



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
330 Harbor Drive
Sitka, AK
(907)747-1811

Minutes - Final

City and Borough Assembly

*Mayor Gary Paxton
Deputy Mayor Steven Eisenbeisz,
Vice Deputy Mayor Kevin Mosher,
Kevin Knox, Dr. Richard Wein, Valorie Nelson, Thor
Christianson*

*Municipal Administrator: John Leach
Municipal Attorney: Brian Hanson
Municipal Clerk: Sara Peterson*

Thursday, March 5, 2020

6:00 PM

Assembly Chambers

SPECIAL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Christianson, Knox, Wein, Paxton, Mosher, and Nelson

Absent: 1 - Eisenbeisz

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A [20-057](#) Discussion / Direction / Decision for the FY2021 Municipal Budget with focus on the General Fund

Controller Melissa Haley reviewed the process to date and presented on the General Fund. Haley spoke to available resources to fund general governmental operations and infrastructure repairs, trends in federal and state funding, and noted reduced state and federal funding meant more reliance on local revenue streams. Haley reminded staff was directed to keep services/staffing at the same level with the following exceptions: salary for Library Director increased, Assistant Controller position for succession planning for one year, Community Affairs Director position budgeted, no funding for lobbyists, no rehire of vacant Engineer position, subsidy to Electric Fund to cover USDA loan for Green Lake, and signing bonuses for police officers not budgeted.

A motion was made by Mosher to fund lobbyists Larry Markley (\$25,000) and Blank Rome (\$120,000) in the FY2021 budget. The motion PASSED by the following vote.

Yes: 4 - Paxton, Christianson, Mosher, and Nelson

No: 2 - Knox and Wein

Absent: 1 - Eisenbeisz

Mosher spoke in support of lobbyist funding reminding the City had only started working with Blank Rome. Wein spoke in support of Blank Rome and wished to see regular updates from the firm. He wondered if this funding request was in addition to the Community Affairs Director position or in place of. Nelson reminded she was initially in support of funding Blank Rome if the Community Affairs Director position were eliminated. Knox spoke to the need for a Community Affairs Director. Christianson suggested it be placed in the budget and reminded of the ability to adjust the budget as needed.

Public Works Engineer Position

Christianson requested the Administrator report back to the Assembly if and when a future adjustment was needed. Wein spoke to temporary employees and overtime amounts in the budget.

Signing Bonuses for Police Department

A motion was made by Christianson to include a total of \$15,000 for Sitka Police Department signing bonuses in the FY2021 budget. The motion PASSED by the following vote.

Yes: 5 - Knox, Paxton, Wein, Mosher, and Christianson

No: 1 - Nelson

Absent: 1 - Eisenbeisz

Nelson voiced opposition and stated there were still problems in the Police Department. Wein said while it was unknown if signing bonuses would attract prospective employees it was a small amount and not unreasonable. Mosher concurred. Paxton spoke in support noting the shortage of officers on a local, state, and nationwide level. Knox said it was a small token on an issue that would be need to be addressed in multiple ways.

Haley continued with the remainder of the presentation. She told of government services expenses and factors impacting those expenses - e.g. health insurance rates, implementation of the Building Maintenance Fund, PERS, and a temporary increase in Finance FTE. Haley spoke to local funding for education and school building depreciation, school bond debt service, and reminded no funding was secured for future school building renovations. Knox proposed the idea of creating a sinking fund for school building maintenance.

Capital project funding was discussed with specific attention to the Peterson Storm Sewer Rehabilitation Project, Knutson Drive Critical Repairs, Katlian Avenue Paving Project, and Crescent Harbor Restrooms. Public Works Director Michael Harmon answered questions related to each project.

Wein complimented staff on the presentation and suggested it would be helpful for department heads to write a paragraph explaining their budget and any differences.

VI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

None.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Nelson to ADJOURN. Hearing no objections, the meeting ADJOURNED at 7:42 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Sara Peterson, MMC
Municipal Clerk