



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, May 8, 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
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Peter Spadafore excused
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley
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
Jane DiSessa, Deputy Mayor
Dominic Cochran, City TV
Chris Swope, City Clerk
Dennis Parker, UAW 2256
Barb Kimmel, EDP
Doris Witherspoon, EDP
Desiree Kirkland, Finance Director
Michael Lynn
Mark Lawrence, Mayor's Office
Erika Lynn
Elizabeth O'Leary, HR Director
Dan Conley, LFD Union
Ryan Wilcox, LPD Union
Jason Pung, LPD Union

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER GARZA TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 1, 2023 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Public Comment

Mr. Lynn spoke on his concerns with the Mayor's budget asking Council to ask for duties and abilities the positions hold in the Mayor's office, particularly the position for the executive at \$111,000. He then spoke on Charter violations and the stated fines, and asked Council to consider those violations on the Executive Office.

Ms. Lynn spoke on the Mayor's budget presentation on the agenda and asked for advocating for Council to ask about where the resources are, the spending cuts, and how it will impact the community.

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.

Mayor

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

Mr. Lawrence stated there were no significant changes.

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

Mr. Lawrence stated there were no changes.

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

Mr. Lawrence stated they have no rates or fees in the department.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Mr. Lawrence stated they do not have any major equipment purchases proposed.

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

Mr. Lawrence stated that they have no staffing changes.

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

Mr. Lawrence stated they did not get ARPA funds and this not applicable.

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. Lawrence stated this was not applicable.

Council President Wood recapped for Mr. Lawrence that the Mayor did receive \$1.9 million in ARPA funds to disburse and was given directly to his department. Mr. Lawrence stated he interpreted the question specific to the Mayor's office directly, which they did not get. Council President Wood stated that Council would be interested in a breakdown on where the \$1.9 million went. Mr. Lawrence disputed that Council has been kept apprised of the ARPA funds during the process. Council President Wood stated that all departments received this question on obtaining ARPA funds and reported where those funds went.

Ms. Linden asked about their increase in the miscellaneous line item. Mr. Lawrence stated that a separate line item was set up for the Ramadan event along with a separate line item for the Veterans Committee. Regarding the question asked, the increase in miscellaneous was due to and increase in

expenses based on more activity in their office. Ms. Linden asked for clarification on the statement for Ramadan and Veteran Committee and Mr. Lawrence confirmed they are separate line items now.

Council Member Spitzley asked Mr. Lawrence how the miscellaneous increased since he just stated as a response to the question that Ramadan and Veterans Committee have separate line items. Mr. Lawrence confirmed the increase in miscellaneous is due to activity in the office.

Council Member Hussain noted that in 2015 there were five (5) positions in the Mayor's department and now there are eight (8). Mr. Lawrence confirmed there are eight (8). Council Member Hussain asked what the roles were of those eight (8) positions. Mr. Lawrence provided details that the CSO is doing the work per the ordinance and special projects. The other positions include the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor. Ms. DiSessa explained her official position is Deputy Mayor Chief of Staff and the second Deputy Mayor is Ms. Frayer who is also the CSO. Ms. DiSessa defined her position as a authority position, and when the Mayor titles that changed duties for her and Mr. Frayer. Ms. DiSessa stated she is over internal departments and Ms. Frayer is the other departments and special projects. Ms. DiSessa role is the liaison to City Council, an executive assistant, special projects, liaison to special committees, on the Mayor's task force work and also represent the Mayor at specific events. Council Member Hussain asked how involved Ms. Frayer was in the budget because there is an ordinance that speaks to the role, and Council being told there is a \$11.6 million deficit and they are working on a plan.

Mr. Lawrence continued with listing the other staff including his role as Deputy Chief of Staff. Council Member Hussain asked again if there were any staff additions and Mr. Lawrence stated no, and his role as Citizen Advocate was approved by Council in 2018. Council Member Spitzley called point of order stated that Council did not approve the Citizen Advocate, they did the ordinance for the CSO, and have been told multiple times by OCA that they are not involved in the hiring or firing of positions. Council did not approve the deputy mayor's either, and the Charter speaks specifically to the Mayor and the Mayor's Executive Assistant, not deputy mayors. Council President Wood added to the explanation that in the budget there is a personnel line item, but it is not divided out by positions. Mr. Smiertka confirmed the Charter does only speak to the executive assistant to the Mayor and the term "deputy mayor" is used on as a title. Council Member Hussain explained his reason for the inquiry into these positions is to make sure Council and the public is aware of what they are getting out of each position. Mr. Lawrence out lined his position as Deputy Chief of Staff which includes run the administrative side of the office, provide resources to residents that call who have issues, advise the Mayor and assist in running the City. Lastly he referred the Council to his job description that was provided in 2022. Council Member Hussain admitted that he was in support of the Citizen Advocate position when it was created, however then the Mayor created the Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement Department and recently a 311 phone system that takes all calls from all department main lines. He asked Mr. Lawrence if there was actually enough work for a Citizen Advocate considering all the other advocates.

Mr. Lawrence finished listing the rest of the staff in the Mayor's office being the labor negotiator, the CSO, and the digital media communications manager. It was noted that the digital manager is not paid for out of the Mayor's budget. And by bringing in Living Lansing in house they have been able to save funds. Council Member Hussain referred to the budget document and asked again for the eight (8) positions the Mayor stated were in his department, noting the documents specifically states the "communication and digital manager position moved to the Mayor's Office". Mr. Lawrence stated the other positions are the office manager and a scheduler. The scheduler's role is the person that does all the scheduling and the appointments to boards and commissions. Council Member Hussain asked what Scott Bean's role was and Mr. Lawrence stated it is the communications director. Council Member Hussain asked about the role of the faith based, noting it appeared the Mayor's office is continuing to add positions but the City and the citizens are not getting anything additional in services. Mr. Lawrence disagreed with Council Member Hussain. Council Member Hussain noted that he has

not seen the return on the dollars, and everywhere he goes people talking about the spending and lack of service. There are multiple roles in the staff that are doing the same thing.

Council Member Spitzley asked if Ms. O'Leary was still the Labor Negotiator and Human Resources Director and Mr. Lawrence confirmed. Council Member Spitzley asked if her salary was budgeted in HR or the Mayor's office and Mr. Lawrence stated the Labor Negotiator is budgeted out of the Mayor's office.

Ms. DiSessa appealed to explain to Council that the mayoral staff works diligently to provide services to the community, adding that in his role Mr. Lawrence also works with legislative issues, works on proposals to legislatures and acts in her absence. Lastly she reiterated that they are still working on the deficit and have been working on it since she started.

Council Member Brown asked for governmental transparency in the Mayor's office, asking the Citizen Advocate go out to the community. He asked that they provide a calendar of where their staff will be out in the community so citizens are aware of their efforts. He then inquired into what role the office staff was doing since the administration has stated that 311 has been taking largely all the calls. Ms. DiSessa stated that when they look at an issue, everyone in the office may be involved. She assured the Council that they believe Mr. Lawrence is meeting with residents. Council Member Brown asked for assurance in reporting that the tax payers are getting and can see the action for the investment of their of tax payer dollars.

Council Member Garza noted the earlier statement where Mr. Lawrence stated they have not had any changes in service, but then went on to speak of all the changes in titles. And statements made on his role where he fills in for Ms. DiSessa but has only been to Council meetings 3 times since January. He then asked Ms. DiSessa why she does not live in the City and asked why the Mayor could not hire someone that was in the City. Mr. Lawrence stated it is illegal to require someone to live in the community they work in, and Council Member Garza acknowledged he is aware of the law, however the Mayor could have hired someone in the City who would be involved in their community. Ms. DiSessa briefly appealed to her understanding of her interest in the community, her role in looking for efficiency and work with the Mayor and Finance. Council Member Garza asked why the CSO was not present. Ms. DiSessa stated her understanding for this meeting was about the budget not the departments operations and management.

