



**MINUTES**  
**Committee of the Whole**  
**Monday, April 15, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.**  
**Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**PRESENT**

Councilmember Peter Spadafore  
Councilmember Adam Hussain  
Councilmember Tamera Carter  
Councilmember Trini Pehlivanoglu  
Councilmember Jeffrey Brown  
Councilmember Ryan Kost  
Councilmember Jeremy Garza- excused  
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff  
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA  
Greg Venker, OCA  
Mark Lawrence, Mayor's Office  
Jake Brower, Chief Strategy Officer and Acting Budget Director  
Jackson Mills, Budget Analyst  
Anethia Brewer, District Court  
Susan Kneiling, District Court  
Judge Buchanan, District Court  
Judge Ward, District Court  
Ulices Rosa, District Court  
Andrew Kilpatrick, Public Service  
DeLisa Fountain, Neighborhood Arts and Citizen Engagement  
Elizabeth O'Leary, Human Resources  
Brett Kaschinske, Parks and Recreation  
Kim Coleman, Human Relations Community Services  
Loretta Stanaway  
Tiffany Szakle  
David Ellis  
Michael Lynn  
Norma Bauer  
Tom Hansen  
Kyla Moore, Deputy HR Director  
Toni Young, HRCS  
Delvata Moses, HRCS Deputy

## **Minutes**

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER KOST TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM APRIL 8, 2024, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

## **Public Comment**

Ms. Stanaway spoke on budget issues with the Parks and Recreation specific to personnel, grounds crew and equipment for the cemeteries.

Council Member Brown stepped away at 5:02 p.m.

Ms. Szackle spoke on the general fund in the budget.

Council Member Brown returned to the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Ms. Szackle spoke specifically to the tax rate, residential property listings, and differences in taxes on properties when sold.

Mr. Ellis spoke on the budget and the items that speak to programs that are not being performed. He then spoke briefly on tax revenue proposed in the budget.

Mr. Lynn submitted a screen shot and outlined the document on Mayor Schor social media page and then referenced the Charter speaking to discrimination, and First Amendment Rights with the Mayor's Communication Director. Mr. Lynn concluded by asking the OCA to respond on this issue and his understanding of a violation.

Ms. Bauer spoke on Nation Outside and homelessness.

Mr. Hansen spoke on the homeless issue in the City and asking Council to provide services in a center in downtown.

## **Presentation**

### **Department Budget Presentations**

Council Member Hussain spoke briefly on the department process and cited all the questions listed in the minutes the departments will speak to.

### **District Court**

Ms. Brewer introduced Judge Buchanan, Judge Ward, Mr. Rosa and Ms. Kneiling.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
There is an increase in the security line item due to the full force as armed guards, which is shared with the City. There is a decrease in contracted services due to the State of Michigan due to the elimination of user fees in the case management program.
- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so, why?  
No changes in daily tasks, but changes with the new Clean Slate Legislation.
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so, why?  
There is a fee increase in civil infraction tickets to \$5 from \$130 to \$135.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
No and should be set until they move to new complex.

- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so, provide specifics.  
There are two (2) contract part time positions magistrate positions.
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
No response.
- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
There will be a bid next month for security, and the second largest vendor is the office supply vendor.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
There is a mandate filing civil service done electronically. There would be a savings in the future.
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?  
None that will effect the dollars, but there is a prevention program based on selection from the National Courts for eviction diversion program. Ms. Brewer stated there has been a success and the model has been selected as the model in other States.  
Secondly the Court was approached for a secondary court for a community court to deal with blight and nuisance with land owners. There is a more desperate need now for a specialized drug court, and Judge Simmons was approached by treatments centers and appealed that this is needed in the City of Lansing. They are putting together a grant with the State to begin this process, and if approved it will take effect October 1, 2024.

Council Member Brown asked about the eviction diversion program and out of the 1170 families addressed what is the budget. Ms. Brewer stated it is funded by the grant and can get the specific funds to Council. Council Member Brown asked what role Mr. Rosa has accomplished and how robust is the program is. Mr. Rosa stated the need is so broad he does not limit what can be provided to the families and his goal is to make sure he attempts to make sure any resource is available. Council Member Brown asked if he thought he had all the resources in house to reach those goals. Mr. Rosa acknowledged it might seem like a lot for one person, and technology allows him to move swiftly.

