

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Special Budget Work Session Minutes for Sunday, May 17, 2009

A Special Budget Work Session of the Piedmont City Council was held May 17, 2009, in the Police Department EOC Room at 403 Highland Avenue. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this special meeting was posted for public inspection on May 14, 2009.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Friedman called the session to order at 1:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council: Mayor Abe Friedman, Vice Mayor Dean Barbieri and Councilmembers John Chiang, Margaret Fujioka and Garrett Keating

Administration: City Administrator Geoff Grote, City Clerk Ann Swift and Recording Secretary Chris Harbert

Police: Interim Police Chief John Hunt and Police Captain Scott Wyatt

Fire: Fire Chief John Speakman and Fire Captain Warren McLaren

Finance: Finance Director Mark Bichsel and City Accountant Ken Lee

Public Works: Public Works Director Larry Rosenberg, Parks & Projects Manager Mark Feldkamp and City Planner Kate Black

Recreation: Recreation Supervisors Erin Rivera and Penny Robb

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The City Administrator reported that in light of the continuing economic crises, the proposed FY 09-10 budget reflects \$191,000 in non-personnel operating cost reductions when compared to last year. However, there are strong indications that the state may “borrow” approximately \$800,000 in Piedmont property tax revenue in 09-10 if as expected the Governor’s tax measures on the May 19 special election ballot fail. If so, additional cuts in the proposed budget will have to be made to off-set this loss of revenue.

PUBLIC FORUM

Barbara Bernstein, Executive Director of Eden I & R, the agency which operates Alameda County’s 211 health, human services and housing referral program, urged the Council to continue Piedmont’s \$5,000 annual contribution to this program for FY 09-10. She cited the types of calls the program receives from Piedmont residents, emphasized that the 211 program is a member of Alameda County’s Emergency Operations Team and stressed that the program is a vital, efficient and proven asset for Alameda County residents. The Mayor advised Ms. Bernstein that at this time, funding for the 211 Referral Program is not included in the proposed budget.

Milly Cleveland, SEIU Union Representative, advised the Council that Public Works maintenance personnel have been under compensated for years because they are performing above their pay grades. She also cited inappropriate management actions regarding union activities.

CIP Committee Members Mary Geong and Leesy Taggart presented the CIP Committee's proposed funding recommendations for the FY 09-10 CIP Budget.

Esther Rogers and Liz Epstein spoke in support of the CIP Committee's recommendation that \$5,000 be allocated for a traffic calming study of Linda Avenue and suggested that Measure B and PUSD funding be pursued to implement the traffic engineer's recommendations.

BUDGET REVIEW

The Council reviewed the proposed FY 09-10 departmental budgets and during the course of discussion requested staff to provide the following:

- Department Head proposed *Goals and Objectives* include special initiatives, professional development goals and cost efficiencies to be undertaken in addition to on-going job responsibilities;
- A proposed plan for eliminating \$800,000 from the proposed budget in the event the state "borrows" this amount from the City;

Administration

- Report on whether *ArcView 9.1 software* updates can be deferred one year (\$3,500);
- Identify ways to reduce *Departmental Supplies* expenses to \$60,000, e.g. use postcards for public noticing to reduce postage costs, use less expensive paper, etc.;
- Reduce *KCOM Contract Services* to minimal funding level necessary for government meeting coverage – propose creative ways that community events/programs can be filmed using unpaid volunteers;
- Reduce *Civil Service Allocation*. Staff to provide expenses for this category for the last 5 years to determine an average annual cost;

Public Works

- Identify the minimum amount of funding necessary to provide for only the most essential *Street Resurfacing and Sidewalk Repair* in FY 09-10;
- Provide information on how \$500,000 in *Measure B* funding could be expended other than for proposed *Street Resurfacing*;
- Provide a cost break-out for *Street Paint, Street Signs & Banner Hanging*. Estimate the fee necessary for Banner Hanging if all related costs are to be borne entirely by the private party (no City subsidy);
- Eliminate or reduce proposed expense for *Hand Tools*;

- Provide budgeted expense figures for the last 5 to 6 years for *Emergency Tree & Debris Removal Services*;
- Consider reducing *Street Tree Trimming* to \$145,000. Provide information as to how this reduction can be achieved and expenses over the last 5 years;
- Report on whether *Filming Permit Fees* and *Wireless Communication Facility Fees* can be increased over that already proposed and provide fee comparison rates of other cities;

Recreation

- Re-evaluate all proposed expenditure items and only propose increases over last year's actual costs, when such increases can be justified;
- Identify approximately \$11,000 in potential reductions in *Schoolmates* expenses;
- Provide the total annual operation costs associated with the City's *Skate Park* and the amount of usage this park receives. Report on whether the continued monitoring of this park is necessary and/or whether the \$25,000 annual expense for park monitoring can be reduced or eliminated;

Police

- Increase the proposed *Citation Sign-Off Fee* to \$20.00 per citation;
- Consider deferring purchase of a *Solar Radar Vehicle Speed Display* (\$20,000);

Fire

- Provide information regarding possible billing options for the uninsured and those with high insurance deductibles related to the proposed *Ambulance Transport Fee* to insure that these residents are not reluctant to call for ambulance service;
- Re-evaluate all proposed expenditure items and only propose increases over last year's actual costs, when such increases can be justified;

Capital Projects

- *Linda Avenue Traffic Study* – provide cost estimates for the recommended traffic analysis and report on the potential of a joint study/funding effort with the Piedmont School District for data collection and recommendation implementation;

Non-Departmental

- Report on whether the Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance Fund allocations can be reduced by drawing on the funds' reserves;

Sewer Fund

- Support voiced for imposing the maximum sewer tax rate;
- Consider expanding the scope of Phase IV sewer rehabilitation work if a state loan is secured and construction bids are favorable;

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Friedman adjourned the special budget work session at 4:35 p.m.