

City of Carter Lake
City Hall – 950 Locust St.
Budget Meeting
Proceedings: Thursday, March 12, 2015 – 6:00 PM

The Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Gerald Waltrip called the Budget Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll Call: Present – Council members Dave Huey, Ron Cumberledge, and Barb Hawkins
Council member Barb Melonis arrived at 6:42 PM
Council member Ed Aldmeyer was present on the telephone.

Also present – City Clerk Doreen Mowery

John Paterson questioned the legality of a council member attending a meeting by telephone. The clerk will provide Mr. Paterson with the code that allows electronic attendance.

Mayor Waltrip explained that the budget has to be certified to the State by March 16, 2015. He has worked with council members Cumberledge and Melonis to try to come up with some solutions for the budget shortfall. The budget that the council passed on March 2nd cannot be changed from the way it was published and adopted. He is now looking for commitments from the council to make enough changes prior to July 1 to keep from using reserve funds.

The clerk read the proposal that the Mayor and the two council members would like the remainder of the council to consider. Suggestions included: cut the position of the Resource Center Office Assistant, cut the newsletter, freeze department head wages, eliminate the new cruiser, the water rescue team, and reallocate Deputy Clerk's wages. It was recommended that the Resource Center and Library work together to create the newsletter electronically and a news page could be added to the City's website. Consideration would also be given to distributing a one page handout on a weekly basis. Council member Hawkins is committed to sitting down with the Mayor and getting a budget plan. She is not in favor of eliminating the Water Rescue Team. She would like to find a different funding source for that program. She is willing to work with the Mayor to make the numbers work by July 1st.

The Mayor stated that the WET uses quite a bit of space at the fire station. Omaha owns 87% of the lake and they can handle any water rescue better than Carter Lake.

Council member Huey stated that if Omaha loses their dive team the next closest team is in Yutan or Red Oak. Water rescue is a secondary team in Omaha. Carter Lake's fire chief is willing to give up funding next year, but they would like to keep the team and not lose their investment in the program. Carter Lake has citizens living on the lake and Omaha does not have dwellings on the lake.

Council member Aldmeyer suggested changing the word "eliminate". He does not believe there is a reason to eliminate the Water Rescue.

Council member Huey would like to work a little bit more to take across the board wage hits.

Council member Cumberledge asked Julie Dake-Able of AFSCME if there was any way to negotiate lowering the union member's wages. She said that the wages must be honored during the contract period. In addition to department heads, the part-time park

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workers, the fire department coordinator and the deputy clerk are the only employees that not covered by one of the two union contracts.

Patrice DeVault questioned how the newsletter was going to be accessible to people that do not have access to the computer. Council member Cumberledge reassured her that the people would still have access to the newsletter.

The Mayor requested a motion to commit to adjusting the budget. Council member Hawkins and Huey verbally committed to doing what needs to be done.

The Mayor read a summary of where he stands on the budget issues. The Mayor wants to see a study for the need of any grant before it is considered. His opinion is wages are on the high end and the benefits are also on the high end. He would like to invest in Carter Lake's own citizens instead of farming out the work. He would like to see shared resources between departments. The Parade and Festival should be run with volunteers. The Library has been involved with the Resource Center on partnering for programs as far back as 1995. The Boys and Girls Club provides the services that the Resource Center does. He believes the City could subsidize the Boys and Girls Club by setting up a fund with \$3,000 to fund 100 students for a year. He believes the Library and Resource Center should be merged and run by the Library Director. The Resource Center programmer can stay in the school however she would be supervised by the Library Director. It is not fair to the public that the newspaper twists the facts. The Resource Center Director is quoted in the newspaper as saying she has received approximately million dollars in grants over the last 10 years. The Mayor stated those grants are the reason for today's financial problems. When you hire people with a grant and the grant runs out the employees expect the community to pick up the bill. His position is that grants are for things and not for people.

Council member Hawkins stated that the grants have been good for the community and have not been a bad thing. The employees know that if the grant funds stop then the employees no longer have a job.

Amy Smith stood up and stated she is a supporter of the Resource Center. She stated the programs have supported her children and her with many outings and events. Her oldest son now volunteers as a peer at the Center. She doesn't feel the community should cut back on services to the children in the community. She does not think combining the kids at the library is a good fit. The activities provided by the Resource Center are safe and fun for her children.

The Mayor stated that the Boys Club provides the services that are needed by the youth. Council member Cumberledge stated the only employee he wants to cut is the employee that does not work in Carter Lake.

Council member Hawkins stated she is committed to not dissolving the Resource Center and their programs.

Vera Rosenberger complimented the programs at the Boys and Girls Club. Her children used it and it is a wonderful place. She stated that the churches also have children's activities. She also stated that there needs to be more parent involvement. She said the council needs to quit their spending and balance the budget.

Patrice DeVault stated the Library and their staff are phenomenal. She also attends Resource Center events. She pays for her children to attend the Resource Center summer events. Not everything is 100% funded by the city. She received a list of the Resource Center events and she was taken back by all of the services provided. She thinks the

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community can support all of the organizations, but it is not okay to remove the Resource Center. Their programs work.

The Mayor stated the city does not need six people to do the job of three people. The Mayor stated nothing was going to change tomorrow. He is trying to find a more equitable way to eliminate the budget deficit. He stated he still has the right to veto the budget. He is not here to hurt the City of Carter Lake.

Pat Paterson questioned Dave, Barb and Ed about why he should think their word is going to be any better on July 1st. He would like a motion and a second on a resolution. Keebie Kessler stated that he has been on the coalition board for over 20 years. Everyone that gets hired knows that it is run by a grant and if the funds run out they are out of a job. They have always been able to apply for and receive grants.

The Mayor stated they cannot apply for a grant unless he agrees to them to apply. His position is that there will only be one employee in the Resource Center and that person will be under the supervision of the Library Director.

Jim Skudler asked if the Mayor even knows what the Resource Center does.

The Mayor stated that he hasn't had anyone in the community tell him what the Resource Center does. He has tried 10 times in a year to go to the Resource Center and half the time no one is there.

Mr. Skudler suggested that the Mayor make an appointment to assure someone would be at the Resource Center. He wanted to know how much Omaha will charge to use their water rescue team.

The Mayor stated that the budget has to be fixed by July 1 or the City won't get state funds and would have to file bankruptcy.

Council member Melonis made a motion to do the following in order to balance the budget, avoid a veto and retain the programs at the resource center; cut the position of the resource center office assistant, cut the contract for the newsletter (that would be doing it in a different fashion), cut the printing, postage, etc. for the newsletter, freeze department head wages that are currently coming from the general fund, do not purchase the police cruiser and leave half of that cost for vehicle maintenance and repair, eliminate the water rescue team, and allocate ¼ of the deputy clerk's wages from water, ¼ from sewer, and ½ from administration. The general fund savings would be \$70,142. She instructed that the budget amendment be prepared and published for the July 20, 2015 regular council meeting. In the meantime the proposed changes would be implemented. Council member Cumberledge seconded the motion. Motion and second were amended to take out the word "eliminate" from the water rescue and change it to "not fund". Roll call: Ayes: Hawkins, Cumberledge, Melonis. Nays: Aldmeyer, Huey.

Council member Melonis stated that this has been a very tedious time for everyone. The meeting that she had with the Mayor the other day was the most fruitful she has had with him.

The special city council meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Doreen Mowery, City Clerk

Gerald Waltrip, Mayor