

**MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING
ARTESIA, NEW MEXICO
March 30, 2016**

The City Council of the City of Artesia, New Mexico met in the City Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday, March 30, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in special session with Mayor Phillip Burch presiding, and the following present to wit:

Jose Luis Aguilar	Manuel Madrid Jr.
Luis Florez	Bill Rogers
Terry Hill	

The following were absent:

Raul Rodriguez (*joined the meeting at 5:16 P.M.)
Kent Bratcher
Jeff Youtsey

Also present:

Aubrey Hobson, City Clerk-Treasurer
John Caraway, City Attorney

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Mayor Burch stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider and approve adjustments to the 2015-16 budget.

Mayor Burch distributed a plan to reduce expenses for the 4th quarter of 2015-16. He stated that based on current projections, there would be a budget shortfall of \$1.2 million in revenue by the end of the fiscal year. In most years, there is an end-of-year savings of around \$500,000, so the city would only need to cut an additional \$700,000 to the end of 2015-16.

He stated that as of April 1, 2016 the non-essential positions on the authorized list will be frozen. In addition any terminations between now and June 30, will be reviewed as to whether the position would be replaced or not. The city will also take some common sense spending cuts: suspend non-essential travel and training; suspend tuition reimbursement until further notice; and consolidate all pcards by department and suspend all non-essential purchasing.

Mayor Burch reported that the proposed plan has been reviewed by the Mayor, the Budget and Finance Committee and the Department Heads.

City Clerk

Aubrey Hobson reported that from his departments, two full-time positions will be removed, with an estimated savings of \$28,000 for the quarter and \$113,000 for the year basis.

Councilor Rodriguez joined the meeting at 5:16 P.M.

Mayor Pro tem Hill stated that meetings had been held with the department heads to determine which positions could be selected.

Councilor Aguilar stated his opposition to cutting employees. He also stated that the city had reduced property tax to \$0.00, and that money could have helped with this situation.

Mayor Burch stated the hold harmless GRT has generated over \$2 million and without that they city would be looking at an even larger deficit. When the council considers the 2016-2017 budget they can consider all revenue sources.

Councilor Rodriguez expressed his concern that by cutting positions the city would be cutting services. He also expressed concerns with the lack of communication between council members.

Mayor Burch stated that while the Budget and Finance Committee met on Monday evening, the city did not have the final figures until around 3:30 on Wednesday.

Councilor Florez stated that he had faith in the committee members and what they are proposing.

Community Development

Community Development Director Jim McGuire reported that his department would cut one position. In addition, the summer temporary positions will be cut from the normal 61 to 26. The city will only fund the splash pad and the recreation center positions, there will be no funding for the school recreation programs or for the city summer workers.

Police

Chief Raley reported that his department will cut 4 positions, two from support staff and two from certified staff. This will save \$64,000 for the quarter and \$252,000 for an entire year.

Fire

Chief Hummingbird reported that his department will eliminate the not-filled Captain position, with a savings of \$21,000 for the quarter. Rather than cut any further positions, he stated that the employees in the department will have 2 furlough days before the end of the fiscal year, with an estimated savings of \$25,000.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Director Byron Landfair stated that his department will eliminate 3 positions, for a savings of \$35,000 for the quarter and \$135,000 for an entire year.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Sandi Farley reported that her departments would eliminate 1 position, for a savings of \$19,000 for the quarter and \$80,000 for an entire year.

Mayor Burch stated that if the proposed changes are not made at this time, there may have to be deeper cuts requested for the 2016-17 budget.

Councilor Aguilar stated that he would prefer to get the difference from reserves, rather than eliminate employees.

Councilor Madrid stated that he was more comfortable with the recommendations of Budget and Finance.

Councilor Rodriguez asked if the temporary staffing costs had been reviewed.

Councilor Rogers stated that this will be the first year since he's been in office that the city was not looking at a surplus at the time of end-of-year.

Mayor Pro tem Hill stated that the city has tried to be conservative, but progressive, but reserves could be spent quickly and postponing this action may only increase what will have to be done.

Mayor Pro tem Hill moved to approve the budget reduction plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rogers.

Councilor Aguilar moved to postpone this item until the meeting on April 12, 2016. The amendment was seconded by Councilor Rodriguez.

Mayor Burch stated that the proposed changes were being made at this time, so that they could take effect with the start of the 4th quarter.

Councilor Rogers stated that he would be concerned if the list of position eliminations was held until the first meeting in April that would cause all employees to be apprehensive.

Councilor Aguilar stated that if he had a list of the actual positions that were being cut, that would allow him to make a better decision. Plus, he would like to have all members of council present for this vote.

It was determined that discussion was needed on individual employees and positions in executive session.

Councilor Aguilar withdrew his amendment.
Mayor Pro tem Hill withdrew his motion.

Councilor Rodriguez moved that in accordance with 10-15-1-H(2), the Council and Mayor go into executive session regarding limited personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Florez and upon roll call vote, with the following votes recorded:

Aye: Aguilar, Florez, Hill, Madrid, Rodriguez, Rogers

Nay: none

the motion passed.

Mayor Burch declared a short recess at 7:24 p.m.
Council recessed to executive session at 7:30 p.m.
Council reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

Councilor Rodriguez moved that the only matters discussed in executive session pertained to limited personnel matters and no action was taken. The motion was seconded by Councilor Florez and upon vote, the motion passed.

Mayor Pro tem Hill moved to approve the budget adjustments for the 4th quarter of 2015-16, as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rodriguez and upon vote, the motion passed.


RESOLUTION NO. 1606

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m., March 30, 2016.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk