

**CITY OF HARAHAH
6437 JEFFERSON HIGHWAY, HARAHAH, LOUISIANA
MAYOR AND HARAHAH CITY COUNCIL
December 30, 2015**

The Mayor and the Council met on the above date for the special council meeting at 2:00 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Clerk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor called the Meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Miceli, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Benton, Councilman Huete, Councilman Johnston, Councilman Wheeler, Municipal Clerk represented by Judy Johnson, Fire Chief Todd St. Cyr, Police Chief Tim Walker.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS - None

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Miceli spoke directly to the citizens about what they deserve from their elected officials when we make decisions on your behalf. We must all remember that our actions impact the safety and welfare of the citizens. We must spend our tax dollars wisely and use limited resources wisely. We risk not providing essential services. We know you deserve the essential services such as fire & police protection and the use of the sewer system & your facilities during a simple rain. The basis of all our decisions must be based on facts backed up with data from professionals known to you and whom you and I can hold accountable. Prior to coming to the meeting I received an email from Councilman Huete asking whether Mr. Wheat will be in attendance today. I went over in detail the minutes of the previous meeting where Mr. Wheat made it very clear that if he was to be here we are paying for his time and he could not speak to our former CFO's budget because it wasn't his budget and he would be more ready to speak to the 2016 and 2015 amended budget in January or February. In the latter part of the meeting Councilman Johnston stated that what they needed was the line items in the proper format – it was provided but not in a proper format. She said that she went through messages and emails for about 4 hours to determine what has transpired about budgets. She stated that as of Jan. 2015 – no operating budget was in place although required by state law. Costly time and research were charged in 2015 which should have been accounted for in 2014 to develop a 2015 budget. Important man hours were spent creating that budget. In February, 2015 – the council got the hard close out figures for December, 2014. All monies were accounted for. On March 13, 2015 we provided them with Jan. 2015 close out financials. On April 15, 2015 the council was provided with the 2015 proposed budget but the adoption was delayed. On June 3, 2015 they were presented with March, 2015 close out financials. In June, 2015 the Legislative Audit was in progress and identified significant problems in payroll and health insurance. In June, 2015 the employee charged with payroll and

health insurance resigned and no one had been cross trained to do those vital functions. The CFO then used precious time & resources to correct the many payroll and health insurance problems. This delayed the gathering of the financial information, which he informed the council by email. The CFO also performed the day to day activities to make sure the lapsing health insurance didn't hurt our employees and to make sure the payroll was met for the employees. He continued these day to day duties until an employee was hired and trained. On June 23, 2015 the council was presented with April close out financials. On June 24, 2015 the council approved the 2015 budget. In August, 2015 the CFO sent out an email explaining the delay in the financials due to personnel changes and the fact that close out numbers take at least a month to provide after the close of the month. On Sept. 9, 2015, the council received closed out figures through July, 2015 and was informed the 2015 budget required amending. Budget amendments were provided in November along with the 2016 budget. On Nov. 11 the council was provided with close out financials thru September. After that meeting the CFO resigned and in Dec. Carr, Rigs and Ingram was brought in to help with the budget which had strict deadlines. I am thankful for Ms. Johnson, who is volunteering as the City Clerk during this transition. Her normal role is doing the minutes which is the City Clerk's responsibility. She has been doing the minutes for years. Now in this volunteer role, Ms. Johnson is trying to meet the city clerk's duties and cope with the many special meetings that we have had in this year. The Mayor clarified this is not everything that has happened but we have provided the budget information they need and they understand the difficulty with the transition.

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Former Mayor Vinny Mosca, Stoneleigh Dr. said he was supporting Gilbert Buras, the Mayor's nominee for City Attorney – I've known him over 30 years. He's a very intelligent, tenacious, sensitive person. He is user friendly. Mr. Mosca met with him for over 2 hours recently and asked how he came to be nominated. Mr. Buras said he did pilates with Sue Benton. He is knowledgeable of the law and worked well with the council and Mayor of New Orleans. Mr. Mosca said he got beat up pretty bad as Mayor. When I was mayor and the city got sued I let the insurance companies handle the lawyers – not the city attorney. He said maybe Mr. Buras could be hired on a probationary period and evaluated after a few months. He won't embarrass the council or the mayor, fire or police chief. If there are issues in his background that causes concern, hire temporarily and then investigate his background. He said Mac Dickinson didn't like government and asked what he could do for the city. Mr. Mosca said he asked what the government could do for the city. Mr. Dickinson got him an appointment with the governor who sent him to a department that gave him a \$4 million loan with 1% interest and a deferred payment. He supports Gilbert Buras. He hopes this year will be better than last year. He said the council has all different personalities, but they and the Mayor are all here for the city. He said the state has a \$380 million deficit. Mayor Miceli personally thanked him for speaking up for Mr. Buras – by doing that you spoke up for the city and it proves that your heart is with the city.

Mr. Mosca said he is just a citizen now and he wants people to know that there is no crime in Harahan because our citizens do not commit crime and the police dept. keeps the riff raff out. Councilman Benton said that to clarify what Mr. Mosca said. She went to an executive session with the Mayor and met Mr. Buras and recognized him and after talking realized they were both in the same yoga class.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the December 15, 2015 Special Meeting was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Huete.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION APPROVED.

A Motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2016 Special Meeting was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Wheeler.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION APPROVED.

A Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the December 17, 2015 Regular Council Meeting was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Huete.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION APPROVED.

A Motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2015 Regular Council Meeting was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Huete.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION APPROVED.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

RESOLUTIONS - None

ORDINANCES FOR APPROVAL (Public Hearing)

The following Ordinance was introduced by Councilman Benton and seconded by Councilman Johnston.

1. An Ordinance adopting the annual Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the Fiscal Year, ending December 31, 2016 for the City of Harahan, Louisiana.

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

No one spoke

The Mayor closed the public hearing.

Council Discussion:

Councilman Wheeler said she would like to go line for line on Schedule 1 – the line items.

Mayor Miceli said these 3 budget ordinances were proposed by Mr. Robert Heinz and the line item budget was presented by Mr. Heinz but not in the proper form. Ms. Johnson and I transcribed the numbers from Mr. Heinz's report to the required form.

Councilman Huete said she would start with the travel line item 40200 in 2015 going to \$5,000 where in 2015 it was budgeted for \$1,000. If anyone has thoughts on that. In addition, line item no. 4600 Accounting Maintenance Contract is listed as \$24,283.

Mayor Miceli asked which line item?

Councilman Huete asked if the \$24,283 was the amount to pay the new accounting firm CRI.

Mayor Miceli said again she was not an accountant to refer to the in-depth parts of this. I don't want to misspeak or misrepresent what exactly that refers to.

Councilman Wheeler there's quite a few line items that I have that I guess we can go line for line like one of the concerns for instance is the travel expense. You know the council has the right to amend and say if we are going to give it \$2,000 or whatever it is that we decide to do. I think we'd like to go line for line, not every single line, but I think the ones people have concerns about and uhm, I guess make an amendment to the budget.

Councilman Huete said we could tie back the two travel line items. In Line item 40200 travel in Non-Departmental is \$5,000 and then you go down to the next cell area - General Governmental Line item 40200 and there's another line item for travel there as well for \$5,015. So is the proposed travel \$10,015? Or

Mayor Miceli said she will speak to this very frankly. She will not present herself as an accountant nor does she have the underlying subcategories that address this with her at the meeting.

Councilman Huete said help me Mayor help me, then if you don't know and you are the Mayor.

Mayor Miceli said I'm not saying that I don't know, but I don't want to speak as an accountant to officially state...

Councilman Huete interrupted and said I'm not asking for you to speak as an Accountant, there are two line items that add up to \$10,015. Is that what you are requesting - \$10,000 for travel?

Mayor Miceli said this is what I said – I took Robert's numbers and transcribed them into this form period. The total travel expenses – we took a reflection of what was utilized last year. Travel expenses was an unforeseen expense - having to send people to Texas for training and to fix our financial software system and get it where it needed to be in a timely manner and

also there was a storm that created the position of them having to wait causing extra hotel expenses.

Councilman Huete interrupted and said we understand what happened – you have \$6,000 in training and education so that would be training but the travel is \$10,015.

Mayor Miceli said the travel to her understanding was supposed to be a total of \$6,000.

Councilman Benton said right, that's what we had.

Councilman Huete said correct. So are we going by this schedule or that schedule?

Councilman Benton said that was Mr. Heinz' number.

Councilman Wheeler asked do we go line for line. It seems to me there are some lines that are in question compared to what was previous in years and what is now and we know there is nobody here to answer the questions. We understand that. For instance if we go back to the Non-Departmental Travel Line 40200 which is \$5,000. I guess as long as we are going to be here. I think we need to – do we say that we are making a motion to amend that line and agree to what is being given or do we go down line for line uhm...

Councilman Huete interrupted and said my concern, Councilman Wheeler is that we do have questions and because Mr. Don Wheat gave us something, and we have the line items that Ms. Judy put into a line item format from Mr. Heinz who is no longer with the city and the Mayor doesn't want to speak to any accounting questions. I mean how do we even, how do we even vote for it when we approve if there's no one to answer the questions.

Mayor Miceli said we have had numerous...

Councilman Huete interrupted and said we have double, we have this one from Mr. Wheat who's not here and we have the one from Mr. Heinz who is no longer here.

Mayor Miceli said let me reiterate, we have had numerous budget hearings...

Councilman Huete again interrupted and said maybe we have, but today's the day to vote on it and it's not...

Mayor Miceli said I just want to finish my thought, we had numerous budget meetings where we went through it ad nauseam with Robert Heinz line by line – these same line items all we did was transcribe those numbers into the form period. The accounting maintenance contract, I believe that is for our audit contract that we've applied in the past, that we will be applying forward, but not having the sub-pieces that explains everything, every line item, I want to make sure I don't misrepresent anything. At the last city council meeting, we stated that Mr. Wheat was asked if he was needed, when he was asked to comment on the 2016 budget, he stated, I quote – I

don't have a say because I didn't prepare it, Mr. Heinz prepared it. There's a good deal of work on my part to get to a decent budget – something that everyone can agree on. He also stated that he would not have anything ready for 2016 until January or February. And he included the amended budget for 2015 also that he required the time to investigate the numbers. At the end of the meeting it was questioned whether Mr. Wheat was needed for any additional meetings after he made it clear that he needed time to prepare a budget and Mr. Johnston replied not necessarily that Mr. Wheat needed to be present, we (the council) can look at the numbers, we can build it ourselves, we don't necessarily need him. So no one asked for Mr. Wheat to be here...

Councilman Johnston interrupted and said his suggestion was if you want to change to just change and if we have to adjust the numbers later we can adjust numbers later.

Councilman Wheeler replied that's kind of what I'd like to do.

Councilman Baudier asked if they could go in and add a new line item on each department of what we don't believe – a surplus line item.

Councilman Wheeler said well that's kind of what I wanted to do. There are a few line items I felt, in my opinion, were over budgeted that I would like to reduce down, take the total of the surplus and create a new line item called 2016 revenue surplus and just put it somewhere until we can get a better understanding of actually what these items are and the definition are for instance Accounting Maintenance Contract. Mayor you mentioned something about auditing but you drop down 5 lines and there's \$28,000 for auditing.

Mayor Miceli said she was sorry, she had looked at the wrong number. That's why I don't want to do this. We've gone through the line items ad nauseam with Robert.

Councilman Wheeler said then we can go through them again piece by piece.

Mayor Miceli continued but again I'll refer to my opening remarks. We have paid professionals to do this once. Now we are paying professionals to do it again.

Councilman Huete said she did not know what that means.

Mayor Miceli said we paid a CFO to prepare a budget with multiple budget hearings. Then it was asked at the last meeting for Mr. Wheat to develop the 2016 budget and amended 2015.

Councilman Huete said no, actually that was his recommendation at the meeting with Councilman Wheeler and Mr. Wheat, he said that the Incode financial software system numbers did not match the run that Robert Heinz provided and therefore, he did not feel comfortable with any of the numbers because they didn't match. Therefore, he needed time to do his due diligence. It wasn't we who requested, he needed to do that to do the job we hired him to do.

Mayor Miceli replied when asked from the....

Councilman Johnston interrupted and said we can beat this until... we have to try and move on and get this thing done, and the problem is that we have a CFO that left us right in the middle of budget hearings, so we have to move forward with or without him.

Mayor Miceli said she wanted to clarify that this budget was built with each department, with multiple meetings and that it is the Mayor with the CFO who present the budget.

Councilman Wheeler said it is also for the council to approve it.

Councilman Johnston said correct.

Mayor Miceli said it's a proposed budget and then what happens is the council has all due diligence, know the numbers and then to amend the budget.

Councilman Wheeler asked why can't we amend it now before we adopt it.

Councilman Johnston said we can.

Councilman Wheeler said so the first line item is travel expense under the non-departmental is \$5,000...

Councilman Baudier interrupted and asked if we are going to go departmental and add a surplus line item in each...

Councilman Wheeler interrupted and said that's what I kind of just made changes on my own for certain line items that I had questions about that I thought were – had excellerated in the past years, for instance travel – non-departmental...

Mayor Miceli suggested that we do this one item at a time so we can pass a motion – will that do?

Councilman Wheeler said the question is do we adopt and amend or I say we go through the lines and amend...

Councilman Johnston said amend and adopt.

Councilman Wheeler said she would like to do a running total of the surplus - whoever – doesn't matter and create a new line item under revenue called 2016 surplus and that time, once we get a better understanding of these numbers, then we can always go back and take that surplus and move it accordingly and put it in certain departments.

Councilman Huete said she will go ahead and add it up for you.

Councilman Wheeler continued.. and this is up for discussion totally I'm not just... we can agree on the amount – these are figures I kind of put in my head like the travel expense is \$5,000, I think it should be \$1,000 that's what's it's been for the last 3 years...

Councilman Baudier said Councilman Wheeler let's start from the top and work our way number by number on the ones you have an issue with, so we can uh...

Councilman Wheeler interrupted and said it's open to anyone to, so if there are other lines. She started with Non-Departmental – Travel No. 40200 – \$5,000 I think it should be \$1,000. We talked about the bank service charges, I know Robert had mentioned it had something to do with the direct deposit, uhm I still think somebody needs to address that with the bank and maybe see if we can reduce that down. I'm not asking for that line to be amended but I think that's something that still needs to be brought up.

Councilman Baudier said he's asked for that the entire year.

Councilman Wheeler said that's fine. The Accounting Maintenance Contract...

Councilman Baudier interrupted and asked for the line item.

Councilman Wheeler said I'm sorry it's Item 40600 the \$24,283, uhm, my understanding is that it was a new line item that was created.

Councilman Huete interrupted and said Accounting Service the \$48,000 which is the line item we paid Robert out of ...

Councilman Wheeler interrupted and said she did not understand what accounting contracts need to be maintained. Uhm, I personally feel that should be zero and that whole amount should be moved to the surplus line until we have a better understanding of what that money is for. Uhm, the legal fees for the Council that's \$4,000 a year – we have engaged Mr. Robert Garrity who is to be our legal counsel – \$4,000 a year is not going to cover his salary, so I left a question mark there and I'm open for anybody's suggestions and I think that amount needs to increase.

Councilman Baudier asked what she thought it needs to be increased by.

Councilman Wheeler replied – at least double.

Councilman Huete said his letter said \$175 an hour.

Mayor Miceli said we usually pay the city attorney \$2,500 a month and let me reiterate Mr. Garrity has not been hired – the only person who can enter into contracts is the Mayor and no one can represent this city without being hired and contracted.

Councilman Baudier said he was hired to represent the council.

Mayor Miceli said that in Councilman Baudier's email you put that he is representing the council on a city issue, so no that's not what and also he can only be hired and contracted with the approval of the Mayor and the signature of the Mayor.

Councilman Baudier said he thinks they will get a legal opinion on it. He said the reason why I've asked the city council to engage Mr. Garrity is an issue to do with a business in the city of Harahan and in order to help this guy's business grow and create more of a commercial tax base, uhm we've been working with him on distance of a liquor law of which he is a few feet short of so he can serve liquor in the back of his room. So this Mayor has stopped me literally at almost every turn to try to hurt this man's business and uh, this is not a personal venture on myself...

Mayor Miceli stopped him saying this is a personal point of privilege.

Councilman Baudier said it's not personal to him.

Mayor Miceli said it is personal to her. She told him not to say her intentions when he does not know her intentions. I have not tried to impede anyone's business, we are promoting business, we are having a city attorney being nominated and voted on on January 21, then we'll be able to address this issue should this council see fit to approve his nomination. That is the appropriate person to address this issue. That is representing the city with a city issue. I would just caution that council members not enter into negotiations, contract negotiations individually with contractors or professional services or anything. You can not do that negotiation.

Councilman Benton said it seems to her, in all due respect, that you are trying to circumvent that we don't have a city attorney and put in place of a city attorney...

Councilman Baudier interrupted and said absolutely not.

Councilman Benton continued – don't you think this is a matter for a city attorney.

Councilman Baudier said I think it's a matter for an attorney.

Mayor Miceli said I think we need to get back to only dealing with the budget. I think that's a separate issue that we should discuss and I think you are very welcome to start attending our weekly meetings, I'd love to have you and discuss these issues. I'd like to pull the case law, the AG opinions, uhm, the Lawrason Act, etc. everything that applies to these issues, and also, hopefully, we can have our city attorney to address these issues.

Council Huete asked what line item were we on.

Councilman Wheeler said we were on legal fees (council) and we'll come back to that line item. Uhm legal fees and lawsuits item no. 40820 has been increased to \$50,000. In the past year it was \$39,750.

Councilman Huete said but we budget that just in case we need to pay the premium for a lawsuit.

Councilman Wheeler said - so I say maybe we budget what it was before and if it comes a time to increase it, we can amend it at that time.

Councilman Johnston questioned whether the figure was \$39,750.

Councilman Wheeler said it was and again this was open to discussion with everybody.

Councilman Benton asked what number was that line item.

Councilman Wheeler said it was No 40820, Legal Fees and Lawsuits. Uhm, the city attorney is up to \$40,000 and in previous years it was right about \$25,000 cause its \$2,250 a month give or take. I think that should go back to \$25,000 and move that \$15,000 to surplus.

Mayor Miceli asked if Councilman Wheeler knew how long it had been at \$25,000.

Councilman Wheeler said she only had runs to 2013.

Mayor Miceli asked if she know what the standard hourly rate for an attorney is?

Councilman Wheeler said no – do you?

Mayor Miceli said there are different levels depending on levels of expertise just as there is for accounting - \$95 for a junior partner and \$125 for senior.

Councilman Wheeler well we can address that when a city attorney is hired. If you hire a city attorney and you say this is all the city can pay that should be disclosed in the initially on his hire.

Mayor Miceli said that is – I'm just going to tell you, you have to pay professionals a decent wage in order to get...

Councilman Huete interrupted to ask how were we able to get David Courcelle for 17 years.

Mayor Miceli said that if in 17 years he didn't get a pay raise that was remiss on the prior administration's part for not increasing his pay.

Mixed conversations between the councilmen.

Mayor Miceli said - and I will also tell you that if you divide, if you just want to use the low number of \$125 an hour, which is a low rate - \$40,000 I think you're talking about 6.4 hours per week.

Councilman Johnston said we can't give our employees a raise and we are talking about increasing the city attorney.

Councilman Wheeler said I think it has to go back to the original amount - \$25,000.

Councilman Huete agreed.

Councilman Wheeler went on to the next line 40830 Council Meeting Transcription and Video and Mayor I know we had talked about this and it appears that maybe the services for our televised council meetings, the amount has increased, I would think until we know exactly what that amount is and see the contract from whatever service will provide that service to us, I think that should be zero. She continued is that just video or does that include – I notice that remark from Ms. Judy – she asked does that include your salary.

Judy Johnson replied – I’m sure it does.

Mayor Miceli said no it does not, I think include your salary as transcriptionist is paid from another line.

Councilman Huete asked do we project that we have a Cox Cable Contract in place for 2016.

Mayor Miceli said they no longer provide the service.

Councilman Huete asked where the \$9,000 comes from – whose contract.

Mayor Miceli said she had called multiple facilities and agencies. It is a standard average of \$600 per council meeting.

Councilman Wheeler said that until we know exactly what the cost is then maybe we can get several estimates from different providers and I think that should be zero and the \$9,000 shifted to the surplus.

Councilman Huete asked what did everyone agree on about going back to the city attorney - \$25,000?

Councilman Wheeler said she had \$25,000 marked.

Councilman Benton asked when did it increase to \$40,000?

Councilman Wheeler said it was the proposed amount for 2016.

Mayor Miceli asked if Councilman Wheeler had increased any of her rates since you’re in business. Are you still charging the same rate you did 15 years ago?

Councilman Wheeler said that actually Mayor I’ve only owned my business for approximately 6 years and the only costs that I increased were actual hard costs. My fees have not increased.

Mayor Miceli said what I’m getting at, is a loaf of bread over 15 years has increased. The cost to do business has increased.

Councilman Wheeler interrupted asking is the Mayor was speaking about the city attorney’s salary. Mayor Miceli answered yes. Councilman Wheeler then proceeded to say that her suggestion would be if you hire a city attorney, this is the annual salary and the increase can be given to other employees in different departments. If you don’t want the pay – then don’t take the job – somebody else will. I’m sorry I think that should be made up front when somebody applies or is nominated for the

position and you get approved this is what the annual pay is and let that person decide if they want to take the job or not.

Councilman Huete said that Mr. London and Mr. Anzelmo both accepted that rate.

Councilman Johnston agreed.

Councilman Huete said they didn't turn their noses up at it.

Mayor Miceli said this is a discussion that we can have further time and why don't we proceed with your line items.

Councilman Wheeler continued with Item 41010 which was addressed with Robert which is \$48,000 – but I did not get a full explanation and we have Miscellaneous at \$10,000 and it doesn't even have a line item or number I should say.

Councilman Huete asked what is that for?

Councilman Wheeler said that's the problem we never got an answer so I feel that should be zero and that should go to the surplus.

Councilman Huete asked the Mayor if she knew what it was for.

Mayor Miceli said they were moving through their budget now – not her.

Councilman Wheeler said these are just suggestions. That's all she found in non-departmental and going to General Government – Administration she is reiterating what Councilman Huete had mentioned the travel expenses line item 40200 are \$5,015, I suggest \$1,500 with the \$3,515 going to the surplus. For training and education...

Mayor Miceli and Councilmen Benton said they were lost – and asked what line item.

Councilman Wheeler repeated 40200 under General Government Administration, uhm travel expenses – the \$5,015 in previous years it was \$1,000, uhm I think \$1,500 - again these are just suggestions and the overage moved to the surplus.

Councilman Baudier asked what was the surplus.

Councilman Wheeler said \$3,515. She continued with Training & Education line item No 40300 is \$6,000 – I think \$2,500.

Councilman Huete asked what was it in the previous years.

Councilman Wheeler – Training expenses in 2013 were \$600 with \$981 in 2014 – we budgeted \$1,000 in 2015 and she is asking for \$6,000 in 2016.

Councilman Huete asked if it was proposed to bring it back down to \$1,000?

Councilman Baudier replied no \$2,500.

Councilman Wheeler said again we could do \$1,000 or then again \$2,000 – again this was just suggestions that I was going through.

Councilman Huete said she would put the surplus as \$4,000.

Councilman Wheeler said the only question I had and I know Robert had provided this to us, but since then we've hired another person here in city hall and another employee received a raise – the salary line no. 49000 is \$161,511 I guess I will get with Don to provide us a breakdown and Salaries – Other Subcontractors line item 49100 - \$15,000 – why would we need to hire a subcontractor for city hall. Mayor do you know what that's for?

Mayor Miceli said we have gone through these line items with Robert ad nauseam...

Councilman Huete interrupted and said if we went through your department ad nauseam, and you can't tell us what the \$15,000 is for – it's your department.

Mayor Miceli responded that she didn't want to challenge or question the expertise that has gone into building this or the changes.

Councilman Huete said she didn't think anyone is challenging anyone's expertise. This is your department and it has about 20 line items and you can't tell us what the \$15,000 is for. If I asked you what a line item was in your department certainly you would know it backwards and forwards right – it's your department – you live and breathe it every day.

Mayor Miceli said I would have had Robert here and I would have pulled all the data if I thought you were going to go through this line item by line item again. I do not want to pretend to speak by memory or be misquoted on.

Councilman Wheeler interrupted and said that the \$15,000 would go to zero and that money would go to the surplus until we get a better understanding of what a sub-contractor is. That's was all in general government administration for me and my only other concern Chief Walker was line item no. 40300 training & education of \$3,500. I think I remember speaking with you and Ms. Whittle. Aren't your officers required to attend so many hours of continuing education.

Chief Walker said most of the training and education is done in-house.

Councilman Wheeler asked if he ever had to farm out the continuing ed to maintain their....

Chief Walker said normally not, but we have two new officers coming on.

Councilman Wheeler said and I believe that line item needs to be increased because \$3,500 does not seem enough.

Mayor Miceli said this was negotiated between Robert and Chief Walker.

Councilman Wheeler said I know Robert said he had spoken to you and that was something you had submitted. I'm not challenging your submission but I thought it was a little low for the number of police officers you have – but if you say a lot of it is in-house – you would know.

Chief Walker said they have 20 hours in-house training and the 2 new officers will be going to the academy...

Councilman Wheeler interrupted and asked if the \$3,500 would cover that expense.

Chief Walker said it would.

Councilman Baudier asked what did she want to move the Training & Education up to.

Councilman Wheeler said she was under the impression that Chief Walker had to ... but he said that it was sufficient. She did not know that it was done in-house.

Councilman Huete asked about the Recreation Dept. field maintenance.

Councilman Wheeler said Robert had met with Stu but they never got a definitive answer about it. The line item no. is 45300 Field & Maintenance – it drastically went up from \$24,000...

Mayor Miceli asked for the line item again.

Councilman Wheeler said it was in Recreation and repeated the line item. She said it drastically went up to....

Councilman Huete interrupted saying it was \$8,000 in 2013; \$6,000 in 2014; \$30,000 in 2015 and projecting almost \$30,000 in 2016.

Councilman Wheeler said she doesn't believe we ever got a definitive answer as to why it increased so dramatically.

Councilman Johnston said don't quote me 100% on this but I think when we first went over this in June or whenever it was, I think it was said that certain things were under the wrong line item and he moved them into this line item. Like I said don't quote me 100% on that.

Councilman Huete further postulated that some items were put in the wrong categories and had to be moved.

Councilman Johnston said that was right.

Councilman Wheeler then asked if he just lumped into field maintenance.

Councilman Johnston said that's the impression he got.

Councilman Wheeler said okay and that she remembered him saying that. Other than that those seem to be the ones that called out to her. She asked Councilman Huete for the total.

Councilman Huete added the totals with Councilman Baudier.

The clerk asked for a motion to amend the line items by department.

A motion to amend Schedule 1 - Non-Departmental Line Items for travel No. 40200 from \$5,000 to \$1,000; Line item for Accounting Maintenance Contracts No. 40600 from \$23,283 to -0-; Line item Legal Fees & Law Suits No. 40810 from \$50,000 to \$39,750; Line Item City Attorney No. 40625 from \$40,000 to \$25,000; Line Item Council Meeting – Trans/V No. 40830 from \$9,000 to -0-; and Line Item Misc. Exp. From \$10,000 to -0- was offered by Councilman Huete and seconded by Councilman Wheeler.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: Benton

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

A motion to amend Schedule 1 – General Government – Administration Line Item Travel No. 40200 from \$5,015 to \$1,500; Line Item Training & Education No. 40300 from \$6,000 to \$2,000 and Line Item Salaries – Other/Subcontractor No. 49100 from \$15,000 to -0- was offered by Councilman Wheeler and seconded by Councilman Baudier.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: Benton

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

Councilman Johnston questioned the ordinance itself under Non-Departmental total is 688,934 and Schedule 1 has a total of \$1,092,255.

The clerk said it has to do with the transfers.

Councilman Huete said the ordinance doesn't match the schedule and asked if they feel comfortable voting today.

Councilman Johnston said we have to figure out how to get past that first part and see how it adds up.

Councilman Wheeler explained what she thought the explanation was. The transfers had been added into the Schedule.

A motion to adopt the budget was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Baudier.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: Benton

ABSENT: None

ORDINANCE PASSES

The following Ordinance was Introduced by Councilman Benton and seconded by Councilman Johnston.

2. An Ordinance adopting the annual Budget for the Sales Tax Fund for the City of Harahan, Louisiana for the Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2016.

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing.

No one spoke.

The Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Council Discussion:

The voted on the motion was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

Councilman Johnston asked about the line item for the surplus.

A motion to amend the agenda to refer back to Ordinance 1 from Councilman Baudier and seconded by Councilman Wheeler.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

Councilman Wheeler said she came up with an approximate surplus in Non-Departmental of \$63,533 and in General Government-Administration \$22,515 which would make the grand total of \$94,798.

The clerk asked for the department totals again.

Councilman Wheeler repeated the numbers.

Councilman Wheeler said she would like to create a line item under revenue called 2016 surplus revenue.

Councilman Johnston said that would be until we find out more information on this other stuff.

A motion by Councilman Wheeler to change the line items and create a revenue line item seconded by Councilman Johnston.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

The following Ordinance was introduced by Councilman Baudier and seconded by Councilman Johnston.

3. An Ordinance adopting the Annual Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the Sewerage Department for the Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2016 for the City of Harahan, Louisiana.

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing.

No one spoke.

The Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Council Discussion:

Councilman Huete asked if there was any follow up – if there was I don't remember. We had asked at the last council meeting that the revenues were less than the expenditures – if that was correct and if someone could explain that to us.

Mayor Miceli said here again she had talked to Councilman Wheeler and it was brought to my attention last night that this question had come up...

Councilman Huete interrupted and said we talked about it at the last council meeting.

Mayor Miceli agreed right – that’s why we have also executive working sessions so we can hammer out these issues and address them and this was not addressed the moment of or the night before.

Councilman Huete said it was discussed at the last meeting.

Mayor Miceli said no one came to the executive working session to discuss this.

Councilman Huete said she was out of town with her family – she apologized for not making the meeting.

Councilman Wheeler said it was brought up at the December 17th council meeting and I specifically asked ...

Mayor Miceli said we had a conversation.

Councilman Wheeler said we did and I spoke to some councilmen and told them I would reach out to Robert, but it got away from me, I didn’t get a chance to ask him.

Councilman Huete asked so do we know the answer.

Mayor Miceli said she did not want to speak in accounting terms. It is a...

Councilman Wheeler interjected that it had something to do with depreciation.

Mayor Miceli continued it is because the depreciation is considered and it mimics what was adopted in July, 2015 because we are utilizing accounting principles and put in depreciation as a non-cash asset.

Councilman Wheeler said you could see the concerns of the other councilmen because as you and I had spoke before we are bringing forth an ordinance that, you know, who’s to say the Legislative Auditor doesn’t get a hold of this and say that you got \$875 in revenues and \$896 in expenditures.

Mayor Miceli said that all budgets were put forth to the legislative auditor for their consult. Every ordinance, every budget amendment, everything – all financials, all runs were sent.

Councilman Huete said she doesn’t feel comfortable approving it with a deficit. And I guess when Mr. Don Wheat comes to the next meeting in January, he can better explain the depreciation expense of \$113,000.

Councilman Johnston said we did this last year and if by chance Mr. Wheat finds an issue we can always come back and amend it.

With no further discussion, Mayor Miceli called for the vote, it was as follows:

Councilman Huete said she did not want to defer but I don't support it.

YEAS: Benton, Johnston

NAYS: Baudier, Huete, Wheeler

ABSENT: None

ORDINANCE FAILS

ADDRESS COUNCIL - NONE

REPORTS

Police Chief Walker no report.

Fire Chief St. Cyr no report.

Councilman Baudier apologized to the Mayor for his commentary. He did not mean to pick out the Mayor. He is a little frustrated on trying to help this business and looking for alternate ways to try to get him up and going just to try help him create and promote business here and he just wanted to apologize to the Mayor for the remarks directed at her. I just feel like I'm being turned back at every front and I feel like it's personal on me sometimes. That's all I wanted to say.

Councilman Johnston - no report.

Councilman Huete - no report.

Councilman Wheeler - no report

Councilman Benton said she just wanted to point out one thing. The council chose to strip the budgets that most directly affect the Mayor's day to day operations of \$100,000 - not take it away from her but give themselves more control over it which speaks to what Mr. Wheat implied that his contention was that the council intended to use the budget to hamstring this administration and that's why I voted against those amendments and that's what it looks like to me.

Councilman Huete retorted well, that's interesting that you can make that observation since you've only met with me once for 30 minutes and we've never worked together. That's an interesting observation.

Councilman Benton this is what I gathered from what Mr. Wheat said at the meeting. Our budget ordinance which required line item form is not clear in terms of specifically delineating the level of detail required for the line item budget. According to Mr. Wheat there are many levels of detail that could be adopted. Also according to Mr. Wheat - New Orleans and Jefferson Parish do not adopt a budget at the level of detail that this council is requiring because it would be an exercise in futility based on the number of amendments and special meetings that would be required to stay in compliance and that it hampers the administration, which is what I believe is the true intent of that ordinance and this council in approving this ordinance. We are requiring a level of detail that is not properly provided for in the ordinance. He also explained that adoption of amendments for the previous year's budget are not necessary in order to prepare a budget for the coming year. The year is never closed out prior to January or February so the budget for the coming year which is required in November per Mr. Johnston's other ordinance is always based on the projected numbers for that year based on what was actually spent at that point. So I don't know how he came to that conclusion but he did and I think he's right.

Councilman Huete said well, Sue I have to make one comment – maybe we can help Mr. Wheat and you to understand that this is not Jefferson Parish this is the city of Harahan.

Councilman Benton – said exactly – we’re small and have less revenue.

Mayor Miceli made her report. I worked with professionals – a CPA – an tough accomplishment to become a CPA; with Chief Walker and Chief St. Cyr to come up with a budget. The local government budget act requires the Mayor to present a budget but it should not be amended to such an extent that it no longer resembles what was advertised. It also can not be amended to such an extent that it makes it impossible to run a government or the day to day operations. I would make it clear that this council acted without accountant suggestions or approval, this puts at risk day to day operations to our city. These are independent acts not supported by the professionals the citizens deserve. When we can’t even agree that a line item for an attorney to support the city should be increased after 16 years – it’s not a good day for Harahan.

You can’t hire professionals and pay them basically nothing.

Council Huete interrupted but Mayor Miceli said this is her report.

She continued you can’t hire professionals and pay them basically nothing and expect to attract the quality input or advice that you deserve. This is a dangerous precedent on this council. I will be sending my recommendations, my concerns to the legislative auditor and to the AG. What transpired here today is bad for the city of Harahan. I purposely did not want to speak to specific line items. I do not want to pretend to be an accountant. We were here for the vote on this. It had been gone over. We do have weekly executive sessions so that we can pound out the line items that were concerning the council. It is going to be a new year and we all have to face the ramifications of the vote that has transpired. The health, safety and welfare of our citizens will not be compromised in spite of the poor actions or poor votes that sometimes occur. I’d like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and I’d like to repeat to the former Mayor thank you for speaking up on Mr. Buras’ behalf. It is not easy for candidates and professionals to come into some situations where there is so much acrimony. I am praying that that acrimony will get better as we work together to resolve the problems that are before us. So Happy New Year to everyone.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

A motion was offered by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Baudier to adjourn at 3:32 pm.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

LAWSUITS

A. The following matter involving pending litigation may be considered:

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. **Susanne K. Scalise vs. City of Harahan, LA, Anne Gordon, Louise Slayden, Ronald Gordon, Gail Gordon; 24th JDC, Case 744-986, Div. "O".**
3. **City of Harahan, et al, v. BP Exploration & Production, Inc., et al, U.S.D.C., Eastern District of Louisiana, No. 2:13-cv-01397.**

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

Judy Johnson, Acting Clerk

Tina Miceli, Mayor