

Sidney, Nebraska, September 26, 2023 - BUDGET HEARING

A meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Sidney, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session at 5:30 p.m. on September 26, 2023 in the Council Room. Present in person were: Vice Mayor Strommen and Council Members: Buckner, Radcliffe and Bondegard. Others present: City Manager Scott, City Clerk Borchert, Attorney Leef. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in *The Sidney Sun Telegraph*, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was given to the members of the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the City Council. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Vice Mayor Strommen informed the public of the location of the posted Open Meetings Act.

Members of the Sidney Raider Cross Country team came before Council to thank the public for their support. The public was encouraged to attend the Sidney Invitational on October 5 at the Hillside Golf Course at 3:00 pm.

Vice Mayor Strommen announced that a public hearing would now be held at 5:35 p.m., for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions, or observations relating to the 2023-2024 proposed budget statement for all City departments.

David Scott, City Manager, presented the FY2023-2024 Budget. Scott stated that the last few fiscal years' budget cycles have been challenging. In fiscal years 2019 and 2020 there were large budget cuts across the board as property tax revenue was reduced due to large decreases in the city's full value determination (assessed value). Looking ahead to FY2023-2024, Scott reported, there has been good news with housing developers willing to come to the Panhandle. The city is still struggling with sky rocketing materials, energy and fuel costs, supply chain issues and inflation. The city also needs to address the mandated minimum wage increase. The county assessor has sent out assessments showing large increases due to state property tax calculations. This can be addressed with an allowable 2.3% increase, lowering the overall mill levy for the city and the property tax payers. Scott continued that this budget proposes that the city overall levy be reduced from .05746 to .05452. The city general fund levy is currently .003388, which is close to the statewide average of .003176. In this budget we are proposing lowering that general fund levy to .003139. Scott pointed out that in the 2018/2019 city budget report to the state the city held \$36,686,988 in debt, and in the 2022/2023 budget report to the state, the city debt that was reported was \$24,965,638. This will go down more in this fiscal year's state budget report, with principal dipping below 20 million. Scott reported that the City was awarded Rural Workforce Housing Funds, awarded money for Safe Streets For All, awarded Certified Economic Development status by the state and awarded the Certified Creative District status. Voters passed the ½ cent sales tax for infrastructure which will be used on Forrest Street and bidding out the trails and pool parking lot.

Lane Kizzire, Finance Director, followed up with a PowerPoint presentation. The current budgeted total expenses are at \$39,070,202 with budget revenues at \$35,879,083. Kizzire also presented the highlights of the city's accomplishments through the budget year. Overall operating budget increased 6%, mill levy dipped 5%, evaluation increased 8%, property taxes up 2.3%.

There were no further comments, Strommen closed the public hearing at 5:53 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm.

ATTEST: /s/PAUL STROMMEN, VICE MAYOR

ATTEST: /s/LORI BORCHERT, CITY CLERK