

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
held November 6, 2023
5:30 p.m.

Vice President of Council David L. Tadych, Chair
President of Council Dwight Clark
Councilman Thomas J. Kelly
Councilman Peter Winzig

Also Present: Mayor Koomar, Law Director Barbour, Councilwoman DeGeorge,
Finance Director Mahoney, Assistant Finance Director Milton,
Councilman Greco, Police Chief Gillespie, Fire Chief Lyons, Community
Services Director Messeri, Building Director Tuck-Macalla, Clerk of
Council Kemper.

Audience: Mr. David Florez.

Mr. Tadych called the fifth meeting of the Finance Committee of 2023 to order in the Committee Room of Bay Village City Hall at 5:30 p.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance.

2024 Budget Review

Fire Department

Mrs. Mahoney reviewed the 2024 Budget for the Fire Department.

Sixty percent of the wages for the Fire Department are taken from the General Fund, and 40% are taken from the Emergency Paramedic Unit (EPU) fund.

Mr. Winzig asked if the budget amount is \$23,500 for turnout gear. He asked if the Seabob is a carryover from last year. Mrs. Mahoney stated that in 2023 the budget amount was \$26,500. Mr. Winzig stated that the turnout gear is \$27,000 (6 sets @\$4500 each) but we budgeted \$23,500. Chief Lyons stated that originally there was \$19,500 budgeted in that slot and he asked for a \$4,500 increase. The turnout gear is slightly more than \$3,900 each. The amount budgeted is correct.

There are 24 employees plus the Chief in the Fire Department. One firefighter recently retired. A Civil Service examination is being conducted on November 15 to create a fresh eligibility list. It is anticipated to have the position filled prior to the end of the year.

Mr. Clark asked if Mrs. Mahoney would bookmark the number of employees for wages.

Mrs. Mahoney budgeted a 4% increase for health care, and 3% for wages. For both the Fire and Police Departments an additional 72 hours of overtime was budgeted for the solar eclipse event in April 2024, resulting in higher overtime. Fire Chief Lyons stated that the vast amount of overtime is due to shift vacancy fill-ins. Other overtime is caused by training.

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The Bureau of Workers' Compensation has awarded monies to purchase a new power cot and two new stair chairs for the emergency response teams. This is a \$50,000 grant with a 75%/25% allocation of funds between the grant and the city portion. The power cot has a life span of eight years; the presently used power cot is 12 years old. An amended appropriation ordinance will be prepared for the November 20 meeting of Council.

Technology equipment at the Fire Department is adequate. The Records Management system switched over from a company was going out of date. They are moving along with the new provider with a much more reasonable price (\$1,000 per year for the new system; the old system was expected to rise from \$3,000 per year to \$12,000 per year) A subscription from the previous vendor was purchased, in the amount of \$500, for limited access for old records. The subscription runs on a stand-alone computer and is not part of the City's computer system upon the advice of the City's IT consultants to ensure against being hacked.

Ambulance Fees are on track. Mr. Winzig stated that the amount received is \$329,000 versus the \$275,000 budgeted. A third-party vendor is used for billing. The Records Management System information after an ambulance call is updated, and the system is tied to the third-party vendor. The information is sent to the vendor in order to bill the clients' insurance company. The vendor takes a fee of 6% and has not raised the fee since the inception in 2006. Mr. Tadych noted that he has not heard anything from anyone since using the ambulance service, to which Chief Lyons commented that it may take some time before hearing from the insurance company.

Building Department

The Planning, Zoning, and Architectural Board of Review Commissions show a reduction in wages due to an overbudget in 2023, and the efficiency of the secretary to the commissions. There are four full time and one part time employees in the Building Department. All employees are cross-trained. Included in the 2024 Budget is an additional full-time employee for sewer connection testing of homes. Director Tuck-Macalla stated that the city engineer will hire a contractor. The contractor will do the testing and report to the Building Department. The Building Department will send a letter to the residents notifying them of what needs to be fixed. Permits will be issued, and inspections will follow. Historically, the Building Department always had an extra person. Mr. Clark noted the professionalism and courtesy of the Building Department. Mr. Tuck-Macalla stated that all of his employees are well-trained across the board.

Police Department

It has been difficult to find part time deputies, therefore the part time deputies wages have been consolidated to facilitate hiring an additional police officer bringing the complement to 24 plus the Chief. The School Resource Officer wages are paid 70% by the Board of Education. The complement of dispatchers is one full time dispatcher and two part time dispatchers. Interviewing is being conducted for an additional full-time dispatcher. Two hundred and fifty hours of overtime has been added to the budget for the solar eclipse in 2024. It is expected to have an eclipse population surge to 50,000. The Service Department has ordered 100 porta-potties for the event. An area is being mapped out in Cahoon Park for landing an emergency helicopter for hospital transport if needed.

Court Fee is for the Rocky River Municipal Court and is provided by revenue received from traffic tickets.

Special Investigative Services funding is related to the Amy Mihaljevic case which is still active in the department.

School Guard gear is budgeted at \$1,000. Mr. Winzig commented that there was discussion about upgrading their apparel. Chief Gillespie stated that the guards do a nice job of keeping their clothing nice from year to year. It is good to have something set aside. New safety equipment includes an LED safety stop sign.