Council Member Hussain asked Mr. Rosa what he could ask for. Mr. Rosa stated if the agencies that were doing their thing would be willing to work together they could get the services out faster. It would help to better educate what services and agencies are out there. Ms. Brewer stated she would like to have an administrative assistant to that position, but they are currently limited. Council Member Hussain asked if they asked for equipment or personnel submitted to the Administration and not forwarded to Council. Ms. Brewer confirmed none.

#### Public Service

Mr. Kilpatrick went through the questions.

Council Member Brown stepped away from the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
Inflationary increases, in addition to a request for one arborist, one trash and one recycling operators, one seasonal employee at WWTP along with other positions.

- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so, why?  
No changes
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so, why?  
Inflationary increase. There have been increases, but due to COVID they were not increased, and based on mailing of the invoices, they will be started in July. The plan would be implement the current to the proposed on two fiscal years.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
With the fleet services there are always major, nothing new just replacing end of life equipment. For Public Service there purchases in trash, one in sewer.
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so, provide specifics.  
No changes
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
At current service levels, they can. Without additional funding, with the BWL and CSO they are helping. They transfer funds from local street side to major streets.

Council Member Brown returned to the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?  
They plan to have a recycling drop off center.

Council Member Jackson stepped away from the meeting at 5:44 p.m.

- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
Largest change project by project, so now they are the CSO contractors. For more traditional service, they can look and bid back out. All of largest vendors are related by construction projects. The engineer is 5 year, and that was just bid. They just bid out electrical, plumbing, mechanical services, and they will do elevator and janitorial out soon. They will bid out sludge hauling soon as well.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
With basement backup program, will bring that house and base on residential case by case.

Council Member Hussain asked for a report top vendor per six (6) divisions. Secondly he spoke on composting delay recently stated by the Mayor. This statement included not hiring employees.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

Council Member Hussain's statement he read spoke to rate increases and that residents concern with increases but now services. He confirmed he had already spoke to Mr. Kilpatrick about this but wanted it asked in public forum as well. Mr. Kilpatrick stated at the job fair they did not get anyone with a CDL apply. If they do not have seasonal with CDL they use FTE. When they become behind, it is the large amount people put out, and it started today and they hope working Friday and Saturday they can keep up on a weekly basis. If they get behind in one area, then it rolls into the schedule for the next area. As far other services, street sweeping does not come from the rates, leaf pushing is not in the fee, and this is for pick up.

If there are funds not used, they funds stay in the fund. He encouraged that Council might consider having the Internal Auditor look into the fund to make sure the fees are covering the operational costs and long term costs.

#### Neighborhoods, Arts and Citizen Engagement

Ms. Fountain went through the list of questions.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
The difference is less than 1%, with an operational increase with grant administrator and FTE counselors, and the neighborhood grants line item has increased.
- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?  
Only changes are the ongoing with 311, OFE FEC inhouse, two additional counselors which used to be contractual. They eliminated one contracted position.
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?  
Not applicable to this department.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
Nothing proposed.
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.  
Restructuring in FY 2024, in 2025 no restructuring.
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
Yes
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?  
As of today, not implementing new initiatives or services.
- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
Cristo Rey and MSU, but that will change because FEC in house now. There are two recently last bid in last two years.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
With FEC in house, there is one program manager over all four programs, there is a grant administrator, Lansing Saves, moving OFE to REO uplift initiative and allow more programs for BOLD – Believe Optimize Learn and Dream. The budget was created by knowledge-based working with Finance.

Council Member Brown and Hussain acknowledged Ms. Fountain. Council Member Hussain asked if they asked for something from the Administration she did not get, and Ms. Fountain stated not.

#### Human Resources

Ms. O'Leary and Ms. Moore presented and answered questions.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
There is a training and dispute resolution position. Increasing temporary line item, and currently have two contract employees. There is a currently upgrade happening to a cloud based, and then after than they will update to a new program. They are increasing overtime hours. The parking subsidy was removed from HR and will be applied to each departments. The miscellaneous line item was increased to continue

- to do their jobs on a daily basis, in addition to an increase in medical services for hiring. In the training budget they increased to keep employees trained.
- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?  
No
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?  
Not applicable.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
No
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so, provide specifics.  
Not eliminating budgeted FTE, have 2 contracted, and two labor relations interns.
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
yes
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?  
Will be doing updates in the hiring process, upgrade in payroll system, performance evaluations, and trainings.
- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
M-CO – police and fire promotional processes and that will be moved to the police department and last bid in Fall 2023. Sparrow Occupational Health is other top vendor and that will be bid out again in the next couple months.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
Working on hiring and payroll updates.

No questions from Council.

Council Member Hussain stated there might be a future invite to speak on the hiring process.

### Parks and Recreation

Mr. Kaschinske went through the questions.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
Nothing significant.
- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?  
No changes proposed.
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?  
There are increases, and he referred to page 184 of the budget book which outlined the new fees.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
No
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.  
No
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
Yes
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?

Mr. Kaschinske referenced page 154 in the budget on the Capitol Improvement projects. They are starting on the 5 year plan for 2025 and have gone out to bid on that.

- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
The vendor redoing the parking lots this year at Frances Park, Gier and Davis. Second vendor is Rino who are working on the restoration at Moore's Pool.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
Lansing Connect and the ability for individuals to report what is out there and what is wrong in the parks.

Council Member Spadafore asked confirmed on the Rueter Park project at \$750,000 and for a timeline on the Moore's Park Pool. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed the project will take an entire year in 2025. Council Member Spadafore asked about the funding from Community Foundation for a project at Fish Ladder, and Mr. Kaschinske confirmed the project which will take place this fall and they are currently waiting on engineering estimates. It is not in the budget because the State appropriations go directly to the Community Foundation and currently there is no City match.

Council Member Hussain asked if the CIP process that was done was altered after it went to the Administration. Mr. Kaschinske assured the Committee that what the Park Board approved was approved by the Mayor. Council Member Hussain asked about the CIP project for a fitness project, and asked where that location would be, and Mr. Kaschinske stated they are looking at Davis Park. Council Member Hussain asked for an update on playground installations and Mr. Kaschinske stated the Park Board is going out into the community reviewing the parks to look at how many they want to increase. Council Member Hussain for the date United was last bid out, and Mr. Kaschinske stated they are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a five year contract, and it is annual one year renewal in that five year contract. The next bid could be December 2026. Council Member Hussain noted that as part of the contract United responsible for picking up the trash in the parks before they mow, and asked if the Parks staff is monitoring that and Mr. Kaschinske confirmed.

#### Human Relations & Community Service

Ms. Coleman, Moses and Toni Young presented.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
Adding FTE for compliance enforcement and converting contracted part time to FTE.
- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?  
No
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?  
No
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
No
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.  
Converting contracted to FTE.
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
yes
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?

There is the alternative temporary shelters. A 24/7 temporary shelter to decrease homelessness and they are currently looking at the options to address the needs, and the recommendation will be sent to the Mayor in the next couple weeks.

Working on landlord incentive programs, developing services fund.

- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
Detroit Rescue Mission, last bid October 2023, and Holy Cross last bid October, 2023.
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?  
Using 311 for calls and now allows staff to work with the community and meet the needs of the community.

Council Member Jackson asked about the temporary shelter and where those funds came from. Ms. Coleman stated it is the \$800,000 from the State and the Letts Center transition comes to a close the end of April and will start up again in November for 24/7. Council Member Jackson asked if that would be the warming center, and Ms. Coleman stated the warming was not the intent for a solution, but the intent is for the shelter. Of the \$800,000 funds, all those funds are still available that will be used for the shelter, the warming center was from the budget.

Council Member Brown stepped away at 6:27 and back at 6:28

Council Member Jackson stepped away at 6:27

Council Member Kost asked about the shelter plan, Ms. Coleman stated the plan is to supplement the services until the shelter is built.

Council Member Kost asked if the organizations in the grant recommendations are vetted. Council Member Hussain stated the would come back to that report once all questions on the overall HRCS budget are done.

Council Member Hussain asked for the status of interim director from 2020 where that person was only going to work for 6 months in transition but is sill employed.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Coleman confirmed that individual has continued to work with HRCS with regard to equity and police commission and other areas. His time will be reduced in the new FY to 10 hours a week and he will be working on training the Commission Investigator and working on Equity. This is reflected in the budget.

