

City of West Buechel
Special Council Meeting
City Council Chambers
3705 Bashford Avenue
Louisville, KY 40218
June 1, 2021 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Brenda Moore, Attorney Mark Hall, Councilwoman Linda Cook, Councilwoman Danielle Wood, Councilwoman Ashley Stewart, Councilwoman Kim Richards, Councilman Toby Clark, City Clerk Debbie Batliner. Councilwoman Evelyn Saldana was absent. Visitors were Bonnie Manning, Lyn Gauthier and Rose Shouse.

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Moore welcomed everyone and presented her budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

After Attorney Mark Hall read Mayor Moore's proposal, Mayor Moore requested that Clerk/Treasurer Debbie Batliner recap the Budget Committee findings.

Clerk Batliner stated that the Budget Committee met twice and there were no issues regarding the revenue.

Clerk Batliner noted that Councilwoman Richards and Councilman Clark had issues with the business office salaries. There was \$182,000 allotted in the business office salaries and Councilman Clark and Councilwoman Richards wanted part time help in the business office to hold down benefits, insurance and CERS. Mayor Moore disagreed with their findings and stated that we needed trained and quality staff.

Councilman Clark and Councilwoman Richards wanted to reduce the travel expenses for the council, ethics board and office staff. They also wanted to reduce the city attorney from \$19,000 to \$18,000 and the council attorney to be brought down from \$18,000 to \$12,000.

Code Enforcement: Councilman Clark and Councilwoman Richards wanted a part time position for hearings, agenda, notices and stated having a part time person would not change the bottom line.

Clerk Batliner stated that the budget committee wanted to wait until the Community Center Committee met to hear suggestions from them before deciding.

Clerk Batliner stated that there was not a problem with the police department budget, but Councilwoman Richards and Councilman Clark wanted justification for 3 cars. They also wanted public

works to remain the same. Clerk Batliner stated that funds were in the budget for above normal snow fall.

Councilwoman Richards questioned the \$350,000 in capital outlay and wanted the entire council to discuss how those funds should be used. Clerk Batliner had taken some of the council members on a tour of the upstairs to see what the funds were set aside for. Clerk Batliner informed the council that we lost our storage space to a new heating vent and our server room goes against OSHA guidelines because we have the server in the electrical room along with the phone systems and some of the files. Clerk Batliner stated that Mayor Moore feels very strongly about getting proper records storage.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and second by Councilwoman Stewart to take a 10-minute break and to get paperwork that they were lacking. Motion carried with unanimous vote.

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:24.

Councilman Clark questioned if there were changes that were made from the Budget Committee meetings to this paperwork. Clerk Batliner informed him that the business office salaries, city attorney, code enforcement and the pension health care for administration had changed.

Councilwoman Richards questioned if there were changes made from the Budget Committee meetings to this paperwork. Clerk Batliner informed her that there were changes made as she had just informed Councilman Clark.

Councilwoman Richards questioned about the capital outlay funds and was informed it was left alone. She also questioned about the Code Enforcement person to be hired. Clerk Batliner stated that there were changes in the pension, health care and payroll. Moved one full-time administrative position to fulltime code enforcement. Councilwoman Richards stated that there were not that many people in city hall when Rick Richards was Mayor, and she was city clerk. Clerk Batliner informed her that she had information on the number of employees in city hall during Rick Richards term and Sharon Fowler's term and could prove their salaries and overtime. If need be, she could redact the information and show the payroll reports to the council and there were always no less than 4.

Councilman Clark wants to see the payroll because he said there was not 4 full time employees during Fowler's term. Councilwoman Richards stated that there were 6 before Rick Richards term. Clerk Batliner stated that she would show him the proof of the personnel whenever he would like to view it.

Councilman Clark does not want to use the \$350,000 in capital outlay on the project for the upstairs of city hall. He wants to create a development committee. He stated that he had a vision of going to the residents in this community and the apartments to see what they wanted to do with the extra funds. He does not feel that the upstairs of city hall is a need, it is just a want, and he does not want to go into

the community and explain to residents why the funds went to the upstairs of city hall. He would prefer the funds to be used in a community project.

Councilman Clark stated that he had no problems with the community center helping kids, but he sees no need for a full-time person once the school year is back in session. He thinks that one part time person could take care of the community center and that would save on health care, pension etc.

Councilman Clark also stated that he was against 5% pay increases across the board when inflation is at 1.25%. He thinks a 2.5% pay increase is reasonable. He stated that the people in West Buechel are well paid and urges the council to consider a lower increase.

Councilman Clark said that he had made some comparisons with cities our size like Watterson Park and Audubon, and they did not require 4 staff members. Mayor Moore informed Councilman Clark that Watterson Park does not even have an office nor police officers and they meet at Farm Bureau office and work from home. She also stated that Audubon does not participate in the retirement system. Mayor Moore stated that there are huge differences in those cities and in West Buechel.

Clerk Batliner stated that the council needed to consider that there was no other city in Jefferson County behind in their audits and lost their road aid money. Also, hard to compare to last year because some personnel did not receive pay raises. Clerk Batliner reminded the council that your employees are your most valuable asset. If you choose to get untrained, uncertified personnel then you will end up in the same places we just came from.

Clerk Batliner informed the council that we will have three audits done in one year and that will bring us up to date so we can start receiving road aid money again.

Mayor Moore stated that not everyone got raises. Code Enforcement did not receive a raise last year.

Councilwoman Richards questioned what he was doing besides out there picking up garbage.

Mayor Moore told Councilwoman Richards she was out of order.

Councilwoman Stewart spoke about the community center and her ideas for the community center operation. Eleven until one could be early childhood program, HS and Middle school could be 2:30 to 4:30 with homework help and 4:30 to 6:30 could be elementary school homework help.

Mayor Moore stated that there were no programs for seniors. Councilwoman Stewart stated that we could contract out for programs for seniors on the weekends. Mayor Moore stated that seniors wanted to be with their families on the weekends.

Attorney Hall stated that we were off track and needed to discuss only things that pertain to the budget.

Councilwoman Richards stated that we should leave the community center as is for now.

Councilman Clark repeated that he was trying to prepare budget for what we need and not what we want.

Councilwoman Richards stated that the whole city hall building was built for \$300,000. If there is anything that would have to be done due to safety issues, we could do for less than \$350,000 and put the rest off until next year. Councilwoman Richards stated that we have no idea what we are getting in revenue and do not need to spend on the city hall building.

Councilwoman Richards also stated that she agreed with councilman Clark regarding the 5% across the board raises. She thinks that the maximum should be 2.5%. She also requested that the budget committee work on the pay classification.

Councilwoman Richards requested that herself and Councilman Clark will complete the Pay Classification and present it to the Council on June 10th.

Councilwoman Richards stated that she was concerned about seeing the justification for three new police cars.

Clerk Batliner stated that she would forward the e-mail that Interim Chief of Police Tyler sent that justified the three vehicles.

Bonnie Manning spoke to the council about the need for the community center. She also stated that the upstairs of city hall would cost a lot to repair since all building materials have gone up.

Councilwoman Cook stated that she was in favor of full-time employees because of training that is required for these positions and it is a benefit for the city. She also stated that a part time employee does not care like a full-time employee that has a vested interest in their job.

Councilwoman Cook said that she thought that we could wait on the upstairs. She suggested doing the one file room and not do the whole upstairs now.

Councilwoman Cook stated that she agreed with Attorney Chris Johnson that we do not need a pay classification. She also stated that she was in favor of a 5% pay increase because prices are going up and an increase in salary would be fair.

Councilman Clark stated that his reasoning for the pay classification was a guideline to set salaries. If you do not have one there is no discretion on how funds will be spent. Guidelines need to be set in place.

Councilwoman Cook stated that it had been in place since 2007 and a 5% increase was fair. If it had been in place that long and no one abused it, there is not a problem now. The city piggybacked off the previous ordinance and there had been a 5% increase in the ordinance from 2013 thru 2018.

Mayor Moore stated that we did not have a budget for years. Once it was established in the ordinance, that is in place of the pay classification.

Clerk Batliner stated that a pay classification for a small city was not needed. The Budget would suffice for a pay increase or decrease. Clerk Batliner also stated that in a pay classification, you would have to look at the credentials, education, etc. you would also have to differentiate between full time and part time employees. Also, the legalities that we deal with, having a part time employee would not be safe.

Mayor Moore stated that employees would have to be bonded when handling money.

Councilwoman Wood agrees with Councilwoman Cook that it is important to have the best, so we do not run into problems we are still dealing with from past administrations. Need full time employees so we can function correctly and not go back to the way it was. Should be professionals.

Councilwoman Richards stated that the money that the mayor has set aside for upstairs should be used for the community. She also wants Councilwoman Stewart to fix the community center and not shut it down.

Councilwoman Richards requested that we put aside \$100,000 in budget for the residents.

Councilwoman Richards also said that Clerk Batliner was mistaken about what she meant regarding the two new full-time employees added to the office. She stated that she wanted a part time person for code enforcement to write citations in the evenings and weekends. Not a clerk.

Councilwoman Richards wants to look at altering hours between current enforcement officer and a part time officer. Councilwoman Richards wants to know when the Code Enforcement Officer will start writing citations again. Clerk Batliner informed her that he would start back July 1st.

Councilwoman Richards stated that she tried to amend the budget to allow for a city council attorney and Councilman Clark put money in there and administration can do what they want to do with it.

Attorney Hall explained that the money was already in the administration budget and did not have to amend the budget to allow for the salary of an attorney for the council.

Councilwoman Richards stated that they will amend the budget one time at the end of the year because there was no category for the city council attorney.

Attorney Hall stated that it was under administration. There was 1.6 million instead of earmarking, can use under any category in administration. It is perfectly valid and legal to use those funds for a council attorney.

Clerk Batliner stated that the money was left to get us through the pandemic and make the dollar stretch farther.

Attorney Hall stated that he had many hours that was not billed. Time spent for research, defending lawsuits brought on by council member, organize litigation code enforcement and has been as frugal as can be to get called a liar and paid too much.

Councilwoman Richards said, "thank you for your hard work, but your 40 hours a week did not get the council the information that they requested."

Councilwoman Stewart stated that unless we have a project, leave the funds as is and we can amend the budget. This does not have to be the end of it.

Councilwoman Linda Cook sponsored Ordinance 294 Series 2021 FY 21-22 City of West Buechel Budget.

Attorney Hall read Ordinance 294 Series 2021 City of West Buechel Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 as first reading.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Wood and second by Councilwoman Cook to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM. Motion carried unanimously.



Mayor Brenda Moore

ATTEST:



City Clerk, Debbie Batliner