

Town of Hertford
Special Call Session (In Person/Zoom)
Thursday, May 5, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Special Call Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Zoom) on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at 6:00 pm.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor (Zoom)	Connie Brothers
Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem	Sandra Anderson (Zoom)
Jerry Mimlitsch	

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Ashley Eure, Account Specialist

A quorum was present.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges called the meeting to order. The invocation led by Councilwoman Brothers was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

New Business

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges announced that we are holding this Special Call Meeting so the Public Works Department can present their initial budget requests for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Interim Manager Cole told the Council that she wanted Public Works to present what they are requesting and identify priority items and wish items and advocate for what they are requesting. They will go over the Budget Request Worksheets provided to Council to explain the different items they are requesting and allow Council to have questions answered regarding those items. There are five Public Work categories that will be addressed.

WATER DEPARTMENT

The Interim Public Works Director, Harry Sanchez presented.

Public Works is asking for an increase in salaries and a separate line item for Over Time. Professional Services budget is nearly the same and noted that OCR services are shared with Water Collections. Currently the Water Department does not have anyone certified in distribution or cross connection, so the Town must contract those services out under Professional Services. There is a request in budget for increased

certifications under Travel and Training. Operating expenses have increased significantly. The rise in chemical prices and the rise in fuel prices are driving up costs. Those fuel increases have been added to the budget request calculations.

Maintenance Repair includes taking care of Water Treatment Plant and Distribution System, as well as maintenance for the four (4) generators and equipment in distribution. Distribution Repairs were cut last year and the costs for those parts and services have now increased. Also included in Maintenance Repair Budget is the repair of Well-Site Road, from Ballahack to Well #1. This road is causing damage to the water plant truck. Vehicle Maintenance/Repair is impacted by the rising fuel prices, requests for mechanical repairs, and noted that backhoe repairs requested will be shared with the Water Treatment Plant and Distribution. Materials and Supplies requests funds for in-house lab chemicals needed to test our water and gas respirators need to be purchased for staff performing gas chlorine change out. There are no safety devices or respirators for this task and the issue of safety must be addressed. A new truck (with snowplow capability), mini-excavator and jackhammer are being requested under Capital Outlay. The current truck is much older and needs many repairs, and due to the age of the vehicle most parts are not available. Capital Improvements include water tower maintenance to ensure the town's water quality and water filter replacements for the current filters that are three (3) years past their ten (10) year life expectancy. The Water Department is also requesting the purchase of mowers and trimmers as they must wait to use those of the Street Department and this delay results in overgrowth at the well locations. The Backwash Basin Pumps acquired in 2009 need services and repairs to avoid catastrophic failure.

Mayor Brown would like to see a detailed list of expenditures for 2021-2022 as there was no Capital Outlay budgeted although \$59K was requested.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges asked for an explanation regarding the pros of the mini excavator over the backhoe.

STREET DEPARTMENT

The Interim Public Works Director, Harry Sanchez presented.

Street Department is asking for additional funding for salaries and a separate overtime budget. Overtime was not included in previous salary budget and there will be overtime. The Flea Market and Indian Summer Festival are new additions and will require street staff on weekends to work overtime. Training and Travel is requesting funds to get more employees herbicide training and CDL certifications. Operating expenses have increased, again the rising cost of fuel contributes to this. The cost of boarding up abandoned houses also has risen with the increased prices of wood and materials. Average price to board up an abandoned house is \$300. The Street Department and Electrical Department should share the cost of the building maintenance. There are failing electric door openers that need replacement and maintenance of existing garage rails. Vehicle and equipment maintenance is also faced

with rising fuel and diesel costs, older vehicles needing repair. The Street Department is requesting funds to purchase and sustain tools and is faced with the rising cost of safety supplies. Herbicides, insecticides, grease, oil and asphalt are also needed purchases. Meads Circle and Barrow Alley need repaving and possibly substructure and drainage work. Capital improvements include the previously noted purchases of a new F350 truck, as the current and aged F150 is unsafe but still in use, as well as the mini excavator and jackhammer. The purchase of an F750 Flatbed is needed to replace the obsolete grey flatbed that cannot be repaired due to unavailable parts. Landfill budget needs to be increased due to increased cost of fuel to empty and return receptacles. A budget is requested for engineering services to scope the extensive repairs/maintenance for work on Pennsylvania Avenue and Barrow Alley.

Mayor Brown asked if the wood used to board up abandon houses was reused. This prompted a conversation that explained that the sheriff's role in inspecting houses for any persons still in there before the final boards on the doors were placed.

ELECTRIC

Presented by Jason Value

Professional Services for the Electrical Department should stay the same as previous FY. Asking for funds for meter testing and calibration that could potentially reclaim lost money for the town. Tree trimming is needed for branches that are overgrown across power lines and sidewalks need to be clear of debris from this. Trimming is also preventative in damage due to storms, hurricanes. Travel and Training budget should remain the same. The department would like to add an apprentice, get the individual into school, and have an apprenticeship. Operating Expenses budget remains the same. Uniform rental to be cut in half over the next three years. Costs have increased for materials and transformers and emergency equipment s to be purchased. There is a contingency amount for storm damage costs. Utilities have gone up due to higher costs, along with increased costs of propane. Maintenance and Repair is budgeting for non-vehicle repairs of trenchers, saws, and other equipment. Electric Department can also share in costs of Building maintenance with Street Department. Another contingency budget is requested. Again, the rising fuel costs are increasing budget for Vehicle Maintenance and Repair. Costs for materials and supplies and poles have increased dramatically and there isn't a stock of supplies available for repairs needed. A stock of supplies needs to be purchased and safety equipment, boots, raingear, harnesses are needed to outfit the crew properly and safely. Capital Improvements include pole replacement, generator upgrades, SMART meters. Capital Outlay includes wiring removed for bridge replacement, purchase of transformers, purchase of two (2) new reclosers for better performance and efficiency and repairs on two (2) other reclosers, purchase of mini excavator to share with other Public Works Departments.

Mayor Brown would like an explanation of separate line items requesting Contingency funds and separate line items requesting vehicle maintenance. Also asked if residents can refuse to have SMART meter installed at their home. These issues will be addressed later.

Councilwoman Anderson asked if there was a list of poles that need to be replaced around town as there are some that look like they are in dire need of replacement.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges questioned the cost of burying power lines vs. replacing poles and it is estimated to be 3x the cost to bury.

(Mayor Brown exited the meeting)

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Presented by Jeremy Haislip

Mr. Haislip started off by explaining that there is no staff at the WWTP at night. If there were any kind of mechanical failure, it would not be known until the next day when a staff member arrives. The state can impose fine or penalties for leak issues. The building itself is in dire disrepair. The roof leaks and lab equipment, samples, paperwork, and office are constantly getting wet. Upon state inspection, we were cited for the leaking roof. The need for a third clarifier is a state requirement whenever we go over 80% of the permitted flow of water each day. The Inflow and Infiltration is incoming water into the collection system that is not from a home or business. It can come from storm drains, old broken sewer laterals and/or clean out catches for a person's yard. Although there hasn't been a great deal of growth in Hertford, there has been a greater influx of I&I which is impacting our usage. Salaries will remain similar but asking for overtime line item as this department has the greatest amount of overtime. Travel and Training budget needs an increase to accommodate more staff and additional training. Operating costs are mainly fixed for biosolid removals, permits, software, sample testing, internet and phones. Inhouse lab costs have increased and a line item for annual conference attendance has been added. Uniform budget was duplicated from last year. Utilities have increased with usage and rising costs. Although the Spray Field is not used, we are required to perform maintenance. Pumps, motor, and controller repair is not timely as we do not have an inventory of any spare parts when something goes out. A stock of parts is needed along with maintenance items. Vehicle expenses and equipment repair costs also increased and rising fuel prices contributed greatly to this. Chemicals have increased in price and another increase is expected. This was factored into the budget request. Safety expenses have been added to as WWTP would like to get respirators and other supplies have increased in price drastically, glove costs are up approximately 150%. Capital Improvement items include a new lab roof, a third clarifier as it will be required by the state. It was noted that the motor control room in the building that houses controls and electronics is NOT leaking. Capital Outlay budget requests include replacing Clarifier #1 as it has a major oil leak and is over 30 years old. A Zmower has also been requested as the current one is over 10 years old and the mower is needed to maintain large areas at the plant, pump stations and parts of the Spray Field. Sensors need to be upgraded to improve operation and efficiency. The current sensors are non-operational. Motorized/automatic gates are requested at the facility for security purposes, the cost would be shared with Wastewater Collection. A new pump is needed to use if a pump station has a mechanical or electrical failure. This year we had to rent one at the cost of \$3K/month. Other requested items include mini excavator, pickup truck and pump replacement as a previous pump was used for parts and never replaced.

Councilman Mimlitsch discussed the possibility of rescinding our lease for the Spray Field as we do not use it and spend budget maintaining it. New lease was signed in 2019 and goes through 2025. The possibility of contracting out the mowing is being explored.

WASTEWATER COLLECTION

Presented by Jeremy Haislip

A line item for Over Time has been added to Salaries and Wages budget as it has not been added in the past. Professional Services does include the ORC Contractor Services which is shared with WWTP. Training and Certification for staff is being requested in Travel and Training. Operating Expenses include Continuing Education Services for continuing education and certification and license fees. Engineering services are also being requested. Utilities have increased so the budget request is increased. Maintenance and Repair items include pump repairs and having replacement parts on hand, maintenance on the two generators that have not received proper maintenance in many years. The generators are critical in the event of a power outage. Pump station maintenance including fencing. Contract the cleaning of the four pump stations. Vehicle Maintenance budget requests reflect the rising fuel prices and the cost of general maintenance on vehicles and equipment. Materials and Supplies has requested special tools for sewer lines and pump stations, including a Tripod Kit. Safety supplies are needed and costs for those has increased. Pump station Capital Improvements include upgrading the Mead pump station and the Feed and Seed pump station. Capital Outlay requests area vacuum truck to share costs with WWTP, new gate for WWTP, mini excavator, pickup truck. Some of the other divisions will share in the costs of these items.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Brothers and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges. The motion passed unanimously with a voice vote of 4-0

Councilwoman Anderson aye

Councilwoman Brothers aye

Councilman Mimlitsch aye

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM