

Budget Review Meeting
Wednesday, October 29, 2014
Penn Room

Attending: J. Waltman, F. Acosta, D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, C. Snyder, L. Kelleher, C. Younger, D. Pottiger, C. Zale, D. Cituk, M. Bembenick, C. Younger, Fire and Public Works representatives

Mr. Waltman called the meeting to order at approximately 5:10 pm. He stated that the meeting is focused on the follow up issues for Fire and Public Works.

Fire

Chief Stoudt distributed a list of Fire Concerns and the overtime breakouts for Fire and EMS.

Chief Stoudt stated his department's budget increased to \$17.3M (increase of approximately \$900K) due to the IT chargeback, the 2% contractual salary increases and the increase in fringe benefits costs.

Chief Stoudt explained that the increases in overtime were in part due to the harsh winter storms which required double staffing and the need to provide staffing for the Fire classes for the new trainees.

Chief Stoudt stated that Acting Chief Mogel instituted a new policy to curb overtime caused by sick, vacation, funeral, and military leave time. He stated that the department paid \$89K in Fire overtime and \$1.3M in overtime due to sick, vacation, funeral and military leave.

In response to a question from Ms. Snyder, Chief Stoudt stated that the overtime used during Standby calls is covered by the \$90 per hour charge to the applicable organization.

Chief Stoudt noted the need to consider improving medic training so personnel can address non-emergency ambulance calls in the field and avoid an unnecessary trip to the hospitals. He stated that a task force has been formed to address this problem.

Dep. Chief Conrad agreed to reduce the number of non-medical emergency trips to the hospitals. He noted the need for improved public education to reduce the number of dispatch calls made just for transportation to the hospitals for issues that could be handled by a visit to a physician or Urgent Care facility.

Chief Stoudt noted his agreement with the need to cover the cost of the wheelchair transport service. He stated that the service started 13 years ago and it has not been evaluated since it started. He asked Council to consider providing him with a year to make the corrections to this service. He stated that he has been discussing this issue with Ms. Santamoor from PFM. He stated that he will agree to eliminate the service if he cannot make the service cost effective.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with the need to improve public education to avoid unnecessary EMS calls for transportation to the hospitals for non-medical emergencies.

In response to a question from Mr. Waltman, Chief Stoudt stated that increases to overtime were proposed in 2014; however, the administration reduced them to the levels contained in the 2015 budget.

Chief Stoudt explained the need for a new ladder truck. He stated that the department is applying for grants and they are prepared to seek an AFG grants and wait for up to two years to purchase the new truck. The last ladder truck was purchased in 2008. He stated that the department has three (3) ladder trucks and one ladder truck in reserve. The reserve truck was purchased in 1997. He stated that the department's CDBG applications for a new ladder truck were rejected each of the last three (3) budget years.

Chief Stoudt stated that he is also seeking two (2) Deputy Chief vehicles and two (2) vehicles for the Fire Marshall's Office. The department currently has two (2) vehicles purchased in 1996 and seven (7) vehicles purchased in 2000.

Mr. Waltman thanked the Chief for his presentation and he stated that the overtime adjustment and the vehicle requests will be considered during budget modification discussions.

Mr. Spencer arrived.

Public Works Budget

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ruyak stated that their gasoline line item was reduced by \$27K. They expressed the belief that the budgeted figure is not realistic. They stated that the gasoline charge covers the entire Public Works Department.

Mr. Johnson stated that he needs to re-check the funding of the new traffic signals as he believes they are included in both the budget and the Additional Spends list. He

described the traffic sign regulation changes that will require the City to add reflective coverings to traffic signs.

Mr. Johnson stated that the costs to address the ADA needs are included in the Public Works Administration budget. He stated that the costs in 2015 will cover a reassessment of the handicapped curbs that have already been installed. He stated that there may be changes required as the regulations now require a different grade, repositioning so the ramps connect with the crosswalks and the installation of rubber inserts.

Mr. Johnson described the situation at the Meade Street intersection that lacks a handicapped ramp. He explained that the need for the installation of the ramp was brought to his attention by a handicapped individual who resides near the intersection. He stated that the installation of the ramp will proceed before any other work occurs.

Mr. Johnson stated that he is seeking the addition of an Operator 2 position in the Highways budget and a project manager to assist with the work he and Mr. Ruyak currently perform. He stated that the Operator 2 would work with the Sanitary Sewer 2nd shift crew and adding this position will reduce overtime costs. The Operations Project Manager will cost \$75.9K and the 2nd Shift Operator 2 position will cost \$61.9K

Mr. Johnson stated that the Public Property budget included \$2.2M in dam remediation; however, he stated that funding is being moved from the Self-Insurance Fund. He also noted that the remediation project may not be completed in a one year period.

Mr. Ruyak explained that the department is aware of the need to improve grass mowing in City park spaces. Mr. Johnson noted that parks employees have been reduced from 15 to eight (8) over the last 10 years. Mr. Ruyak stated that they plan to address this need by using seasonal employees, rather than full time employees. He also noted that they are considering planting ground cover that does not require constant mowing.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz reminded the group of the need to also consider finding organizations that will assist us with general maintenance of parks by adopting the park. Mr. Waltman agreed, noting that Centre Park uses ADDAPT occasionally to cut the grass and trim Centre Park.

Mr. Ruyak described the plan to increase tree trimming through the Shade Tree Commission funding.

In response to a question from Mr. Waltman, Mr. Ruyak stated that he is unaware of the amount of money in the Shade Tree fund; however, the amount exceeds the 2014 allocation.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the many capital needs that have been deferred over the past 10 years. He noted the damage to the City Hall façade and roof that requires repair and many other unaddressed capital problems. He stated that repairs to the Pagoda Walls are going to begin shortly; however, the damage to the Skyline walls in the Reading area are unscheduled and unbudgeted.

Mr. Cituk stated that the Liquid Fuels allocation from the State will increase by \$250K in 2015. Mr. Ruyak stated that approximately 20% of this allocation can be used to purchase vehicles that service the City's streets. He noted that it costs approximately \$250K to pave ¼ mile of street surface.

Mr. Johnson noted the dramatic decreases to the Public Works department staff over the past 10 years which has caused many operational problems.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the Consent Decree requirements and the progress made to meeting the requirements.

Budget Review Agenda

Ms. Kelleher stated that Council is scheduled to discuss the impact the new recovery plan has on the 2015 budget tomorrow. Mr. Waltman stated that the list of budget modifications will be discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

A brief executive session regarding litigation occurred and concluded at approximately 7:15 pm. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk