



Date: November 7, 2013

To: Budget Committee Members

From: Mia Cariaga, City Manager's Office

Re: Community Workshop Notes

During the month of October the Budget Committee held five community workshops at Eugene high schools. The workshops included an educational component to help citizens better understand the City's General Fund deficit. In addition, the workshops provided an opportunity for the public to share their thoughts on City services, finances and the budget process with Budget Committee members directly.

The workshop agenda included budget committee introductions, a video outlining the City's financial situation, a table activity and small group discussion, a report out individual tables to the full group, and next steps. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions of committee members at each table throughout the workshop or they could submit questions in writing.

There were a total of 85 participants over all five workshops. In an effort to provide the Budget Committee with thoughts from all participants, the subsequent pages include notes provided by the staff member assigned to assist a Budget Committee member at each table at every meeting. Staff are working to identify commonly asked questions so that answers can be provided on the City's website.

Budget Workshop #1
South Eugene High School: 34 participants
October 15, 2013

Table 1

Facilitators:

- Betty Taylor (Budget Committee member)
- Jason Dedrick (staff member)

The process:

- Some struggled with the directions, primarily because they wanted to *increase* funding in some areas. This made the math a little more complicated for them to track.
- Group split into two groups (one with two people, one with three).
- The group of two had a very good discussion where they ranged through many issues.
- The group of three did not have as productive of a discussion due to issues with math (increasing and reducing funding) and a difference of opinion as to whether increasing funding was appropriate.

Budget priorities:

- Both groups chose to increase funding to human services, primarily as a way to offset the service reductions that would result from a reduction to public safety.
- The two person group cut public safety by \$8, increased human services by \$4 and reduced planning and economic development by \$1 each.
- The three person group did not arrive on details, but essentially reduced public safety and increased funding to human services.

General comments:

- Encourage the City Manager to look for ways to cut the cost of existing services
- City salaries are far too high and need to be reduced
- There is a lot of community resentment about the use of general fund dollars for City Hall
- Reducing public safety funding
 - Some feeling that volunteers could fill the gap, but one individual pointed out that these types of programs cost money to administer
 - Cut police service from University of Oregon events (Autzen)
 - Do we need fire engines and stations as much as in the past due to the merger? Do we really need to dispatch ladder trucks to medical emergencies
 - We're such a safe community already. We don't need to spend this much on safety.

Measures of Success:

- Information will go back out to the community on what they found
- Transparency with the "funds within the funds" that aren't viewed by the public
- They will communicate information on the number of managers in the organization and their pay

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- More information will be provided on the budget for legal services (remaining contract work)
- Good revenue sources will be discussed
- No money will be allocated for City Hall. Instead, fund it through a bond measure.

Feedback:

- Better publicity of meetings (several felt that most people probably didn't hear about it)
- FIT and Revenue team meetings needs to be open to the public
- More will get involved if they fell like their ideas are captured and brought to the right place

"Parking Lot" comments/questions:

- Why hasn't the revenue team started their work yet?
- Why are we not doing a performance audit for public safety (such as what Portland has done)?
- Can people "adopt" services or facilities as a cost-savings measure?
- Can we see detailed numbers on the cost per capita of our public safety budget as compared to other jurisdictions?

Table 2

Facilitators:

- Laura Illig (Budget Committee member)
- Greg Evans (Budget Committee member)
- Jan Bohman (Staff Member)

The process:

- Need to know more what is included in categories. What is included in eco devo/job creation? Also, in planning? What are the specific outcomes of the work?
- Does human services funding all go to HSC for other agencies? Or is some delivered through City services?
- Library – Is some of it fixed costs, or all people?

Budget priorities:

- Group consensus – Cut economic development to protect human services.
- Economic development – long term effect and vision vs. short term problem
- Public Safety – cut by \$2.5-7
- Parks/Rec/Library – cut by \$4 – Mostly rec, less parks, not much if any from library
- Human services – no cut

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Revenue:

- What about revenue that wouldn't need voter approval? User fees? Parking fees? Parks fees?
- (GE - Fees can't exceed the cost of the service, if they do it then becomes a tax and other legal issues come into play.)

Measures of success:

- Total transparency :
 - tell exactly what is cut
 - some alternatives that could be considered instead

Feedback:

- Cut across the board. Take a proportional cut from each.
- Proportional cuts but don't cut human services. CAHOOTS is very important, saves Police. There are real mental health needs in community.
- No benefit to cutting human services.
- Eco devo - not getting bang for buck when give breaks to out of state developers for housing. Wish we could undo some of these.
- Wouldn't cut planning, eco devo, job creation
- Would take the \$ from where it is - \$5 from Parks/Rec/Library, \$5 from Pub Safety
- Take \$5 from Parks/Rec/Library, maybe volunteers can take up the slack
- Maybe cut some from public safety.
- Would have a hard time cutting library. Supports kids, education. Take it from Parks and Rec if necessary.
- Send a strong message to community – they need to support what they value
- Use internet, Facebook. Label everything “cute kitten video.”
- Representative democracy trusts decisions to good reps. We have to trust.
- Likelihood of getting enough people involved not too likely
- Squeaky wheel phenomenon – i.e., MLK Blvd. renaming
- When peoples' ox will be gored, they will come out
- Make yourselves more visible, like tonight
- Share “matrix” of reasons why the specific cuts were proposed

“Parking Lot” comments/questions:

- Why aren't we talking about revenue? (LI - We will talk about it. Probably not possible to secure new revenue for FY15 so must address gap, but will have a team to look at it soon for the future.)
- Why not just use reserves again? What's wrong with running a deficit? (By state law, can't legally run a deficit. And the reserves won't last too long.)
- Last time, it looked like there were lots of costs to cut the services (like mothball costs or others). Were there?

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Table 3

Facilitators:

- George Brown (Budget Committee member)
- Lorna Flormoe (staff member)

The process:

- (3) Budget exercise was too simple, not enough information. Need more detailed information.
- (3) More information on what is covered in the general categories.
- (All) Didn't like the exercise. Hard, but good discussion.
- (All) Want to give feedback on actual solutions/proposals.

Revenue:

- (All) Want to talk about revenues.
- (All) Use GF for the services proposed for cuts, not for City Hall.
- (All) Do a bond for City Hall; that is what a bond is used for. People would be more likely to vote for a City Hall Bond instead of a City Service Fee. Don't steal money from the GF for City Hall. Put it back, this will solve the problem for a few years while new revenues can start to come in.
- (4) Instate a 5% restaurant tax.
- (1) If taking a service away, allow for privatization (i.e. pools, maybe YMC would buy)
- (1) Cut some parks, recreation, library but balance it by increasing fees. Let private/non-profit come in. For example, YMCA, Civic Stadium, pools.
- (2) Have a higher library card fee for high-income folks.
- (1) Help Human Services raise more money, write grants, be creative.
- (2) Create more tourist taxes.

