

**CITY OF HARAHAH
MAYOR AND HARAHAH CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARING
April 20, 2015**

The Mayor and the Council met on the above date for a budget hearing.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor called the Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Tina Miceli, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Benton, Councilman Huete, Councilman Johnston, Councilman Wheeler, Municipal Clerk Nicole Lee, Fire Chief St. Cyr, Police Tim Walker.

Absent: City Attorney Anzelmo

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

None

BUDGET DISCUSSION:

POLICE DEPARTMENT – PROPOSED \$1,829,270.80

Chief Walker presented his proposed budget to the council. He introduced Capt. Adams, Sgt. Gleber and Secretary Tracy Whittle.

He said that he was only in office for half a year, but they have developed a budget from scratch. There are less full time policemen than 3 years ago. The reserves have 24 officers. An IT specialist has been hired. The fleet consists of 3 motorcycles; and 36 cars. Community service workers from Jefferson Parish Court were their only janitorial service. He has added a janitorial service to this year's budget because it is unsanitary to have unclean restrooms. Appearance Bond Fees have been modified to allow a \$15 appearance bond fee which is included in the Capitol Fund, and dedicated to the Police Dept. However, the dept. has not received this money. The purpose was to raise money to buy police cars. There is a ¼ cent sales tax that is included in the budget. The city has granted 13 holidays – one paid holiday costs \$7,300. Officers who work holidays can take time off rather than being paid holiday pay, but that leaves the shift a policeman short. The policemen would rather be paid. Starting pay is \$32,960, with payroll expenses it costs the city \$60,141.57. Officers pay into social security and most pay into the police pension fund also. State pay for police officers is \$6,000 after their first year. Comp time is 1-1/2 hour off for 1 hour of work. Comp time now on the books 1,346.25 hours and 8,782 hours annual leave. They would rather pay the officers holiday pay. The police department moved into the old post office in 1990. There is a termite problem and Terminix has been contacted for an estimate. No major maintenance has been done on their offices since then. There is one officer per car per shift. The chief is requesting 3 additional officers which would increase the proposed budget to \$1,944,121. Officers work a 7 day – 12 hour shift in a two week period. He is asking that the officers be paid for 84 hours straight pay during a two week period. His budget includes the 4 hours over the 80 hrs. and overtime for 13 holidays.

Councilman Huete asked about the proposed budget from the financial director which is different from Chief Walker's budget.

Chief Walker said he has included the holiday pay for 13 holidays and the additional 4 hours pay.

Councilman Huete asked about the \$15 appearance bond fee.

Chief Walker said that the fees were not been coded properly and they not properly credited.

Robert Hienz, finance director said that the appearance bond fees were recorded in the general fund. There was an error in 2013 – a \$60,000 error. It was really closer to \$20,000.

Councilman Baudier asked about the amount of the appearance bond fees.

Chief Walker said that the \$15 was the maximum allowed by the state.

Councilman Johnston asked why the projected fees are so low.

Mr. Hienz said this was because of the error and asked about the fees for the officer appearing in court.

Chief Walker said that this fee was to reimburse the officer for appearing in court.

Capt. Adams agreed that the appearance fee is actually charged to the violator and

paid to the officer.

Councilman Benton asked about the amount of officers and the salaries should reflect that.

Chief Walker said he attempted to make sense of the 2014 budget but the numbers kept changing from month to month.

Councilman Benton asked about the percentage being paid into the pension fund.

Chief Walker said it was approximately 31%.

Councilman Benton asked about hiring officers.

Mr. Hienz said that officers leaving were paid their comp time and that would impact the figures.

Councilman Huete asked about ways to creatively increase revenue.

Chief Walker said that state law sets the figures for fines. He said there are other state agencies that must be paid from the fines so a \$200 fine may only bring \$100 into the city coffers.

Mayor Miceli said they were addressing the problem but they don't want to bilk the citizens.

Mr. Hienz said that court fines are projected to be \$392,107.

Councilman Johnston asked about the \$60,000 from his dad to purchase police cars.

Chief Walker said that was not reflected in the budget because it is a capital expense.

Councilman Benton asked about the rate for Workman's Comp.

Chief Walker said the rate is 4.9%. He said the add-ons for employees were out of sight.

Councilman Johnston asked about the travel expenses increase.

Chief Walker said the increase was due to improper coding by the previous administration.

Councilman Huete asked about a millage for the police dept.

Chief Walker said the city has to wait 6 months between millage elections.

Councilman Baudier said that the prior chief had made an unfortunate statement that caused the millage the fail.

Chief Walker said that the statement was that the money from the millage would be "back doored" out of the police budget.

Councilman Baudier asked if insurance rates would be affected.

Chief Walker said no.

Mayor Miceli said that one of the city's biggest asset was the police department and the safety of the city.

Chief Walker said that Harahan is a country town on the south side of the lake but there is a major highway through the city which brings the criminal element into the city. He said if the Parish would add another section to Earhart that would help take the traffic out farther it would help.

Mayor Miceli said she had talked to the DOTD about that but they have no timeline for it.

Councilman Huete asked about the license plate recognition cameras.

Chief Walker said they are operated by Jefferson Parish but they notify us of any criminal activity.

FIRE DEPARTMENT – PROPOSED \$1,013,465.00.

Chief St. Cyr presented his budget and said that all salaries are lumped into one line item – but he will meet with Mr. Hines to break out salaries and expenses.

Maintenance is being delayed due to cost constraints. He said all 3 trucks went down at one time and he had to rely on 3rd District and Jefferson Parish for coverage. He has included 2 new firemen to keep our rating. We need to buy a fire truck – if not our rating is in trouble. If we don't spend at least \$20,000 on maintenance on the trucks in a year, the department has problems. He is down to 3 men per shift – with one shift with 4 people because one came back to work after surgery. He said that he was not the one who disbanded the volunteer fire company that the administration did not want the liability. He explained the \$15 fee that is on the tax bill. He said that training is done in-house – which includes 240 hrs. per year. The shortage has affected overtime and has led to moral problems. He will work with the Mayor to re-establish a volunteer crew.

Mayor Miceli said that they are working with the department to update the software to help the department run smoother and to increase the volunteer effort.

Chief St. Cyr said he has 10-12 volunteers that are already trained but they need equipment which the dept. needs to provide. He said the department is drastically undermanned. To fully man the department would mean that 24 additional employees need to be added. This would increase the budget to \$2,202,064. He is not acting as chief on sight – he is actively fighting the fire.

Mayor Miceli asked how many grants has the department received.

Chief St. Cyr said that have received 1 grant and been turned down for another.

Mayor Miceli said that Homeland Security might be able to help with a grant.

Chief St. Cyr said that they will only fund personnel for a certain length of time and then the city is responsible for their salaries.

He said they have operated on an “as need” basis. He compared budgets from 2013, 2014 and 2015 for the council.

Mr. Hienz said that \$26,000 is left on the lease payment for the latest truck.

Chief St. Cyr said that buying a truck had to wait until the millage renewed. He said that once ordered – it takes a year to come in. He said that we have no reserve unit right now. He is asking for permission to put out bids for a new truck. Depending on when the truck comes in – payments could be delayed 1-2 years. He explained the need for 24 additional firefighters and the law that requires it. He said a plan needs to be in place to work toward getting the department properly manned. He is hoping to get moral back to normal in the department. As to volunteers, he won't use untrained volunteers because of the liability to them and to the city. He explained the rating survey and the result volunteers and a new truck will have on the survey. We have a “moochable” agreement with parish. We mooch equipment and manpower from them to fight fires in Harahan.

Councilman Benton asked about salary adjustment.

Chief St. Cyr said that the system they are using is labor board approved. Overtime is built in their schedule but Mayor Mosca didn't want to call it overtime pay.

Councilman Benton asked about the Dept.'s workman's comp.

Rate and the insurance for volunteers.

Chief St. Cyr said that he did not have the figure for the dept.'s workman's comp and yes the city does need to provide insurance on volunteers. He estimate that for 12-14 volunteers it might cost \$2300 per year. Equipment for volunteers is a big thing also. He said that the moral is down because they have not had a raise in 6 years.

Councilman Wheeler asked about the current lease. There is \$43,000 that could be dropped or used for something else.

Chief St. Cyr said that if the city is in dire straits the money could be used – but the money could be left for a new truck because if it is taken away – the dept. may never see it again.

The next Budget hearing will be held on April 22, 2015 at 5:30 pm for all remaining departments.

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

None

ADJOURN

A motion was made by **Councilman Wheeler** and seconded by **Councilman Benton** to adjourn at 7:05 pm.

The **Mayor** called for a vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Chatelain, Huete, Landry, Murray

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Tina Miceli, Mayor

Nicole Lee, Municipal Clerk

A. The following matter involving pending litigation may be considered

(Court, Case, Number, Parties):

1. Phillip Canella vs. Arch Ins. Co., City of Harahan, Todd A. St. Cyr, and Allstate Ins. Co.; 24th JDC, Case 744-961, Div. "I".

2. Suzanne K. Scalise vs. City of Harahan LA, Anne Gordon, Louise Slayden, Ronald Gordon, Gail Gordon; 24th JDC, Case 744-986, Div. "O".

B. The following matter involving prospective litigation for which formal written demand has been made may be considered.

C. The following matters involving discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of:

Name: