



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, April 24, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.
Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Wood called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Council Member Carol Wood
Council Member Jeremy Garza- excused
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley - excused
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson
Councilmember Jeffrey Brown
Councilmember Ryan Kost

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Jim Smiertka, OCA
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Emily Linden, Internal Auditor
Desiree Kirkland, Finance
Jane DiSessa, Deputy Mayor
Anethia Brewer, District Court
Susan Knieling, District Court
Elizabeth O'Leary, HR
Andy Kilpatrick, Public Service
Brett Kaschinske, Parks and Recreation
DeLisa Fountain, NCE
Michael Lynn
Erika Lynn
Judge Ward, District Court
Susan Kneiling, District Court
Ulices Rosa, District Court

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 10, 2023 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Council President Wood reminded the Council that the financial affidavit and eligibility form is due with the Clerk by May 1st.

Council President Wood briefly referred to documents on the DIAS that were provided at the Committee on Ways and Means today from the Finance Director presented. They documents

had to do with the projection of the budget for FY 2023, and would not be discussed tonight but at the meeting on May 1st.

Public Comment

Ms. Stanaway spoke on the budget proposal for the cemeteries, the parks millage subsidy, the lack of funding projection for opening and closings, no transfer in from the perpetual care fund, and then spoke on the emergency shelter funding that is missing from the projected budget.

Presentations

Department Budget Presentations

Council President Wood referenced the seven (7) question document in the folder and asked each department to address those and any separate reports should be submitted to Council but not for discussion tonight.

District Court

What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?

Judge Ward, Ms. Brewer, Ms. Knieling and Mr. Rosa were introduced. Ms. Brewer stated there was a slight change in the sharing costs.

Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?

Ms. Brewer stated there were no service changes, but significant changes with success in their specialty courts and the services have been extended in community outreach.

Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?

Ms. Brewer stated there is one fee increase to \$100 per assessment for alcohol and drug in house assessments.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Ms. Brewer stated there are changes in incidentals, which will require scanners for the civil department.

Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.

Ms. Brewer confirmed they have not contracted or combined positions, but have eliminated two deputy clerk positions to boost the clerk salary schedule.

Did your department receive any ARPA funding in the current fiscal year, and if so how was it spent.

Ms. Brewer confirmed they did not get ARPA funds directly but have spent some funds via the Financial Empowerment Center.

Does your proposed budget include a carry forward of ARPA funds and if not how will your department programs change because of not having those ARPA funds.

Ms. Brewer confirmed they do not have any carry forwards.

Ms. Linden asked if they were asked to cut any expenses, and Ms. Brewer stated they were not.

Council Member Jackson asked about their ZOOM ability and asked how they perform ZOOM trials and what the cost is. Ms. Brewer stated there is no cost and judges are managing them personally. Judge Ward added that each judge proceeds each day assuming it will be hybrid, but prepared to go in person. The District Court has provided all judges with IPAD to participate in breakout rooms.

Council Member Brown asked about the eviction diversion program and if it is drawing more resources. Mr. Rosa stated the program has created a holistic approach for the courts to bridge resources for those being evicted. This includes people who are homeless, in shelters or in hospitals. Council Member Brown asked how many people were served since in existence. Mr. Rosa stated it has been 9 months and have documented 500.

Council Member Kost asked if in the eviction program if they have worked with the Housing Ombudsman, and Mr. Rosa confirmed they do work with the resource specifically for those on Section 8. Mr. Rosa outlined their process.

Council President Wood asked Ms. Brewer about \$50,000 for Dispute Resolution from the ARPA funds, and Ms. Brewer stated she was not aware that those funds went through District Court but would confirm. Council President Wood asked her to confirm if it is or is not in the budget this time.

Neighborhoods & Citizen Engagement

Council Member Wood reminded Council that if they have to recuse themselves from any departments budget, they cannot ask any questions of that department during their budget presentations.

What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?

Ms. Fountain stated the cost changes were in personnel, but in line with contracts.

Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?

Ms. Fountain confirmed there are no changes in services.

Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?

Ms. Fountain stated they do not have any rates they are responsible for.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Ms. Fountain confirmed they do not have any planned purchases.

Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.

Ms. Fountain confirmed they are not eliminating, combining or contracting positions.

Did your department receive any ARPA funding in the current fiscal year, and if so how was it spent.

Ms. Fountain began with Financial Empowerment; they purchased a bus and expect it before the next tax season. The Driver While License is Suspending spending, there was \$10,000 paid towards fines and fees in the program. For marketing there was \$100,000 for marketing the services Financial Empowerment offices and they are on track to spend that. The neighborhood grants is \$200,000 and the department is on schedule to utilize all those funds.

Does your proposed budget include a carry forward of ARPA funds and if not how will your department programs change because of not having those ARPA funds.

Ms. Fountain confirmed they have or will utilized all funds on the programs, and those programs will not be going forward. Once funds are depleted for neighborhood grants they will return to the original program.

Ms. Linden asked about the 28.9% increase in personnel but her statement that there were no changes in personnel, what is that for. Ms. Fountain stated there are no new people, it is due to the employee contracts.

Ms. Linden asked if they were asked to make budget cuts, and Ms. Fountain confirmed they were not asked directly but to be aware.

Council Member Hussain referenced their personnel line item which has \$100,000 increase then asked for details on the number of staffing. Ms. Fountain stated under Neighborhoods there are 2 FT, and Financial Empowerment has 2 FT, and in that area there is a contract employee which is reimbursed by the State of Michigan. Council Member Hussain asked about the \$310,000 in contractual and Ms. Fountain stated they are working on a RFP for funding one organization.

Council Member Kost asked if with 311, how many calls have resulted in resolution in the past year. Ms. Fountain stated there were 30,753 calls as of 4/21, but when speaking about resolution it is difficult, but she can pull a breakdown of the calls for the next meeting.

Council Member Kost referenced the miscellaneous cost of \$50,000 and asked what those funds are for, and Ms. Fountain confirmed citizen academy, everyday supplies, trash clean up supplies for residents.

Council Member Brown referred to the 311, and asked how many calls are deferred to the department. Ms. Fountain said 311 has taken the departments main lines, and this allows the department to reduce their direct line numbers. She stated she can investigate their report breakdown for numbers. Council Member Brown asked about the \$100,000 marketing and asked what that is used for. Ms. Fountain explained it is used to market the Financial Empowerment Center services but could not provide with specifics at this time and would provide in the future. Council Member Brown asked what the internal marketing referrals were coming from, providing the example if someone goes to HRCS for services, do they refer people to Financial Empowerment. He then asked how many of their referrals come from internal departments. Ms. Fountain could not provide the statistics at this time and could get the referral numbers to Council.

Council Member Hussain asked if they can distinguish between calls directly from 311 vs the rerouted one. Ms. Fountain could not provide details on that , but could look into that information

Human Resources

What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?

Ms. O'Leary stated they are adding one FT for retirement technician and succession planning.

Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so, why?

Ms. O'Leary confirmed there are no changes.

Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?

Ms. O'Leary confirmed no changes.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Ms. O'Leary confirmed there are no purchases proposed.

Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.

Ms. O'Leary confirmed they have no combining, contracting or eliminating of positions planned.

Did your department receive any ARPA funding in the current fiscal year, and if so how was it spent.

Ms. O'Leary stated they have had no ARPA funding.

Does your proposed budget include a carry forward of ARPA funds and if not how will your department programs change because of not having those ARPA funds.

Ms. O'Leary confirmed it does not have any impact.

Ms. Linden asked about the new position mentioned. Ms. O'Leary stated she does not have a definite date the current Retirement Coordinator will retire so this is for preparation for the succession. Ms. Linden asked if they were asked to make any decreases, and Ms. O'Leary stated they were not but she was aware because she is also the Labor Negotiator.