Council Member Spitzley asked if Scott Bean salary was coming out of the Mayor's office and Mr. Lawrence stated it is in the IT department budget. Council Member Spitzley asked why it was not part of the Mayor's eight (8) staff. Council Member Spitzley spoke briefly on her frustration that they have been aware of the structural deficit however have not addressed it and now are telling Council they will have a plan after the budget is adopted. The question was then asked if the CSO, Ms. Frayer is full time and Ms. DiSessa confirmed. Council Member Spitzley asked why Council has not had meetings with her quarterly per the ordinance. Council Member Hussain again referred to the Mayor's budget and the documents where it stated Mr. Bean was part of the Mayor's staff at \$90,000. Council Member Spitzley confirmed the same, and noted that when IT presented they said it was in their department, so there was confusion.

Council Member Kost asked Ms. DiSessa if she had spoken to any residents today, when the last time was and if she has had any conversations on weekends. Ms. DiSessa stated she had not and the last time was the week before sometime, and there has been an issue where she did come in on the weekend. Council Member Kost referred to the Mayor's budget and the close to \$1 million in the office, and stated his frustration with the work performed in the Mayor's office for the \$1 million. Council Member Kost spoke briefly on the duties of the Deputy Mayor Ms. DiSessa and her continual

response of “not prepared to respond to that”, along with always being on her phone during Committee and Council meetings. Ms. DiSessa explained her reasoning for not having responses, and her contact during meetings on her phone to obtain information.

Council Member Spitzley stepped away from the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

Council Member Hussain reminded the Council that with the continual statement that the Administration will have a “plan” after the budget is adopted, Council can come up with a plan and approve it to start right now. Lastly, he explained to the staff that statements are not personal, but Council’s task is to look at the budget line by line and ask the questions.

Council Member Spitzley returned to the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Council Member Hussain then asked what the temporary staff are doing for the \$118,000. Mr. Lawrence confirmed they do have paid interns, but he could not confirm that the \$118,000 was inclusively for the interns, but is largely used for them. Council Member Hussain again stated comments were not personal, but Council struggles when they see the funds on salary in the Mayor’s office, hear of the duties, but still get confronted by frustrated residents because the scheduler is never returning their calls. It is the understanding that if the scheduler only has that role and board appointments there appears to everyone they are not doing their job and positions should be looked at. He then concluded by stating that with a Faith Based position, a Citizen Advocate position, and department on Citizen Engagement there is no need for 311 and Lansing Connect. If Council does not see changes in the level of service, Council could have no choice but to cut positions.

Council President Wood reminded Council that they created the Chief Strategy Officer via ordinance, and even took funds from their budget to fund the positions. There is the expectation per the ordinance that Ms. Frayer is only doing the duties outlined in the ordinance and what she was hired to do. Council needs to look at shoring up the budget, and look at redundancies.

Mayor- Community Media

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

Mr. Cochran stated any increases are due to indicators from contract employees to full time.

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

Mr. Cochran stated there are no changes in services.

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

Mr. Cochran stated there are no rate or fee increases.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Mr. Cochran stated they do maintain an equipment locker and they are looking to upgrade and updating those items.

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

Mr. Cochran stated that they have no staffing changes.

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

Mr. Cochran stated they did not get ARPA funds and this not applicable.

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. Cochran stated this was not applicable.

Ms. Linden and City Council did not have any questions.

City Clerk

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

Mr. Swope stated there is an increase of over \$40,000 salary and benefits. Also \$200,000 expense line for the presidential primary slated for 2/27/2024, there will also be a corresponding income because the State does reimburse all direct costs and overtime.

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

Mr. Swope confirmed they will have changes because due to Proposal 2 of 2022 and will do a full presentation at a later meeting. In summary the changes allow for 9 days of early voting for state and federal elections, and they are trying to implement for city elections. Voters can also be on a permanent ballot list to get a ballot for every election. The proposal requires the state to pay the return postage on absentee applications and ballots. At this time, they are preparing a budget to pay directly, but through the end of this year, they will be reimbursement, so might the department might have to add this. Lastly, Mr. Swope pointed out that currently right now at the state level, the legislature is looking at moving the primary date from August to May, and if that passes his department could add expenses to this budget. If that occurs, he will be back before Council.

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

Mr. Swope stated there have not been any rate or fee increases.

Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?

Mr. Swope explained that the state covered the first five (5) years for tabulators, but now the City is responsible for the ongoing maintenance fees which is \$56,000 annually. Regarding laptops they have 20% repairs a year at \$20,000.

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

Mr. Swope stated they are not making any staffing changes. They traditionally contract seasonal for elections, and with the amount of hours of the 500 workers they . The hours of election workers (500 workers) 2-3 days, equals 5-6 year-round employees.

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

Mr. Swope confirmed their office did not receive any ARPA 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

Mr. Swope confirmed this is not applicable.

Ms. Linden and Council did not have any questions.

Union Representatives

Mr. Parker, Mr. Conley, Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Pung introduced themselves.

Council Member Garza asked them to consider any expenses for their departments they represent and propose their needs. He also informed them that he would be proposing using ARPA funds interest for hiring/signing bonuses for LPD like the LFD is already doing.

Council Member Spitzley stepped away from the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Conley appreciated the offer and admitted they are not fully staff and

Council Member Spitzley returned to the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Council Member Hussain asked if \$5,000 was enough. Council Member Hussain explained that hearing from other municipalities that are offering bonuses this would attract more people. Council Member Hussain clarified he misunderstood and he thought he was proposing more funds to the home purchase program the City had. Council Member Spitzley recommended that they promote that housing program in their job postings because currently it is not well known.

Council Member Jackson asked the union leaders if their unions make political contributions to elected officials. Mr. Parker confirmed all unions have a PAC and Mr. Conley stated no dues can be given to a political party or person. Council Member Jackson asked if they can endorse, and he was informed only through the PAC. He then asked if they gave to the Mayor or any City Council member, and was told they were not sure what is given by the State. Mr. Parker and Mr. Wilcox confirmed they have endorsed. Council Member Jackson asked if they are at the table during contract bargaining and were told yes, along with Ms. O'Leary and sometimes the department director in the case of LPD and LFD. Council Member Jackson asked if they are close with the LFD and LPD Board of Commissioners, and was told they are not. Mr. Parker assured the Council that the unions have always come to the aid of the City when there are needs for cuts with pay cuts and furlough. Council Member Garza assured them that some Council Members have also given back 10% of their pay as well.

Council Member Hussain asked what their roles were when it comes to putting the budget together. Council was told they are not involved with the department budgets. Mr. Conley added his interest in addressing long term replacement plans for vehicles. Suggestions have been made to bring trash collection in house because the City is losing revenue with that. Council Member Hussain spoke briefly on stump removal plans, costs and potential of the City doing it. Mr. Parker stated it would all depend on the plan; chipping, hauling chips away, staffing and equipment.

Council Member Wood passed the gavel to Council Member Garza and stepped away from the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Council Member Brown spoke specifically to LPD and LFD with his concerns that he is hearing that other police and fire departments in Michigan have 20-35% of the workload the LPD and LFD but with more pay, and that is a concern of his.

Council Member Spitzley asked about street sweeping.

Council Member Wood returned to the meeting at 6:27 p.m.
Council Member Brown stepped away at 6:27 p.m.

She then asked for quarterly updates on the progress and areas. Mr. Parker acknowledged they have four (4) sweepers, but it is not a priority and sometimes staff is pulled from that project for potholes, barricades and street projects.

Council Member Brown returned to the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Council Member Hussain asked about the positions open in yard waste and compost removal. Mr. Parker confirmed that in solid waste there is just one, however it does require a CDL and there are no candidates that come in with a CDL. They currently work 4- 10hour days, and if they have to work

over, their overtime day is Friday. This does allow them to stay on track for the yard waste pick up rotation.

Council President Wood recapped earlier meetings where the Administration and Finance stated that there are talks that there is the potential that if a position is not filled and has not been filled for some time, they would just cut those positions. She asked them if that was done, how would that effect their departments, and all union leaders stated it would effective their services, and they can barely answer all the calls now, and this would give a bad sense of security and would be a horrible idea. Mr. Parker added that if you cut positions that would change what goes into the pension and would also require current employees to work overtime which would cost more and cause more burnout.

Council President Wood reminded the Council, Administration and the public of the next meeting on Thursday, May 11, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m. at Foster Community Center 2nd Floor.

Council President Wood distributed a spreadsheet that outlined potential 5% and 10% cuts out of all department operational budgets. This would result in only spending \$173,000 of rainy day fund if they do 5% and if they do 10% cut it could back into rainy day fund. Further discussions on this will occur at the meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023.

Discussion/Action

RESOLUTION – Reappointments

Arts and Culture Commission: Diane Gardin(At Large), Kevin Bonds (2nd Ward), Mary Toshach(At Large)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2027; Board of Fire Commissioners: Kathleen Tobe (3rd Ward), Mallory Willis (At Large)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2027; Board of Police Commissioners: Damon Milton(At Large), Guillermo Lopez (3rd Ward)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2027; Board of Public Service: Jason Wilkes(At Large), Thomas Hickson Jr (3rd Ward)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2027; Board of Zoning Appeals: Jordan Leaming (At Large), Kurt Berryman (At Large)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2026; Capital Area Transportation Authority Board: Darlene Fancher (City)- Term to Expire 6/30/2026; Downtown Lansing, Inc. Board: Karl Dorshimer(City) - Term to Expire 6/30/2027; Historic District Commission: James Bell (At Large) -Term to Expire 6/30/2026; Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority Board of Commissioners; Danielle Lenz(At Large), Larry Leatherwood (At Large), Maureen Saxton ((At Large)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2026; Lansing Gateway Corridor Improvement Authority Board of Directors (North Grand River): Dianne Hartwell (Resident)- Term to Expire 6/30/2027; Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Board of Directors: Elaine Barr (Member), Joan Nelson (Member)- Terms to Expire 6/30/2027; Park Board: Isaac Francisco(3rd Ward) -Term to Expire 6/30/2027; Planning Commission: Monte Jackson (At Large) - Term to Expire 6/30/2027

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER GARZA TO APPROVE THE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE REAPPOINTMENTS AMENDED TO REFLECT THE CORRECTON TO THE SPELLING OF MALLORY WALLIS TO MALLORY WILLIS AND A TERMINATION DATE FOR JASON WILKES TO JUNE 30, 2027.

Ms. Boak explained the substitute corrects the resolution to reflect “Wallis” to “Willis” and adding “30” to the expiration date of Mr. Wilkes.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER GARZA TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR REAPPOINTMENTS AS MAYOR’S OFFICE HAS COMMUNICATED VIA EMAIL THAT ALL REAPPOINTMETNS HAVE BEEN VETTED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Council Member Jackson spoke on the BWL which he noted is not on the resolution and the LPD Board of Commissioners. He asked for a report from the Police Commissioners on how many complaints, he also voiced his concern with Mr. Milton as the department chaplain and a Police

Commissioner. He will not ask for the positions to be voted on separately but will bring up again at Council.

RESOLUTION – CDBG Annual Action Plan

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER GARZA TO APPROVE THE CDBG ANNUAL ACTION PLAN.

Council President Wood confirmed the presentations and public hearings were held.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Other

No other topics of discussion.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on May 15, 2023