

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

PUBLIC HEARING

JUNE 29, 2022

The Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) met in a Public Hearing on Wednesday, June 29, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 123 Boone Street, Jonesborough, TN.

The first item on the Public Hearing agenda was the FY2021-22 Budget Amendments for the General, Drug and Solid Waste Funds. There were no comments.

The Public Hearing was closed.

PAT RYDER, RECORDER

CHUCK VEST, MAYOR

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

CALLED MEETING

JUNE 29, 2022

The Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) met in a Called Meeting on Wednesday, June 29, 2022, at 5:30 p.m., at the Town Hall, 123 Boone Street, Jonesborough, TN.

Mayor Vest called the meeting to order. Alderman Wolfe led the group in an opening Prayer, and Mayor Vest led the pledge to the Flag.

Upon call of the roll those present were: Mayor Chuck Vest Alderman Virginia Causey, Alderman Terry Countermine, and Alderman Kelly Wolfe. Alderman Adam Dickson was absent. Also, present were: Town Administrator Glenn Rosenoff, Town Recorder Pat Ryder, Operations Manager Craig Ford, and Town Attorney Jim Wheeler.

The only item on the agenda was discussion and possible action concerning second and final reading of an Ordinance for the FY2021-22 Budget Amendments for the General, Drug and Solid Waste Funds. Mayor Vest asked the Aldermen if they had any comments or questions. Alderman Wolfe asked Town Recorder Pat Ryder why he

has a line item called balance at the end of each of these fund classifications, there is revenues listed, expenditures listed and a line item to transfer to fund balance. Alderman Wolfe asked what fund balance meant because it looks like to him it is merely a reflection of revenues. Pat Ryder said in this case, with respect to the first one it is the difference between revenues and expenditures into the extent they are not in balance. Alderman Wolfe said that is not what he is asking. Alderman Wolfe said there is a line that states balance at the bottom of each of these funds, it is merely at the top and it is the same number for General Fund as it is at the bottom. Pat Ryder said balance is equal to expenditures plus the differences between expenditures and revenues. Mayor Vest said in Solid Waste it looks like where they transferred something from the fund balance. Alderman Wolfe asked Pat Ryder if he was saying if its positive then they are going to match and if it is negative there not. Pat Ryder said the transfer of the fund balance can be positive or negative depending on which is greater, but the balances is going to match revenue in either case. Alderman Wolfe said Solid Waste does not. Mayor Vest said there is a transfer from fund balance to make that happen. Town Administrator Glenn Rosenoff said the revenues and expenditures have to balance. Alderman Wolfe said he understands, but he does not understand the terminology of balance. Glenn Rosenoff said balance is in the case of the General Fund the \$10,439,408 is what balances the budget between revenues and expenditures. Pat Ryder said whichever is greater because it has to match, so whether you have to come into the fund or out of the fund. Alderman Wolfe said this is a new term and the use of this term and he was confused by the use of this term. Alderman Wolfe asked Pat Ryder if he has looked at past budgets or referenced past budgets to make sure that this is a format that is acceptable from the State. Pat Ryder said he is not familiar with the format to the State at this point. Alderman Wolfe asked if this has to go to the State of Tennessee. Glenn Rosenoff said the Ordinance before the Board is the same Ordinance that has been passed for years. Mr. Rosenoff said this information is basically your general information. Alderman Wolfe said he did not have a copy of the Ordinance, and that was his next point. Glenn Rosenoff asked Alderman Wolfe if he did not have a packet. Alderman Causey said the packets were emailed out. Alderman Wolfe said he was not present at the Board meeting when the first reading was passed and asked Glenn Rosenoff if they do have a copy of an Ordinance. Glenn Rosenoff said yes. Alderman Wolfe said in the past Board members have had a little bit of a narrative talking about the different rationale instead of just having the numbers presented and asked if that is something that has been shared internally or shared with other Board members. Glenn Rosenoff said the agenda presentation has a narrative of what funds were whether they were up or down or they thought there would be some adjustments. Alderman Causey said she felt what Alderman Wolfe is saying is that in the past Abbey Miller would show which line items are being adjusted and then a final and the Board would have a big packet of the adjustments instead of just of the summary. Pat Ryder said in the past there was a line item summary and that they do have the line item working spread sheet that they used to summarize in this case, but not like in the past where Abbey Miller would go line item by line item to produce that. Pat Ryder said he had not done that, but they do have the working spread sheet by line item and this is a summary of that work. Alderman Wolfe said honestly if you want to look at it and understand the document it is hard to understand with the information being presented,

and that is his comment. Mayor Vest said it is certainly more general than in the past. Alderman Wolfe agreed.

