

**THE WORKSESSION  
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA  
HELD MAY 15, 2013, AT 7:00 P.M.  
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Acting Mayor McGoffin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present were: Acting Mayor Lori McGoffin, Councilmembers Ron Brooks, David Lambert, Nick Maldonado, Chris Moncada and Al Sacco. Excused was Mayor Toney D. King, Sr.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Budget Worksession for the City of Benson, Fiscal Year 2013-2014; all revenues and expenditures of the City may be discussed**

Finance Director Megan Moreno addressed Council stating the last budget worksession left off at Tourism, but noted with the Tourism Department's new employee, there was a need to add an employee uniform allowance for \$100. Ms. Moreno then reviewed the Finance Department budget stating the personnel costs decreased with the removal of the Deputy Finance Director, adding the proposed budget now included an Accounting Specialist. Ms. Moreno then noted another change in the budget was a \$3,000 increase for the required transparency website, adding the cost for the site is based on the number of cities that participate. Ms. Moreno then stated the line item for IT services increased, because it now included the Caselle software support service. Ms. Moreno then stated the budget included the purchase of a new laptop since the one in the Finance Department no longer worked. Councilmember Moncada asked about bank charges with Ms. Moreno stating these are merchant services charges from customers who use credit cards to pay their bills, adding she is actively seeking quotes to see if this cost can be decreased. Ms. Moreno then stated the current budget includes capital outlay in the amount of \$2,500 and with the new budgeted amount of \$2,500, she hopes to have the on-line bill pay program running in the near future.

Acting Mayor McGoffin stated she would be excusing herself from the Police Department budget discussion, citing a conflict of interest and designated Councilmember Lambert to preside as Acting Mayor for the discussion. Chief of Police Paul Moncada addressed Council stating his number one priority is the salary for officers, as mentioned last year and this year at the Council retreats, adding it has now become critical. Chief Moncada then stated the Police Department is currently down 2 officers and 1 more is awaiting word from another department to hire him and others are looking, depending on what happens during the budget. Chief Moncada then stated the City is currently in its fifth advertisement for officers and dispatchers and is still not finding qualified applicants, especially for officers, noting a big factor is the salary, adding it is hard to compete with other agencies, but we can make it a priority. Chief Moncada stated it costs a lot of money and time to recruit and train officers, only to see them go elsewhere in a few years, adding the department has been stable until recently when they have started to lose people and the City needs to do what we can to retain what we have and hopefully attract better applicants. Chief Moncada then stated we need to have a pay plan in place so the officers can see down the road, if they get good evaluations, that they have the possibility of reaching the top end in a reasonable amount of time. Chief Moncada then stated in the Council packets, there is a pay step plan based on what was introduced in 2006. Chief Moncada then stated the other personnel issue is a reclassification for the Records Clerk to change to an Administrative Assistant, noting when the Communications Supervisor left the department, her duties were divided up between the Records Clerk and the Sergeant, but now most of those administrative duties have gone to the Records Clerk, which is more responsibility. Chief Moncada then stated he feels the position should be reclassified to grade 26 with a 3% increase, adding it would then be equivalent to some other positions in the City based on those responsibilities. Councilmember Maldonado

asked if the City required officers to spend a certain amount of time with the Benson Police Department or if we can have the officers reimburse the City for their training with Chief Moncada stating the City had temporarily used a contract requiring officers to stay for 3 years and was prorated based on the cost for training, but found if the officer left, the enforcement of the contract was not cost effective since it costs the City more in legal fees than what could be recovered. Council then discussed how the department was doing with 2 officer positions being vacant with Chief Moncada stating the department has had to make adjustments, including utilizing a detective to cover officer positions, but if they lose any more officers, they will have to consider more alternatives. Further discussion focused on the decreasing number of applicants for both officers and dispatchers, with Councilmember Moncada noting it was important to remember employees also valued being able to work 4 10-hour days and in order to do that, the vacant positions need to be filled. Councilmember Brooks asked about the officers patrolling the school with Chief Moncada stating the department does what it can and he keeps in touch with Dr. Woodall at the school.

Discussion then moved back to the step pay plan with Chief Moncada stating he believes all the Police Department personnel are doing a great job and deserve raises, but the employees at the higher end are not getting adjustments, noting he is only addressing those at the lower end, since those positions are the most in need of adjusting. Chief Moncada also noted the plan is not longevity-based, but is merit-based and employees will have to earn a raise with recommendations from their supervisors. Councilmember Moncada stated if the Council did institute the step pay plan, it was not a guarantee it would remain in place, since the economy is not a sure thing, adding the next Council may not have this option and could change the budget. Chief Moncada stated the plan is imperative to maintain, adding cost of living adjustments affect the plan, but noted if money becomes tight, the Council has to make that decision.

Acting Mayor Lambert asked if the proposed budget included the requested changes with Ms. Moreno stating it did not, adding if the Council approved the request, it would increase personnel costs by \$90,741 and Council would need to find that funding in the budget, as she would not recommend increasing the budget. Chief Moncada restated this is his number 1 priority and is, by far, the most crucial portion of the Police Department budget, adding he can cut some capital outlay and put off purchases to offset this increase.

Council then reviewed the capital projects noting patrol vehicles for \$25,000, unmarked cars for \$10,000 and the Animal Control truck for \$5,000 could all be delayed with Chief Moncada stating he was looking at grants for training so that budgeted amount of \$14,500 could also be removed, for a total of \$54,500 to be applied to the proposed adjustments. Councilmember-elect Peter Wangsness asked if the additional \$90,000 was a one-time expenditure with Chief Moncada stating the increase would be permanent with future salary increases being reviewed each year and the plan being merit-based. Council had a brief discussion on the economy with Ms. Moreno stating the City should be conscious of our spending for at least 1 or 2 more years, noting the prediction is that the Phoenix area will have a full recovery in 2015, Tucson and greater areas will recover a year behind that and hopefully, Benson will be close behind. Council consensus was to include the proposed adjustments and they agreed to keep looking for the remaining funding of \$35,000 as they went through the budget.

Chief Moncada then reviewed the remaining Police Department budget noting having the IT position contracted works well for the Police Department since it's not just 1 employee covering the entire City's IT needs. Council then discussed the need to replace 3 computers as they start to age and have issues and Councilmember Sacco asked about grants with Chief Moncada stating he had recently applied for \$75,000 to correct a radio issue on SR90, adding when officers go to certain locations, they have to manually change their radio to a different frequency to hit the repeater on Adams Peak, instead of the main repeater on Jennella and if they forget to, they won't have contact with dispatchers. Chief Moncada then stated the adjustment is a simulcast system, which requires about \$150,000 in funding, all of which he is trying to get through Stone Garden. Chief Moncada then stated the officer would transmit like normal and the system would find the strongest signal, which would eliminate the manual switching of the frequencies, which is safety issue. Chief Moncada then stated if we are awarded the first \$75,000, it will pay for Phase 1 and in October, he will put in for the remaining funding to complete the project. Councilmember-elect Jeff Cook

asked about the personnel increase for the next budget and if everyone would receive the same amount with Chief Moncada stating the pay raises are merit-based and each employee could receive between 2% and 5% increases if they were recommended for a raise, based on their performance. Mr. Cook then asked if the \$90,000 represents the cost to implement the changes and put people where they should be based on experience and performance with Chief Moncada stating there are employees at the higher end, such as the 3 supervisors who are not getting any increase, not because they didn't earn it, but because he is trying to address areas where there is a greater need to address the salary ranges. Councilmember Brooks stated he knows a lot of employees have not gotten raises, however police protection is critical, it's one of our emergency services and we don't want to lose more officers, adding it makes more sense to retain officers than to lose them and have to hire and train new officers. Chief Moncada agreed, stating the officers want to see a step plan in place so they can plan their futures here.

