



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, April 7, 2008 , for the purpose of reviewing the Public Safety sections of the proposed FY 2009 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building .

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Leta M. Mach was out of town.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin , City Manager; Jeff Williams , City Treasurer; Chief Jim Craze , Capts. Dan O'Neil and Tom Kemp, Lt. Dave Buerger, Sgts. Carl Schinner and Jim Parker, Cpl. Maria Parker, and Officer Jonathan Lowndes , Police Department; and Kathleen Gallagher , City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Chief Brian Rudy, Chris Fleshman , president, Jay Remenick , vice president, and George Moore, trustees, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad (GVFD); Bill Holland, Coordinator, and Lester Whitmer , CERT; Silke Pope, chair, Public Safety Advisory Committee; Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Kap Kapastin , Beltway Plaza; and Judy Bell, Greenbelt News Review.

Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad

Mr. Fleshman opened by saying that as Council was aware, their budget from the county had already been cut in the category of station management. He said the City has allotted \$58,000 for them in the proposed budget, and they would like that amount increased by \$20,000 to be comparable to the amount funded for FY 2007. He said they need that additional amount on a annual basis to maintain their apparatus replacement fund at a functional level. Chief Rudy noted that their memo had already been distributed. He said that between the county cuts and their own declining fundraising revenues, especially from bingo, they will not be able to make up the replacement fund gap in the foreseeable future.

The Mayor observed that they had listed the ambulance for replacement this year, although last year it had been removed as a county contribution. Chief Rudy said they had decided it would be better in the long term if they owned it.

Mr. Remenick, as bingo chair, said they had not been able to recapture their prior revenue levels following the competition from the electronic bingo games, which are now illegal in Maryland . He said they had tried different combinations of nights and times to no avail. Nor are the customers attending the bingos spending at the same rate. He said that they are about to start their fundraising drive and that this year they will, in addition, mail businesses directly. The Mayor pointed out that their boot drive had been eliminated, too.

Mr. Roberts asked what the impact would have been if the Fire Department were still funded on the basis of the value of one cent of the tax dollar rather than a fixed amount. Mr. McLaughlin said it would be about \$193,000.

The Mayor asked to receive a bingo report. After some discussion, it appeared that the 2006 report had not been provided either. Mr. Fleshman said they just completed an audit and would send the current and missing reports within the next couple of weeks..

The Mayor also asked about rental for the hall. Mr. Fleshman said they have stopped general rentals on the hall, since they cannot charge enough to cover wear and tear. He said other groups with halls had come to the same conclusion.

Mayor Davis noted that when the City had looked into the county cut to their budget, it was found that the county had apparently cut evenly across the board.

Mr. Herling asked if their experience was different from that of other Fire Departments at this point. Mr. Fleshman said not really, but there is a range from some who are a good bit worse off than Greenbelt to others who are doing better because they can bill for ambulance services.

Mr. Roberts asked what the total amount was that they needed to raise from all sources annually to support their apparatus replacement schedule. Chief Rudy said right now it would be about \$100,000 per year.

Mr. Remenick concluded by saying that the extra \$20,000 had been there in FY 2007, and they had expected to see it again in FY 2008. He said Mayor Davis had told them they should put the request into a letter, which was why they had done so.

Mayor Davis asked to add an increase of from \$20,000 up to the value of one cent of the tax dollar to the list of possible additions to the budget.

CERT

Mayor Davis said that she had asked Mr. Holland to present a report on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), including the equipment the team already has, and address whether there is anything else needed. Mr. Holland provided a list of equipment already purchased and items funded by the county. He said there are only four things they are seeking funding for this year: completion of lettering and logos for the trailer (\$600); funding for additional first aid equipment in conjunction with training to take place in May in first aid, CPR and defibrillator use (\$200); some funding for stickers or logos to use on their equipment to make it easily identifiable at drill or emergency sites; and a petty cash fund of about \$1,500 for miscellaneous supplies and replacement items that will be needed on an ongoing basis. The Mayor estimated this at about \$2,500 and told Mr. Holland it would be placed on the list of additional requests for consideration. Since there is no CERT funding in the proposed budget, however, she encouraged him in the future to submit a request to the City Treasurer or the City Manager earlier in the year. She also asked him to keep working on developing fund-raising plans.

Police Department

A slide presentation was given on the department's accomplishments, activities, and programs for the year. At the end of the presentation, Chief Craze introduced representatives from Camp Fire USA to talk about a proposal they were making to work with children and families in a wide range of programs at Springhill Lake . Rosemary Pezzuto, Executive Director of the Patuxent Area Council, described some of the plan, saying they would work closely with the Police Department and other service providers in the area. To date, they had been working with assistance from Officer Jonathan Lowndes . The budget to support the program for a year, exclusive of indirect service fees and space costs, was given as \$210,625. The Mayor asked what they were seeking at this time. Ms. Pezzuto said initially they were looking for space and for a partnership that would enable the project to be eligible for funding through such government sources as Community Development Block Grants and Department of Justice grants. She said she believed that AIMCO, the owner of Springhill Lake , should be convinced to provide space to the program. Councilmembers expressed interest in continuing the discussion, but the Mayor said that would need to happen in a separate meeting where Greenbelt CARES, which already conducts programming in the area, and other stakeholders could attend. She asked that a work session be added to the list of meetings to be scheduled.

Council then reviewed the Police Department section of the budget document page by page.

The Mayor praised the increased bike and foot patrols. She said Ms. Mach had asked to see the family medical leave policy that was developed to meet CALEA criteria but was now to be extended to other employees.

There was discussion of additional funding for Toughbooks to replace the original in-car computers. Mr. Williams said seven were scheduled in the Special Projects budget. The Chief said there is about \$30,000 in two grants for in-car cameras that he strongly recommended diverting to purchase of Toughbooks. He said he does not want two major projects of that sort open at the same time and would prefer to finish the one before starting the other. Mr. Williams estimated that 12 computers could be bought between the grants and the budgeted money.

Asked about retirements, the Chief said none were expected this year, but several were possible for next year.

The Mayor asked to have the statistics for the replacement vehicles. Mr. McLaughlin said he would send it in the packet this week. The Mayor asked to add a vehicle to the list for possible elimination.

There was discussion of the proposed reduction in overtime for the Beltway Plaza station. Mr. McLaughlin said the City had sought more support from Beltway Plaza but that since Mr. Kapastin had said they would keep their funding at the current level, the City would reduce its overtime. Mr. McLaughlin added that the City's support still exceeds Beltway Plaza 's. Mr. Kapastin urged Council not to reduce the time. He questioned the accuracy of the City's revenue and said, regardless, that this is just the cash contribution and does not take into account the substantial amount represented by the donated space for the station. He said the program is very

successful and that he would hate to see it curtailed. At the same time, he said all their costs are going up, and they cannot really increase their contribution. Mayor Davis praised Mr. Kapastin for being a good partner to the City and for his considerable community involvement. Mr. Herling asked to add the restoration of the police overtime to the list of possible additions.

Mr. Putens and Mayor Davis both requested that Council receive a revised off-duty call report.

Mr. Herling asked if the possibility of a welcome-wagon packet could be added to the list. After some discussion, it was agreed that this concept be referred to the Community Relations Advisory Board for further development prior to coming back for budget consideration.

Following several informational announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk