

City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois
Public Hearing on Proposed FY 2011 City Budget
April 6, 2009

The City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois, held a public hearing on Tuesday, April 6, 2010, in City Council Chambers of the Carbondale Civic Center, 200 South Illinois Avenue, for the purpose of soliciting comments on the proposed FY 2011 operating budget. Mayor Brad Cole called the public hearing to order at 7:27 p.m. with the following-named members of the City Council present/absent:

Present: Councilman Steven Haynes, Councilman Lance Jack, Councilman Joel Fritzler, Councilwoman Corene McDaniel, Councilwoman Mary Pohlmann, Councilman Chris Wissmann and Mayor Brad Cole

Absent: None

Also present were City Clerk Janet M. Vaught, City Manager Allen Gill and various members of the City's administrative staff.

Mayor Cole noted that the budget was placed on display for public inspection on March 29, 2010, and presents a financial and operational plan for the City for the period May 1, 2010, through April 30, 2011. The notice of Public Hearing was published on March 27, 2010, in the *Southern Illinoisan*. The Mayor noted that the City Council must hold a public hearing on the budget as required by law and that formal adoption of the budget by the City Council cannot occur for at least seven days following the public hearing. No vote will be taken at this meeting. The Mayor noted that later in the agenda the City Council will discuss the Community Investment Program and the budget. He noted that this Public Hearing provides the opportunity for anyone to wishes to present information to the Council on the budget, adding that in accordance with Carbondale Revised Code Section 1-2B-2, he would ask speakers to keep their remarks within five minutes which will allow as many people as possible to speak. Mayor Cole invited City Manager Gill to offer opening comments.

City Manager Gill noted that the City budget has already been discussed for months, starting in September 2009 with advance planning and spotting potential deficits with the FY 2011 budgets. At that time a plan was developed for addressing those deficits; this plan included a combination of tax increases and expenditure cuts. The Council, in December, voted to increase the sales tax. With the annual budget in front of the Council, it is now time to consider the expenditure budgets and see how the revenue picture fits. City Manager Gill said that there are three things that have really impacted the City, most of which are beyond the City's control. First, he said, the economic downturn resulted in reductions in the amount of sales tax income received by the City. This revenue stream fluctuates and as cities become more dependent on sales tax rather than property tax they become subject to those fluctuations. Mr. Gill said for the first time in anyone's memory there was an actual reduction in the amount of money received by the City. Second, he said, there has been a dramatic escalation in benefit costs for City employees in pensions, health insurance and workers compensation. Most of those are set by State law and the City is obligated to pay the benefits as established by the State. City Manager Gill said that since these things were discussed in September and December, there has been a proposal by Governor Quinn to significantly reduce the amount of revenue coming to the City in the form of income tax from the Local Government Distributive Fund. This reduction would total approximately \$590,000 and that is what is driving additional budget cuts. Mr. Gill said the City is also dealing with the aftermath of the May 8, 2009, storm which cost the City over \$3.5 million. He noted that some of the money will be recovered over time from insurance proceeds and federal aid but there are still reduced reserves to fall back on.

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City Manager Gill concluded by noting that the budget being presented is not the kind of budget he wants to present, adding that these are not the type of economic times that very many people can remember in their lifetime. Mr. Gill then presented his budget transmittal letter. (Exhibit PH-A-4-6-10)

Following the conclusion of City Manager Gill's presentation, Mayor Cole invited comments from the audience regarding the FY 2011 proposed City budget. He again reminded speakers to limit their comments to five minutes.

Reverend Sidney Logwood, 1701 West Colonial, spoke in support of retaining the position of Community Relations/Affirmative Action Officer and in opposition to transferring those duties to the Administrative Services Director. (Exhibit PH-B-43-6-10) Reverend Logwood presented the Council with a packet of information including petitions and letters of support for retaining the position.

Calvin Stearns, a resident of rural Carbondale and a former Deputy Chief in the Carbondale Police Department, asked the Council to reconsider not purchasing squad cars in FY 2011, noting that when a similar decision was made in 1995-96 the cost of repairs and maintenance to the older vehicles increased exponentially. He said the Police Department ended up spending almost as much money on maintenance and repairs as it would have cost to purchase the new vehicles.

Tyler Young, Chair of the Attucks Community Services Board (ACSB), asked the Council to restore funding to the programs of the ACSB. In addition, Young suggested options including the reduction of space which would reduce rent or possibly allow them to do their own janitorial work which could reduce the money needed for rent thereby allowing more money for programming.

Jim Scales, a Carbondale resident, spoke in support of funding for programming for the Attucks Community Services Board and pointed out how the services and programs provided by ACSB correspond with the goals and objectives set forth in the City's budget. He also talked about the fund raising, strategic planning and volunteerism that will be undertaken by ACSB in the near future. He said the ACSB can also network with the other social service agencies within the Eurma C. Hayes Center to provide a comprehensive support system. He asked that the City reconsider the budget for FY 2011 and, if that is not possible, give consideration to funding for FY 2012.

Ella Lacey, 847 West Lake Road, spoke on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Carbondale Alumnae Chapter in support of the I Can Read program and Attucks Community Services Board. She also suggested that the position of Community Relations Officer be retained and expanded to include grant writing. Dr. Lacey presented a written statement for the record. (Exhibit PH-C-4-6-10)

Sandy Robinson of Springfield, Illinois, said he was present as President of the Illinois Municipal Human Relations Association and on behalf of the Illinois Department of Human Rights. Mr. Robinson spoke in opposition to the elimination of the Community Relations/Affirmative Action Officer position. He also expressed concern about the apparent elimination of the Human Relations Commission, noting that the Commission does not appear in the chart of departmental services which lists other boards, commissions and committees. Robinson suggested that if the duties of the Community Relations Officer are being reduced, this would give the CRO the opportunity to do more work towards meeting the City's goals in Affirmative Action. He also noted that eliminating the position may jeopardize receipt of Community Development Block Grant funding. Following Mr. Robinson's comments, Mayor Cole noted the City of Carbondale is not a direct entitlement community for receiving Community Development Block Grant funds. He also noted that the omission of the Human Relations Commission from the list of City boards and commissions was an oversight and should have been included in the list.

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Margaret Nesbitt, President of I Can Read of Southern Illinois, spoke in support of continued funding for the I Can Read program and other programs that benefit the youth of Carbondale. She opined that the cuts may be racially motivated, with some programs providing services to disadvantaged youth being cut but other programs receiving no cuts. She noted that the City no longer has to fund Abundant Health so that \$34,000 could be reallocated.

Lakendria Kenner, a student residing at 407B East Chestnut, said she was told by her school that she was an at-risk student and less likely to receive a diploma. At the Eurma C. Hayes Center, she receives after-school tutoring and has a safe place to go after school. She has a child and the loss of the Eurma Hayes Center will leave her child with nowhere to go.

Jane Adams, 702 West Cherry and a member of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, spoke in opposition to the merging of the Development Services Director position with the position of Assistant City Manager for Economic Development. She noted that both are important positions that entail a great deal of work and she would not like to see a negative impact on either position, especially when the City is on the cusp of adopting a new Comprehensive Plan.

Charlie Howe, 47 Dart Drive, noted that every organization is suffering financially and is having to make hard choices. He asked if the City of Carbondale had considered employee salary cuts. Mayor Cole responded that all City employees took four furlough days in 2009, there are no budgeted salary increases for non-bargaining unit employees and all employees will see increases in out-of-pocket expenses for medical benefits.

Elbert Simon, Carbondale resident, asked whether the contribution to SIUC for Saluki Way could be cancelled so the City could utilize that money. Mayor Cole noted that the agreement with SIUC is a two-party agreement and although the Mayor approached the University President about revisiting the agreement, the President declined to do so. Mr. Simon also spoke in opposition to the elimination of the Affirmative Action / EEO Officer and the assignment of those duties to the Administrative Services Director. He suggested that the Affirmative Action/EEO Officer be retained and that the position report directly to the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Simon also noted that although the City may not received CDBG funds, if the City receives any federal funding it is subject to scrutiny by the United States Government to ensure that all citizens enjoy the benefits that the City has to offer.

Liz Gersbacher, 1507 West Taylor Drive, agreed with comments made by Jane Adams related to the position of Development Services Director. Ms. Gersbacher also asked that the City Council consider decreasing travel expenses contained within the budget, particularly Mayor and Council travel, and reallocate those funds to human rights.

Rick Jackson, 316 East Jackson, asked if there was going to be a hiring freeze and if the three officers to be hired on a federal grant will have their benefit packages also covered under the grant. Mayor Cole noted that the benefits are included in the grant funding and other than seasonal workers there are no plans to hire any additional employees at this time; vacant positions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Brent Ritzel, 2511 South Illinois Avenue, noted that he attended an informative address by Donald Jacks, President of the Illinois NAACP, at the Eurma C. Hayes Center and presented a document outlining the basis on which any employer with less than 15 employees can legally discriminate without recourse to the victim. (Exhibit PH-D-4-6-10). He encouraged the City to pass ordinances addressing these issues and spoke in support of putting aside the economic issues and retaining the Community Relations Officer position, adding that the position is important to the City of Carbondale and the values of the community.

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Reverend Sidney Logwood apologized to the Mayor and City Council for his earlier statements which may have been interpreted as questioning the qualifications of the person who will be assigned the duties of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Officer.

Darnecia Moultrie said some years ago she received a grant from the City for the rehabilitation of her home and the construction was not done correctly. Although she took her complaints to a number of City staff members, the problems have not been resolved. Mayor Cole asked that Ms. Moultrie share her concerns with Ron Bryant, the City's Housing Rehabilitation Specialist, and Khristina Vaughan, the Housing Programs Coordinator.

Elius Reed, 2012 South Illinois Avenue, noted that the NAACP has adopted a resolution opposing any attempt to eliminate Affirmative Action. Mr. Reed also noted a leak in the roof around the skylight at the Eurma C. Hayes Center; Mayor Cole said the City would go out and inspect the area. Mr. Reed said instead of eliminating the position of Affirmative Action Officer, the Affirmative Action policies need to be enforced.

Evelyn Koine, 1104 North Pierce, spoke in support of the Eurma C. Hayes Center and the services provided by the various organizations housed in the Hayes Center and which have been supported by the City of Carbondale. She asked that the Council reconsider the move to eliminate the Affirmative Action Officer position and the reduction of funding for the various community organizations.

Mayor Cole noted for the record that one letter had been received from a citizen unable to attend the public hearing. (Exhibit PH-E-4-6-10).

There being no one else to address the City Council during this public hearing, Mayor Cole declared the public hearing closed at 9:06 p.m..

Janet M. Vaught, City Clerk

Approved by the City Council on:
