

**CITY OF HARAHAH  
6437 JEFFERSON HIGHWAY, HARAHAH, LOUISIANA  
MAYOR AND HARAHAH CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING/BUDGET HEARING  
November 4, 2013**

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 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Provino Mosca, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Chatelain, Councilman Huete, Councilman Landry, Councilman Murray, Municipal Clerk Nicole Lee, Fire Chief St. Cyr, Police Chief Lorenzo.

**ADDRESS THE COUNCIL**

Mae Jean Cazenave, Oak Ave., wants to know how many police cars and how many policemen and do they take the cars home – in or outside the city, what is the insurance and do the officers pay any of the insurance or expenses?

Chief Lorenzo – 30 cars in the fleet. 1 car is disabled.

Councilman Huete said the chief would have the best inventory.

Chief Lorenzo – will speak with her personally after the meeting about the number of policemen. He does not want to compromise security.

They do take cars home; and there are pool cars for the reserve officers; large contingent of reserve officers who use the pool cars. Reserve officers take home in city; and pay a fee; but don't take them out of the city.

Ms. Cazenave asked why can't they use their own cars to drive to work and then use the city's cars when they get here. How much is the insurance?

Mayor Mosca answered that all vehicles are covered in a pool policy.

Ms. Cazenave said she has seen cars outside of Harahan on numerous occasions. She asked if they pay the gas or use them for vacation.

Chief Lorenzo said they don't use them on vacation – but they do pay gas. Detectives can be called back when they are home. He asked that she please report any misuse.

**BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Mosca read a list of the top ten sales tax payers in the city. He also said a compliance letter was received by Viola concerning the sewerage plant's discharge. He also announced there are two new sink holes that will have to be fixed. He told the council that they will have to determine how much millage would be needed and the process would have to be completed by January to go on ballot in April.

He suggested: 5 mills police; 5 mills fire; and 3 mills sewerage. This will raise the mills to 19 and be used for salary and equipment. He said that an error in advertising had caused the city's current millage to be rolled back instead of forward.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT – PROPOSED \$1,725,475.**

Chief Lorenzo said this has \$108,000 in cuts – but no reduction in force.

If the council could add \$30,000 back into 2014 budget, it would allow a 2-1/2% pay raise for cost of living.

Many officers have been here awhile and they need a raise. They received a raise of 3% in January, 2012 but insurance went up and cancelled it out. Some officers have opted out of the retirement system.

Social Security and Medicare also comes out of their checks.

Councilman Chatelain asked what details are left.

The Chief said the Bingo Hall, Lions Club, Court yard on the Ridge, & The Kamp. New Ordinance should increase the need. State Investors was 5 days a week but that is gone. The bank is now using security guards. He said the officers charge \$25 per hour with a minimum of 4 hours while JP charges \$35 and security guards cost about \$15.

Councilman Huete asked about the cuts to the budget.

Chief Lorenzo said that Rena is keeping them on budget – there is enough money in budget for rest of year but next year is in dispute.

Councilman Murray asked why repairs and maintenance are only budgeted at \$5,000.

**Chief Lorenzo** said there are several new cars and asset forfeiture money bought some new cars but there may not be any next year. It is not recurring revenue.

**Councilman Baudier** asked about the staff working with other programs with forfeiture money – are they still working with DEA.

**Chief Lorenzo** said yes but investigations take 1-2 years and use a task force – we only get a portion of the proceeds. Can't use money to budget.

**Councilman Baudier** asked about grants and other freebies.

**Chief Lorenzo** said that some have dried up but highway safety and narcotics are too still being used.

**Councilman Chatelain** asked if the multi-jurisdiction task force would take some of the officers out of the city.

**Chief Lorenzo** said that is correct.

**Councilman Chatelain** said he doesn't know how you will make it on this budget. He asked the Mayor if millages pass, could we add into the budget later in the year.

**Mayor Mosca** said the money won't come in until 2015 – but it adds borrowing power.

**Councilman Baudier** said that the citizens don't want commercial development on the Colonial property or pay higher taxes.

**Mayor Mosca** said the city may have to give the recreation dept. and sewerage plant to Jefferson Parish.

**Fire Chief St. Cyr** said that the city can contract out the departments but you won't have the service you have today.

**Councilman Chatelain** asked about salaries for the multi-jurisdiction task force.

**Chief Lorenzo** said that there are 2 officers – one with DEA and one with the FBI and that half their salary is paid by the city and their overtime salaries are paid back to the city.

**Councilman Chatelain** pointed out that the police retirement match went down because some officers have opted out of the program.

**Councilman Landry** asked if they have take home cars regulations for the department.

**Chief Lorenzo** answered that they are in effect and this was the first complaint he has heard about cars being out of the city. Insurance on disabled cars has been cancelled and totaled cars are being cannibalized to save money.

**Councilman Chatelain** asked about details at the video poker truck stop.

**Chief Lorenzo** said the owner does not want to pay the officers that much. He wants to pay less than the detail rate.

**Mayor Mosca** said to negotiate with the owner for the detail cost.

**Councilman Landry** said to go talk to them and see if you can work it out.

**Councilman Huete** asked if we could set our own detail rates for the video truck stop.

**Chief Lorenzo** said no, the state has regulations about that but he will poll the officers and see if they can set something up.

**Councilman Murray** said the officers don't get paid enough now.

**Councilman Landry** said he only suggested the Chief talk to them.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT – PROPOSED \$984,410.**

**Chief St. Cyr** said that the Mayor is proposing to cut his budget by \$136,010 and that will hurt the department because it is already a bare bones budget. He stated that the new millage will only keep dept. at status quo because the current millage expires at the end of this year. He also said that if all 3 millages are on the ballot they will probably all fail. If a menu is used – they will fail.

**Councilman Murray** said that we did not advertise the millage correctly and had to take a rollback on the millage. The millages have been rolled back and no one realized that the Fire Millage expired this year. She said the Mayor is overspending the budget.

**Mayor Mosca** said you can't budget for sink holes. He told her to get her copy of the budget and that the council and mayor are equally responsible for the spending.

**Municipal Clerk Lee** said that the fire department millage also expires this year and we did not know it.

**Councilman Landry** said we only lost 1.38 mills in the rollback.

**Rena Sanders** also announced that the last day for qualifying for state capital outlay money was Friday and they didn't get notification until Friday, so that opportunity was lost.

**Mayor Mosca said the state legislative auditor should inform us or the city auditor should have informed us. He said the city will get the \$4 million loan and if the millage doesn't pass, the sewer usage fee could be increased to pay it back.**

**Mayor Mosca said we don't employ people to do lobbying for us. He said we can get an advance based on the bond commission approval of the sale of the bonds and then repair the sink holes.**

**Councilman Huete said she met with Villavaso, Charlet and Meyer Engineers and they told her our municipal code does not support impact fees. But the Subdivision Ordinance says we can. She is concerned about the information she is getting from them which is why she wanted to hire outside counsel. She asked the Police Chief and Fire Chief about implementing impact fees on the developers of Colonial to cover some of the City's costs. She wants to find out what the impact fees are and assess them.**

**Councilman Murray said the council must follow the Subdivision Ordinance.**

**Councilman Landry said this must be done by the Regulatory Director not the council.**

**Councilman Huete said they haven't done this and she is concerned.**

**Mayor Mosca said the ordinance says it must be done by the council.**

**He also stated that the impact fees are only for infrastructure.**

**Chief St. Cyr said he understands the situation and he struggles to keep the fire department under budget – but cutting vehicle repair to less than \$20,000 would mean that trucks will be pulled from service. He said the firemen do a lot of the repair work themselves, but without a valid test on a truck – it has to be taken out of service.**

**Councilman Huete said that cuts to both departments help the city but hurts the departments in the long run.**

**Chief St. Cyr said he would be happy to revise his budget with Mayor's cuts – but he asked what happens if a truck goes down.**

**Mayor Mosca told the council they have to make a decision before Jan. about what to do about millage. There are only two meetings left to decide.**

**Chief St. Cyr said that if city keeps the dept. at \$25,000 for maintenance and \$30,000 for small equipment, the dept. can manage, but air packs and hoses need to be replaced.**

**Councilman Huete asked that a budget for all departments be made and then decide what the millage will have to be.**

**Chief St. Cyr said the department has maxed out on the rating system on everything they can control. Equipment, trucks, training are all great – but their man power is less than 1/4 of what they should have per truck. They need more than 5 mills and he thinks 5 mills will only keep them where they are now.**

**Councilman Landry said the council needs a campaign.**

**Mayor Mosca said they need to decide on total millage and whether or not a menu will be used. If the fire millage doesn't pass, he suggested the city can raise the user fee but asked that this be kept quiet until after the election.**

**Chief St. Cyr said a meeting is needed to explain to the citizens the need for this millage.**

**Councilman Landry said the council is not too liked right now to ask for more money.**

**Fire Chief St. Cyr is convinced only the fire millage will pass.**

**Councilman Murray asked to have the assessor come in and explain what a mill is.**

**Mayor Mosca directed the Municipal Clerk to call the assessor and invited him to the Nov. meeting.**

**Councilman Landry said the next budget hearing is next week.**

**Councilman Huete again suggested they create a budget that they can live with and then decide what mills are needed.**

**Councilman Landry said he has been listening to dream budgets for the fire dept. for 5 years.**

**Chief St. Cyr said this isn't his dream budget – it is a bare bones budget.**

**Councilman Huete said the city pays Al Courcelle to be our accountant – he should know what the budget should be.**

**Mayor Mosca again asked how do you budget for a sinkhole or hospital insurance rate increases.**

**Chief St. Cyr** said he could give the council his 15 year plan, but this budget is reality – not a dream and the Mayor wants to cut it by \$136,000.

**Mayor Mosca** asked where do we get the facts for the budget. They don't have any idea.

**Chief St. Cyr** said that Mr. Courcelle is only an accountant. If you want an analyst, you may have to hire someone. The budget he presented shows you what the dept. needs. The dept. runs with ¼ of the personnel needed.

**Councilman Landry** said that city sales tax and franchise fees are down.

**Chief St. Cyr** said that most people in Harahan live on a fixed income. The city doesn't collect 50% of what other cities get to run their programs.

**Mayor Mosca** asked if there is a limit on the service fees that the city can impose.

**The Municipal Clerk** said she will look that up and let the council know.

**Chief St. Cyr** said that his department's approval rating is better than any other department. He feels the fire department millage will pass.

**Councilman Baudier** suggested that the fire department millage be put on the ballot in April and the police department and sewerage in November.

**Chief St. Cyr** pointed out that the police dept. budget has doubled, but the fire dept. has not. He can justify what the department needs to the public.

**Councilman Chatelain** asked if homes are built on Colonial would we lose our insurance rating.

**Chief St. Cyr** said that it would not happen immediately – but a re-rating would have to be done and even if commercial was developed it would require a re-rating. He stated that right now there is not enough water pressure to fight a full fire at the Colonial building and that the water would have to be staged from the highway.

**Councilman Chatelain** asked if his budget includes a raise for the employees

**Chief St. Cyr** said no.

The next Budget hearing will be held on Nov. 11 at 7pm for all remaining departments.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Harahan Christmas Parade December 14, 2013**

A motion was made unanimously by the council to move the parade to December 14, 2013.

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

**YEAS:** Baudier, Chatelain, Huete, Landry, Murray

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

A motion was made by **Councilman Landry** and seconded by **Councilman Murray** to adjourn at 9 pm.

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

**YEAS:** Baudier, Chatelain, Huete, Landry, Murray

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

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**Provino Mosca, Mayor**

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**Nicole Lee, Municipal Clerk**

- A. The following matter involving pending litigation may be considered (Court, Case, Number, Parties):**
  - 1. D Stop Prop LLC vs. Harahan City of, Board of Adjustments and Appeal of the City of Harahan, Case: 729-152 Div: "N".**
- 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:**