Fire Chief Keith Spangler then reviewed the Fire Department budget stating last year in the budget Council talked about hiring 2 firefighters and given the economy, he asked if the Council wanted to discuss other options, with the Council agreeing there wasn't a way to hire any full-time firefighters at this time. Chief Spangler then stated most calls are run during the daytime hours, adding he is constantly getting calls from outer areas wanting to volunteer, but the City doesn't have a place for them to stay in our Fire Department. Chief Spangler then stated he is starting to get people to come down from 8-4 on days they are available which frees him up for administrative duties, adding an option for that would be to pay 2 people a stipend in the amount of \$20 for a 4-hour shift, with 2 shifts Monday-Friday, covering the department from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at a total cost of \$19,000. Chief Spangler then stated another option Council could consider would be to pay for a 12-hour shift, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at a cost of \$28,800. Chief Spangler then stated the Professional Services line item is for the City to pay Benson Fire Inc. \$60,000 so the total costs with the 8-hour coverage would be \$79,000 and with the 12-hour coverage would be \$88,800. Chief Spangler then stated we can stay where we are now, but most of the firefighters are working out of town and can't respond to calls and are not available during the day, adding this is happening everywhere. Councilmember Brooks asked about City employees who volunteer and if there could be a way to offer an incentive to employees to volunteer with Council discussion on how the volunteers must be trained, must pass medical exams and a fitness agility test, attend meetings and that some employees don't want the inherent danger of being a firefighter, as well as the problems with overtime and insurance. Acting Mayor McGoffin asked if there was any room in the Fire Department budget to pay for the increased professional services cost with Chief Spangler stating he could possibly drop training down to \$8,000. Ms. Moreno stated the Council may be able to find some funding in the Community Enrichment budget, stating Council didn't review the entire budget for Community Enrichment. Acting Mayor McGoffin then asked about reducing the turnout replacement line item by \$8,000, adding that would only leave the need to find \$3,000 to fund the 8-hour coverage option. Ms. Moreno then stated in the interest of time, she could review the budget and make recommendations on the remaining \$3,000 needed for the 8-hour coverage option. Council agreed.

Ms. Moreno then asked if the Council had any questions on the City Attorney budget or the Magistrate budget with Council noting there weren't many changes and not much could be done. Ms. Moreno then stated the Library Director was not present, so Council could move on and then come back to the Library at a future worksession.

Public Works Director Brad Hamilton reviewed the Parks Department budget stating it was almost the same as last year, adding he didn't plan on filling the vacant staff position and was carrying forward the CIP items, noting he would hold off on items like the storage shed, but the Gator, which was used every day during ball season would probably have to be addressed. Mr. Hamilton then stated since the City implemented Park light fees, there has been a 30-40% decrease in the electric bill, adding people now make sure the lights are shut off when they are done using them. Councilmember Brooks asked about the pool supplies with Mr. Hamilton stating that line item was moved to the Recreation Department budget.

Mr. Hamilton then reviewed the Public Works Department budget, stating this was the General Fund portion of Public Works, with development review. Mr. Hamilton noted an increase in Professional Services, but stated it would not be spent unless developers came in and paid for it. Councilmember

Moncada asked about the cemetery line item increase with Mr. Hamilton stating this was to address erosion problems, which was not a major project but was still something that needed to be addressed. Councilmember Moncada then asked about the space in the cemetery with Mr. Hamilton stating the cemetery was just expanded last year and there is quite a bit of space.

