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***Roanoke Rapids City Council***

***April 14, 2015***

The City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids held a budget work session on the above date at 3:00 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the J. Reuben Daniel City Hall & Police Station.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Wayne Smith)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk

MeLinda Hite, Finance Director

Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief

Chuck Hasty, Police Chief

City Manager Scherer opened the meeting by presenting Council with copies of an editorial from the *Mount Airy News* regarding Senate Bill 369, the sales tax relocation proposal. He also shared information received in an email this afternoon regarding House Bill 739 which was just filed. He stated this proposed legislation would repeal all business license fees.

**Presentation of Fire Department Budget**

Fire Chief Coggins reviewed the General Fund and Capital Outlay budgets for 5300 Fire as outlined in the Council’s budget workbooks.

Chief Coggins stated they have no control over the line items for salaries and benefits. He stated they are requesting the same amount as last year for the educational bonus. He pointed out that they have increased the budget for building maintenance in order

to repair two leaking showers at Fire Station No. 2. He stated when the station was

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constructed, no pans were put in the bottom of the showers. He stated there are significant leaks and the damage will eventually cause problems with mold. Chief Coggins stated this line item also covers all maintenance at both stations. He stated they try to do what they can to save the money. He stated they are requesting $10,000.00 for equipment to take care of computers. He stated they have done a good job of replacing computers but they still have some that need replacing.

Councilman Bobbitt asked if the turn-out gear comes out of this account.

Chief Coggins stated no. He stated turn-out gear comes out of the line item for uniforms. He stated they try to replace five sets of turn-out gear each year.

Councilman Bobbitt asked the cost for one set of turn-out gear.

Chief Coggins stated $2,300.00 for the coat and pants. He stated they are also requesting an increase in the line item for maintenance of vehicles. He stated they have a 10 year old pumper that requires recurring maintenance fees. He stated they also have a 24 year old reserve pumper.

In response to a question from Councilman Smith, Chief Coggins indicated that they have to take the 10 year old pumper to all calls, including first responder calls, because they have only three men at Station No. 2.

Chief Coggins stated they are also requesting an increase in the training line item. He stated we have a young department and we do not have a facility available where they can get live burn training. He pointed out that the supplies line item includes paper, ink and the maintenance agreement for the copy machine.

Chief Coggins stated under the capital outlay budget, they are requesting funds for air packs (SCBAs). He referred to the following handout he distributed to Council:

**Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Justifications**

Our current self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) are two NFPA standards behind. They were

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purchased in 2004 with funding from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) which at that time met the 2002 standards. At this time the SCBAs are aging and starting to cost us more for repairs. The SCBAs we currently have are out of warranty and some of the parts are obsolete. To make the proper repairs, the SCBAs have to be retrofitted which ends up costing more for the repairs. Since July 1, 2014, we have spent roughly $4,500.00 on repairs to these air packs. Also, the current cylinders which we are using will have to be taken completely out of service within the next four to five years. The face pieces which we use with these packs also do not meet the current standards and can’t be used with the new packs. The new packs would meet the current 2013 edition of NFPA 1981, and would have longer End-of-Service indicator warning, higher temperature face piece rating, and most of all be under warranty for 10 years. A breakdown of cost is listed below:

**SCBAs as a Unit**

1 ea. SCBAs with Cylinder and Face Piece $ 6,199.00

1 ea. Spare Cylinder $ 810.00

1 ea. Face Piece $ 346.00

**Option 1**

To replace every pack we have would consist of 25 air packs, 25 spare cylinders, and 7 face pieces to outfit the rest of the department.

25 SCBAs with Cylinder and Face Piece $ 154,975.00

25 Spare Cylinders $ 20,250.00

07 Face Pieces $ 2,422.00

**Total $ 177,647.00**

**Option 2**

This option would propose to replace all SCBAs and bottles within three years. The first year we would replace 9 air packs, 12 bottles, and all SCBA face pieces. This would allow us to have all new packs and spare bottles placed on the first out trucks—Engine 144 and Ladder 141 the first year. The second year we would replace 8 air packs and 7 bottles. The remaining packs and bottles would be replaced the third year. A breakdown of the cost per year is listed below. These cost figures may change year to year due to vendor and manufacturing pricing.

**2015-2016 Budget**

09 SCBAs with Cylinder and Face Piece $ 55,791.00

12 Spare Cylinders $ 9,720.00

23 Face Pieces $ 7,958.00

**Total $ 73,469.00**

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**2016-2017 Budget**

08 SCBAs with Cylinder $ 46,824.00

07 Spare Cylinders $ 5,670.00

**Total $ 52,494.00**

**2017-2018 Budget**

08 SCBAs with Cylinder $ 46,824.00

06 Spare Cylinders $ 4,860.00

**Total $ 51,684.00**

Chief Coggins pointed out that this is the third year in a row that they have applied for a grant for the SCBAs. He stated without these SCBAs, they will no longer be able to go into a structure to fight a fire. He stated they would have to fight the fire from outside.

Mayor Doughtie asked how many would be needed.

Chief Coggins stated 25.

Chief Coggins stated some of the Council members were on the Council when the Police Department received a significant raise and no one else did. He distributed the following showing the pay comparisons between positions in the Fire and Police Departments:

**Pay Comparison**

**Between Fire Department and Police Department**

Firefighter $28,933.30 Police Officer $33,429.23

Fire Engineer $31,949.32 Master Officer $33,559.57

Fire Lieutenant $35,246.50 Police Sergeant $37,035.66

Fire Battalion Chief $37,768.45 Police Lieutenant $40,895.13

Assistant Chief $45,138.00 Investigative Captain $45,138.00

Deputy Chief $47,142.78 Deputy Chief $47,142.78

Fire Chief $57,764.38 Police Chief $60,703.71

Mayor Doughtie asked about comparing our fire department salaries to salaries in other City fire departments.

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Chief Coggins stated that would be fine. He stated that is something our Human Resources Manager can do. Chief Coggins stated they want to get quality candidates in the fire department. He stated we spend money training firefighters and then they leave for more money. He stated we lost one last year to the Rocky Mount Fire Department. Chief Coggins stated he feels like the guys with their training and expertise should be in line with the guys in the police department. He stated our guys do a great job. He stated they are first responders and are now certified in installing child safety seats. He stated the department’s pay scale shows a minimum, medium and maximum--and most are paid the minimum. Chief Coggins stated we used to get a 5% increase based on performance.

Mayor Doughtie asked if it is normal for employees in police departments to make more than employees in fire departments. He asked the difference in the number of hours these departments work.

Chief Coggins stated police officers have a tendency of making more than firefighters. He stated the firefighters average 212 hours a month.

Chief Hasty stated the police officers average 170 hours a month.

Chief Coggins stated most of his firefighters have a part-time job.

Councilman Smith asked if that was because firefighters are off three days in a week at times.

Chief Coggins stated it depended on the firefighter. He stated the reason the police department got raises was because of morale and the grumbling. He stated his guys will not act like that. He stated they are grateful for everything they get and will continue to serve. Chief Coggins stated they realize that money does not grow on trees.

Councilman Smith asked if there was any active grumbling within the fire department. He asked if it was because they are doing first responder work.

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Chief Coggins stated no. He stated they are very proud to be first responders. He stated Lisa Landen came to the station to let them know that they saved her husband’s life. Chief Coggins stated our first responder work is very important especially with EMS moving further out.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated Mrs. Landen said that on the radio. She stated she has been to the fire department to take cakes and the men have told her that they love being first responders. She stated she asked them what they needed in the upcoming budget and they were very concerned about the air packs.

Mayor Doughtie stated although the police officers and firefighters do not want someone to get hurt, they do enjoy making a difference in the community. He stated as a whole, the community has three agencies doing rescue work--EMS, Roanoke Valley Rescue Squad and the Roanoke Rapids Fire Department. He stated he feels citizens are confused about which agency is supposed to respond.

Chief Coggins stated the 911 operator is supposed to follow 911 protocols. He stated our first responders are supposed to only go to Code 3 calls. He stated sometimes they are mistakenly called out.

Councilman Smith stated EMS only moved one-quarter of a mile from the other fire station that answers calls. He stated sometimes the ambulance beats the fire department to the scene.

Chief Coggins stated people need to take note of who gets out at the scene. He stated you could have a small woman with EMS or Roanoke Valley trying to lift a very large man. He stated it is a team effort. Chief Coggins stated we all work together.

There was discussion about the digital radios listed in the capital outlay budget.

Councilman Bobbitt asked the cost of the radios.

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Chief Coggins stated $40,000.00. He stated they want to wait on the radios until the Police Department works out the kinks with their radios.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that the County 911 is heading to digital.

Chief Coggins pointed out that he has submitted a grant for more personnel. He stated the grant would pay for everything for two years and then the City could decide whether or not to continue funding the position.

Councilwoman Cowen stated we have to consider the small amount of money paid. She stated you hire someone, spend time and money training them and then they leave for more money. She stated this also happens in the teaching profession. Councilwoman Cowen stated you create a false economy when you spend time and money training a person and then do not give them a raise. She stated you end up paying people to go somewhere else. Councilwoman Cowen stated she realizes we have a tight budget but she hopes we can look at the whole picture and do the best we can for our employees.

