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## Aldermen pass budget

get priorities came in the provision to add an Economic Development Director in April 2019. Fisher wants to provide “an experienced individual with the contacts and relationships needed to get Clinton in front of the decision-makers and influence their decisions.”

Fisher was adamant that the position is needed to move Clinton forward.

“The recruitment of retail is not as easy as some would make it out to be. It cannot be done ‘on the cheap.’ It takes years of work to develop a relationship that allows you to meet with the right people. Why not hire someone that already has the knowledge? Before hiring, we will get an outside consultant to assist us in reviewing our city’s economic potential.”

Other provisions in the budget which Fisher touted include growth and equipment for most departments, particularly in Parks and Recreation. The City will request a Capitol Loan (Cap Loan) from the Mississippi Development Authority of \$2.5 million for improvements at all parks. If granted, Robinson Park, Northside Park and Traceway Park will have new bathrooms, a complaint heard from female players and participants for many years. New concession stands and complete upgrades to all ball fields and scoreboards at Traceway are also planned.

Fisher says that “money from this Cap Loan will be used to upgrade our baseball fields and give us a strong boost in our efforts to bring a ‘play up tournament’ for the Little League World Series to Clinton, allowing us another economic opportunity. This money will be used, along with partnerships from other sources, to build a soccer stadium...to be the home field for Brilla, the only professional soccer team in the state. Once complete, I anticipate college and professional teams playing exhibition games, adding an economic development ele-

ment to the stadium.”

Other budgeted items include addressing drainage issues at Robinson Park, adding a dog park to Kids Towne Park, putting together a plan to light the walking trails in all parks, adding six part-time summer workers in the Public Works department, and adding equipment in the form of two tractors,

two trucks, two zero-turn mowers, one dump truck, one backhoe and one mini-excavator for Public Works.

The aldermen who presented amendments to the budget had previously voiced concerns in the September 4 public hearing. Garrett said that the “Board of Aldermen is the legisla-

tive branch of City government, and we believe we need to operate in a fiscally sound manner that is in the best interest of Clinton citizens.”

She continued, “I want to make it perfectly clear that we support salary increases for employees, determined by

department heads with a range of zero to five percent, with most averaging three percent. We are concerned, however, that department heads are receiving \$5,000 to \$10,000 per person raises. We believe emphatically that we have outstanding department heads but don’t understand these increases in

comparison to an average increase of three percent for the rank and file.”

Garrett, Martin and Ellis also disagreed with the proposal for a full-time Municipal Court judge and a full-time Economic Development Director, wanting more time to analyze exactly where problems might lie, particularly in the court system.

Mayor Fisher, however, was single-minded in his analysis of the City’s priorities and the necessary steps to be taken in terms of allocation of monies.

“Like any budget, a good budget is when no one is one hundred percent happy. I believe this budget continues to move our City in the right direction.”



Special to The Clinton Courier

Mayor Phil Fisher



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Alderwoman-at-Large Ricki Garrett