Recreation Coordinator Laura Parkin then reviewed the Recreation Department budget stating Professional Services increased to \$3,700 and includes the website updates, which have been moved out of the IT line item in the Administration office. Ms. Parkin then stated she is requesting an increase for CPR/First Aid required certifications and Pool Operator certificates they are required to have, as well as the increase in utilities for the Community Center to reflect the actual expenditures. Ms. Parkin then stated the repairs line item was increased to allow for the installation of drain valves to prevent the sprinklers from freezing during the winter and she would like to paint inside and out. Councilmember Moncada stated he would like to see a second phone line at the Community Center due to calling and receiving a busy signal with Ms. Parkin stating they only have 1 phone line and 1 fax line in addition to her cell phone, but there are times when both she and the Recreation Assistant are both on the phone and even though they have an answering machine, people calling in get a busy signal, adding she believes another phone line would be about \$30.00 per month. Councilmember-elect Peter Wangness suggested a fax line splitter with Ms. Parkin stating she would have IT look into that option. Council suggested making sure the phone lines would rollover to the open line. Ms. Parkin then stated she is also asking for \$2,000 to purchase an outdoor PA system, noting it would be portable and could be used for numerous City functions.

Building Official Luis Garcia reviewed the Building Department budget stating there were very little changes, but noted Professional Services dropped by \$5,000 due to not using Brown & Associates to review plans since he has been with the City, adding his department has retained every bit of revenue from plan review fees, noting there are no projects on any scale that the current staff can't handle. Mr. Garcia then addressed his personnel requests for reclassification, noting the staff currently is the most talented staff Benson has ever seen and they are actually overqualified for the positions they now reside in, but their concern is the probationary period associated with reclassifications, adding if there is a probationary period with a reclassification, they are not interested being reclassified. Mr. Garcia then stated the new job title for Mr. Tim Brandenburg would be Building Inspector II, adding he is a combination commercial and residential inspector and his current level only requires him to have one residential building inspector certification. Mr. Garcia then stated Ms. Michelle Johnson, acquired her AICP, which is the highest level of designation a planning professional can achieve, noting she is currently is a Planning Technician/GIS Manager, asking for her to be reclassified to a Senior Planner Position, which is more in line with what her educational background shows. Mr. Garcia then stated these employees are concerned about a probationary period and if it is a condition of the reclassification, they would like to decline. Councilmember Lambert asked if the probationary period could be waived with Human Resource Coordinator Melissa Quiroz stating it could not. Council then discussed the possibility of a merit raise for their accomplishments with Mr. Garcia stating a reclassification for title would show they deserve the increase without a merit, adding since no one else in the City is getting a raise, he was also attempting to salvage Citywide morale. Councilmember Brooks asked if the Senior Planner title was a title Ms. Johnson needed with Mr. Garcia stating it is more in line with what she does on day-to-day basis, adding she is currently working above and beyond her workscope, but he does recognize our economic conditions. Council then discussed giving a raise to the employees for their achievements and looked at the budget to see where the funding could come from. When discussion turned to the education and training line item, Mr. Garcia asked to keep the budgeted amount, stating all his personnel are certified, and continuing education is required, noting in the coming fiscal year, the Educational Institute for Building Officials will be in Phoenix and he would like to send Staff for a day class, adding next spring, it will be held in Tucson and he sends them for the majority of the week so Staff can get and maintain their certifications without having the City pay for lodging. Ms. Moreno then noted the subject employees were not both in the Building Department, stating the increase to Building would be \$3,204 and the Planning Department increase would be \$2,040 if the proposed salary adjustments were agreed to by Council. Mr. Garcia again noted the caliber of the current staff, adding it is his intent not to send anything out for review, regardless of whether it's a utility scale solar system or apartment complex or big box store, noting they would do everything in house and keep that revenue in Benson.

Councilmember Sacco asked about the goals listed in the Building Department and what a complete Zoning Regulations update consisted of with Mr. Garcia stating it was a major update, adding all existing zoning districts are not changing, so while it appears it's a major overhaul, it's an addition to encourage economic development and to give the property owners more options for their property. Mr. Garcia then stated this was listed as a short-term goal, noting he already has a recommendation for approval from the Planning & Zoning Commission, and it now needs to come before Council. Councilmember Sacco suggested the completion of the General Development Plan (GDP) update be the priority item with Mr. Garcia agreeing. Councilmember Sacco then stated he thought of all the documents the City had, the Zoning Regulations were the most accurate and didn't need any updates, with Mr. Garcia stating the Zoning Regulations as they exist today are actually prohibitive to any sort of progress, adding what happens right now is a property owner gets the highest level of zoning designation and then can do everything underneath it, which results in the City currently having subdivisions that are still zoned under business use. Mr. Garcia then stated the "topdown" zoning, as it's called is not at all in line with what it was intended to do. Councilmember Sacco then asked about the update to the City Code and establishing a Development Services Department with Chapter 7, stating that issued has been tabled. Mr. Garcia and Ms. Moreno then stated the budget was drafted with goals that were in place before the Council tabled this issue. Councilmember Sacco then stated he would like to see it eliminated from the goals of the Building Department and that Mr. Garcia's top priority be the GDP update. Mr. Garcia stated there is a State mandate requiring the City to update the GDP in the year 2014, adding the challenge with the update without having the Zoning Regulations update in concert with it, is that we'll have a GDP that is not usable because there is no zoning district to allow it to be able to be used. Councilmember Sacco asked about the dates for the GDP update with Mr. Garcia stating the statute requires that if the City has a certain level of growth, the update must be ratified by the voters; however, since Benson didn't have that growth, the update does not need to be ratified by the voters. Councilmember Sacco asked if this was considered a minor or a major change with Mr. Garcia stating it was considered a re-adoption, adding the ratification only has to be done every 10 years, the current legislation moved it to 2014 and that ratification only had to be done if the City had a certain level of growth, but Benson didn't. Councilmember Brooks then asked if the City received this extension because we weren't able to get it completed and now the legislature is saying if the City didn't have a certain amount of growth, we now don't have to do that with Mr. Garcia stating that was incorrect. Mr. Garcia then stated the legislature gave the entire state, due to economic conditions, a grace period to be able to get their General Plans re-adopted and ratification by the voters only had to occur if the City met certain growth levels, which Benson did not. Councilmember Brooks then asked when the City needed to get the re-adopted GDP to the State with Mr. Garcia stating the GDP does not require any State approval; Council must just re-adopt it in 2014. Councilmember Sacco stated the legislature was still debating that issue with Mr. Garcia stating the issue has been resolved by the legislature. Councilmember Brooks then stated he wanted to verify Council was reducing Professional Services down to \$1,500 and other items to try and give the adjustments to the 2 employees who received the additional certificates with Ms. Moreno confirming the reduction in Professional Services. Acting Mayor McGoffin stated she had started looking at the Planning Department budget and it was pretty bone dry with Mr. Garcia stating he needed to keep the Public Notices line item in order to notify residents again of the upcoming Zoning Regulation changes and the GDP Update. Councilmember Moncada asked about reducing the CIP projects with Ms. Moreno stating she would be very hesitant to replace an on-going personnel expenditure with a one-time expenditure, adding if Council commits to giving an increase, it will be an on-going expense and they should look at the operational side of the budget to fund those, adding Police vehicles were leases, so they were an on-going expense, so it seemed more reasonable. Acting Mayor McGoffin stated she was still looking to see if there was any room in the Planning Department budget to accommodate the proposed increases with Ms. Moreno stating she could review the budget and make recommendations to Council. Ms. Moreno then asked if the Council wanted to continue moving forward with Acting Mayor McGoffin asking if the Council was on schedule with the worksessions and Ms. Moreno indicating they were. Ms. Moreno then stated on Monday, the Council would begin the worksessions that week with the Enterprise Funds and the Miscellaneous funds, but would also need to revisit the Library Department budget when Ms. Scott could be present. Acting Mayor McGoffin noted if Ms. Scott is proposing personnel increases, Ms. Moreno should ask her to find the funding for the increases in her budget when she presents it to Council.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Lambert moved to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Brooks. Motion passed 6-0.

ATTEST:

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Toney D. King, Sr., Mayor

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Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk