



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Special Budget Meeting
Alfreda Schmidt South Side Community Center
Wednesday, May 3, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Spitzley called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Brown Clarke
Councilmember Kathie Dunbar – excused and arrived at 6:34
Councilmember Tina Houghton
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley
Councilmember Jody Washington – arrived at 5:53
Councilmember Carol Wood
Councilmember Jessica Yorko – arrived at 5:43 p.m.

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Angie Bennett, Finance Director
Deb Parrish
Elaine Womboldt
Kathy Miles
Claude Beavers
Mary Ann Prince
Marilyn Irvine
Alex Rusick

Department Budget Presentations

City of Lansing Fiscal Year Budget 2017/2018

Council Member Wood informed the public that Council Staff did reach out to City TV to attend and tape, however since they were not present, they have been asked to reach to them again to attend Thursday's meeting at Foster.

Ms. Bennett provided an overview of the budget, timeline and highlighted the total FY 2017/2018 budget. Noted were funds for roads, \$128.5 for the General Fund which is

tax supported and the main revenue. Ms. Bennett went on to outlined programs such as “Block by Block” which was a Pilot in 2016/2017 with Baker Donora as the first area, and will continue. The next program request is \$100,000 for *My Lansing Initiative*, similar the President Obama’s *My Brothers Keeper Initiative*. This is for education, keeping youth engaged, crime prevention, with a focus on minority youth and opportunities. The next program mentioned was the Financial Empowerment Program which is going into its 5th year. The original grant has expired and now is being transitioned into the budget. Lastly, Ms. Bennett noted the City has entered into a partnership program with the YMCA in the aquatic program.

Ms. Bennett moved onto highlights of some new items, including Groesbeck Golf Course transition to LPEFA for the operations, with the City still owning. The Administrations idea with this is to provide a focus on golf plans and golf course events. The transition would occur in January 2018 after the 2017 season. Currently the Park Millage in the amount of \$500,000 a year is supporting this, and this would free up those funds to be used on park capital projects. Another new item she mentioned was the enhanced security and data analytics in the IT Department. Ms. Bennett then pointed out that currently the budget for the Community Block Grant (CDBG) is pending based on the Federal proposed elimination. It was also noted that the FHT will present their recommendations the week of May 8th on the legacy costs.

The presentation then went into details by Ms. Bennett on the sidewalk millage. Currently she noted the State could look to eliminate income tax or eliminate any growth in funding, and over the last 6 year millage there has \$22 million of improvements. Ms. Bennett gave an example of 1 mill increase would be \$50 annually for a house of \$100,000. The plan would be to issue the debt over the winter, then begin the construction in spring 2018, totaling \$11 million debt for 3 years, the same time as the construction season.

Ms. Beavers asked if the millage gets passed by the voters, would the residents also have to pay the special assessment they have been paying in the past when they get sidewalks replaced. Ms. Bennett answered that the special assessment would go away, it would not be a component of it. She did add in that there could be some exceptions, but generally speaking correct. Council President Spitzley admitted that this information on “no” special assessment was new information and Council asked Mr. Smiertka took into it, and if there is a millage then from passage of the millage forward if there would be no general fund dollars needed.

Mr. Beavers then pointed out to the Council that even the trees are not addressed next to the sidewalks the sidewalks will continue to be damaged, or the trees may even die.

Council Member Washington asked for the business plan for the millage, if there will be cost for on curb cuts, cost for ADA compliance, and also asked for the map of area where the sidewalks will be replaced.

Council Member Wood reminded Council that the millage is a discussion that will need to continue because they have not seen the ballot language, and it is not being proposed to be on the ballot until November, so the funds not allocated as any part of the budget. Ms. Bennett confirmed that the sidewalk amounts in the budget now for

sidewalks until the ballot is proposed. She also confirmed that before the ballot goes out there will be more discussions.

Ms. Bennett concluded by stating that in the budget is a proposal to build back up the reserves with a depository plan of \$500,000.

Public Comment

Mr. Beavers asked for the future outside meetings be taped and placed on public TV, acknowledged Council, support those that were going to vote “No” on the LEPFA request for the golf course, and questioned what LEPFA was doing with their funding.

Council President Spitzley informed the group that Mr. Keith with LEPFA will be attending the neighborhood budget meeting on May 4th at Foster to answer questions on the Groesbeck Golf Course.

