



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
June 10, 2008

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Croft in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Steve Croft
Vice Mayor Todd Rogers
Council Member Diane DuBois
Council Member Joseph Esquivel
Council Member Larry Van Nostran

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF FY 2008-09 OPERATING BUDGET

City Manager Howard Chambers stated that development of the budget was a five and a half month process. The purpose of this session would be to review the budget focus areas, provide an analysis of financial forecasts, and to review the details of the proposed budget for each department.

Administrative Services Director Diane Perkin provided an economic overview touching on changes in Residential Investment, consumer confidence, employment forecasts, State budget and deficit forecast. She discussed trends in property taxes and sales taxes, noting Lakewood's top ten sales tax producers. She compared Lakewood's sales tax revenues to neighboring cities and noted the top ten revenue sources for the City. She reported that although the City was being hit hard by the down swing in sales, being a "built-out" city meant that the impacts from the housing slump and property tax reassessments would not be felt as severely as in other, developing areas.

Responding to a question from Council Member Van Nostran, Ms. Perkin stated that property reassessments were only occurring here on an individual basis, unlike other areas where large tracts or whole cities were subject to reassessment.

Recreation and Community Services Director Lisa Litzinger stated that over the current fiscal year, her department had provided services to just under 2 million people and conducted more than 100 special events. She reported that the proposed budget for her department would maintain the same level of service with no cuts to programs or services and with no increases in staffing. She advised that the areas of change included Emergency Preparedness and an increase in Contract Classes.

In response to a question from Council Member DuBois, Ms. Litzinger stated staff was working with the Centre's caterer to increase bookings.

Ms. Litzinger clarified for Council Member DuBois and Vice Mayor Rogers that the registration fees for contract classes, which was shared between the contract instructor and the City, covered all of the City's costs, rendering the service self-sustaining.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF FY 2008-09 OPERATING BUDGET - Continued

Mayor Croft determined from Ms. Litzinger that if additional staffing was required for events at the parks, existing part-time staff could be assigned more hours.

Public Works Director Lisa Rapp reviewed major changes and challenges within her department. She stated they would be required to implement a sewer FOG (fats, oils, grease) educational program; present an ordinance addressing construction and demolition waste; replace the current hardscape database which was an orphan from the old FMIS system; upgrade the fuel dispensing system to meet new AQMD standards; adopt a new NPDES permit; and address features of animal control contract.

Responding to a question from Council Member Van Nostran, the City Manager stated that there currently was no reserve account system specifically for equipment or vehicle replacement.

Vice Mayor Rogers inquired about isolated hardscape repair and if there was a significant backlog of locations. Ms. Rapp responded by stating that the proposed budget contained the same level of funding as the current year, and that since the City had been aggressively pursuing repair over the past years, even though trees would continue to cause damage, the damage was less severe thus requiring fewer replacements. She noted that in addition to the funding for isolated location repairs, hardscape repairs were often included as part of the work for residential paving projects.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Rogers regarding animal control, Ms. Rapp stated that Lakewood license fees, although much lower than un-incorporated area rates, were comparable to many neighboring cities, but that staff would be looking at the effectiveness of license canvassing.

Council Member DuBois asked about the impact of city-wide street sweeping on the NPDES stormwater permit. Ms. Rapp responded by stating that although more debris had been collected, it might not be enough to satisfy NPDES requirements.

Mayor Croft questioned the numbers reflecting the square feet of sidewalk replaced as being significantly lower than previous years. Ms. Rapp responded by stating that although there had been some slow down, she would be reviewing the numbers. She advised that the numbers were also impacted by target block work done under capital projects and that there was not a project proposed during the next fiscal year.

Assistant City Manager Sandi Ruyle presented the proposed budget for law enforcement, noting that the current deployment plan had proven effective and that Part 1 crimes were down nine percent from last year. She also reviewed changed conditions under the Personnel function such as MUNIS software implementation that would allow job applicants to apply online, and an effective safety and injury/illness prevention program.

Mayor Croft inquired about the status of the SAO positions previously authorized by the City Council. Ms. Ruyle responded by stating that the transition in Station Captains had brought some new staff to the Lakewood Station and that the last remaining opening should be filled in July. Responding to a further question about the Probation Officer plan, Ms. Ruyle stated

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF FY 2008-09 OPERATING BUDGET - Continued

that the proposal was to share a full-time probation office with the City of Hawaiian Gardens, but she noted there would be a defined work plan and at least half of the staff time would be dedicated to Lakewood needs.

Mayor Croft questioned the impact of fuel costs on the Sky Knight Helicopter Patrol Program. Ms. Ruyle stated that aviation fuel had not escalated at the same rate as gasoline.

Water Resources Director Jim Glancy stated that the single largest issue facing his department was the Governor's declaration of the statewide drought. He reported that Lakewood residents had achieved a seven percent voluntary water conservation rate. He also noted that the financing for the reclaimed water project had been completely paid off this year.

Mayor Croft asked about the process for updating the water conservation campaign. Assistant to the City Manager, Don Waldie, stated that the public information campaign already included text and graphics for ads and banners which would be rolled out on schedule with the City Council's plan.

Mr. Glancy noted that during the 1990's drought, Lakewood residents had responded by conserving way over and above requested levels. He concluded by reviewing the proposed water main replacement project for next year.

Deputy City Manager Lisa Novotny advised that a proposed additional module for the CIVICA Service Request System would improve the graffiti release process. She also noted that Intergovernmental Relations functions were keeping busy monitoring the State budget process and the many legislative proposals to address the budget deficit.

Mr. Waldie reported that Public Information and Community Relations would be gearing up for the City's 55th anniversary in 2009 with the updating of and addition to the Pillars of Community. He stated that they would also be focused on volunteer recognition.

Community Development Director Jack Gonsalves stated that changes included the reduction in building inspection staffing due to the housing market; a proposal to modify newspaper publication requirements to gain cost savings; amending the municipal code to provide for an automatic escalation of building fees to cover County charges for building inspection; and code enforcement efforts to address maintenance issues with foreclosure properties.

Responding to a question from Council Member DuBois, Mr. Gonsalves stated that code enforcement staff continued to monitor foreclosure properties, even after corrections had been made.

Ms. Perkin reviewed conditions with the Administrative Services Department including changes such as outsourced treasury management; implementation of MUNIS payroll and personnel modules; transition from ACS to BreaIT for IT support; and the expanded parking control functions for RV parking and city-wide street sweeping.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF FY 2008-09 OPERATING BUDGET - Continued

The Director of Public Works briefly reviewed the proposed Capital Projects including the replacement of the Boyar Park activity building; replacement of the Del Valle Park picnic shelters; upgrades to the City Hall Data Center; and street resurfacing projects.

Responding to a question from Council Member DuBois, Ms. Rapp stated that construction on Bloomfield Avenue was due to begin in the last quarter of 2008 and take up to six months to complete.

Vice Mayor Rogers determined from Ms. Rapp that the County was scheduled to award bids for the Paramount Boulevard improvements in November or December.

In response to a question from Council Member Esquivel, Mr. Gonsalves stated that the owner of the property located at the northwest corner of Bellflower Boulevard and South Street was due to appear before the Development Review Board this week with plans for the parking lot improvements and that building improvements were still slowly proceeding.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Croft adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk