

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS, HELD ON MAY 15, 2020 AT 1:00 P.M PURSUANT TO SECTION 418.016 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE.

A. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mitcham at 1:10 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor, Andrew Mitcham	City Manager, Austin Bless
Council Member, Drew Wasson	City Secretary, Lorri Coody
Council Member, Greg Holden	
Council Member, Bobby Warren	
Council Member, James Singleton	
Council Member, Gary Wubbenhorst	

Staff in attendance: Kirk Riggs, Chief of Police; Mark Bitz, Fire Chief; Jason Alfaro, Director of Parks and Recreation; Isabel Kato, Director of Finance; Bob Blevins, IT Director; and Trelena Collins, HR Manager.

B. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Any person who desires to address City Council regarding an item on the agenda will be heard at this time. In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, unless the subject matter of the comment is on the agenda, the City staff and City Council Members are not allowed to discuss the subject. Each person is limited to five (5) minutes for comments to the City Council.

There were no public comments made at this meeting.

C. FY 2020-2021 COUNCIL/STAFF BUDGET RETREAT

1. Overview and Departmental Information presented by Austin Bless, City Manager

City Manager, Austin Bless, began his presentation on the 2020-2021 budget overview with information on the following items:

- Mission Statement
- COVID-19 Update
- FY 20 Potential Issues
- Responses to FY 20 Potential Issues
- Sales Tax Trend
- Property Values
- FY 2020-2021 Budget Overview

Council engaged in discussion about the effects of chlorine on the virus in the pool. The CDC has stated that there is little or no risk of getting the virus from a swimming pool. There was also discussion about opening the dog park and the concern about the dogs catching the virus. There have been several calls from the public about re-opening the dog park. The National Recreation of Parks Association and other parks and recreation organizations were contacted. Some organizations approve re-opening and others do not. The CDC, while still studying, has not been able to find any evidence that dogs could spread or catch the virus. Some wondered about Harris County. They are open as well as the City of Houston. The pros and cons of re-opening the dog park as well as Carol Fox Park was discussed. The general consensus of Council was that the

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parks should be opened and users of the parks can decide on their own whether or not to use the park.

The majority of the cities that have been contacted still have their playgrounds closed as well. Staff asked for direction about opening the playgrounds. Council discussed the pros and cons of opening the play structures. Carol Fox Park was discussed in particular. Most felt that this park is an all or nothing type park because it is mostly play structures. It was the consensus of Council that this park and its play structures should remain closed and follow what Harris County is doing. The Council felt that the dog park should be opened.

There was discussion about the splash pad. In accordance with the Governor's orders, splash pads must be closed.

There was discussion about the fund balance of \$8,217,451. Some wondered if some of these monies are earmarked. Finance Director Kato stated that these funds include the facility replacement fund, which is \$6.8 million. It does not include the monies appropriated for the City Hall, which construction will not start until Collaborate purchases the property. There was concern that as a policy we have always maintained a 90-day reserve and sometimes it has been higher. Therefore, there was discussion about making sure that the reserve will be higher than 90 days.

There was discussion about the sales tax trend and on-line purchasing. For Argus and Cemax, most of their work is done by sales persons, and not affected by on-line purchasing.

There was discussion about the second half of 201-2020 salary adjustments, which could be as much as \$200,000.

With no further discussion, City Manager Bless gave information on the various City Departments for the 2020-2021 Budget. What follows is the description of each along with any Council discussion.

Administration

2020-2021 Budget

- Digital Time clocks System – integrate with INCODE 10 - \$25,000 (estimated)
- Elections \$16,000
- Charter review committee
- Sales tax referendum
- Other lines will see some decreases

Sales Tax Referendum

- Current sales tax allocation is
 - 1% - General revenue
 - 0.5% - property tax relief
 - 0.5% - Crime Control
- With passage of SB2 last year our property tax relief sales tax is used against us in calculating our property tax revenues

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- Could reallocate the 0.5% property tax relief to general revenue
- Other allocations could include
 - Economic development
 - Street maintenance (includes sidewalks) – does not include building new ones
- Sales tax must be levied in 1/8 penny increments
 - 1/8 = \$ 44,742.63
 - 2/8 = \$ 89,485.26
 - 3/8 = \$ 134,227.88
 - 4/8 = \$ 178,970.51

Administration – Future Years

- On-going Annual Records Management Costs for implementation of City Records Plan, and digitization of them.
- Processing of on-going public information requests.
- Staffing issues and the potential need to add more staff.

Council engaged in discussion about the rebates to Cemax and Argos. There was also discussion about the sales tax referendum. City Manager Bleess explained how the taxes work now and how it would work with a sales tax referendum.

There was discussion about how it factors into the calculations on how we set the tax rate each year. Under the current system, it reduces the amount of monies we can collect and with SB 2 reforms; it is another cap that is unnecessary.

Council discussed other allocations. We are topped out at the 2%, but that can be allocated however the voters approve when this is taken to them as a sales tax referendum. There was discussion about reallocating the 2% to fire or streets. At the end of the day, it is still 2% and taxes will not increase it will just be reallocated. If placed on the ballot and it is rejected it will not change how we are allocating the monies today. If we do not change it, we are leaving monies on the table as a result of SB2. The consensus of Council was that the sales tax referendum is being considered for May 2021.

Legal/Other Services

2020-2021 Budget

- Budgeted \$30,000 for marketing for this year that won't be spent
- Wanting major projects to be at least underway
- Legal expenses are tapering off with ending of 290 project
- Automobile insurance increases - \$7,000

Council engaged in discussion about automobile insurance purchase process. City Manager Bleess explained that we go through TML since they have the best rates.

IT Department

2020-2021 Budget

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- Software Maintenance Increases
 - Normal increases
- Technology Replacement
 - Replace Desktops with Notebooks where it makes sense
 - Advanced Authentication System Upgrade \$5,000
 - Promotion System Administrator Position \$6,500
 - Update EOC Video / Audio system \$5,000
 - Satellite Phone Base Station Replacement \$3,000
 - Digital Signatures / DocuSign \$ 600

IT Department – Future Years

- Improve Remote Access / MDM / BYOD More Prevalent
- Customer Contact
- Code Enforcement
- Cloud
- Fire Department Vehicle Computers
- Increased Video Data Requirements
- Third server for our Virtual System

Council engaged in discussion about video data and how it is stored and for how long. Basic cameras around the buildings are seven (7) days, but police station videos are kept for 90 to 120 days.

Council also discussed the number of servers versus the number of PC's and printers. It seems that the City has more servers than printers. Some wondered if the servers are being partitioned. Bob Blevins addressed the question, explaining that many of the servers are virtual servers and how these work. He also explained that we increased redundancy of the servers. As far as printers, only the larger network based printers are counted, not your standard desktop printers.

Finance / Municipal Court

2020-2021 Budget

- No major issues for current fiscal year
- Hiring freeze impacts 1 court clerk position
- Ticket numbers are down
- One part time position has been unfilled and may be eliminated for next year
- Anticipating retirements in the next few years, may need to budget for overlap/training period

Council engaged in discussion about Courts and how it might change due to COVID-19. City Manager Bless explained that the Court must put together a plan that must be submitted to the Texas Office of Court Administration. So there will be no Court until July, which are the guidelines from the State for in person Court activities.

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There was also discussion about voting in July and the fact that it will be held in the Civic Center to adhere to social distancing.

Police Department – CCPD Fund

- Current Fiscal Year
 - Budgeted Revenue of \$1,905,000
 - Revenue First 7 months of \$1,241,754
 - Expenses budgeted of \$1,602,587
 - Fund Balance of \$4,421,878
- We will look to utilize the CCPD fund a bit more for FY21
- Moving PT Detective Position to PT Evidence Tech

SALARY ADJUSTMENTS	20,670	CCPD/GF
STEP	20,000	CCPD
Salary Increases for 12hr Shift	63,000	CCPD/GF
EOC/Training Room Equipment Upgrade	6,000	CCPD
CONTROLLED ACCESS AND VIDEO SUREVELLANCE FOR PROPERTY ROOM	4,500	CCPD
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT/BALLISTIC VESTS – Will get \$8,000 back in grant	12,000	CCPD
Four more Flock Cameras	8,000	CCPD
Uniforms	3,500	CCPD
Ammo/Targets	4,000	CCPD
Tasers	6,200	CCPD

