

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
BUDGET STUDY SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024**

Mayor Beagle called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present:

Mayor: P. Beagle
Deputy Mayor: T. Rzeznik
Councilmembers: P. Behrmann
K. Gottschall
T. Gronlund-Fox
P. Sharpe
R. Smiley

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Beagle thought it would be best to talk about the DDA Budget while members from the DDA Board were in the audience. He also recommended they follow the same dynamic as last year and discuss the Review of Other Funds (Water/Wastewater, Budget Stabilization, Major/Local Streets, Cemetery, Safety Path, Solid Waste, LDFA Capital, Land Acquisition, Forfeiture Fund, CDBG Fund, Opioid Settlement Fund, Special Holding Agency Fund, Insurance Fund-Retirees and Tribute Drain Bond Fund) before they discussed the General Fund.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments at this time.

Budget Highlight Details/Overview

Ms. Stamper reviewed the budget highlights for Fiscal Year 2024/2025. She explained that the taxable values were estimated to increase 7.94%. The millage rate was proposed at 11.8860, reflecting an increase from Fiscal Year 2023/2024 of .0039 which related to the Safety Path millage renewal. She noted that of the 31 cities in Oakland County, Wixom would have the 7th lowest millage rate. She indicated an increase of 2.077% in revenue and an increase in expenditures of 20.87% compared to the previous fiscal year. The increase to the expenditures was due to operational costs of \$1,314,988 and the capital projects contribution of \$1,672,155. She said this budget provided funding for the City's normal cost of Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) in the amount of \$85,424 and pension in the amount of \$168,372 along with a pension payment of \$313,872. The General Fund reflected an estimated balance of \$6,391,902 or 36.95% at the end of Fiscal Year 2024/2025. The Budget Stabilization Fund reflected an estimated balance at the close of Fiscal Year 2024/2025 of \$1,313,165 or 7.59%. The Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan contribution amount was \$1,030,000 along with an additional contribution of \$1,970,000 to fund any substantial expenses.

Councilmember Behrmann noticed that in several places throughout the budget the revenue dropped. He asked if that was because they took into consideration that the millage may not be renewed. Ms. Stamper said yes.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if the Budget Stabilization Fund was their rainy-day fund. Ms. Stamper confirmed. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if that was the only savings account the City had. Ms. Stamper said that it was. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if there was a best practice on what that balance should be. Ms. Stamper said the Budget Stabilization was part of the General Fund and could be as high as 40%. She stated that if you get higher than that, you should consider using the funds for capital projects, but you wouldn't ever want to see it lower than 15%.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik noted a correction needed to be made on page 31 of the budget, the Contribution from the DDA should be 3.5%, not 0%. Ms. Stamper said she would make that correction.

* Councilmember Smiley arrived at 6:09 p.m.

Mayor Beagle thought it would be ideal to discuss the following other funds first:

Water/Wastewater Enterprise, Budget Stabilization, Major/Local Streets, Cemetery, Safety Path, Solid Waste, DDA, DDA/VCA Development Bond Fund, LDFA Capital, Land Acquisition, Forfeiture Fund, CDBG Fund, Opioid Settlement Fund, Special Holding Agency Fund, Insurance Fund – Retirees, and Tribute Drain Bond Fund.

There wasn't any discussion regarding these funds.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

DDA, DDA/VCA Development Bond Fund (112-113, 137)

Mr. Benson explained that the DDA revenue continued to increase as it was estimated they would capture 1.4 million in this upcoming fiscal year. That amount gave them the flexibility to do more than just pay back their bonds, which were set to roll off after Fiscal Year 2027/2028. He said they would be making a bond payment of \$468,675 during this next fiscal year, which would be their single largest expenditure. He highlighted the \$420,000 under capital contribution for special projects. Of that amount, \$320,000 would be used for the West End Commons area as that was the matching amount for their Federal Congressional Directed Spending and the Oakland County Mainstreet Grant. The other \$100,000 would be allocated toward the sign program. He pointed out that the Downtown Site Readiness Account had \$80,000 in this fiscal year and \$100,000 in next fiscal year. Those funds were set aside to help facilitate any downtown beautification projects in conjunction with the City. He noted an increase in Downtown Enhancement Account as it went from \$20,000 to \$55,000 next fiscal year.

Ms. Cloutier said the Downtown Enhancement Account was responsible for multiple items. Part of that account would help the startup of the downtown art program. They would also use these funds to collaborate with other communities on events, marketing, assist with the social district and miscellaneous items.

Mr. Benson said the DDA continued to budget for the programs they host each year such as; Block Party, Candy Cane Lane, Downtown Dazzle, etc. They've also continued to contribute to the full-time cost of an additional DPW employee and maintenance services in the downtown district. He mentioned that in the Fiscal Year 2026/2027, they've allocated a \$400,000 contribution toward the safety path as they were planning to rebuild the Chambers Road to Wixom Road sidewalk.

Councilmember Behrmann was aware they've talked about the flowers at length but hoped they would continue to pursue a way to bring those costs down and/or spend that money elsewhere.

Mr. Benson said they've done some preliminary mapping on bringing the watering of the flowers in-house and determined that it would not save money. They entertained the idea of decreasing the frequency of how often they water/fertilize the flowers. He added that the vendor understood they were looking for ways to provide that service at a lower cost.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if the Federal Congressional Directed Spending would be received in Fiscal Year 2024/2025. Mr. Benson said it would.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if the Special Studies/Services budget covered the new branding. Mr. Benson confirmed that it did. He noted the largest expense was the carry-over of the engineering from projects that were not completed this year as that came out of this budget.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

General Fund Revenue (p. 31-36)

This was previously covered at the April 9, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.

City Council (38-39)

Mayor Beagle said there hadn't been any significant change to this budget.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

City Manager's Office (40-41, 144)

Mr. Brown said they've taken the former full-time secretary position in the City Manager's Office and moved it to the Finance Department. They believed that position could assist that office with credit card acceptance, associated reporting and consolidation of the HR duties. The City Manager's Office budget would pay the wages for the part-time clerk.

Councilmember Behrmann asked if the copier machines were all on three-year leases. Ms. Stamper said they've started to buy the copiers because they tended to use them longer than what the lease expectancy was. She said if they didn't need to replace the copiers they would be pushed it to the following fiscal year.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Financial Administration (42-43, 148)

Ms. Stamper explained the biggest highlight was bringing the full-time position from the City Manager's Office into the Finance Department, and then shifting the part-time position to the City Manager's Office.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik wondered if there was any penetration testing considering the software with credit card systems. Mr. Benson said they used a large company for their database software and their security was pretty robust.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if they took into consideration any upcoming retirements when drafting the budget. Ms. Stamper said they did.

Councilmember Smiley asked if they needed to budget monies to get the ball rolling on accepting credit cards. Mr. Brown said that wasn't necessary but indicated how they were working with Plante Moran to help with the mechanics of getting this function going. He said it was their desire to have the new employee in the Finance Department be responsible for the credit card payments. Ms. Stamper noted that they've already implemented online credit card payments for taxes and water bills. They were only missing the ability to accept credit/DEBIT card payments in person. She said there wasn't much out of pocket cost to the City because the consumer would pay the 3% charge to use their credit card.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

City Clerk (44-45)

Ms. Opalko explained the Clerk's budget didn't reflect many changes except for conducting the two major elections in this fiscal year. Additionally, the new Deputy Clerk that would require training so they increased that line item.

Mr. Brown said they've held interviews for the Deputy Clerk position and made an offer that was accepted. The person had experience and would start on May 20, 2024.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if there had been a lot of cemetery plots and/or columbarium niche sales. Ms. Opalko said they haven't seen an influx higher than usual. They sold roughly twelve niches since it was installed.

Mr. Benson said they've been trying to get the word out about the columbarium as they've dispersed an informational brochure to the local funeral homes.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Information Systems (46-47, 153)

Mr. Benson noted they didn't have any significant changes. Last year they incorporated the GIS operations solely out of this budget. They've switched GIS vendors and experienced a cost savings and better service. The biggest expenditures with GIS was working on updating the as-built plans within the software. Recently, they've started

working on the sidewalk collector application of GIS to help support the Sidewalk Improvement Program. He mentioned they've budgeted \$12,000 toward a website re-design in order to accommodate the new branding.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik stressed the ability to change information daily on the website and how that was extremely important. He felt they needed to designate someone to be in charge of this and update the information regularly/daily.

Councilmember Smiley believed they had the ability to put content on the website; however, it just needed to be put on there in a timely fashion. He said it could affect the website more if they ended up changing the color scheme along with the logo.

Mr. Benson said there wasn't any new major capital expenses except for the carry-over for dark fiber and the network redesign.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Board of Review (48-49)

Mayor Beagle stated this budget was straight forward and nothing had changed from previous years.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Economic Dev/Assessing (50-51)

Mr. Benson said the single largest expenditure that came from this budget was the agreement with Oakland County to perform the City's assessing services. He noted that marketing, branding, job fairs and specialized planning consultant fees also came out of this budget.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked where they were with the Redevelopment Ready Program. Mr. Benson said they were 99.9% finished. The only thing they needed was the ability to accept credit card payments.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Building Maintenance & Facilities (52-53, 147)

Mr. Sikma said this budget reflected building updates moving forward. His staff had been working on building lighting and replacing the ceiling tiles throughout the building. In the capital budget, they were looking at performing renovations in the Building Department, Police Department, Community Center and Library.

Mr. Benson indicated those departmental renovations were originally budgeted separately but they realized there would be a cost savings by packaging them all together.

Mr. Sikma said they applied for grant funding and received a 50/50 match for the renovations within the Community Center.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik recalled budgeting for the UV disinfection within the HVAC units. He was shocked at the cost to replace the UV elements after he had to replace his own in his office. He didn't notice any funds allocated for those replacements and/or maintenance. Mr. Sikma said they haven't installed them yet because they were going to be part of the building upgrade/remodel. He was aware of the replacement costs and thought they might want to consider the towers that hang from the ceiling because they cost less to maintain and work pretty well.

