

Atchison Moves Forward In Budget Process

(KAIR)--Atchison City officials met Monday afternoon for the fourth and final budget workshop of the year, another step in preparing a budget for 2016.

Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce President and Amelia Earhart Festival Coordinator Jacque Pregont led off the meeting by making a presentation requesting funds for both the festival and for tourism promotions. She said that "I just went through what we have done in the past year, what our plans are going forward, kind of substantiating the fact that we use the money wisely, that we spend all of it trying to do the best we can in not only advertising, but we also use it to reach people person to person. We do several shows, we spend it on brochures...just kind of went through what those expenditures are for and how they benefit our mission to bring tourism to Atchison."

Pregont requested \$85,000 for tourism and \$22,500 for the festival, the same amounts she has requested from the city in recent years.

City Finance Director Becky Anderson then gave a presentation on the city's general fund. She says that "expenditures are really on track, but when you have revenues that are down, that gets concerning when expenditures are on track...Last year when we did the budget process, we told them it was going to be more painful this year because we are running a structural deficit in our general fund, meaning our operational expenses are outpacing our revenues that we receive for the general fund. We brought to them what the specific department requests were...there really wasn't anything really much extra in that....all Department Directors know where we are at right now, and what we are facing."

Anderson says that staff has suggested different ways money could be saved in the general fund. "We have the Community Development Director position that is not filled. We talked about keeping that open longer, through the first of the year would save some, to keep it open through all of next year would save quite a bit of money, but I don't think that that is where they are at on that. If it comes down to it, that might be something we have to do. We talked about reducing our transfer to the capital projects fund. Right now we transfer about \$300,000 to our capital projects fund, which is where we fund our large capital projects."

Anderson says the next step in the budget process is City Manager Trey Cocking presenting his recommended budget to Commissioners during their July 20th meeting. Commissioners will then be able to recommend any changes before voting on it. After the budget is published, a public hearing will be held on August 3rd seeking the public's input.

A final budget must be submitted to the Atchison County Clerk no later than August 25th.

Many Signals Communications