General comments:

- (3) Cutting Human Services puts people on the streets. This is not good for people, economic development... it's not good for Eugene.
- (3) Cutting Library and Recreation will put more kids at risk both academically and socially.
- (2) If taking a service away, allow for privatization (i.e. pools, maybe YMC would buy)
- (All) Use GF for the services proposed for cuts, not for City Hall.
- (All) Do a bond for City Hall; that is what a bond is used for. People would be more likely to vote for a City Hall Bond instead of a City Service Fee. Don't steal money from the GF for City Hall. Put it back, this will solve the problem for a few years while new revenues can start to come in.
- (2) Cut a little bit from Public Safety.
- (2) Privatize EMS.
- (1) Cut planning entirely.
- (1) Parks, recreation, library are "nic" to have, not "have" to have.

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- (2) Fire could sustain some small cuts.
- (1) Would not cut planning, economic development or human services much.
- (4) Cut economic development; City is not doing a good job. Too many apartments built with tax breaks. These tax breaks should not be given, that is partly why we are in this mess.
- (All) An “ah, ha” for the whole group, everyone came together on this: Short-sighted and misguided proposed cuts. Real economic development comes from having a desirable community with strong schools, recreation, human services, public safety, parks etc...this is what will attract businesses and employees to come here. If we cut these things, then Eugene will lose quality of life and businesses and employees will not want to come here. Existing businesses and residents will leave. Cutting is not cost effective – this will create more crime, more trouble, more poverty, more kids without things to do. Cutting library and taking money from schools (Urban Renewal – TIF) will negatively affect youth literacy and life skills. All these things are connected to economic development, but it doesn’t seem like the City is seeing the connections. Need to look at whole picture; there needs to be better leadership from the City on wholistic, sustainable economic development.
- (2) Why does the City preach “sustainability”, but they are only looking at short-sighted economics. What about all the other things that go into true sustainability?
- Don’t cut library – there are no library’s in public schools because of decreased funding.
- (1) Cut some parks, recreation, library but balance it by increasing fees. Let private non-profit come in. For example, YMCA, Civic Stadium, pools.
- (2) Have a higher library card fee for high-income folks.
- (4) Stop taking money away from public schools through Urban Renewal (TIF) and MUPTE.
- (1) Help Human Services raise more money, write grants, be creative.
- (4) Instate a 5% restaurant tax.
- (2) Create more tourist taxes.
- (5) There is no room to reduce, City has already reduced.
- (All) All care about the community and don’t want to negatively affect the community.
- (All) Want to talk about revenues.

“Parking Lot” comments/questions:

- (1) Want more information on wages, benefits (including retirement) to figure into the picture. Is the City paying more than what is comparable in Eugene? How has this changed over last 5 years?
- (1) How is EMS funded? Does it generate funds? Is it supplemented by the GF? Is it losing money or stable?
- (1) How can there be a budget deficit when property taxes have gone up consistently?
- (2) Put FIT information on the web – what are they coming up with?

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Table 4

Facilitators:

- Alan Zelenka (Budget Committee member)
- Eric Jones (staff member)

The process:

- Participants found the yellow budget fact sheets helpful, although most had questions and wanted even more detail
- The participants questioned the value of the worksheet but were willing to “play along” to see how the conversations went
- If the exercise worksheet continues to be used, indicate which departments are included in the service categories
- Need to show revenue options
- Three dyads were formed; none of the dyads agreed on a common budget solution in the exercise; one of the three dyads modified their choices slightly after discussing the budget options
- In one dyad, one member wanted to cut public safety, the other parks and recreation
- In another dyad, one member favored proportional or “across-the-board” cuts; the other took all \$10 from public safety.
- In the third dyad, one member favored proportional cuts; the other took \$11 from public safety, added \$1 to human services, and used the remainder to cut the budget.
- At least one participant talked about taking a long-term view by solving problems now that later will become very expensive to deal with (such as educating children or rehabilitating convicted felons); another participant questioned whether the long-term benefits would accrue to the City or go to the state
- Some participants said they were “diametrically opposed politically” with their dyad partner but felt that “if we could get to know each other better there may be ways to become more flexible, not because of sympathy but because we could learn to work together”

Budget priorities:

- The group agreed unanimously that the FY15 budget should not postpone cuts if that’s what’s needed to balance the budget.
- Regarding budget cuts, most participants said they would like to see a balance of cuts and new revenues
- One participant said the City should stick to core services (police, fire, roads)
- The group generally felt new revenues would be hard to put in place in the short term (i.e., in time for the adoption of the FY15 budget)
- Several participants said the cuts that were put on the table for the May 2013 city fee election should be made – “the will of the people”

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Revenue:

- Eugene needs a restaurant tax
- Can we raise franchise fees to get more revenue for the GF?
- Where does SDC revenue go, and can it be used to address the GF shortfall
- Can we increase the transient room tax to raise revenue for the GF?
- We should raise parking rates to generate revenue for the GF

General comments:

- The budget process/decisions following the spring 2013 election wasn't clear and transparent
- Negative experiences with unpublished or "secret" meetings make budget process less than transparent
- Is the budget committee "just for show" because, in the end, the council makes the decisions?
- In the end, it boils down to a lack of trust

Measure of success:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Follow the will of the people
- Ask questions to ensure that the budget committee is getting full and accurate information and not being "managed" by City staff
- Look for/demand shared sacrifices (e.g., employee pay cuts)
- Do what you say you're going to do

"Parking Lot" comments/questions:

- Free parking is a myth
- What were the actual GF property tax revenues (not including bond measures) for FY2008-FY2013?
- Is it true that closing the library one day a week would save \$500,000 a year, and what percentage of the GF would that represent?
- We heard that 100 positions have been cut, but how many people actually lost their jobs?
- How many "vacant" positions does the City have ?
- Why are employee wages and benefits not in the purview of the budget committee? (Councilor Zelenka answered that the city charter enumerates the responsibilities of the council and the city manager, and the manager has the authority to set wages)
- Is the 6% PERS pickup something the budget committee can change?
- How are budget committee members selected (there was a misunderstanding that each councilor selects the budget committee from his or her own ward)

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Table 5

Facilitators:

- Bob Clarke (Budget Committee member)
- Babe O'Sullivan (staff member)

General comments:

- Why are we only looking at cuts to address the budget, need to look at revenue side too
- Economic development program is headed in the wrong direction, no new or big businesses coming in
- Human services are a priority – need to meet basic needs of citizens for the health and well-being of the community.
- Invest in building community to reduce crime (and the need for \$\$ spent on public safety)
- Give a sense of community and involvement through parks, library, recreation

Measure of success:

- Ask committee members – what are the core values that inform your recommendations and budget choices?
- With the failure of the city fee proposal, there is a crisis of trust – need new revenue that is dedicated (not discretionary) to preserving target services/programs
- The fee proposal was thrown together at the last minutes, not well thought out (e.g. no advance agreement with EWEB to collect the fee)
- Listen to employees (not mgt) to get ideas for efficiencies and cost reductions. Try to ask more questions of staff doing the job, find out how to do things differently
- May need some combination of revenue and cuts
- Support for extending the period during which the Budget Committee can do its job
- Indications of the BC doing a good job? Putting forth a good faith effort; articulating goals and values and how these were met in recommendations; recommendations are clear and understandable and public knows the basis for them; articulate tradeoffs and impacts; time for public to discuss the budget rationally.

Feedback:

- Meetings allow public to come and vent but sense that decisions are already being made, that direction is already set
- Table exercise felt coercive, focused on the negative instead of prompting more positive problem solving
- Would like to see results of the FIT
- Not enough info shared with the public to make an informed decision or provide input. Need information campaign to better inform public about choices. This would help develop support for revenue measures

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“Parking lot” comments/questions:

- Where does parking revenue go? To the General Fund?

Table 6

Facilitators:

- Jill Fetherstonehaugh (Budget Committee member)
- LaVena Nohrenberg (staff member)

Budget Priorities:

- Last year all the hits were to social services.
Last year’s list was the typical hot button items, manipulating the voters to vote for the fee.
Cut the employee redundancies before making cuts.
- Volunteers should raise funds for the parks and pools and such.
- We have a lot of parks and it is choking us.
- There are ways for the pools to cover more of their costs with revenue.
Get more industry into town.
- For those who did the worksheet:
 - Cut \$8 public safety, \$1 parks, \$.5 planning, \$.5 economic development
 - Cut \$8 public safety, \$2 parks
 - Cut \$5 public safety, \$1 planning, \$1 economic development, \$3 parks, recreation, library, and make things tighter, not eliminate, like closing the library for a day
- Comments about the worksheet exercise itself:
 - I don’t have enough information to engage with this type of activity.
 - I would rather that you show me the real numbers and I will give you my opinion on that.

General comments:

- Don’t cut pools. My daughter swims. I feel safe in this town, we don’t need as much money in public safety. Treat every ward the same (as you would with children), don’t treat one different from another; don’t pit ward against ward.
- Create more jobs, but not by hiring people for the government.
- Don’t cut activities for teens. Looks seriously at maybe finding some savings in public safety and fire.
- Don’t sell off parks to make money
- Take a minimalist approach to spending. We don’t need fancy, we need adequate. For example, glad that there is less landscaping maintenance occurring in the road dividers.
- Don’t cut the pool, it’s important part of the health and wellbeing of my child and other children. We are already turning kids away from swim clubs because there is not enough space. Also, the elderly really need the pools.
- Leery of cutting public safety.

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- Use general funds as they are intended, to be used as operational funds. Stop siphoning off general funds for special projects (like City Hall or the Police Department building), go for a bond to pay for those projects.

Measure of success:

- Each Councilor should have to explain what and why they are voting for something, including when they dissent.
- City Council and the Mayor take responsibility, own, their decisions.
- A balanced budget
- Greater transparency. Transparency with funds, how property taxes relate to expenses of the City.
- Be able to go online and see general funds and the other funds.
- What is the Riverfront Urban Renewal? What's it doing for us?
- When the public votes something down, the City Council shouldn't still spend it.
- I appreciate opportunities like tonight's meeting.
- What about putting ideas on budgets on line and let people vote on it? (This comment got a heated reaction, because others did not want uninformed people to be able to just click and influence an important city issue.)
- Be transparent about the Comprehensive Financial Report that reflects where the money was spent.

Feedback:

- Put proposals online so they can vote.
- Each Councilor holds 2-3 budget meeting in their ward.
- The people, who really care, will come to meetings like this.
- There is a lot of hurt in this community, with the list of services put out for vote last time.
- There's this idea that what is going to happen is already pre-conceived.
- Go where the community is, engage them where they are. Do an intercept survey (with volunteers and staff gathering responses)
- Remember, 40-50% of the people in town do not have Internet access
- More public hearings.

"Parking Lot" comments/questions:

- In the video, it sounded like they had already made a concerted effort. Sometimes people don't think about the reality of cuts.
- I've lived in four communities in my life, this is the most stingy tax base. They want everything and are unwilling to pay for it.

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Table 7

Facilitators:

- Will Shaver (Budget Committee member)
- Robin Hostick (staff member)

The process:

- Split out “play budget” categories to enable more specific discussion about each category, e.g. talk about funding for parks separately from funding for library or rec services
- Need more specifics about what kinds of services would be cut w/in each program area; choices feel “blind”

Revenue:

- Would like to add revenue as a part of the discussion; budget cutting does not address the whole picture of options
- What are long-term fixes to boost revenue?
- Eco Devo – loan program is key to business success which is part of the long-term solution; bad idea to cut this investment
- Annexation would boost revenue; put a referendum on the ballot to incorporate all urban areas; this is an equity issue since these areas already enjoy services but don’t pay for them
- Need job growth with living wages; this is the bigger issue that needs to be addressed
- Eliminating services will drive away talented workers and families from the community
- What services have the most impact on economic development? Avoid those cuts . . .

General Comments:

- Don’t want to cut anything – other alternatives available?
- Need all services
- Public safety is the elephant in the room; can’t cut items w/so little budget to begin with or they will disappear entirely; it is unavoidable that cuts will need to be made in EPD
- Public safety should get cuts because it was the only department to get increases over the duration of the economic downturn; this is a logical rationale to start with
- Key question: how much are we willing to cut from parks/rec
- LRCS are keys to quality of life
- Recreation services are critical for special needs; makes a world of difference; LRCS helps augment deficits for kids resulting from poorly-funded school activities; kid crime mostly from 3-8 PM; this is a de-facto contribution to public safety
- Worried that once we get rid of services for special needs, they may not come back
- Cutting police is bad for the community
- Cut 10% across the board
- Downside of this: across-the-board cuts may impair function w/rigid limits, i.e. it may not be useful to cut something partially; the function may be lost and cutting the whole program may make more sense

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- Focus on reducing vs. eliminating a service, e.g. closing a pool is eliminating the service; instead, just reduce the hours
- Cut items where others can fill in the gap
 - E.g. volunteers in parks
 - E.g. closing a pool and offering it to a private vendor to operate (don't leave it vacant)
 - Need to be truly open to letting it happen
- Recreation services are fee-based; fees can/will go up to cover cost needs
- Privatization may end up with higher fees anyway; may not result in better or more efficient service
- How does PERS play into the equation?
- Will highly-qualified people want to take jobs that are constantly under threat of cuts? Bad idea from an organizational standpoint

Measures of success:

- These meetings are important
- BC members could also show up at grocery stores and talk to patrons to better understand how most people feel (random samples vs. self-selected group at meetings)
- Likes extended committee meetings
- Provide a rationale for the cuts that are eventually made and explain it clearly, specifically
- Clearly identify exactly what would be cut and how the implications will be addressed (if possible)

Table 8

Facilitators:

- Ken Beeson (Budget Committee member)
- Mike Kinnison (staff member)

The process:

- Budget process is too truncated. Not enough time to understand the budget once it is presented by the City Manager.
- I appreciate the extra time that the Budget Committee is putting into this process.
- Meeting was too orchestrated and choreographed. Would like more opportunity for give and take.
- Need an outreach process at the end of the budget process after Budget Committee has sorted through issues and has some options to consider.
- This meeting is only reaching those that are already engaged.
- Consider using a panel of City and public members to provide different points of view.
- Have to have enough knowledge before talking about budget cuts. We don't have that.
- The budget exercise was disingenuous. Budget is much more complicated than that.