Councilmember Sharpe asked what public restroom did they want to replace for \$25,000. Mr. Sikma said that \$25,000 was to replace the fixtures, toilets, etc. in the Senior Center bathrooms.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if the Surveillance/Security System/Door Locks account was for the electric keys that were used to get into the various buildings. Mr. Sikma it was. He explained that the current system was only three years old but the company that maintained them moved away from that technology. He indicated that they were also looking into replacing the fire system in City Hall and the Community Center.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Legal Assistance (54-55)

Mr. Brown noted there was a reduction in the labor negotiation counsel because they anticipate finishing the labor contracts in this fiscal year. The tax litigation was increased substantially as they anticipated that activity would increase during next fiscal year. They also considered that anytime you're in a commercial situation you would have to get an appraisal. He wasn't sure of the amount they would need so they took a prognosticator approach. In addition, the prosecution was higher than they anticipated so they've budgeted for that to continue.

Mr. Benson said they've estimated \$40,000 in this fiscal year and next for tax litigation but in all likelihood, they wouldn't spend all that. If they didn't spend it then it would just roll into Fund Balance.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if the adjustments to tax litigation were a result of businesses with questions. Mr. Brown said they heard rumblings through the grapevine about a certain property. Councilmember Gottschall wondered if it was worth it to spend all this money for the City to save a minimal amount of money.

Mr. Brown explained the \$40,000 was just to point out that they may have to spend some money next year. The amount was simply placed there to anticipate a risk.

Mr. Benson said valuations impacted the value of the property for many years, not just the current fiscal year. Councilmember Gottschall feared that they were setting this high budget just to prove a point and become aggressive.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noticed the City Attorney budget was set at \$17,500 which was higher than last year. He recalled that amount being set higher because of the

charter amendments. If there weren't any more amendments in the near future, they should consider reducing the budget. Mr. Brown agreed.

Mayor Beagle suggested they reduce the budget to \$14,500. Mr. Brown was okay with that change.

Councilmember Sharpe agreed with the point that Councilmember Gottschall was trying to make.

Councilmember Smiley understood that Mr. Brown was aware of something that may or may not happen and this was his way of letting them know that something may be expensive down the road. He appreciated that they were preparing for the worst.

Councilmember Behrmann was fine with the \$40,000 being set and if they didn't spend it then it would just roll over to the general fund.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

General Operating (56-57)

Ms. Stamper said they budget annually for the HRA expense and throughout the year they moved those funds to the individual departments as those expenses occurred. The MERS Defined Benefit (DB) Closeout Costs increased to \$343,000 with \$212,000 of that going to unfunded liability.

Councilmember Sharpe asked what she meant by Defined Benefit Closeout. He wondered if that meant they were off the hook because those accounts were now closed. Ms. Stamper said they named those accounts as such because they closed the DB plans throughout the years. The actuarial portion notates what was owed for all the retired employees and the normal cost were for the employees still working. Councilmember Sharpe stated that amount was basically our contribution every year. Ms. Stamper said yes.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox questioned why the current budget of \$31,088 for Wage and Salary Adjustments jumped to \$220,000 for FY 2024/2025. Ms. Stamper said the \$31,088 pertained to the wage increases given to non-union employees this past year.

Mr. Benson explained the \$220,000 that was budgeted for FY 2024/2025 would move to the individual line items once any wage increases were approved July 1, 2024.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox knew they were responsible for the bond payment for both OPEB and pension, plus they're responsible for the closeout costs and the normal cost. She asked how long they had left to pay on the bonds. She thought it seemed like the bond payment plus the other costs just kept going. Ms. Stamper said you had to look at from a different perspective. If you didn't bond then you would have to pay a higher actuarial liability with MERS so you'd be paying it either way, it's just who you'd be paying it to. When they bonded and looked at the studies of the long-term bond payments, they were typically less than paying MERS as you were upfronting that

money to earn more interest as you go forward. They always knew the risk that you had with additional liability because the interest rate assumptions, mortality tables, etc.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox thought the bond payments would go down but the other costs would increase. Ms. Stamper said that was correct unless scenarios changed with mortality. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered what they could do because this was such a huge cost. She asked when the bond payments would cease. Ms. Stamper said the healthcare bond would expire in 2036 and pension would expire in 2037.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said in 2008, prior to bonding, the City was still in good standing as they were 60% funded while other communities were at 0%. In fact, in 2009 they skipped paying a year because of their severe financial situation.

Councilmember Gottschall was aware of an effort by the legislature where they'd give funds to communities to bring them up to a certain level and funds to communities that were responsible. He asked if they heard any new talk about that lately.

