

**MINUTES  
PAYETTE CITY COUNCIL  
Work Session  
August 14, 2014**

**4:00 PM – Work Session**

A work session of the Payette City Council was called to order at 4:06 PM by Mayor Jeff Williams in the City Council Chambers of Payette City Hall, 700 Center Avenue.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Jeff Williams, Mark Heleker, Nancy Dale, Ray Wickersham, Craig Jensen, Jeff Sands, and Lee Nelson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Mary Cordova, City Administrator, Mark Clark, Chief of Police, John Plaza, Captain, Jake Hust, Water Superintendent, Jamie Couch, Street Superintendent, Randy Schwartz, WWTP Superintendent, Steve Castenada, Fire Chief and Bobbie Black, Deputy City Clerk

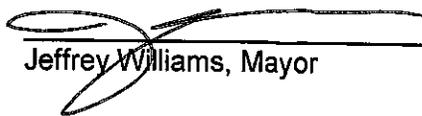
**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. FY 2015 Budget: Mayor Williams stated after last meeting staff found a few little things, and massaged the numbers. Last year our levy rate was .01074, we set a tentative rate of .01137. We did not include any operating property value, which is 5 million added to the total property value; we estimated the property value to be the same as last year. The values might go down or might go up this year, with the budget provided our levy rate would be .01037. Councilor Sands stated we can argue the levy rate till we are blue in the face, we are better off on focusing on operating the city better. Councilor Heleker stated that it is public perception; citizens focus on the levy rate and he agrees with Councilor Sands. Councilor Wickersham stated people seriously look at that number. Mayor Williams stated with all the amenities we have and neighboring communities do not have our levy rate is in line. Councilor Jensen asked if someone is coming to build a building, when compared are we close to neighboring cities. People's mortgage will go away, but property taxes will not. Property taxes do make a difference. Mayor Williams stated that the Council has talked in the past about adding franchise fees, and we might want to look at that in the future. The budget does include 2.5% pay increase for employees. The Mayor asked if anyone had questions or comments. This budget has to be approved by the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Councilor Jensen stated that the general fund is up about \$130,000 from last year. Councilor Dale stated that is only 5% more. Councilor Jensen asked if that was due to increases on insurance, wages and workman comp. Ms. Cordova said yes, the boat ramp grant is also in there, we added new personnel in Fire Department, more to Snake River Transit, and more to economic development. Councilor Nelson asked if there was any project we dropped and maybe would want to reconsider. Ms. Cordova stated she doesn't think so. Since we received the grant for SCBA's we took \$5,000 out of that line item, but no big project was cut out of general fund. Mayor Williams talked about not taking out any projects if we didn't have to. Councilor Jensen asked if we took any from unencumbered and it was stated yes, we are using \$100,000, and that leaves us around 1.6 M. Councilor Jensen asked how Snake River Transit came up with the amount for the one-time contribution. Mary Cordova stated there was a match amount for the grant they received and it was split between 5 entities for matching grant funds needed. The Mayor asked if Council remembers what changes they asked for, the page increase was changed. Does anyone recall anything else or is everyone happy with the way this is going. Mary Cordova stated we would have to cut \$313,000 more in budget to get were Fruitland's levy rate is. Councilor Nelson asked what their sewer rate is compared to ours and it is

at least 3 times more. That is significant if you look at that. Councilor Heleker doesn't have a problem why our rate is higher, because we can justify. Councilor Sands asked who are "they" and how come "they" are not here, we are unique. People choose to live in their community due to amenities. We are trying to battle the wrong things. Councilor Heleker stated in the past he has seen "them". Councilor Sands stated that some of it is staged and just crying wolf. We are not doing taxpayers justice; we need to focus on our community. Councilor Heleker stated the levy rate is not his first concern. If the value of property goes up, the tax bills will go up. Councilor Jensen stated he never said we have to have the same as Fruitland; we just need to be competitive to attract new commercial business. Councilor Dale said we have to be able to compare ourselves to our neighbors, but we have to be informed what our fees are compared to other cities. Councilor Sands stated the bottom line is you write x amount to do business in the city. Councilor Jensen stated on franchise fees it spreads it out to everyone, not just property owners. The Mayor asked if the Council had suggestions for staff or any recommendations for the budget presented. The public hearing is to hear the citizens concerns. He asked what questions you have about the budget. Councilor Nelson stated he is not disappointed where it is, people do like to see street project and if we can boost that, that is what people see. We are still looking at a levy decrease, so it is a win-win. The Mayor stated we have been down on members on the public works, but have two new members to be appointed at next council meeting and the committee usually suggest projects. We haven't done anything for a couple years due to declining revenue. Councilor Dale asked what it would take to annex and improve road on Iowa Avenue. Councilor Sands stated look where the pool, library, fire station, fuel at airport is, the city has done a lot of positive things. Look at the boat ramp it is turning out to be a nice project. Councilor Dale asked about the park at the library, it is a little sad, and asked if something needs to be budgeted there. The Mayor stated some of it was getting seasonal people on track this year, and now with Mr. Fales not having responsibilities at the pool, hopefully next year will look better. Mary Cordova stated they have recently started placing pavers. Councilor Dale wanted to give a big thank you to Ms. Cordova. The Mayor stated she has spent a lot of extra hours preparing budget. The Mayor informed the Council of a website that tracks wages for departments on every government agency. Discussed how the building inspector wages will be between Admin & Fire. We switch insurance from water and sewer each year for the Council. Councilor Wickersham stated he has always had a problem with percentage rates; people with the highest wages get the biggest raise. It was stated that percentage is the easiest. Ms. Cordova stated you have some good department heads and you need to pay them. Councilor Wickersham stated the poor guy working minimum wage struggles. Ms. Cordova stated all these departments heads have started at the bottom and they do a damn good job. Councilor Sands asked Chief Clark if he has someone that deserves a merit he can give, and the Chief responded yes. Councilor Heleker stated if your give merit increases, the moral within the company is an ugly thing. We are being forced to do at school district and it is not fun at all. Councilor Dale stated it is subjective. She also asked what the tort line item is, and it was stated it is used for insurance premiums.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM

Signed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2014.

  
Jeffrey Williams, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Bobbie Black, Deputy City Clerk