

TOWN BUDGET MEETING OCTOBER 2, 2012

Present:

Sawyer Baker, *ex-officio* City Council Member

Jan Beran, 304-24th Street

David Carlson, representing the Greater Iowa Credit Union, 801 Lincoln Way

George Covert, 3000 Northridge Parkway

Mike Coveyor, 3320 Emerald Drive

Kim Hanna, representing the Campustown Action Association, 114 Welch Avenue, Ste. 201

Dinah Kerksieck, 621 Garden Road

Nancy Marks, 1625 - 24th Street

Susie Petra, 2011 Duff, Ames

Kathy Svec, 603 Grand Avenue, representing the Ames Historical Society

Sharon Wirth, 803 Burnett, representing Ames Historic Preservation Commission

City Manager Steve Schainker stated that the City is starting its budget process for FY 2013-14. He explained ways that public input on the budget can be provided to the City Council. Mr. Schainker said the purpose of this meeting was to get citizen input at the beginning of the budget process.

Finance Director Duane Pitcher presented the budget calendar starting in late summer when the Resident Satisfaction Survey is sent randomly to residents. The City's operation budget and Capital Improvements Plan begin on July 1, 2013, and run through June 30, 2014. Budget issues will be presented to the City Council on November 27, 2012. The final budget hearing and adoption will take place on March 5, 2013.

An overview of the current City budget by given by Mr. Pitcher. The City budget makes up approximately one-third of a citizen's total tax bill if he or she lives in the Ames School District (33.13%). Story County, the School District (44.72%), and Des Moines Area Community College (1.81%) receive the other two-thirds. Mr. Pitcher showed prior years' data on property tax levies and Local Option Taxes. He gave a summary of revenues; total revenues for 2012/13 equate to \$196,252,245 Expenditures total \$204,777,920, which primarily reflects large projects in the Electric Services and Water Departments.

Mr. Pitcher advised that Ames has one of the lowest tax levies in the state: for 2012/13, it is \$10.72/\$1,000 valuation. There is only one city in the comparison group with a lower tax levy, which is Urbandale, and one city with a lower city tax burden per capita, which is Dubuque, which has casino/gambling revenues. The General Fund levy is \$5.83418/\$1,000, which is well below the \$8.10 limit. The state-imposed residential roll-back was explained. The calculated property tax in Ames is \$544/\$100,000 valuation. The cost of services per residence was itemized.

Public Input:

Dinah Kerksieck, 621 Garden Road, Ames, gave a brief history of the South Duff Bicycle Trail project. She advised that a group of citizens and staff applied for a grant to build a multi-use trail from Airport Road, up South Duff to South 5th Street. That grant was received in the amount of \$673,817. A section of the trail was completed in 2004 to just north of Squaw Creek; the trail is eight-feet-wide and was completed to the north property line of Howe Metal. Ms. Kerksieck was

dismayed when the Texas Roadhouse restaurant was constructed and installed a four-foot-wide sidewalk, instead of it being eight feet wide. She felt that this was a poor completion of a project that received federal and City monies. In Ms. Kerksieck's opinion, the inconsistency between the four-foot-wide and eight-foot-wide presents a problem with aesthetics as well as safety. She pointed out that there is a large amount of pedestrian traffic in that area due to the number of apartments and commercial properties. Ms. Kerksieck requested that the bike trail be completed to honor the intent of the grant funding – the trail should run to South 5th Street and eventually to the Boys and Girls Club, which was the original purpose. She suggested that the trail be finished as a two-part project (Howe's Welding to South 5th and then from South 5th to the Boys and Girls Club). In Ms. Kerksieck's opinion, funding could be provided wholly by the City or 50% by the City and 50% from corroboration with the property owners. Mr. Schainker explained the process of the Council's prioritizing the shared-use path projects.

Kim Hannah, Director of the Campustown Action Association (CAA), 114 Welch Avenue, Ste. 201, Ames, requested the continuation of the allocation of \$25,000 for the CAA in 2013/14.

Kathy Svec, 603 Grand Avenue, Ames, representing the Ames Historical Society(AHS), asked that the City Council allocate \$17,000 for 2012/13; the AHS will be going through the new grant process established by the City. Ms. Svec also noted that the Ames Sesquicentennial will occur in December 2014. She requested that the Mayor appoint an ad-hoc commission to support the planning of the festivities to celebrate the Sesquicentennial. She would like that commission to be in place by January 2013. Ms. Svec also requested start-up monies for that commission.

Sharon Wirth, 803 Burnett Avenue, Ames, spoke as the Chairperson of the Ames Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). She requested: (1) \$2,000 for operational funds (use for mandated training and educational activities); \$2,000 - \$5,000 for community-wide education (might be used for grant match, workshops, publication costs); and \$7,000 to fund a half-time staff person for the Ames Historical Society, which would be matched by funds from the Ames Historical Society. This would allow assistance to implement the AHC Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for the entire City, which is very labor-intensive.

Mike Coveyor, 3320 Emerald Drive, Ames, asked to see a revival of plans to extend Grand Avenue to South 16th Street. He also would like to see an overpass or underpass built on Duff Avenue so as not to cut off emergency vehicles' access to South Ames.

Susie Petra, 2011 Duff, Ames, stated that the League of Women Voters did an extensive survey in 2010/11 and found that residents age 55 and over will increase in Story County a great deal in the next ten years. Ms. Petra suggested that a dialogue be started within the community on recreational opportunities in an effort to keep those residents in Story County, e.g., warm-water pool, safe indoor walking areas. This may entice more people 55-and-older to move to Ames. Mayor Campbell noted that tomorrow there will be a Mayor's Healthy Walk, which kicks off a series of Healthiest Iowa Community events. Ms. Petra also requested that the City Council postpone deciding on the disposition of the Geitel Winakor Bequest until the community had dialogue over where those monies could go. She felt the ideas she had mentioned would fit the criteria for the use of the Bequest.

George Covert, 3000 Northridge Parkway, Ames, thanked the City for the work that had been done regarding flood mitigation. The flood mitigation workshops that are currently occurring were highlighted by City Manager Schainker and Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda.

Jan Beran, 204-24th Street, Ames, advised that they had hosted a young man during the Sister City Cheque Republic Delegation's visit about a year ago. The young man used a wheelchair and was very interested in learning more about what Ames offered for persons with adaptive needs. Ms. Beran checked at that time, and there were no programs offered in the City or the University. She requested that the City look into providing recreational programs for those with adaptive needs.

Ms. Kerksieck reiterated her request that the City Council place a high priority on completion of the South Duff Bike Trail and perhaps replace another project with this one since it would receive such extensive use, instead of increasing funding.

Ms. Beran requested that the neighborhood party trailer be available for neighborhoods to use on the weekdays, not just weekends.

The meeting concluded at 8:12 p.m.

Scribe: Diane Voss, City Clerk