Mr. Brown hasn't heard any more on that. Mr. Benson said they've worked with other communities urging law makers to bring it up again but didn't think that it went anywhere. Ms. Stamper said they released the awards of what they were giving all the communities and Wixom didn't receive any.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Police (58-61, 152)

Chief Langmeyer said their budget pretty much stayed the same with a few exceptions. Considering they had a very young department, he'd like the officers to start getting the experience and knowledge that they needed. For that reason, their training budget was high. They had two new full-time detectives, three brand new sergeants and five brand new officers. They all deserved time, experience and training. The best thing they could do for them was to have a large enough training budget. The other large increase dealt with the Equipment Rental/Radio Rental account. This line item paid for all the computer system software that was implemented, in-car video cameras, cloud storage, body worn cameras, Flock cameras and their new personnel file software. There were two large programs that they were still looking into for this upcoming year. The first program was a collaboration with the Oakland County Health Network (White Lake Police, Walled Lake Police, Wixom Police) to bring in a mental health professional that could be used while in the field. They've applied for a grant in order to pay for this so this program would be implemented if they receive funding. He indicated that mental health had been an issue for them as the officers responded on average to one mental health call per day. The second program was possibly putting a school resource officer in Sarah Banks Middle School. They were approached by the Walled Lake Consolidated School District after they received four school threats inside Sarah Banks before the end of 2023. The district was willing to pay 66.6% of all wages and benefits for the officer. During the summer months this officer could be utilized as a community resource officer, working with the subdivision associations, crime prevention, etc. He stated that neither of these programs had been budgeted but thought Council should be aware that they may be coming soon.

Councilmember Behrmann appreciated the conscientiousness that Chief Langmeyer took with this budget as it was \$200,000 less than last year's budget. He felt that he was doing what he needed to do to come in well under budget. He had no issues with the current proposal or the capital expenses.

Councilmember Gottschall asked what the difference was between Conferences/Workshops and Education/Tuition. Chief Langmeyer explained that Education/Tuition was part of the bargaining agreement and the promise to reimburse the officer for any secondary education. The Conferences/Workshops was more for administrative advanced education.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if there was upcoming mental health training/education for the officers. Chief Langmeyer said they attended mental health training last year and planned to attend more. At this time, he was more focused on every officer having emergency vehicle operations training as that was a requirement for accreditation. Councilmember Gottschall asked if they had a training for after care with overdose calls. Chief Langmeyer said they haven't hosted the training yet but they were scheduled to go next month. They planned on using the opioid funds to pay for that.

Mayor Beagle asked if they planned to have any officers attend the FBI Academy in the coming year. Chief Langmeyer said that Sergeant Caldwell applied to attend the FBI Academy; however, COVID stopped that program for a while and now they were years behind.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik believed that an officer's presence in the school was deterrence. He urged the use of forfeiture funds for any capital purchases that could be utilized. Chief Langmeyer agreed but mentioned they liked to keep those funds readily available should a large expense arise.

Mr. Brown pointed out that compared to Fiscal Year 2023/2024, the HRA expense was reduced by \$63,376. Additionally, they had fifteen police officer wages come in less than previous years.

Chief Langmeyer mentioned that they've budgeted for one patrol vehicle a year going forward.

Mayor Beagle asked how many miles or how long did they plan on keeping these vehicles considering they were only going to purchase one a year going forward. Also, he wondered how the Dodge cars were working out for the officers. Chief Langmeyer predicted 90,000 miles or until they became mechanically unsafe. He thought the Dodge cars were working out pretty well.

Councilmember Sharpe echoed Councilmember Behrmann's comments pertaining to the Police Department budget. He felt it gave a lot of credence to Chief Langmeyer.

Councilmember Behrmann asked that all the cars be wrapped the same considering it didn't cost much. He believed the entire fleet should look the same for appearance and consistency.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Fire (63-65, 149)

Chief Geistler said he was happy to report that for the first time since 2010, they have 22 members on the roster. There had been a growth in the community, as well as call increase. Since 2020, the calls had gone up 39.5%. Last year alone, the calls were up 11½%. Since the first of the year, they had 78 calls (16%) coming in on top of each other. Of those 78 calls, 49 of them were within 2-30 minutes of each other. He felt with their staffing configuration of only two full-time people working during the day, it was difficult to respond to those types of calls in a timely manner considering they had to wait to clear the call they were currently on. He said one of their larger requests for this upcoming budget was to hire two additional full-time firefighters. He believed with two additional firefighters at the Station, they would be able to respond to the second and third calls. Chief Geistler mentioned they've made increases to their fire prevention, medical supplies, uniforms and office furniture budgets.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox applauded him for having the staffing and the coverage. She was never a fan of adding full-time staff, but she understood where he was coming from. She asked if there was a distinction between Paid on Call and Auxiliary Firefighter. Chief Geistler explained that auxiliary pay was taken from their part-time shift response budget because Auxiliary Firefighters worked a shift. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if they had more Auxiliary Firefighters than Paid on Call. Chief Geistler replied that they had eight Auxiliary and seven Paid on Call Firefighters. He mentioned that the part-time shift response budget also paid for the Paid on Call Firefighters to work a part-time shift. She wondered if any of the part-time firefighters worked enough hours where the City was obligated to pay for their health care. Chief Geistler replied no. He said that everyone was limited to the number of hours they worked; however, he could not limit the number of times the Paid on Firefighters reported. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked what benefit would the City gain from having two additional full-time personnel, other than there would be more staffing during the day. Chief Geistler said that his goal was to reduce response time for the residents. From a financial standpoint, once they figured that out, they could reduce the amount of overtime. He indicated that the overtime cost for this year had been estimated at \$39,000.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked how many times out of the 78 stacked calls were they unable to respond to any mutual aid calls in surrounding communities. Chief Geistler said there wasn't an incident where they've been too tied up that they couldn't go on a mutual aid. He stated that it was a rule they would never leave Wixom vulnerable for a mutual aid assist. Deputy Mayor Rzeznik wondered if they had to rely on mutual aid for any of those stacked calls. Chief Geistler said no but they relied on Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA). Deputy Mayor Rzeznik supported the additional firefighters due to the current situation. He was aware that the latest census showed an increase of 17.4% to the City. Chief Geistler noted that HVA was less available now than they've ever been. In 2023 year, they transported 210% more than the previous year because HVA was not available.

Mayor Beagle asked how long the crew and rig were out of service to the City when they

needed to transport. Chief Geistler thought it was about one hour on average.

Councilmember Behrmann supported the additional staff to make sure they had full-time coverage in the City. They forecasted coming in under budget this year, which meant they were not over-spending.

Councilmember Sharpe wasn't sure how he felt about adding additional staff. Chief Geistler indicated that he was requesting two more people because they had two shifts. The twelve hours would be full-time during the day and the overnights would be covered by Auxiliary and Paid on Call Firefighters.

Mayor Beagle asked if the two extra staff members would be hired from outside or within. Chief Geistler would like to hire from within. He thought there were more than enough individuals interested.

Councilmember Smiley said he supported the additional two full-time people.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked for more information about their HVA agreement. Chief Geistler said that it was more like a gentleman's agreement. He knew that Commerce just went to Advance Life Support (ALS) on Monday; Milford utilized Superior Ambulance and they were looking at going ALS themselves; Novi just purchased a couple of transport rigs so they could start transporting more. He knew they were not the only department to have problems with the private EMS service.

Mayor Beagle asked if HVA would dedicate one ambulance to the City. Chief Geistler knew that costs were in upwards of \$600,000 per year, and they couldn't guarantee a second ambulance if they had a second call.

For Capital Improvement, Chief Geistler requested two command inspection vehicles to replace what they currently had. Considering the Police Chief was using the police cars until the end of life, there wouldn't be any vehicles to hand down to the Fire Department. He indicated that these two new vehicles would be used for the command staff and on inspections. He figured they would last the department 8-10 years.

Mayor Beagle asked if it would be beneficial to put some sort of boxes on the new vehicles with the Jaws of Life and then send that out on a wreck instead of an engine. Chief Geistler wasn't sure because of the amount of equipment that was needed for certain wrecks. They liked having a bigger vehicle on an accident scene to block traffic and protect everyone on the scene. He knew that the larger fire engines have doubled in cost. When he was looking at a stripped-down version it cost \$1.4 million.

Councilmember Gottschall asked what vehicle did the Chief want replaced. Chief Geistler said the 2015 Explorer that had 75,000 miles and the 2016 Explorer that had 59,000 miles on it. Councilmember Gottschall asked how many miles a year did they put on their cars. Chief Geistler thought it was about 4,000 miles each.

Councilmember Behrmann asked where the ladder truck was in the Capital Plan. Chief Geistler replied that the ladder truck was a 2009 and it was a 30-year truck. He added

that it costs \$2.5 million to replace it.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik confirmed that the \$130,000 for the trucks included outfitting and Chief Geistler replied yes.

Councilmember Sharpe questioned the \$65,000 cost for the vehicles. Chief Geistler said that they used MiDEAL. That was the cost for an Expedition or a Tahoe.

Chief Geistler indicated that during Fiscal Year 2025/2026, he was proposing the replacement of Bravo 1. He figured that based on the number of medical calls, they could down size to a sprinter van which meant the cost could be reduced by \$280,000 - \$300,000.

Councilmember Sharpe saw the new audio and visual system noted in the budget. He wondered what they used today. Chief Geistler said that they carried radios or pagers.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Building Department (66-67, 146)

Mr. Benson said that the largest cost in this budget was due to contract with SafeBuilt, which covered their Building Official, Building Inspector and all of the trade inspectors. They were projecting some possibilities of that increasing in the next couple of years. He mentioned the other significant change to this budget was the estimated actual for Building Inspector and Code Enforcement expense to be higher this fiscal year. They budgeted \$8,500 and they were already at \$7,400. They were projecting \$12,000 by the end of the fiscal year. He knew code enforcement was a goal for City Council and would like them to be proactive or consider looking into other models for doing that. He indicated that this budget did not reflect any changes to the code enforcement Operations. He figured there were basically two options to consider when providing code enforcement. Option number one, they could continue to work with SafeBuilt, and their current rate was \$54.75 per hour for code enforcement. He mentioned that SafeBuilt expressed code enforcement was not necessarily their greatest desire to do. The second option was to hire a part-time Code Enforcement Officer. Most communities in Oakland County around the same size had one, maybe two. They worked 25 hours a week at \$18-\$25 an hour. That would be a total cost of \$25,000 to \$30,000 yearly. He stressed that he was not recommending that for this budget, but giving the Council something to think about. He suggested they increase the budget by \$12,000 because they've seen an increase in the number of calls with some very complex code enforcement cases over this past year.

