

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, AUGUST 31, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following members present: Larry Janssen; Chris Kielblock; Chad Cummings; Amy Ernst; Alaina Kolpin.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Deb Olsen, Finance Director; Jason Brisson, Assistant City Administrator/Director of Economic Development; Troy Appel, Public Safety Director; Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director; Steve Schneider, City Engineer; Hyunmyeong Goo, Assistant Engineer; Mindy Eggers, City Clerk.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Council/Mayor, Administrator, Clerk, Finance, CAL, Event Center, Aquatic Center, Data Processing, Engineering

Steve Robinson, City Administrator gave, an outline of items that make up the levy increase for 2022.

Mr. Robinson said the personnel and benefits attribute to a 2.07% increase to the levy. This is a result of the cost of living adjustment and the estimated increase in health insurance premiums.

There are two new positions added to the overall 2022 Budget, the positions are in the Data Processing Fund and the Public Works area.

Allocation of \$10,000 for the 75th Anniversary of Crailsheim Sister City collaboration.

Due to the 2020 Census Data Redistricting may need to occur, costs are unknown at this time.

2022 is an election year so we have included costs associated with the election. Election judge wages have been adjusted.

Due to Covid-19 closures and reduction in events, the City is subsidizing operations at the Event Center.

Field House operations are included in the 2022 budget, this will be the first year of operations. This includes personnel as well as supplies and other services and charges.

Utilities and Insurance costs associated with the 10th Street Pavilion.

Added amounts for reserves for future Skate Park equipment and Millard Park playground equipment.

Worthington Regional Economic Development Corporation contribution increased from previous year.

Nobles Home Initiative abatements are projected to increase in 2022 for homes coming in to the program in 2022.

Property taxes for Cecilee/Grand Avenue on redevelopment land.

Downtown outdoor seating area (Pilot Project).

Capital Improvement expenditures are a work in progress at this point. There is \$900,000 included currently in the levy, this totals additional levied dollars in the amount of \$528,835 over the 2021 budget.

Aquatic Center professional services allocated in 2022 budget that have not been previously budgeted total \$50,000 (YMCA contract).

Information Technology (IT) contracted services with Nobles County.

Mayor Kuhle asked if consideration should be given to adding a food and beverage tax that could help off set the increases to the budget. Council Member Cummings questioned whether this was the time considering that bars and restaurants aren't even operating at 100% yet.

Engineering

Mr. Robinson said personnel costs are distributed to projects.

Steve Schneider, City Engineer, said that there are some projects in the current CIP plans that can be done in house. He said that he and Goo are working on re-doing the five year CIP plan. Mr. Schnieder said there is a backlog of reserve funds that may take care of the upcoming projects but funds have been added just in case. He said he is also working on getting all of the past year state aid funds wrapped up and closed out.

Community/Economic Development

Jason Brisson, Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Director, said there will be a .4% increase over the 2021 Budget including a 13.4% increase in compensation for the City's Rental Housing Inspection Program Manager and the proposed increases for publication costs. The .4% increase excludes the one-time expenses of the Comprehensive Plan update and the proposed outdoor seating area pilot project. It also excludes the replenishment of the EDA's Facade Improvement Matching Grant Program fund.

Mr. Brisson said the Comprehensive Plan has not been updated since 2004. The recommendation is that it is updated every 10 years. The estimated cost of this update is \$50,000 with an additional \$50,000 that will also be required in 2023.

He explained the outdoor seating area pilot project is estimated to cost \$74,000.00. When planning the reconstruction of the downtown streets it would be the optimal time to redesign and widen sidewalks to accommodate outdoor seating throughout the downtown.

He said the Facade Improvement Grant program was established and each year will be replenished back to the starting balance of \$100,000.00.

Public Safety

Troy Appel, Public Safety Director, reviewed his department's budget, noting that the WPD staff currently consists of twenty-four officers. He explained there will be a \$25,000 video storage/upgrade for the bodycam system. An approximate 3% increase in the Security Center cost share for the garage addition. Another civil defense siren will be replaced.

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, stated there will not be any adjustments to the fire ERS until 2023 because of the purchase and interfund loan for the new aerial fire truck last year.

Public Works

Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director, stated operation budgets for Street Maintenance, Parks and Recreation, and the airport will be staying relatively the same in 2022. Another Public Works Operator position will be added to help in the maintenance of all the new amenities that have been added along with a manager's position and some part time hours to staff the new field house.

Memorial Auditorium

Tammy Makram, Manager, said that the Auditorium re-opened two weeks ago and had two events last weekend which were very well attended. There are some repairs that need to be made to the brick outside which will require tuck pointing, the cost will come out of reserve funds.

Mr. Robinson said sales tax has been below projections but part of it is the result of the legislature taking the excise tax away. So far, each month the amount is trending at approximately \$95,000.

Mr. Robinson also noted after meeting with the owners of the Event Center an additional \$25,000 subsidy has been added to the budget. The hotel and event center are busy and remain booked but it remains a challenge.

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Mr. Robinson said another Special meeting will need to be scheduled as pre-certification for the 2022 levy needs to be voted on at the September 13th council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Cummings, seconded by Council Member Ernst and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC
City Clerk