

City of Troy, Missouri
Board of Aldermen Workshop
Thursday, March 2, 2023
6:30 P.M.

Present for the Board of Alderman Workshop were Aldermen Harold Horner, Dennis Detert, David Norman, Steven Jones, Rachel Dunard, and Mayor Ron Sconce. Also present were Police Chief Jeff Taylor, Assistant Police Chief Dustyn Tienter, Finance Director Linda Flinn, Building Official Dave Lindsey, Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor Jared Comer, Public Works Superintendent Jeff Burkemper, Parks Director Ryan Howell, Deputy City Clerk/ Human Resources Generalist Kaitlyn Knickmeyer, City Attorney Jesse Granneman, and City Clerk Tonya Hawkins. Alderman Guy Grimstead was absent.

Mayor Sconce called the meeting to order, announced a quorum present, and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Sconce yielded the floor to Alderman Dunard, who yielded the floor to Major Tienter.

Major Tienter said he is concerned about the readiness of the police department. He said the department is losing officers faster than they can be replaced. He said the City is at a critical point, and police cannot provide the public service. Only two to three officers are patrolling the roads, and staffing is particularly difficult at night when the detective staff is gone, he said.

Alderman Horner asked Major Tienter if he had any suggestions. Major Tienter gave three options: 1) a ten percent pay increase, 2) a \$2,000 incentive for employees to sign a contract, 3) a take-home vehicle for officers who live within a thirty-mile radius.

Alderman Jones asked if there was currently a policy for take-home vehicles. Major Tienter said the current policy would have to be modified.

Alderman Jones reviewed Option 2 and asked if \$48,000 in ARPA funds was available for contract incentives. He asked about the legalities of ARPA funds use. Director Flinn said this would be a proper use of ARPA funds, but the City would have to make sure it complies with Missouri law.

Attorney Grannmen said currently all employees are at will. If the City wants to set up contractual relationships, aldermen would have to determine how long they want those funds to apply, he said. Alderman Jones asked when employees would get the \$2,000 incentive. Attorney Grannemen said it depends on whether the board wants payment upon execution, a scheduled payment, or payment at the end of a term. He said he believed he could draft language within the statutory constraints of Missouri law.

Alderman Detert asked for the expiration date on the CARES money. Director Flinn said she believes once CARES funds were received, they were spent, and funds were reimbursed. She explained ARPA funds are different and must be committed by 2024 and spent by 2026.

Alderman Jones asked what Proposition P on the April 4, 2023, ballot would do for the City. Major Tienter said it would help. However, he said, it needs to pass. Alderman Detert asked when Prop P would go into effect. Major Tienter said it would go into effect when passed.

Alderman Jones asked Director Flinn if she reviewed the numbers in the police department's report. She explained she had not seen the report until tonight. Alderman Jones said it is going to take some time to see if we have the money. He said options 2 and 3 could be done faster.

Alderman Norman said he supports the police, but the last time aldermen gave a pay increase, they had to give 10 percent pay increases to all city employees. Chief Taylor said no other department is losing people like the police department.

Alderman Harold said another \$4,000 or \$5,000 per year could do a lot for a family. Major Tienter said his concern is for his guys. He said he was told to put himself on the list, but it is about the officers.

Mayor Sconce said the purpose of the workshop is to come up with a plan to pay for something. He said the board needs to look at the budget and give direction to the finance department.

Alderman Norman said Option 2 can be paid with ARPA funds. He said Option 3 is in the budget. He said the elephant is funding Option 1.

Alderman Detert asked why police and building departments were the only departments in the General Fund. Director Flinn explained there are more things that come out of the general fund. She explained this is the main operating fund for the City.

Alderman Dunard asked what was in the general fund. Director Flinn said a little over \$5 million. Alderman Detert said there is \$19 million in the bank, and it increased more for the end of January. Director Flinn explained a budget is different than a bank account balance. She said the totals are not the important part. She said the funds are what you have to look at. She explained aldermen need to look specifically at the general fund for police pay raises.

Building Official Lindsey said the only person who has been here longer than him is the police chief. He said he made \$12.20 per hour and later \$12.60, before the City talked about responsibility levels. He said there was a compensation study at that time. In 2008, we went five years without a raise, he said. He noted there was a subsequent 3 percent pay increase. Later, Evergreen completed a compensation study, he said. I was in law enforcement for almost 18 years, he said. I understand where they are coming from, he said, but for 19 years city employees have been underpaid and they have been told the City cannot afford it.

Alderman Horner said he agreed with Alderman Dunard that when people call 911, someone should respond. However, he said aldermen need to make sure that when employees go to the bank, the check does not bounce.

Alderman Dunard said she thinks all three options need to be on the table for the Monday, March 6, 2023, meeting. She said Option 2 without Option 1 is not going to do anything. She said she thinks Option 3 would be a great incentive. Alderman Horner said he likes Option 3 more than the \$2,000.

Alderman Detert said he believes the money is there. He said he wants someone to sit down and prove to him that the City is as broke as it claims to be. Alderman Jones asked if aldermen could have figures for Monday. Director Flinn said she could look at the numbers.

Mechanic Adam Cockrum asked if the proposed pay increase would affect insurance. He asked about bumping up retirement instead of an incentive.

Alderman Dunard said she talked to Attorney Granneman about Proposition M funds going toward retirement accounts if passed by voters. Attorney Granneman said it is unclear what the financial impact of Proposition M would be.

To answer Mr. Cockrum's question, Director Flinn said it is up to the board to decide whether employees will pay more for insurance.

Superintendent Burkemper said he lost 61 percent of his staff in the past few years.

Building Official Lindsey asked when the board would address a pay study across all departments. Alderman Horner said he did not want people to think aldermen are catering to police. He explained aldermen want to make it work for everyone.

The workshop adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor Sconce