

There was a legal special session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date at the Council's regular meeting place, the Council Chamber, City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Juanita Woods, Chairman, called the meeting to order. She then asked the Clerk to call the roll.

There were present: Council members Harvey, Ezernack, Woods, Wilson and Clark (Mr. Clark entered the meeting at 6:05pm.)

There was absent: None.

The Honorable Juanita Woods, presiding officer, declared a quorum was present and asked Marshal Wince Highshaw to lead the invocation and pledge.

The Honorable Juanita Woods, presiding officer, then stated the object of the meeting; that being to consider: (1) The 2020/21 fiscal year budget submitted by the Administration for review by the Council in Budget Hearing #1.

Mr. Danny Richards, Budget Officer, gave the opening statement of the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2020/2021 and welcome all those in attendance and thanked the Mayor's Office, the City Departments and Division Heads, the Monroe City Marshal's Office and the Monroe City Court for their input and assistance in creating the proposed budget.

For the General Fund, the Administration proposed a \$61.1 million operating budget. This is a structurally balanced budget, which simply means recurring expenditures are funded solely by recurring revenues. This proposed budget does not use any of our operating reserves. The total fund balance is \$14.1 million, which includes about \$400 thousand in non-spendable. Unassigned fund balance of \$13.7 million and the ratio of unassigned fund balance to estimated operating expenditures is 22.5%, so we have a healthy fund balance.

For the Revenue Fund, the estimate is \$61.1 million and there are several categories, but the 3 largest sources are: Sales Tax, the estimate for FY 2021 is \$37.36 million. Property Tax, the estimate for FY 2021 is \$7.9 million, mainly due to decrease in property values of 0.2%.

For Fees & Charges, the estimate is \$6.3 million with a decrease of 1.5%, which include these three largest sources Sanitation Fees, Entergy Services Settlement and Sale Tax Handlin Fees. The total Revenue from all sources is \$61.1 million with a decrease of 0.4% over the current year estimate of 61.3 million.

For the Expenditures the total is \$61.1 million, a decrease of 0.8% over the current year estimate of \$61.9 million.

The Personnel changes by percentage: Full-time 0.3%, Part-time -9.3% for a total of -1.0% and Full-time equivalency of -0.4%.

The Budget by Major Function, the largest resources are allocated to Public Safety at 42% and this is a decrease of 0.7% over the current year estimate.

The Budget by Departments: Proposed total General Fund Expenditures for FY2021 is \$61,063,015 at -0.8% change from 2020.

For the City Expenses, there is an overall decrease by \$37 thousand. The largest expense at 1.4 million is Retiree Group Insurance, but continued savings since offering the Medicare Advantage Plan option. There are 282 active members: There are 135 below Medicare age, 106 on Medicare Advantage Plan and 41 at or above the Medicare ae but not on Medicare Advantage.

The Pension Costs and other benefits are 30% of all G/F expenditures, salaries & wages are 45%. Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS) include all city employees except fire, police and judges. The employer rate is going up 1.75% and new rate goes into effect July 1 and the 10-month general fund impact is \$167 thousand. Citywide, the financial impact is \$306 thousand. The Firefighters Retirement System (FRS) will increase 4.5% and is included in the Fire Department's proposed budget. Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System (MPERS) will increase 1.25% and the Financial impact is approximately \$88 thousand. The Employee contribution rate for MERS will increase from 9.5% to 10% up 0.5% and the Police and Fire will remain the same at 10%.

The Enterprise Funds all 6 combined: Airport, Transit, Civic Center, Zoo, Water and Sewer are operating and non-operating revenues plus transfers are \$46.2 million. Operating and non-operating expenses (including depreciation of \$11.7 million) are \$52.9 million. Budgeted decrease in net position for all funds combined \$6.7 million.

There are 26 Special Revenue Funds and the only major fund is Capital Infrastructure, Revenue source is 1% (Street improv. Sales Tax), Sales Tax estimate \$15.8 million-flat compared to 2020 estimate. Interest Income estimate \$275 thousand, total revenue estimated at \$16 million and total expenditures estimated at \$15.7 million. All 26 funds combined total revenues and other sources equal \$28 million and total Expenditures and other uses equal \$27.4 million. Budgeted increase in fund balance for all funds combined of \$600 thousand and that concludes the budget summary.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions concerning the opening statement and she asked that a copy of the opening statement be emailed to each council member.

The Budgets discussed were as follows:

**HEARING SCHEDULE:**

**1.) Revenues**

Councilman Doug Harvey noted that the question that he did have was they are forecasting sales tax to go up and, in a year, where it looks, so far you are over your decrease so what are you expecting the growth to come from.

Mr. Richard noted that for last year the actual was approximately 37.5 million and that was 2019 actual and the 2020 estimate roughly could be anywhere from 37.2, could be lower and then the current years is 37.36 so he is budgeting less compared to 2019.

Ms. Woods noted that taking under consideration the decrease in sales tax how much did you go back to each of the departments and ask them to cut from what they originally proposed in their budgets.

Mr. Richards noted that in the proposed budget it was a different percentage they were required to cut approximately .7% in their current year's budget.

**2.) Council**

Councilman Wilson noted that for the new council coming on board he see there was nothing budgeted for special projects.

Councilwoman Woods noted that the \$100,000.00 was budgeted and the council too was asked to cut our budget and having gotten with Ms. Riley we are fairly flat and there were really no other places to cut so I authorized her to cut \$45,000. 00 from the special fund. Whereas each council member would have gotten \$20,000.00 and trying to comply with the request it was reduced by \$9,044 and leaving each council member \$10, 956.00 to spend in their perspective districts.

Mrs. Rowell, Administrator also noted to Councilman Wilson that he may be seeing the zeros in the council at large area, but what they did was went ahead and budgeted it in each district that amount as appose to the lumpsum in council at large.

Councilman Wilson noted so when the new council comes on, they will have the same amount.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they will have the split approximately \$55,000.00 between the 5.

Councilman Wilson noted that he would have some concerns about that, and that budget shouldn't be cut because it is going directly to the people and we know the people are the taxpayers. It is a small amount for the districts, but he is certain they can make some amendments. Mr. Wilson noted in the local grants he see that no one applied for grants, there is no money there.

Mrs. Rowell noted that a lot of times they don't know at the beginning of the year at budget time what grants are going to come through, so they generally don't budget that until they have applied for them and they work those through the amendment process.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what's the difference between the 2020 department and 2020 mayor.

Mr. Richards, Budget Officer, explained that the department is what the individual department requested and once the deadline to key in all this passes the budget advances to the administration level where he will make his changes or key in information and once that is done it is advanced to the mayor's level.

**3.) Court**

Judge Joyce and Judge Lee

Councilwoman Ezernack wanted to know the difference in this budget as opposed to last year.

Judge Joyce noted that it is relatively the same from last year's budget.

Judge Lee noted that they aren't making any changes.

Councilman Wilson asked about the state grant and where did the past grant come from.

Judge Joyce noted that they got one grant for the defense program, family needs services for juvenile systems and the supreme court give a 30,000.00 grant. This really helps families.

Judge Lee noted that there was originally a position at the court that when the grants came along, they were able to do that.

Judge Joyce thanked Councilman Wilson for using some of his funds for the courts last year.

#### **Marshal**

Marshal Highshaw, Marshal January

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know what's different with this budget from last year.

Marshal Highshaw noted that there is no difference from last year, the budget remains the same.