Council Member Kost asked about the \$25,000 residency program and what that entails. Ms. O'Leary explained it is where an employee can get assistance with downpayment assistance. Council President Wood explained the history of the program. Council Member Kost asked if they market the residency program, and Ms. O'Leary acknowledged they do not, but stated she will look into better marketing so people are aware. Council Member Kost asked about the \$13,000 for employee recognition program and what that is used for. Ms. O'Leary outlined the event they hold annually for all employees. Council Member Kost asked about the increase in salaries from FY2022, and if that is all contractual. Ms. O'Leary stated it was the addition of FTE position and collective bargaining contract increases.

Council Member Hussain referred to the summary of projection, there has been 4 FTE added over the last 2 years. Ms. O'Leary informed them of the positions being the current posting of succession coordinator, a health wellness specialist, a hiring specialist, and the deputy director. They have recently hired a hiring specialist in the last 2 months and are working on a priority list. Council Member Hussain asked how many specialists currently and Ms. O'Leary stated there is one manager and 3 specialists, with one vacancy. Council Member Hussain asked about the hiring process, it historically being slow, and asked what they are doing to speed up the process. Ms. O'Leary confirmed it has been a priority to make it faster so they are looking at combining steps, eliminating duplicate steps, and recently held a seasonal job fair where people were hired on the spot. Employees have been asked to go to community events as well. They are looking at processes to review the process and look at efficiencies.

Council President Wood referred to the \$235,000 in line item of contractual services, and asked for a list of what those are. She then asked for what the training line items is used for, and Ms. O'Leary stated it can be used for mandated trainings and for HR trainings for certifications. Council President Wood asked for a list of those trainings. Council President Wood then referred to the 84 vacancies in the City, and asked for any ideas the City can do to enhance the process to move it along. She then asked why no paper applications available, and Ms. O'Leary confirmed there used to be computers to create applications, and they are working with UAW to streamline. They are looking at options to address the barriers and address the issues. Council President Wood asked what training they were doing on diversity and inclusion. Ms. O'Leary stated that through MRJEA and HRCS there is cabinet level training taking place and HR is doing training. Council President Wood asked how often the City is doing the training. Ms. O'Leary confirmed that is part of the MRJEA plan, which is a

“train the trainer” component, which will have a schedule with a regular training and be consistent.

Council Member Hussain asked Ms. O’Leary and Ms. DiSessa for an update on a statement that was made to Council that the CSO was going to audit contracts across the departments. He also asked for a list of what contracts have been audited and what the findings were. Council President Wood asked if the contracts have been reviewed with current licenses, current insurances, and if HR has any of those contracts, she is interested in a list. Council President Wood asked the Internal Auditor to ask all departments for a list of contracts and verification that they have been reviewed, and confirmed current licenses and insurances. Mr. Smiertka confirmed OCA reviews on the initial contract and after that it is up to the departments.

Public Service

What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?

Mr. Kilpatrick pointed out the 311 allocation is being done differently this year, and this year it was based on call volume and type, so the allocation was changed. The fleet costs overall went up 10% because of vehicle purchases and vehicle items. They are assuming that cost will increase more than inflation, but they will look at costs going forward and adjust.

Regarding O & M, they looked at it by employer and position, for allocation of funds. In the past the charges were charged to general fund, then allocated back, but now they take each employee by position that they would work on for the year and based it on that. In multiple funds there is a significant increase in capital projects, for example a CSO project, there was federal funds for downtown that they were not prepared to get, and there are matching funds which was not in the normal CSO funds. In the Frandor Hills area there is road work and sanitary work. With the Michigan Avenue project, the match amount is budgeted in the FY 2024 budget. There is a project at Paulson for design at remediation, and they have asked for funds from Congress, but that amount will not be known until the design is done. In the CSO project there is new storm sewer, and the sewer fund cannot be used for that.

Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so, why?

Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed there are no changes in services.

Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?

Mr. Kilpatrick acknowledged there are inflationary increases in trash, recycling and sewer fund.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Mr. Kilpatrick acknowledged there are not significant changes, but every year there are fleet changes to cycle for newer vehicles.

Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.

Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed there are no changes in positions.

Did your department receive any ARPA funding in the current fiscal year, and if so how was it spent.

Mr. Kilpatrick there was \$6.9 million in ARPA for fleet in Fire and Police vehicles. Those, due to long lead time, they do not expect to take possession of until FY 2024 or early calendar year 2024.

Does your proposed budget include a carry forward of ARPA funds and if not how will your department programs change because of not having those ARPA funds.

Mr. Kilpatrick admitted they do not anticipate, but if the vehicles are not here before July 1, then there will be carry forward.

Ms. Linden asked about the personnel numbers, and Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed they have eliminated the transportation engineer. Ms. Linden referenced the percentages projected for local and major streets and asked if they had a plan. Mr. Kilpatrick explained that with long term it could be problem, with the timing of the projects it is higher on major and local. Ms. Linden asked if there is a breakdown of the mandated CIP projects, and Mr. Kilpatrick stated he would get a list. Ms. Linden asked for an explanation on utilities in the city. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed that all bills go to finance, and they pay them. Currently they are looking at all bills to see what facilities the bills are for and which facilities they should be charged to. Currently he stated he was looking at what have been done, and then look at if they need to evaluate per department. They will need to consider if all charges go to property maintenance or broken out to each department based on square footage in the facility. They will be able to provide information within the FY2024 on what the break is down in the utilities.

Council Member Spadafore asked about the condition of the fleet used for trash and CART. Mr. Kilpatrick stated the age is above industry standard of 7 years. The City age is 12 years. The yard waste vehicles are the oldest and they are looking to replace those as well. The way they are allocating fleet, there is one lag, so they look at what was the cost and then allocate for the next year. Council Member Spadafore asked if the allocation method allows for more time.

Council Member Hussain asked how operable sweepers the city has. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed 3, and would confirm the types, rentals and owned. Council Member Husain asked about the chip seal process done on some of the streets. Mr. Kilpatrick acknowledged the chip seal process in last year did cause issues and they are trying to finalize things with the contractor to come back and fix things.

Council President Wood asked for a list of public service vehicles. She then asked if they have worked out with the OCA the guarantees and contracts with the contractors. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that when they put asphalt down, they will test, and they can add a warranty but that will cost more. They already have a 3-year warranty on sidewalks.

Council President Wood referred to the allocations for 311, and the budget for Public Service is paying for almost 50% of the system. She asked if he believed Public Services is getting that many calls that he can warrant paying for half when District Court is paying nothing. Mr. Kilpatrick acknowledged it is difficult to say and he cannot speak to how the allocation is determined.

Council Member Jackson stepped away from the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Council President Wood then spoke on the sewer funds, which were being increased at 4%, and how Council was told that 4% was not going to be enough. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed they are looking at that and the CSO was changed from a 20 year to 30 year repayment, so somewhere in the next 6-8 years they projected the sewer fund would not have enough funds. Once done with CSO and funds drop off, the sewer fund will be okay.

Council Member Hussain asked if the prior administration stalled the CSO and if that is true how many years was it delayed and what was that. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed the City was spending more money than taking in.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Mr. Kilpatrick expanded on the details by stating there was a pause to work out a longer schedule, and during that time as opposed to doing any, they decided to let the fund build back up. As for the actual cost to the City Mr. Kilpatrick could not provide that, but with construction costs it is now higher.

Council Member Hussain stated for the record that this delay has cost the tax payers a staggering amount of money.

Parks & Recreation

What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?

Mr. Kaschinske stated they are less than 1% in general fund, with a 7.5% increase in the cemetery account.

Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?

Mr. Kaschinske confirmed no changes.

Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?

Mr. Kaschinske referred to page 119 of the budget book which outlined the fee increases. He highlighted the areas such as cemeteries, community rooms, pavillions and summer park playground camp program.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Mr. Kaschinske referred to page 116 which outlined the CIP projects. Those included park maintenance and repairs, Fenner Research Park, playground renovations, basketball complex, One Fit lots, Holiday Lights structures, and Ranney Skate Park improvements. The projects total \$1.8 in CIP, \$600,000 in subsidies equaling \$2.5. Council President Wood also referred the Committee to page 98 in the budget book as well which outlined the projects.

Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.

Mr. Kaschinske confirmed they have no differences.

Did your department receive any ARPA funding in the current fiscal year, and if so how was it spent.

Mr. Kaschinske stated they have used ARPA funds for the concrete pad at Reutter park, and a pool liner. There will be 3 parking lots and an entry drive at Frances park; redoing Gier Park ball field lots, and Davis park at Pleasant Grove.

Does your proposed budget include a carry forward of ARPA funds and if not how will your department programs change because of not having those ARPA funds.

Mr. Kaschinske stated the project mentioned in the previous question will carry forward.

Ms. Linden asked about the 2 positions added in the FY 2024 budget, and Mr. Kaschinske stated they are FTE full time in aquatics and a community center programmer.

Council Member Spadafore asked about participation and programs, asking if they are returning to pre pandemic. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed they have exceeded the levels, the after school programs have waiting lists, but there is not enough staff to provide for the need. Council Member Spadafore asked if their department was part of the seasonal job fair. Mr. Kaschinske said it was geared towards seasonal maintenance, but they are planning another job fair with on the spot hiring.

Council Jackson asked about the tree planting, trimming and tree efforts in the parks that have to be done.

Council Member Spadafore stepped away from the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Kaschinske confirmed they have a tree canopy report that they need to look at to maintain trees they currently have. There are 525 trees currently being distributed to residents that have requested, and the City will plant more.

Council Member Spadafore returned to the meeting at 6:36 p.m. and Council Member Kost stepped away from the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

To increase the tree canopy they would have to consider “no mow zones”. Council Member Jackson asked if they have the resources to maintain the trees they plant. Mr. Kaschinske stated they do put out water bags when we plant and need help from public, but could use more resources.

Council Member Kost returned to the meeting at 6:38 p.m. and Council Member Brown stepped away from the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Council Member Hussain asked if there is enough personnel to do tree trimming. Mr. Kaschinske explained the number one task is for hazard removal; a tree that is dead, dying or decay and to remove before a limb falls or is lost. They are behind on that, in regard to trimming

Council Member Brown returned to the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Council Member Hussain asked about stump removal and if there is State or Federal funding. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed he has never seen grants funds for that, but plans for stump grinding have been discussed. Council Member Hussain asked how many playground replacements planned. Mr. Kaschinske stated they can spend from \$500 – \$500,000 on a playground so there are discussions with the park board as to divide by ward as they have done previously. Council Member Hussain asked for community outreach on that decision, and Mr. Kaschinske confirmed Council did direct the Park Board to have a outreach program and they are actively working on that.

Council President Wood asked about the cemetery fund and if those revenues have been taken into account. Mr. Kaschinske stated that they have taken into account the perpetual care fund in the current budget and in future, in terms of what earned, it has not earned. They have determined the account has not increased in the past so there was no reason to assume it would.

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN AT 6:47 P.M. TO RECESS INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MCL 15.268(C) OF THE OMA FOR STRATEGY AND NEGOTIATION SESSIONS CONNECTED WITH THE NEGOTIATION OF A COLLECTIVE

BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LANSING AND LOCAL 421 OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS AS REQUESTED BY THE CITY. PRESENT IN THE MEETING WILL INCLUDE ELIZABETH O'LEARY, JANE DISESSA, COURTNEY ROBERTS, MICHAEL TOBIN. ROLL CALL VOTE, MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECONVENE

Council President Wood reconvened the meeting at 7:14 P.M.

Discussion/Action

RESOLUTION – Ratification of CBA; Local 421 International Association of Fire Fighters

Council Member Hussain outlined the topics of the CBA.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE CBA WITH LOCAL 421 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Other

No other topics of discussion.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee April 1, 2023