

City of West Orange
Tuesday, August 1, 2023
Budget Workshop

West Orange Council Chambers
2700 Western Avenue (rear entrance)
West Orange, Texas
5:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Branch	Jay Odom	Lanie Brown
Brent Dearing	Michael Shugart, Sr.	Meritta Kennedy

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin	Theresa Van Meter	David Roberts
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Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation. The mayor then led in the Pledges of Allegiance to the American and Texas flags.

2024 FY Budget Workshop

Mayor Branch explained that he would be going through this proposed budget line item by line item and if anyone had any questions, to ask and they would be discussed.

He presented the following Budget Summary for the proposed 2024 FY budget:

2023-24 BUDGET SUMMARY					
		Operations	Capital Outlay	Total	
10	General Administration	\$ 508,724	\$ -	\$ 508,724	
11	Building Official	163,571	-	\$ 163,571	
12	Fire Department	138,998	67,000	\$ 205,998	
13	Sanitation	702,737	-	\$ 702,737	
14	Humane	83,242	-	\$ 83,242	
15	Police	1,805,902	129,000	\$ 1,934,902	
16	Municipal Court	196,533	-	\$ 196,533	
17	Street	524,373	50,000	\$ 574,373	
18	Parks & Facilities	97,652	8,000	\$ 105,652	
21	Maintenance Shop	88,792	-	\$ 88,792	
		\$ 4,310,524	\$ 254,000	\$ 4,564,524	
TOTAL REVENUE			\$ 3,662,975		
+Fund Balance Transfer			647,549		
+ Capital Imp. Fund Transfer			254,000		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES			\$ 4,310,524		
TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY & IMP.			254,000		
			\$ 4,564,524		
NET INCOME(LOSS)			\$ -		

Revenue:

Council Member Brown asked if the reasoning for the budgeted increase in Delinquent Property Tax was due to the increase in the Property Tax Revenue line or due to the economy in general. Mrs. Van Meter responded that both factored into the increase, as well as considering the historical numbers of the account.

The mayor stated that some revenue line items increased, while others decreased. The bottom line for budgeted revenue projects an approximate \$165,000 increase.

Mayor Branch pointed out that he has budgeted \$125,000 for interest income for the upcoming year, while there was only \$5,000 budgeted for the current year. He stated that the \$125,000 is only about half of what he expects the City to receive, due to moving almost \$4,000,000 over to TexPool, whose current rate of return is approximately 5%. Since moving these funds over only 15 days earlier, the City had already earned over \$10,583. Mrs. Van Meter added that, for the year-to-date at the bank on General Fund accounts, the total interest revenue was a bit over \$27,000.

The mayor further explained that any interest earned on designated accounts, such as the Road Tax account, must remain in those accounts, and can only be used for those mandated purposes.

Mayor Branch reported that over 3,400 outstanding warrants have been turned over to the Linebarger Law Firm for collections which was why he felt comfortable increasing the warrants and court fines revenue line items for the upcoming year.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy questioned the decrease in budgeted revenue for Holiday in the Park. Mrs. Van Meter responded that she decreased that line item as a result of the numbers from last year's festival. The 2022 festival simply did not do well financially. She stated that she felt more comfortable budgeting less...while hoping for more...than budgeting even the same amount budgeted for 2022 and falling short again.

General Administration:

The mayor stated that this budget includes a 3% raise for all employees.

Council Member Brown questioned the increase in Credit/Debit Card processing fees the City pays in relation to the revenue brought in from these fees. Mrs. Van Meter explained that the City charges a 3% fee when anyone uses a card when paying inside the lobby. The City also receives an invoice from the third-party provider for transactions handled online and over the phone.

Council Member Brown questioned if the "Economic Development" line item was the amount paid to the Orange County EDC. The mayor responded that it was. Mrs. Van Meter explained that she decreased the budgeted amount for FY 2024 based on the actual amount paid in FY 2023.

