



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

October 21, 2015

Budget Review

Following the Gen. Fund Public Hearing

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

J. Waltman, D. Reed, D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, J. Slifko

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, C. Younger, D. Pottiger, W. Heim

Note: The symbol "»" shows follow up/parking lot items.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz.

I. Follow up Items

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested an update on the new follow up items:

- » Information on the three (3) pension funds' performance for years 1, 3, 5 and 10 – being prepared by the administration
- » Can Council budget a pension payment that falls below the amount approved by the pension boards?

The actuary provided the response to this question at the October 20th meeting. The City is required to make a pension payment at the amount approved by the Pension Boards. The City can make a larger payment, but the City cannot reduce the amount of the payment. Penalties will be applied if the payment is reduced.

The Special Police Pension Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28th at 9 am in the 3rd Floor Conference Room.

II. Police Budget Review

Chief Heim stated that the increase in the Police Budget is caused by the contractual 2% salary increase and the step increases for new officers. He explained that the new program provides

five (5) step levels allowing an officer to be paid more as their skill levels improve. He stated that the other cost drivers in the Department are the cost of healthcare (active and retiree) and retiree pensions.

Chief Heim stated that the 2016 budget contains funding for two (2) new K9 vehicles; however, the Department needs to replace more of the K9 vehicles and two (2) unmarked patrol vehicles. He explained that a sponsor will be covering the cost, in whole or in part, of the two (2) budgeted K9 vehicles.

» Mr. Cituk inquired if the funds freed from the African American Museum could be used to fund the additional police vehicles requested by the Chief. Council decided to place this issue on the parking lot.

» The Chief expressed the need to replace the security cameras purchased in 2007-08 and to upgrade the security camera technology. Mr. Pottiger agreed with the need to replace the 2007-08 cameras as the repair bills are increasing. The Chief stated that the replacement of the cameras and the upgrade of the camera system together would cost between \$50-75K.

Mr. Pottiger explained why vehicles, other than expensive fire apparatus, are not included in the capital budget. He stated that they cost less than \$50K and they have a relatively short life span.

Mr. Waltman questioned the overtime expense. Chief Heim stated that the Patrol and CI (Criminal Investigations) areas are the big drivers of overtime for the Department. He explained that the Patrol area expenses fell within the amount budgeted; however the CI area exceeded that budgeted by 38%. He explained that this overage was driven by two issues: CI officers signing up to work special details and actual investigations.

The Chief explained that when a CI officer works a special detail the overtime is charged to that Division. He noted the importance of the first 48 hours following a crime incident to an investigation. He noted that the investigation cannot stop when the officer's shift ends.

The Chief stated that overall the Department's overtime cost came in at the amount he projected, instead of the amount of the overtime reduction. He stated that the 2015 overtime expense was \$1.8M which is a vast improvement from the \$2.4 spent previously.

The Chief noted the dramatic loss of experienced officers when the Department was required to move from 215 officers to 168 officers. Ms. Kelleher reminded the group that the next loss of experience came when nearly half of the Department retired since 2011. She reminded the group that at an Act 47 meeting the Chief spoke about his concern about potential retirement of an additional 80-85 officers.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz observed that \$0 is budgeted for K9. Ms. Reed inquired about purchasing health insurance for the canines.

Chief Heim stated that much of the K9 costs are covered through donations from various support organizations. He stated that the Department does not pay for canine health care, except for medication. He stated that he will explore the cost of healthcare insurance.

The Chief stated that the State, through MPOETC (Municipal Police Officers' Education & Training Commission), will once again begin reimbursing for the cost of instructors at the Police Academy. He explained that some officers pay tuition to go through the academy, some go through during their senior year at Alvernia, others using the academy are expected to become police officers for Reading or other municipalities.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:45 pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 26th at 4:45 in the Penn Room.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*