

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING 1
DATE: March 13, 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER-LEVEL CITY HALL

Call to Order

7:00 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier MD

Presiding Officer

Mayor Malinda Miles (By Phone)

Officials Present

Councilmember Celina Benitez (Vice Mayor)
Councilmember Luke Chesek
Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz
City Clerk John Hoatson

Minutes provided by:

City Clerk

FY20 Budget Presentation and Discussion

City Manager Letter

City Manager Miranda Braatz presented FY20 Budget covering July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 to Mayor and Council. She read the City Manager's letter that summarized the FY20 budget. It includes five tax class structure. A 7.1 million-dollar budget was presented. The budget is on the City website for public review. City Public Works, Police, and Economic Development Dept. were highlighted along with City branding and employee recognition and professional training. The City's Budget Calendar, new tax classes and proposed tax rates, and schedule of fees were reviewed.

Mayor Malinda Miles wants examples of other municipalities with same classes and rates. Councilmember Bryan Knedler questioned the definition of utility tax? There was also questions from Mayor and Council about taxing railroads. There was discussion about Mount Rainier not charging a utility tax and how the City is missing out on revenue. City Manager Miranda Braatz will bring research about City railroad and utility tax and comparables of other localities.

Code Enforcement staff joined the table. There was review of the proposed FY2020 fees with rationales from City Manager and Code Enforcement staff for changes or amendments. There was also a discussion of discrepancies between County and City permitting regulations and how to handle them. There was a discussion of home based business and the fees. Home Based business are self identified in the City. Mayor Malinda Miles said many residents have home based businesses in the City and are not registered. City Manager Miranda Braatz said there is an organization ZOHA that has best practices on this issues. She will review their recommendations and see if the City's practices are up-to-date.

City Manager Miranda Braatz said that rental inspections are taking up significant resources of the Code Enforcement Department but the fee of \$150 does not cover it. The City has many rentals that are not up to code and it takes multiple inspections for code compliance to happen. The proposal has increase to this fee.

City Manager Miranda Braatz would like to add a full-time Asset Coordination Analyst staff position under the Finance Department. The person that staffs the position would review all purchases by the City. They will track and review all monies paid out by the City and make recommendations for improved contract and vendors for services for the City. Councilmember Bryan Knedler wanted to know if these position would also track and manage the City's grants. Mayor Malinda Miles said the City currently does not have a lot of grants, but needs to apply for more.

Public Comment

Resident - He congratulated City Manager, Finance, and Mayor and Council on this year's Budget. Last year was rough, but this year it's great.

City Manager Miranda Braatz said currently we are working on grants using Dept. Directors or key staff. However, there are options for hiring a grant writer. She said the Mayor and Council can get back to her about their thoughts on getting more grants for the City and possibly hiring or contracting grant writers. In FY20 there is funds for the Communication and Event Coordinator and a Permit Tech.

The Police Chief joined the table to discuss the restructure of the Dept. He will have two night staff and succession plan for staff to move up in the Department. He will have new daily/monthly compliance rules within the Dept. and is working on better compliance to the State. He will have grant writer for the Dept. to get funds for police and community programs. There was discussion of ways for the Police can get information to general public or respond to specific requests in a more timely manner. There was discussion of need for policing at night and overnight. Mayor and Council thanked the Chief for the increased police presence and that residents have notice and are grateful.

The Director of Finance reviewed expected service and salary costs and revenue streams for the City. There was discussion that some of the expected revenues are too high. They would be corrected in the budget process.

Councilmember Shivali Shah joined the Budget Meeting in person.

City Manager Miranda Braatz highlighted major allocations in the FY20 Budget and there was discussion. The Police Dept. building will be improved and safety cameras and parking smart meters will be installed in the City. The Police Dept will be seeking out grant opportunities to cover costs. The budget includes

major street and sidewalks improvements throughout the City, buying a Public Work Dept. generator, and bridge work.

Meeting concluded.