

**Mayor**  
William Siegel  
**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Lois Wynne  
**Council Members**  
John Gordon  
Eddie Neal  
Willard Rodarmel



**Office of the Mayor**  
  
119 Fox Street  
Lemoore • CA 93245  
Phone • (559) 924-6700  
FAX • (559) 924-9003

## Staff Report

ITEM  
NO. 6

**To: Lemoore City Council**  
**From: William M. Siegel, Mayor**  
**Date: May 1, 2013**  
**Subject: Review of 2013-2014 Proposed Department Budgets  
by the Budget Review Committee and Approval of  
the Recommended Cost Saving Measures**

### Discussion:

The Budget Review Committee (Budget Committee) is tasked with presenting Council with a proposed balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. As you are aware, the City was recently required to make a one-time payout of approximately \$179,000 as severance pay to our former City Manager. Additionally, the City has ongoing costs in the amount of \$125,000 to complete the staffing levels in our Police Department, which included an increased compensation package. In an effort to recover the costs associated with these expenditures and potentially find other cost saving measures, the Budget Committee extensively reviewed every City department's proposed Budget with the main objective of providing exceptional service to our customers, the community of Lemoore. The information below identifies areas of excess, which can be immediately implemented, saving the City ongoing costs estimated at \$305,044. These cost saving measures should alleviate the necessity for cuts to other departments for the coming Fiscal Year. The community and employees can then begin to recover from any loss of confidence that may have resulted due to the change in leadership.

### **Analysis of Planning Department**

The following includes an in-depth analysis of the Planning Department's Annual Report for the 2013-2014 Budget (attached), which proposes a 15.3 percent increase in expenditures, for a total cost in excess of \$373,000.

Beginning with the Activity Statistics for planning functions performed during 2012, the Budget Committee assessed the top three ranked Planning Activities, which include Administrative Use Permits, Planned Unit Developments and Violations. The activities listed in the three categories total 324, which account for 71.5 percent of the 453 total activities performed.

According to the statistics, there were a total of 103 Administrative Use Permits issued in 2012. Included in the total are permits issued for signs, secondary dwellings, accessory building & carports, administrative use permits, minor deviations, similar use determination and other various approvals allowed by the Department. According to Planning Director, Holly Smyth, each permit averaged approximately 1 to 1.5 hours of staff time. To obtain an understanding of the level of each permit, the Committee reviewed Planning's 2012 Activity Updates (attached), which are provided to the Planning Commission and available on the City's website (for 11 of the 12 months). A breakdown of the 103 permits listed is shown in the following results:

- 49 - Various sign approvals, denials, letters and sign information sent
- 12 - Fireworks stand approvals
- 11 - Administrative reviews for storage sheds, room additions, carport, second dwelling units, church office, and elevation amendment

A total of 80 Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) Individual Plot Plan Reviews/changes were approved. According to Director Smyth, a separate review is performed for every housing unit on every lot, and the typical review time for each takes approximately one hour or less.

The highest level of activity was for the issuance of 141 Violations. According to Director Smyth, each violation takes approximately 15 minutes or less to perform. As listed in the Activity Update, violations were issued for the removal of banners, failure to submit a sign application, removal of non-conforming signs, location of A-frame signs, flashing signs, maintenance of signs, speed of animated signs, fence location, removal of canopy, extension/removal of POD storage containers, construction without a permit and dying landscape at businesses.

The Activities Statistics table can be found in the attached Annual Report. It should be noted that some of the items listed in the Activity Updates were difficult to determine which activity they were assigned to in the Activity Statistics table, because they were not necessarily placed within the same category.

In addition to the Statistics, the Budget Committee reviewed the Planning Department's Goals and Objectives for the upcoming year. An assessment of staff's involvement for each activity is noted within the parenthesis:

- **Invigorate the Department with a renewed sense of customer focus to serve all customers professionally, accurately and in a timely fashion in coordination with the Public Works and Building Department staff.**

*Note: No additional staff time required.*

- **Implement a feedback tool to help report on the effectiveness of delivering development services so that improvements may be made to be more business friendly.**

*Note: The City Manager's Office should solicit feedback from developers to eliminate the potential for persuasion by the Planning Department's staff and to make sure that the feedback presented is not compromised.*

- **Update planning fees in conformity with 2012 Zoning Code processes to insure that fees do not overcharge or undercharge for the services rendered.**

*Note: Updating fees is a process performed in the City Manager's Office. No staff time is required of the Planning Department.*

- **Recommend modifications to the 2012 Zoning Code through Ad-Hoc Committees and Planning Commission research, discussions, and public hearings.**

*Note: Council has requested that these recommendations come from the Planning Commissioners based on feedback from the business community. Staff is not to make the recommendations. They are to set up meetings and provide information and assistance when asked. Staff time for this activity will be minimal.*

- **Update the General Plan Circulation Element to re-evaluate potentially unnecessary "Planned Improvements to Accommodate Buildout" list in order to reduce overall developer impact fees and utilize free KCAG traffic consultant to keep traffic modeling costs down.**

*Note: The Planning Department included a one-time cost of \$20,000 in the proposed budget to pay the City Engineer to provide this service. Staff time should be minimal.*

- **Provide support to Public Works Department during the revisions to the Public Works Standards book as needed to insure conformity with the General Plan and Zoning Code.**

*Note: Public Works does not anticipate performing this function this year. No staff time required.*

- **As time and funding are available, cleanup the City's GIS mapping system to eliminate duplicate files, simplify the archive file system, and train staff to be able to start producing some GIS maps and be able to provide street maps to the public.**

*Note: GIS mapping services are currently performed by Quad. However, it may be contracted out to the County for \$5,000 per year.*

- **Work with Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) on long-range planning as it relates to Lemoore:**
  - **Countywide Climate Action Plan funded through Proposition 84 round 1 grant funds to reduce the potential impacts of having a plan dictated by the regional government to retain local land use control.**

*Note: This grant is being administered through KCAG. The City of Lemoore is allocated up to \$10,997 of grant funds to pay for staff time, which can also be used to pay Quad to perform such services.*

- **Provide information, input, review, and participation into the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) required by the State of California, so that Lemoore is not dictated an allotment by the regional agency without representation and help retain grant eligibility.**

*Note: Our Housing Specialist will provide the required information and participate if needed.*

- **Provide information, input, review, and participation into the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) Plan as part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) process required by the State, so that Lemoore retains its local land use authority and remains eligible for grant funding which is tied to these plans which are anticipated to be adopted by June 30, 2014.**

*Note: Quad will perform this process if needed.*

- **Should Walmart want to move forward, continue to work with consultants to complete Walmart Environmental Impact Report and get to public hearings.**

*Note: Walmart has pulled this project and the property is for sale. If it gets resurrected, Quad can provide the required information.*

## **Planning Department Staffing Costs**

The Planning Department currently functions with two full-time employees – a Planning Director, an Assistant Planner, and a part-time Planning Technician. The 2012-2013 adopted Budget reflects expenditures for salaries and benefits for the three positions totaling \$222,954. However, the projected cost presented to the Budget Committee for the same year estimates salaries and benefits exceeding the budgeted amount for a total of \$226,776. The change is reflected as an increase to the part-time position.

The Department Request for 2013-2014 proposes that the part-time position be converted to a full-time employee for a total salaries and benefits amount of \$259,906. In 2006, when development was booming and the economic meltdown had not yet occurred, the Planning Department's budget for salaries and benefits was a total of \$240,264 for a Planning Director, two Assistant Planners and \$25,000 for part-time. Since that time, the number of activities requiring substantial amount of time to process have declined significantly. The staff time to perform them should have decreased instead of continually increasing.

## **Elimination of Planning Department and Replacement of Services**

In an effort to achieve the maximum savings for the City and the community of Lemoore, I am recommending that the Planning Department be eliminated effective immediately, which will yield ongoing annual savings estimated at \$243,000. This estimate was derived by taking the Planning Department's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 (est. \$373,000) and subtracting the estimated cost the City will incur to outsource the planning functions (est. \$130,000). Additionally, there is a one time budget adjustment necessary for accrual of vacation time in the amount of \$3,906.60.