**Presentation of Police Department Budget**

Police Chief Hasty reviewed the General Fund, Capital Outlay and Drug Enforcement Fund budgets for 5100 Police as outlined in the Council’s budget workbooks.

Chief Hasty stated they are requesting an increase of $500.00 in the educational bonus to try to recruit candidates with college degrees. He stated they are also requesting an increase in the vehicle maintenance line item as it appears that not enough money has been budgeted in that account in the past. He stated they have 12 vehicles that are 2007 models and 1 vehicle that is a 2006 model--and they are still in service. He stated as they get older, they cost more to maintain. Chief Hasty stated they are requesting an increase of $700.00 in the line item for ammunition to cover the variance in costs. He stated they are requesting an increase in the line item for community policing to get more involved in the community. He stated they would like to sponsor a t-ball or baseball team.

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Chief Hasty pointed out the line item for TLO (The Leads Online) program which they were paying for with drug seizure funds. He stated the fund has now been depleted. He stated this program gives us a smorgasbord of information on a person. He stated there is a new line item for the MorphoTrak Live Scan fingerprinting system which will replace the old-fashioned way we have been doing fingerprinting. He stated we currently have to mail fingerprints off to the SBI or carry them to Rocky Mount. Chief Hasty stated with this system, we would be able to electronically submit the fingerprints and get information back within 10 minutes. He stated both the TLO and MorphoTrak Live Scan will be valuable tools.

Councilman Smith asked about the line item for the body cameras and in-car cameras.

Chief Hasty stated we have cameras for everyone on patrol but we would like to get them for everyone else in the department. He stated this would also allow us to have extra if one is broken as it was during an assault on an officer this past Saturday. He stated they would like to have in-car cameras in the spare cars.

Councilman Bobbitt asked about the cost to install the in-car cameras.

Chief Hasty stated around $600.00.

Councilman Smith asked if we have any extra police vehicles that are not being used.

Chief Hasty stated they have three that are unassigned and four spares assigned to each shift.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that they rotate them so they do not just sit in the parking lot.

Chief Hasty stated we have some at local businesses, banks and motels as decoys.

Councilman Smith asked if these vehicles are still on our insurance policy.

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Chief Hasty stated yes.

Councilman Bobbitt asked about the cost of an in-car camera.

Chief Hasty stated around $4,000.00. He mentioned a new program for running wires--the LETS Platinum Package. He stated this is a three year package for $8,100.00. He explained that this works through a cell phone. He stated we hope when we start to seize drug funds, we will be able to pay for this.

Chief Hasty stated he is requesting four new positions. He stated he believes he has taken care of one of the positions--an administrative security position--with volunteer Edith Harris. He stated she is doing a wonderful job and wants to do more. Chief Hasty stated he needs an additional criminal investigator, an additional task force agent and an evidence room technician. He pointed out that in the last 14 months, two investigators have worked over 800 cases and cleared 352 of them. He stated this shows you how busy they are. He stated an evidence room technician is needed to keep the evidence room organized. He indicated that a recent audit of our evidence room showed that we have a lot of evidence that needs to be disposed of and also evidence that needs to be separated. He stated this is a full-time job. He stated this position would also help the CID on major cases by serving as a crime scene technician.

Councilman Bobbitt stated all of our detectives are proficient in crime scene processing.

Chief Hasty stated yes. He stated they are constantly going to classes. He pointed out that Lieutenant Baggett just received his certificate from Wilson. He stated they are also requesting some computer upgrades. He stated they did receive some laptops through the military surplus program but they do not last long and they do not come loaded with the programs that we need to use for reports.

Councilman Smith asked how many laptops are needed.

Chief Hasty stated 18. He also reported on and explained the need to move the interview room from the basement to the old Mayor’s office on the first floor and the

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need for a cage for a supply room. He stated the Public Works Department will be assisting with this to keep costs at a minimum.

Chief Hasty stated in the capital outlay budget, they are requesting five vehicles. He stated they would like to be able to stay on a rotation schedule. He stated he would also like to propose a City-wide camera system. He stated we could put these cameras in high crime areas and at stop lights where we have a lot of accidents. He stated once we get the infrastructure in place, the price will be reduced. Chief Hasty stated this tool will help identify people and help solve crimes.

Councilman Smith asked if this would be considered an invasion of privacy.

Chief Hasty stated not when filming in a public area.

Councilwoman Cowen stated she wrote a grant for these types of cameras. She stated they are in all schools in the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that some items presented are on departmental wish lists. He stated our department heads are trying to look down the road and be proactive.

Chief Hasty stated in the drug enforcement fund budget, they are requesting funds for special investigations to assist in undercover operations. He thanked the City Council for their time and for what they do for the community.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

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5/5/2015