

# ***City Council Meeting Minutes***

**January 23, 2018  
Library Meeting Room  
951 Spruce Street  
7:00 PM**

**Call to Order** – Mayor Muckle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

**City Council:**        ***Mayor Robert Muckle  
Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lipton  
Councilmember Jay Keany  
Councilmember Chris Leh  
Councilmember Susan Loo  
Councilmember Dennis Maloney  
Councilmember Ashley Stolzmann***

**Staff Present:**       ***Heather Balsler, City Manager  
Kevin Watson, Finance Director  
Megan Davis, Intergovernmental Relations Director  
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk***

**Others Present:**

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Muckle called for changes to the agenda and hearing none, moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Keany. All were in favor.

## **2019/2020 BIENNIAL BUDGET PROCESS AND FORMAT**

City Manager Balsler stated this is a review of the proposed budget process and format. She asked what Council would like to see different in the process, if there are other audiences Council is trying to reach, or different formats Council wants to use. She asked for their thoughts on process and the document.

Councilmember Loo stated most people are only interested in a small section of the budget so it is hard to target this to most audiences.

Councilmember Leh stated for most people the process seems opaque. People don't get involved because they are satisfied or don't have the time. He stated it would be nice to have some kind of one-on-one for people to understand the budget process; a way to help people understand the budget calendar.

Councilmember Loo noted Erie has a colorful Budget 101 presentation on their web site. Watson stated when the Tyler enterprise system is in place we will be able to lay that over the web site to allow people access to the details in the budget similar to Erie's.

Mayor Muckle stated the biennial process worked well last time and it did save Council and staff time in the second year. He asked if the schedule could be put on the web site along with some kind of summary to help people understand the program areas and how much we are spending in each area and sub program.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated he has not gotten complaints from people looking for more information about the budget. He would hate to spend a lot of staff time on this if people don't contact us looking for more information or come to a meeting now and then. He stated if people are interested in the budget we can reach out to them, but this may not be an issue to which we need to dedicate a lot of staff resources.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated the work of the Finance Committee and the program budgeting does have a lot of benefits but we need to continuously improve on the foundation we have already built. We need to present the Key Indicators with many years of data to see how we are progressing. We can continue to improve the Key Indicators.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated certain boards and commissions would like more ability to get their opinions into the budget process. We need a larger window to get their input. He noted the boards sincerely want to have input and they can feel marginalized when their items may be removed by staff. He would like Council to be able to see their input before it is filtered by staff and the City Manager's Office.

Councilmember Loo stated she does get questions about items related to the budget. She stated maybe we need an FAQ on "here is what we are spending money on." She noted people don't realize how much we spend on projects and how it relates to other projects and the total budget. If we give people some perspective on how we spend our money that would help.

Councilmember Maloney stated we need to be clear what Council's expectations are for the budget. We have a good groundwork for the program budget; now is the time for maturation. We need to look where we are not meeting expectations and decide if we need more funding in those areas.

Councilmember Maloney stated we need to integrate the Finance Committee's work plan in to the schedule. That would include the fiscal impact model, enterprise and auxiliary budgets, the new recreation expansion tax, fees, and fee calculations. For the Recreation Board one of the tasks for them is to look at the finances and fees for the program, and that will need to be incorporated in the budget conversation.

Looking at the calendar Mayor Muckle suggested moving back performance goals and key indicators to April 17 and perhaps on March 20 bring in some discussion with the boards.

Councilmember Loo stated the difficulty with that is all the boards will want to do this. The less sophisticated boards are going to have difficulty competing with the boards with a great deal of political know how. It is not equitable and creates expectations among the boards who don't understand the process; it gives them an expectation they will get whatever they ask for. Councilmember Leh agreed. He stated there ought to be a way to make sure board members have a baseline of knowledge of the process.

Councilmember Stolzmann stated the 2018 Supplement Budget book is very helpful and if Council could have the proposed budget information presented in a format like that as a starting point budget it would be easy to understand and adjust from there. It would be an easy way to relate the goals and objectives to the money we spend in each program. Mayor Muckle agreed.

Councilmember Stolzmann stated it would be nice if when the Council looks at the proposed budget, staff has had a chance to update Key Indicators. She suggested taking out the measures that aren't annual measures; some are every four years.

Councilmember Stolzmann would like Directors to give Boards and Commissions a chance to give input at a meeting and finding a way for Council feedback to get back to the boards somehow. Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated staff should play a big role in that.

Councilmember Stolzmann would like a chance for Councilmembers to give some feedback about areas they hear about a lot.

Director Watson stated the schedule is for Boards and Commissions to give input on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in February and on the operating budget items in April. City Manager Balser stated staff will have to clearly state to Boards and Commissions when to give input and how to give it and also have a way to identify for them what will or will not be incorporated in the proposed budget. Councilmember Keany stated the staff liaisons to the Boards and Commissions have varying knowledge of the budget process; there needs to be a way so that each Board or Commission understands the process in the same way and what the possibilities are.

Councilmember Stolzmann would like a graph showing recurring expenditures over time added to the two-page design layout for each subprogram. She would like to see the

trending of the numbers five or ten years out. And, also include list the 5-year capital spending for the sub programs.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton would like an index in the budget document.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated the Finance Committee is going to look at the fiscal policies and that will have an effect on the budget and will need to be considered.

Mayor Pro Tem Lipton stated the budget process is very additive; we add a lot of items throughout the year. We need to let the City Manager's Office work with Departments to allow for reallocations in a way that is not a disincentive. Councilmember Maloney suggested giving Directors some options for potential reallocation without punishment. Rather than being additive, think about ways to reallocate.

City Manager Balser stated we need to think about better ways to do things with what we have.

Councilmember Leh stated we need to review the Key Indicators to know if we are reviewing the right things.

Mayor Muckle stated he views the 5-year staffing plan presentation as a key date. We need to ensure as a community we maintain what we have rather than build more, which may mean we need different staff. We have spent a lot on capital projects and we need to spend more on staff and maintenance in general.

City Manager Balser stated that based on this feedback staff will revise the schedule and bring it back to Council for discussion.

### **DISCUSSION/DIRECTION CITY COUNCIL SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE**

Members discussed possible options for a summer meeting schedule. Members decided to cancel the May 22 and July 24 Study Sessions to give a couple of small breaks between meetings in the summer.

### **ADJOURN**

Members adjourned at 8:25 pm.

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Robert P. Muckle, Mayor

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Meredyth Muth, City Clerk