Councilmember Behrmann thought they received about five hours a week in code enforcement from SafeBuilt. He said whether or not SafeBuilt liked doing it or not shouldn't matter. He thought five hours a week was a fair amount of time to ask of them. He figured with five hours, they could hit a couple neighborhoods each week.

Mr. Brown thought that might be a good interim step to see how it goes. As they got larger, they may want to consider a part-time officer. He mentioned that they would not make any money on that, but they would be keeping the property values up.

Councilmember Gottschall expected an hour a day for code enforcement as they are driving around. He would like SafeBuilt to do more hours to help reset expectations that they were not going to allow knee-high grass, dilapidated houses or dead vegetation. He figured once the word started to spread that they were watching things again, it would help. He didn't think they had a ton of issues but they had enough because all of the Council had mentioned it numerous times. He suggested they get away from the reactive approach and move to proactive. He would be happy to increase those hours.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik asked how far along they were with the task of archiving and scanning building documents. Mr. Benson said that during the last four years, they haven't had any expenses paid to an outside vendor for archiving. Since the 1% archiving fee was implemented in Fiscal Year 2014/2015, they've collected \$156,000 and only spent \$45,000. It was his desire to put together an RFP for a document imaging service. Deputy Mayor Rzeknik wondered if the new builds were archived immediately and Mr. Benson replied yes. They required digital plans for the building permit admissions, as well as the as-builts.

Councilmember Sharpe proposed that they incentivize SafeBuilt to do something when they drive around. He felt five hours a week was next to nothing. Mr. Benson indicated that for every hour that was spent looking for enforcements, you spent another hour doing the follow-up steps. Councilmember Sharpe wondered if it would make a difference if they went from three hours a week to five hours a week. Mr. Benson said the additional money to go from \$8,500 to \$12,000 was really to reflect the increase on demand. He didn't think \$12,000 would work. He stated that they have asked SafeBuilt what kind of a proposal would work for them and they have expressed no interest in a retainer route. Councilmember Sharpe wondered what the hesitation was with putting money in the budget. Mr. Benson suggested that they leave it as is for now and adjust it when they have a firmer proposal to bring forward.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox agreed that they needed more time for code enforcement. She would rather have a part-time Code Enforcement Officer for the City. It would cost less and they would get more.

Councilmember Smiley echoed Councilmember Gronlund-Fox's comments.

Councilmember Gottschall didn't think they needed to pay SafeBuilt extra to do code enforcement. They tracked their numbers and the citations issued and they were seeing no results coming from it. He questioned if they were our partner because the City was asking them to provide a service and they were defying the request. He thought they needed to keep an eye on them because they needed a vendor that would do right by our community.

Mr. Benson explained the renovations to the Building Department and a new copier were part of the Capital Improvement budget. He said they wanted to put the funds there but the copier could get pushed out further.

Mayor Beagle commented that there was \$80,000 for front counter renovation but no

furniture. Mr. Benson said that was correct. Much of the office furniture was recently replaced and in good shape. He explained that the \$80,000 was the cost to redo the front counter to create more space to interact with customers. It would also offer a little better of a barrier so customers can't just walk into the Building Department.

Councilmember Gottschall said he was not in favor of this project, especially at that cost.

Mayor Beagle asked how many members of Council were in favor of the Capital Improvement plans. Five of the seven said they were okay with it.

Mayor Beagle said they wouldn't approve the building budget until administration came back to Council with some definite figures on the Code Enforcement Officer.

The Council took a short recess at 9:17 p.m. and reconvened at 9:29 p.m.

DPW (69-71, 154)

Mr. Sikma said over this past year they've done a lot of work on the sidewalk program. They would continue keep it up for this next year as they were working on an app where they could monitor changes. Since there wasn't a lot of snow removal this past winter, they trimmed more trees. He mentioned that last summer they received the NPDES permit for the City that required more monitoring of the storm drains and more inspections. In order to get it done in a timely fashion, they contracted some of that out. They started to inspect more City property on a monthly basis so they could remain compliant with the NPDES permit.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik wondered if the DPW monitored the Waze App for pothole reporting. Mr. Sikma said they didn't. He hoped the staff could drive through the town utilizing GIS to identify each pothole. Mr. Sikma noted that Millstream and Hillsborough Subdivisions were in the 24-28 category. They planned to use this data as part of the 2.5% millage increase recommendation for November. This was a 20-year plan for what he hoped to do with the money from the millage.

Councilmember Sharpe thanked Mr. Sikma for his proposed budget with slight increases in FY 2024/2025. He thought his Department delivered a lot of great services this year.

Councilmember Behrmann wasn't sure if there was an update that could be shared regarding staffing for his Department. Mr. Sikma said they just hired a temporary employee for the person that was out on medical leave. Last fall, he hired a person who would assist with the downtown area. Councilmember Behrmann asked if they were getting caught up on projects or if they were still running behind. Mr. Sikma said they were barely maintaining. Councilmember Behrmann noted the street map Mr. Sikma passed out. He saw that Sam's Way belonged to the City. Mr. Sikma said one of the reasons they haven't done any work on Sam's Way was because of all the work they were doing on I-96. It didn't make sense to do work there right now. He was also looking into Alpha Tech Drive, and mentioned they would be working on Oak Creek next year.

Mr. Brown added that if the millage passed in November, that would represent \$1.25

million worth of additional revenue. He projected that would include a lot of projects. He forecasted that he would address City Council with a request to hire a Project Manager. The volume of work was already too great for what's on Mr. Sikma's plate already.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if the City had a tree fund. Mr. Sikma said they did. She questioned how they handled the sidewalk program with a tree causing issues. Mr. Sikma said they cut the tree root and if the tree died, they replaced it. He mentioned that they've been fairly successful with just cutting the root and replacing the sidewalk. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox was curious if the individual that was out on medical leave would be coming back to work. Mr. Sikma said they were still looking into it. Mr. Brown said he was actively staying on top of the issue. She was happy they had a temporary employee in place.

Councilmember Gottschall understood why they wanted to wait until after the election to consider increasing their staff. He asked if there was a way to hire someone as soon as they could after the election. Perhaps, they could cover it until they got into next budget cycle when they knew the funding would be coming. Mr. Brown said they could get ahead of that before the election so after the election they could hit the ground running.

Councilmember Smiley believed they could discuss the Project Manager position at a later meeting. He felt the general consensus amongst everyone was that they supported the position if the millage passed. He continued to encourage Mr. Sikma to contract out various projects.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked how the part-time seasonal help was coming along. Mr. Sikma replied that they were still hiring. One person started last Monday and another would start at the end of the month. He was also hopeful that a few students may work once school was out for the summer.

Mayor Beagle asked about the DPW Capital Improvements. He asked how many wing plow trucks they had. Mr. Sikma said they had three, and the new truck would just be replacing one they current had.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik wondered if the actual plow would be used from the truck that's coming out of service. Mr. Sikma said it's all brand new as they were expecting to receive about \$50,000 from the old one.

Councilmember Sharpe asked if they were asking for a new administration vehicle considering the Police Department were no longer passing down their old cards. Mr. Sikma said his budget reflects the purchase of a new pickup truck. He's had it in the budget for a while but it kept getting pushed back.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Senior Citizen Activities (72-73)

Mr. Brown stated that some numbers changed largely related to greater participation which was a good thing. If things continued to get busier, they may want to consider supplementing with part-time help. Senior transportation was one of the largest changes

related to the Oakland County millage that passed, but they still had some expenses related to transportation for charter trips.

Councilmember Gottschall asked why they wouldn't increase the amount for the events or the dues. He said that he wasn't looking to make a profit; however, they were already subsidizing \$50,000 a year and if they added part-time labor that would be even more. He thought they should consider adjusting the fee structure. Mr. Brown said that the Senior Coordinator does charge to cover the expenses of the event.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Planning Commission (74-75)

Mr. Benson indicated that this budget contained funds for their planning consultants and legal counsel. The primary change was adding additional money to Special Studies for the five-year review of the City's Master Plan. The Planning Commission already started some exploratory conversations on what areas to focus on.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if the five-year period was mandated by the State. Mr. Benson said they were supposed to look at it every five years, but there was no penalty if they didn't. He indicated the process was a great opportunity to set the stage for future ordinance updates and look into long-term goals. Councilmember Gottschall agreed there was some stuff to do but nothing monumental. He wondered if they needed the added expense right now. Mr. Benson said the bulk of the cost was due to public engagement. In the absence of having a formal proposal before him, he believed this was a good number to start with knowing they could scale it back. They were under no obligation to spend the entire \$55,000.

Councilmember Behrmann favored a more streamline approach with the Master Plan and making it more in line with the current zoning so they wouldn't be conflicting. He thought that the last time things were not streamlined and so many changes had to be made. It would reflect poorly on the City if that were to happen again.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if the Master Plan update was required for RROC. Mr. Benson said that it was. The last update was partially funded by the RROC, and noted that they were still in compliance by their standards. At a minimum, they required an annual report.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Zoning Board of Appeals (76-77)

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Parks & Recreation (79-81, 150-151)

Ms. Magee commented that a lot of the expenses for their events increased in this budget. Additionally, another large change was contracting out the landscaping projects where the DPW previously handled them before. She provided a short

update on the improvements being done to Mack Park. She indicated how they were looking at contracting out many things in order to free up DPW's time in order to get some of their projects moving along. She said they were hoping to get the pickleball courts completed at Gunnar Mettala by the end of June. She indicated that she pushed the restroom projects to Labor Day with bids going out in July and awarded in August.

In regards to the Capital Improvements, Ms. Magee said there had been some cracking in the tennis courts and pickleball courts at Gilbert Willis so those would need to be done, she would have them repaired at the same time.

