

BUDGET WORKSHOP TOWN BOARD

February 15, 2023

Present Mayor George Holleman
Mayor Pro Tem Kenny Poole
Councilman Ronnie Robinette
Councilman Jack Simms
Councilwoman Kim Brown

The budget workshop was opened for business by Mayor Holleman at 10:00 a.m.

Items of Discussion:

1. Signs, street décor, events and performance stage and master gardner club
Councilwoman Brown will attend the Mainstreet Conference to get ideas for our downtown area. She is working with JD Sink, Scotty Cook and Master Gardner's Phill Bowman and wife regarding options for trees and ornamentals for planters along Main Street and will report back. She will also get dates available for the Town Board to take a walking tour of our downtown to access the needs and to also visit other nearby towns to get ideas. Councilman Robinette is working on information for options for a portable stage.

Up-Coming Budget Goals:

1. Central Alexander Fire Dept. presented information regarding their request for additional funding for next budget year. Member, Charlie Marshall states that the FD is in need of better more up-to-date turn-out gear and to be able to staff the FD 24/7 in order to get better response time to get to the calls quicker. They are requesting an additional \$125,000.00 above the yearly allocation of \$93,000.00 they receive.
2. Improving Main Street: Councilwoman Brown stated Main Street needs to be more attractive and funds need to be set aside for improvements.

Tax Rate – Revaluation:

1. Town Manager Odom stated things to consider will be
 - a. Health insurance and other related benefits and their costs for FY 2023-2024
 - b. Salaries/low pay for Police Dept and other departments
 - c. Vacancies of positions and future retirement of personnel
 - d. Costs of our buying rate for water and its effects, projected cost increase of 8.5% per the CPI of March 2022
2. Discussion of the current tax rate when revaluation hits and the tax revenue it will generate. Other tax rates were discussed including revenue neutral and it's impact on the overall revenue. Revenue needs for the police department, fire department and overall operating general fund government were discussed and reviewed against possible tax rates.

Water & Sewer:

1. A bid solicitation page has been added to the Town's webpage. All upcoming projects/needs will be placed here for the bid process. Anything under 30,000 can be a

“will call” basis and it not required to be bid out but the Town will post any needed services here unless it’s an emergency situation and cannot wait.

2. Requested that the inmate program be re-instated and to make contact with appropriate officials to get established.
3. Councilman Robinette stated to set aside \$ for a grapel for the new truck and a bushhog for the front of the tractor to mow the right-of-ways in this up coming budget to cut costs of outside contracting of this service.

Other Topics:

1. Inquiry of the Old Jail and the contract with Alexander County Ancestry Association. Contacts will be made with Alexander County.
2. Street lights needed in town
3. Christmas Lights and the placement of droplights with the new poles now installed
4. School SRO at alternative school – Councilwoman Brown emphasized the immediate need that a full-time SRO be at that location at all times when in session. Chief Bowman stated that he has moved one of the two officers at the high school over to the alternative school for 2 hours per day until full-time SRO’s can be hired. He stated that those positions along with the entire PD is underpaid compared to the sheriff’s office and all surrounding counties by more that 6,000 on starting pay and he cannot find officers that are willing to come to work for that amount of pay. We currently have 2 open positions due to that problem and other’s are working double duty to just cover shifts.

With no other business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Mayor

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Attest: _____
Yolanda T. Prince, Town Clerk