

# City of West Columbia, SC

Public Hearing on Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015

June 3, 2014 at 6 p.m.

## Members Present:

Joe Owens, Mayor  
Casey Jordan Hallman, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Eric L. Fowler  
L. Dale Harley  
Temus C. Miles, Jr.  
Tommy Parler  
Teddy Wingard  
B.J. Unthank

## Members Absent:

Boyd J. Jones, out of town

## Others Present:

Myron Corley, Deputy City Administrator  
Mardi Valentino, City Clerk/PIO  
Rick Hodge, City Treasurer  
Sid Varn, Director of Planning and Engineering  
Ken Ebener, Municipal Judge  
Jamie Hook, Sanitation/Street/Parks Superintendent  
Members of the Public and Press

Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief  
Brian Carter, Director of Planning and Zoning  
Charles Garren, Public Works Director  
Stuart Jones, Building Official  
Justin Black, Staff Accountant  
Anna Huffman, IT Systems Administrator

## Agenda Item I – Call to Order

Chairperson Unthank called the public hearing to order at 6 p.m. and noted a quorum was present. *The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, The Columbia Star* and radio and television stations were notified of the public hearing by e-mail on May 30, 2014.

## Agenda Item II – Opening Remarks

Chairperson Unthank recognized Staff Account Justin Black who gave a brief overview of the budget plan for Fiscal Year 2014-2015. Mr. Black said General Fund expenses are balanced at \$12,878,000, which is a 1.1 percent (1.1%) increase over FY 2013-2014. The General Fund property tax revenue was estimated using 55.279 on operating mils and 6.6 in debt service mils.

Mr. Black described the primary sources of General Fund revenues as including property taxes, business licenses fees, state rebates, hydrant and fire protection fees, police fines and fees, interest, permits, sale of assets and other miscellaneous revenue, transfer from the Water/Sewer Fund and anticipated grant funds.

Mr. Black stated the Water/Sewer revenue was estimated with a 15 percent (15%) increase to water and sewer rates. No increases were requested for connection (tap) fees; however, a \$1.00 per month increase in hydrant availability (fire protection) fees in requested. A two-percent (2%) increase in the SCE&G franchise fee will bring the total franchise fee to five percent (5%) to be implemented January 1, 2015. Mr. Black said the recommended FY 2014-2015 transfer to the General Fund from the Water/Sewer Fund is \$2,440,000, which is a 23.8 percent (23.8%) decrease from the FY 2013-2014 transfer. He noted that the transfer is the lowest in 10 years and relieves some of the financial pressure on the Water/Sewer Fund.

Mr. Black stated the proposed budget plan includes a two-percent (2%) across-the-board, cost-of-living increase effective July 1, 2014 and up to a three-percent (3%) merit increase for employees with satisfactory performance evaluations to be awarded on the anniversary of employment.

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Agenda Item II – Opening Remarks (continued)

Mr. Black said the city joined the State Health Plan in 2011 and currently pays the same rates as other comparably-sized entities. Next fiscal year's premiums under the State Health Plan will increase by four and a half percent (4.5%). Mr. Black recommended that the city continue to pay the employees' portion of the monthly premium for health insurance, which is included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Black stated the cost of fleet insurance, property and tort liability insurance decreased by approximately \$100,000 and is provided through SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund (SCMIRF). The South Carolina Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT) provides the city's workers' compensation coverage. He explained the premium for workers' compensation insurance is based upon claims and safety experience and is indexed to salaries. The city's premium for workers compensation coverage will be approximately \$200,000 for FY 2014-2015.

Mr. Black explained that 80 percent (80%) of General Fund expenditures go to the Police Department, Fire Department and Public Works.

Chairperson Unthank asked if any council members had any comments or questions on the proposed budget for FY 2014-2015 and received no response.

Agenda Item III – Public Comments on Budget for FY 2014-2015

Chairperson Unthank asked if any members of the public had any comments or questions on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and received no response.

Agenda Item IV – Adjourn

Chairperson Unthank declared the public hearing on the proposed budget for FY 2014-2015 adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta M. Valentino, CMC  
City Clerk/Public Information Officer