

CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 14, 2010

Committee Room #1

PRESENT: Alds. Ewerdt, Causier, Berdan, Wilson, Hanson, Donegan, McBride - 7

EXCUSED: Ald. Walsh

ALSO PRESENT: J. Archambo, City Admin.; J. Plass, Accounting Manager

Ald. Ewerdt as Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Visit Milwaukee

Mr. Archambo reported that this budget is for the promotion of tourism and convention business in the greater Milwaukee region. The City anticipates collecting \$807,000 from the hotels and motel tax, with \$288,371 returned to Visit Milwaukee.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Visit Milwaukee budget – Ayes: 7

WI Retirement Fund

The program provides through the State of Wisconsin a pension system with contributions based on the percentage of employee income. The Wisconsin Retirement Fund provides income to disabled and retired employees. The contribution rates are given to the city by the Wisconsin Retirement Funds for each of the employee groups. These are Elected Officials, 13.3%; Police, 20.1%; Fire, 22.4%; and General Employees, 11.6%.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the WI Retirement Fund budget – Ayes: 7

Social Security

This account provides the funding for the city's portion of the Social Security which is 7.65%.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Social Security budget – Ayes: 7

Employee Assistance Plan

There is a budget of \$9,600 for this program which provides assessment and a limited number of consultations to employee and their family to assist them in dealing with a wide variety of personal and family situations.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the EAP budget – Ayes: 7

Unemployment

This is generally budgeted with \$10,000. The account reimburses the State of Wisconsin for eligible payments made on behalf of the city. The individual department's budget is used to reimburse.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Unemployment budget – Ayes: 7

Remission of Taxes

This account provides funding for the refund of taxes to taxpayers as directed by the Board of Review or Common Council. There is \$84,000 in this budget.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Remission of Taxes budget – Ayes: 7

Contribution for Uncollectibles

This \$15,000 budget provides funding for the write-off of uncollectible receivables to the city. \$15,444 was written off in 2010 and the amount has been as high as \$71,000 in recent years.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Contribution for Uncollectibles budget – Ayes: 7

MADACC

The Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission provides quality, cost-effective animal control services that protect the public health and safety and promotes the welfare of animals. The budgeted amount of \$60,700 is expected to be paid to MADACC in 2011.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the MADACC budget – Ayes: 7

Unallocated Revenues

Mr. Archambo said that this fund covers revenues that could not be assigned to a particular budget and then goes to each department.

The targeted fund balance needs to be about 17% of our revenue. The city will have to be cautious about the surplus fund projects in the coming years.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend approval of the Unallocated Revenues budget – Ayes: 7

TIF

Mr. Archambo said that under state laws there is a cap on what the value of a TIF district can be. The total combined valuation for all TIF District increments located within the city cannot exceed twelve percent of the equalized value of the City.

Mr. Archambo said that there is legislation out there for distressed TIF's. The city's TIF's are very successful and a couple of them are expected to close earlier than anticipated.

Moved by Ald. McBride, seconded by Ald. Wilson
to recommend approval of the TIF budget – Ayes: 7

Economic Development

The budget for this department is \$245,210 for 2011. The study done for this department called for three positions: Director, Business Specialist and CDBG Administration. Funding is included in the budget for ½ FTE which is geared for a Business Specialist. \$10,000 has been set aside for economic development incentives, to assist businesses with code updates. In the past a \$10,000 grant was available.

Ms. Enders explained that the Business Specialist would work closely with groups like the BID and North Avenue. Currently she is attending their meetings and working with them. Some of the tasks that the Business Specialist will handle are being a liaison to the neighborhood services, helping with small business development, referrals to other agencies and support for boards and commissions. Ms. Enders replied to questions that the budget will be tight but she will be looking at grant funding for assistance.

Moved by Ald. McBride, seconded by Ald. Causier
to recommend approval of the Economic Development budget – Ayes: 7

7:25 p.m. recess; reconvened at 7:37 p.m.

Fire Department

This discussion is continued from September 23rd when it was held for more discussion.

Mr. Archambo reviewed with the committee and clarified that the city is not proposing to shut down Fire Station #2 or to close down Rescue #2. The budget recommendation is to eliminate three firefighter positions. On a typical day there would be 32 staff members assigned to duty and this would be a reduction of one per day. These positions are currently vacant and no one is being laid off.

Mr. Archambo suggested if vacation time was balanced throughout the year and sick time not abused it is less likely that the department would be short staffed.

Mr. Archambo felt it would be inappropriate to ask the taxpayers for more money to pay for these positions.

