

MONONA CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
REVIEW OF 2022 OPERATING BUDGET
October 27, 2021

The meeting of the Monona City Council Committee of the Whole was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 5:35 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor and Alderpersons Kathy Thomas, Kristie Goforth, Molly Grupe, Nancy Moore, Doug Wood, and Jennifer Kuhr

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Finance Director Marc Houtakker, Director of Community Media Will Nimmow, Project Manager Brad Bruun (via Zoom), Library Director Ryan Claringbole, Parks & Recreation Director Jake Anderson, Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell, and City Clerk Joan Andrusz

ROLL CALL (the Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the preceding meeting)

COUNCIL REVIEW OF 2022 OPERATING BUDGET

Finance Director Houtakker distributed an Expenditure Restraint Limit report and explained that the General Fund plus departmental levy limits has to be under 3.2%; the City is under this at 2.72%. He provided information throughout Department Head's presentations.

Media Director Nimmow reported his budget is paid by franchise fees and the Monona Grove School District. The wage of the new Multi-Media Content Coordinator is funded 70% by the School District. Part-time wages fluctuate due to COVID-19 and the school student Youth Apprentice availability; he is re-building the program. Some of this fund goes to the radio station; a part-time staffer works on programming from home 15 hours per week. The full-time Program Director has resigned but he may need to pay more for the replacement.

Finance Director Houtakker reported funds requested by the Media Committee from the General Fund for the newsletter has not been added. Franchise fees cover this expense but this may need review in the future. Alder Thomas reported the request was because the newsletter that was previously mailed was now done in-house. She is very grateful to the School District for their support. Future funding was discussed; she will look at alternative sources and legal sponsorships. Mayor O'Connor stated funding will most likely have to come from the General Fund. Alder Kuhr stated she would like the City to cover more expenses so franchise fees can be saved. \$25,000 is from taxes, based on legislative action. Finance Director Houtakker reported he is not sure of the apartment complex's impact; he doesn't know who serves those.

City Administrator Gadow reported the Planning Intern was put into the Executive Office budget with a raise, which will be covered by the Committee, from \$15 to \$18 as a committee lead, and a new job title, "Sustainability Coordinator", to not limit the position to a planning background. Benefits are needed at 20 hours per week. Project Manager Bruun reported the position may become permanent part-time. Alder Moore reported staff is needed to align with and support the City's sustainability goals. She advocated to the Committee to increase the hours because it is shared with Planning. Alder Grupe agrees and praised Intern Elisa Guerrero; she should be granted the raise as a reward for her important work. City Administrator Gadow reported he is looking at TIF and Renew Monona funds to hire a separate Planning Intern to free up the position to focus on Sustainability.

Library Director Claringbole reviewed increases and decreases and reported salaried staff are covering the desk and should be focused on programming. Finance Director Houtakker reported a position cut was requested last year to allow the Youth Services Librarian to become full-time. Revenue from County Aid is combined in the Operating Budget line. Library Director Claringbole reported fines are for lost or damaged items. Room rentals will go up. Completed HVAC work will reduce building and maintenance costs. There is a fairly aggressive collection weeding schedule; space and community needs are considered. The Library is getting creative to increase circulation, like providing a tool check-out program.

Recreation Director Anderson provided and reviewed budget reports, reviewing revenues and expenditures. He thanks the Mayor, Council, and community for their support of the Department. River Rink attendance went way up due to COVID-19. Dedicated staff made innovations possible. The Department's ratio is 55% of revenue to expense; the national average is 29%. Staff assists with community events like charity runs and the Festival. San Damiano has become a birdwatching "hot spot"; a related event will be held there. The special event Ordinance will be revised soon with increased fees. Having an event in the City shouldn't be about the fees. Alder Grupe commended the Department for new events this year, like the Solar Plunge. Alder Thomas is impressed by the quality of service and is grateful for the revenue generation.

Recreation Director Anderson reviewed the After-School Program and need for space. Fees cover full-time wages and decreases the tax levy. He will have Biergarten events at Grand Crossing Park as well as Schluter Park next year. There will be programming, environmental activities, and Senior Center events at San Damiano. Parking will be reviewed. Music & food events and other use will increase. Ash tree removal and pruning is needed; he is working with the Friends. There are no Community Center rentals so there are only expenses and programs in the facility. He does allow Monona-based meetings there.

