

**CITY OF STEVENSON SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
First Budget Meeting – Public Hearing
November 10, 2016
6:00 p.m., City Hall**

City Council present: Frank Cox, Robert Muth, Paul Hendricks, Mark Peterson, Amy Weissfeld
Excused Absence – Council member Jenny Taylor

Staff present: Nick Hogan, Ben Shumaker

Public present: Mary Repar

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 6:01 PM
2. No changes to the agenda
3. **6:00 – Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget**

Mayor **COX** opened the Public Hearing at 6:01 PM. **HOGAN** presented the proposed budget for 2017. He discussed the reasons we prepare an annual budget: 1) It’s legally required; 2) The budget sets the legal limit for expenditures; and 3) It’s the financial plan for the City for the upcoming year. He reviewed the priorities and goals in the budget document for the current and upcoming budget years. **WEISSFELD** requested Hogan add the vision statement from the Comp plan to the “Priorities and Goals” section in the budget.

HOGAN reported personnel costs account for about 42% of the City’s costs, with staff salaries increased by 1.7% based on Portland-Vancouver CPI which City Council approved at their last meeting. He gave an overview of the benefits costs increases including a PERS rate increase from our current employer rate of 11.2% to a new rate of 12.7%. PERS rates are adjusted by the State every two years. He added that employees also contribute 6% to PERS. Medical insurance cost will be increasing by 4.5%, with no planned increases in the cost of vision or dental insurance. He reminded Council that the City currently pays the full cost of employee health insurance for its employees.

HOGAN discussed the budget meetings schedule and the approval process.

HOGAN then walked through the budget document explaining each section briefly. He explained pages D and E, one page overviews of the revenue and expenditure budgets for this year and next year. **HOGAN** stated that for Council members, these pages are probably the most useful pages in the entire budget as they show the budget at a macro level. He then reviewed Tourism Funds awards (page G), Equipment Replacement Schedule (page H), and gave several examples of how to use the revenue and expenditure detail pages to find specific data if desired.

Public Comment

M. Repar commented, in reviewing the City’s overall goals and priority, she noted nothing specifically addresses the environment. She commented a good quality of life based on scenic environment as part of the City’s Comp plan. She added the City should begin a Rainy Day Fund. She added Skamania County has encumbered lands and asked if the City has any, in urban boundaries where the City can make any money. Ms. Repar

added, on private forest lands, the City should consider changing the assessment of excise taxes to every year and not wait 35-40 yrs to realize that revenue. She wondered if all taxes from online (hotel/motel) bookings, are being collected and how do we know? She also asked how much money was lost from liquor sales being privatized. She complimented **HOGAN** on the easy-to-understand format of the budget document.

Mayor **COX** closed the public hearing.

There was general discussion about the budget document and categories. **HENDRICKS** asked that Council consider adding a stipend for Planning Commission members, and that we consider exploring grant awards to help improve some of our downtown storefronts. **HENDRICKS** also asked if we can make our sewer plant look better. Councilmembers asked several questions that Hogan said he will look into and get back to them on, including certain street improvements and why 2016 tax collections went down.

Budget approval will be considered in the next City Council meeting.

4. **Public Hearing on the Proposed Property Tax Levy**

Mayor **COX** opened the Public Hearing at 7:09 PM

HOGAN presented Ordinance 2016-1099 and Resolution 2016-293 for Council consideration of the property tax levy for fiscal year 2017. He discussed the annual process and options available to Council. He explained the proposed Ordinance will raise property taxes up to 1% in 2017. **HOGAN** gave some examples of why the City needs this 1% increase, including building a new fire hall. There was general discussion about ways to fund the purchase and/or construction of the new fire hall.

Public Comment

M. Repar commented, simply, no. She continued, people are tired of seeing their taxes continue to rise and she feels the community needs tax relief. She believes the City doesn't need the money so she votes NO.

Mayor **COX** closed the public hearing at 7:17 PM

There was general discussion about the proposed tax levy amount and the 1% increase.

MUTH motioned, **HENDRICKS** seconded, a motion to approve Resolution 2016-293, as presented. Vote: In Favor: 3, Opposed: 1 (**PETERSON** opposed)

HENDRICKS motioned, **MUTH** seconded a motion to approve Ordinance 2016-1099, as presented.

Vote: In Favor: 3, Opposed: 1 (**PETERSON** opposed)

5. **ADJOURNMENT** at 7:18 PM

Approved _____; Approved as amended _____

Frank **COX**, Mayor

Date

Minutes by: Jennifer Anderson