

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
MAY 4, 2015

Public Officials Present

Council President Jacob R. Day (arrived 12:45 p.m.) Council Vice President Laura Mitchell  
Councilwoman Eugenie P. Shields Councilman John "Jack" R. Heath  
Councilman Timothy K. Spies

Public Officials Not Present

Mayor James Ireton, Jr.

In Attendance

City Clerk Kim Nichols, City Administrator Tom Stevenson, Assistant City Administrator Julia Glanz, Internal Services Director Keith Cordrey, Building, Permits and Inspections Director William Holland, Neighborhood Services & Code Compliance Director Susan Phillips, Public Works Director Michael Moulds, and Public Works Deputy Director Amanda Pollack

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The City Council convened in a Budget Work Session at 12:30 p.m. in Conference Room 306 of the Government Office Building.

Salisbury Neighborhood Housing Service

Council was joined by Cheryl Meadows, Executive Director of Salisbury Neighborhood Housing Service (SNHS) to review the questions from Council on the funding requests. The following is a synopsis of the discussion:

- Travel/training – Who receives training? Mrs. Meadows responded that as a chartered member of NeighborWorks America, the staff at SNHS is required to hold certain certifications in their specific fields. For instance, the Housing Counselors are required to be certified in teaching homebuyer education, financial fitness, and foreclosure counseling. The Loan Administrator must be certified in lending not only through NeighborWorks America, but also through the National Mortgage Licensing System.
- The SNHS Board Members also receive trainings from NeighborWorks America.
- There was a shift in the past couple of years to focus on foreclosure prevention and help with those situations. Do you see any improvements? Mrs. Meadows reported seeing a recent drop in the number of foreclosure requests. Lending is up for the past two years from the previous three or four years.
- Beginning October 1, 2014, they saw 220 clients. 86 were for pre-purchase or homebuyer assistance and 68 were for mortgage or delinquency counseling.
- Still focusing on home ownership opportunities for new homeowners but over the last year they have shifted focus on retention because they saw people facing the threat of

foreclosure, and were very successful. Last year, they received a grant through the CDBG program through the City of Salisbury for down payment and closing cost assistance. With that, they were able to assist eleven (11) clients in purchasing a home within the City limits of Salisbury.

- This year they had two programs, 1) CDBG Rehab Project which assisted eight (8) clients in rehabilitation and safety repairs to their homes; and 2) Down Payment and Closing Cost Program which has allocated funds to nine clients.
- The \$100,000 in CDBG funds helped leverage over \$500,000 in mortgage loans.
- A big project SNHS is working on is an Acquisition Rehab, funded through the Attorney General settlement. Since the Spring they have purchased seven (7) foreclosed properties that were vacant, all but two have been renovated, and three are already sold. The two remaining projects will be on 230 and 232 Ohio Avenue. The foreclosed properties were purchased for \$15,000 each and should be renovated for \$85,000 each.
- Parkside High School will build a house this year.
- House Keys for Employees still available and require the applicant to have a homebuyer education certification.
- Working with Habitat providing homebuyer education and classes on home repairs, etc. and hope to involve Lowes and Home Depot.
- Many of the home foreclosure clients are repeat offenders
- The annual operating budget of SNHS is \$439, 183.00

Council recessed at 12:45 p.m. and reconvened at 12:50 p.m.

### **Building, Permits and Inspections (BPI)**

BPI Director William Holland joined Council to review goals and changes. He reported one goal for the upcoming year is to complete the State Final Flood Plain Ordinance, adopt the Maryland Building Performance Standards, reduce plan review time to issue permits within 21 days, provide a minimum of three continuing education/professional seminars for BPI employees to help achieve and maintain certifications, ensure sub-permits such as roofing, plumbing, mechanicals and sheds are issued within two business days, continue to identify broken clean-outs which require necessary repairs and complete the necessary correspondence in two days, ensuring all plumbing and building inspections are completed within one day after notification, and provide resources to the Neighborhood Task Force to assist them with problems.

Mr. Holland reported one the following three (3) minor changes to the budget from last year.

- Clerical position upgraded (approved at the Mayor's level) – this has been long overlooked for a number of years
- Increase in vehicle fleet maintenance
- Replacement of two computers that are both close to ten (10) years old

### **Neighborhood Services and Code Compliance (NSCC)**

NSCC Director Susan Phillips joined Council to review the departmental budget requests and began with stating the following goals:

- Advance legislation to legislative body creating more robust rental inspection program
- Research and execute a Citywide project where inmates can perform the cleaning of excess debris, buildup and/or growth removal
- Work with Legal to achieve the acquisition of administrative search warrant for code enforcement purposes
- Continue to review and revise departmental directives and standard operating procedures

Ms. Phillips reported on the departmental requests and discussed the following with Council:

- One additional housing inspector requested (Mrs. Shields asked for the job description and asked Ms. Phillips to notify the local NAACP that an additional inspector position will be available)
- New laptops are needed for all inspectors as all are beyond their life expectancy
- There are several properties on the demolitions list (will send Council the list)
- 555504 (training) NSCC spent \$1,754 and the budget request is \$1,700 this year. Is this enough funding for training?

### **Business Development**

Mr. Stevenson presented the summary for Business Development on behalf of Laura Kordzikowski in her absence.

Mrs. Shields asked what the \$22,127 Operating Expenses covers for the department, and Mr. Stevenson answered advertising for the City, postage, computer, telephone, events, dues and training. Mr. Day stated that he was disappointed that the County did not increase their investment in SWED or other economic development funding.

Mrs. Mitchell inquired about the Travel account (555503), which was originally budgeted at \$4,315, and budgeted at \$4,115 this year. Is the actual amount correct (\$493) and is the amount sufficient? Mr. Stevenson responded in the affirmative that funding was adequate for the department.

Council recessed at 2:25 p.m. and reconvened at 2:35 p.m.

### **Water & Sewer Account**

Public Works Director Mike Moulds joined Council to continue the review of the budget as follows:

#### **Water Engineering (81080)**

- Engineering Architectural (513020) increased by \$18,000 for a study for meter reading system. The water meters in the City are aging and starting to degrade with regards to accuracy.
- Computers (546011) are to replace some old computers in the department +

#### Water Treatment (82075)

- Skilled Services (523600) increase requested for electrical upgrades at Park well house #7, and afterwards there are three (3) other well houses needing electrical conversion
- Chemicals (546004) revised budget is \$258,000, actual is \$390,000 but only \$247,000 is being budgeted.

#### Water Branch (82076)

- New Lease (558600) is for the new 3 ton dump truck (cost of \$150,000)
- Safety (546015) is not being utilized as fully as it should. Mr. Moulds will investigate.
- Mr. Spies asked about the hearing test screenings, and Mr. Stevenson reported that HR had not scheduled them yet

#### Water Administration (83000)

- This account covers Internal Services administrative fees and is quite straightforward

#### Sewer Engineering (84080)

- Budgeted for a water sensor that is mobile and can be placed in the sewer system to give numbers and data
- 546011 – new computers will be purchased
- 513020 – increased by \$4,000 for ESRGC intern will help with mapping and getting data into GIS layers and decreased by \$160,000 due to removal of study contracted in FY15

#### Sewer Branch Utilities (86085)

- Budgeting for additional overtime for emergencies due to rough winters
- 523600 Skilled Services decreased due to in-house root cleaning
- 546004 - Chemicals increased due to purchasing the chemicals that kill roots done in-house
- 546012 – Equipment Maintenance increased so that more repairs can be done in-house
- 555504 – Training for new staff to receive MDE certifications
- 558600 – Lease for new Sewer Jet Truck (SEW13)

#### Pretreatment Monitoring (86086)

- 501002 – is a reclassification of Safety Officer for the Wastewater Plant and was not an original part of her job description. This position also is back up for Frank Ennis while out in playground equipment inspection.

Sewer Administration (87000)

502043 Admin Fee

513301 and 513302 – Other Attorney

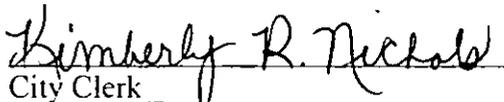
- 513301 - The \$290 spent to date was paid to Mr. Wilber for Wastewater Treatment Plant final leftover bills.
- 513302 – \$333,011.66 projected – the encumbrances were closed out. The attorney who litigated the treatment plant and some of the expert witnesses were still on an open purchase order and have now been closed out. That line will go away next year.

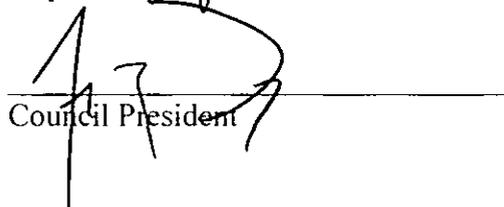
Critical Items for Water and Sewer

Mr. Moulds reported critical items included a security fence around Paleo Well #3, Park fountain repairs (this has been patched many times and still has cracks and leaks), Paleo Roof replacement and Control building roof replacement.

The security fence and park fountain jobs would run about \$63,550 and the control-building roof would cost \$50,000.

With no further discussion, Mr. Day adjourned the Budget Work Session at 3:30 p.m.

  
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City Clerk

  
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Council President