The swimming pool had its highest revenue-generating season this year. 55% of daily admissions are non-residents; 85% of season passes are residents. Swim & Dive Club use generates revenues. Finding seasonal labor hasn't been an issue so far but is becoming more challenging. Lifeguards are paid \$10, Head Guards \$12, and Pool Manager \$17 per hour. He wants to increase those wages to be competitive with Madison. He reaches out to all employment sites available and there aren't a lot of workers out there. Training and certifications takes time so it's difficult to stay open any longer. It's a big gamble in terms of revenue costs; weather, finding staff, etc. are challenges.

City Administrator Gadow reported Executive Office Other is increased by \$1,500 to \$4,000 because of items that will be done like the Memorial Day Parade, the staff picnic, and increased Cloud storage costs. Alder Thomas stated she wants to show employees they are valued by means other than compensation, which can't be done, like the picnic and Employee of the Month recognition. City Administrator Gadow agrees. There is a huge impact on staff when an employee leaves; others step up to cover those duties. He is funding economic development training for himself and City Planner Doug Plowman to learn additional skills. CDA support is needed for projects coming up.

The Tourism Grant has \$40,716 available. \$2,500 each will be spent for the marketing guide and Lake Loop map. \$5,000 was provided to MESBA for the Chili Fest. Airbnb rentals are 50/50 with hotels. \$100,000 is projected for tourism funds; he will know in February. The Memorial Day Parade can't use tourism funds for the City's \$500 contribution because it doesn't drive hotel stays. It is hard to get data from hotels about why a person is staying. The Planning salary will increase \$3,500 for doing Renew Monona work. \$388,577 was disbursed from the program with \$361,000 remaining in the current cycle. \$1.3 million remains in the pool. TIF #7, Fairway Glen will be closing soon but could be held open for

one more year. There are no applications for first-time homeowner mortgages. Bank interest rates dropped during COVID-19. Alder Kuhr reported the CDA will be marketing the program better.

Director of Administrative Services Kimmell reported service contracts increased because most are software subscription-based contracts. A lot of them focus on security. Coverage lengths vary. Office 365 is 1-year; the 3-year contracts may have to move to the Capital Budget. Finance Director Houtakker reported he would look into that; they are not considered a physical asset. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell stated free services can't be used because everything has to be retained and these are specifically government licenses. Zoom costs were discussed. City Administrator Gadow reported he isn't sure these can be bundled for a cost savings. Each has to be separate because multiple meetings can't be run at once. Director of Administrative Services Kimmell reported programming and classes are also using Zoom.

Finance Director Houtakker reported 5-year bids were sent out for transit services with two responses. Contract cost increases were reviewed. 55% is paid by State Aid. The loops will be kept the same. Alder Thomas stated the cost is increasing \$25,000 but ridership is not increasing. Currently 11 people use the service. Other options should be looked at. Alders Grupe and Goforth reported 25 total people ride per day on the Lift and Express combined. There are 19 to 21 riders; the highest was 25 to 26, with 12 round-trips on the Lift and 13 on the Express. Alder Grupe stated the Commission is looking at many options including added bus stops, rides to events, increased routes, and route changes. They are in early discussions with Madison Metro. Finance Director Houtakker reported Metro has reached out to the City; they have a new, more open, director. Alder Moore stated ridership was growing pre-COVID-19. Alder Goforth stated people want more service; she wants to share the survey data. The City needs this sustainable effort as well. Getting sponsorships from businesses that benefit from transit users could be pursued.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Moore to Convene in Closed Session under Wisconsin Statute section 19.85(1)(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility (Performance Evaluations and Salary Adjustments). On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Upon reconvening in Open Session:

Finance Director Houtakker requested Capital and Operating Budget amendments by tomorrow to be included in the November 1 Council packet. Discussion followed on waiting for approval of the Capital Budget until November 15. Alder Moore stated the City has never had exact figures in the past. Alder Grupe requests another meeting so Council members could talk more about budget items. Mayor O'Connor stated a vote could be taken at Monday's meeting to delay approval.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Kuhr to close the Committee of the Whole, was carried. (8:28 p.m.)

Joan Andrusz
City Clerk