

**Lewiston City Council**  
**Special Council Meeting Minutes**  
**November 25, 2020**  
**Lewiston City Hall – 6:30 P.M.**

**1. Call to Order**

Electronic City Council Meeting called to order by Mayor Beth Mayor Carlson at 6:45 pm  
November 25, 2020.

**2. Roll Call**

Present (4): Mayor Beth Carlson, Councilor Dan Robertson, Councilor Carol Boynton, and  
Councilor Larry Rupprecht. Not Present (0).

Others present: City Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Knight, Fire Chief Tim Dahl, Public Works  
Director Curt Benter, Ben Borchardt and Polly Calhoun.

**3. Discussion topics: 2021 Budget**

Mayor Carlson commented that she is looking at a budget draft labeled 11.13.20.

City Administrator Cheryl Knight began with a couple items:

1. The EDA contract approved for 4 days per week (\$26,962) is not updated in the 11.13.20 draft.
2. The ash tree removal expense is not recorded yet, but there will not be a revenue offset for it. The City will use the pool funds (like retained earnings/savings) for this expense.

Mayor Carlson stated the stipend for Robin Randall needs to be determined. In the beautification department, wages and fringe were moved to the outside service line, as it is a 1099 item, and it does show \$1,500 for the stipend for the budget year 2021. The flower basket amount for 2020 was \$3,150. Councilor Rupprecht questioned where the auger for planting trees will be charged? Public Works Director Curt Benter stated it would be charged to 43100 (the Street Department) as an outside service and does not affect the beautification budget. Knight clarified that she has paid Robin Randall \$1,200 each of the last three years under outside services, instead of wages. Councilor Rupprecht recommended she be paid \$1,500, with Mayor Carlson, and Councilors Robertson and Boynton agreeing also.

Mayor Carlson stated this budget book stands at 4%. Discussion of reducing the EDA levy due to the contract reduction to 4 days instead of 6 per month. Mayor Carlson stated that in the prior year when the days were increased in the contract, the extra amount was paid for from EDA savings.

Mayor Carlson stated she is not sure if this topic is for budget or personnel committee, but we still need to look at what employees are being paid. There have been problems getting people to apply for vacant positions. Do we need to look at where our wages are for certain employees? She found the LMC research forwarded from Administrator Knight but has not reviewed it yet. Mayor Carlson feels that the cost of living only can be addressed. The federal cost of living stated at the 10/28/20 meeting was 1.3%, and she requested that at least that cost of living amount increase be added into the wage sheet. The councilors all agreed, and then Councilor Rupprecht added that that was a starting point but would not be satisfied with that as a final pay change for all employees. He further stated that the prior comments he made of the 5% increase for those other than the probationary folks can be interpreted that 1.3% is cost of living, with the remainder of 3.7% being a raise. Mayor Carlson made note of previous corrections to wages being done and felt that should continue. She proposed a \$1 per hour for the probationary folks plus the 1.3% cost of living raise. Knight stated that proposal would be equal to \$17.21 per hour. Rupprecht stated he favored the \$19 per hour for those coming off probation. Further discussion. Knight stated that the \$17.21 equals \$35,796.80, \$16 equals \$33,280, and \$19 equals \$39,520. Question and further discussion of what other employees pay should/will be adjusted as a result of this probationary increase. Councilor Boynton feels it needs to be fair all the way through. Councilor Robertson felt that perhaps \$1.75 plus 1.3% this year, with maybe 1.75 plus 1.x next year, with maybe a 3 or 4% for other people-not just through it all out this year. Mayor Carlson proposed using 1.3 cost of living and 1.7 raise, with an additional 2% to be used to adjust positions that need to be adjusted. Mayor Carlson does not feel 5% across the board will work because it will just continue the inequity. Councilor Rupprecht stated the prior levy amount of 4% did include a 5% and \$3 per hour probationary raise, and he had further questions to ask, along with the comment that the EDA contract amount difference could be the equalizer. Chief Yeiter questioned the \$100,000 in sewer “what-if” money and asked if Bryan Holtz had replied to the City yet with a memo on proposed rehab costs for the treatment plant. There was a discussion of transfers to be made to the sewer fund.

Councilor Rupprecht had other questions to be answered:

1. On page 2 of the summary, why the decrease in expenditures from 2020 to 2021? Knight stated that the ambulance had a decrease in expenditures from \$299,511 to projected expenditures in 2021 of \$200,221, a reduction of \$99,289. This was due to COVID grant funds received in 2020.
2. In general city admin, object 210 operating supplies, shows an increase of 112%. Is it COVID related? Knight stated that due to the previous year’s bare bones minimum budget, there were

necessary non-annual expenses needing to be purchased, and it was not COVID related. She agreed to reduce the budget to \$3,000.

