

# Special Called City of Bloomfield City Council Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2024

6:00 pm

A Special Called City of Bloomfield City Council meeting was held Monday, June 3, 2024 at the East Nelson Fire Department 130 Perry Street Bloomfield, Kentucky.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Dudgeon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Call to Order**

Mayor Dudgeon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

## **Roll Call:**

Presiding Officer:	Christopher Dudgeon, Mayor
Council Members:	Laura Barnett
	Scott Stevenson
	Judy Wilson
	Tina Long
	John Hammond
	Todd Sweazy
Maintenance Supervisor:	Derrick Hagan
City Clerk:	Toni Burton

## **Approval of the May 27, 2024 Special Called meeting minutes**

Tina Long made the motion to approve the May 27, 2024 Special Called meeting minutes. Second by Judy Wilson. Laura Barnett abstained since she was not present at the May 27, 2024 Special Called meeting. The other 5 council members approved unanimously.

## **Discussion FY 2025 Budget**

Mayor Dudgeon shared that many of the council members have been through the budgeting process many times; except for Todd. Mayor went on to say that we are a small city with a small budget so some of these line-item expenses are self-explanatory; such as office supplies, wages & benefits. These are normal expenses we have every single year. Mayor Dudgeon asked the council if they wanted to start with the water company's budget or city. Tina Long said start with water. (Prior to the meeting all council members were provided with a copy FY24 budget verses FY 25 proposed budget. Mayor Dudgeon wanted to point a few things.

- We have been running about \$10,000 dollars in meter sales. We have been averaging about 20 new meters in addition to there are several new homes being built in Blazers Heights. So, we increased meter sales to \$20,000.

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- Last year we budgeted 1.3 million in water sales. After looking at the numbers it looks like we are going to come in about 1.4 million. We need to budget for 1.5 million for fiscal year 25.
- John Hammond asked about the \$15,000 increase in contract labor. Mayor Dudgeon shared that Ricky Jewell is still helping us out. Derrick is the only certified water employee at the time. When he is gone to training Ricky will come help us. We have used Superior also. Lane is working on getting certified sooner. Thomas is getting ready to start the process.
- Mayor Dudgeon and Derrick Hagan shared information about equipment purchases. \$200,000 would cover the cost for every inside city water customer go to the cellular water meters. Laura Barnett said she did not think people would be interested in going to the cellular meters. Mayor Dudgeon shared how the city would benefit from this. John Hammond expressed his uncertainties about forcing customers going to the cellular meter oppose to giving them the option. Derrick said the state is forcing all water agencies to do a copper/lead test; due by October 16<sup>th</sup>. Derrick shared information about a vacuum machine and how this would help with this test and a lot of other everyday task.
- Salaries and wages we budgeted \$300,000 for FY 24 looks like we are going to come in under that. We did raise it a little bit for FY 25.

Mayor asked if there were any other questions. John Hammond asked is there anything we need to look at put in the budget for the fueling station. Mayor Dudgeon said we are trying to prioritize some of these projects. Mayor Dudgeon said if we are all okay with the \$1,813,000, we can write it on the budget ordinance.

Mayor Dudgeon said he passed out a new city budget worksheet; because of a change. Mayor Dudgeon said that under advertising it was put in as \$25,000 dollars and should have been \$2500 dollars. Reducing advertising amount increased the contingency amount to \$44,800 dollars. Mayor Dudgeon asked Laura if it was okay with her to go over the current proposed budget with a retired officer and then he has numbers with a non-retired officer. Laura agreed. Mayor Dudgeon went over the different ways the city gets money. Mayor Dudgeon proposed to the council to close the park and public improvement bank accounts and move those funds to the city revenue account. Then just make the park and public improvement departments under the city revenue account. Mayor Dudgeon went on to say when you look under expenses you see police department for \$75,000. That is a retired officer paying \$31.00 an hour without health and retirement benefits. It does include the FICA benefits the city would be responsible for. The \$5,000 gas expense is what the city has always had. Mayor Dudgeon explained that gas

has gone up and depending on where the officer lives and if allowed to have a take home vehicle;

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we will need to monitor that expense. \$2,000 dollars for training and uniforms and another \$2000 for First Net. Mayor Dudgeon said he wanted to talk about city side of salary and wages. The administrative side it was only the city clerk. The previous city clerk only wanted to work 4 days a week and went on her husband's insurance. Now we have a fulltime city clerk and has the city's benefits. That amount is going to be more. Mayor continued to say that he increased council salary a little to cover the cost for special called meetings. Everything else under city expense is basically the same. Then he went through the park expenses. The utilities, operating and contingency all are normal cost. The \$50,000 park project is what John Hammond mentioned last week about going ahead and getting the bathrooms re-done. Mayor Dudgeon said we do not have quotes yet, but estimated the \$50,000. Mayor said he has been approached by several different people about no access to lake for disabled people. Mayor Dudgeon said most lakes/ponds have docks. Maybe if we could build a 16 x 16 dock right off the walking trail this would provide access for people who are disabled. Mayor Dudgeon said he has talked to Tony Calvert and he would put him contact with a contractor and we could purchase the supplies from Tony. Mayor Dudgeon said he did not know what the cost would be. Scott Stevenson more people are going to use the park more and more with all the other updates. Mayor Dudgeon agreed. Mayor Dudgeon went over the public improvement account and shared in the past it was revenue \$31,200, expenditure of \$25,000 and contingency of \$6,200. Now, we are using the public improvement for the city's contingency. This will allow the city to have extra funds to help pay for a retired officer. Mayor Dudgeon said the sheriff's department is getting a cost of living raise in July. Their current rate \$20 plus dollars an hour plus KLEPFP money from the state takes them to \$31 dollars an hour. Lastly, the mayor went over the Street and Road account. He said in years past we collected \$18,000 dollars in municipal road aide and we spent \$18,000 nothing more nothing less. I would like to put another \$42,000 in this account and have \$60,000 in this account. We are still going to do Riverside that we talked about last year. That quote was \$12,500 last year and we think that quote will stay the same. We will still have a public hearing to see what citizens want fixed. If you all agree to put the \$42,000 this will allow us to get a couple other streets done. Mayor Dudgeon said that is the city's proposed budget, and ask the council if they have any questions before going over the numbers for a non-retired officer. John Hammond said he would like to increase the police uniform, training, and supplies budget from \$2,000 dollars to \$15,000 dollars. John suggested to take this away from the contingency fund. Mayor Dudgeon agreed, and reminded the council the actual budget ordinance only reflects income and expenses. Mayor asked if anybody disagreed with any of the projects. Tina said if we are going to do the projects we talked about last week; we should include fishing. Mayor Dudgeon said you do not see ARPA on the worksheets, but it will be on the ordinance.

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Since we have already voted to do the pickleball project, we're going to put whole amount in. This way if the quotes come in over the budget than we can pull money from somewhere else. Or, if the quotes come in under the amount, then this will allow us to use the funds elsewhere. We will just have to make the correct motions at those time. John Hammond asked if the camera system is going to be in the FY 25 budget. Mayor Dudgeon said the camera system is in the current budget. Mayor Dudgeon provided each council member 2 spread sheets with numbers for a non-retired officer, per Laura's request. Mayor Dudgeon said I started the hourly rate with \$16 dollars an hour (which is the cheapest amount other cities started their new hired officers at); then went up in \$2 dollar increments. All the way up to \$32 dollars an hour. This included overtime, holidays, health benefits, and retirement. Mayor Dudgeon said we have talked about paying what Bardstown is paying their officers. At \$32 dollars an hour it would cost the city over \$100, 000 dollars a year. This with 2 hours overtime a week and only working 6 holidays. Then in a second spread sheet mayor high-lighted in yellow how it affects the budget with current numbers. Mayor Dudgeon said using the contingency fund you can see we can handle this for 2 or 3 years and then we cannot. Now, if we start them out at \$16 dollars an hour and they get a dollar or two raise each year we can handle it for a while; then we can't. This means we use every dollar in the contingency fund and then we must strictly follow the lines within the budget. The cost is not affordable and that is why we go with a non-retired officer. The health benefits alone is over \$12,000 dollars a year. Laura Barnett said her thinking about it, as city government this is one of our responsibilities. If we cannot find a retired officer, we still need to fill this position. Laura said, she does not care if we take money from the park. This should be our number one priority. Laura went on to say this is her belief. We take money from the people and they need protection. She said there are things going on in this community that make her believe we need an officer. If we cannot find a retired officer; then we need to look at the alternative ways to find an officer. Laura said, we need our own police officer, and that she does not know how anybody else feels. Mayor Dudgeon said, he agreed, but asked how do we afford it. Not just this year, but going forward. Tina Long said that is her question. Laura Barnett said she understands that. Mayor Dudgeon said we live off tax revenue. Laura Barnett agreed. Mayor Dudgeon asked if we are going to raise the property tax 4 percent every year? Laura replied, no. Mayor Dudgeon said that is the only way we can create more revenue without create the Insurance Premium Tax. Mayor Dudgeon continued to say how he has shared how New Haven created the Insurance Premium Tax that pays for their police department. They implemented it years ago. Today's environment consists of high inflation, housing market is high and salaries have sky rocketed. If the city's cost continues to increase and we do not increase revenue; then we are physically responsible for hiring an officer now. Get what need now, but how are we going to pay for them next year. Laura said we made more money this year than last year. How do we know it's not going to go up. Mayor Dudgeon said we increased property taxes. Laura said new houses are being built.

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Mayor Dudgeon replied that does not mean more money. Mayor explained that the city cannot go below the compensating rate. So, if last year we got \$250,000 dollars with those assessments and then this year we have 50 new houses. We cannot go below the compensating rate and with the new houses the compensating rate drops. That is what we were experiencing and that is why we did the increase last year. We were at 33 cents and it drop down to 28 cents. Mayor Dudgeon said you can build 100 houses in Bloomfield and still make the same amount of money you did last year. Laura said she understands that. Laura went on to say that if you (Mayor Dudgeon) went out and asked the people how much they want a cop and how much they want a dock at the lake You might find out how important it is to have a police officer.

John Hammond said that is this year. Laura said she realizes that. John said he was looking seven years down the road. Laura said she realizes we must look seven years down the road. John said he agreed with Laura that this year we can make it happened, but I do not think we can pledge our bets on we are going to continue to have an increase in revenue. John said he didn't think she could say that. Laura said she thinks later on we can say we cannot afford this anymore and then figure out what we are going to do. Scott Stevenson said there has to be money in this budget somewhere to take from to make this work. Mayor Dudgeon said he presented the proposed budget. You all tell me where I am to take money from to fund what you all want me to fund and long term. This is the money we have. We cannot get rid of KLC insurance \$15,000 dollars and that is probably going to continue to go up. Office supplies is not going to go down. Expenses go up, so you find a way to make more money. Either raise property tax or implement the insurance premium tax. John Hammond said when you look at this. Would we be able to hire an officer at \$16 dollars an hour? Mayor Dudgeon said no. Tina Long said especially not with the sheriff's office pays. Scott Stevenson asked what is plan b? What is another option? Mayor Dudgeon said plan b is the proposed budget. It includes a retired officer and if we can find somebody. John Hammond asked what the city's cost is to send somebody to the academy. Mayor Dudgeon said the city must pay salary and benefits. Tina Long said and in years past. After a year once sending a new officer to the academy; they leave. Judy Wilson said Danville deals with this every year. Toni Burton said if the city was going to send somebody to academy. That person would sign a 3-year contract to stay with the city. If the person was going to go to another agency. That agency would pay that contract out. Then the city is back at ground zero. Laura asked if we could do that? Mayor Dudgeon said that sounds great; if we could find a way to afford that. He went on to say the problem he does see, you are going to have a brand-new officer, straight out of the academy, only one cop, with no over sight. He or she get in a situation and mess up because they do not know any different; our insurance company is going to look at us and raise premiums or drop us all together. Toni Burton shared the rookie cop

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would have to be Chief of Police to get the KLEPPF money. If you do not have a police chief, the agency does not get the KLEPPF funds from the state. Tina Long said some things she has been looking into. If the city wanted to hire an officer that is not yet retired, but getting close to retirement. They will not come to Bloomfield because they want to make as much money as possible. That way they can get best retirement possible. Mayor Dudgeon shared part of the benefit factor is there last three years. Tina shared we will not be able to hire an officer that is approaching retirement; because they want to make as much money as they can to have a better retirement. Mayor Dudgeon said the retirement is partly based off the last 3 years. Tina then asked doesn't the police chief also need to have some kind of administrative experience. Toni said yes, there are reports that must be submitted. Tina said we can all agree this is a tough situation. Mayor Dudgeon said we are not the only city with this issue. Several small cities are doing away with their police department all together. Mayor said he has talked to Junction City and they have been without an officer for months, they need a retired officer and they still cannot find anybody. Tina said we all can agree we want an officer, but without bankrupting the city. Tina continued to say that she has been doing research and there is a nation-wide shortage. Bullitt county sheriff's department is offering \$63 thousand dollars right now. There are cities and other small municipalities that are having to make that tough decision; that she does not want to have to make. Laura said we don't have a police force. Tina said I know we have went months going without one, but everyday I hope that uniform will come along. Tina continued to say she does not think we can put everything we have into that. I think we should continue to look for a retired officer. That would give us somebody with more experience and dedicated, build relationships with community members. Give us somebody that takes ownership of the position. Mayor Dudgeon said he agrees with Laura it would be nice to have our own officer right now. He said that he told council that last summer and has maintained that stance through out the year. Mayor Dudgeon said that is one of the reasons why I have not pushed to partner with the sheriff's department. I put that option out there and brought Ramon in talk about it, but have not pushed for it. Mayor Dudgeon continued to say the city has had the money for 12 months to partner with the sheriff's department, but he wanted a Bloomfield cop with a vehicle that says Bloomfield on it. Mayor Dudgeon asked how much longer do we keep holding out hope to pay somebody the same rate and will come over here and do the job? Let's say we find that person, pay them \$31 dollars an hour and they become chief of police; what happens when that person gets in a situation and there is no accountability for them? Rather it's me or somebody else the mayor is only part-time; who is the chief answering to? There is no accountability. The sheriff's department has a chain of command. From the insurance side of it, we tell them we have partnered with the sheriff's department and the insurance company could say you have reduced your liability risk and possibly lower premiums. These are things we have not discussed because we have been holding out hope to get an officer. You all see the lump sum in the budget, but you don't see the actual breakdown of the cost. None of you all have come to the mayor when Scott Dennis or Jodi worked here and see how much they made and how we were

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spending money. This is still you all looking at these numbers and going the mayor has handled this in the past and been under budget; lets just hold out hope for a cop or partner with the sheriff's office. Mayor Dudgeon said the sheriff's office is not my call. Laura Barnett asked how much the sheriff's office going to contract with us. What is our expense? Mayor Dudgeon the sheriff told us it would be the hourly rate, pay for fuel, they would drive our vehicle. Mayor Dudgeon it is what is in the proposed budget. We may need to get equipment; the protected vest does not fit everybody. They are tailored to the person. Restriping of the vehicle. Laura asked how they able to do this and we cannot do it. Mayor Dudgeon said they offer a lot more money. Our current pay scale only allows to pay \$25 dollars an hour. Scott Stevenson said they are paying the officers and we will reimburse them. Judy Wilson said they will be working for the sheriff's department, but will be assigned to us. Laura asked what benefit do they get for doing this? Mayor Dudgeon said there is no benefit to them. Tina said they are being good community partners. Mayor Dudgeon said the sheriff took it upon himself to offer a dedicated officer over there if you pay the expense. Mayor Dudgeon continued to say with New Haven they took a guy there fulltime. He is there 40 hours a week. Since that person is dedicated to them; then that reduces the amount of time the Sheriff's department must go to New Haven. Since the city pays his salary that freed up funds in the sheriff's budget, so that he can now hire another person. This allows the sheriff's department to build a bigger force, rotate more officers, and have more coverage through out the county. The sheriff's department is not making money on this. Bloomfield has a dedicated cop that does not just answer to the mayor. He will answer to the lieutenant, sergeant, and they will handle all the disciplinary actions. With the insurance part and what law enforcement goes through anyways; you do not have a body camera on. This person messes up and the next thing the city gets sued. There are a lot of moving parts on having a retired officer, non-retired officer, how we pay for it. There is a lot of moving parts that we have not talked about the last 12 months, because the mayor has been trying to find an officer. With this new budget coming up and Laura wanting to see how a non-retired officer affects the city's budget. Talking about expenses going up and revenues staying the same. Laura asked what is the disadvantage of going with the sheriff's office? Tina Long said she is not ready to just jump up and go with the sheriff's office. However, she does feel like we are at a point where we need to have these discussions. Tina went on to say she has no problem partnering with the sheriff's department; especially since we will have the dedicated officer. One that is trained; has oversight, and the insurance portion of it. Tina said in the beginning she felt like she wanted our own officer, but that may not be realistic. Scott Stevenson asked are they dedicated to Bloomfield or will he have to go to Bardstown? Tina said, no, once they are here. Their here. Now in the past we have had agreements and something happened at the city lines out officer could handle or assist with; they were allowed to go, Mayor Dudgeon said there was no agreement; because they were law enforcement they could go. Judy shared as a pastor of church. There have been times the alarm at the church would go off, and the alarm company

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contacted her. She would get to the church, thinking the city officer has responded. Front door unlocked she goes in; thankfully nobody was in the building. City officer did not respond the sheriff's department did. Judy said had we had a dedicated county law enforcement officer here the response time would have been faster. Judy said she is not pro or con for having a city officer. She does not believe the city can afford a city officer long term. Mayor Dudgeon said for tonight we do not have to decide on hiring an officer. Tonight is about the budget and I do want to bring up that the proposed budget does not have us purchasing a new police vehicle. The reason I bring this up, is because this has been brought up in other meetings and nobody has done anything about it. Mayor Dudgeon asked do we need to add this to the proposed budget? Both Tina and Scott both said yes, we do. Mayor Dudgeon asked do we build it into the budget to buy now, or do we build it into the budget to buy later when we decide the route we are going to go with? Tina said, let us build it to buy later. That we don't have another vehicle just setting in the garage. John Hammond said if we do decide to go the sheriff's department route, then we can get it branded one time. Mayor Dudgeon said the park project has already been approved. If the city is awarded the grant the city will have to amend the budget, because he did not put the city's portion of the matching grant in the budget. The city has cd's; there are 2 together is almost \$500,000 dollars. One of them comes due in November; that is the one we will use to pay the city's portion of the match for the grant (\$150,000 dollars). When that city comes up, we either pull it, pull part of it, or renew it for 5 months. We need to create a line item to purchase a vehicle. Mayor Dudgeon said around \$45,000 for a car, and striping. Judy asked if the mayor knew the cost of an SUV. Mayor Dudgeon said Ramon told him the Tahoe's were somewhere around 70 to 80 thousand fully outfitted. Judy said that when both Jodi and Scott were here, they preferred an SUV because it was easier to get in and out of it. Judy went on to say that if we are looking at a retired officer, you set stiff setting in vehicles for extended periods of time and it is much more difficult getting in and out of a car. Mayor Dudgeon said he thought we could get a small SUV for \$60,000 so let us budget for that. Plus, we have contingency funds we can use if we need to. Judy asked how do we need to do that. Mayor Dudgeon asked if we all agree with the city budget of \$392,800 the way it has been presented, park project and all. Judy said yes. Mayor Dudgeon said add \$60,000 to that number and you will get \$452,800. The street and road account do you all agree with that part of the budget. John Hammond asked when do we get the municipal road funds. Mayor Dudgeon asked Toni if it was in September. Toni explained in years past Bloomfield participated in the Co-op program. That program gave 3 payments through out the year. Each of those payments the state kept a percentage. The funds the state kept was put in a pool. Then if a city had an emergency, they could apply for some of the funds. The state awards larger city's first and then it trickles down to the smaller cities. State would base their award off the size of the community. Toni said she encouraged Chris to opt out of the

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co-op program, collect the monthly payments and use those funds. Chris said basically she saved us money. John Hammond said potentially we could see an increase in municipal road funds. Toni said she has not heard what Bloomfield will get this fiscal year. John asked when is the public forum. Toni shared legislation changed in the last year, so we do not have a separate meeting. In our regular meeting we can declare a portion of the meeting as a Special Meeting or Public Hearing and hear what the community has to say. Mayor Dudgeon said now we have our totals; if you all agree with closing the park and public improvement accounts and adding them as departments under the city's budget, we need a motion to close those two accounts and move those funds under general revenue. Judy Wilson made the motion to close the park and public improvement bank accounts, put those funds in the city's revenue account and make list them as departments under the city. Second by Tina Long. Mayor Dudgeon asked the council if they had any discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

## First reading of Ordinance 2024-1 Budget Ordinance for FY 2025

Tina Long read the first reading of the budget ordinance.

## Adjourn

John Hammond made the motion to adjourn. Second by Tina Long. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting minutes approved on

6/17/24

  
Christopher Dudgeon, Mayor

  
Toni Burton

City Clerk