

Proposed Minutes

ELKINS COMMON COUNCIL SPECIAL CALL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

***401 Davis Avenue
Council Chamber, 2nd Floor
March 22, 2022
9:00 a.m.***

Elkins Common Council met in special session in the council chamber of city hall. Present were Mayor Jerry A. Marco; Councilpersons N.E. Bross-Fregonara, R.C. Chenoweth, M. D. Cuonzo, C.H. Friddle, III, J.A. Guye, C.J. Higgins, G.M. Hinchman, D.C. Parker, and L.H. Vest; City Treasurer T. Judy; Fire Chief S.D. Himes; Police Chief T. Bennett; Operations Manager J. Sanson; City Attorney G. S. Roberts; and City Clerk J.R. Sutton (acting as recording secretary).

Councilor C.C. Lowther was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Ward, Executive Director Randolph County Senior Center and Country Roads Transit, is advocating for the citizens of Elkins. The proposed 64% decrease in the city's contribution to Country Roads Transit is a great disservice to them. Ms. Ward stated that she comes annually to report on the benefits of transit and each year invites council to ride. Ms. Ward reports that since inception the grant requires a 50% local match and that every \$1 used towards the program results in \$2 in customer service. Therefore, every cut in \$1 equates to a \$2 cut in service. This proposed reduction is shortsighted and callously disrespectful. Transit provides over 11,000 rides that are a lifeline to many- predominately the elderly, disabled and financially disadvantaged. Lack of transit means missed doctor's appointments, lack of access to medicine and groceries, and job loss resulting in negative economic and health outcomes. This is a fiscally sound investment in your community Shame on any one of you who chooses to cut transit.

Barry Band, President of the Senior Center Board of Directors, met his wife in 1966 at D&E College and they choose to stay in Elkins because of the people – specifically how they cared and shared. He has been a professional educator for forty years and understand cutbacks. However, when he made those decisions, it didn't take children's books or food away. These cutbacks are low-hanging fruit. Organizations don't mind cutbacks, but they do mind a slap in the face. Transit relies on the 50/50 local match to access the federal funding.

Katy McClane, 185 High Street, spoke on behalf of those who do public gardening in town. This service is usually provided at places that can't afford landscaping. The cuts in contributions to organizations that relay on volunteers takes the wind out of volunteer's sails.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Cm. Chenoweth suggested starting the discussion with the proposed budget submitted by the Clerk on behalf of the administrative officers. However, M. Cuonzo asked that the budget be reviewed line by line and a majority of council concurred. T. Judy reviewed all anticipated revenues for FY2023 and answered questions from council. T. Judy advised council that she is comfortable with the approximately \$300,000 carryover proposed.

City Attorney G. Roberts reminded council that the WV legislature has severely and continually limited municipalities ability to raise additional revenues keeping their budgets stagnant despite rising costs. City Clerk J. Sutton also reminded council of their pending Home Rule application which could generate a small amount of additional revenue for the municipal court, if approved.

FY23 budget discussion continued with each administrative officer reviewing budgets they are responsible for and noting any significant changes. Notable changes for all include an increase in wages and the city's absorption of a 5% increase in health insurance premiums for employees. Significant reductions were made in the Clerk's contracted services budget due to the reduction in printed city code binders to be maintained (from 16 to 6); zeroing out of the demolition budget (from \$50,000 in previous years); and removal of requested funds for a wash bay at the central garage.

Mayor J.A. Marco **MOVED APPROVAL OF A RECESS.** The motion carried. Council recessed at 11:11 a.m. to 11:23 a.m.

All outside contributions were restored to the same levels as were approved in FY22. The final budget was balanced at \$5,380,724.00, including a carryover amount of \$270,054.

Cm. Friddle, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET AS AMENDED.** The motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Clerk J. Sutton requested that council consider moving the regular second meeting in April from the 21st to the 19th to accommodate the mandated meeting for the laying of the levy. Council agreed.

Cw. Cuonzo, **MOVED ADJOURNMENT.** The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

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*Approved by council at the meeting
of MONTH DAY, YEAR*

Jerry A. Marco, Mayor

Attest:

Jessica R. Sutton, City Clerk