

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2012 – 5:00 PM**

PUBLIC HEARING – 2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

Mayor Phillips called the Public Hearing to order at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and announced that it was for the purpose of hearing public comment regarding the 2013 Proposed Budget. He further noted that Council is seeking ways in which to decrease expenses and increase revenues.

Council members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor Phillips, Mr. Cashman (arrived during the hearing), Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Park, Mr. Zavinski and Cody McGraw, Junior Council Member. Mrs. Freenock, Mr. Gustafson, Mr. Hildebrand, Mr. Holtz, Mrs. Leary, Chief Pascuzzi, Mrs. Risinger, and Chief Zydonik of City staff were also in attendance.

Mayor Phillips stated that Council would give consideration to comments received and indicated that, despite cuts, the proposed budget calls for tax increases.

PUBLIC PRESENT

- John Aldrich: Transit Authority of Warren County
- Brent Ordiway: Resident – 5 LeRoy Street
- Pete Molinaro: Resident – 608 Beech Street
- Andy Moore: City of Warren Firefighter
- Jason Schott: City of Warren Firefighter
- Tracy Swartz: City of Warren Firefighter
- Shawn Jones: City of Warren Firefighter
- Amanda Kosterman: City of Warren Police Officer
- Nick Bryan: City of Warren Police Officer
- Jeff Dougherty: City of Warren Police Officer
- Ken Hinton: City of Warren Police Officer
- Josh Cotton: Times Observer Reporter

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Aldrich Mr. Aldrich distributed information relative to the manner in which requests for municipal contributions for matching funds are calculated by the Transit Authority of Warren County.

Pete Molinaro The following questions/points were made:

1. A new City Manager and Assistant City Manager have recently been hired. Are both positions necessary when department heads “have itineraries?”
2. Mr. Molinaro questioned whether it is still required that department heads reside within six miles of the Municipal Building and stated that he believes this should be the case so that they are contributing to the local economy. Mrs. Freenock indicated that this requirement is still in place unless otherwise negotiated by contract and further noted that employees pay Earned Income Tax to the City.

3. Leaf pickup is a necessary service to prevent storm drains from being clogged by fallen leaves.
4. Street sweeping is a necessary service to prevent road debris from clogging storm sewers.
5. The Municipal Pool is nice to have but could be cut. Mr. Molinaro suggested that a private establishment may wish to take over the pool.
6. Is it necessary to have "extra people on top"? Cuts may need to be made.

Brent Ordiway Mr. Ordiway stated that having read the City Personnel Code many times, he is not aware of there being an exception to the residency requirement and stated that he believes any exception is unfair to employees who have borne the expense of a move to within the required 6-mile radius. (Note: Mr. Ordiway is a retired City employee)

Mr. Cashman arrived.

- Andy Moore
1. Mr. Moore expressed concern regarding the level at which the Firefighters Pension Plan is currently funded and provided historical information regarding the plan from the 1970's to date. He further questioned the disparity in funding levels among the Firefighters, Police, and Municipal Employees pension plans.
 2. Mr. Moore referenced the Firefighters Cancer Presumption Act and stated that he believes the resultant increases in workers' compensation insurance rates are "criminal." He stated that firefighters across the state worked toward the Act for twenty plus years. He suggested that consideration be given to the development of a workers' compensation buying program.

There being no further citizens wishing to provide comment, the hearing was closed.

OPENING OF SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor Mark A. Phillips presided over the December 10, 2012 special meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor Phillips, Mr. Cashman, Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Park, Mr. Zavinski, and Cody McGraw, Junior Council Member. Mrs. Freenock, Mr. Gustafson, Mr. Hildebrand, Mr. Holtz, Mrs. Leary, Chief Pascuzzi, Mrs. Risinger, and Chief Zydonik of City staff were also in attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE

Council members acknowledged receipt of additional materials from the Transit Authority of Warren County (TAWC) relative to its request for funding in 2013.

2013 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mrs. Freenock outlined expenses which cannot be reduced as well as areas where City staff has sought to decrease expenses. Included in reductions was the decision not to fund a proposed "laborer" position in the Department of Public Works as well as the decision to not replace a receiver in the Fire Department (\$54,000). The receiver is for a secondary alarm system and businesses which utilize the current system will be advised that should they wish to continue the service, they will be responsible for replacement.

Mrs. Freenock noted the following areas identified by City Staff in which Council might consider reductions:

1. Do not install Police Department in-car cameras. It was noted that such cameras have become the industry standard, protect officers, and provide evidence in court.
2. Eliminate staffing at special events. It was noted that an ordinance establishing a Special Events Policy will come before Council at the December 17 regular meeting. The proposed ordinance contains provisions to pass on direct costs to the sponsoring organization. It was further noted that the Police Department alone had expenses in excess of \$6000 for the annual Fourth of July activities.
3. Close Betts Park and the Municipal Pool. It was noted that savings realized would not be significant.
4. Do not pave any streets and utilize Liquid Fuels Funds for other qualifying expenditures. It was noted that the City is already off pace in addressing paving needs.
5. Approximately \$15,000 in savings would be realized if residents were to bag and transport autumn leaves to an approved recycling location.
6. \$10,000 in savings would be realized if replacement trees and flowers are not planted.
7. Do not replace the traffic signal at the intersection of Liberty Street and Pennsylvania Avenue West. It was noted that the light has been purchased and is being stored at the DPW Garage. The remaining estimated \$80,000 expense is for installation with the high cost being due to the need for placement of a pole within an area of a heated sidewalk.

At 6:00 PM, Council adjourned to executive session for the discussion of personnel matters.

Upon the meeting being reconvened at 6:45 PM, there was considerable discussion regarding reductions in expenditures and possible revenue sources. The following actions were taken by Council:

1. Mr. Cashman made the motion to include \$53,000 in CIP funding in the 2013 Budget for the Beaty Park Improvement Project with additional funds to come from private sources. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried with five votes in the affirmative and two negative votes cast by Mr. Harvey and Mayor Phillips.
2. Mr. Harvey made the motion to establish a committee to evaluate all City-owned property to determine what may be sold, leased, or drilled (oil/gas) – committee to report to Council in the first quarter of 2013. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried unanimously.
3. Mr. Lewis made the motion to allocate \$6000 to Paws Along the River (Warren County Humane Society) in the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Park and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one negative vote cast by Mr. Harvey.
4. Mr. Harvey made the motion to remove the allocation for the Warren County Historical Society from the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three negative votes cast by Mr. Lewis, Dr. Ferguson, and Mr. Park.
5. Mr. Harvey made the motion to remove the allocation for the Warren Garden Club from the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three negative votes cast by Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Zavinski, and Mr. Cashman.

6. Mr. Harvey made the motion to remove the allocation for the City of Warren Redevelopment Authority from the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried unanimously.
7. Mr. Park made the motion to reduce the 2013 Budget allocation to the Music in the Park program to \$1500. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one negative vote cast by Mr. Zavinski.
8. Mr. Cashman made the motion to eliminate \$4000 in “walking around money” for the City Manager from the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried unanimously.
9. Mr. Cashman made the motion to allocate \$7500 to the Transit Authority of Warren County in the 2013 Budget. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ferguson and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one negative vote cast by Mr. Park.
10. ***Italicized text indicates corrections made 1/21/2013.*** Mr. Lewis made the motion to freeze the wages of non-collective bargaining City employees for 2013. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman. ~~Following amendment (below) the motion failed with three votes in the affirmative and four negative votes being cast by Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Zavinski, Mr. Park, and Mayor Phillips.~~

Before a vote could be taken on Mr. Lewis’ motion, Mr. Harvey made the motion to amend the motion and decrease the proposed wage increase for non-collective bargaining City employees from 2.5 percent to 1.5 percent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three negative votes cast by Mr. Cashman, Mr. Park, and Mayor Phillips.

Prior to the vote on Mr. Lewis’ motion, as amended, to approve a 1.5 percent increase for all non-collective bargaining City employees Mayor Phillips stated that a “No” vote would result in no change in the budget and the proposed 2.5% wage increase for non-collective bargaining City employees would stand. The amended motion was defeated with three votes in the affirmative and four negative votes being cast by Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Zavinski, Mr. Park, and Mayor Phillips.

11. Mr. Cashman made the motion to direct the City Manager to develop a plan for the Building Codes Department with the goal of reducing expenses. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ferguson and carried unanimously.
12. Mr. Lewis made the motion to set a 2013 Earned Income Tax Rate increase at .3 percent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and failed with two votes in the affirmative and five negative votes cast by Mr. Harvey, Dr. Ferguson, Mr. Zavinski, Mr. Park, and Mayor Phillips.
13. Mr. Harvey made the motion to direct the City Manager to prepare a budget reflecting a decrease of .3 percent in the Earned Income Tax Rate and an increase of 5 mills in the Real Estate Tax Rate for 2013. The motion was seconded by Mr. Park. Following amendment (below) the motion carried with five votes in the affirmative and two negative votes being cast by Mr. Harvey and Mayor Phillips.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to amend the motion by setting a Real Estate Tax

increase of 3 mills and no increase in the Earned Income Tax Rate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lewis and carried with five votes in the affirmative and two negative votes being cast by Mr. Harvey and Mayor Phillips.

PROPOSED AGREEMENTS – BUILDING CODE INSPECTION SERVICES

Mr. Gustafson stated that at its November 19 regular meeting, Council approved a revised agreement for the performance of building code permit and inspection services pursuant to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC) in municipalities with which the City has existing agreements. Although the municipalities were each provided with a copy of the proposed agreement, the City did not receive responses until following the City's adoption of the agreement. The common concern among the municipalities involved the fees/expenses for which they would be responsible in the event of an appeal and at what appeal level they would bear financial responsibility. Mr. Gustafson further stated that he and the City Manager met with the City Solicitor and have clarified the language in Agreement Item No's 3 and 6 under "Fees" and believe the revised language appropriately addresses the municipalities' concerns.

Mr. Lewis made the motion to approve amendments to the Intergovernmental Building Codes Inspection agreements with municipalities. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski. Following amendment (below) the motion carried with five votes in the affirmative and two negative votes cast by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Park.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to amend the motion by deferring action to the December 17, 2012 regular Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harvey and carried with five votes in the affirmative and two negative votes being cast by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Park.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Phillips declared the meeting adjourned.