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Press Release

Commission hears budget presentations from City departments

Police chief, parks and facilities director, fire chief talk 2016 budget needs

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (July 23, 2015) — The City Commission of Arkansas City met Tuesday night at City Hall and heard budget presentations from three City department heads.

Those presenting at the end of the regular City Commission meeting were Police Chief Dan Ward, Parks and Facilities Director Tony Tapia, and Fire Chief Bobby Wolfe.

Also present were City Manager Nick Hernandez, City Attorney Tamara Niles, Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson, City Planner Josh White and Finance Director Kathy Cornwell.

Ward kicked off the presentations with a discussion of the police department's mission statement, overall philosophy of community policing and crime prevention, and strategic plan.

He emphasized that ACPD currently is in the most time-consuming phase of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation process — the review and rewriting of all procedures — and soon will be facing costs for facilities improvements, in 2016 and 2017, to become CALEA compliant, especially in the area of evidence handling and storage.

Ward told commissioners about the department's training efforts in not just tactics, but also decision making. He outlined ACPD's high standards of customer service and mentioned it has an online survey citizens can fill out. There also are follow-up surveys with those who have contact with police officers.

The department's crime prevention and suppression efforts consist mainly of building a Business Watch program, working with the community — there are only three or four officers on duty at most times, so they need help from citizens who secure their belongings and watch out for their neighbors — and blending the data-driven strategies of hot spot policing and intelligence-led policing.

When it comes to traffic safety, Ward said, the emphasis is on preventing traffic accidents, not writing tickets as a source of revenue. Where crime and traffic hot spots overlap is where police focus

For immediate release

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most of their attention, he said, and the result so far in 2015 has been a drastic decrease in many crime rates, especially those involving the theft or destruction of personal property.

Ward also talked about maintaining a realistic replacement schedule for the department's fleet of vehicles. ACPD is set to buy three new vehicles in 2016, but Ward said he has not yet chosen between cars or SUVs for that purchase. He mentioned the need for new radios as part of the 911 consolidation.

Other needs for 2016 and beyond include new and additional Tasers, a server and six new desktop computers, annual fees for a variety of expensive third-party software platforms, and in-car video systems and body-worn cameras. Both the roof and front fascia of the ACPD building need repairs, too.

The department continues to leave one officer position unfilled in order to make the budget work.

Parks and facilities

Tapia outlined five capital projects, which he jokingly referred to as his "problem children," on which he would like focus in 2016 and subsequent years:

- a new roof on the Agri-Business Building — from \$75,978 to \$95,878, depending on type;
- a recoated roof on the Northwest Community Center — \$25,000;
- remodeling or demolishing and rebuilding The Hogan — at least \$17,954.12, but likely more;
- repairing the elevator control box at City Hall — \$92,000 (eligible for CDBG facilities grant);
- installing a new liner at Paris Park Pool — \$259,000.

Fire-EMS department

Wolfe talked about his major 2016 capital equipment projects:

- replace Tanker 51 — \$240,000 (could be split into a two-year lease-purchase agreement);
- replace 5- and 3-inch fire hose (1,000 feet each) purchased in 1988 and 1990 — \$10,000;
- purchasing 10 portable radios — \$38,500;
- replace battalion truck — \$39,000.

He briefly addressed the NFPA 1901 safety standards and how many of ACFD's vehicles still don't meet those standards. Additionally, both tankers are managing only two-thirds of their listed flow rate.

Other future needs for 2016 and beyond include replacing Fire Engine 53, a 1990 Mack/Pierce truck; purchasing new Personal Protective Equipment and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for firefighters; replacing the overhead bay doors on the fire-EMS department, estimated at \$26,000; and renovating the apparatus bay, estimated at \$18,000. The last two could help with recruitment, he said.