Ms. Miles asked for details on where the 2016 millage went, stating her opinion that some went to uniforms, retirement costs and snow plowing. She in turn questioned where the new proposed millage would go, since it appears it will only fix 4.5 miles of sidewalk. Ms. Miles then spoke in opposition to LEPFA taking over Groesbeck. Spoke, in opposition for signage for Downtown, in opposition to the \$100,000 for LEAP for the loss from the Radisson, in opposition to future funding for Sister Cities, and lastly in opposition to the \$100,000 for *My Lansing*.

Ms. Womboldt acknowledged Council for their work, voiced concerns on some areas of the budget where there are increases requested, and asked Council to focus on the City infrastructure. Ms. Womboldt asked for continued research into where the \$250,000 for the payout of the City attorney was. Ms. Womboldt then made suggestions on items she wishes they would do such as hire a code compliance officer for commercial corridors and businesses. Lastly Ms. Womboldt spoke in opposition to LEPFA taking over management of Groesbeck Golf Course, opposition to \$100,000 for Downtown signage, opposed funding for Common Ground, asked for the elimination of Sister Cities funding and questioned the funding for the FHT for Legacy Costs research. In conclusion Ms. Womboldt spoke in opposition to the proposed millage.

Ms. Parrish asked for details on the outside contractor from Eaton County the City HR department has paid \$95,000.00. She also inquired into that department on why then need another full time position with the funding that was approved last year for an Interim Director, a New Director and a hiring specialist, when they just paid \$95,000 to an outside company to help with hiring. Ms. Parrish ended with asking for funding to paint lines in parking lot 21 and 37. Ms. Parrish asked Council why the Sister Cities was looking for a 50% increase. Council Member Wood informed the public that in the past the City has supported Sister Cities for their support staff services. Ms. Parrish concluded by asking for additional code enforcement officers, and spoke against LEPFA managing Groesbeck Gold Course.

Mr. Rusick spoke on the encouragement of the Council looking into protection from cyber-attacks, similar to what just happened to Ingham County and shut them down

for 3 days. Council President Spitzley assured Mr. Rusick that on Monday, the City IT Director updated the Council on everything the City is doing.

Ms. Womboldt asked to get copies of the presentation boards, and Council Member Wood told her they were on the website.

Ms. Irvine acknowledged the Council for their work, and asked them to consider taking the requested \$100,000 for Downtown signage and put it towards roads. Ms. Irvine also made Council aware that in areas where sidewalks have already been replaced, the trees are dying.

Council Member Washington spoke in opposition to any funding for the City Market, and suggested selling it because it is not sustainable. She noted to her fellow Council Members that it is not appropriate to ask tax payers to subsidize a bar, which occupies the majority of the property. Council Member Washington then asked Ms. Bennett how much was in the budget for the Faith Based Initiatives. Ms. Bennett confirmed it is \$20,000 and part of the Mayor's budget. Council President Spitzley asked what that \$20,000 was used for, at which Ms. Bennett confirmed it was for Bishop Maxwell salary and supplies. Council Member Washington proposed eliminating those funds.

Council Member Wood provided an answer to an earlier question on the \$100,000 to LEAP for loss of Radisson payments. She noted that there was an agreement with the Radisson that just expired, and in that the Radisson had to provide \$100,000 to LEAP, but since the agreement has now expired, LEAP is still seeking those funds from the General Fund. In regards to the question on Sister Cities, Council Member Wood stated that in 2003 or 2005 Sister Cities made an agreement with Council that if fund them for 3 years, after that 3 years they would become self-sustainable. Council began reducing the funding each year. Currently they are asking for an increase, not the reduction that was being done, and they are not self-sustained.

Ms. Bennett clarified that the Radisson payment of \$100,000 was paid to LEDC, not LEAP, and that was stopped once the agreement ended this year. The request from LEDC is for \$100,000 from the General Fund.

Council Member Washington suggested to fellow Council Members they consider cutting \$100,000 from the Downtown wayfinding sign request, \$140,000 from the proposed round about on Washington and Grand River; take the \$140,000 that Common Ground wants, \$20,000 from the Faith Based Initiative, \$40,000 from the Sister Cities program and that would save the City \$440,000.

Council Member Wood asked Mr. Smiertka to provide an opinion on if the sidewalk millage would be similar to the "rain tax" issue from a couple years ago. Mr. Smiertka admitted it is a 3-prong request, and the ballot language has not been written. He did admit that it will have to be proportionate and cannot be a tax.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by, Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary Lansing City Council

Approved by Committee on May 8, 2017