Monday, October 29, 2018
Council Chambers
Immediately following General Fund Public Hearing
Budget Review Agenda

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee of the Whole meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the President of Council.

All electronic recording devices must be located behind the podium area in Council Chambers and located at the entry door in all other meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No.27-2012.

I. Budget Review – Immediately following General Fund Public Hearing -
   1. HRC
   2. Police
   3. Managing Director
   4. Law

II. Parking Lot Items
   1. Vacancy Allowance Management, FOP, IAFF, AFSCME (rank & file and supervisors)
   2. Technology Needs
      a. Hansen Upgrade/replacement
      b. System that is compatible with the County IT system
   3. Fire Stations – 10th & Penn and/or Marion
   4. Ordinance to increase the salary of the elected auditor
   5. Solid Waste Budget – typo office supplies at $12K – should be $500, Gas should
be $12K

6. PW Streets – discontinue Yard Waste Pickup in Jan-Feb annually
7. Release of Public Property Assessment – location of facility/property, size, liability to City
8. Repair of the Pagoda Wall
9. Shade Tree Budget salary reduction
10. Organization Charts for all administrative departments and offices
11. Consider adding narratives to all budget areas outlining action plans for projects and programs funded
12. Aggregated expense summary
13. List of new part-time positions created since the Salary Cap requirement
14. Capital needs for the Library – Main & Branches
15. Revisit County Contribution to RPL
16. Update Liquid Fuels projects overall, 2019 proposed projects & use if carry-over funds
17. Revisit Bio Solids Tipping Fees
18. Revisit electrical costs re use of blower at new WWTP
19. In Fire Administration, the Civilian salary of $36,560 should be increased to $37,280.
20. Suppression Contracted Services for Dispatch - reduce $192K to $187,250
21. Increase Suppression Machine and Equipment to $247,400 from $155,250
22. Reduce EMS overtime by $25K if a 4th EMS unit during training is not included in the 2019 Budget
23. Review the experience levels of firefighters/paramedics funded in 2019 and reduce the salaries to actual salary rate for every level of firefighters/paramedics – currently all are budgeted at the highest experience rating of Firefighter VI
24. Reduce overall Fire Budget by $575K
25. Reduce Dispatch in EMS from $185,970 to $180,085

III. Schedule for Monday Nov 5th

1. CD Department – Administration, Planning/Zoning/HARB, Property Maintenance & Building Trades
2. CDBG Action Plan

Schedule for Tuesday Nov 13th

1. ARL
2. Parking Lot
Schedule for Monday Nov 26th
1. Parking Lot

IV. Adjourn
COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
J. Slifko, S. Marmarou, B. Twyman, D. Reed, J. Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:
L. Kelleher, R. Johnson, O. Deming, G. Mann, D. Pottiger, W. Stoudt, F. Lachat

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:58 pm by Mr. Slifko

This symbol ⇒ will denote issues for additional follow-up.

I. Budget Review

• Fire

Chief Stoudt reviewed the Administration portion of the Fire budget noting the required correction to the Civilian Salaries line item:

⇒ In Fire Administration, the Civilian salary in of $36,560 should be increased to $37,280.

Chief Stoudt explained that the increase in the Contracted Services line item reflects the shift in IT expenses for fire and EMS related software products from the IT Division. He stated that Minor Capital includes maintenance coverage, computer training etc.

Chief Stoudt stated that in Suppression, the overtime expense is increasing to $605K from $440K as the Department is currently 12 firefighters below that budgeted. He stated that when the new class graduates the shortage will be reduced to four (4).

Chief Stoudt noted the need to reduce the Contracted Services line item in Suppression to the following, as the amount billed by the County has been slightly reduced:

⇒ Suppression Contracted Services for Dispatch reduce $192K to $187,250

⇒ Increase Suppression Machine and Equipment to $247,400 from $155,250
Chief Stoudt stated that the radio loan payments for the new County radio system will end in 2019.

Mr. Waltman suggested moving items that could be considered or covered as capital items into the Capital Budget to help close the deficit described at the Saturday and Monday Budget review meetings.

Chief Stoudt stated that the overtime expense in EMS has risen to $944K from $443K. He explained the various situations such as training that create the need for overtime expenses. He described the various ways the Department works to attract EMS professionals. Lt. Bauer explained that the salary suppression created under the two (2) Act 47 Recovery Plans and the stressful work environment make it difficult to retain paramedics.

Mr. Pottiger distributed a document prepared by Chief Stoudt outlining the overtime issues in the Suppression and EMS areas. Suppression and EMS have overtime increases due to short-staffing during the fire training process that new employees need to go through. He also noted the 25% increase in the volume of EMS calls since 2012. In 2012 Reading EMS responded to 16,325 calls and that number increased to 20,454 in 2017.

Chief Stoudt included an additional $25K of overtime funding in the EMS budget to provide a 4th EMS unit during staff training events.

⇒ Reduce EMS overtime by $25K if a 4th EMS unit during training is not included in the 2019 Budget

In 2014 the Mutual Aide responses from surrounding EMS provider began. In 2017 there were 717 responses to calls that the Reading EMS could not respond to. In 2017 surrounding EMS providers responded to 949 calls. Please note: in 2014 a 4th unit was added to EMS through the SAFER grant, allowing EMS to respond to 18,024 calls.

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<th>2012</th>
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<td>Rdg. EMS</td>
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<td>16,773</td>
<td>18,024</td>
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To increase the ability of EMS to respond to the growing EMS call volume, the Chief proposed adding a partial EMS unit during peak periods six (6) days per week using existing employees on overtime. The costs projected for a staff of two (2) at $44.25 per hour each:

- **8.5 hrs per day**
  - 5 days per week - $195,585 per year
  - 6 days per week - $234,702 per year
  - 7 days per week - $273,819 per year

- **10 hrs per day**
  - 5 days per week - $230,100 per year
  - 6 days per week - $276,120 per year
  - 7 days per week - $322,140 per year

Funding for this partial unit at 6 hours per week with overtime is included in the 2019 EMS Overtime budget line item.

Mr. Waltman left the meeting.

Mr. Mann explained that the Recovery Plans allow the Coordinator to establish the dollar value for the salaries, overtime and holiday pay for each employment group - management and the 4 bargaining units. The addition of this partial unit and the increase in overtime in EMS and Suppression places the Fire budget $575K over the established value for the IAFF. While the Chief is not adding staff to man the proposed partial unit, he is staffing the unit with overtime for existing medics. He noted the need for the budget to be in compliance with the Recovery Plan in order to retain the Commuter Tax for 2019, adding that without the Commuter Tax the capital projects planned for 2019 would be greatly reduced.

Mr. Mann described his conversation with the former managing director about the need to add staff in virtually every Department without including how or where the funding for these new employees would come from. The separation of the former managing director interrupted future conversations about how the City will fund those many new positions.

Mr. Mann stated that in the Fire Department, one way to reduce the budgeted cost of salaries would be to revisit the experience level of the firefighters that are funded. Currently the budget assumes that all firefighters/paramedics have reached the 5th
experience level (Firefighter VI) and are compensated at the highest level, when actually many of the employees funded are at a lower experience level, which would allow a reduction. Budgeting for what the City has, rather than what the City had will save a few hundred thousand dollars automatically. He explained that in actuality the Chief is not adding an actual 5th EMS unit, he is really using overtime to create a ½ unit. He noted that it will take a few weeks for the Chief and the Acting Managing Director to work this out.

☞ **Review the experience levels of firefighters/paramedics funded in 2019 and reduce the salaries to actual salary rate for every level of firefighters/paramedics – currently all are budgeted at the highest experience rating of Firefighter VI**

Mr. Deming noted the need to understand the number of non-emergency calls received and how that number can be reduced, which can reduce the strain on the Department. He also noted the need to understand how these calls are billed and collected.

☞ **Reduce Fire Budget by $575K**

Lt. Bauer described the Department’s approaches to attracting paramedics but he noted the challenges under the Act 47 salary restrictions and the stressful workload. He noted that other municipalities in Berks are mostly career positions (working for multiple municipalities such as Southern Berks, etc.); however, the compensation is higher and the workload is lighter. The Chief stated that the Dispatching fee can be reduced, as the County has provided a final 2019 billing rate.

☞ **Reduce Dispatch in EMS from $185,970 to $180,085**

The Chief stated that the Training portion of the Fire budget contains funding for 15 trainees.

Mr. Slifko closed the meeting for an executive session on personnel at 6:51 pm. Everyone but Mr. Deming, Ms. Reed, Mr. Slifko, Mr. Marmarou, Mr. Twyman, Ms. Kelleher, Mr. Lachat and Mr. Cituk left Council Chambers.

The executive session ended at 7:10 pm and the meeting immediately adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk