

JUNE 6, 2006

The Special Common Council Focus Session was called to order by Mayor Meyers at 6:10 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall Plaza.

PRESENT: Michael Feirer, Alanna Feddick, Trish Siegler, Marty Anderson (arrived at 6:30 p.m.), Ed Wagner, Chris Meyer, Donald Krueger, John Spiros, Tom Buttke and Edward Beaudry, Jr.

ABSENT: None

Department overviews were given by the following:

1. Police Department – Joe Stroik
2. Assessor – Joan Spencer
3. Marshfield Utility – Joe Pacovsky
4. Library – Lori Belongia
5. Airport – Jeff Gaier
6. Administration – Mike Brehm
7. Engineering – Tom Turchi
8. Public Works – Dan Knoeck
9. Wastewater Treatment Plant – Ron Dickrell
10. Street Department – Brian Panzer
11. Building Services – Roland Donath
12. Fire Department – Ed Erickson
13. Information Technology – Dan Wolfgram
14. Human Resources – Lara Baehr
15. Planning and Economic Development – Amber Miller
16. Parks and Recreation – Ed Englehart
17. Finance Department – Keith Strey
18. City Clerk – Deb Hall

The Mayor said that the presentations made by the Department Heads offered a better understanding for the City Council as to where all the departments are coming from. He has never questioned the fact that they are always accessible because they always have been.

Alderman Krueger commented that he has heard about how departments have made some changes after the Council made some cuts. He appreciates this but he would like to see this done prior to them making cuts. All he hears from departments are their needs and wants. Look ahead to see where cuts can be made.

Administrator Brehm responded that he takes exception to his comments. A lot of these departments are doing more with less because they have the technology you have given them to do that. We are saving literally millions of dollars when you combine all of these efforts throughout the different departments and divisions. One of the things that he is constantly being criticized for is that all he looks at when he looks at the budget is that they have to increase taxes. Why doesn't he ever cut expenditures? Tonight he thought there were very good examples in how expenditures have been cut after doing more with less. One of the reasons he puts them in the recommended budget is so that all of the Council has a chance to be able to look at that and be able to have a written document at your fingertips to be able to be responsive to the citizens. You can show them that the budget is being cut and that taxes are not just being raised. It is a combination of both. Our staff does a superb job in trying to control costs and provide the same level of services that the City expects.

Aldersperson Beaudry said that there were at least a half a dozen examples of items that are coming up in the near and long-range future that are unfunded state mandates that we know these expenses are going to be there. To sit and say that we have to go into the budget process looking for ways to cut, he would rather go into the budget process looking to see if there are anyways we are spending the tax dollars foolishly or inefficiently.

Aldersperson Anderson commented that the family's ability to pay is not equal to the governments current need to consume. It is not that our local government is consuming at an outrageous rate. He thinks we are doing a lot of things right but the family budget is not there anymore.

The Mayor said that this discussion is good. But he is very curious to know specifically what the Council would suggest be cut from the budget. He wants to know what it is the Council feels we are providing right now that we don't have to provide anymore.

Administrator Brehm added that the Council needs to establish what goals and service levels they want. If you don't want the current service levels that are being provided than you need to begin to prioritize things. You need to ask the question, "Are these service levels worth raising the taxes each year at a certain level?"

Alderspersons Feirer, Krueger and Spiros left at 10:10 p.m.

The department overviews ran a little longer than anticipated so another Focus Session will be held to finish discussing the items on the agenda.

Motion by Beaudry, second by Wagner to adjourn at 10:20 p.m.

Motion carried

Deb M. Hall
City Clerk