CITY OF MUSCATINE
CITY COUNCIL BUDGET REVIEW SESSION
City Council Chambers, City Hall – January 28, 2023 – 8:00 a.m.

Mayor, Brad Bark, called the meeting for the City Council's budget review session for Saturday, January 28, 2023, to order at 8:00 a.m. Councilmembers present were; Brockert, Lewis, Gordon, Osborne, Jindrich, Froelich and Hopkins. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance.

Following the call to order, Mayor Bark turned the meeting over to Finance Director Nancy Lueck for an overview of general information regarding to the 2023/2024 projected budget.

Finance Director Nancy Lueck shared an overview of general information regarding the 2023/2024 projected budget.

City Administrator Webb shared a memo with City Councilmembers that described all personnel change requests for the 2023-2024 budget. Ms. Webb highlighted the positions that were recommended in the budget and explained the others would be reviewed in the compensation study and discussed later in the year. Ms. Webb stated 2 positions that were being considered were moving two 3/4-time positions to full time. Both of these positions would only cost the hourly wage as both are currently receiving City benefits through their spouses.

Councilmember Gordon stated if this position were to be replaced, the cost would increase due to having to pay insurance for that position. Ms. Gordon also had questions regarding the government funding for housing positions.

Councilmember Brockert had questions regarding City Investments and if the decrease in stocks had affected the city funds. Ms. Lueck stated the city is not allowed to invest in high-risk investments, and therefore the city remained ok.

Councilmember Gordon had questions regarding the purpose of the Emergency Levy and why it was being brought up now. Ms. Lueck stated the levy was brought back last year to catch up on deferred maintenance.

Councilmember Jindrich had questions about the General Fund balance. Mr. Jindrich stated last year that the City's fund balance could not go below 22% but this year it is at 21.5%. Ms. Lueck stated not to focus on the % but on the actual amount. Ms. Lueck stated these numbers will change slightly as expenditures come in.

**Mayor and City Council**;

City Administrator Webb reviewed the Council goals and accomplishments from the previous year and highlighted a few of the larger objectives to be completed during 2024.

**Legal Services:**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the projected Legal Services budget and stated that the city had hired a new City Attorney, and continues to utilize the County Attorney for Prosecutor Services.

Ms. Webb stated the budget may increase slightly due to the upcoming review of building codes and negotiations for all three unions.

**City Administrator**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the projected City Administrator budget.

Ms. Webb reviewed accomplishments and goals for the upcoming year.

Mayor Bark stated that the implementation of Civic Clerk and SeeClickFix have made a great improvement for customer support and employee time management.

Councilmember Brockert had questions regarding the Administrative Secretary position being changed to Deputy City Clerk. Ms. Webb stated that would be included in the Compensation Study and the job analysis along with the request from other departments.

**Human Resources**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the projected Human Resources budget.

Human Resources Manager Stephanie Romagnoli shared how the online application process has improved the hiring process for the city a great deal. She states there are still a few things to work out but overall considers it very useful.

Councilmember Lewis had questions regarding the amount of time saved by using this program. Ms. Romagnoli stated it helps the office assistant more than herself and estimated an average of 2 hours/week of saved time.

Mayor Bark had questions regarding the timeline of the application process. Ms. Romagnoli stated that depends on the position and if there is testing involved in the process or not.

Ms. Romagnoli also stated over the past year she has setup supervisor training, sent out an RFP for new City Attorney and organized the process for hiring a new police chief.

Councilmember Brockert suggested having sexual harassment training as it has been 4-5 years since that was last held.

Ms. Romagnoli stated she is now using the IMWCA online training and will look to see if that is on the list.

Ms. Romagnoli stated some objectives for the upcoming year include a compensation study, staff stay conversations and exit interviews.

Councilmember Gordon had questions regarding employees knowing they are doing a good job and how does the City acknowledge staff going above and beyond the normal day to day tasks. Ms. Gordon suggested finding a way to fund an employee recognition program through the budget process.

Ms. Romagnoli shared the current Bravo Program and how the ERC funds that.

Ms. Gordon stated that the ERC should not have to fund these recognitions.

There was discussion with Council and staff regarding legal issues of using city funds for nonpublic purposes and ways to acknowledge staff without spending funds. (Golf passes, aquatic center passes, etc.)

Ms. Romagnoli stated that union negotiations this year look to be challenging.

**Risk Management**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the projected Risk Management budget.

Stephanie Romagnoli shared information regarding the City Insurance coverage and stated that the workers compensation experience rating had dropped.

Ms. Romagnoli stated the online training program has been a time saving asset. She states this program also allows supervisors to assign training to their employees and that it service included in our insurance cost.

Councilmember Brockert had questions regarding the number of OSHA recordables and if the OSHA docs were available for viewing.

Ms. Romagnoli stated the city had 2 recordables for the previous year and that she would have to check with OSHA on if the records were available to the public.

**Finance**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Finance Dept. budget.

Ms. Lueck stated increases in the finance budget due to insurance cost, merit increases, employee benefits and financial software costs.

Ms. Lueck stated accomplishments for the past year included receiving the GFOA Budget award, scheduling uses for the ARPA funds, conversion of Springbrook to the cloud and research and preparation for implementation of electronic bidding software.

**Information Technology**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed IT Dept. budget.

IT Manager John Kreuzenstein stated it had been a busy year with phone system upgrade, computer replacements and the implementation of the key card system.

Mayor Bark had questions about the keycard system and the time frame that doors would be unlocked that were addressed by Mr. Kreuzenstein.

Councilmember Jindrich had questions regarding the installation of the generator and how long the power would be down for the installation. Mr. Kreuzenstein stated it would take a few hours on the weekend and that the times would be communicated to staff.

Councilmember Brockert asked if the keycard system could be a head count of employees in building if there were an emergency. Mr. Kruezenstein stated that it would not because not everyone has to use a keycard to have access to their office.

Councilmember Brockert asked if the City Councilmembers would get key cards as well. Mr. Kreuzenstein stated that is something that could be looked into and that not only are the cards access cards they also serve as employee ID cards.

Councilmember Lewis asked how much more vulnerable is the city to cyber attacks with the use of online pay for permits, parking etc. Mr. Kreuzenstein stated payments are processed outside of our network so should not affect the city.

Mayor Bark asked if the state had any regulations on the amount of security required. Mr. Kreuzenstein stated the state did not however the Insurance Company does.

**Community Development**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Community Development budget.

Jodi Royal-Goodwin, Community Development Director shared the Community Development Dept had been busy with some intense nuisance abatements over the last year. She stated there have been many repeat offenders and some difficult to deal with nuisance abatements. She stated staff is working on a better way to deal with nuisance abatement appeals, as well as trying to catch up on all of the housing inpsections.

Councilmember Froelich had questions regarding the body cams for inspectors and Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated that they had been trying out different models to find the best fit for their department. Ms. Webb stated that all enforcement positions will be required to wear body cams. Ms. Lueck stated these could be moved to the revised budget.

There was discussion among council regarding improvements in neighborhoods with the enforcement of codes and nuisances, Kudos to Andrew Fangman on communication with owners of old Hardee's building, importance of getting codes and information out to citizens (possibly bi-lingual).

Ms. Webb stated that an assessment was going to be done in the Community Development to determine where the city needs are prior to moving any staff around or hiring staff. There is $10,000 budgeted for this assessment.

Council had questions regarding what the top nuisance violations are and Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated junk, mowing, shoveling and vehicles.

**Airport**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Airport budget.

Community Development Director Jodi Royal-Goodwin shared that the airport is managed by REV formerly Carver Aero and Bolton & Menk are providing professional services. Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated she would like to hear from Council on ways to promote the Airport in the community.

**Police Department**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Police Department Budget.

Captain Tony Kies started by announcing promotions within the department effective March 1, 2023.

