TUESDAY, 7:00 P.M. **APRIL 29, 1997**

BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT **NEWBERG, OREGON**

Members Present:

Roger Currier	Fred Owens
Bob Ficker	Bert Pennock
Donna Proctor	William Rosacker
Chuck Cox	Robert Soppe
Melinda Newland	

Others Present:

Duane Cole, City Manager	Terry Mahr, City Attorney
Kathy Tri, Finance Director	Robert Tardiff, Police Chief
Leah Griffith, Librarian	Mike Soderquist, Community Dev. Director
Ben Erb, Asst. Fire Chief	Frank Douglas, EMS Supervisor
Ann Pesola, Newberg Chamber	Warren Hunt, Newberg Chamber
Debbie Smith-Wagar, Asst. Finance Director	

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Robert Soppe at 7:03 p.m.

Newberg Chamber of Commerce Presentation: Ann Pesola, Executive Director of the Newberg Chamber of Commerce, and Warren Hunt, member of the Chamber Board of Directors and Chamber Finance Committee, gave an overhead presentation on why the City should continue to support the Newberg Visitors Center. They said that in a questionnaire sent out to members, 73% responded that the Visitors Center was important to their businesses. They also reported that the Visitors Center answered more than 15,000 requests for information last year, and if the Visitors Center is closed, someone will still be getting those phone calls requesting information.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chamber representatives said the Visitors Center carries brochures from around the area without charge. In exchange, other visitors centers carry information on the Newberg area without charge. They also said local people use the Visitors Center to get information for family and friends that may be interested in visiting, and to get information for themselves.

Robert Ficker asked why the City can levy the hotel/motel tax. City Manager Duane Cole explained that the legislature decided many years ago to allow local governments to levy the tax as a general revenue. Part of the reasoning was that travelers create an additional burden for public safety. The rates and how the governments spend the money varies from area to area. A proposal to raise the tax in Newberg was presented to the City Council earlier this year, but the Council decided to table the idea as it required a vote of the people.

Roger Currier said the Chamber should be businesses supporting businesses. He also expressed concern that raising the tax would cause tourists to bypass Newberg and stay elsewhere.

Donna Proctor said Bob Weaver had asked her to add that this is an "area" chamber of commerce and that other towns should also be supporting the Chamber.

Department Budgets - Fire Department: Assistant Fire Chief Ben Erb presented the proposed Fire Department budget. Some of the costs have been reallocated to better reflect expenses in the EMS Fund. The department secretary is now funded ½ in the Fire Department and ½ in the EMS Fund. The "Rescue" Division has been dissolved, being absorbed by "Suppression" in the General Fund and the EMS Fund. Capital expenses have been reduced. Administrative training has been reduced by more than half. Computer replacement has been cut in half. The Fire Department's contribution to the Vehicle/Equipment Replacement Fund has been eliminated; the Fire Department will now rely on the fire fee (billed with the water bill) to provide money to replace vehicles.

Roger Currier asked if the City is charging the same rate for a medical response with a paramedic versus a response without a paramedic. EMS Supervisor Frank Douglas said no, there are different rates for the different responses. But he also said ambulances rarely go out without a paramedic. Even "third outs" have a paramedic on board.

Melinda Newland asked why donations are used for EMS equipment if it is a fee-based service. Frank Douglas said the money was spent where the Newberg Charitable Organization asked that it be spent.

Department Budgets - Library: Librarian Leah Griffith presented the Library's proposed budget. She said the budget would reduce open hours from 39 to 34 per week, and Newberg's library would continue to be open for the fewest hours of any library in Oregon for a town of comparable size. She said the budget would cut two staff positions, but that can be done through attrition as two employees have already left. Staff is being reorganized to make up for the loss. She said the Library answers 15,000 reference questions and checks out 170,000 books a year. She said the Library is emphasizing its services to families.

Bert Pennock asked about the Library buying books. Leah Griffith said the Library hasn't purchased any new books since January.

Melinda Newland asked how the Library determines which periodicals to buy. Leah Griffith said the staff reviews which magazines are used the most. She said it is also important for the periodical to be referenced. And she said part of the decision is based on professional judgement.

Donna Proctor asked if the Library considers what the schools offer. Leah Griffith said she tries to work with the schools to provide a complimentary service. She said local students are doing a lot of research in the City's Library.

Leah Griffith also said the large library building is difficult to staff because it has two floors. Duane Cole said there have been discussions about closing the lower floor.

William Rosacker asked if the Library had considered cutting back on internet services. Leah Griffith said so far the internet services haven't really cost the City anything. She said the initial set up and equipment was paid for by a grant, and the on-going costs have been covered by charges to users who have a connection at home. The charge for a home connection is $96 a year for 30 hours of access each month.

Department Budgets - Police: Police Chief Robert Tardiff presented the proposed Police Department budget. He presented statistics showing Newberg's overall crime was slightly higher than the statewide average, however person crimes are lower than the average. He said the metro area is having a greater impact on Newberg's crime as well. In addition, juveniles are committing more crimes. He said the Police Department is working with the schools and the parks and recreation district, and as a result vandalism and disorderly conduct crimes are down.

The Police Department budget has been reorganized with a "Support Services" division created for the public information officer, code compliance, and the DARE officer. All of those positions will report directly to the deputy chief.

One officer is retiring, and his position will be replaced by a non-sworn position. The expenses also include a new COPS grant. The grant provides approximately $35,000 to pay for a position that costs about $44,000. Robert Tardiff said one thing that is not in the budget is an additional communications officer. One of the current communications officers has been moved to the 9-1-1 Fund, but that money is usually used for capital improvements.

Roger Currier pointed out that the Police Department budget increased for next year over the current year, and wanted to know if anything was being cut. Robert Tardiff said part of the increase was due to the City Attorney being moved to Central Services, plus the cost of the new COPS grant officer. Also most of the department's cost is salaries, and the union contract provides for a 3% wage increase. Therefore reductions had to come from other parts of the budget.

Robert Soppe wanted to know how the City is getting by with fewer communications officers than other cities, and if some of the duties couldn't be shifted to lower-paid positions. Robert Tardiff said some of the records and front window duties will probably be shifted when the new public safety building is completed and the physical layout of the Police Department changes.

There was also concern about police overtime. Robert Tardiff said adding officers doesn't necessarily decrease overtime because of the way overtime is defined. District and circuit court appearances create a lot of overtime. The municipal court works with the Police Department to try to reduce officer overtime due to court appearances.

Department Budgets - Administration: Duane Cole presented the proposed budget for Administration. He said the cuts reflected fewer City newsletters, reduced training, and fewer employee expenses. However he said the overall department budget increased due to legal services being moved to Central Services.

William Rosacker asked about the Cable TV account. Duane Cole said it has been moved to its own Cable TV Trust Fund because the money is being held for the community use on the cable access channel. City Attorney Terry Mahr said TCI Cable hasn't been able to find volunteers to videotape the city council meetings.

Roger Currier asked about the expense of having someone from the Police Department attend all of the city council meetings. Terry Mahr said a reserve officer also attends all municipal court hearings to help keep the peace and make employees feel safer. Some council members and the mayor expressed an interest in keeping the reserve officer at the city council meetings. The officer is paid $10 an hour.

Department Budgets - City Manager's Office: Duane Cole presented the proposed City Manager's budget. It includes a reduction in the receptionist position. The Finance Department will begin answering all phones. It does include $20,000 for a lease/purchase of the VFW hall and the senior citizens building. Duane Cole said these are desirable properties for the city since they are adjacent to other city property.

Department Budgets - Finance: Finance Director Kathy Tri presented the proposed Finance Department budget. Two employees are retiring in this department and will be replaced by lower-paid employees.

Roger Currier asked about the $5,000 increase in copier expense. This is due to new copiers in Fire, Police and Community Development.

Department Budgets - Legal: Terry Mahr presented the proposed Legal Department budget. The paralegal in this department has accepted a position with the Federal Courts and she will not be replaced. He will rely on other departments to pick up some projects that used to be handled by the Legal Department. This department was moved to Central Services so that the enterprise funds could pay their share of legal expenses incurred by the city.

Donna Proctor pointed out that the mayor's position was missing from the organizational chart on page 90 of the budget document. Staff said they will correct that omission.

Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

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Secretary