

Special Meeting for Budget
November 9, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Station Four:

The meeting was called to order. The architect passed around a list of value engineer items and drawings to discuss. Items on the list included: a metal roof versus shingle roof; the omission of the shed; the omission of shutters; and simplifying the roof trusses. Also on the list were: the reduction in size of the front porch and omitting the screened back porch; fewer tiles in the restrooms; an alternate HVAC unit and ductwork; the omission of some of the cabinetry; the substitution of name brand windows, door hardware, and plumbing fixtures. It was discussed to omit the washer and dryer from the bid, and to remove the generator enclosure. Alternate landscape plans are also an option. The architect is looking into getting an exact cost for allowance items.

It was discussed whether to negotiate deduct items with the low bidder only, or to open the bidding to all bidders. It was also discussed whether or not to scratch items before or after sending them out for new bid prices. The architect will prepare the letters for the bidders.

George Oldroyd stated Kay Benton was looking at the possibilities of what would need to be done to borrow more money. She said the appraisal was under review, and she prepared amortization schedules to compare to annual principal reduction.

The Budget:

Chairman Hitchcock began the discussion with the revenues. No growth was seen in Georgetown County, and a small increase in Horry County. Conservative numbers were used for both tax and impact revenues. The fire contract with Horry County should be paid, and the medical contract will be 50,000. Based on what was taken in this year, medical income was budgeted at 700,000.

The budget amount for the advertising expense will increase due to advertising for nine new firefighters next year. The medical billing expense is calculated as a percentage of the medical income. Due to Santee Cooper's rate increase, and Station Four, Chairman Hitchcock would like to see 32,000 in the electricity expense item. Chairman Hitchcock asked Assistant Chief Haney to look into the amount required for next year's fingerprinting expense. Chief Knight will have a better number for next year's health insurance expense as soon as enrollment is complete for the new State Health Plan.

Assistant Chief Haney states the water rescue supplies expense includes two new life vests and an aluminum john boat. Chief Knight pointed out there were several occasions in the past year when a john boat would have been more advantageous than the equipment used.

The differences between the line 897-Bunker Gear Supplies & Equipment and 943-Capital Outlay, Bunker Gear was discussed, and whether or not one line could be eliminated. Assistant Chief Haney explained the process of leasing bunker gear through a firefighter's probationary period and purchasing the gear after the probationary period is over.

Capital building repairs planned are coating the parking areas, new carpet for Station One, coating the bay floor at Station Two.

Moe Wells questioned the amount budgeted for Repair and Maintenance – Equipment. Chairman Hitchcock requested a list of what was spent in the last year to compare with what is anticipated.

Booty Shelley remarked on the increase in telephone expenses. George Oldroyd requested a breakdown of telephone expenses between cell and landline.

George Oldroyd questioned the amount of 300,000 for Capital – Station Four, and whether it could change if more money were borrowed for construction of the new station.

Chief Knight talked about the need for a new Quint for Station Four; and having a new truck built versus buying a demo model. Also discussed was the need to purchase a new vehicle for the EMS Supervisor, and if the purchase could wait another year.

Salaries:

Mr. Hitchcock stated that the department is behind with starting salaries. What the Chief has proposed is something we cannot afford, but we have to come up with a compromise. George Oldroyd would like to know generally what kind of raise Chief is presenting. Chief Knight stated the starting salaries were adjusted in 2008, putting the department in the middle of the pack. Raises given during 2011-2014 did not adjust starting salaries. Chief Knight explained he looked at the middle tier and adjusted to be in line with other departments. He then adjusted the others accordingly.

Booty Shelley requested to see the entire package, including time off, insurance, and buy back. Moe Wells would like to adjust starting salaries every two years, rather than a big increase this year and not again for another eight years.

George Oldroyd would like to see the Salaries Expense sit as it is until the next meeting and have the Chief come back with more justification and a complete package comparison. Also discussed were merit increases and the review process.

At George Oldroyd's request, Chief Knight has presented a fleet replacement schedule.

Next budget meeting scheduled for the November 16th at 6:00 p.m.

Kay Benton made a motion to adjourn, and was seconded by Moe Wells. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved on 12-14-15



Al Hitchcock, Chairman