Mr. Tadych noted that the Equipment category budget has been reduced by \$15,000. The funds are used for camera equipment and rifles. Chief Gillespie stated that the funds are to update the interior and exterior cameras from analog to digital. New rifles will be purchase for the SWAT team. The 2023 Budget included speed cameras that are not included in the 2024 Budget. Mr. Winzig asked if additional funds are needed for speed cameras.

Mr. Kelly noted the speed calming tables installed in the City of Lakewood, and asked the Police Chief if he is in favor of that type of speed impediment. Chief Gillespie stated that they are working with the city engineer to analyze data to study regarding speeding in various locations.

Fire Chief Lyons asked the committee to keep in mind that anything done to reduce speed on the roads can affect emergency responses of the Fire Department, slowing down the response time considerably.

Chief Gillespie stated his first inclination would be to handle speeding with an officer before adding something to the street, to avoid unattended consequences.

Police and Fire Pension payments are increased to correspond with the increase in overtime wages.

Law Enforcement funds are seizure monies and are set aside for future expenses that may occur.

Mr. Tadych noted that Prisoner Care has increased in the budget and asked if expenses have increased over the average of the last three years. Chief Gillespie noted that during COVID the Police Department was asked to have less people in jail. That recently has changed with a push to serve warrants. With an increased patrol officer staff, arrests will increase as well. The budget numbers should be the same, but do change from year to year.

The Deer Management Plan has been completed for the year and sent to the United States Department of Agriculture. The plan is then turned over to the Department of Natural Resources who will issue tags for culling. Baiting and culling will begin in December.

Community Services Department

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The Community Services Department is comprised of two full time. three part time employees, and four part time drivers.

The Senior Transportation Connection was used to schedule rides in 2022, and for a few months in 2023. An employee has been hired to schedule rides.

Classes were incorrectly charged in 2022. Classes should be charged to Fund 290, Miscellaneous Contractual Services.

Mr. Clark asked where Director Messeri sees challenges in 2024. ADA doors, and bathrooms are installed. Tuck pointing has been done.

Ms. Messeri stated that an addition to the Recreation Department at the Dwyer Center would be an item for consideration in the future. The dance room is the biggest concern due to the flooding. Adjustments to provide drainage at the back patio door will need to be done to avoid buckling of the floor. Six thousand dollars has been set aside in the capital budget.

Mr. Clark asked if there are plans for the kitchen renovation. Ms. Messeri stated that available funds will allow upgrade to appliances next year. The flooring will have to be in contingency with plans in the future for building adjustments to add the Recreation Department offices.

The Mayor noted that the feasibility study for the Recreation Department addition to Dwyer was set aside due to COVID. After the fire station renovation is underway, attention again will turn to the Dwyer Center to see what makes sense.

Mr. Clark noted that there is great momentum at the Senior Center now. Council always tries to be supportive.

Chief Gillespie stated that the Police Department is working with the Fire Department on safety and security measures for the Dwyer Memorial Center.

Mr. Winzig asked if safety cameras are in place at the Dwyer Center currently. Ms. Messeri stated that safety cameras are not in place. The Mayor suggested working on that item sooner rather than later.

Mr. Clark noted that the new pedestrian trails lead to the Community Services Department. Ms. Messeri noted that all side doors are secured and entrance to the building is required at the front entrance.

Mr. Tadych asked if the four part time drivers are expected to be driving more frequently in 2024. Ms. Messeri stated that it is the hope to increase transportation, and information is being circulated through newsletters that the program is available.

Mr. Tadych noted that gasoline costs are doubled in the 2024 Budget. Ms. Messeri stated that it is a service that is provided.

Mayor Koomar stated that residents found transportation with friends or relatives during COVID. There continues to be a spike in the Knickerbocker Apartment residents requesting transportation. Director Messeri will coordinate rides for groups rather than individually. In 2023 the transportation expense is expected to be \$3,500, and \$5,000 is budgeted for 2024.

Mr. Clark asked the reason for the drop in the Hospitalization category for the Community Services Department. Mrs. Mahoney stated that someone must have elected not to be on the plan. She will double check that amount.

All Funds Page

Mrs. Mahoney stated that the budget must be balanced. The right-hand column is positive. Council does not appropriate revenue, but estimated revenue is shown. It is anticipated to have a 3% increase in property tax over 2023, amounting to \$200,000 in the General Fund. A three percent increase is budgeted for Municipal Income Tax for 2024. Municipal Income Tax receipts are received monthly, and are presently tracking ahead.

Mr. Clark stated that Council has continued to refine the budget efforts over the past few years to the point where there is a great trend line. One of the challenges is if there is a way to show the 2023 actual number plus what we proposed. That is a better use of comparison as opposed to using last year's budgeted. Last year's budget included higher numbers that actually came in lower, which prompts a lot of questions for the 2024 budget being lower. Mr. Clark suggested an added column and dropping the 2020 actual which is irrelevant now. He suggested a year-to-date column for 2023. Mrs. Mahoney will add that column.

Mayor Koomar stated that they have been working with Congressman Miller and have received notification that the House of Representatives passed the appropriations package which advances eight of the Congressman's requests, of which Bay Village is one. Bay Village put in for the engineering and planning for the equalization tank in the amount of \$866,000. This was passed by the House and will now go over to the Senate. It is hoped to look at it next year from a construction standpoint.

Mr. Clark suggested having a representative from Congressman Miller's office before Council in January to express appreciation.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Monday, November 13 at 5:00 p.m.

There being no further comments or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

David L. Tadych, Chairman

Joan T. Kemper, Secretary