

City Council Budget Work Session
Minutes
April 23, 2019

Easley City Council met for a budget work session on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. All members were present except for Councilman Wright who arrived later in the meeting. The press was notified.

Mayor Bagwell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Councilman Moore asked that we have a moment of silence in memory of Bill Robinson.

New resolution number 2019-09 - to appoint Christopher Jones as Associate Judge for the City of Easley Municipal Court. Councilman Mann made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Garrison. Mr. Jones told Council a little bit about himself and his background. Mr. Steese commented that he was recommended by the committee that consisted of Mayor Bagwell, Mr. Steese, Police Chief Tim Tollison, and Clerk of Court Natasha Hamby. There was no further discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion was approved 6-0. Councilman Wright was absent.

Mayor Bagwell turned the meeting over to City Administrator, Stephen Steese for a budget presentation. The power point presentation is attached.

The budget general fund is 4.4% high from last year. There is no tax increase the millage will stay at 68. Building permits and business license have gone up. Property taxes and local option sales tax has increased. Councilman Robinson commented on the peaks and valleys on the graph. Mr. Steese commented that the economy and growth have a lot to do with the fluctuation. The discount multiplier for taxes decreased which will cause city taxes to increase. The County reassessed property values. We are looking at a potential 11-14% increase in tax base depending on the number of approved appeals. We will have to reset our millage rate next year to account for this increase.

The average home has increased 3% over the last five years. Commercial construction is about 30 million based on numbers from the planning and development department. The average value for new home construction is \$200,000+. There are approximately 1000 units that will be available between apartments and single-family homes.

General government expenditure include money for Christmas lights, computer upgrades, fire equipment, public works equipment to repair roads, and demolition.

The budget includes a 2% cost of living raise for employees, as well as a Christmas bonus. Recommendations for one new public works employee, two new police officers, and one maintenance person for the Parks and Recreation department. Based on projects and growth it is recommended that we have a discussion related to a community and economic development type position and the role it can play in continued proactive growth in the City. Mayor Bagwell

appointed Councilman Garrison, Councilman Robinson, Mr. Steese and Mr. Sanders to an Ad Hoc Committee to give recommendations to council on economic development. Councilman Mann commented that this was a good problem to have and the best way to be prepared for growth.

The Hospitality Fund will be tight this year with an interest payment around \$220,000. There will be one payment remaining. Repairs to the Bagwell gym have been removed from the budget. Money budgeted for special events totals \$135,000 which includes Party of Pendleton, Music, Movies, Trunk or Treat, and July Fourth events.

The stormwater fees will remain the same. As more and more systems age we need to be proactive and make sure there are funds available to make repairs.

Councilman Garrison requested that Mr. Steese come to council to reassess the need for employees as requested for each department. Mr. Steese commented that Planning and Development would be first, then fire, and eventually Streets and parks due to growth. Councilman Dykes commented that it is something we need to keep an eye on. Councilman Moore asked if we were at capacity in all departments. Mr. Steese stated we are not.

Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Steese for a good budget.

There was no further discussion.

Councilman Mann made the motion to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

