

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa. October 26, 2010

Tuesday,
October 26, 2010
6:00 p.m.

The First 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 Revenues for 2010 budget.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Fleck
Dr. Ruggles
Dr. Warner
Mayor Panto (4)
Absent: Mr. Brown
Mrs. Vulcano
Mr. Warren (3)

Also in attendance was Rita M. Messa, Assistant City Clerk, William Murphy, City Solicitor and Glenn Steckman, City Administrator and Tony Bassil, City Controller
There were fifteen (15) other persons present in the audience.

CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD (Agenda Items Only)

There were no comments at this time.

At the beginning of the meeting Mayor Panto announced that Bill No. 37 which was introduced on October 13, 2010 would be acted upon at the Council meeting scheduled for November 10, 2010.

BUDGET REVIEW

Mayor Panto started the budget review session by asking if anyone had any questions regarding the City Controllers budget. There were no questions.

The Mayor then spoke the revenues from the Earned Income Tax and the Casino monies.

Dr. Warner asked about the parking meter fines and how they increased from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to the projected income for 2011.

Mayor Panto stated the he believes that many people are actually starting to plug the meters and that parking tickets are given to people who park in the same space all day long, and for street sweeping fines.

Mayor Panto also spoke about the parking meters that will eventually be placed around the court house. He stated that the meters were not installed earlier due to construction around the court house.

Mayor Panto also stated that the Downtown Parking Task Force Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Warner asked about why the Planning Commission Revenues are estimated with a 40% increase.

Mayor Panto said that the amount of development going on, i.e. Intermodal Facility, Pomeroy Project and the projects that Lafayette College will be doing is the reason for the estimated increase.

There was some discussion on this matter.

Dr. Ruggles asked what is included in the parking fines.

Mayor Panto stated that all violations including double parking, parking near fire hydrants, street cleaning, etc. were all included in this.

Mayor Panto also stated that people that are now parking in the Perkins lot are parking there for free, however, when that lot is no longer available those people will have to obviously park somewhere else which will result in more revenue.

Mr. Heagele stated that there has been a significant increase in coin collections.

Mayor Panto stated that the Business Privilege Tax is up resulting in more people "plugging" the parking meters.

Mr. Steckman also stated that the daily revenues for the parking garage have increased.

Mr. Ruggles asked about the "Rental Inspection Fees" in the Planning and Codes Budget.

Ms. Bradley stated that this fee is for re-inspections of problem properties, or in extreme cases when the owner doesn't show up for appointments, etc.

Mr. Ruggles asked about the Forrester position.

Mr. Steckman stated that previously the Forrester position was funded by a Grant, however, that grant is no longer available.

Mr. Ruggles asked several questions about the some of the line items relating to sewers.

There was some discussion on this issue and Mr. Heagele addressed Mr. Ruggles questions.

Mr. Ruggles also asked about the Easton Parking Authority Revenue line item. Both Mayor Panto and Mr. Heagele addressed Mr. Ruggles concerns.

Dr. Warner asked about the Easton Suburban Water Authority tapping fees. Mayor Panto stated that the tapping fees are a direct result of the Development of St. Lukes Hospital in Bethlehem Township. Mayor Panto stated that St. Lukes have not paid any fees yet for Phase I.

Mr. Steckman stated that he believes that once the development of the hospital is completed there will be more development that will bring in more revenues.

Mayor Panto also stated that the City will charge itself for permit fees and tapping fees for the Intermodal Facility.

Mayor Panto spoke briefly about the future purchases of city vehicles. He also stated that more highway supplies will be coming from a different line item due to the limited amount Liquid Fuels monies.

Mayor Panto stated that the basis for the budget is – conservative for revenues and liberal for expenses.

Mayor Panto stated that the Health Benefits Budget was “in check”.

Mr. Steckman commented that the changes in the plans and the amount of claims made help with this budget.

Mr. Steckman also stated that Mrs. Glory, Human Resources Director, is working on a census for the membership – this will insure that only the people that should be on the City’s plan are on the city’s plan.

Mayor Panto spoke briefly on the following budgets: Alpha Building Fund, Parks and Recreation Fund, Insurance/Casualty Fund, Unemployment Fund, Workers Compensation Fund, Wastewater, etc.

Mr. Ruggles asked about the Swimming Pool Fees with regards to the project scheduled for Heil Pool. Mr. Hopkins, Director of Public Works, stated that the amount of revenue is really based on the weather, etc.

All questions that were asked regarding any revenues projected were answered.

The budgets will be formally introduced at the Wednesday, November 10, 2010 meeting.

CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD (Any matter)

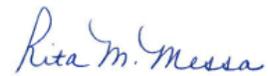
There were no comments at this time.

ADJOURMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. on motion of Dr. Warner and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warner, Ruggles, Fleck (4)

Nays: None (0)



Rita M. Messa
Assistant City Clerk