

Council approves hiring grass cutter for summer

Contributed by Chris Case
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The Cuba City Council met in regular session at city hall on Monday, April 20. The council discussed the following items of business at that time.

- The board agreed to have citywide brush pick up on May 18 and May 19, two weeks after the citywide spring clean up event.

- Public Works Director Bob Baldwin asked the council for authorization to hire summertime help for the groundskeeping department. Baldwin said the department needs full-time help with grass cutting during the three summer months.

Alderman Faye Howard wondered if employees from another department could be shifted to groundskeeping, rather than hiring someone from outside.

The board agreed to advertise in the newspaper for the grass cutting position. Howard voted against that motion.

- The board approved fund balance transfers and budget revisions as submitted by Tonya Farace. She noted that the transfers do not take care of all the fund deficits and the city cannot end the year with deficit balances in any funds. "You have three months to rectify that," Farace warned.

The budget was increased \$1.7 million for expenditures and most of that was capital improvements that were not originally budgeted. Also, the Sho-Me Power costs were greater than what was budgeted and utility revenues in electric and natural gas areas have been lower than expected, but with higher costs. Profit margins in those departments are lower than in past years.

- The council passed the second reading of Bill No. 1521, authorizing tax rebates for Frisco's Grill & Pub, LLC.

- The council passed the second reading of Bill No. 1522, expanding the city's snow routes, by unanimous decision.

- Christine Nash, city clerk, asked that the council amend the approved list of mayoral appointments, because Caren Meade was not listed as treasurer. The council approved the change.

- Alderman Kevin Copling inquired about adding a traffic light at the intersection of Highway PP and Highway 19, due to congestion in the mornings. Police Chief Bo Dildine said he would inquire with the state about it, but it was tried in the past and the state refused to add a light there.

- Copling also asked about the pond at Hood Park and the city's policy on removing fish from the pond. He was under the impression that the catch and release requirement had expired now that the pond is stocked.

Baldwin stated the catch and release signs can be removed, but they were left there to "keep some kind of regulations in place."

Daily keep limits will be according to Department of Conservation requirements.

- Alderman Don Conaway asked about money put into the budget for roofing the building at Hood Park. Seven thousand dollars was put into the budget for patch work, and Baldwin indicated the problem area is by the offices and has been a consistent problem for years.

- Conaway also asked about a trash problem at a Bond Street residence and a littering ticket has been issued there. He also stated a large pothole at Dr. Fuch's dental office needs to be repaired.

- Conaway asked when the Park Board meets, and Annalee Williams, board member, stated they don't meet anymore because "there's not any money for us and nothing for us really to do. If we need to have a meeting, we'll call a meeting, but it seems like a waste of time to just meet and gossip."

"Our parks are supposed to be a showplace for our city, and we don't have a budget for our parks," commented Conaway.

Mayor Killeen said a tax was put on the ballot to support the parks and “the people voted it down, overwhelmingly.”

• Conaway asked Dildine if the police patrol Bond Street before and after school. The chief said there should be an officer there every morning, if possible.

• The council authorized hiring Kayla Hewkin, Haylee Bess and Danielle Thompson as lifeguards for the city pool.

• Kent Robinson, city attorney, informed the council that the ordinance states if a business qualifies for a state liquor license, then it also qualifies for a city license. Businesses cannot serve alcohol if they are within 100 feet of a church or school, by state law. The city could reduce the distance requirement but not without a public hearing to notify all neighboring property owners. Owners of Main Street Café want to obtain a liquor license, but the restaurant may be too close to the Presbyterian church across the street.

• The council convened in executive session, without any actions.

• Returning to open session, Copling stated he’d like to let the voters decide if utility late fees should be set aside specifically for use in the parks department and not to help fund the utilities.

“I hate late charges, but if we're going to have them, let's have them go toward the parks budget. It's just something to think about. We need to fund the parks. Let the citizens decide if we fund the parks with it. I think they've got a right to decide that,” the alderman said.