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Revenue:

- Consider leasing recreation facilities to private entities instead of closing. Salem does this successfully.

General comments:

- Need to check the assumptions being made about the budget gap. Not convinced there is one.
- Need to stop giving money away for developer incentives. Everybody should pay their fair share. Subsidies have a danger of artificially supporting growth.
- I believe this is just headed to another either/or revenues vs. cuts situation.
- City has a credibility problem. Property taxes not assessed equally. City service fee failed and no cuts made. Need to rebuild trust by making decisions that are transparent, trustworthy and not manipulative.
- Need to be talking about use of general fund dollars for other purposes.

“Parking Lot” comments/questions:

- Structurally change the process for capital projects like City Hall. Should be consistent with best practices in other communities.
- Municipal bonds are a more fiscally responsible way to build City hall (not use of general fund).
- Where is the discussion of MUPTE, urban renewal funds or other issues that impact the general fund?

Budget Workshop #2
Sheldon High School: 18 participants
October 23, 2013

Table 1

Facilitators:

- George Poling (Budget Committee member)
- Jason Detrick (staff member)

The process:

- Budget exercise went fine, with few questions or problems
- Some frustration that the exercise was too general and made reductions hard (within public safety, should the reduction be Police? Fire? EMS?)
- Group split into two groups of two
- Both groups had a good discussion and quickly reached agreement on a budget
- All other discussion at the table throughout the evening was respectful and constructive, although it was a quiet bunch. They may have attended more out of curiosity rather than having a specific axe to grind.

Budget priorities:

- Both groups chose cuts to public safety and parks/recreation, with minimal or no reduction to the other categories
- All participants did not want to cut public safety (felt that it was a critical service that does not have room for cuts) but felt forced to given their large proportion of the general fund

General comments:

- Fee for services models (or higher fees) should be explored for services such as pools and libraries. This could also include assessing fees for repeat users of public safety services. Some feeling that the willingness to pay for some of these services is higher than current rates.
- Would combining police services with Springfield or Lane County accomplish savings?
- Library budget could be reduced because of the increase in online books, services, etc., thus meaning less need for brick and mortar library hours, staffing.
- Planning is not as efficient as it could be; cut staffing
- Volunteers could take care of parks
- Sell Laurelwood Golf Course
- Concerns about cutting the 2nd Fire Company because it has paramedics on it
- Economic Development services should be retained as they help to generate revenue
- Services should be prioritized based on things we have to have, would like to have, etc.

Measures of success:

- Provide better explanations of why choices were made for proposed service reductions
- There will be more creative solutions
- Existing community resources will be taken advantage of (volunteers, etc.)
- Feeling that budget priorities focus on the services that the private sector can't provide

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Feedback:

- Engage people on the web (surveys, etc.)
- Mail a survey to residents
- Get renters and young people involved (they are freeloading)
- Contact people through their children's schools

Table 2

Facilitators:

- Mike Clark (Budget Committee member)
- Laura Hammond (staff member)

The process:

- Would like to add money – suggested charging more for services like the pool.
- Noted the importance of public safety
- Questioned why City would consider buying Civic Stadium
- Feels public safety funding is dysfunctional
- Decided to cut same amount across the board because he didn't feel he had enough information
- Wanted to look for efficiencies within the budget – mentioned the fire department
- Noted that we had the same problem 10 years ago
- Wanted employees to share costs – vacation, health, retirement; noted that if any business had 58% overhead cost it would be broke
- Wanted to save \$25 instead of \$10
- Felt all services are important – it is a dilemma
- Heard that city employees average over \$100K salaries which seems disproportionate
- Was in high agreement with partner
- Took \$5 from public safety
- Noted the high need for social services
- \$3 from Parks and Libraries
- Didn't feel it was the city's job to create jobs – i.e. economic development
- Asked why city doesn't use biannual budget like state instead of going through process every year
- Felt it was important to look at employee benefits
- Suggested adding fees for parks and recreation
- Noted the theme of employee costs/management, the desire to look at competing priorities rather than across the board cuts, and the question of whether employee compensation is competitive (i.e. it is perceived as higher than average in area)

Budget priorities:

- Young people are being cheated by school funding – sad to see more cuts to youth programming
- How can we raise more revenue?
- Increasing property tax base is long term strategy

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- In short term – what about students who use services (police) – what about a bike licence/fee?
- Sin taxes – increase fee on selling alcohol, tobacco, tattoos, lottery shops, tanning
- Question about the golf course – can fees be increased or sell the course?

General comments:

- One participant noted that the cut to human services was proportionately very large for that allocation – felt it was disproportionate
- Questions about what sustainability program does – could it be funded with grants?
- Question about city hotel tax
- Several noted that there should be more cooperation between local governments – like the fire merger to help save money
- One participant suggested cutting the police auditor budget

Measures of success:

- Budget cut should be matched with revenue – through fees
- Ideas have to be presented clearly – fee was done the wrong way
- Want to see the benefits to people when increase budget
- When broad spectrum of community feels it is fair and providing good value – good description of benefits and services
- More cooperation and coordination across jurisdictions

Feedback:

- Groups struggles with cuts – want to see priorities rather than across the board cuts
- Employee costs
- Would like to explore revenue
 - Fee increase, sin taxes, bike fee
- More cross jurisdictional coordination to save money
- Good budget had to clearly communicate benefits and value of the services – be supported broadly

Table 3

Facilitators:

- Marty Wilde (Budget Committee member)
- Terri Harding (staff member)

The process:

- Exercise is hard to do without detailed knowledge of the budget.
- Agree. The numbers are already changing from what's on the exercise.
- A participant took 9 from public safety because it has the most money. Maybe 1 from Parks/Rec. Planning, Economic Development, and Human Services need to remain whole.

Budget Workshop #2

Sheldon High School: 18 participants

October 23, 2013

- One participant, a 20 year resident, took 8 from public safety and .5 each from Planning, Human Services, and EcoDevo. 1 from Parks. Job creation is in trouble; we should follow the lead of what they're doing in Corvallis.
- An unnamed person feels frustrated. The biggest problem is not on here. PERS costs, health insurance costs, fees going up, but city always wants more. Giving tax breaks to developers, using urban renewal for library which failed public vote. Took 8 from library, 1 planning, 1 eco devo.
- Participant: Cut 10% across the board. Good place to start.
- Another participant basically took 10% across the board.

General comments:

- Question – does closing the main library for 1 day equal the same savings as closing a branch library?
- We need examples of what's been cut already.
- It's good to see the options for spending cuts, but we need to see the revenue side too.
- Somebody's breaking the bank. We can't afford a 7% increase in medical or PERS costs.
- It's frustrating not seeing our tax base expanding. We should annex RR/SC, it will help in the long run. I don't see the economy improving in the next year. We need to focus more on economic development.
- We'll be back at this type of budget meeting next year for sure. The whole budget needs to be looked at.
- Marty: the property tax rate was frozen in the 90s but spending was not curtailed. A 2009 committee recommended looking at a restaurant tax, a utility surcharge and a city service fee.
- It's a shell game. I can't find the ball anymore. We're spending the money on the wrong things. (skate park example) There is a disparity in who pays – some developers are required to construct roads and others aren't held to the same standard. Why are building permits so much more now?
- Can the library or other services be merged or special districts created?
- Marty: Joining Willamalane would shift the cost to the taxpayers. Annexation would provide some long term savings/revenue.
- We should work on an annexation/tax plan for properties inside the UGB.
- The cuts would be easier to take if we knew there were long term strategies in the works to balance the budget.
- Sell Laurelwood, save money.
- Marty: Reserves are available, we could raid them again
- If you want feedback, go where the people are like Fred Meyer.
- We have to get a hold of the PERS problem.
- Marty: We could raise the room tax, but that would not help much. Rental car tax, but we need to annex the airport.
- Sell Laurelwood. 2 agreed.
- Overall dissatisfaction with how the money is spent. Need the whole picture.
- City should solicit feedback on all the services it provides.
- We should move to biennial budget.

Budget Workshop #2
Sheldon High School: 18 participants
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Table 4

Facilitators:

- Chelsea Clinton (Budget Committee member)
- Mike Kinnison (staff member)

The process:

- Not enough information provided to make an informed decision in the exercise
- Maintain services that the more vulnerable in our community need. People need a solid base of services to thrive and contribute to our community.
- Don't like the dilemma we are in. Feels like we're having to choose between short term and long term needs. Emergency services needed now. Pools invest in the long term health of our community.
- I don't support PERS. I used to work for the school district and am taking my money out of the system. It is our personal responsibility to plan for retirement not the government.
- If human services go away the community will fill the gap. Mother of invention is absence.
- Appreciate recreation services and parks. However, neighbors should step up and maintain the parks.
- Information about cuts to personnel costs need more transparency.
- Defer building City Hall. Fund with a bond measure.
- Eugene's lack of a pro-business climate is not attractive to businesses locating here.
- Giving away tax breaks (MUPTE) is undermining our tax base
- We shouldn't be spending money on Civic Stadium in a budget crisis

Budget priorities:

- Remove the Hult Center from general fund support.
- Why are Springfields parks thriving? Maybe we should consider establishing a taxing district for our parks.
- United Nation's Agenda 21 is forcing governments to spend money. Where are costs associated with this in the budget?

General comments:

- Would support some reductions in services just don't take it all away.
- Need to look more closely at internal administrative savings over public services.
- Make sure the Budget Committee digs thoroughly through the budget to identify potential savings. It is very convoluted.
- Sell off parks of low value to generate tax revenue and reduce maintenance costs.

Measures of success:

- Don't depend on staff for information. Be skeptical about information provided and verify.
- Schedule another round of meetings later in the process that looks at revenue options.
- Appreciate these meetings and the opportunity to participate.
- Create a budget that avoids impacts to those most in need.
- Balance competing community interests.

Budget Workshop #2
Sheldon High School: 18 participants
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- Need to demonstrate honesty and transparency.
- Reduce services before eliminating them (i.e. reduce hours before shuttering libraries and pools)
- Don't revive the idea of funding services with stormwater fee.

Table 4

Facilitators:

- Mark Rust (Budget Committee member)
- Peter Chavannes (staff member)

The process:

- Confusion around the table regarding general fund vs. sub-funds
- Community participants appreciated being educated regarding what had been happening over the past 4-5 years
- Initially frustrated that the worksheet was not the actual budget but did engage—the exercise helped move individuals who anticipated advocating for narrow interests into a more general discussion about the budget process.
- Moved directly from individual work on worksheet to general table discussion
- Table discussion revolved around why sub funds could not be used to preserve general fund activities and why the public found it difficult to trust “the City” (see “skinny” vs. “fat” wallet below)
- Wanted more detailed information

Budget priorities:

- 3 General strategies emerged around making reductions
 - 2 coins from each of the 5 categories (though after table conversation the community member changed this to a 2% reduction for each category)—to be “fair.”
 - Splitting the cuts between Parks/Recreation/Library (4 coins) and public safety (6 coins) because these were the largest pots to choose from.
 - Eliminating Planning and economic development/job creation and reducing public safety by 6 coins because he wanted to support people already living here not plan/develop for people who may come in the future. Thought that too much was spent on Police
- Planning and economic development were generally prioritized less than public safety and Parks/recreation and Library (though one citizen participant noted that public safety funding had actually increased over the time in question and consequently felt they should experience the bulk of the reduction)

General comments:

- A lot of energy towards finding additional revenue though appreciative of the difficulties of doing “enough” in the short timeline.

Budget Workshop #2
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- City Service Fee was poorly put together, poorly communicated and contributed to citizens distrusting city government.
- Frustrated at repeated announcements of inadequate funding for core services while simultaneously hearing/reading about civic stadium and new city hall (why do we have a “skinny wallet” when it comes to core services and a “fat wallet” for unnecessary things.)— leads to a lack of trust regarding the city’s prioritization of resources
- Agreement that the tough choices need to be made. Do not postpone them.
- Enjoyed committee members coming out into the neighborhoods
- Generally appreciative of the work the budget committee is trying to do—“I know you guys are in a tough spot. There are no easy answers, I’m glad it’s not me who has to decide what to cut. I’m impressed at what the city has done so far

Table 6

Facilitators:

- Bob Clarke (Budget Committee member)
- Jan Bohman (staff member)

The process:

- Don’t want to do exercise. There aren’t enough specifics. We aren’t able to give meaningful feedback with this information.

Budget priorities:

- Group didn’t do it.

Revenue:

- Where is the positive spin to this? We want to talk about revenue.
- Bob C – I like idea of installing red light cameras, getting increased revenue that way. Use federal grants to get the cameras.
- Participants generally in favor of increased service fees – fees tied to specific services.
- Maybe pay fees for use of branch libraries – a fee for the convenience.
- Why do we have no business license fee? I always thought that was surprising and kind of ridiculous.

General comments:

- The City really wants to raise taxes. That’s why this process is occurring and is set up this way.
- If we compare our budget to another similar community elsewhere, how would we compare? (BC – I compare us to Madison, WI. Their property values are higher. They have a business license fee that brings \$4.2 million/year, plus other additional fees.)
- It’s all in the salaries and retirement costs.

Budget Workshop #2

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- We need a mayor who will not bull over everyone. When the community is not in favor of projects, she will find a way to make it happen anyway.
- The City said they would cut services and then they didn't cut. (BC tried to explain the different roles between City Manager, Budget committee, City Council.)
- Service Fee measure – Felt like the most favorite services were proposed for cut.
- The video doesn't help much to increase understanding and trust.
- Most people feel “none of the above” – they don't want any cuts.
- The credibility of the budget process is contradicted by things like tax breaks for developers and pursuing Civic Stadium.

Measure of Success:

- Group didn't really address these questions.

