

**Aberdeen City Council Work Session  
March 31, 2008**

**Roll Call:** The Aberdeen City Council Roll was called with the following results:

**Present:** Mayor Bennett, Council President Elliott, Councilwoman Young, Councilmen Kupferman, and Hiob

**Also Present:** Douglas Miller, City Manager  
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works  
Captain Kenneth Cox, Aberdeen Police Department  
Opiribo Jack, Director of Finance  
Monica Correll, City Clerk  
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

The Aberdeen City Council Work Session was called to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Mr. Miller.

1. Budget

Mr. Miller noted that 3 of the 4 Budgets are out of balance. The Stadium Budget is the only one which is balanced. Based on the \$.711/2 tax rate, an additional \$969,000 is required. Some needs included in this budget are:

1. Hiring a receptionist
2. A larger legal council budget amount
3. GIS increase
4. Police PCO
5. Fire Department increase
6. Sidewalk repairs
7. Additional tipping fees
8. A 3% personnel increase
9. Increased health costs
10. Payroll study
11. General Fund contingency
12. Increased parks maintenance
13. Volunteer dinner
14. New badge system
15. Police fleet replacement
16. Street sweeper
17. Add and replace refuse and dump trucks
18. Addition to the Solid Waste Building
19. Additional street lights

The following items are needs not included in the Budget:

1. LEOPS
2. A new telephone system
3. Additional engineer for the Public Works Department
4. A rental licensing program

Mr. Miller noted that the Water and Sewer Fund is out of balance. However, these services cannot be reduced.

All budgets will be reviewed with the Council. The Staff is being asked to try to reduce their requests and needs to help balance the budget.

Councilman Hiob asked about the PCO request. Mr. Miller said this was for a police dispatcher which does not include a car. The proposed salary would be \$40,000 plus benefits.

Mayor Bennett said the amount designated for the Fire Department has been \$80,000 for a long time. The Fire Departments receive revenue from the County and donations.

Councilman Hiob feels that the City should not be required to maintain sidewalks for new developments. He also questioned the \$25,000 for a Payroll Study.

Mr. Miller stated that the current telephone system is antiquated. It is 8 years old and is very difficult to find parts and repair people when problems arise.

Council President Elliott asked if there was a surplus with the Tipping Fees. Mr. Miller said there was a 20% increase to the City by the County. She asked that the fees not be increased if at all possible. Council President Elliott asked the cost of the Payroll Study and was told the amount was \$25,000. The Contingency Fund increase is \$25,000. The Legal Fee increase estimate is \$110,000 to 120,000 per Mr. Jack. Council President Elliott asked that the Poll Tax be pursued.

Councilman Kupferman was told the additional receptionist salary would be \$28,000, plus benefits, plus a new work station. The Payroll Study amount is \$25,000 which will be used to create a parity. The Badge System amount is estimated at \$7,000.

Mr. Miller said the Poll Tax and Fees collected for towers will be reviewed. Leases are done on extended times and there is not much negotiation possible.

Mr. Jack noted that the year-to-date figures are \$3,000,000 ahead of the budgeted amounts. LEOPS can be funded with current funds. Mr. Miller said if the balance is "real" it could be used. The City was hoping to receive County funds but the amount is very low.

Councilman Kupferman was told that some of the General Fund money plus 3.5 million dollars could be used for LEOPS. Then, in 8–10 years the General Fund would be the only revenue used. Mr. Miller asked that the Council review the LEOPS program.

Mayor Bennett noted that 1.1 to 1.2 million dollars per year is the cost for LEOPS. Plans are required for future financing.

Council President Elliott asked if the assessments came in at \$450,000. Mr. Miller said that amount was higher. Ms. Grover totals the value of the assessments yearly. The value of the building permits assessable base for last year was \$35,000,000. The Department of Assessments said the amount is \$93,000,000. Mr. Miller wants verification of the difference.

Councilwoman Young supports the LEOPS program; however, it is not currently affordable. She asked if any speculative cost was done on the Rental Registration Program. Mr. Miller said the registration could be done with the current Staff. Councilwoman Young noted that one half of the City residents are in rental units. Mr. Miller wants landlords to be responsible for getting licenses and the City would do annual or bi-annual inspections. Councilwoman Young asked if the units have been or would be checked for lead paint. Ms. Grover said this issue is handled by State Agencies.

Councilman Kupferman asked what the projection was for June 30, 2008. Mr. Miller said the Budget must be balanced at that point in time. A balanced Budget equals revenue properly estimated, Capital equipment on a yearly schedule, and Department line items reduced.

Council President Elliott wanted to know if there would be temporary hires for the summer to help keep the streets clean and appealing. Mr. Miller said none are currently in the budget. Councilman Hiob noted that W. Bel Air Avenue is a State street. Council President Elliott asked if the City could get help from prisoners.

Councilman Hiob asked if the City purchased street sweepers; could there be a trade-off with other municipalities. Mr. Lapinsky said that would be limited and not feasible.

Councilman Hiob would like to have a schedule set up for permit fees, etc. to lower the cost of operating Rental Regulations in the City. The fees for registration and inspections could possibly pay for an additional person.

Mr. Miller noted that the Constant Yield Tax Rates were higher than adopted. Currently, they are \$.711/2.

The Budget will be introduced on April 14<sup>th</sup>, and Hearings will be held on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

## 2. Town House Regulations

Ms. Grover stated that Ordinance No. 737-08 is an Amendment to the Development Code. The Planning Commission and Staff researched this subject and determined that there were too many townhouses in the City. They felt standards needed to be raised with the width being the biggest problem. Currently, there are 579 townhouses in Aberdeen and 142 townhouses proposed. There are 558 townhouses which are 20 ft. or less.

Councilman Hiob asked what the County standard was. Ms. Grover will check on this question. The current document is for a townhouse width of 26 ft. Councilman Hiob asked for a compromise to 24 ft. He also asked that Item No. 15 be reconsidered and possibly stricken. Currently, there is no City requirement for brick front homes.

Councilman Kupferman disagrees with Councilman Hiob that the City would give a better appearance with fewer townhouses. He has no problems with the construction materials. Currently, there are many starter homes in the area. The City needs improvement by size and quality of construction. He supports the Ordinance as submitted because there are professional people coming to the area who demand high quality homes.

Ms. Grover stated that the majority of rentals are apartments.

Mayor Bennett asked why the recommendation was for 26 ft. townhomes and not 24 ft. Ms. Grover said this was done because there are fewer 26 ft. townhomes in the area.

Council President Elliott asked the price range of 24 ft. and 26 ft. townhomes. No one had this answer.

Councilwoman Young supports the Ordinance and Item 15 as written.

## 3. Passenger Rail Stop

Mr. Miller noted that there has been talk for approximately 2 years regarding the creation of a Multimodal Rail Station. This could provide synergy to the City on the Rt. 40 corridor. This is no longer a concept plan. There will be meetings next week which Mr. Miller and Ms. Grover will attend. They would like input from the Council on the location for the train station.

Councilman Kupferman suggests leaving the Amtrak station where it is because the Multimodal will be primarily for BRAC employees. The OPUS, C4 ISR Project and COPT are coming to the area.

Council President Elliott wants to keep the old train station. It is convenient and an attraction.

Mayor Bennett noted a dire need for upgrades and additional parking for the old train station to remain.

Mr. Miller reiterated that this is no longer a concept plan and he needs City recommendations.

Ms. Grover stated that the County is submitting an OEA Grant for a feasibility study on the train station. She feels the City would be on a parallel path with the County. Mayor Bennett noted that obviously the County has changed its position on the existing train station and the proposed new train station.

#### 4. Other

Councilman Hiob asked the status of the Property Maintenance Code. Mr. Miller said it would be ready by the end of April or the first of May. It is currently being reviewed by the City attorney.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.