Police Department – Future Years

- Implement the Texas Police Chief Staffing Model-2020-2021
- Create DPS Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement Program-2021
- Become a TPCA Best Practices Recognized Agency-2022
- Establish Jersey Village Police and Clergy Partnership Program-2022
- Implement a Property Identification Program-2023
- Executive Leadership Training for Supervisors, i.e. LEMIT, ILEA or FBINA-2021-2025

Council engaged in discussion about the Flock cameras and the apartments. There was also discussion if private businesses can purchase their own Flock cameras with an opportunity to be included in the program. For example, if the storage business is having a theft issue, is there a way that this business could donate monies for the purchase cost of the camera and licensing fees. City Manager Bless stated that it is a possibility if it is solely for police usage and this can be looked into.

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There was also discussion about the 12 hours shifts and if it is working. Chief Riggs stated that it is working. Staff likes this shift and the fact that they get every other weekend off. It is a big recruiting tool.

Council engaged in discussion about the clergy program. Chief Riggs explained the program. It is patterned after the citizen's police academy where in clergy are put through a mini citizen's police academy. It is a great outreach.

Fire Department

2020-2021 Budget

- Applying for SAFER grant – application due today.
- This would be 4 full time fire fighters, paid for 75% by FEMA.
- Total cost to city would be \$113,800
- Grant awards should be known in June
- If we added 4 new positions without grant funding cost would be \$455,200
- AFG Grant was applied for to buy new air packs. Total cost of \$336,000.
 - If we get the grant the cost to city will be 5% or \$16,800.
 - This is budgeted in our replacement fund
- Second high water truck
 - Use this for traffic control on US290
 - Total cost of \$44,000 includes lift gate and arrow board

Council engaged in discussion about not getting the grant. The cost without grant funding would be \$455,200. There was discussion about the staffing needs in the Fire Department. Fire Chief Mark Bitz explained the needs, which included the use of the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshall. Chief Bitz explained that there are times when the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshall are not always available. Some members felt that four (4) positions may not be enough when you consider taking the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshall out of the equation. Council discussed the pros and cons of filling the staffing need at the fire department. It was the consensus that it is a cost that the City will need to bare whether we get the grant funding or not. These are basic needs that need to be filled and cost is less of a factor.

If we do get the grant, in three years, the total amount will be the responsibility of the City and the amount will be greater than it is in today's cost. Sales tax revenue was discussed in connection with these costs.

Council discussed the blinking arrow sign and if it is used during accidents by the Fire Department. Chief Bitz stated yes and explained how it is used.

Public Works Department

Public Works

- Staff doing more projects in house
 - Street panel and side walk repairs done partially in house

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- Expand allocation for street panels to include sidewalks, crosswalk painting, etc.
- Overtime is an issue due to utility companies hitting our water/sewer lines while doing repair work

Utilities

- Our share of White Oak Bayou Treatment Improvements \$650,000
- Seattle Street well repair \$350,000 – need this back online for water backup purposes
- Elevated storage tank near Congo \$500,000 for rehab
- Impact fee study – preliminary one received by council
- Water rate increase study – underway and anticipated to be to council this summer

E-Bills / Auto Bank Draft

- We now have the ability to send utility bills via email.
- This is less paper, postage, and physically handling the bill.
- Auto Bank Draft is a great way to get people to pay.
 - Automatically paid, automatically applied to accounts
 - No handling checks
- Staff would like to incentivize the use of E-Bill and Auto Bank Draft
- Offer a \$2 per month discount for bills that are delivered E-Bill and Auto Bank Draft

Council engaged in discussion about the operable wells in the event there are issues with the Houston interconnect. City Manager Bless explained that we would use the well on West Road that runs with chloramine. It can be used at any time without issue. It is currently part of our water system. On the East side of Jersey Village we are City of Houston water and well water. This whole process was discussed in depth. Public Works Director Ward explained how the use of water from the Houston interconnect works in connection with the use of well water and the North West Regional Water Authority.

There was discussion about the use of ground water and ground subsidence. What is the threat? Director Ward explained subsidence as it relates to Jersey Village as well as the cost associated with water from the City of Houston and the fees charged by the North West Regional Water Authority.

City Manager Bless also explained the TCEQ requirement that we must pump so much from well water to supplement water we get from the City of Houston. The contract we have with the City of Houston requires that we only use a certain amount of water from that system.

Council discussed the E-Bills/Auto Bank Draft application process that is presented online. It is difficult to use. However, Bob Blevins stated that INCODE is having some issues lately. There is a guide, but it is difficult to use and not user friendly. Staff will check into the problem.

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There was discussion about the rate of E-bills compared to regular billing. Currently it is at about 3%. If all residents signed up it would be a savings of \$48,000 per year. At any rate, the program will have some staff and supply savings.

Fleet was discussed. City Manager Bless explained the fleet replacement schedule. We are in our second year. The vehicles are being sold at the value that we estimated. The selling of the vehicles is working well. We got the model from Enterprise. Once completely into the plan, vehicles will be replaced every twelve (12) months with the exception of police vehicles. The program was discussed and how it saves the City money.

Council took a 15-minute break at 3:00 p.m. Reconvened at 3:15 p.m.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and COVID-19

- COVID-19 has changed how we interact at parks and playgrounds
- Looking to open the pool Memorial Day weekend with limited hours
 - Will have reduced capacity – 25% right now – approx. 50 people
 - Might increase to 50% by the time we open
- If we get shut down orders again this will close the pool
- Golf Course lost a month
 - With great weather it could have been a record month
- Looking to reopen Dog Park on Monday
- Waiting guidance for playgrounds from Governor

FY 2020-21 Supplementals

Parks and Recreation

- Trail Connectivity – \$45,000
- Parks Line Item Increases – Roughly \$8,000

Golf Course

- Tree moving - \$4,000
- Irrigation Improvements - \$5,000
- Drainage Improvements - \$5,000
- Lake Improvements/Beautification - \$6,000
- Erosion Control – \$6,000

Building Maintenance:

- Keyless door entry for doors at PD and FD - \$8,000
- Replacement of ice machine for City Hall - \$8,000
- Repair of Golf Course Clubhouse (roof, posts, doors, etc.) - \$35,000

Areas of Concern

- Expansion of the parks and recreation division
- Expansion of the golf course division
- Village Center

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- Parks Master Plan
- Continue a proactive approach to facility maintenance
- Budget:
 - 11-81 (Overtime) Roughly \$2,000 projected overage
 - 11-81 (Merchandise) Roughly \$30,000 projected overage
 - 11-82 (Trash Services) – Roughly \$3,500 projected overage

Two to Three Year Outlook

- Continue to explore recreational opportunities and potential revenue sources
- Continue exploring public and private partnerships
- Continue seeking grant funding (review PMP)
 - Re-plaster and repair decking at the swimming pool
- Repair existing trails
- Implementation of Parks Master Plan
- Village Center – Parks/Trails
- PD and FD – Continue to replace items with high efficiency use.
- Continue to budget for preventative maintenance items

Golf Course Food and Beverage

- Contract with back yard Grill expires at end of year
- New convention center club house could limit who would be interested in a 1 year deal
- Could bring these operations in house
- Estimated costs would be about \$200,000, estimated revenues about \$300,000

Golf Course Convention Center and Club House

- Low bid came back at \$5.171 million
- Worked with PGAL and collaborate to look into costs
- Both agree the project as designed came back with appropriate bids
- We could v/e items to bring cost down to \$4.5 million, not including FFE or Contingency
- Proposed solution to stay within budget would be remodel current building and add separate building for convention space
- Everything would be 1 story
- Would require a construction manager at risk type of build
- Total project cost would be \$3.7 million
- Funding for this supposed to come from hot funds
- Hot funds are drastically down for the past year
- Project will require at least \$3 million in funds from General fund, which could potentially be repaid from HOT and/or Golf Course funds

Gateway Signs

- We had originally planned 12 foot gateway signs to be installed at Eldridge, west and senate
- The county may be willing to give a variance to their guidelines for some of these signs
- Clark Condon reached out to a few traffic engineers to address county concerns
- that route has proven unsuccessful
- They are proposing 3' signs instead – cost of \$15,000 instead of \$30,000.

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Parks and Recreation Director Alfaro explained the Trail Connectivity Program and the grant for which the City applied. Council engaged in discussion about the trails program. Mr. Alfaro explained that the Parks Master Plan will determine the trails. It is basically sidewalk usage and not behind the homes on the bayou. There was discussion about homes that do not have sidewalks. These would be the homes around the lake that are exempted by ordinance because they have the walkway behind their home around the lake. The trails being proposed are along Jersey Meadow by the Golf Course because it takes into consideration safety, which is a major requirement of the grant approval.

Council discussed the Golf Course supplementals. Some wondered if there should be more supplementals. The areas next to the cart paths are always torn up. The greens are not where they should be. It seems that these items should be added to the supplemental list or that the priorities need to be refocused. City Manager Bleess explained that we have a turf expert that comes in regularly to survey the greens under our turf management program and our greens have improved over the past four (4) years. There was discussion about the greens and it will just take time for the greens to improve. Staff projects that over the next couple of years our course greens will be top-notch. Council discussed how improving the greens may increase golf course revenues. There was also discussion about the golf cart paths.

There was discussion about the number of rounds per year at the golf course. Staff reported approximately 42,000 rounds per year. Raising the price per round was discussed. Director Alfaro explained the history of price increases. The prices were increased \$4 to \$5 per round at the beginning of this year.

Director Alfaro explained the current contract for food and beverage at the Golf Course. He explained that going out for bid, we may not get as good a deal as we currently have. Therefore we looked into bringing this service in-house. Research was done on other courses and looking at what has happened with our current vendor. The cost would be about 40% for food, 25% for labor leaving 35% revenue, or approximately \$100,000. Currently we get about \$47,000 back from Backyard Grill so their sales are about \$250,000. Some members wondered if Backyard Grill is interested in extension. It was explained that all the extensions under the current contract have expired. Therefore, we would need to check with the City Attorney to see if we have to go out for RFP or if we can extend for one (1) more year. Most felt that Backyard Grill is a great deal. However, if we have to go out for RFP, that might be a better decision than bringing it in-house. Council discussed the pros and cons of each option. It was the consensus to seek the City Attorney's advice on extending Backyard Grill.

Council discussed the clubhouse project. The current clubhouse remodel is not a good option. The basics are not there for a remodel. Some members were hesitant to do anything at this time and recommended research if there is a different option that is more economical. There was concern about cash flow and the funds involved with the Village Center project. There is concern for the risks if we spend \$3.7 million or more on a clubhouse at this time. If we proceed, we must know more about how this investment will help pay for itself. Council discussed the pros and cons of a new clubhouse for the golf course. We must first sell the land, build city hall, look at higher

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fund balance, etc. Therefore, the golf course clubhouse should be on hold for an indefinite period of time and just spend what we need to maintain the current structure. Council then discussed how a new clubhouse would or could affect golf course revenues. Some wondered if it would change revenues that much and spending the funds would take away the ability to do other more needed projects. Others felt that a better clubhouse might bring in more golf course revenue. Remodeling the current building was discussed. City Manager Bleess explained his conversations with the consultants about a remodel project. It was the consensus that we should put this project on hold and alternatives should be revisited in terms of the structure as well as funding sources. The project can be revisited during the 2021-2022 budget year.

The 12' foot signs versus the 3' signs in the gateway sign project were discussed. It might be that we could have an option of a 6' sign if the County will give us a variance. It was the consensus of Council that the 3' sign was not acceptable. Some wondered about the contact person at the County and if he/she has the final decision. Some members felt that we should be a bit more persistent to see if there is another contact at the County that might be able to help. The pros and cons of the signage were discussed by Council. The problems with the signs at the various locations were discussed as a result of needing to work with the County to install these signs. Council was disappointed with the work of the Consultants concerning this issue. It was the consensus of Council that the Consultants should have known their design would be a problem with the County.

Telecommuting

- It's been working well overall
- Reopening the front facing spots soon
- Several employees are in the high risk category
- Also planning for potential round two of COVID-19
- Moving to a more fully telecommuting city hall could prove beneficial
- Some positions could be permanent telecommuting
- This could change the landscape for what is needed in a new city hall

Council engaged in discussion about telecommuting. Some members felt that telecommuting is a decision of the City Manager. There was discussion on how telecommuting could affect the cost and square footage of a new City Hall. However, changing the size of the building today could affect the needs in the next 50 years. Council discussed the pros and cons of reducing the size of a new City Hall as a result of telecommuting. Some felt that changes could be made to make the space more flexible and perhaps reduce the number of personal office space. Therefore, the current design could be tweaked in this regard. Some suggested that we should look to what the major/largest companies are doing in connection with telecommuting. Currently they have plans not to bring their workforce back for at least a year. Others are tweaking their workspace so it is more flexible. With this in mind, we should consider tweaking the space in the new City Hall as well. There was also discussion about supplementing those that work at home with a co-workers fee. Some felt that flexible workspace is good, but they are not in favor of reducing the currently planned footprint for the new City Hall. It is cheaper to build now than it will be 20 years from now. Productivity versus telecommuting was discussed. How do you measure productivity?

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Others felt that being in the office or at home will not affect how productivity is measured. It is business goals and objectives that help measure productivity.

The design of the City Hall was discussed. Some felt the current design does not lend itself to re-purpose the current space.

Tear Down Rebuild

- Set aside \$1 million for this FY to do this
- Good conversations with about 5 contractors
- COVID-19 put that on pause
- Common theme – city selling empty lots would be easier
- Is there interest from Council to buy houses and tear them down and the city selling empty lots?

Council engaged in discussion about the Tear down Rebuild Project versus the city selling empty lots. The pros and cons of both were discussed. The cost of each was discussed. Incentives were discussed to make this project happen. The alternative to tear down rebuild is elevations, which also bears a cost to the City. Some felt at this time, given the revenue complications from COVID-19, it might not be wise to pursue this project at this time.

The buying and selling process of this project was discussed. City Manager Bless stated that we could go the bid route or just place the home for sale. Twelve (12) current homeowners are interested in selling their home under this project. The City set aside \$1 million for this project in the 2019-2020 budget year. Some members felt that selling the property will not be difficult and that we should continue with the plan, but sell empty lots. Some members wanted to see the cost of this project for a single home. Others felt that incentivizing a contractor to take on the project was the better option since it removes the city from buying and selling property.

City Manager Bless explained that originally the cost was set out as \$250,000 for the purchase price, teardown would be paid by flood insurance at zero cost to the City, and the City would sell the lot to a Contractor at \$100,000 per lot, which results in a cost to the City of \$150,000 per lot. It was mentioned that the City could try a pilot program to see if this project is viable.

City Manager Bless explained why we are looking at a tear down rebuild program for this area of the City. He further explained that if this program does not work, these homes would be eligible for home elevations through FEMA. Elevations cost the City approximately \$860,000 for 17 homes as a match to FEMA funds. However, the homes in the tear down rebuild program would need to be raised some six (6) to eight (8) feet and some wondered if they would be eligible for elevations, and if so, is a home raised eight (8) feet feasible.

There was concern that if the City buys the land and has the home demolished, but has no Contractor in place to buy the lot before the whole transaction begins that it might be too much risk for the City. This concern was discussed by the Council.

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It was the consensus to pursue this program selling empty lots.

In closing the presentation, some members of Council feel this will be a tough budget season. We need to maintain a strong fund balance. Supplementals will be looked at very closely. Staff is encouraged to look at supplementals as a must have basis and not wants.

There was discussion about past floods and what the City's immediate costs are after the flood. It was felt that some amount should be budgeted for such an event.

ADJOURN

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Lorri Coody, City Secretary

