

(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection on the City of West Branch Website at www.westbranchiowa.org/government/council-videos. The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)

**West Branch, Iowa
Council Chambers**

**Special City Council Meeting
(FY19 Budget)**

**January 22, 2018
6:30 p.m.**

Mayor Pro Tem Colton Miller called the West Branch City Council meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Miller invited the Council, Staff and members of the audience to stand and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call: Mayor Laughlin was absent. Council members: Colton Miller, Nick Goodweiler, Jodee Stoolman, Brian Pierce and Jordan Ellyson were present. Mayor Laughlin arrived at 7:15 p.m. Miller welcomed the audience and the following City staff: City Administrator Redmond Jones, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Gordon Edgar, Library Director Nick Shimmin, Public Works Director Matt Goodale, Park & Recreation Director Melissa Russell and Police Chief Mike Horihan.

GUEST SPEAKER, PRESENTATIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS

Budget presentations:

General Funds Revenue – Finance Officer Edgar said he had been working on the budget and provided copies of the draft FY19 budget form 16-142 to the Council. Edgar reviewed the form highlighting several general fund revenue line items and said that although property assessments have increased from last year, the budget outlook was concerning. He also provided information on current outstanding debts and said he was very worried with the debt level and preliminary estimates may result in a tax increase. When asked why, Edgar reported that a few projects completed in 2017 were not funded with the previous budget and general funds were used to pay for them. That resulted in ‘borrowing’ from other funds to pay for the projects, but leaves the general fund short for other obligations. Edgar also stated that he had concerns with the College Street Bridge project and the additional improvements to North Second Street as that portion is also not funded. The Council requested additional detailed information to further assess the situation. A few council members said they were not in favor of a tax increase. They also said they were unaware of Edgar’s findings that some projects were not funded as they were lead to believe.

Fee Schedule Presentation – Deputy Clerk Brick presented the current West Branch Schedule of Fees and said that during a recent review she found that the schedule to be incomplete and that many more fees were currently in place but not listed on the schedule. Brick requested adding additional existing fees to the schedule in order to remain transparent to the public. She also said that during this review, it was apparent that some fees had not been reviewed for many years and should be looked at to determine if they were reflective of current rates. Brick said she was working with department directors to review all fees and would bring back suggestions for potential user fee increases.

Hotel Motel Tax – City Administrator Jones said he had done some research on adding a hotel motel tax as an additional revenue generator. He listed other surrounding communities that have the tax and noted that although the additional revenue it generates is not substantial in smaller communities, he felt it was worth pursuing. The Council felt it was a good idea and directed Jones to pursue the tax.

Administration Budget:

Economic and Community Development – Jones said as with other department requests, he reduced this budget by 5% as well. Jones recommended reductions in the fireworks for Hoover’s Hometown Days, a temporary discontinuation of funding the blacksmith at the National Park Service (NPS) for at least one year, summer concert series for performances in June only (in which the City would pay for two and NPS pay

for two). Jones said he was expecting Community Development Group (CDG) to request additional help with the carriage rides for Christmas Past. CDG will present their request at the February 5th meeting.

General Government – Jones said he was willing to forego one year of his ICMA credentialing per his contractual employment agreement with the City. Jones agreed that the next few budgets will be challenging with trying to pay down current debt and that all future projects will be investigated and scrutinized more thoroughly before implementation.

Capital Improvements – Jones reported that Goodale was getting prices on the West Branch Village Trail project and recruiting volunteers to help keep costs down. But that no other capital projects would be taken on for a few years.

Fire Department – Stoolman presented the fire department budget with the proposed 5% reduction. He noted areas where he was able to cut were based on actual expenditures from the FY17 budget. Stoolman did suggest to set aside \$1000 for emergency siren repairs, but said the Council could remove it if they needed. Otherwise with the proposed budget and the expected income, Stoolman presented a balanced budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION

No items to approve.

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to direct the City Administrator to include an across the board 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for city employees and be reflected in the City Administrators recommended budget. /Move to action.

Jones said the purpose of the 2% increase was based on Federal Social Security Administration announcement. He further explained that COLA is to ensure the purchase power of the Social Security and Supplement Security Income benefit is not eroded by inflation. Stoolman commented that she would like to see future employee increases based on employee performance rather than across the board. Other council members agreed but said that would take some backend work to accomplish standards for determining compensation levels but felt it was something to move toward.

Motion by Ellyson, second by Goodweiler. AYES: Ellyson, Goodweiler, Miller, Stoolman, Pierce. Motion carried.

Discussion – Director’s Salary Proposal

Jones said that three years of data was reviewed to determine actual over-time hours used in determining a fair compensation adjustment for the department directors. In doing so, Jones said he was able to come to an agreement with the current directors on moving them from an hourly wage to an annual salary basis. This change will result in an approximately \$10,000 dollar savings. This change is intended to take place on July 1, 2018. Laughlin asked how the directors felt about the change. Parks & Recreation Director Russell said she was in favor of the change as it would help her do her job and provide the flexibility it would provide based on recreation programs. Goodale said he was fine with it since he was not taking a pay cut since he currently uses almost all of his overtime each year. Horihan said he was also okay with the change and said he would be making some internal changes and having other members of the department cover shifts when in the past he would cover. Stoolman suggested that part-time officers cover shifts for full-time officers when possible to keep over-time costs down.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

No additional comments.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Not available.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Stoolman suggested that the City consider hiring a full-time fire chief in the future. Stoolman recognizes that that role is important and takes a lot of time. She also said that the current chief does a great job but that the responsibility does take him away from his current owned business which results in a loss of income. Finding someone else to replace him will be difficult. Goodweiler said he supports the idea.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn regular meeting by Miller, second by Ellyson. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk