

Mayor Hedglon's Special Budget Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
July 14, 2009

Attending:

Mayor Hedglon
Bob Pryor
Bruce Herb
John Reinhardt
Kevin Salerno
Shirley Lomery
Paul Newsom
Kent Johnson
Charlie Donovan
George Clark
Jean Coolican

Absent:

Sarah Marshall
John Little

This was a preliminary meeting with Mayor Hedglon to discuss his reasons for forming the committee. Mainly it was due to a disappointment in the budget process and the lack of involvement by the public with regards to their input on said budget process. The Mayor feels by choosing citizens from the community, discussions can be generated to help review services offered by the city, then make recommendations regarding whether these should be continued, cut back or possibly eliminated.

Department heads are currently working on 2010 budgets. Mayor Hedglon believes the budget is due to the city comptroller by September 30, 2009. Then the Mayor will present the proposed budget to the Common Council on or around October 31, 2009.

It was established that the advisory committee will meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, with an expected meeting length of 60-90 minutes. It was established that the Mayor will have the title of Chairman and that a Vice-chairman should be appointed. This appointment was not yet done. The Mayor also stated that all requests for information from the committee or its members should be given to him and he will contact the appropriate department heads for that information.

Paul Newsom asked for better clarification of the committee's responsibilities and also for more budget detail. Mayor Hedglon reiterated stating he is looking for recommendations on what city services residents would like and would do without. Suggestions were to actively discuss such with family, friends, neighbors, political parties, unions, etc. The Common Council will be provided with information from the Advisory Committee that they can utilize in making final budget decisions.

There was significant discussion on how much access the public has to budget information and how that access can be improved. The budget is currently not on the city website. The Mayor stated that progress is being made, but the Information Technology department is not there yet. Hard copies of the budget are available but are limited and it is expensive to make more. There was discussion on how other members of the public could give their input. This committee is functioning under the open meetings law and so will be open to the public. It was also asked if there was a mechanism where the public could be informed about a large expense that was fairly significant and could the decision be put out to the city residents to decide, for example - if referendums were allowed. The Mayor stated that they are prohibited by law except for very specific items.

The question was asked on if there were requirements for a certain number of positions for the Fire Department, Police Department and the DPW. The city charter does not have mandates for those departments. It was stated that there are around 135 employees currently with the city. Union contracts were then discussed briefly. The Advisory Committee will have input on specific union contracts, but can make recommendations on number of employees.

Meeting was then adjourned. Next meeting will be held July 28, 2009.