Feedback:

- Parks & Rec – Includes things like pools, parks, golf course
- Sheldon Pool:
 - How can you help build a pool at the Y but don't care about closing Sheldon Pool?
 - It costs ~ \$1 million/year to run Sheldon pool
 - No other pool is available to this part of town.
 - Can we sell Sheldon Pool to the Y for \$1.00? Programs outside of pool could still be run by City.
 - If Sheldon is so busy, it should carry its own weight financially.
 - Main costs are salaries and benefits
 - Increase class costs, user fees but keep scholarships and use those to offset as needed
- People think this is a bluff. The City won't really cut the pool.
- With the recent investments made in the pool, it would be crazy to shut it down. People are laughing at the City. In business you would never do that.
- River Road has shut down some programs (as subsidized programs) and made them be self-sufficient and even pay a pittance back to the district
- Campbell Center is under pressure for more space.
- Good schools are important for economic development
- Police Department is important for livability. They do a great job!
- Closing facilities and services will have a detrimental effect on the community and hurt business development

Budget Workshop #3
North Eugene High School: 10 participants
October 24, 2013

Table 1

Facilitators:

- Claire Syrett (Budget Committee member)
- Laura Illig (Budget Committee member)
- Peter Chavannes (staff member)

The process:

- Limited turnout—5 tables consolidated into 2
- Wanted more detail within the budget categories—while some people recognized the value of each of the categories, wanted to explore ways to cut specific services within them. Without more granular detail, didn't feel knowledgeable enough to make a strategic decision.
- Virtually everyone completed the worksheet. The only community member who did not said he could not because he was new to Eugene and didn't know enough
- After individuals completed the worksheet, we went around the table and asked each person to share what they had decided and why.

Budget priorities:

- One participant commented "Planning is a luxury"
- Must reduce luxuries when money is tight, although there was debate regarding what was a luxury to whom and also a statement that some "luxury" services generated revenue (e.g. recreation)
- Government has special responsibility to ensure access to goods and services in a way that private companies do not (this in the context of a discussion about leasing facilities to private entities.)
- The large pots in Public safety and Parks/Recreation/Library were noted as more able to survive reductions than planning, human services or economic development although 1 community member felt human service expenditures attracted people to the community we may not necessarily want to come here.
- One suggestion—to make across the board reductions in each of the categories and then let managers make the decisions about what to fund within their domain sparked a conversation about whether decision makers should lead (do what they feel is best) or carry forward community desires.
- Another community member wanted to prioritize those things that attract people to come here (Parks/Recreation/Library)
- A community member suggested cultivating community ownership of public services by closing branch libraries and asking neighborhoods to set up volunteer libraries at high-schools and reducing park maintenance by shifting primary responsibility to volunteers.
- Several people felt council travel should be reduced

Budget Workshop #3

North Eugene High School: 10 participants

October 24, 2013

General comments:

- Where is the revenue in this conversation
- Where does the CMO office reside with respect to the budget worksheet
- The City should outsource some of its services (leasing the pools)
- We talked about reforming the City's Haz Mat team as a regional response team and sharing the cost with Springfield and Junction City.
- People don't really know what Equity, Human Rights, Neighborhoods and Sustainability do, consequently cannot evaluate their value.
- One community member expressed his appreciation for the establishment of the FIT team, the "Victory Garden" process and budget reduction steps taken to date.
- Community members appreciated Budget committee members coming to their neighborhoods to talk and encouraged them to do so more often
- Frustrations over the city hall re-build project and the chatter about Civic stadium.
- A couple of community members urged council to explore special service districts.

Table 2

Facilitators:

- Ken Beeson (Budget Committee member)
- Greg Evans (Budget Committee member)
- Mike Kinnison (staff member)

General comments:

- Where are the costs for City's fancy website? Need to look at administrative costs.
- Don't cut library services. This is the only internet access for many people and is critical for getting utilities, searching for housing and applying for jobs.
- Don't want to make any cuts. We're already at a critical level that people rely on.
- What are we doing on the economic development side? We need jobs with fair wages.
- What are our short and long term goals for bridging the gap?
- Does the existing general fund allocation reflect Council goals?
- Some stakeholders don't have a strong voice. Budget Committee needs to remember that.
- Library/recreation and parks are not luxuries. These services impact other essential services like public safety.
- Quality of life services (libraries/parks/recreation) makes our community a desirable place to live. Without these it is harder to keep people here and get people to want to move here. Impacts the tax base.
- Consider increasing user fees to maintain services but need to balance with affordability. I am willing to pay more to maintain them.
- Use reserves and consider selling off assets as a short term strategy.
- Annex property within the UGB.
- Need to bring in industry. Who is responsible for that? What is City's role?
- We shouldn't be paying for maintaining flowers downtown. Let businesses do that.
- Skeptical all the fat has been cut.
- There is a lot of public frustration with employee pay and benefits. Need to take a look at benefit packages.

Budget Workshop #3

North Eugene High School: 10 participants

October 24, 2013

- Consider reductions instead of closures. Shorter hours to keep facilities open.
- Closures are a more efficient way of saving money. Reducing hours at pools may not create a savings.
- Need to ask what else can be provided by the private sector. Park maintenance, for example. What are the vital functions the city needs to provide then look at outsourcing other functions.
- Are we looking at how other city's are structured that are not having a budget crunch? We might learn about new ideas.
- Are we being aggressive enough to attract business?
- Can we collect more fines?
- Tax breaks are hurting the City's credibility.

Budget Workshop #4
Willamette High School: 12 participants
October 29, 2013

Table 1

Facilitators:

- Greg Evans (Budget Committee member)
- Mike Kinnison (staff member)

General comments:

- Need to make sure cuts are distributed equitably. Bethel residents should share a disproportionate burden.
- Are there funds outside the general fund that could be used to fill the gap?
- How does MUPTE impact the general fund?
- Have we implemented partial reductions (limited hours, reduced but not eliminated services)
- Spread cuts across the board so that everyone experiences some impacts.
- Consider user fees or increasing fees for services. However, need to balance with keeping services affordable.
- Pools get lots of use—individuals, schools, other communities use them. Cuts to this amenity would have broad impacts.
- I use downtown and still support paying for parking. Need the revenue.
- How can we capture more revenue from those visiting our community?
- Why would we even consider buying Civic with our current budget situation?
- I don't support bonds. They are just delayed taxes.
- We need a sales tax.
- What was the reasoning behind cutting a fire station?
- What would be the impact of eliminating Equity, Human Rights, Neighborhood Services and Sustainability? What do they do?
- How were FY14 proposed cuts prioritized?
- Makes me angry that we're building a new city hall. Why not use the EWEB building?
- Have we asked the YMCA or others to operate our recreational facilities?
- I think we should use City Hall reserve to fill the gap and consider moving parks out of the general fund by creating a parks district or merging with Wilamalane (G. Evans).
- In the future, we will need more information on what is going to be proposed to be cut.

