

(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**

**City Council Meeting
Work Session**

**February 12, 2018
6:00 p.m.**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council Work Session to order at 6:02 p.m. Mayor Laughlin 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 present. Council members: Colton Miller, Nick Goodweiler, Jodee Stoolman, Jordan Ellyson and Brian Pierce were present. Laughlin 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, Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman and Police Chief Mike Horihan.

GUEST SPEAKER, PRESENTATIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS

Budget presentations:

City Administrator's Recommended Budget

Jones presented the Council with four case scenarios of budget form 16-142 showing various levy options of the imminent property tax increase ranging from \$0.03 to \$1.12. He explained the budget shortfall is the result of debt service, employee benefits and regular operating expenses. Jones recommended scenario number four (a proposed \$0.50 tax increase) which includes the maximum levy for Planning a Sanitary Disposal Project, and Other Employee Benefits, but less than maximum levies on Operation & Maintenance of City Owned Civic Center (Town Hall), Emergency Fund, Liability, Property & Self Insurance Costs and Debt Service.

Jones reported that he spoke with the Cedar County Auditor about the Hotel / Motel Tax that the Council approved at the last meeting and said the auditor will not be able to get it on the primary election in June, but could get it on the general election in November. However, the auditor did say there are a number of other items already on the ballot. She did suggest a special election which could be held on May 1, 2018, but it would cost the City \$1200 to hold that election. Council was concerned of a low voter turn-out and asked if the measure failed with the special election, could it still be added to the November ballot. Jones said he would confirm with the auditor. The Council agreed with covering the \$1200 cost for the special election, if they could bring it back in November.

Jones reviewed the goals the City Council adopted in fall goal setting session and reported that he had met with Fehr Graham's, Nate Kass and they were able to value engineer some items from the original bid reducing the costs by approximately \$150,000. Councilperson Miller added that he had received an email from the City's engineer and that the West Branch Village Bridge project is on hold due to possible DNR permitting issues. Edgar stated if the project is unable to be completed, the City will have to pay back the portion of the REAP Grant previously received and spent on engineering for the project.

Administration

Jones gave examples of suggested non-salary expenditure cuts for FY19. Jones said membership to CEDCO and the National Park Blacksmith programs would be cancelled for one year and revisited at a later date, Hoover's Hometown Day fireworks would be cut from \$40,000 to a recommended \$25,000, vehicle set aside programs eliminated or reduced, department budgets were also cut 5%. Jones also suggested not funding the City's storm water contribution this year. Miller argued that the City committed to matching funds collected from the residents when the Storm Water Utility was created. Miller further said if the City did not match those dollars as previously agreed, then future Storm Water increases should not be charged to the residents. The council was split on the on what to do about fireworks for Hoover's Hometown Days. The Mayor stated that he wants to have them and has asked for a reduced cost of \$25,000. This lower cost

will reduce the length of the show as well as possibly the height of the launch of the display which means residents may need to come closer to the event to see the fireworks. Ellyson challenged that having fireworks in an already tight budget year means that the City cannot have equipment they need to do their jobs, which in turn could affect city services. Miller suggested that the Hoover's Hometown Days budget should be reviewed to see where other cuts may be needed without sacrificing entertainment for the event. It was noted that budgeting for this event is challenging as it crosses two fiscal years and some entertainment and service contracts are due upon execution and others on the day of the event. Brick said last year, over \$18,000 was donated from businesses and private citizens for the event, but that number is not guaranteed each year.

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) History

Edgar provided a CIP history report showing capital projects with beginning and ending balances. Edgar noted that several projects were completely funded and closed while others still had remaining balances. Although vendors and contractors have been paid, two projects still carry deficits to the amount of \$246,735.28. \$116,424.39 for the North 4th Street Project which had overages due to soil issues discovered during construction. \$130,310.89 for the Main Street Water Main Project which has had funding challenges. Edgar stated his funding strategy for both projects of pulling funds from other sources such as the water, sewer and road use tax to close out those projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT

Motion to Direct the City Administrator to budget and include a "Not to Exceed" Expense for Hoover Home Town Days Fire Works Display./Move to action.

Jones asked for direction to move forward with a fireworks agreement not to exceed \$25,000 for Hoover's Hometown Days 2018 based on earlier discussions. Jones said that if the council agreed to this amount, a resolution would be brought back to the next meeting for the council to vote on.

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

Direct the City Administrator to move forward with developing a budget that is based on a total property levy of 13.09246.

Stoolman, Goodweiler and a reluctant Miller directed Jones to move forward with finalizing the budget which includes a \$0.50 property tax increase. Ellyson and Pierce had no further comment.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

No additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn regular meeting by Pierce, second by Ellyson. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk