

CITY OF GILBERT
MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Mayor Kutsi called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Kutsi, Councilors Pontinen, Skalko, Bol & Liimatta.

Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Attorney Michael Kearney, City Engineer Jammick, Chief Techar, Public Works Operations Director Lautigar and City Clerk/Treasurer Sakrison.

Mayor Kutsi led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Motion by Liimatta second by Bol to approve the agenda with the addition of 5D ó Mesabi Humane Society Animal Control Contract. All approved.

Public Input:

Leo Skrbec asked the City Council to keep the Levy at 0%.

Nick Ouke spoke and stated that he pays almost \$4,500 in taxes, and will pay almost \$5,000 this next year. He wanted to know why and what the money is being used for. Mayor Kutsi noted that they bought a new fire truck last year, and there are expenses that the Council has no control over that have occurred. He doesn't understand how some people have to pay so much more than others. Does not think it is right. Mayor Kutsi noted that other surrounding communities have had great business growth which greatly reduces the tax burden on their residences.

Kate Giese also asked that the City Council to keep the levy at 0%. Would like to see the city recruit businesses.

A gentleman spoke regarding his taxes going up also, and it says it is pushing them right out of town.

Jessica Sandnas asked questions regarding the surplus from previous years of the budget and where that goes. She asked why the City Clerk gets paid the amount that she does, stating that she did the research and she makes 70% more than the national average for City Clerks. Mayor Kutsi explained that she actually has a broader job description and does more than just City Clerk duties. Attorney Kearney explained that the City Clerk's salary was determined and approved by the Council, not the City Clerk. She finished with stating that it is not fair that she has to tighten her belt while others get to expand theirs, and to vote 0 on the tax levy.

Motion by Liimatta second by Skalko to approve November 18, 2015 Budget Work Session Minutes and November 24, 2015 Regular City Council Minutes. Approved.

Motion by Liimatta second by Skalko to approve Pay Estimate #2 in the amount of \$182,097.90 to Bougalis, Inc. for the T.H. 135 Water Main / Lower Florida Infrastructure project. Approved.

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Motion by Liimatta second by Skalko to approve Knights of Columbus Assembly #528 Application to Conduct Excluded Bingo Activity on January 31, 2016. Approved.

Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to approve a transfer of \$25,000 from the Water Fund to the Electric Fund and a transfer of \$25,000 from the Sewer Fund to the Electric Fund to repay the amount advanced in 2013 for the infrastructure project. Approved.

Motion by Skalko second by Mayor Kutsi to approve a transfer of \$20,000 from the General Fund, utilizing budgeted but unspent dollars from the City Clerk's payroll accounts, to Fund 501 for Capital Asset Replacement for Public Works Equipment. Approved.

Motion by Liimatta second by Skalko to approve the audit engagement letter as presented from Walker, Giroux & Hahne LLC to perform the audit of the 2015 financial records for a price not to exceed \$31,000. Approved.

Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to support the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Wastewater Legal and Regulatory Program by paying a voluntary assessment of \$1.00 for each wastewater connection the city has as of January 31, 2016. Approved. (3) Ayes, (2) Nays.

Councilor Skalko spoke about the levy. He noted that the citizens that have attended the meetings are one voice, but there are lots of other voices than those in the audience. The city needs to pay the bills. There are a lot of citizens that have come to Gilbert and have bought moderate houses and are OK with how life is going. This is not a popularity contest. Skalko made a motion to set the levy at 7% and the audience got very boisterous, and he hoped that the levy for next year could be worked out to be 0.

Councilor Pontinen asked why only \$40,000 of his proposed cuts were taken into consideration out of his \$350,000 proposed cuts. Mayor Kutsi stated that some of his cuts were not possible because of contracts that are in place.

Mayor Kutsi noted that the position the City is currently in has taken 10, 20 30 years and we need to start to fix the problem, it can no longer be ignored. There are buildings that need to be taken care of and general costs increasing.

Councilor Bol stated that this city has a lobster taste and a hot dog budget and there is no way he can support a 7% increase.

Councilor Liimatta stated that bills need to be paid, and he was not here when the contracts were put in place, and we are stuck with them for now. These can be reviewed and possible changed when the contracts are up.

Mayor Kutsi stated that he spoke with Jason Metsa and asked about getting the LGA restored. Metsa is pushing to get some of the surplus put back into the LGA.

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Councilor Pontinen stated that it is easy for this Council to spend other people's money.

Attorney Kearney discussed tax law.

Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to set the levy at 7% for 2015, collectible 2016. Approved. 3 ó 2 Roll Call: Pontinen ó Nay, Skalko ó Aye, Mayor Kutsi ó Aye, Bol ó Nay, Liimatta ó Aye.

Leo Skrbec stated that he had served on the Charter Commission and the public has recourse with the decision that the Council just made with a petition. Attorney Kearney said they would address that at the time the petition is received.

Motion by Liimatta second by Skalko to acknowledge Revenues and Expenditures through November 30, 2015. Approved

Mayor Kutsi

- IRRRB ó Steve Peterson contacted him and the sewer study feasibility study is being turned down. Kutsi spoke with Representative Metsa to try and keep this study moving to either combine plants or build our own for \$7 million.
- Thanked the Senior Citizen's for inviting him and his wife to the Senior Citizen's Christmas party, it was very nice.
- Noted again that he spoke with Jason Metsa regarding the LGA.
- Would like to have the city send a letter to all the Representatives & Senators to come to a meeting to discuss the sewer issues and unfunded mandates regarding the mercury issues.

Councilor Bol talked about holding a fundraiser event on New Year's Eve. This is not feasible but look at February. And would like to agree with Mayor Kutsi about unfunded mandates and would like to tell the MPCA & EPA - No!

Motion by Bol second by Liimatta to approve a three year contract with the Mesabi Humane Society for \$5,000 with a 5% increase in 2nd & 3rd years. Approved.

Chief Techar discussed street traffic on Broadway. They did a survey between semi-trucks and cars, and out of 500 cars and 40 trucks, only 6 ó 7 vehicles were traveling too fast.

Public Works Operations Director Lautigar looked at some lawn mowers and will get some prices. Street lights are working up on Summit, it had bad underground. There is one light on Broadway Street that has some bad underground. They are doing some tree trimming. They are hoping to start flooding the rink this weekend, it has been too warm.

Mayor Kutsi noted that the Christmas Tea at the Library is this Thursday, December 10, 2015 from 11 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to approve bills and payroll subject to audit by Mayor and Clerk. Approved. Roll Call: Pontinen ó Aye, Skalko ó Aye, Kutsi ó Aye, Bol ó Aye, and Liimatta ó Aye.

Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to acknowledge the Gilbert Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report of 2015. Approved.

Motion by Bol second by Skalko to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Debra Sakrison, City Clerk

ATTEST:

Robert Kutsi, Mayor