Based on statistics and forecasted work-load, approximately 400 technical planning hours will be required next Fiscal Year. To best serve our customer's needs, these technical services can be performed by our City Engineer, Quad Knopf. Quad Knopf is prepared to send a trained planning representative to provide counter assistance at the CMC. Based on the estimated planning hours necessary to perform the more technical activities, a representative from Quad Knopf would be available onsite three days per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) from 8 am to 12 pm (12 hrs/week). An additional eight hours per week will be required for offsite technical review and preparation/attendance for one Planning Commission meeting per month. This outsourcing translates to approximately \$100,000 (20 hrs/week X 50 weeks X \$100/hr), which will be added to the Public Works Department Budget. Staff is seeking other proposals, and believes that the cost will be at or below \$100 per hour. Fees generated for the anticipated planning activities are estimated at \$25,000 for Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

Additionally, an estimated \$30,000 will be required to overhaul the zoning code. The code will be designed for ease of use and greater efficiency in order to meet the needs of our community, unlike the newly adopted code, which is difficult for staff and the public to understand. Our goal is to implement more of a "cookie cutter" approach that will be easily understood by the development community and ultimately reduce staff time in performing the associated tasks. An example of such code will be presented to the Planning Commission for review at an upcoming meeting. My expectation is that the Commission will recommend an adoptable update to Council within four months, which will include, at a minimum, the following six sections:

- Fees associated with each type of action
- Application for action
- Design Standard Guidelines
- Sign Ordinance
- Planning and entitlement fees
- Basic zoning requirements

It is understood that a certain amount of in-house services will still need to be performed. In the absence of the Planning Department, a new system will be temporarily implemented. Oversight of planning functions will be assigned to the Public Works Director with the assistance of the Project Manager. To perform the basic clerical duties associated with planning functions, a current full-time Office Assistant will be relocated to the Cinnamon Municipal Complex (CMC) and assigned to the Public Works Department. This employee will be transferred from another department and will not increase the City's overall Budget.

Several other activities associated with business development are being performed by other departments, such as, issuing business licenses, economic development activities, and building inspections. These functions will continue to be performed. However, to better serve our business community, all of the activities listed will be performed at the CMC, which will provide a convenient One-Stop Shop for our customers.

#### **Position of Code Enforcement Officer**

The position of Code Enforcement Officer is another area for potential savings. Beginning in 2006, the position of Code Enforcement Officer was assigned to and paid out of the Redevelopment Division. With the dissolution of redevelopment in California, the funding source for this position is no longer available. The ongoing cost to the City to maintain this position is \$69,650, which includes a \$500 per year uniform allowance. There is a one time budget adjustment necessary for accrual of vacation time in the amount of \$5,867.32. In addition to property maintenance, shopping cart abatement and vehicle abatement, the Code Enforcement Officer provides weed abatement field services for the Lemoore Volunteer Fire Department, of which, 11 percent of the salary (\$7,606) is budgeted to that department. This expenditure for weed abatement will remain a cost to the City and the duties will transfer elsewhere.

The Budget Committee has reviewed this position, and although there is a benefit to the City to maintain a full-time Code Enforcement Officer, cuts are necessary in order to present a balanced budget and to effectuate ongoing savings. I am recommending the elimination of the position and transferring the duties to the Police Department to be performed by the Community Service Officer. Prior to 2006, these duties were a function of the Police Department and the Fire Department had its own part-time clerical employee, who also performed weed abatement. The savings from eliminating this position totals \$62,044.

### **Total Savings to City**

The combined savings achieved by eliminating the Planning Department and the Code Enforcement Officer is estimated at \$305,044. Identifying these areas where cuts can be made with little to no reduction in services to our community provides immediate security for all other City employees for the coming fiscal year. Additionally, it provides for the recovery of costs associated with bringing our police force to complete staffing levels with the approved satisfying compensation package, and it provides for the recovery of a large portion of the approximately \$179,000 in severance pay associated with the resignation of our former City Manager. It is important to act now in order to provide 60 days' notice to affected employees. By acting now, the cost savings will be enjoyed for the entire 2013-2014 fiscal year. City Council, the Planning Commission, City staff, and the community of Lemoore can be assured that the proposed changes will not hinder the City's ability to service our community efficiently and professionally.

### **Budget Impact:**

Vacation-time accrual payout of \$9,773.92.

Ongoing savings to the General Fund is estimated at \$305,044.

### **Recommendation:**

I recommend the Council approve the immediate elimination of the Planning Department including all staff, the immediate elimination of the position of the Code Enforcement Officer; and that the Acting City Manager be directed to immediately begin implementing

the staffing transfers necessary to provide exceptional service to the community of Lemoore, as set forth in this staff report.