

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Special Meeting of the Brainerd City Council was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President Gary Scheeler

Upon roll call, the following members were noted present: Koep, Pritschet, Bevans, Johnson, Borkenhagen, Hilgart and Scheeler. Mayor Menk and the following staff were also noted as present: City Administrator Thoreen, Finance Director Hillman, City Planner Ostgarden, Fire Chief Holmes and Park Director Sailer.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing at 6:05.

The following citizens addressed the Council with concerns:

- o Julie Klettshner, 901 Lakeview Lane; requested the City keep a tighter budget
- o Bruce Clark, 1305 Quince Street; asked the City to live within its budget
- o Barb Worms, 2248 Spruce Drive;
- o Margee Backstrom, Spruce Drive; reported that her increased value is too high
- o Joe Vreeland, 1607 South 6th Street; asked why County determines home values
- o Melinda Castle, 2210 Spruce Drive; concerned with government always "taking"
- o Chad Sundberg, Sunset Way; suggested better communication based on the proposed increase letter being sent with no explanation on huge increases and stated it creates future mistrust
- o Jim Runberg, 1205 Lakeview Drive; increase would mean \$100 per month property tax increase, requested assistance to get an appraisal.
- o Irene Walberg, 2111 Spruce Drive; stated that increased home value is more than she could sell her home for
- o Marty Johnson, 1104 15th Avenue; feels higher taxes are just "moving problems down the road"

Council Member Borkenhagen stated that the Council had to determine a preliminary number by a certain date knowing that that number could be reduced but not increased. He stated that increases help the City grow and that property values do not increase the same way a residential property does.

Council Member Koep offered the observation that the City's budget can be cut from the original amount without any adverse effects.

- o Melissa Schmeck, 15626 Sunset Way; feels certain areas are targeted and not equally plowed
- o Carole Miller, 2244 Spruce Drive; finds the increase outrageous, mentioned all of her other expenses/self-funded improvements and asked to not be treated as number
- o Tom Lake, 102 Bel Ray Circle; stated that it will be hard to get more people to want to move to town with increases like the ones being addressed tonight.
- o Robert Taylor, NE 10th Avenue; reported he cannot afford the proposed new taxes, that he is unable to secure a full-time job with benefits
- o Julie Kletcher, Lakeview Lane; asked the Council to look at other options, that her proposed tax is only \$300 more than a North Long Lake resident
- o David Runberg, 1004 S 7th Street; Tree looks great; what happened when the state helped us out, referred to LGA
- o Jerry Sinner, 10020 Island Drive; offered perspectives on the levy
- o An attendee suggested the freezing of salaries and making everything public information
- o Melinda Kessel; 2210 Spruce Drive; suggested constructing a new building rather than spending money on the existing city hall building
- o Jan Burton, 1017 Terrace Ave; stated that in speaking to many businesses the taxes “are driving them right out of town”
- o Bob Gillespe, 1001 Lakeview Lane; commented on the large increase in levy and taxes

The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:24 P.M.

Council President Scheeler offered perspective on the \$4.9 million levy for 2015 and the amount now in front of the Council. He also noted the City’s strong reliance on LGA.

Council discussed Budget concerns and suggestions.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:35 P.M.

Jim Thoreen
City Administrator