Table 2

Facilitators:

- Chris Pryor (Budget Committee member)
- George Brown (Budget Committee member)
- Eric Jones (staff member)

The process:

- Participant declined to participate in the exercise on the grounds that it is "slanted" and doesn't put all the budget items on the table. Participant described himself as a frequent speaker at Council public forums and an active opponent of the City service fee last spring
- Because there was only one citizen at this table and, therefore, no opportunity for the participant to compare his values with anyone else's, we moved immediately to general

Budget Workshop #4
Willamette High School: 12 participants
October 29, 2013

discussion. Some of the discussion points are listed under “general comments”; the others are in the “parking lot.”

General comments:

- The participant said the budget problem was the result of the budget committee’s reluctance to prioritize. His top priorities are police, fire and public works.
- Councilor Pryor characterized priorities as “what you must do,” “what you should do,” and “what you can do;” finding a “must do” list that everyone can agree on is the hard part.
- Participant offered as examples of low-priority expenditures council travel expenses, LRAPA, sustainability, subsidies for Laurelwood Golf Course, money spent on election in May 2011 (“income tax for schools”)
- Participant said an incremental approach – “whittling down” the gap by cutting relatively small amounts – would be a good approach
- Participant said people are offended when they are told they don’t understand the budget.
- There was concern about the lack of transparency in the online budget; not enough line item detail, and hidden CSA charges
- Process budget discussions at the line item level “to a reasonable degree”
- Participant questioned why the mayor is allowed to sit at the budget table when the charter doesn’t list the mayor as a budget committee member
- Participant would like to see how the budget is put together, starting with public information about what each exec proposes to the city manager
- Put more budget information online
- Elect budget committee members from wards
- Neighborhood meetings are good
- Council forums are a “mixed blessing”
- Whenever there’s discussion/decision on a major issue, including the budget, there should be ward meetings
- Hold budget workshops like this every year, three times a year
- Find and use community opinion leaders

Measures of success:

- Everything should be put on the table

“Parking Lot” comments/questions:

- Money was wasted on Gary Manross/SRI survey. Alleged improprieties with consultant
- 2006 park bond measure was “grossly oversold”; can’t afford to run even the parks we have
- Dahlia Society member offered to help clean up Henricks Park but “was told to take a hike”
- People feel the council is anti-business
- Opposed to Capstone tax incentives
- City service fee flier was “dishonest” because it said no fees have been increased (but parking fees were increased)
- Council positions are non-partisan but party politics are obvious (demonizing GOP)

Budget Workshop #4

Willamette High School: 12 participants

October 29, 2013

Table 3

Facilitators:

- Bob Clarke (Budget Committee Member)
- LaVena Nohrenberg (staff member)

Budget priorities:

- 2 of the 3 people completed the worksheet, the other felt there was not enough information in order to do it.
- \$5 public safety (because it's the largest), \$1 planning, \$1 economic development, \$2 parks/recreation/library, \$1 human services.
- It's a balancing act.
- We're talking about people's jobs, when we talk about making cuts to the city budget. When people are working, they're paying taxes.
- We have seen a lot of growth in the past, and we've seen a lot of contractions lately. Concerned. I don't want to see any further cuts. We're placing the current services at risk.
- \$7 public safety, \$.50 planning, \$.50 economic development, \$1.40 parks/recreation/library, \$.50 human services = just for this exercise. I understand this is where the public would like to see the cuts.
- It's important to have a safe community. We need planning to take care of issues for the community.
- There has not been any significant job growth since 2007. Haven't seen a real aggressive push to get jobs here, to get business here – something that's going to provide a living wage.
- I don't want to see the Library reduced. It's a real resource for all families, to kids, to all economic levels.
- Don't want to see a pool closed.
- Increasing property tax value is long term.
- Opportunities in River Road/Santa Clara for the City to grab that revenue.
- I want to know more about what reserves are available and how they are used.
- The Bethel area has not been considered as a priority for the city. We are not listened to.
- Don't know why the City is thinking about buying Civic Stadium, and that is another example of not caring about Bethel. Who are they appeasing? The city is centered in the south hills.
- Why are we busying more parks when we can't afford to maintain the ones we have?
- A community member brought a mailing from Parks and Open Spaces as an example city waste. He said it took staff time to write it and lay it out, expenses to print it in full color, and expenses to mail it. Whereas the Recreation brochure has moved to printed far less, and only for those who need it in paper form.
- Generating enough revenue could take a year or two.
- Bob comment: Not a supporter of Downtown. Comment from community member: I am a supporter. If you develop a place like that, people will come.
- Bob comment: He asked what they thought about the tool. Responses: Would like more specifics about if \$7.00 is cut from public safety, what does that mean as a practical matter, how many cars or equipment or staff. Another response, I recognize this was just intended to foster dialogue, which it is doing.
-

Budget Workshop #4

Willamette High School: 12 participants

October 29, 2013

- Livability is important. When outsiders look at Eugene, what are they seeing. They look at the news and they see homeless camps and panhandlers. I'm worried about the perception people have and will they want to move their company here.
- Have we partnered or reached out to other cities similar to ours to learn from them? Bob response: I've looked closed at other cities, like Madison, WI that is similar to Eugene. They have a business license fee, and I think we should do that in Eugene.
- There should be short term goals to bridge the current gap that does not cut services and long term goals.
- Again, the city should annex River Road.

General comments:

- Bob's initial comments: We should be generating more revenue. As you can see, they have tried to reduce funds, they've incorporated efficiencies and doing more with less, and the unions have been worked over. We only have enough reserves for one more year (7-8 million), should have 8%.
- No more cuts, sell assets if needed.
- Still there are more some things to be looked at.
- Bob's initial comments: You will see Council's goals on the back. This is what Council wants, that's not what they are going to get our city can't afford it.

Measures of success:

- Bob's comments: I hate the wording of this question, but I'll ask it anyway. Difficult to make a determination when only looking at expenses. We should be given revenue information also.
- The fee vote was blackmail
- Don't think new tax is the answer. Doing it without a vote would be a worse mistake.
- Look at more pay for play services, like Recreation. Bob's comment: Good idea! One example might be with the libraries. If someone wants a neighborhood branch, they have to pay a fee to check out a book at a neighborhood branch.
- Meetings like this, listening to people is a big step.
- Don't feel the City Council does what the citizens want.
- The City talking about spending money on things (like Civic Stadium) is a crime.
- Bob comment: I think we should be installing stop light cameras to generate revenue.

Feedback:

- The ballot measure failed last year, which came as no surprise. That gave the budget committee only 14 days to meet. We used one time money. We felt it was necessary to reach out to the community, which is what we're doing in this process.
- Described the FIT team, that it's report was just received, and explained the other funds and how they are different from the general funds.
- Shared that he is a strong proponent of generating more revenue for the City.

Budget Workshop #4
Willamette High School: 12 participants
October 29, 2013

Table 4

Facilitators:

- Ken Beeson (budget committee)
- Terri Harding (staff member)

The process:

- Larry – the 5.3 million should have been passed as a property levy. Service fee was grossly mishandled. How much is in reserves? (total 114 mil) We've cut to the bone. If more community members knew, maybe they would pony up and pay for it.
- Where is Central Services on the budget exercise?
- Dennis – the primary purpose of government is public safety. Keep that whole and cut everything else.
- Larry – staff have done a good job cutting to this point, and scrutinizing the budget. I cut it all from public safety, which is absurd! We can't cut any of it. This is backwards. We need a levy like Lane County passed. Fund public safety with levy and shore up general fund for all services incl. library.
- Dennis – the library is not essential. The LC levy passed for public safety.
- Larry – the library is the brain of the community. People better themselves there.
- Cindy – did not do exercise. Too simplistic. General fund should be for operational expenses only. Do not raid for facilities. If we need facilities, we should go for a bond. Stop giving tax breaks to out of state developers. They should benefit Eugene.

