

CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

329 Main Street; Clarksville TN 37040 (Online and On the Phone)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

APRIL 22, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.

Executive Committee Members Present:

Richard Swift, Chair
Bryce Powers, Vice-Chair
Mark Kelly for Mayor Pitts
Bill Kimbrough for Mayor Durrett

Others Present:

Jeff Tyndall, RPC
Judy Burkhart, RPC
LaDonna Marshall, RPC
John Spainhoward, RPC

Mr. Tyndall stated that he thought they had the budget completed approximately three weeks ago but then the Corona Virus came along and started shutting things down. He stated that he knows the County is concerned, but the City is very concerned as far as what this means for their revenues next year. Mr. Tyndall stated that the City has already asked what we can do to reduce this year's budget. He stated that we had some leftover Census money that was not used, so we have given that back to them. He stated that was approximately \$4000 each to the City and the County. Mr. Tyndall stated that the money for the Historic Survey was also reduced by about \$700 each. He stated that he did not want to reduce any money that we would ask from them on a monthly or quarterly basis because he felt that the County would also ask for the same consideration.

Mr. Tyndall stated that the City is going to be hit pretty hard with the loss of sales tax revenue. He stated that we are going on 40-45 days of this now. He stated that he was glad Tennessee had passed where sales tax could be collected through online purchases, because if that was not the case we would really be hurting at this point. Mr. Tyndall stated that he has said all of this to kind of set the stage for what we have had to do with our budget.

Mr. Tyndall stated that originally we were coming in with about an \$11,000 increase for both the City and the County, so a \$22,000 increase in overall budget year over year. He stated that was a pretty meager request which included an approximately four percent increase. The County is looking at about a 5 to 6 percent increase. He stated that a lot of this is driven by benefits and salaries. He stated that we had to

not only cut out that \$22,000 but do what we can on our end to further reduce our budget.

Mr. Tyndall stated that we have decided to go back to where we have the same amount that was requested last year, from the City and the County, of \$428,000. He stated that he has not heard any feedback from the Mayor's yet but he feels that is our first, best foot forward. He stated that any additional cuts beyond that are going to eat into our general fund.

Mr. Tyndall stated that he would draw attention to Tab 1 which is a vertical chart. He stated that this was just the general ledger sheet for how we both figure out our allocations, our Transportation money and the expenses. He stated that Tab 6, which you received, has a breakdown of where those expenses go. He stated that the majority of those expenses are benefits and payroll. He presented the portion of the chart which showed that as of right now \$444,328.52. He stated that general funding for the RPC is \$428,000 from both entities. He stated that we have the MPO match which is up a little bit this year from last year at \$11,695. He stated that the carry-over was \$5000, allotted last year for the Historic Survey. Mr. Tyndall stated that we have chosen a vendor, we have agreed upon a price and it has reduced the potential match down to \$4633 for each, so that would be a carry-over item from last year. Mr. Tyndall stated that if we can use some in kind staff allocation as well, we can further reduce that number by a couple of hundred to a thousand dollars.

Mr. Tyndall stated that if you go to budget Tab 6, he stated that the lower bottom right corner is the bottom line. He stated that the current budget we are operating in, the total revenue is \$1,491,367.16 with next year being \$1,562,334.56. He stated that last year we were projected to be over by \$2,235.86 and this year we are projecting an \$8,278 loss. He stated that he feels that is our opportunity to give back to the City and County and try to reduce their budget. Mr. Tyndall stated that our general fund is not in dire straits but it is not as good as he would like it to be. He stated that he would have liked for it to continue to increase several thousand every year.

Mr. Tyndall stated that on the operations side we are looking pretty large this year because there is a large MPO project this year that costs in the range of \$100,000. He stated that is eighty percent written off to the State and Feds. He stated that Social Security has risen and everything has risen a little bit. He stated that health insurance was the big one that was a five percent increase which equates to approximately \$8,000 more. He stated that dental and disability went down a little bit. He stated that we are projecting a two percent cost of living increase, originally we were going with two and a half percent. He stated that we have two employees that are due their longevity, one percent increases.

Mr. Tyndall stated that Judy is retiring here as of the end of June. He stated that LaDonna is taking over. He stated that we are retaining \$18,000 for Judy to work next year on audit and on next year's budget, and as LaDonna needs her for requisitions. He stated that unfortunately it has been a very difficult time to onboard a new employee. He stated that Judy and LaDonna are doing what they can and they are working about two to three days a week in person, in the office.

He stated that LaDonna is trying to absorb as much as she can but he thinks we are going to need to be able to call Judy, have Judy come down and show LaDonna where some things are because we are just losing time right now.

Mr. Tyndall stated that the other employee change, and he talked to Chief Halford at the City about this, in order to do succession planning, Judy gave us enough lead time but he is not sure that everyone is going to give us six months or a year advance notice. Mr. Tyndall stated that we have a couple of folks who are on the verge of retirement, probably in the next two to three fiscal years. He stated that we are looking at Stan Williams retiring, Ruth Russell, Jill Hall probably on more like the five year range, and even John Spainhoward is eligible for his TCRS full retirement here in the next five to six years.

Mr. Tyndall stated that we want to do some succession planning and by doing that he wants to add a position called either Assistant Planner or Planning Tech, sort of an entry level or mid-level position where someone can learn from the planners and be the person to rise up within the organization when someone leaves. He stated that right now we are projecting that person to be Angie Latta, our front end clerk, with a slight salary increase and then backfill her position at her current salary for a new front end clerk.

Mr. Tyndall stated that obviously we are not doing any hiring right now so that is going to get pushed off well into next year. He stated that this budget does take into effect that that would have happened July 1. He stated that he is not saying it will not but we might want to see where we are in another month or so.

Mr. Tyndall stated that even with all of those salary movements going on, salaries from last year to this year did not increase a terrible amount. He stated that most of it is due to the increase in the COLA as well as partial increase to Angie's salary, but it is pretty much well within the range there. He stated that we are talking about an approximately \$35,000 increase, or basically that one new position. He stated that we are holding open the billet for the long range planning position, which is currently vacant. He stated that Kristin left in February and we will be filling that quarter two to quarter three next year. He stated that is the one thing that we can play with, if we need to further reduce the budget every quarter he can push that out.

Mr. Tyndall stated that another big move this year, and he has already talked with Gary Norris, about the Common Design Review Board, Board fees. Mr. Tyndall stated that, as you know, they all get \$75 per meeting. He stated that the Common Design Review Board is actually eleven members, as opposed to the nine member Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Tyndall stated that they meet on the same day. He stated that they have the informal meeting at 2:30 and the formal meeting at 3:00. He stated that historically they have been paid for both meetings, even though they could last fifteen minutes each. He stated that he has already talked to Gary Norris, and he is a City Councilman, so he knows what they are going to be up against for the City this year. Mr. Tyndall stated that we are going to move to eliminating the informal meeting of the Common Design Review Board and paying the Board one time, once per month \$75. He stated that saves \$10,000. He stated

that also the fewer times they meet, it saves us. He stated that they did not meet last month.

Mr. Tyndall stated that the fee increase last year really helped level the budget. He stated that we do not know what is going to happen with our applications, but he still feels that we are within tolerance here. He stated that zoning applications this year were poised to take in approximately \$70,000. He stated that the thin margin is that if we only had eight less cases next year, there is a \$10,000 cushion already eaten up. He stated that he is pretty confident but if these numbers do not get met, and they are all under where our current numbers are, we would expect probably a certain percentage slow down next year. He stated that we have already had two zoning cases pulled from this month's agenda. He stated that is where we made up our budget, was to increase our fees, reduce Board fees, reduce some other operating expenses and got to a line where in the end we are negative \$8,200.

Mr. Tyndall stated that he is comfortable with this for this year and possibly even next. He stated that he wanted to try to avoid running at a five digit deficit. He stated that we are doing a lot better than we were two, three and four years ago when we were getting about \$200,000 less. He stated that we are in a decent place considering the circumstances.

Mr. Tyndall stated that he has prepared the four year plan, which is more for him to think about and write out his thoughts. He stated that a lot of what he said deals with the bottom line, up front budget. He stated that TCRS kept our retirement rate even last year. He stated that any increase in that could have been about a \$5,000 to \$10,000 increase, even for just a fraction of a point. He stated that we have also moved MPO hiring to fiscal year 2022. He stated that we were probably going to look at doing that quarter four of this year but that has now been moved out to 2022. He stated that all hinges on what the Census says but they are looking at adding 1-3 employees throughout the MPO but they would be an 80/20 share.

Mr. Tyndall stated that the big hit, that he believes has happened here in the last month, he was going to request from the City and the County up to \$200,000 combined to go towards a consultant to do a community wide comprehensive plan. He stated, unfortunately he thinks that is a luxury at this point and he has stricken that from the budget. He stated that if it does slow down, we are going to focus on a staff level led Land Use Plan update, looking at each section of the Land Use Plan and updating it. He stated that he often harps about how we have a Medical District without a hospital anymore. He stated that we are talking about renaming areas, maybe changing some of the boundaries, and really giving some goals so that we can have finer grained planning in some of these areas. He stated that some of our zoning cases this month could use a bit of a rewrite of the Land Use Plan.

Mr. Swift asked if sales tax was the biggest issue, on the revenue side, that is impacting the City wide budget. Mr. Tyndall stated that he would say so. He stated that the majority of the City's budget is not garnered from property tax, it is garnered from sales tax revenue. He stated that the majority of the County budget is property tax, and a small portion is sales tax. Mr. Swift stated that the sales tax has to be down considerably. Mr. Tyndall stated that he had not heard any projections but it was down.

Mr. Kelly stated that he was not sure he was following, based on the attachments, but what is the difference between the \$428,000 that we are requesting from each Government Entity and the \$424,328. Mr. Tyndall stated that the \$428,000 would be considered in the City and County budget on the operating expenses of just the RPC. He stated then you have to add the \$11,695 that is the money to run the MPO twenty percent share and then we have a \$4,633.52 that goes toward the Historic Survey Grant which will be completed in September, so it is a carry over the fiscal year. He stated that the total hit to their budget is \$444,328.

Mr. Kelly asked what LGPAC stands for? Mr. Tyndall stated that the LGPAC is the Local Government Planning Advisory Council. Mr. Tyndall stated that is a group of mayors and planners, appointed at the State level, who review all appointments to the Planning Commissions as well as all Growth Plans.

Mr. Kimbrough asked about feedback so far from the City and County. He stated that he knows we have had some initial contact with them about this and he knows the sales tax issue with the City but was there shock and awe with this or was it an expectation? Mr. Tyndall stated that he has been working with Laurie Matta, who is the City CFO and Jeff Taylor for the County. He stated that they have provided minimal guidance. He stated that the only guidance he had received from Jeff was that they know the health insurance is going to be a five percent increase. He stated that all they have said is that they want them to do everything they can to get to 2019 funding. He stated that what the City can do with the State Comptroller is submit a budget that matches last year's budget and it basically gets sort of a temporary okay from the State. He stated then as the numbers come in and they get more data they can then adopt a budget later in the fiscal year.

Mr. Tyndall stated that the last he knew, the County was doing a two percent cost of living increase. He stated that if they drop that, we will follow suit.

Mr. Swift asked what the deadline was for all departments to put in proposed budgets. Mr. Tyndall stated that it was this week or next week that they have to have their budgets entered. Mr. Tyndall stated that the reason we are doing this is so that we can approve this at next week's Planning Commission Meeting. He stated that it does give us May's meeting if we need to make a change, we can adopt an amended budget in May. He stated that we will present this to them next week and then await further feedback.

There being no more discussion, Mr. Kimbrough moved to approve the budget as submitted by Mr. Tyndall. The motion was seconded by Mr. Powers and carried unanimously.

There being no more discussion, Mr. Kelly moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kimbrough and carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Swift', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Swift, Chairman