

BUDGET,

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looks like you're asking for \$16,500," Gillis said, getting an affirmative response from Dieker. "But on the request form, it's a great deal more than that. What am I missing?"

Dieker said the addendum was "the more serious piece," thus the request for \$28,000.

Tim Wood, assistant controller for Keizer, helped decipher the request on May 8.

"The original budget request received in March (from the chamber) was for \$16,500," he said. "The city included \$2,500 in the FY2015-16 budget, the same amount that was in the adopted budget for FY 14-15. The addendum was a further refinement of their original budget request, replacing what was previously asked for."

Wood added the budget meeting was the first time the addendum had been shown to anyone at the city.

"I believe it was new information for everyone," he said.

Councilor Dennis Koho noted during the meeting he was trying to understand things.

"I get confused most every year by chamber requests," he said. "We often get things last minute. This may be a good idea. I just wonder if we have it backward. The chamber comes to us with a good thing to spend tax money on, rather than the city saying we have some needs. I want to see us turn it back around somehow, where the city identifies what we can use the help of the chamber for."

Dieker explained how an increase in TOT dollars would benefit tourism strategies, but was interrupted by Gillis.

"Is that a question for this meeting? If I understand, the TOT increase is more reaching

than this committee," said Gillis, seeing nods of yes.

Later in the meeting, Charlotte Clark expressed surprise at the request.

"I've never heard of a town where the chamber got funded by the city," she said. "I thought a chamber was always funded by the local business community. To see them request a lot, I was quite shocked."

No motion was made on the chamber's request. At the final budget meeting on Tuesday, the amount given to the chamber was lowered to \$1,500.

The future of the Event Center Coordinator position, added in January 2014, was also discussed at length. The recommendation made to the Budget Committee was to continue the position as limited duration for the next fiscal year, then reevaluate the status.

"The overall projection of \$100,000 in rental revenue has been fairly consistent the last two or three years," Wood said.

However, being consistent wasn't enough for some.

"My recall is we expected a larger increase in the events center than we got," David Dempster said. "If I'm correct, what happened?"

City Manager Chris Eppley said that memory was correct.

"We were expecting to see more usage," Eppley said. "We're still getting our feet under us as far as a business center. What we gained was better service for the activities we have, which is valuable. We didn't focus as much on the marketing piece, which we still have to work on."

Like Dempster, Koho had concerns about the numbers.

"With this position, we budgeted revenue to move from \$98,000 to \$170,000," Koho said. "We spent \$31,000 on this position. We made a jump of \$1,700 in revenue with that jump of \$31,000. I'm not sure

it's proving itself financially."

Eppley emphasized the increased level of service for those using the event center.

"We will always have to feed a certain amount (into the center) from the general fund," he said. "The question becomes, is that OK? It brings people to this community and helps fill the hotel. There's a spin off benefit to businesses."

Bersin pointed out the current pricing strategy will make it hard to increase revenues much, in part because state agencies take advantage of "Tightwad Tuesday" special pricing.

"If we want that position, we have to get more revenue," Bersin said. "If we want more revenue, it's time to raise the fees."

Eppley said such a proposal will be given to the city council soon.

Mayor Cathy Clark doesn't want to see the position go away.

"As long as we bring clients in, we will need to maintain it," Clark said.

Bersin said he's not opposed to keeping the position as limited duration for another year.

"In the next year, we need to prove the need," he said. "This position needs to create revenue."

Lore Christopher suggested allowing Kristian Bouvier, who holds the position, to do more marketing.

"I think we should give \$5,000 for marketing," Christopher said. "We need to challenge Kristian to come up with a plan to market that space and we need to aggressively market that. We need to give her the tools. And we've got to get on the government agencies who are taking advantage of the low rates. That program was designed for local non-profits with a \$20,000 total budget, not state agencies."

Councilor Amy Ripp agreed

with the marketing idea.

"Kristian has done so much with so little," Ripp said. "She's done a lot without funding and support. Maybe start with a number like \$5,000. I think the numbers will come to fruition."

A motion was approved to increase the marketing amount to \$5,000.

Park operations was the last section discussed during the meeting. Bersin recalled how Richard Walsh, a Parks Board member, had asked for \$4,000 more in matching grant program funds at the May 5 budget meeting.

That led to committee members looking at various line items, seeking places to get the \$4,000 from until city councilor Dennis Koho suggested taking \$5,000 out of the \$75,000 line item for contractual services, which pays for temporary help. "Then there could be a reduction in the level of service for other parks," cautioned Bill Lawyer, Public Works director for Keizer.

Koho didn't seem fazed. "I have confidence staff can do it," Koho replied.

Mayor Clark was against the idea.

"One thing we get criticized for is we don't maintain the parks," she said. "This line item is for temporary labor. We have more park properties now. It's important in my book to keep parks maintained, so I'm a no (vote)."

Councilor Roland Herrera took a contrary view.

"The grant program is leveraging money there," Herrera said. "I really believe it's more effective to use that money in the parks grant program."

Christopher agreed.

"If we put that money into leveraging, we'll get two to three times the amount," the former mayor said. "I agree with councilor Herrera. The

money is better spent there."

Jerry McGee noted the matching grant program started this fiscal year and thus suggested watching the program for another year before putting more funds into it.

"I want to see more of a history of this grant program," McGee said. "I want to see accountability."

Councilor Marlene Quinn agreed with McGee, but Bersin didn't.

"The city made a commitment to the matching grant program until we get a sense it's not being used successfully," Bersin said. "One thing the city does that touches the most people is the parks. It's what brings people to live in the city."

Small amounts lead to bigger discussions

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

In a city budget of \$38 million, some of the most spirited debate among Keizer Budget Committee members revolved around a \$1,200 item.

The Budget Committee met for a final time Tuesday, approving a city budget. Keizer City Councilors are expected to vote on the budget June 1.

Councilor Amy Ripp proposed adding \$1,200 to the Keizer Community Library, to help with a rent increase in the Keizer Heritage Center, thus giving the library \$8,600 total. Ron Bersin and Lore Christopher expressed disapproval.

"I want them to keep supporting themselves," Christopher said. "They can sustain that \$1,200 increase. They will be fine."

Mayor Cathy Clark said fears of the increase becoming a pattern are unfounded.

"The increase is in large part going from a volunteer doing maintenance on the building to a part-time person doing the maintenance," Clark said.

David Dempster liked the idea of the \$1,200 addition.

"For the \$1,200 that's probably the best bang for the buck in the budget, better than the parks (matching grant) program," Dempster said. "People

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