General comments:

- Larry – we have a split community. Liberals say take care of people. Conservatives say pull yourself up by your bootstraps. The library does both. It's the only service that serves everyone.
- The FY proposed cuts are a parade of horrors. Maybe sell Laurelwood, nothing else. We need a way to avoid stupid cuts nobody wants.
- Get back on the ballot for a levy, use reserves for FY15.
- Cindy – ballot would need to be specific. Consider a business license fee, speed or traffic light cameras, or a hotel room tax.
- Sales tax should be considered.
- Restaurant tax.
- With Capstone, we have this giant investment, and the benefits are going out of state. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
- The city is helping the big fish (example – moving the Agripac building for defrisco's), little guys hard to make a go of it.
- There is a poverty mentality. Eugene is a great city – we have an amazing natural environment; we should be willing to pay for our quality of life.
- Urban renewal funds used to replace awnings for the DAC while small businesses go under.
- City hall funds were funneled out of the general fund. We are deferring maintenance needs and operational needs like parks.
- The people in power – the pathologically rich – have disproportionate influence
- Public safety. We need more police and fire services, not less.

Budget Workshop #4

Willamette High School: 12 participants

October 29, 2013

- Implement the cuts you said would happen if the fee failed. Some companies have not only laid people off, but cut wages by 15%. Look at employee costs. Keep COLAs in line with inflation.
- Look at all funds and costs when doing the budget. The whole picture.
- Eliminate redundancies.
- Use some funds more liberally – stormwater, telecomm.

Table 1

Facilitators:

- Marty Wilde (Budget Committee member)
- Laura Hammond (staff member)

The process:

- Community members completed their own budget and then worked in threes to compare and discuss.

General comments:

- Didn't like the exercise because they didn't feel they had enough information to do it
- Liked the exercise as an example of the process
- Would be helpful to know how much is personnel cost versus other costs
- Wanted to know what category land bank program was in
- What does economic development do? Noted that we need to attract companies that provide living wages for families – that isn't happening – quality of jobs is important
- Don't want to reduce more – reduces our quality of life
- Want to see more information about income and reserve funds – how much?
- Long term plan needs to focus on job development
- Short term we should use assets to bridge funding
- Need to bring in outside money/companies/jobs
- Upset by idea that city considering buying Civic Stadium (pile of sticks)
- Thought proposed crew reduction for Fire/EMS was reasonable
- Library services are important
- Maintenance reductions in parks seemed fine so far
- Wants to know more about how economic development funds are used
- Keep human services intact – ripple effects from cuts there
- Be careful about cutting things that effect long term growth – need to increase property tax base but prevent sprawl – planning is important

Measures of success:

- Committee carries our message to city and makes a case for it
- Want more outreach (expensive) – haven't been included in process enough
- Want to understand issues and how the process worked; it's logical
- People are too busy to attend these workshops – public forums aren't representative, need different approach than this – other tools like equity assessment from Lane Livability, sampling, polling (appreciates the sentiment of this event)
- Clear articulation of how input was used or not – heard, considered, what was decided
- FIT is a good example
- Don't think there is anything you can do to get more people involved
- Each neighborhood gets involved differently – depends on circumstances, barriers
- Liked this forum

Budget Workshop #5
Churchill High School: 11 participants
October 30, 2013

- More food
- Expand the email list
- Look at Portland tool that let people balance budget online and submit

Feedback:

- In general this group focused on taking larger amounts from public safety and parks maintenance
- One member felt strongly that there should be no further reductions in services – it puts families and businesses at risk; need to focus on opportunities and solutions, fixed assets and reserve funds, annexing
- Another member was concerned about on-going recession – selling or using one time funds leaves us in a worse situation
- These meeting are less useful not knowing what the proposals or forecast will be – will the same cuts be proposed?
- This is a black box process – what was considered but doesn't appear on this list?
- Would different values lead to a different list?
- Need to consider Laurelwood Golf Course – what are the options, potential legal problems?
- Not including a revenue option in this process is faulty
- City fee was not sold well – councilors changed their minds – need to be behind revenue option
- If we use reserves to buy time what is the long term plan? Need to know what that looks like – need to plan quickly
- Plan needs to be explained – don't like to be threatened with service cuts
- Not getting answers – don't want services reduced
- Increasing employee contribution to costs for health insurance has potential – has to be negotiated, but worth exploring
- Can argue both sides of neighborhood associations – good newsletters, but not representative of the neighborhood

Table 2:

Facilitators:

- Bob Clarke (Budget Committee member)
- Mike Kinnison (staff member)

Budget priorities:

- Consider cuts to human svcs/parks/rec/libraries since these can be covered by community.
- There is room in Public Safety and Parks/Rec/Library to absorb cuts.
- Don't take the already limited resources away from planning and economic development. We need a healthy economy and well planned community to keep people here and attract new residents.
- Increase resources for economic development/job creation. Cut rest fom public safety and parks and recreation since they have resource to spare.

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- Parks/recreation/libraries should be service fee driven. They can generate revenue to pay for themselves.
- The cannot do enough in terms of economic development. We need to attract middle income jobs. Focus on small businesses with livable wages.
- We're doing well with our land use planning. Don't lose momentum.
- Privatize functions where it makes sense. Approach carefully as outsourcing doesn't always save money.
- Take it all from Public Safety. They are the biggest bucket and have plenty of resources.
- Can we consider lowering our bond rating?
- The City Service Fee was ill-conceived and executed. It was just a regressive tax.
- We need to recalibrate public expectations about service levels.
- Release the budget in Excel format so it can be analyzed.
- Did the positions that were eliminated actually result in layoffs?
- How much do we save in public safety when we invest in human services?
- The Tier 1 list seems like a good balance. It spreads the pain.
- Can some of the functions on the cut list be picked up elsewhere in the organization?

Revenue Ideas

- Create a business licensing program.
- Restaurant tax.
- Sin taxes.
- Find grants to fund human services.
- Increase/establish user fees.
- Carbon tax.
- Keep charging for parking.

General comments:

- How will PERS and increases in property taxes impact the budget gap?
- Why are we not talking about revenue?
- Why give away property tax revenue? We need to kill MUPTE.
- Revise MUPTE so we are more strategic and promote housing that is not just for students.

Measures of success:

- Email updates
- I feel involved and appreciate the opportunity to participate.
- We need more clarity about the different non-general funds.

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Feedback:

- Sell Laurelwood as it only serves a limited number of people.
- The current state of City Hall reflects poorly on the city and undermines economic development efforts.
- What is the cost of leasing vs. building new city offices?