Councilmember Behrmann mentioned that the Habitat repairs continued to get pushed back year after year. Ms. Magee agreed and noted that those funds had been used on other resources. They had \$200,000 budgeted for the Habitat repairs and they would likely contract that work out. Councilmember Behrmann wondered if they were actually going to do it. If not, he asked why they kept it in there.

Councilmember Gottschall asked about the Munshaw barn. Ms. Magee said she left that in her budget because there hasn't been a decision made. Councilmember Gottschall suggested they demo the barn and use the extra funds for the Habitat or other projects. He was aware that some of those projects included marquee improvements, wayfinding and City signage. He didn't want to start adding a ton of signs all over the City.

Mr. Benson mentioned that City Council would be included on any sign decisions. The bigger concern was the monument and gateway signage as they were very expensive. Councilmember Gottschall indicated that any sign that cost six figures was way too expensive. Mr. Benson commented that it was about setting a budget and making something fit within it. With the help of Guide Studio, they believed the \$1 million mark over the course of one to five years was an appropriate number to accomplish installing gateway signage. He was putting numbers out there so Council knew what to expect. He reminded them that the DDA was intending to contribute \$200,000 for their downtown portions.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik agreed with Councilmember Behrmann about the Habitat. They should finally utilize that \$200,000 for the trail system boardwalk as it needed to be completed this year. He walked every inch of the boardwalk and saw four areas that had safety concerns. He supported contracting out for the repairs.

Councilmember Sharpe asked if the ADA pathways from the restrooms to the courts were part of this budget. Ms. Magee said it was and they've been estimated based on the square footage. Councilmember Sharpe recalled last year's budget for this project being \$150,000 for the comfort station and this year the budget was \$500,000. He asked what changed. Ms. Magee said the \$150,000 was a placeholder that didn't include the installation or demolition of the other building. Additionally, the comfort station they were proposing would be a larger facility with a storage area and metal roof.

Discussion was held regarding the West End Commons area. Mr. Benson explained that the one thing that differentiates the West End Commons area from the other parks was the location to the social district. The whole concept with about expanding the social district. It had a little bit of a different focus than a traditional park.

Councilmember Sharpe asked about the \$20,000 for holiday decorations. Ms. Magee said those funds would be to replace the worn out large wreaths that hung on the buildings.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Community Center (82-83, 145)

Ms. Magee said this budget was reflective of the utilities and rentals. She mentioned the facility was busy Monday through Thursday with senior activities and the weekends were booked through the end of the year. The biggest change was that all of her projects were moved into one bid. In addition, she planned to purchase new software for their programs with this budget.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if there would be an ongoing annual fee with the new facility software and Ms. Magee confirmed that there would.

Councilmember Sharpe noticed a restroom cost under the Capital Improvement. Ms. Magee said those funds were for the restrooms near the kitchen. She added they would be replacing the humidifiers from this budget.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Debt Service– Pension/OPEB (84-87)

There was a general consensus on this budget.

Interfund Transfers (88-89)

Ms. Stamper said that this was the annual contribution to the Capital Improvement Fund for this year.

There was a general consensus on this budget.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments at this time.

CITY MANAGER/ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Brown thanked everyone for their time this evening.

Mr. Benson had no further comments.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Smiley thanked everyone for their time and hard work.

Councilmember Gronlund Fox appreciated the efforts of the staff.

Councilmember Sharpe appreciated the staff's attention for detail and being prepared with this year's budget.

Councilmember Gottschall thanked everyone for their time and effort related to the budget. He raised some concern with the recent road construction on Loon Lake Road. He'd received complaints from residents about the shut down of Loon Lake Road for the repaving project. He recalled asking if this project if would be sectioned off to one lane and was told no. He believed the way the road had been closed was a needless inconvenience. Considering they were starting with Wixom Road but closing everything down to Benstein Road did not seem necessary. He understood that's what the engineers wanted, but at a certain point they should say no because it would inconvenience hundreds of people. He urged the City to adjust the way the road was closed. Additionally, he'd known that Loon Lake Woods Subdivision now had construction equipment driving through their neighborhood. He stressed that they should have to follow the same detour they've created rather than tearing up the neighborhood streets. He asked administration to make it clear to contractors that they should not be cutting through neighborhoods. Mr. Sikma agreed.

Mr. Sikma said the detour was going through Oakland County Road Commission and it required a permit. The idea was to keep traffic flowing the same way throughout the entire project. They were still anticipating the completion date being July 31, 2024 with the closures as they stood.

Councilmember Behrmann thought the information given to residents about what was happening with the Loon Lake Road construction was pretty clear. He understood the inconvenience but didn't see how they could fix it since it's already been started. He appreciated that the staff knew what the Council was looking for within the budget so it could become a smoother process and shorter night.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik thanked staff for their hard work and maintaining a ten-year Capital Plan so they could continue to keep their assets in good working order.

Mayor Beagle thanked Sheryl for her efforts tonight and the administration for presenting a budget that the citizens deserve.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Crystal Opalko
Deputy Clerk

Approved
5-14-2024

Patrick Beagle, Mayor

Crystal Opalko, City Clerk