Alderman Wolfe said he was absent for a pre-planned vacation at the last meeting, but there has been a budget continuing Resolution passed, but in all the Town adopting a formal budget to date yet uncertain.

Alderman Wolfe said he wants to say something and wants it to be taken constructively, but he also wants it to be taken extremely strongly, we are in a state of great peril as a Town as it comes to our employees, our current pay we are offering them and current employment policy that we are having to follow which dated very slow and very difficult to navigate. Alderman Wolfe said we are fighting a losing battle with both arms tied behind our back at this point. He said our employees are leaving at extremely high rates. He said employees are looking at \$5.00 per gallon gasoline, grocery store prices that are off the charts and they are having to make decisions based on the needs and interest of their family that conflict with their love for and loyalty to our Town. Alderman Wolfe said it has always been the case you could probably have a better paying job than being here, but because of their love for their community they chose to be here and chose to invest and grow through the ranks with the Town. Alderman Wolfe said we are now making it practically impossible to recruit new employees to the Town of Jonesborough with what our starting pay is on the current pay plan. He said if we do not take seriously and take immediate action, Mayor, and not delay it, immediate action as in a called meeting to address the employee pay plan revisions that have been drafted that the Board has seen via email, and to adopt a pay scale that our employees know is going to something that they can count on next year, we are going to be faced with even more of a mass exodus of talent and we are going to continue to be short staffed. Alderman Wolfe said he has been talking to several of the department heads. Alderman Wolfe said you have some departments with sixteen employees, and they are short seven positions, and another critical department is short three positions. He said if you can't hire people our Town for all intense and purposes is going to have to make a decision, are we going to close the doors or are we going to step up and pay people what it is going to take to get them in here. He said he is, thus far, unfortunately not happy with the lack of urgency getting this done. He said the budget in its entirety can be delayed as much as you need it to be through this continuing Resolution, but he thinks we as a Board need to make a strong statement and make it very quickly and let our employees know that we are here for them, we have their back, we appreciate what they are doing, and we are not going to let them down. Alderman Wolfe said you can go to Chick-Fil-la and start out at \$16.00 per hour, and there are some instances where McDonald's is paying more than that. Alderman Wolfe said it is a sad state of affairs, if we as the oldest town in the State of Tennessee, can't do better than what we are doing for our starting salaries, which is somewhere in the \$13.00 range, is that not correct. Glenn Rosenoff said it is a little more than \$11.00. Alderman Wolfe said \$11.00, even worse; we need to have a very board pay raise that covers last year's hit from inflation and this year's hit from inflation and it needs to happen before our next regular meeting, and it needs to happen before the budget gets done. He said we need to tell these employees what we are going to do, because he is telling you right now there are being

asked to switch jobs, you turn on the television and you see major employer around here advertising with a bright shiny red truck, \$22.00 per hour starting salary. Alderman Wolfe said our people have got to feed their families, and unfortunately the world we live in is extremely tumultuous and you can't blame them if they have to make a tough choice to leave us, but we as a Board have a duty and obligation of oath to protect this town and do what is in its best interest; and if you are not willing to step up and do it quickly you might as well turn the lights off.

Mayor Vest said at their meeting toward the end of the last month, that was the topic of discussion of how are we going to address the upcoming pay increases that we need and that is part of the budget process. Mayor Vest said we understand that we are going to have to give out larger pay raises, it is a decision that this board is going to have to make, we can do that, but where is the revenue coming from. Mayor Vest said that is going to be up to the Board to decide that. Glenn Rosenoff said we had a good retreat and we talked specifically about what Alderman Wolfe is talking about as far as pay, and before Alderman Wolfe came on board, we bombarded everyone with those YouTube advertisements of how we are competing against other companies. Mr. Rosenoff said they presented some information on what it would take if we were to reduce benefits and pay. Mr. Rosenoff said he does have some homework for everyone based on different percentages of across the board increases to also a different scenario of employees hire. He said he has specifically said to different Aldermen that he considers this topic of urgency and importance. He said he felt led to send out a memo to the all the employees that has gone out that we or I care about them and understand that the number one priority of this budget cycle is the pay, obviously there are other important things of matter of the town, and beyond everything else that is our priority. Glenn Rosenoff said it is urgent and it is important to him, as the Town Administrator, to work with the Board to do that. Mr. Rosenoff said he does have some information, that is not part of this packet, that he can provide to Board members when we are done with this meeting, to give food for thought. Mr. Rosenoff said in regard to the personnel policy matters, he agrees 100%, and that it is drafted and is prepared and ready for Board action, and he is willing to meet at the pleasure of the Board whenever they want to meet. Alderman Wolfe said we are hemorrhaging employees. Glenn Rosenoff said he agrees. Alderman Wolfe said we are not responding quickly enough to compete with the pressures from the private and public sector. Alderman Wolfe said other cities have already acted, and that we have to take action.

Town Attorney Jim Wheeler asked Mayor Wolfe if he could address this. Mayor Vest replied yes. Attorney Wheeler said what his hearing is called for getting something done on that and suggestion that be done before the budget, but you may have to do both immediately, because you are very limited in what you can do in a continuing budget situation. Alderman Wheeler said you cannot exceed a line item, you cannot exceed from one month from what the previous year was. Alderman Wheeler said unless the Town had open positions in a specific line item that were not filled there may be some extra money there, if you don't have that in a given department or given line item you would have a lot of trouble any kind of significant increase. He said the Board needs to keep that in mind and unfortunately that would tie it moving the entire budget

along and getting the budget approved to be able to increase those line items. Mayor Vest said the sooner the better on getting the budget approved, and he doesn't feel we need to have a two month or three month continuing budget. Attorney Wheeler said you have certainly had that in the past and it is not uncommon, but in this situation, you cannot do pay increases when you do that. Town Administrator Glenn Rosenoff said the expectation is to move speedily to approve a very good budget for the Town. Mr. Rosenoff said he is reiterating that it is urgent, and it is important to Town staff and himself. Mayor Vest said he feels what Alderman Wolfe is saying, if we know that the first thing, we need to look at is our wages and salaries and we address that first, and even if that can't be put into the budget, we can kind of put the word that we are coming with an x-percent increase for everyone one, so that they know it is coming two months down the road, and not let the employees sit in the dark.

Alderman Countermine asked where do we anticipate the additional revenue coming from. Mayor Vest said it may have to be through a property tax increase, our sales tax is strong, but it would have to come through property taxes. Alderman Causey said department heads can look at their budget and if see if they have something that can wait for another year. Alderman Causey said in the past the Board has gotten what the department heads have submitted. Glenn Rosenoff said staff will get that out to the Board members within the next couple of days. Mayor Vest said department heads need to know the priority for each department is addressing the salary and pay issues, and if that means that they can defer purchasing something to the next year then we should do that. Alderman Countermine asked when the new property assessments would be out, which would automatically more money if we didn't adjust any budgets. Alderman Wolfe said that will be next year. Alderman Countermine said then we cannot depend on that for this year. Alderman Wolfe said there will be growth money that will increase, due to the number of houses being built.

Mayor Vest asked Board members about having a Called Meeting on Wednesday, July 6, 2022 at 8:30 am. The consensus of the Board members was to have the called meeting as suggested by Mayor Vest.

Mayor Vest asked if there were any further comments or questions. There being none, Alderman Countermine made the motion to approve on second and final reading the Ordinance amending the FY2021-22 General, Drug and Solid Waste Fund budgets with the corrected amounts presented today. Alderman Causey seconded the motion, and it was duly passed.

INSERT ORDINANCE

With there being no further business, Mayor Vest adjourned the meeting

PAT RYDER, RECORDER

CHUCK VEST, MAYOR