Building Official:

The mayor pointed out that the largest expenditure in this department was "Abatement." Mr. Sherwin explained that this \$80,000 was expected to cover the demolition of 12-15 structures.

Fire Department:

Chief Roberts stated that the pickup truck originally requested was removed in this budget. Maybe it could be purchased next year. He then stated that most of the other items on the budget were in line with the current year's budget.

Council Member Brown questioned the "Communications Equipment/Supplies" line item. She asked if that was for radios. Mrs. Van Meter reported that on the budget she had received from Assistant Chief Gibson, that line item was described as "battery replacement/additional radios."

Council Member Brown questioned the new line item "Bunker Gear Inspection." Chief Roberts explained that the gear needs to be inspected/tested to meet today's specifications. She then asked him what type of building renovations they would like to make. He responded that they would like to replace the doors (not the bay doors) with glass doors, or at least put windows in the doors that are there. They would also like to repair the cracks in the concrete floors in the bays and then cover them with a non-slip type coating.

He explained that the department has a gear washer, but not a dryer. Should they wash their gear after a call and have another call back-to-back, the gear would not have time to dry.

Council Member Brown asked for clarification on the "Training Apparatus" item. Chief Roberts responded that it will be a software training program.

Sanitation:

Mayor Pro-tem Kennedy asked Mr. Sherwin if the City was still using the same dumping facility. He responded, "yes."

Humane:

Mayor Pro-tem Kennedy asked if there were any plans to "spruce up" the shelter, such as fencing. Mr. Sherwin responded that fencing was expensive. He added that the facility may look bad, but is functional. The animals are safe inside. As things do break, they are repaired, and there is a budget for that.

Mayor Pro-tem Kennedy asked if there fans and heaters in the shelter for the animals. Mr. Sherwin responded that there are fans and heaters used.

Police:

Council Member Shugart asked how many police cars were included in the new budget. The mayor responded, "two." He then asked how the City disposed of the old cars. Mr. Sherwin responded that generally they were traded in on the new purchase, but he will be auctioning one off in the near future. Hopes are that more money will be realized at auction than from a trade-in.

Municipal Court:

Council Member Brown asked if the Court fined the maximum amount allowed by law, or if the fines were adjusted. Council Member (Alternate Judge) Odom responded that the maximum amount allowed by law was charged unless there circumstances where the offense has been addressed within a certain time frame (such as expired registration). The judge dismisses the fine and court costs and assesses an "Administrative" fee of \$20. This is per the State guidelines.

Street:

Council Member Brown questioned the "Equipment/Property" shown under Capital Outlay. Mr. Sherwin responded that those funds are budgeted in the event that a piece of equipment that is needed or can be used by the City becomes available for sale or at auction.

Parks & Facilities:

Council Member Dearing asked where the money would be used that is going to be paid to the City for the easement at WESCO. The mayor replied that he believes the payment from Chevron Phillips for this easement to be approximately \$128,000, plus additional monies for every street they go under. Mayor Branch added that these things will only happen upon the approval of a new ordinance that Mr. Sherwin is working on that addresses pipelines within the city. He stated that he would like to use this money for improvements to Anna Jean Caffey Park, such as a walking track, exercise spots – things geared more toward adults. The mayor then added that all of this would have to be approved by Council.

Maintenance Shop:

Council Member Odom asked Mr. Sherwin if \$400 was really enough to be budgeted for "Tools." Mr. Sherwin responded that it was. They had accumulated many tools over the years, and the men in his departments take care of them.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following upcoming meetings:

- Monday, August 14, 2023 – Council Meeting
- Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023; 5:00 p.m. – Public Hearing on Proposed Budget
- Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023; 5:15 p.m. – Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate
- Monday, Sept. 11, 2023; 5:00 p.m. – Council Meeting
(Adoption of Budget & Tax Rate on Agenda)
- Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023 – *HOLIDAY IN THE PARK*

Adjournment

Mayor Branch adjourned the workshop at 5:49 p.m.


Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:


Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