Councilman Wilson noted to the marshal that some of the vehicles are pretty outdated and are they looking to replace them.

Marshal Highshaw noted they would love to, but they don't have the funds for that.

Councilwoman Woods asked if there are grants that they can get for new vehicles.

Marshal Highshaw noted that they are talking to a grant writer out of Baton Rouge that has prepared a grant for the Constable Office there. They are talking to them and he expect to meet with them next week in New Orleans for the same thing.

Councilwoman Woods asked if that would include getting some new vehicles.

Marshal Highshaw noted that it would be updated equipment in general bullet proof vest, cameras and the works.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know where the opportunities were and where money was spent and generated additional revenue.

Mrs. Rowell noted that is determined by the number of cases they serve.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know if your inability to serve cases impact your revenue, and if you are going to spend money in your budget is there anything that hampers your ability to generate revenue.

Marshal January noted that they get revenue from the sentencing at the courts and that would depend on what the prosecutors and judges at the courts do.

Mayor Mayo noted to add to Councilman Harvey's understanding, they have a unique situation with the Marshal's Office, and they are associated with the courts. They also help us in so many different ways with security at city hall, at taxation revenue office and the annex facility. They do a great job as Councilman Wilson indicated.

Mrs. Rowell also noted for clarification that they are a standalone unit in that sense, a component unit of us so they do generate their own revenues that they operate out of as well. We share responsibility and the same thing with the court.

#### **4.) Mayor**

Mayor Jamie Mayo

Councilwoman Woods asked if there were any changes in this budget from last year and if so what.

Mr. Richards noted there was a slight pension increase and mainly the mayor's budget is a decreased budget at .7%. There were some reductions in public relations. Summer workers increased about \$23,000 in the current budget and about \$17,000 this year.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know who these summer workers are children or adults etc.

Mr. Richards noted that there is the Green Teens, which is beautification.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how many people we are talking about.

Mrs. Rowell noted in this particular division it is about 15.

Mayor Mayo noted that some are in the offices as well.

Councilwoman Woods noted that this is just giving young people an opportunity to work.

Councilwoman Ezernack wanted to know how many weeks they are employed for.

Mr. Richards noted that it is 6 weeks.

Councilman Harvey noted that we have this economic development coordinator position that was funded a little in 2017 and budgeted for in 2018. What are we outsourcing this to or who is the face of economic development if it's not that person sitting in that seat? Ultimately that is our opportunity to where we drive additional sale tax revenue etc., so if this person is not the person actively working on it then who is, money was taken out and put somewhere else it appears.

Mayor Mayo noted that they have 17 different folks that they fund either directly or indirectly, the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, NLA Economic Alliance, NLEP and others.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what's that funded out of.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they are under different lines some in city expense and they have partnerships with several of those organizations as well as some of the Mayor's staff has picked up some of those. (The Mayor noted that his Administrative Officer as well as himself.)

Councilman Harvey wanted to know outside of himself who do you think is your face of this, because obviously someone was dedicated to it in the past.

Mayor Mayo noted that as he said there are 17 of them that they provide support to like the lobbying effort with the chamber, the City pays a share and the total is \$60,000 and the City pays \$50,000. They pay Nova which is another.

Councilman Harvey said if he calls the City of Monroe and he is looking for someone to talk to in economic development, he wanted to know who they route him to.

Mayor Mayo said they will route you to him and he is always there. Most of the people that call, and they are looking for specific area to do different things we have someone who we can refer them to whether its in house or to one of our partners.

Mrs. Rowell noted that the line of economic development is expensed in city expenses.

Mayor Mayo also noted about the Districts, Tower Armand, 1-20, Southside Economic Dev., and Downtown and the only one that doesn't have a revenue stream is Downtown Economic Development District. In addition to what we fund in the economic development fund line item and in the administrative fund which support so many folks. There are very few funds the City doesn't support that enhances economic development. That position was cut when we projected \$4.5 million deficit 6 months into 2017 along with a proposed position that was going to be doing education, that was about \$100,000 altogether.

## **5.) Legal**

Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney

Mrs. Sturdivant noted that her budget is the same as last year.

Councilman Harvey noted that lease and rental went up.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted that is their copiers and shredder services.

## **6.) Fire**

Chief Terry Williams, Monica Brown (Budget Admin.)

Chief Williams said basically he has the same budget and he took a \$90,000 budget cut and a 4.5% increase in pension previously mentioned at about \$420,000, so basically the same budget.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how they were going to make up for that.

Chief Williams said with about 8 or 9 firefighters that he will not fund.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked if those were position outstanding at this point?

Chief Williams said that is correct and he just won't fill those positions, so there won't be a layoff or anything like that.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know how long those positions have been open.

Chief Williams said they just graduated a group in November or December, and they were looking to hire 13 plus. The Parish and West Monroe Fire Department was hiring at the same time and they hired them before he could. Some fail physicals and some didn't show up to follow up on their physicals etc., and out of the 17 he only got 6 or 7 and lost some of those in the recruit academy. He hired 9 and lost 3 in the academy and graduated 6. But they are starting another academy soon and they have an eligibility list.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how long that process takes.

Chief Williams noted that it is a long process about 4 to 6 months.

## **7.) Police**

Interim Chief Reginal Brown, Asst. Chief Don Bartely

Chief Brown noted that his budget is the same from last year, in 2019 their budget was a little over \$12,186,700 million and this year their proposed budget is \$12, 739,390. Basically, their expenses from last year they absorbed that into their projection for this year.

Councilwoman Woods asked about the \$500,000 increase.

Chief Brown noted that one of the lines was in vacation pay or retirement and there is no real way to budget for that to tell how many people will retire etc. and we used that projection to increase for 2020.

Mrs. Rowell noted for clarification that is not a \$500,000 increase it is a decrease from \$12,739 million down to \$12,652 million.

Councilwoman Woods was looking at the wrong line, no increase.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked if they had positions out there that they have a place holder for that is included in this budget or did you get the personnel you budgeted.

Chief Brown said they are not budgeting for new personnel and they have about 130 officers at this time and they budgeted for 136, which is around the same as last year. They are to hire 3 officers right now which would put them were they were this time last year.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked if their process is as long as the fire department's?

Chief Brown said yes.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know when was the last time they had an academy?

Chief Brown noted that they have 2 academies a year and the Sheriff's Department does one for the entire region. There were 5 hired that recently graduated in the last 8 months.

Councilman Harvey asked about the ones he has under salaries and wages temporary what does that represent.

Chief Brown noted that those are part-time workers. (receptionists, call takers etc.)

Councilman Harvey wanted to know where we are year over year with head count because he is looking at where you were in 2017 and where you are now. You are down about 6% labor cost wise and with the cost of things like that going up he can't imagine we're in the same spot as the last 3 or 4 years.

Chief Brown explained that they are at 130 officers and officer Donald Simpson noted that the total with dispatchers etc., is about 172 employees and part of the reduction was due to the loss of people through attrition and we dropped lower than expected and now they are trying to get back up. The target number is 136 officers for what we budgeted this year

Councilman Harvey asked if that would put them back around the 2017 number

Officer Simpson said he didn't recall if those numbers did or not.

## **8.) Community Affairs**

Mr. Robert C. Johnson

Councilwoman Woods asked where are you in comparison to last year?

Mr. Johnson noted that there are very few changes to his budget in comparison to last year and you can see there was over-time pay, sick leave, vacation and such which they really didn't use. The only big difference would be in their park and recreation maintenance area capital fund. Other than that, the budget is pretty much the same.

Councilwoman Woods asked if he was looking to add additional staff.

Mr. Johnson said their count now is about 300 plus, enterprise fund, full and part-time.

Councilwoman Woods noted with this increase how many full-time he is planning to bring on.

Mr. Johnson said 2 additional supervisors for the recreation centers, they plan to reorganize which has been a lot of concern and they want to make those adjustment to those concerns. The process has started, and they have been working with PUD, communicating with medical insurance companies and looking into other agencies to come in to help and also getting computers, so they have been making quite a few adjustments in the centers.

Councilman Harvey asked about the maintenance he is seeing salaries and wages there. In 2018, \$237,000 was spent and now budgeting at \$708,000 we are looking at a 3-fold increase.

Mr. Richards noted that was when those employees came from Public Works and part of the Forsythe Division was moved from out of Public Works and put under Community Affairs as the parks and recreation maintenance division.

Councilman Harvey noted offsetting labor expenses there, but in 20/21 he is still seeing another \$125,000.

Mr. Johnson noted that there were 2 employees that came over but were not counted in the count and they had to make that adjustment.

Mr. Richards noted that they stayed in Public Works budget accidentally and then they had to amend the budget to include them into Community Affairs.

Councilman Harvey noted that in 20/21 under fringe benefit the group insurance almost doubles and pension is about \$30,000. He wanted to know is that all from moving 2 employees over there.

Mr. Richards noted that some of the vacant positions have several tiers of group insurance that go any were from zero dollars up to \$60,000 if they have a family plan verse others and some of the vacant positions we budget amid tier amount considering what they have vacant at the time when they submitted their budget.

Councilman Harvey noted that he was trying to figure out how adding 2 people changes that cost by \$30,000.

Mr. Johnson noted that he didn't think it was just the 2 people, because when you take overall those who left some of the people who were supposed to come actually either retired or left and when they were replaced, they came in with family coverage.

Mrs. Rowell noted that you could easily add 2 members with family coverage at \$30,000.

Mr. Richards noted that each year you can change your coverage and we have people that go from family plan down to employee or vice versa, so it changes those cost.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know the cost per employee, citywide.

Mrs. Rowell will get that information to him.

Councilwoman Ezernack noted that there are several tiers for insurance. (Mrs. Rowell said there are.)

Councilman Harvey asked if they were going to spend capital there.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they are trying to address their capital through another means at this point. They have a Capital Project Fund set aside and they have submitted some priority needs and they are trying to address that through that. There are some vehicles, zoo and other needs on the priority list right now as well as golf courses etc.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know where that list is.

Mrs. Rowell said they have a committee that reviews it and they meet regularly to go over it and they allocate funds based on their submission. The committee consist of Dan Richards, Jimmie Bryant and herself.

Councilwoman Woods ask if she looks at capital projects throughout the city.

Mrs. Rowell said they look at capital needs.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know how that makes its way through.

Mrs. Rowell explained that there is video bingo money that funds one place where the garbage and trash trucks right now are getting paid from and we borrow the money for that and some of that allocation gets to flow out to some of the other departments if money is left over. If there is money left in the General Fund, we try to allocate some of that from the prior year and move that over to the capital improvement project, capital project fund, to allocate that to projects.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know how much they move out of that annually.

Mrs. Rowell noted about a couple of \$100,000 sometimes.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know if it was pretty consistent.

Mrs. Rowell said not necessarily, only if there is a little left and they feel like they can spare some.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how much is in the Bingo fund.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they bring in about \$300,000 a year, it's down a little and that is used to pay lease payment for when we borrow for buying garbage and trash trucks and other equipment need etc., and that makes payments for that.

**a.) 6002 Civic Center Fund**

Dr. George Cannon, Director

Mrs. Ezernack asked for a synopsis of the budget compared to last year.

Dr. Cannon explained that next years budget will be basically what it is for this year. They have had to deal with the ceiling which is a little over 50 years old and they had a few issues that they had to take care of, a \$50,000 electrical line under the chiller had to be repaired and another \$100,000 of emergency items as well. We think we are in pretty good shape right now. We are trying to be really competitive with the other venues that are available in our community such as churches, private sectors and the university and we think we are on the right track for that.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked if they have seen any increase in interest of booking.

Dr. Cannon said they monitor that at all times and it's not the number of booking which is really important to us but the size of the booking that they have as well.

Councilwoman Woods noted that the date of the fair moved and it's going to be October the 2nd through the 10th.

Dr. Cannon explained that the Civitan Club had been wanting to make a change and they think October usually has less rain fall than September and it might be 2 or 3 degrees cooler as well too. They were able to accommodate them for this year in fact the fair will leave on the 10th of October after it's 10 day run and on the 11th they will house in the theater the Russian Ballet production of Swan Lake which will be a big arts event for the community.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know where the dollars for the emergency repairs come from.

Dr. Cannon explained that there were electrical wires under the Chiller that went out and when we were repairing our road work some of that happened. They also replaced a Chiller Pump this year and our maintenance contract with Siemens which handles our maintenance work has gone up about \$50,000 and will remain so for the next 3 years, because they are primarily insuring their equipment and as the equipment gets older more likely something can happen and our fees go up.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what the City's commitment to them annually.

Dr. Cannon said it was \$132,000 and it goes up to about \$134,000 and next year we have a 3-year agreement with them this time. We went out this year before we went with Siemens and talked to other companies that might be able to do the same thing locally and away and this was the best we could do.

Councilman Harvey asked if over half our repairs and maintenance is attributed to that contract.

Dr. Cannon said yes and their contract for next year is not but \$134,000.

Councilman Harvey don't see where they are spending any capital.

Dr. Cannon noted that they have some issue they have to deal with, and he don't believe that they all have been resolved at this particular point.

Councilman Harvey noted that you talk about it being a 50-year old place, but we don't invest capital into it.

Mrs. Rowell noted that in the past again it goes back to that capital fund that was funded through the Video Bingo fund, it originally had a lot more dollars in it than it does now because it started out many years ago where we got its first lumpsum and we dibbed half million to the zoo, the civic center got a brand new \$250,000 Chiller at that time so there have been different avenues through the years that some larger capital needs have been addressed. Sometimes they reached out to Capital Infrastructure if it is a really significant need and it meets that criteria. They pretty much have to accommodate the smaller things in their budget.

Dr. Cannon noted that they think the upgrades make them more viable as a possible venue for the people of the community.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what's the \$600,000 depreciation expense in 2019, but not in 2020 and now back in 2021.

Mr. Richards explained that gets recorded after the fiscal year is over, so it hasn't been recorded through 2020.

Mrs. Rowell noted that the 2019 column is actual, and the other columns are budget, so they have not budgeted in 2020 yet. This is something we usually do at the end of the year.

Councilman Harvey noted looking at most things from a budgeting standpoint mostly we are looking at cash expenses and transferring money in and we are saying we should have a \$600,000 impact there. Mr. Harvey noted he is trying to make sense of that.

Mrs. Rowell noted that its cash so it's not going to reflect in the transfer at all. Transfer is based strictly on cash flow.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know the net on the Civic Center total fund net out against depreciation.

Mrs. Rowell explained that it would change its net position if it factors in, it will have a net position change.

**b.) 6003 Purchase Garden & Zoo Fund**

Joseph Clawson, Director

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know what changes they have seen from 2019 to 2020.

Mr. Clawson noted that functionally nothing has changed, and they may have moved a line item here and there but the bottom-line is similar to what it was last year.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know what new and innovative things they have coming up at the zoo.

Mr. Clawson noted that they need to take the old 50-year old primate building down that no longer meets the standard of animal care by USDA. They are trying to build a new Beaver Exhibit to be done in house.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know the cost to demolish this old primate building.

Mr. Clawson noted that the disposal fees are estimated to be \$60,000. The City can help us with the demolishing and also the National Guard may be able to help us with it too.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know if there are plans for the City to currently demo it or is it something that we are able to do and have not decided or committed to do yet.

Mrs. Rowell noted that she thinks they are just waiting on the weather and the money is there.

Mr. Clawson said that they replaced the roof on the reptile building and now they are going to modernize the inside, the floor and ceiling. This is an inhouse project.

Councilwoman Woods asked if there were any plans to do anything with the gardens?

Mr. Clawson noted that they do things with the gardens, but they are in the middle of winter now and they have a gardener. They have ground employees in which they are in the process of filling full-time. They are gearing up to start the gardens now.

Councilwoman Woods asked about the train.

Mr. Clawson said the train is doing very well at \$60,000 plus a year and the boat is doing approximately the same. Those are very valuable parts of the zoo.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what's the promoter's settlement expense line.



Ms. Rowell explained that the expense line is where they have to settle out after each event there are certain expenses.

Dr. Cannon noted that sometimes the settlement occurs at the end of the event promoters coming in and sponsoring an entertainment event that grosses 23 or 24 thousands dollars they have certain expenses that we charge them for like the rent, labor, kitchen uses and other, so at the end of the night that's all over you settle up based on the contract you have with them.

Councilman Harvey asked margin wise what do we generally make on that.

Dr. Cannon explained that they have rental for various rooms in the civic center, theater and half the arena so those are pretty set in place. What adds to that is the amount of labor it takes for us to help put the show on and that is our skilled group at the theater primarily to set up.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they don't have a percent margin that they calculate, and she don't know if they have ever done a calculation on that.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know how profitable they are at it.

Dr. Cannon explained that when you look at all cost its probably not a new figure in a long time, but we try to be competitive with the other events competing with us and he think that they are. Some think we are a little high, but not given with what we provide, and we are competitive with the industry in this state.

Mayor Mayo noted that what's not calculated in that is the out of town entertainment economic impact it has on the City and Parish; it's not included in that.

Dr. Cannon noted that there will be a group coming in June that will bring 4,000 people to the arena for a 4-day conference and that will be a pretty large economic impact.

Councilman Harvey noted that he agrees with how we talk about subsidizing it, but at the same time we get the benefit, but you wonder what extinct we get on our investment if it's worth investing more.

Mr. Clawson noted that the zoo has the promotion settlement line too, the Zoological Society has a Cooperative Endeavor with the zoo, and they are allocated so many days in the year where they get to hold events. The zoo still collects the gate receipts, but by the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement so that money is given to the Zoological Society. The promoter Settlement is payments to the Zoological for their event days. Last year for Halloween they made \$500, Easter is coming up and if we have a really nice day that will bring in somewhere around \$16 to \$18 thousand dollars and that is highly variable as to what might come in over a year. We don't pay out any money that we don't take in for that event.

Mayor asked Mr. Clawson to mention the Splash Pad.

Mr. Clawson added that when they originally put in the Splash Pad it increased some of the attendants at the zoo by 40% and it has pretty much maintained that level during the summer.

Councilwoman Woods asked what the fees are.

Mr. Clawson noted that the fees were \$6 for adults, \$4.50 for children and group rates are \$4.50 for adults, \$2.00 for children in groups of 10 and rides are \$3.00.

Councilwoman Woods asked about concessions and if they get to keep the money.

Mr. Clawson explained that concessions is with the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement the Zoological Society operates concessions and collects the finances, we provide the building but other than that they pay all the expenses associated with labor, food cost, etc.

**9.) Public Works**  
**a) 6000 Airport Fund**  
Ron Phillips, Director

Councilwoman Woods asked Mr. Phillips to talk to us about his budget and she knows that they are selfsustained.

Mr. Phillips noted that the airport budget is pretty flat this year and there are no significant changes from last year, so they can pretty much expect things to be somewhat status quo as it relates to their budget.

Councilman Harvey mentioned the \$3 million depreciation and he guess it's the final net depreciation charge.

Mrs. Rowell said yes.

**b) 6001 Transit Fund**

Marc Keenan, Gen. Manager

Councilwoman Woods asked Mr. Keenan What's different with your budget.

Mr. Keenan noted that Transit's budget is basically the same as it was last year and the only difference would be on the capital side. This year they are looking at replacing the bus terminal, they are going to finish paying for the bus wash and bus replacement for the bus wash and the replacement for the terminal. The City pays 20% on a dollar and on the bus wash and the bus replacement itself the City pays 15 cents on a dollar.

Councilwoman Woods asked if we were getting a new bus terminal.

Mr. Keenan said that is correct, it has been before council in the past, it is a 5million dollar project and they have all the federal dollars.

Councilwoman Woods asked Mr. Keenan for the record to tell everyone where it is.

Mr. Keenan said it is at 207 Catalpa, it is the main transfer point for all the passengers when they go out of town and they come back in and that is the transfer point when they go from route to route.

Councilwoman Woods noted and for the benefit of everyone here when do you plan to start on it.

Mr. Keenan said they are looking to start in September or October.

Councilwoman Woods noted that all the funds are there and the City has to pay 20%.

Mr. Keenan said that is correct.

Councilman Harvey noted so the city funds are reflected here.

Mr. Keenan said yes, they do have a capital outlay request in for those dollars.

Councilman Harvey said so it is unfunded at this point.

Mrs. Rowell said that's correct as far as she knows, they haven't addendum.

Mr. Keenan explained that is part of the budget, so looking on there you have about \$800,000.00.

Mrs. Rowell noted so you built it into your budget.

Mr. Keenan said it's in the budget under professional services, and the first piece will be to hire an architect.

Councilman Harvey asked how did our insurance go down so much, nobody's goes down?

Mr. Keenan explained that they reduced service in 2018 and so the insurance is paid by miles and the mileage has down.

Councilman Harvey noted obviously fair revenue doesn't make up a substantial portion, so how many people do we think is a beneficiary to the system.

Mr. Keenan noted that they have an annual ridership and this past year it was over 700,000. It was over 1.1 million until we had to change service, so it went down and they are trying to get it built back up.

Councilwoman Woods asked if they were looking at increasing the number of routes.

Mr. Keenan said no, they purchased an AVL System that has some pretty good bells and whistles for advertising and marketing things that we plan on looking at doing this year. We had to stop our night service so some of the riders aren't riding the night service and we also ended during the day at 6:30pm where we use to go until 11pm. There was Sunday service some years ago. There use to be what the Federal Government call the JARC funding for reverse commute or people going to their jobs. The funding would pay us to transport them back home at night and we lost that fund in 2015 and that is why we had to make change on the night service.

Councilman Harvey noted that it looks like we have cut labor cost about 25% so what does that translate to.

Mr. Keenan explained that they had close to 50 employees at transit, right now they have 38 full-time employees and 1 part-time.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what that equate to route wise, less routes.

Mr. Keenan explained we had 14 and now we have 10.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know if the frequency schedule changed as well.

Mr. Keenan noted that it was 50 minutes and it was changed to 45 minutes they are pretty much able to provide services in the same areas as before.

Councilwoman Ezernack noted that you also used some smaller vehicles rather than the large buses at other none peak times.

Mr. Keenan said that is correct and they are primarily for our ADA Complimentary service for the elderly and disabled who cannot ride our fixed route service. We have extra ones so we will provide them on some other routes that have low ridership.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how many buses you are looking to replace.

Mr. Keenan said next month they will have 3 new 35ft buses and in this budget, they are looking at replacing 2. They have about 4 more that needs to be replaced or that are illegible.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what we are paying per bus and he knows 15 cents on a dollar but what is our expense per bus.

Mr. Keenan noted that the cost is \$425,000.00 a piece total cost and we pay about \$68,000.00.

Further discussion followed.

**c) 6006 Water Fund**

Sean Benton, Superintendent

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know what has changed with his budget for 2019 to now.

Mr. Benton noted that his area consists of water treatment and distribution and with water treatment they somewhat have the same budget they had last year just with a few increases on the salary side. They are looking at adding 2 positions and assistant lab tech and a maintenance guy. We have 29 employees at the treatment plant 1 full-time and 1 part-time, also they are increasing the budget on the chemical side due to adding new equipment and new treatment process which cost about \$250,000.00 annually to run.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how long this unit to control the order and taste has been in place.

Mr. Benton said they just got it put in today and Monday they will be training on it and they are waiting on last approval from the public health and hospital to move forward to combat any taste and order.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked about the spraying of the bayou that Wildlife and Fishery has done in the past and she has had complaints about that, and she knows that's our water resource. She wanted to know if there was any line item to do some of that, that they are not doing or how are we going to handle that.

Mr. Benton said that is also covered by the chemical budget but also some funds in his small service equipment budget as well, but with some help with delegates in this area we can get someone to talk back with Wildlife and Fishery and they have been the ones maintaining that reservoir out there. Through cutbacks they stop spraying that area and it looks like the City might be responsible for that, but the waterways are still their responsibility as a whole and with contacts in the area we can get the Wildlife and Fishery back on the team to get that done.

Councilwoman Ezernack noted with this winter being light its really caused a lot of issues.

Mr. Janway, Public Works Director said that he has had several conversations with Wildlife and Fishery and over the years they have responded to public pressure. There is a section of the bayou where there is no public ramp and they say their moneys for chemicals are funded through the federal government and therefore they have to use a public ramp.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know how we show generating \$650,000 interest income.

Mrs. Rowell explained that all of their money is in one fund including the money that has just recently been drawn down for the plant improvement, bond money, so they estimate they will be drawing interest on that through the years.

Councilman Harvey asked about reconnecting fee.

Mr. Benton said that fee is based on turn off and turn on itself and by looking at their fire hydrant meters, which is when a resident or business comes along to get a meter for construction that cost is \$1,000.00 and there is a deposit and that was not added in the year before. That is our fire hydrant meters, when a contractor gets a fire hydrant for construction.

Councilman Harvey asked if we think we will generate an additional \$40,000.00 plus.

Mr. Benton noted that he thinks that line items the year before was put somewhere else.

Councilman Harvey asked about water distribution cost under technical and professional services and it has doubled, he wanted to know what's happening.

Mr. Benton explained that they are looking at doing more water distribution line projects.

Councilman Harvey asked if that would be capital.

Mr. Benton noted that their capital is for buying equipment dump trucks service trucks etc.

**d) 6008 Sewer Fund**

Charles Westrom, Superintendent

Councilwoman Woods asked what has changed with the sewer budget.

Mr. Westrom noted that they have a number of issues that have gone on in regard to expenses and one which is they have had more river events than they have ever had with the length of time the river was up and the storms that occurred. The utilities are up considerable and also their chemicals are up and land farm operations have been up which is what we take to the dumps basically. They operate 4 of the stoppage trucks and prices of those have gone up, we are due to replace 2 now. The prices of these trucks have gone up and they are a pretty big deal to maintain.

Councilwoman Woods asked if the money is in this budget and trucks ordered.

Mr. Westrom noted that one has just come in and that was out of this year's budget and there will be money in next year's budget to replace another one and that's in capital.

Councilwoman Woods asked what else is happening.

Mr. Westrom noted that as far as expenses go, they do have some significant things going on expenses wise and they are working with engineering and capital infrastructure to solve one and it seems like we will be able to go forward.

Councilman Harvey noted in utilities for the water pollution control account is that actual or something driving that.

Mr. Westrom noted that it is a projection based off of that actual expense and he is hoping that the utilities expenses will actually go down. They have a new digester online there that is supplying methane gas and they are generating heat for the digester using that gas as opposed to buying gas from Atmos. It has been working pretty well so far.

Councilman Harvey noted that overall he sees were revenue went down slightly and what do we attribute that to.

Mr. Richard, Budget Officer, explained that a lot of these sewer revenues are based on water usage and there was a reduction in water usage that is reflected in the sewer revenue.

Mr. Westrom noted that these are not our final numbers they are our best guest and a lot of times at the end we see a jump, so it's an estimate.

**e) 7002 Central Shop**

Tom Janway, Public Works Director

Mr. Janway noted that this is an internal service fund and it is responsible for repairing all equipment in the City with exception of fire and transit. They are responsible for keeping repaired about 1,300 pieces of equipment. The staffing levels are 15 permanent and 6 temps. With the shop rates being so low the general fund subsidizes the internal fund approximately 4 to 5 hundred thousand a year.

Councilman Harvey asked if that was just for fix cost absorption or what, so if we are charging out market rates and we are still having to subsidize it.

Mr. Janway noted we are not at market rates they are 125 we charge 55, but it is pulling from the same pool of money. If you raise the shop rate it's just going to raise the cost to the general fund. If it were an enterprise fund such as the airport, water, sewer and you raise the shop rate then the general fund will pay less.

Councilman Harvey asked if we are going to have less people, because he sees labor going down.

Mr. Janway noted that they really have changed the number of personnel in the shop we just have a problem maintaining a skill workforce, so they have 6 temps at this time.

Mrs. Rowell noted that it looks like some of that is a reduction in overtime, which is about what the difference is.

Mr. Janway noted that sometimes it's cheaper to work temps than to hire permanents and that's why you see that in the labor area.

**All other funds under the direction of Public Works – Tom Janway**

Director, Trash, Administration, Garbage, Maintenance, Construction, Beautification Drainage, Cemeteries and Streets  
– Total number of budgeted permanent employee 60 and 35 temps.

Councilwoman Ezernack wanted to know what obviously different in this presented budget as opposed to what going on now in your budget.

Mr. Janway noted that there are no major differences, they received 2 new trash trucks this past fall and that has helped with the trash pickup and they are back on a weekly cycle. They will be receiving 3 new trash trucks thanks to Stacey and her efforts in April and 4 new garbage trucks. In general, looking at the public works portion of the budget repairs and maintenance is the primary thing that has gone up over the years.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked when you budgeted less for that in the different divisions was it because of the new equipment or what.

Mr. Janway said let's look at garbage and in 2019 they budgeted \$290,000.00 and requested \$230,000.00. He is projecting repairs and maintenance to be \$425,000.00 and that is the equivalence of 2 garbage trucks. That give you an idea about equipment replacement and why it's so important.

Councilman Wilson asked about salary wages temps being \$100,000.00, he wanted to know if they are hiring more temps.

Mr. Janway said yes, they are looking at trying to make all of their employees in trash permanent employees and that is the reason you see reduction in temps down to \$20,000.00. You look at the increase from 235 to 336 it is a \$100,000.00 increase.

Councilman Wilson asked are we hiring more full-time workers.

Mr. Janway said no, in trash they have 6 full-time and 6 temp employees so right now we are at 50% and we would like to hire another 6.

Councilman Wilson asked how many openings we have right now for full-time.

Mr. Janway said there were 45.

Councilman Harvey noted this is public works as a whole.

Mr. Janway said that's public works total, right and that represents 15%.

Councilman Wilson asked if they were prepared to bring new people on to fill these slots.

Mr. Janway said if he can hire qualified people, he will.

Councilwoman Woods noted that primarily the reason you are working with the temps right now is you are using that as a screening.

Mr. Janway said as a screening but also the inability to hire qualified personnel.

Councilman Harvey noted the pump station maintenance amount that was requested high and ended with a low amount, he is wondering what they are not going to get to do.

Mr. Janway noted that so far, they have spent over \$300,000.00 and pump station repairs over the last 2 have been high because of high water conditions on the river.

Councilman Harvey noted that your requests were really in line and it looks like the way we balanced this out was by pulling it away from repairs and maintenance.

Mr. Janway noted that we are going to do the best with what we are given and understand that when stormwater pumps stations break, we fix them. We try to figure out where to get the money and we pull some from CIC etc.

Council Harvey noted that you are telling me how much work you are doing as expensive it is and also why your repair and maintenance budget is a third half full in these categories and what it was 2 years actually.

Mrs. Rowell explained that he is right, and this is one of those unknown, we have changes, they make the best that they can and we do have to sometimes hope for the best, we all try to live under our means in our budget because of the unknowns. That is a lot that we deal with and that is the reality and he is right those are expenses we can't avoid them and if from another line item in his budget and if he stays under budget that gets absorbed in his budget at the end of the year. Right now, we are operating at about 95% of our budget right now so that 5% help make up for some of those unknowns at the end of the year because we don't know. It is a plan we don't always know and if we get into a bind on something like pump stations etc., then we do sometimes have to go to the CIC commission and ask for assistance and we have had to do that in the past.

Councilman Harvey noted that if we are being unrealistic with our budget and he knows they will deal with any emergency that come up but if I say I am going to spend a third of what I have been doing and say I'm doing it to make it balance, Mr. Harvey noted that he don't think Mr. Janway is being genuine with himself.

Mrs. Rowell noted this is more realistic than it has been.

Councilman Harvey noted that do you realistically believe that we will spend a third or a half of our repairs and maintenance on our pumps this year.

Mrs. Rowell said we just don't know.

Councilman Harvey noted but if we base our assumptions on historical values and unless we do something magically in the next 12 months our repair and maintenance cost would be in line.

Mrs. Rowell noted that he has the option to cut something else and increase that line in his budget that is his option.

Councilman Harvey noted that we are setting ourselves up for failure.

Mr. Janway noted in this discussion on pump stations and Ms. Golden, Engineer, can speak to this a lot more professionally than I can. Our Calypso Pump Station, we do have a project in Capital Outlay to replace the Calypso Pump Station and that is in the range of 5 million dollars. We also have a new pump station and a small retention area proposed for the Georgia Street area and we have already received a lot of the funding and we have come up with a way to match that so that the city is not out of a lot of money. That was through the state flood program and then we have another major drainage project through the state flood program that's going to be the Youngs Bayou Retention Pond and that's going to help relieve not only the central parts of the City from flooding and that south around Parkview and around Wossman High School and where the new school is being built. Those are some good projects and its going to help a lot of people, we completed the Rochelle Retention Pond a couple of year ago and that has done phenomenal.

Councilman Harvey noted those are great projects, but do we expect those to have any impact on repairs and maintenance in this budget cycle.

Mr. Janway noted not this budget cycle.

Mayor Mayo noted that is why we spend a lot of time in Baton Rouge as well as Washington DC trying to get additional funding because what we budget is a realistic budget, but it is not enough to cover all the things that we need to cover. Because of the nature of the things we do these pump stations for instance 18 pump stations and if Mr. Janway were to say what's all pulled into them all over the city logs, and all kinds of debris which causes them to malfunction because they are mechanical and having the Infrastructure Commission to assist us. I know we have had numerous conversations about what's need in different line items, but we all know it's based on the revenue that we have in terms of the budgeting process.

Further discussion follows.

**10.) Planning & Urban Development (PUD)**  
**(a) 2001 Community Development Block Grant**  
**All other funds under the direction of PUD**  
Ellen Hill, Director

Councilwoman Woods asked Mrs. Hill to tell them what's changed or different in your budget.

Mrs. Hill noted that nothing as changed they have done some realignments with staff duties and looking at where they will be able to best be efficient with our budget considering the activities, we are planning on taking on, like the blight

boot camp we are starting this spring. The idea is that will be a yearly event run through Code Enforcement. They have looked to leverage by looking at CDBG a little differently, the fund for example they need a software where they are going to have citizens be able to track where Code Enforcement cases are so from the time you call in and a case get started we will have an online platform that people can look and see whether or not it has moved to Environmental Court or come to council for anything. That is a partnership between our Code Enforcement and Community Development Division in leveraging our fund, it's not costing our general fund any extra funds.

Councilwoman Ezernack asked as a result of the comprehensive planning that you have been doing and getting that ready, do we expect to be able to secure any additional funds.

Mrs. Hill noted that hopefully we will have a better plan to be able to look to even HUD Funding to look at different discretionary funding and now be able to compete for those. The Census is now key to make sure that we do maintain our population, then as congress allocate more funds for CDBG or HOME that we end up with more money. So, for 2021 congress allocated more money to CDBG and HOME so we got a little bump, but this requires us to maintain our population to be an entitlement city. So, yes, the great feedback we have gotten from our comprehensive plan will allow us to really look at other funding and use that data to compete.

Councilwoman Ezernack noted that at one of the meetings Mrs. Hill mentioned that it's going to be able to be used in some other areas instead of being zoned in on one specific census tract.

Mrs. Hill noted that something else that they are doing differently by realigning staff and leveraging funds, Mr. Johnson mentioned that they will be hiring 2 Vista members both focusing on neighborhood revitalization plans that will allow us to be more flexible with our money once HUD approves those plans. They have started already serving citizens where they are, so right now the current year we are in and going into we service people based on the fact that they are low to moderate if they are income qualified regardless of where they are in our city. We will attempt to meet that need as much as we have funding for.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know how much was the grant for the CDBG funds?

Mrs. Hill noted that the CDBG for 2020 was \$696,702.00 and for 2021 they now have \$708,785.00. HOME is a little different it is \$316,046.00 for 2020 and for 2021 HOME allocations went down to \$297,074.00.

Councilman Harvey noted about the 708 and what exactly do we administer and goes out to the rehabs and things like that out of that federal grant.

Mrs. Hill noted that we are limited to spending only 20% on Admin. and the rest goes into programs, when you are talking about programs for rehabs, we are projecting \$265,628.00 for 2021.

Councilman Harvey noted that's 708, that's 20% that mean we can spend \$141,000.00 on admin. and we got \$161 in wages note counting the fringe benefits, so if 20% is admin. there is more expenses parked in that fund.

Mrs. Hill said that is correct because when they budget, this grant budget isn't budgeted that shows what's admin salary verses program salary, so the staff member who works on rehab is a program person not an admin person, but it is still salaried so in the city budget when we break that down it's still in the salary line item, it does not differentiate between the admin cost and the program cost. We do that on the federal side when we submit the federal budget, so what you see here for admin that is actual cost of house, but there are 2 staff people dedicated to making sure that happens and that is considered program work. You would add from the rehab cost and they would add in those salaries for staff that actually do that programmatic work as well.

Mrs. Rowell added that their time is tracked through timesheets that they have to tract time that they spend on those projects. We adjust that ever so often through payroll, there percentages are divided up through the payroll program. It may be 50% on HOME, it may be 50% on CDBG and that is even broken down by project specifically if they have to. They can revisit that in the year if they need to and it may be 40/60 or whatever.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what the Capital would be in that scenario.

Mrs. Hill wanted to know if he was wanting to know about equipment or what?

Councilman Harvey noted that he doesn't know what this number makes up so if they are getting \$700,000.00 grant, he is trying figure out what they are spending on admin, what they are actually giving to homeowners and what that looks like.

Mrs. Hill noted that the equipment that they would have brought for fire depending on what it was some of it would have been capital equipment and some supplies.

Councilman Harvey noted that they have had some conversation about that and if we are still buying stuff for the fire department that tells me we don't have enough people in the program to actually help out with there homes. Mr. Harvey knows that's not the case and he is really trying to understand this.

Mrs. Hill noted that when they project out to spend funds, they have a certain amount of time to extend funds and they are told by the federal government here is how you can spend money. We have a cap on admin where we can only spend 20% of our money on that and what we end up spending on that is less, the only people we charge there is the Director and the Compliance Specialist. We have Rehab and for the last couple of years we have done only health and safety. We were before council last meeting with a house that ended up being far more than what we had originally thought but we have those funds, so they expended there, so we budget. What they haven't been doing is budgeting the whole grant every year, they are getting there, with the grant they use to only project what they would spend within their fiscal year and because their fiscal year doesn't line up with the federal year and they might be running behind in terms of federal allocations. They have been conservative in things that they might need to wait until the feds send the next year's money. What was done prior years if they got awarded for example in CDBG 696 and they only had 400 hundred thousand dollars' worth of projects identified then only that amount was budgeted. The other would sit in the federal allocation in the federal system where we wouldn't have project to spend those funds until we have something identified. Housing projects unfortunately have taken longer than we are used to because of the process required. We now have environmental reviews that we have to do locally for all of those houses and that makes the process a little longer if you are trying to do 6 to 8 houses a year. We are running a program now where the goal would be to budget the entire grant but also know that we are on a time crunch of being able to expend those funds and people have to qualify. We're not running a program that can budget and expend all our funds every year just because it is a program that relies on people being able to come in, qualify and move things along on a quick schedule.

Councilman Harvey noted with all that where is the 106, that is what he is still missing.

Mrs. Hill noted that they have determined that it is part of the fire equipment.

Councilman Harvey noted that we are saying we are going to spend another 106 this year on fire equipment.

Mrs. Hill noted that she would say if the estimate would be, if that's equipment that they bought will project out again and say okay we might be spending that. Every expense and as said again we have to put together a plan before we even get the funds that we have, so we have to project out and put funds somewhere, however; it doesn't get expended unless it is approved and that requires a federal approval.

Councilman Harvey noted that didn't really answer the question, but he understands what she is saying for the cashflow planning stage. He just can't imagine, and he is looking, and we got \$700,000.00 and a federal grant that ultimately goes to a handful of things and we got all these people that have issues with there homes and we are buying equipment for the fire department. That tells me we don't have enough people in there to give money to and there's more to that. Mr. Harvey is looking at \$700,000.00 and he is trying to figure out how much of that ends up in the hands of people and their homes because that's what it seems this grant is targeted for.

Mrs. Hill explained that HUD gives them money that say they can do public services, so out of this fund they are funding the WMCA for an afterschool program at a school in an eligible area. They have funds to spend on public improvements and they went through that process and the big thing that people said was they wanted funding spent on sidewalks, drainage, so if we take in account that there is a process to this an every year when we get this fund we go through an RFP process where we have a public hearing and they tell us the types of things that they would like to see, then agencies and people have to come apply and qualify. You could have 50 apply maybe out of that 10 qualify and then we go to their home and realize in order to fix their roof, we can't just do that because they need flooring, plumbing etc. and that rehab job is beyond what is outlined as basic safety stuff that they were going to do. It really goes project by project evaluating HUD also give a certain amount of time to spend these funds, so it could also go into use it or lose it. We look for way that we can serve our community and impact them, securing fire equipment helps our low-income areas. Buying life saving equipment that can go out on those fire trucks in area where that equipment did not exist. We calculate that returning investment as a big bang and we have the funds. Another investment is restrooms in public parks that people use every weekend and they are redoing that using CDBG funds as well. It is not as neatly outlined in the budget and all the funds they have has to meet HUD eligibility and they can't use the fund on anything other than things that qualify.

Councilwoman Woods noted that sometimes they do use these funds for demolition.

Mrs. Hill noted that is something they proposed, but in working with legal that is something we are waiting on an AG opinion. We can demolish public building and building we own it is a question about whether or not we can pay our public funds to demolish something privately owned that's not going to lead to an improvement. If someone is going to tare down their house and rebuild that we can clearly say is an improvement and we could do that.

Councilwoman Woods noted that is it safe to say at the end of the day with these funds it's spent on rehabbing or doing some other things in the community. We don't turn any money back in, do we?

Mrs. Hill said no.

Further discussion followed.



**(11) Engineering**  
**(a) 2021 Capital Infrastructure**  
**All other funds under the direction of the Engineering Dept.**  
Kim Golden, Engineer

Councilwoman Woods asked if Ms. Golden would give us an overall difference of anything that's going on with her budget from last year to this year, increases etc.

Ms. Golden noted that first of all it is a flat budget and they are not giving any raises to any one in any of the divisions, we are not adding any additional positions. She does have several funded vacancies, but they have carried them vacant for one thing they are in temporary quarters and if we hired anybody, they would have to sit on somebody's lap. But what she want to talk about is the philosophy of working smarter and in Traffic they have had an ongoing program of upgrading their traffic signal controllers and if you look at the trend of their overtime you will see by investing in those upgrades we are having fewer callouts. That has help offset cuts that have to be done to keep everything inline. In the Civil Division they are leveraging the asset of their GIS and that was developed as a hosted endeavor because we didn't have inhouse expertise, it was a 6-year program and it worked. At the end of the 6 years we had staff that had the competence to let us bring that inhouse. This opens up all the possibilities for instance the program Mrs. Hill referred to that Code Enforcement is using so that people can keep track that's nested with the GIS. It is going to be one of those things that really develops for the City, it is going to be a backbone of a real asset management program. It is going to take time and the departments are coming together and working around it. In Project Management and the Capital Infrastructure Fund, there are 2 divisions coming out of the general fund and that's Traffic and Civil. Project Management is totally funded by Capital Infrastructure and we have grown the number of projects that they are handling by a little reorganization internally and that we have an administrative side and guys in the field making sure it's getting built right. The administrative side not just help make sure we are keeping up with the paperwork so that we pass the audits, but we are able to handle 12 different grant programs, so we are making sure that we are in compliance. We are applying for the grant, getting the grants, getting it right and getting our money back, so to give you an idea of what's going on with these things because it is strictly under the Mayor's leadership with you all support that these things are happening. At the meeting 2 weeks ago CIC review about 18 drainage projects the total cost is a little over \$42 million of that about \$11.4 million is CIC dedicated funds so the only way we are able to pull down that 42 million from other sources is because we have those dedicated funds and that's about 18 projects. We have about 14 different street projects total cost is a little over \$21 million with an investment of \$8.4 million from CIC, so that you understand what we are able to do through project management because of that dedicated tax and the Mayor leadership and you all support. From a staffing standpoint in Traffic there are 10 funded full-time positions and 8 are filled with 2 vacancies, in Civil there are 7 funded positions 5 are filled and 2 are vacant, one is the city surveyor position. It is posted and they would love to find one but just not out there. In Project Management there are 13 full-time funded, 5 part-time funded and are operating with 6 full-time and 2 part-time. We have a pretty lean staff and we are handling a lot of work and getting ready for more. We are looking forward to moving to the one stop and having more space.

Councilwoman Ezernack just wanted to thank Ms. Golden and she continue to be amazed at what her group produces project wise and the information she pushes out, so we all understand what's going on. Its very much appreciated, you have a very good group behind you who are very knowledgeable and will to assist, thank you.

Mr. Golden thanked Mrs. Ezernack for recognizing them and noted that they are a good group and they work very hard.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to thank Ms. Golden as well.

Councilman Wilson wanted to know who are the executives?

Ms. Golden explained that these are positions that are funded 100% Executive Assistant and Project Expeditor is the Project Manager, Administer, GIS Technician 1 which is a technician dedicated to water, GIS Manager is partially funded there, Project Admin. Specialist, Chief Inspector, GIS Support is a part-time position, a Right of Way and Legal Specialist is part-time that are positions funded 100% from Capital Infrs., the vacant positions that are funded in the budget has to do with 3 inspectors and she also filled receptionist and permit clerk. There is another GIS Tech position that she wants to fill but don't have space yet. Plan Reviewer and Inspector are 100% funded and the Capital Asset Management Coordinator is a new position created and when they get into new building, they will get into asset management. There are a few part-time positions having to do with some software and she keep spots funded for interns because she is looking for bright high school or college students really into math and science who would love to spend the summer doing some engineering.

Councilwoman Woods thanks Ms. Golden.

Mrs. Hill came back to explain what that 106 was that Councilman Harvey was inquiring about which is the 15% cap that they have on public services, it is exactly 15% of that 708 and that would be funds that go directly to agencies like meals on wheels. So that is missed labeled and it should not be capital.

Councilman Harvey thanked Mrs. Hill.

## **12.) Administration**

### **All other funds under the direction of the Admin Dept.**

Stacey Rowell, Administer

Mrs. Rowell Noted that Administration's budget is basically flat as well they took the .7% decrease like everyone else, so was spread out through several accounts.

Councilwoman Ezernack wanted to know what's the employee count in those.

Mr. Richards, Budget Officer noted that they have 2 employees in the director full-time position and they have 8 full-time in IT, 3 part-time, 11 full-time in accounting, 2 part-time, 13 full-time positions in Tax & Revenue, 3 positions in Utility Operations Trash, 1 position in Utility Operations Telecom, 7 full-time positions in personnel, 7 full-time in Purchasing and 1 part-time, 1 position in Property Control, 2 full-time in Maintenance and 1 part-time. That is 55 full-time and 7 part-time.

Councilman Woods wanted to know how many hours are the part-time getting.

Mrs. Rowell said that they should work less than 30 hours.

Mr. Richards said they budget for 1300 hours annually.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know how the user software expense jump up like that, it's about 40 grans.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they have contracts and sometimes they escalate, and she has several different pieces that she pays for citywide or she could be adding software we haven't had in the past.

Councilman Wilson asked if there were any raises in this budget.

Mrs. Rowell said there are no raises.

Councilwoman Woods asked if there were any type of restructuring.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they are pretty much staying the same, they have some vacancies throughout different areas and some are being held off from filling because budget wise they have to pay out some separation pay so they are absorbing that in their budget and they can't afford to fill it until they run through all that money.

Councilman Harvey asked if that was per policy or settlement.

Mrs. Rowell said no, they just don't have any money.

Councilman Harvey noted that when you say a separation.

Mr. Richards explained that it is normal policy that when someone retire or resigns their accrual leave is pay out in lumpsum.

Councilman Wilson asked what do we lease and rent?

Councilman Harvey noted that is consistent across the accounts if it's copiers and printers they must have gotten a new wave.

Mr. Richards, Budget Director noted that we got a bunch of computers that we are leasing as opposed to purchasing, so that is going to be reflected in a lot of departments.

Mrs. Rowell noted that they have to carry their share of their lease in there based on a per computer count, so that is probably what you see in their increase of lease and rental.

## **13.) City Expense**

**Stacey Rowell, Administrator**

Mrs. Rowell noted that Dan did a good job in noting for you all with what each line is in city expense so if you have any questions or clarification for that.

Councilman Harvey noted that Ouachita Council of Government that was a pretty substantial year over year increase, increase to Homeland Security.

Mrs. Rowell noted that some of those we don't have a choice on, that's our share and we get told how much. The same on Homeland Security we get billed for that and that's our share. We don't know ahead of time sometimes what it is.

Councilwoman Woods wanted to know who would the temporary workers be?

Mrs. Rowell said that is Beverley Stewart for the Civil Service Board.

Councilman Harvey noted that some of these under debt service like golf capital lease there was \$75,000.00 last year and the department requested even more and are those debts rolling off.

Mr. Richards noted that all that is funded out of Community Affairs Chennault Golf Budget.

Councilwoman Woods asked about the workers compensation and then you have the second injury.

Mrs. Rowell explained that workers comp is our actual expense for what we pay out for some claims, the second injury fund assessment that is a fee that we pay to the second injury board where they reimburse us money if someone comes to work for us and they say they have a back injury from previous, once they are hired they fill out a questionnaire and they are to list thing that are wrong with them because if they get injured on the job and it's their back then there are preexisting injuries we can apply to the second injury board and they will reimburse us toward those injuries. We have to pay so much a year into that fund to be able to do that.

Councilwoman Woods noted that that fee is significant.

Mrs. Rowell noted that is probably based on our workers comp claims.

Councilwoman Woods asked about the prisoner housing and if that is what we are paying.

Mrs. Rowell explained that is what we pay RCC to house our prisoners we were paying them 32.50.

Mayor Mayo noted that it is OCC now and they are working a deal where that may decrease.

Councilman Woods wanted to know what the election expenses were.

Mrs. Rowell explained that we know we are having an election April 4th and the State bills us and that bill will come in next fiscal year for that election. We estimate what that is based on the past.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know what we pay for coroner fees and autopsy, what cost does the city bear with that.

Mrs. Rowell explained that it is for autopsy, anybody that dies inside the city limits we pay for them to go to Little Rock under certain circumstances of death.

Councilman Harvey wanted to know if that was unique to the City of Monroe.

Mrs. Rowell noted that it is a state mandate. We are required to support the Coroner's Office.

**Public hearing & final adoption of budget must occur no later than the April 14, 2020 Council Meeting. (City Charter, Article V, Sec. 5-01)**

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and seconded by Mr. Harvey.

Juanita G. Woods  
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley  
Council Clerk

For extended details on the council meeting please call the Council Clerk Monday-Friday at 318-329-2252 to schedule an appointment to listen to the minutes.