

Session 15-22 a Special Meeting of the Homer City Council was called to order on June 15, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Mary E. Wythe at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: BURGESS, LEWIS, REYNOLDS, ROBERTS

ABSENT: ZAK, VAN DYKE

STAFF: CITY MANAGER KOESTER
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR MEYER
FINANCE DIRECTOR LI
POLICE CHIEF ROBL
CITY PLANNER ABBOUD

Mayor Wythe declared Councilmembers Van Dyke and Zak as excused. The Council had no objection.

Department Heads may be called upon from time to time to participate via teleconference.

AGENDA APPROVAL

(Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual, pg. 5)

Mayor Wythe called for a motion to approve the agenda.

LEWIS/REYNOLDS SO MOVED.

ROBERTS/BURGESS MOVED TO ADD COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE BETWEEN ITEMS TWO AND THREE.

There was brief discussion.

VOTE: (Amendment) NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

There was no further discussion on the agenda as amended.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Ken Castner, city resident, expressed his objection to the Council holding an executive session over matters of the budget. He believes that the public's business needs to be done in public. Its public money and public expense and there is nothing to be hidden from the public when deciding how money can be allocated. He urged them not to go into executive session.

MEMORANDUM 15-080, from City Clerk, Re: Request for Executive Session Pursuant to AS 44.62.310(A-C)(1) Matters, the Immediate Knowledge of Which Would Clearly Have an Adverse Effect Upon the Finances of the Government Unit and Matters Pertaining to Personnel (City Finances/Budget Shortfalls for 2015/2016).

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the approval of the recommendations in Memorandum 15-080 to meet in executive session to discuss city finances/budget shortfalls for 2015/2016.

LEWIS/ROBERTS SO MOVED.

There was discussion to establish whether the topics to be addressed warranted going into executive session. Several felt it would be appropriate to hold executive session if discussing matters specifically related to personnel.

Mayor Wythe explained she requested the executive session after meeting with the City Manager to review the current situation of the finances. There were aspects that from a business perspective are information that the council should hear first before it becomes public information. She assured that there will be plenty of public meetings and discussion throughout the budget process.

City Manager Koester added that when a municipality this size starts talking about cuts relating to personnel in the small departments the conversations hit close to home and the conversations will have to happen.

Further discussion ensued in support of and opposition to executive session.

VOTE: YES: LEWIS, BURGESS, ROBERTS
NO: REYNOLDS

Motion failed.

City Manager Koester reviewed current actions take related to budget shortfalls for 2015 and challenges for 2016.

Council requested information on the following items:

- Number and cost of temporary employees
- Value of current food tax in the winter

- Overall overtime costs
 - Comparison of raising property tax versus sales tax
 - Property tax exemption cost and senior exemption cost
 - Total cost of community recreation, and also discretionary items
 - Savings related to reducing plowing snow only for impassible status, alternating snow plowing and sanding days, closing the library an additional day per week, and putting the animal shelter on a warm status
 - Collection of ambulance charges and cost for a third party contract with an incentive on collections
 - Charging for internet use at the library
 - Airport costs
 - Cost of overtime versus the cost of an employee
 - Savings from the minimal snow removal needed this past winter
 - Ways to increase revenues at animal shelter
 - Revenue of Homer Foundation investments, total available for distribution, and who Council has approved additional funding for
 - Savings of eliminating code enforcement
- Increasing fines for code violations

There was also discussion of holding community meetings to education residents about core services and having them rank their priorities.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Ken Castner, city resident, commented that he didn't hear anything discussed tonight that would have warranted executive session. He appreciates that they had the discussion tonight openly.

Michael Armstrong, non-resident speaking for the Homer News, thanked the Council for considering their letter and holding tonight's discussion in an open meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Wythe adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m. The next Special Meeting is Monday, June 29, 2015 at 6:00 p.m., Committee of the Whole 5:00 p.m., and Worksession 4:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved:_____