3. In general fund again, object 300 professional services-what is in there? Knight stated that was to pay for an employment physical, a voicemail reset, and bond continuing disclosures. No reduction can be made.
4. Object 331 conference and travel- \$6,000 which includes both admin staff and all of council. Knight agreed to reduce this amount to \$4,000.
5. Object 430 miscellaneous expense- previous year's amounts are huge. Knight explained this was due to the SEMMCHRA revenue money passing through from the State of Minnesota back to them. Mayor Carlson added this was also the account used to fix the books from earlier years.
6. In elections department, the object 571 showing budget but no expense. Knight stated she was waiting on an invoice from Winona County for the poll pads software.
7. In civil defense, object 581 communications equipment, why not purchase the equipment this year? It had been talked about, but this radio purchase will be ongoing.
8. Street department object 403 street maintenance-is \$2,000 budget an appropriate amount? Public Works Director Curt Benter stated that the additional expense this year was due to having to repour the curb and a portion of a driveway apron near Councilor Rupprecht's home. Benter feels \$2,000 budget there is appropriate.
9. Street Department object 438-licenses, permits and fees-\$200 is there. Is Benter ok with that? Yes.
10. Object 540 heavy machinery-\$10,000 this budget year. Benter explained this is a new account to pay for the new skid steer and other incidentals.
11. Ice and Snow object 210 operating supplies- is salt and sand purchased from Winona County listed here? That is object 240 road salt. Is \$1500 budget needed? An engine on a sander needed to be replaced of \$559, which will show up in the next Council packet.
12. Object 212 gas and diesel has \$4,000 budgeted. \$1735 purchased this year. Benter states that winter is not yet upon us, and he just purchased \$600 in diesel for the tank.
13. General Fund Community Center object 362 property insurance-paid almost \$2,000. Knight stated it appears to be a typo within the list. She will review the department.
14. Ambulance Service object numbers 121, 131, 151 all show major decreases. Is this due to removing the ambulance assistant position? Yes.

15. Ambulance Service object #581 communications equipment is doubled. Is this something the Cable Fund could pay for instead of the levy? The ambulance service has not bought pagers for 5 years and that is what this budget is for. If paid for by Cable, this frees up levy money. Mayor Carlson stated the Cable Fund does bring in more money than it spends. However, the Cable Commission recently discussed upgrading equipment in the Senior Center, and also that, in this day of folks reducing their cable bill by going to internet streaming services, the question is how much will that affect the revenues currently generated? One radio purchase was approved, but not necessarily a recurring item.
16. Police Department revenue account 35000 fines and forfeits-\$2,000 reduction from budgeted amount in 2020 with only \$539 in the account this year. Councilor Rupprecht explained that it was due to the COVID situation and rightly so. Is the reduction of \$2,000 realistic? Police Chief Yeiter stated that it could be more. COVID is not going away in the foreseeable future and nor will the continued reduction in citizen contacts. Yeiter stated he never counts on revenue from those tickets. Councilor Rupprecht's concern was that if this is a budget item in the Police Department, and this revenue does not come in, then the expenditures have been underfunded. Just a point to be made to make sure this amount is accurate.
17. Police Department object #212 Gas/Diesel-\$4,132 expended as of 11/10 against an \$8,000 budget, with a \$1,000 dollar decrease in budget for 2021.\$6,500 actual in 2019 and with the continued lesser contact with citizens, do you still want to see \$7,000 budget there? Chief Yeiter anticipates \$3 gas. He uses \$2.70 a gallon times the expected mileage. The department still puts on the same miles, just ~~let~~ less contact with people. He is comfortable with the \$7,000.
18. Police Department legal fees #304 are down to \$4,300-is Chief ok with that? Yes.
19. Debt service 2012 Streets-319-43100 \$56,610 reduction was due to prepaying a portion of that bond, which created the expense decrease of \$20,000 (which was then used to pay for the 2020 street rehab project debt). Councilor Rupprecht wondered if this decrease was only for this upcoming year? Knight's answer was no, this was the amount from now on, but will double check those documents were at the office.
20. Sewer debt service, page 23 of 24. \$210,547 budgeted \$134,966 expended-principal payments have not been made yet this year.

Chief Yeiter stated that he expects the COVID expenses such as masks, PPE, and cleaning supplies will in all likelihood continue. Knight stated the 219-object code was only for the grants received this year but thinks that a new object code could be used going forward. Councilor-elect Ben

Borchardt stated that he expects there will be substantial increases in the costs of these supplies going forward.

Administrator Knight stated that she hoped to get the memo from Bryan Holtz regarding the rehab at the wastewater treatment plant in by the next Council packet. She also wondered if a subgroup to look at the salaries (both for probationary employees and the rest of the staff) would be desired by Council? Or Personnel? Chief Yeiter stated that historically this was brought to the Personnel Committee. Knight agreed and stated that the change this year was the pending wage study with all the staff and Council involvement, the personnel committee was waylaid this year. Councilor Rupprecht felt this topic should be in a Council meeting, not a budget meeting, and wants a formal item added to Council.

Mayor Carlson asked about the next meeting. Councilor Rupprecht stated he favored a separate budget meeting. Mayor Carlson suggested a separate budget meeting after the regular Council meeting, to avoid separate meeting days. 12/9 6pm for Council, with 6:30pm for budget after the regular Council meeting.

Councilor Rupprecht motioned to adjourn the special City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Roberton. Approved 4-0.

The Council Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:32 pm on November 25, 2020.

Submitted By:  
Cheryl A. Knight  
City Administrator/Clerk