

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue

September 16, 2013

Mayor DiTullio called the Study Session to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members present: Davis Reinhart, Bud Starker, Joyce Jay, Kristi Davis, George Pond, Mike Stites, Tracy Langworthy and Joseph DeMott.

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; Treasurer, Larry Schulz; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Director of Administrative Services, Heather Geyer; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Public Works Director, Scott Brink; Police Chief Brennan; Parks Director, Joyce Manwaring; other staff and interested citizens.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

1. Staff Reports – none
2. Elected Official Reports

Joyce Jay said she had received a call from DRCOG extending a helping hand to anyone in WR who needs help as a result of the recent floods.

3. 2014 Budget Presentation

City Manager Patrick Goff opened the staff presentation of the proposed 2014 budget by noting the following:

- To achieve a balanced budget about \$845,000 in departmental requests have been eliminated or postponed in the latest round of cuts.
- The creation of a contingency fund is a new item this year. Consolidating the various contingency funds saved about \$70,000.
- We were able to transfer about \$1.7 M into the capital budget by decreasing the unrestricted fund balance to our minimum of 17%.

The 2014 Proposed Budget Presentation followed, with the various department heads addressing the budgets of their respective departments.

See attached: [2014 Proposed Budget Presentation](#)

Mayor DiTulio left at 8:00pm. Mayor Pro Tem Reinhart continued as chair.

Kristi Davis asked about sharrows for bike signage on Pierce. Ken Johnstone explained some options staff has explored. Scott Brink said staff is in the

process of putting together a 10 year plan for bike/ped needs. Ms. Davis received unanimous consent to have staff put together something for Pierce (26th to 48th) for 2014.

Ms. Davis had concerns about PTO buy-outs for employees, which cost \$50,000/year. She thinks employees should take their vacation and this should be the last year of the buy-out. Doing away with this buy-out is common in the private sector. Use it or lose it. Discussion followed. There was consensus to have staff bring back an analysis of the PTO buy-out program which could be implemented in the 2015 budget.

Ms. Davis was concerned about the flat rate for medical plans. She asked that staff bring back information about what a 5% decrease in the flat rate would look like, with the lowest rate being 75%; and she asked that this be brought back before the 2014 budget is passed. There was brief discussion. Mr. Goff indicated staff has looked at this already and could bring numbers back to Council with not much problem.

Tracy Langworthy left at 8:16pm.

Joe DeMott said he helped with the Carnation Festival for the first time this past year, and he learned what a huge undertaking it is. The Festival really is our city's one big defining event, with up to 30,000 people in attendance for the two nights. The Festival hasn't asked for increased funding in as long as anyone can remember, and for \$12,500 it's a bargain. The in-kind support from City staff is certainly appreciated (especially from the Parks Dept.), but like everything else – expenses keep rising (equipment rental, trash removal, etc.). If there is any way to increase that money it would sure help the effort. Considering what WR2020 has requested just for their events on 38th Avenue (\$80,000), what the Festival gets is meager by comparison. The WR2020 events draw significantly fewer people. He did not ask for a consensus.

Discussion followed.

Joe DeMott noted that the \$12,500 the Festival gets from the City is used for the fireworks –but that's all it covers. He added that funding towards the circus has helped.

Joyce Jay said it's a valid point and worth looking at.

Davis Reinhart said the \$12,500 gives us the biggest bang for the buck, compared with any other place the Council might spend \$12,500. This led to a broader discussion about funding for outside agencies.

Kristi Davis suggested there are places where contributions towards outside entities could be trimmed.

Mike Stites raised a number of points:

- We need to start deciding what is necessary and what isn't.
- He wondered what things we are funding for the Ridge that are crossover functions that could be done by our Economic Development staff.

- Does the District Feasibility Study for the Ridge at 38 (\$20,000) really have to be done next year?
- \$80,000 for local events on 38th and another \$40,000 for Live Local events is \$120,000 for events on 38th Avenue; that's a lot of money.
- \$25,000 for the Banners and Lighting Program on the Ridge at 38 is only for a small section of 38th because we still don't know what we can do with the lights west of Harlan.
- He challenged councilmembers to go through the budget and look for things that could be cut regardless of how large or small.
- He suggested the \$35K for Marketing Materials/Website for the Ridge should be done by our Economic Development Department. (Mr. Goff said the website is specific to 38th.)
- He cited the \$7,000 for Corridor Marketing Map and Directory and noted that Heidi [Swiss Flower Shop] did the one for 44th Avenue for \$2,000 and paid for it herself.

Joe DeMott added that grant requests to the Business District are down and thinks half of the suggested budget [of \$90,000] would be adequate.

Davis Reinhart supported that and noted that Council has always been supportive if the Business District came back with further requests for valuable projects.

George Pond referred to the note that \$30K of this \$90K may be actionable this year. If that works, \$60K may be saved in some line items. He doesn't agree with pillaging some of these buckets of money, but agreed some balancing to take into account some of these additional items may be beneficial.

Bud Starker agreed that with some judicious cuts under "Economically Viable Commercial Areas" we might be able to come up with some meaningful funding for these activities without cutting them to the bone, but be able to find money for other uses we look for in the City – such as the Carnation Festival. He listed some ideas for trimming that would save \$80-90,000.

All agreed to approve the Outside Agency Contributions recommended by staff.

Contributions to other agencies that have not applied were discussed.

- Outdoor Lab (for WR students only) – request from the school district is for \$24,500 -- mixed opinions from Council
- Jeffco EDC – do not increase
- Senior Circulator Bus – maintain current funding
- Jeffco Action Center – (new request; \$30,000) Davis Reinhart said he wants to help them, but has trouble contributing to other capital projects when we can't fund our own. George Pond agreed and suggested contributing this year and not putting it in the 2014 budget. Mr. Goff explained that Jeffco Action Center has purchased an old office building and has a phased plan to remodel it and then remodel their current facility

to expand services. Cost is about \$5M over two years. There was consensus to contribute \$10,000 this year (2013).

- Outdoor Lab – Consensus by Davis Reinhart for \$10,000 was approved.

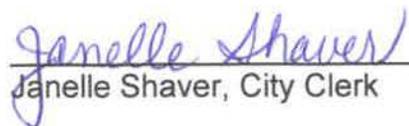
Joyce Jay addressed vehicle replacement and asked that “group buying” with partner cities be explored to get better pricing and save on our gasoline. Mr. Goff said we already purchase vehicles through the state bidding process so we get competitive prices. He noted we are getting one hybrid police vehicle next year and more in the future.

George Pond stated he thinks trimming a couple hundred thousand dollars here or there is meaningless -- it's the millions we need for large infrastructure projects that is important. We have a CIP issue and we're making our last move on reserves. After this year we will have no money and this will eventually crush us. We aren't meeting the needs of the community expressed by the people who came in and spoke on the budget. We aren't addressing serious issues and there is no sustainability. We are barely taking care of our citizens, our resources and our staff. While it's normal to sit and talk about \$20,000 here or there he hopes we aren't avoiding the larger issue. It's not fair to argue about \$10,000 and expect people to think we are doing good work when we are ignoring the need for millions of dollars.

Davis Reinhart noted again that we are drawing our reserve down to our minimum of 17%. Council agreed that this was an adequate number.

Mrs. Jay agreed with Mr. Pond and added that Council needs to get serious about how to increase our income and increase our sustainability. Our increase in revenue is minimal compared to other cities. She suggested the Council set a date to get together to make a plan which addresses how we're going to solve these problems that are huge and real and getting worse.

The Study Session adjourned at 8:57pm.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk