

River Heights City Council
Workshop

Minutes of the Meeting
May 13, 2014

Present were: Mayor	James Brackner
Council members:	Doug Clausen
	Richard Okelberry
	Geoff Smith
	Dixie Wilson
	Blake Wright
Recorder	Sheila Lind
Public Works Director	Clayten Nelson
Finance Director	Clifford Grover

The budget workshop began at 8:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2014.

Mayor Brackner led a discussion on the budget draft for 2014-2015. Council members each made adjustments to their own budgets.

Mayor Brackner also led a discussion on employee wages, specifically regarding Recorder Lind and PWD Nelson's overtime wages. Mayor Brackner has considered hiring an office person to answer phones, at a lesser rate, while Recorder Lind focused more time on her 'recorder' duties. After running the numbers, Mr. Brackner concluded (and showed), it wouldn't be cost effective at this time.

Discussion was held on PWD Nelson's overtime. Mr. Nelson reminded that when the Council changed him from salary to hourly he cautioned that it would most likely cost the city more, because of overtime. He suggested getting rid of the time clock and letting them record their own hours, which would trim some of the additional minutes. Mr. Nelson's wages have been increased in the budget amendments to cover the additional overtime for this year. Councilmember Clausen suggested cutting these increases back down by 10%. Mayor Brackner proposed that he and Mr. Nelson will meet to discuss ways to cut back on his overtime.

Councilmember Okelberry led a discussion on budgeting money for sidewalks.

In light of the amount of money the city has been able to save in the past few years, Councilmember Clausen suggested reducing property taxes by 10%, which would cut the city's income by \$9,000. It would be an effort to show our residents that taxes don't always go up. Mayor Brackner reminded that people may be happy about it, but at some point it will need to be raised and then they will be upset. Councilmember Wright agreed with lowering. Finance Director Grover suggested people won't feel the reduction because of the upcoming raises from the school district and sewer usage fees. Councilmember Okelberry agreed with Mr. Clausen, as well. Mr. Clausen clarified the reduction on residential tax rates only. Finance Director Grover agreed to call County Auditor Tamra Stones to find out the procedure for lowering taxes.

46 The Council set a special meeting for Thursday, May 15, to adopt the tentative budget. Mayor
47 Brackner informed that he'll have the budget changes ready tomorrow.

48 Councilmember Wright felt it's time to consider raising the Council's compensation from
49 \$300/month to \$400. It's been \$300 for at least 14 years. Councilmember Wilson and Clausen said
50 they are happy with the current amount. Councilmember Smith would vote for a pay raise for the
51 council person who takes his place, but not for himself. Mr. Wright feels River Heights' council
52 compensation is near other cities, maybe a little low.

53 Councilmember Clausen recommended taking a survey of other cities to see what they are
54 paying. For now, the increase will be put in the budget.

55 The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

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Sheila Lind, Recorder

James Brackner, Mayor