

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
HOME RULE PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024
6:00 P.M.
SCHIEFFELIN HALL
(CORNER OF FREMONT AND FOURTH STREET)**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Dustin Escapule called the Special Council Meeting to order on Tuesday, July 9, 2024.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Mayor Dustin Escapule led the Common Council and the general public in a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **ROLL CALL**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Councilmember Colin Regan | Present |
| Mayor Pro-Tem Bill Barlow | Present |
| Councilmember Matt Faulk | Absent |
| Councilmember Jim Newbauer | Present |
| Mayor Dustin Escapule | Present |

Also, in attendance: Charissa Presti, Interim City Clerk

- IV. **PUBLIC HEARING – The City of Tombstone will hold a Public Hearing to hear and consider comments about the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Budget.**

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Escapule: This is a public hearing. The City of Tombstone will hold a public hearing to hear and consider comments about the Fiscal Year 2024-25 proposed budget. What that means is if you have a concern or want to talk about anything in the budget, you can come up, tell us what your concerns are, we will make note of it, and we'll address it at next Tuesday's meeting. This is a hearing so that we can hear your side of the story. I want you to know there will be no response to anybody tonight.

Mayor Escapule opens meeting to the public

Lillian Hritz: I live at 114 Escondida. I've been attending all of the budget meetings, so I'm informed and aware. I'm just concerned that information isn't getting out to our constituents and I don't know the best way. My biggest concern is right before I left to come here, I received a text message saying, the budget's already been approved. No, it's got the last hearing today at 6 o'clock. I went back and forth with this person who was told by several people that it has been approved. I just want to know exactly what meeting will it be approved, as I don't recall it being approved, but I was told it was. I know you can't answer me.

Mayor Escapule: I will tell you. We have a tentative budget that has been approved. At the meeting next week, we will approve and adopt the budget.

Lillian Hritz: When was the tentative budget approved?

City Clerk Presti: The tentative budget was approved at the last meeting.

Lillian Hritz: As a tentative? *(City Clerk Presti answers in affirmative)* That's what I had tried to explain to the constituent. I think as a city council and Charissa, you've been doing a wonderful job of getting information out, but maybe there needs to be another conversation on strategy for communicating to our constituents. I don't think many of them know exactly what's going on or the process or how things need to be done, that's all.

Steve McNeely: I live on fourth street. I've been analyzing the budget for over ten years, and I, like Lilly, think there should have been more input from the citizens before this point. I've always felt the city was spending more money than they should in certain areas. I did a comparison this year between Benson, Willcox and Bisbee, and I found out that we spend 30% to 40% more for our employees to run our city than what they do. I found out Willcox takes 1% of their sales tax right off the top for roads. This would be a good thing to adopt here. Each one of those cities has a city manager, which I think makes sense.

I feel the proposed budget is over projected again for this year as it was last year. The proposed budget shows that we're pulling out \$500,000 from city revenues. If we do not beat our projected income, that's going to result in more shortages if we project it too high. I think everyone knows it's a good idea not to increase spending while you're depleting your savings. At least that's my philosophy.

Our water, sewer, and garbage, is about \$168,000 in the red. I think we're proposing an increase there, which if they don't come true, it's going to be worse.

We need to decrease our spending and work to increase the sales tax income since we don't have any large box stores like some of these other towns. We rely only on tourism, that's all we have, and I think we have to increase that. The only stores are: Circle K, the dollar store, hardware store, and the businesses on Main Street, which includes hotels, restaurants, and bars. They need tourists to make money. We're currently proposing 149,000 for tourism, which is room tax. That's what we've historically done. To me, that's nowhere near enough, with the budget we have in this city, to only spend that kind of money to promote our town. Tourism is the only revenue we have; we need to do more. I mentioned we're short, we need more revenue.

We had a wonderful event last July, but it appears it's not going to be here. For your information, Deadwood wants it back. I talked to Ken, and there's a state, not a city, a state that wants to get a redemption event. Ken also worked hard, working hard to get two Indian nations involved. It appears that Tombstone is either too bogged down or had egos or arrogance that they don't want to get the event back. We need that in town. We need events like that more than once a year, and we need more events on Allen Street. So, we get people here to spend money and promote tourism in this town. We're not going to survive. Thank you.

V. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET

MOTION by Councilmember Newbauer, **SECOND** by Mayor Pro-Tem Barlow, to close the public hearing.


DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 4/1/0

MOTION: Carried

VI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mayor adjourns meeting at 6:15 PM.



Dustin Escapule, Mayor



Charissa Presti, Interim, City Clerk