

Aeric Ripley, Interim City Manager called the Budget Goal Setting session of the Alma City Commission to order at 5:33 p.m. at the Alma Public Library.

Present: Roger Allman, Roxann Harrington, Greg Mapes, Nick Piccolo, Michelle Pitts, and Audra Stahl.

Absent: Danny Wernick.

Staff members present: Brett Baublitz, Curtis Dancer, Aaron Hale, David Ringle, Kendra Overla, Kathy Roslund, ~~and~~ Mark Williams, *and Lorrie Taylor*.

Others present: Jim Wheeler and Casey Zehner.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss goals for the upcoming FY 2023 budget year.

All members of the City Commission having been duly notified of the meeting and the business to be transacted thereat, at least 12 hours before the time of the meeting, in accordance with Section 2.13(b) of the Charter of the City of Alma. Public notice was also given in compliance with Act 267, of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1976.

Ripley opened the meeting with a review of expected revenues, general fund personnel costs, and funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act. He noted there were no plans to create additional personnel positions in the upcoming year, but he would be working with Alma College to bring in two interns, if possible.

Ripley said a rewrite of the City Master Plan must be done in the upcoming year. The Commission will need to consider funding for a consultant to help develop the plans. Some items for consideration in the Master Plan are zoning districts and potential changes to meet changing needs, future uses for the sugar beet property and Total property. Discussion followed about the opportunity for solar farming on the Total property. Jim Wheeler and Kasey Zehner, Greater Gratiot Development, and Assessor Kathy Roslund answered questions from the Commission. Ripley asked the Commission to consider shifting use of the sugar beet property from industrial to something that would build up the neighborhood. Discussion followed about clean up of lime on the property.

Ripley noted the City Parks and Recreation Master Plan is also due for renewal. He suggested connecting the downtown area to 127, and asked the Commission to consider other opportunities that could be attained through applications for grants. An important item to consider is a millage for local parks after the library bond debt millage is paid off in 2025. Recreation programming could be something to add in the future. Discussion followed about the county parks millage and the best use of millage funds so as not to add an extra burden to taxpayers.

Ripley moved on to downtown capital improvements. He talked about the tree removal/replacement project, and said alleys and parking lots also need to be a priority, and money needs to be set aside for future maintenance. Discussion followed about downtown community spaces.

Another item to consider in the new budget year is building security for municipal buildings. The project has been split into phases, so as to be manageable in the budgeting process.

Commissioner Piccolo asked Ripley to develop a color coded project page to help the Commission determine the order in which projects need to be addressed.

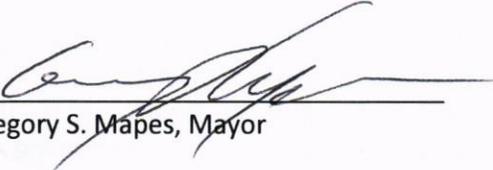
Public Services Director Dave Ringle spoke about the intent to move away from use of chlorine gas at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He presented two options and offered expected costs and requirements for each option. Lengthy discussion followed regarding both processes.

Assistant Public Services Director Aaron Hale provided a presentation covering the conversion away from chlorine gas disinfection and improvements in efficiency of treatment.

Both Ringle and Hale answered questions from Commissioners regarding funding for each process and necessary plant improvements. Commissioners asked for long term operating expense projections for conversion to UV disinfection. Mapes asked for statistics and suggested working together with St. Louis. A general consensus from Commissioners was to take immediate steps to move away from chlorine gas to sodium hypochlorite.

Ringle moved on to a brief overview of streets included in the street millage program and streets that will be included in the upcoming millage renewal request. Mapes suggested that the Commission will need to consider turning some of the streets to gravel. Lengthy discussion followed about which streets would be proposed for gravel, the cost of maintaining gravel streets, the effects on utilities underneath gravel streets, the rising costs of repairing streets, and special assessment districts versus millage. Ringle will continue work on the project.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.



Gregory S. Mapes, Mayor



Sara Anderson, City Clerk



Date of Approval