Mr. Kies stated that the police department has kept busy with Shop with a Cop (30th year), Coffee with a cop, Multiple Trunk or Treat, Female self defense classes, Code Blue Program, Community Policing Activities, Active Killer Training, and graduating 25 students in the Junior Police Academy.

Mr. Kies stated that the Police had given out 4 life saving awards in the past year.

Mr. Kies stated the Police Department had received zero complaints against police officers in the past year and attributes this to the departments ABLE Program.

Councilmember Brockett asked if organizations could volunteer to help with the Code Blue Program and as advised to contact Lt. Ryan Buss.

Councilmember Brockett had questions regarding human trafficking in Muscatine that were addressed by Mr. Kies. He stated there are no open active cases in Muscatine and that it is not something that highly affects our City.

There was discussion regarding holding Citizens Police Academy at the library as a way of educating citizens.

Mr. Kies stated the Juvenile Diversion Plan has had to date an 80% success rate.

There was discussion regarding problems with drug use in Muscatine and what the community can do to help alleviate some of this. Lt. Jirak stated the Drug Task Force positions are grant funded at this time and in the future Council may have to approve funding them from City Funds.

**Animal Control**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Animal Control Budget.
Captain Kies was present to discuss the number of calls received this year to discuss the purchase of a chip reader for the Animal Control Officer. This would allow ease of getting pets back with owners in a timely manner.

Ms. Webb stated that the new City Website update would include access to register pets online.

**Library**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Library Budget.

Library Director Robert Fiedler stated this had been a year of change for the library as he took over the director position. Mr. Fiedler stated some of the accomplishments included placement of skycam on library roof, acquiring books on prevention of violence, Libraries Alive Program, New Child Librarian Emerson Taylor and implementing the Fine Free Model.

Mr. Fiedler states he would like to increase the marketing for the library.

City Councilmembers discussed the improvements they have seen and heard from citizens regarding the atmosphere and customer service at the library over the last 6 months.

City Council asked about the library getting more audio books, more DIY shows on Channel 5, and adding children's education programming.

**Cablevision**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Cablevision budget.

City Administrator Webb stated there had been recent issues with cable feed for City Council meetings but staff, MCC and MPW have worked hard to get that resolved.

**Art Center**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Art Center Budget.

Art Center Director Melanie Alexander shared information regarding the accreditation process through American Alliance Museums, Exhibits that have been hosted, new events held in 2022 and classes for children.

Ms. Alexander stated work has began on the Japanese Garden with the removal of trees.

There was discussion and questions from council regarding the library using the new grant writer to help in preparing some of the grants applied for in order to fee up some of the director’s time. Ms. Alexander stated she would be willing to try to use the grant writer but said that sometimes the language used in Art Grants is different lingo than other grants.

Councilmember Hopkins stated that the Muscatine Art Center is a “diamond in the rough” and feels the city should do more to support them.

**Fire Department**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Fire Department Budget.

Fire Chief Jerry Ewers stated the department does what they can to work within the budget, but there were unexpected expenses that come up. Mr. Ewers stated that the department is now at full staff and that 2022 was a record year for calls.

Mr. Ewers stated that recent accomplishments included state certification training, increased community presence, seven new hires and they had an outside consultant to help with staff issues. Mr. Ewers stated they used changes to work schedules to help gain a better and more rested staff.

Assistant Fire Chief Mike Hartman shared information regarding upcoming objectives to include inspection program review, vehicle replacement, recruitment/retention of staff and making safety a bigger priority.

Darrell Janssen stated the department was requesting a breath air compressor to fill portable tanks before going into fires and a smoke machine to use for training purposes and high pressure lift bags.

**Ambulance**

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Ambulance budget.

Fire Chief Ewers was present to answer questions from City Council regarding the number and types of calls received, the distance travelled for transfers, and other general questions regarding the ambulance services.

Councilmember Froelich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Cinda Hilger
Administrative Secretary