



# TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

## Minutes

**Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 4:00 pm**

Attendees: STAFF PRESENT: Heidi Wink- Interim Town Manager/  
Finance Director, Kelsi Miller - Town Clerk, Dayson Merrill- Chief  
of Police, Robert Pena Jr. - Fire Chief, Robert Pena III - Battalion  
Chief, Susan Seils - Museum Director, Robin Aguero - Community  
Services Director,

Pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the Springerville Town Council and to the general public that the Council will hold a meeting open to the public at the Springerville Town Hall, 418 East Main Street, Springerville, Arizona. The Town Council reserves the right to adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes Section 38-431.03 (A)(1)(3)(4) and (7) for legal consultation on any of the following agenda items.

### 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

**Minutes:**

Mayor Hanson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m and led the pledge of allegiance.

### 2. ROLL CALL:

**Minutes:**

The Town Clerk completed a Roll Call: Councilor Llamas - Present, Vice Mayor MacKenzie- Present, Mayor Hanson - Present, Councilor Davis- Absent, Councilor Reidhead -Present. A quorum is present

## NEW BUSINESS

### 3. FY 2021/2022 BUDGET WORKSESSION:

**Minutes:**

DISCUSSION: Interim Town Manager Heidi Wink explained we are not asking to budget for any new capital improvements that have not already been laid out in the master CIPs from last year that includes HURF and WIFA projects. Those projects are planned and outlined for the next 5 years. We are asking for a three percent cost of living adjustment for all employees. Mayor Hanson asked when the last COLA took place?

She responded it has been a couple years. Council showed support. Councilor Reidhead asked with some of the possible issues how this has affected the budget. Mrs. Wink explained we have budgeted some for possible litigation. They reviewed that the Town has requested to budget \$2,000,000 if needed. Mayor Hanson said it appears the Police Department is doing a great job securing grants. Ms. Wink said its a conservative budget for the most part. Councilor Llamas asked if Ms. Wink is comfortable with the budget. She said yes she is okay with it. Councilor Llamas pointed out an increase in the Fire Departments' budget. She said yes, Council should review and discuss the fire department's budget. Councilor Llamas asked Ms. Wink her thoughts on the drastic increase in the fire department's budget. She explained it is a little bigger than what she would like to see in a department in a year. Council discussed the fire budget has gone from \$180,000 to \$500,000 in three years. They discussed the majority of the increase is to add two additional full-time firefighters. Council asked Fire Chief Pena what they would be doing on a daily basis. Mr. Pena explained the variety of duties he has planned for them. He explained the challenges they have with having enough personnel responding. He gave the recent example of sending a crew down to a fire and how they were lucky to find personnel that was available. They have challenges having personnel respond to medical calls as well. He explained he has placed a report on their call data in the packets. They have seen a huge increase in calls this year. Councilor MacKenzie asked if they would be looking at bringing in new employees or if they would be hiring inhouse. Robert said they would open the position up to in house first. If they do not have qualified personnel interested inhouse they will open the position to the public. Mayor Hanson asked if hiring two full time employees is something we can do for a year and then look at the budget. Heidi said her main concern is how they will support a a \$500,000 fire budget every year moving forward. She said for one year they can afford it but what if they can't afford to sustain a budget that high, then what happens to those employees. Phil suggested trying it for a year and then seeing if we can keep them after that. Heidi asked what they would do with those employees after a year. The employees would then apply for a lay off unemployment and we would then be paying that. Phil suggested we hire with a year long contract and be upfront that this is a trial period while we see if the general fund can support the position past a year. If we can then maybe we can bring them on as regular employees vs. contract employees. Heidi feels this is a good idea. We can support it for a year, and then see what our budget looks like after. They should look into all avenues such as the possibility of going district and see what other options we have to help fund the department. Robert said two employees would be wonderful, but they will be happy with what they can get. He explained when they need to send three people out on a truck, if they are already had two committed to full time, it would be much easier to find one to fill the truck. Ruben inquired about overtime, he was curious if they would want hourly or salary contract employees. Heidi explained that is completely up to how the council wants the contract written. You can do a contract either way. Robert reminded them that if this employee is called out on a fire they will be on a wildland pay scale, eligible for

overtime, and the Town is reimbursed from the state for their salary. Councilor Davis asked if funds allocated for the building remodel will be dropped after this year. Robert explained the majority of the remodel is complete with the exception of the possibility of expanding the back bathrooms. He explained the benefits if we were able to expand that area for bathrooms. Mayor Hanson asked if we have shower units now, Robert said only in the old fire department building but not at the new building. Councilor MacKenzie said he is okay with allowing them to have two as presented in the budget, but he does have concerns on what to do with them if we can't afford them. Heidi and Councilor Reidhead suggested we start with one, we can add an additional at anytime once budgeted. Shelly said she feels they should budget 1 employee and then use the additional funds to help develop the shower / bathroom area. Council agreed they support a contract employee. Both Fire Chiefs prefer the employee be brought in as a regular employee vs. a contract employee. Councilor MacKenzie reiterated that the concern is what to do with the employee if the general fund can not support the position. They explained they are up calls during the day time week day hours while the volunteers are at their day jobs. The Chiefs said they would like to fill the position at the start of the fiscal, as we are still in fire season. They are still doing the volunteer shift program, but it is up to the fire fighters schedule and its completely dependent on their schedules. Heidi said you can have a contract employee with benefits, what's the difference if the employee understands the employment end after a year. Chief Pena asked what's the difference after a year on a contract vs a regular employee if we aren't able to sustain the position. Heidi explained it is a non renewal where we are not responsible for relocation and unemployment. Heidi said if our general budget says we can support the position after a year bring the person on as a regular employee. They will also continue the volunteer shift program. They will have a year that justifies why they need to keep them as well. Heidi is comfortable with that. Council said they would love to give them two full time employees it just isn't feasible at this time. These are all steps towards improvements for the fire departments. Council next discussed the Community Centers grants, Robin verified they budgeted the approval of the 5310 grant broke out between 3 years. It was budgeted as needed. Heidi brought up a new grant that the Community Center is trying to get. Robin explained this is a U of A grant to bring on a full time program coordinator for nutrition. This person would be paid by the grant itself. The grant is not a guarantee renewal but it is very likely. The award announcement will be in August. Robin feels pretty confident they will be successful with their grant application. It was asked what they will do with the employee if we do not get the grant. She said they would understand their employment is based on the renewal of the grant. Heidi went over the capital improvement cover sheet. Council next discussed the Police Department budget with Chief Merrill. The Police Departments budget has also increased. The police department is getting more grants. The department is getting a portable incinerator. They have a couple more vehicle grants in the works. The department would like to eventually phase out of using SUV's and get the guys into trucks. They would also like to get an unmarked

truck for under cover operations. He went over the value of having trucks rotate through the fleet because they are more valuable to public works when the police department doesn't need them. He feels he will be able to get grants for these. The airport Manager Sean Kienle said he is happy with his budget. He does not have any new grants but will be finishing up from a grant they are already in. Susan Seils the Museum Director said she has no major changes to her budget. Public Works director Tim Rasmussen explained he is happy with his budget. The public works department has a lot of projects outlined in the Capital Improvement Plans. The HURF fund will need to come in under \$70,000 in order to complete Tori Circle. We will not be able to come in under this year and possible next. We did discuss with Woodson the possibility of trying to get a grant to help with that paving. Councilor Reidhead said she has heard the property east of Town Hall will soon be on the market. Is Council still interested in acquiring this property? Council showed great interest in looking at the possibility of this. Mayor Hanson said at one time they thought it might be achievable by trading the owner for another piece of property. They agreed they would need to discuss it with the property owner and see if he has interest. They discussed using funds once they sell the Papago Fire Station to purchase the property next to Town Hall. Ms. Wink reminded them we can only pay appraised value for property as a Town. She let them know he had the appraisal done on the old Northland Pioneer College building jointly owned with the Town of Eagar. Eagar has shown interest in purchasing our half of the building. We are waiting for the return of the appraisal. The funds from that can also be used towards the property the Council is interested in. Heidi let them know we will get ARPA funds around 240,000 that can be used for broadband, infrastructure and items like that. Councilman Llamas asked if we acquire this property what are we going to do with it? Councilor Reidhead said we can expand our park, Mayor Hanson said parking is horrible during big events. This could be a parking area for overflow parking. Mr. Rasmussen agreed that expanding the park onto Main Street would look very nice. They discussed if they purchase it they will need to look into costs of improving and developing it. They looked at Mayor and Councils budget. Heidi asked if Council is still interested in getting tablets to be used as agenda packets? Council still wants to get tablets. Heidi said she did increase the attorney fees in the event we go into litigation, we have had threats of possible litigation regarding the marijuana farm. Finances budget is about the same with the exception of new filing cabinets. Mayor Hanson asked about budgeting for a new Town Manager. Heidi said it is budgeted for starting in July. We will start advertising for a Town Manager as soon as Council would like. Planning and Zoning department has an increase in salary and wages, Heidi explained this is for a full time Zoning Director. Councilor Reidhead said she would like us to also budget a code enforcement. Heidi explained this is inclusive of that. She said Kristy may also be able to help that department some with permitting. Heidi let them know she has budgeted for internet due to the County sending us notice of no longer providing it. Shelly said we should explore looking into satellite internet. Heidi said they are talking with the Unified School District to possibly work with them. We are working with the schools,

Sunstate, and Cellular one to see what our options are. Councilor Llamas said we would need to look into if we can get what we need from a satellite internet. Councilor Llamas asked if the police budget is for a full staff? Chief Merrill said yes, and our cadet is set to graduate in a couple days and then we will have one open position. He is also actively advertising a lateral officer. He gave his thoughts on first responders and call times and how it pertains to the Police Department and the Fire Departments. He said the Police Department is fully staffed with 7 officers. Councilor Reidhead asked for ideas how we could help bring in revenues for our first responders. Chief Pena said they can do things such as burn permits. He gave an example of a fire a couple years ago and that staffing is the most important thing. Council asked if the Town Hall Roof repairs will be this year or next. He explained that it is completely dependent on how soon they can get the material. They have ordered the duralast liner and other materials just waiting to see how soon they will be in. They will be billing us 2/3 of everything at start of the project so that should hit this fiscal year. The Council asked how long it will take them to complete the project. Tim anticipates once they start and have all materials about 1.5 weeks. Councilor Reidhead also noted that all departments need to verify they have tires, she has heard there will be a tire shortage. Heidi said we have put some extra into building maintenance and repairs to fix some electrical issues going on with Town Hall. Vice-Mayor MacKenzie asked about the increase in janitorial supplies, Heidi explained instead of each department paying individually for janitor costs they will all come from the building maintenance budget. She said some of the extra cost is also to allow us to hire someone to clean Town Hall, the Police Department, and the Airport. Mayor Hanson said that is a good idea, especially with inmates not coming back until probably close to August. The budget for Parks / Cemetery have increased. This is because they are planning to put in sprinklers at the Town Hall park. We currently have irrigation which we pay \$3,000 a year for that just floods the park for those weeks at a time. Tim feels we would do better with a sprinkler system. The irrigation water is not promised. A couple years ago we only had two turns. Sprinklers would allow us to control it regularly. The cost of the sprinkler system setup is a one time cost. Mr. Pena had concerns about the Rib burn if we set up a sprinkler system and pulling RV's out there. Heidi pointed out that event has almost out grown our venue anyways. Councilor Reidhead said we can explore other property. Robert Pena said we can look at different parking areas in the gravel too. They also discussed adding a flagpole to the Town Hall park. The only things in HURF that are different are the big CIP's including the Hualapai/Sheldon project. Council discussed the Water Adjudication and hopes the legal fees will soon go down. Ms. Seils has budgeted some money in the Save our School fund for floor repairs. They will try for some grant monies with a match. They went over the new fund created for revenues at the Fire Department to go towards CIP's. Councilor Reidhead asked when we will be up for a CDBG grant, she said we just got it and we actually will have some roll over for next year. The gazebo will be in July, we bought the plans and the wood and it is in construction. Mayor Hanson asked Chief Merrill if we have looked into storing and towing vehicles to a secure lot here

instead of Springerville Auto-wreckers. This would be forfeiture vehicles. Dayson gave the example this is when an officer pulls over a vehicle with drugs and they forfeit the vehicle because they can't pay the impound fees. The Town could sell the vehicles. He also pointed out the Springerville Auto wreckers tows the vehicle and charges daily for impounds, the Towns actually losing money by Springerville Auto wreckers sending us the bill for the tow. The cost would be setting up the tow yard with proper security measures such as fencing, lighting, cameras, ect. However, Heidi believes in the long run this would help offset some of the departments expenditures. Councilor Reidhead said we just need to be careful where we put it, as Eagar has had some issues with the location of their impound yard. Councilman Llamas asked if this is linked to RICO funds. He said yes it is. Mr. Llamas continued that he likes the idea but wants to make sure it will not require additional staffing. Chief Merrill said it would not. Councilor Llamas also had concerns about hard water and minerals in our sprinkler system if that is something we do, it costs money for upkeep. Council directed Chief Merrill to look into it. Councilman Llamas asked Mr. Merrill in a year how many vehicles could we have impounded, he said not a lot. Himself alone probably 4 vehicles. But he explained if we do this and impound 1 vehicle that can be auctioned that is helpful along with the others who have to pay the impound fees. Lastly, Chief Merrill said he keeps hearing rumor that Apache County is possibly raising wages for law enforcement. He feels some officers are waiting to see if this is true, if they do not he believes we will get some lateral interest. Council directed they are ready to have the tentative budget placed on the next Council meeting.

#### 4. ADJOURNMENT:

**Minutes:**

Robert MacKenzie / Shelly Reidhead motioned to adjourn at 5:29 p.m.

DISCUSSION: None

**Vote results:**

Ayes: 4 / Nays: 0

Americans with disabilities act (A.D.A.): The Town of Springerville intends to comply with A.D.A. If you are physically challenged or disabled and need special accommodations to participate in this town meeting, please contact the Town Clerk at (928) 333-2656 ext. 224 forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting to arrange necessary accommodations.