Ms. Young spoke on the grant funding report noting there were 76 applications, and 92% of them were funded. Of those, 6 were new and serve high priority target populations or services. The returning programs that were funded were kept at status quo that mirror their current year award. There were a few that did get slight increases. There were 6 that were not funded, and that was largely due to parent duplicate agencies or they did not submit adequate plans, or didn't meet grant priorities in the ordinance on human services. She then spoke on the earlier question from Council Member Kost, stated each application included a number of documents and they are vetted and reviewed before any awards. Council Member Kost referred to the list again pointing to some that continue to get funds but if a back ground check was performed they should not have, for example if an agency utilizes a organization that does questionable practices with those funds. Ms. Young assured Council that they monitor all organizations in March and follow up with monitoring reports and will review again before

they finalize the grants at year end. If they find an issues they will withdraw and redirect the funds. She encouraged any Council Member to contact her if they are aware of any issues.

Council Member Kost stepped away from the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Council Member Brown asked if the HRCS Board members make a recommendation is that followed, and Ms. Coleman stated the current document they have is 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter which is the cycle for January when the Board reviewed, rated, and scored, and that is a result from the board. Ms. Young noted the headings might be misleading; the “2023-2024” is what they get this year, ending June, 2024. The Mayor recommendations is first scored by the Advisory Board then the Director who then makes the recommendation to the Mayor who makes the final decision.

Council Member Kost returned to the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Ms. Young added that sometimes the currently funded is not what they requested or applied for. Council Member Brown asked for the department to provide the list including the amount they applied for, what Board recommendation was, what the Director recommendation was and what the Mayor recommended. Ms. Coleman stated they could do that.

Council Member Spadafore stepped away from the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

#### City Attorney

Mr. Venker went through the questions.

- What is the difference with your budget from current fiscal year to the proposed budget?  
Inflation increases due to fringe and salary.

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

- Are there any changes in services that your department is responsible for and if so why?  
No
- Are there any rate or fee increases and if so why?  
Not applicable.
- Are there any major equipment purchases proposed in your budget?  
No
- Are there any eliminating, combining or contracting of positions in your budget, and if so provide specifics.  
No
- Are you able to perform all necessary departmental responsibilities with this budget?  
Yes
- Are there any new initiatives or services your department will be providing with this budget?  
No
- Who are the top 2 largest vendors for your department and when were they last bid?  
Carpel Computer Services- software used to manage and track prosecution cases, and a multiyear contract in spring 2023 with last bid 2022. The second biggest contractor is Thompson – Westlaw; there are only two options for legal research service; had since 2021
- What (if any) operational changes have you made to become more efficient in your department? What were the savings?

The computer services has been an positive impact to meet requirements.

Council Member Hussain asked what the transition period is with Mr. Smiertka. Mr. Venker stated that conversation should be with the Mayor, and his understanding is Mr. Smiertka will be here until the end of June, 2024. Council Member Hussain asked about Jack Roberts contract and Mr. Venker confirmed Mr. Roberts is still employed by the City. Council Member Hussain asked if there needs to be multiple contracted employees.

City Council and Internal Auditor

Council Member Hussain moved this to the May 6, 2024 Committee meeting.

**DISCUSSION/ACTION:**

PLACE ON FILE – Human Services General Fund 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Report  
MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORÉ TO PLACE ON FILE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

**RESOLUTION – APPOINTING THE INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY**

Council Member Hussain noted on April 8<sup>th</sup> there was a resolution to confirm Mr. Venker as permanent City Attorney but there were council questions on that and it was tabled. He added that his understanding is that there is not a requirement for an interim City Attorney or a time limit for an interim attorney. Mr. Lawrence had nothing to say on this topic.

Council Member Brown asked who provided this resolution. Council Member Hussain confirmed it was written and provided by the Administration and the City Attorney. Council Member Brown asked when Mr. Smiertka was retiring, and was told by Council Member Hussain it would June 30<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Brown suggested extending the interim City Attorney time line to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Venker stated that Mr. Smiertka has formally stepped down from City Attorney so the City does not have anyone employed carrying the title. Council Member Brown again reiterated his concerns. Council Member Hussain noted the resolution for a permanent City Attorney was tabled, and this current resolution does not bind Council to the permanent attorney resolution that was tabled.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORÉ TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR INTERIM FOR GREG VENKER TO MAY 6, 2024. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee May 6, 2024