

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa. November 9, 2010

Tuesday,
November 9, 2010
6:00 p.m.

The Second Budget Review Session of the City Council was held at the above hour in the 6th floor Conference Room, One S. Third Street, Easton, Pa. to review proposed Expenditures for 2010 budget.

The following members of City Council were present: Mr. Brown, Mr. Fleck, Dr. Ruggles, Mrs. Vulcano, Mr. Warren, Mayor Panto. Also in attendance was Rita M. Messa, Assistant City Clerk, Glenn Steckman, City Administrator and William Murphy, City Solicitor. There were approximately 32 other persons present.

Mayor Panto opened the session by asking if anyone had any questions regarding the budget.

Mr. Fleck asked about shared cost of Health Care.

Mr. Steckman addressed Mr. Flecks inquiry by explaining the changes that have already been implemented, for example, co-pays, (3) tiered prescription plan, flexible spending accounts, etc.

There was a brief discussion on this matter.

Mayor Panto spoke about the GEDP allocation of \$375,000. Dr. Ruggles stated that he would like to have a better breakdown of the monies that the City is allocating to GEDP. Mr. Heagele, Finance Director provided Council with a breakdown of the \$375,000.

After a lengthy discussion on this matter with questions being asked and answered Mayor Panto stated that the ultimate goal is for the GEDP to become self sustainable.

Mr. Fleck wanted to know what percentage of the budget is discretionary spending. Mr. Steckman said that approximately one (1%) percent is discretionary spending.

Dr. Ruggles asked about the pension differentials. Mr. Heagele gave a detailed explanation of what the differences were.

There was some discussion on this matter.

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Dr. Ruggles stated that since the part-time hourly employees have not received a raise in at least five years he would like to suggest that they at least receive a two (2%) percent raise.

A motion was made by Dr. Ruggles and seconded by Mr. Warren.

Yeas: All

Nays: None

Mr. Fleck asked if any positions were cut from the budget and how the attrition process was proceeding. Mr. Steckman stated that one (1) position was cut from the police department's clerical staff. Mr. Steckman also stated that three (3) people are interested in taking the retirement incentive and that those positions left vacant may or may not be filled. That decision has not been made yet.

Mr. Trotman, Chairman of the GEDP, thanked everyone at Main Street, the Mayor, City Council and all of the volunteers for all of their support.

Mr. Heagele, stated that the operation funds were discussed at the Sewer Authority meeting and that the adjustments that were discussed will be made prior to the introduction of the budgets.

Mayor Panto spoke briefly about the five (5) year Capital Projects.

Mr. Heagele stated that he wanted to recognize his staff for all of their help in the preparing of this budget.

Mr. Fleck asked about the Police Overtime Budget. Captain Vangelo stated that the overtime budget has continued to decrease and that he expected it to continue to decrease. This was able to be done due to the implementation of flex time for the Lieutenants, Captains, and the Chief and by the increase in the number of officers. Captain Vangelo stated that in 2011 the police department will be going from 8 hour shifts to 12 hour shift and that hopefully that will help decrease overtime.

Mr. Fleck asked how the Special Response Unit will be implemented. Captain Vangelo stated that there are approximately ten (10) officers in this unit with four (4) of those officers being Lieutenants. The SRU will respond to low to mid level incidents, however, the State Police would still assist in any high level incident.

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Captain Vangelo said that although the City already has some equipment, some equipment may still be needed and that the officers would have to be trained.

Mr. Fleck asked about the Fire Department overtime.

Mr. Steckman stated that sick leave is an issue and it is being addressed, not only in the Fire Department but throughout the City.

Mr. Steckman also stated that some factors in the overtime were due to vacancies within the fire department, fire fighters that were deployed and fire fighter injuries.

Dr. Ruggles asked what the impact on the overtime would be if the city were to hire any new police officers or firefighters.

There was a lengthy discussion on this issue.

Mayor Panto spoke briefly on the cost of fuel.

Mr. Steckman spoke about the city purchasing more fuel efficient vehicles.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he wanted to acknowledge what a great job his staff has done throughout the year.

Mayor Panto complimented the Directors on what a great job they have done also.

Mr. Steckman also wanted all of the mid-level managers to be recognized by Council.

With no further questions or comments regarding the budget the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Rita M. Messa
Assistant City Clerk