Chief Redman said that there has been an impact on response times. He said it is a matter of risk level the city is willing to accept. He noted that there was an accident in the city this morning and they had to call in West Allis because Rescue 2 was not in service and this is a revenue loss to the city.

The Chief discussed the contract with Milwaukee County to provide a certain service level for the Medical Center. He said the county has asked for a repayment due to the city's rolling vacancies in the amount somewhere between \$49,000 and \$210,000. The committee asked Mr. Archambo about this and requested that the Chief supply copies to them.

Thomas Wyhoski, 4320 Raymir Place, was not in favor of any cuts in staff. He said if it weren't for our rescue squad who revived him two times on the way to the hospital he would have died. The response time from another station to his home is too significant.

Bea Lex, 6030 W. Wells Street, didn't think the city needed the extra fire fighters. She noted that the city is declining in size. She questioned why when she made a call to 911 that an ambulance and a fire truck showed up. Although she said the EMT's arrived quickly and they were wonderful, the city needs to cut back. The employee benefits should not be paid at the taxpayer's expense. She felt employees should also live in the city they work in.

Raymond Cronick, 4309 Raymir Place, expressed concern that other reporting agencies to our city won't be as quick as our fire fighters and it is time lost. Wauwatosa shouldn't have to depend on another community to cover for us.

Jill Petryczkiewicz, 4411 N. 107th St., expressed concern that Rescue #2 was going to be eliminated. She asked for clarification if this was going to happen or not as they have heard so many different stories. Ms. Petryczkiewicz said it took her about 12 minutes to travel to the meeting tonight and if someone in her neighborhood needs an EMT quickly or in need of a defibrillator, the response time to get across town is too much. She asked that Rescue #2 not be taken out of service. She felt inclined to say that taxpayers would pay an additional \$1.00 per month if that is all it would take to keep all the stations fully staffed. She asked the city to remember all the residents in the vicinity of fire station #2. Ms. Petryczkiewicz also suggested that employees should pay part of their pension.

Ald. Wilke noted that he circulated an e-mail in his district to get the word out that there was a possibility of Rescue #2 being shut down. He said the residents like the service they are receiving and are proud of it. They were not in favor of cutting this from the budget. Ald. Wilke felt that this has not been discussed with the residents of the city. He said it is important to seek efficiencies before taking away response times. He said last year the Chief thought he was going to be able to make it work with the reduced staff and already 40% of the time Rescue #2 has been shut down this year. People have overlying thoughts that the city should maintain their services. He presented between 40 and 50 emails from people opposed to the cuts.

Hank Wendt, 9502 W. Ridge Court, thanked the aldermen who stopped by the fire station to discuss the issues. He said he understands people's concern but the impact of taking one position away is a significant impact. He said that in the past couple of years there has been reduction in personnel and they are at the breaking level. There will be a change in service which compromises the city in the area of Fire Station #2. He noted that it is important to the people on the line to have adequate staff and to continue full staffing would cost residents \$1.18 a month to keep this. He felt this was pretty reasonable insurance to provide what needs to be provided properly.

Chief Redman felt there were funds elsewhere in the fire budget to make up for the personnel. He mentioned mobile data or ambulance upgrades which could be shifted and have a zero impact on the budget. Mr. Archambo disagreed, saying the city would be using one-time funds toward personnel and realistically any unneeded funds would go back into the surplus applied fund balance.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson to accept the executive budget as proposed with the directive that Rescue 2 be considered a priority apparatus and to include the coverage of the half-time clerical position –

Asst. Chief Mike Anton discussed the Milwaukee County contract. He felt this will be a discussion in moving forward. He asked Mr. Archambo his opinion of the funding issue and to what extent does he feel the city is opening the door to negotiating a reduction or alteration in that contract. Mr. Archambo said he doesn't have that fear, he didn't feel that the county would approach the city that they are in violation.

Ald. Wilson was vehemently opposed to the motion on the floor. He asked for clarification on the Rescue #2 situation. He noted that on page 67 in the budget book the first bullet point in objectives for 2011 says closing Rescue #2. He felt that there is a wide consensus of how the department should be run. He said the committee was told they wouldn't be discussing the study or policy, but it is. He agreed that the sick time needs to be reined in. He felt the impact of reduced staffing needs to be explored at great length. He thought it was premature to say the city is not going to fund this in the hopes that status quo works out. Ald. Wilson said he knows there is a risk in adding to the budget, but he suggested using the overtime funds to staff the three positions at entry level.

Ald. Berdan said she will support the motion. She said she hadn't heard anything about the Milwaukee County contract.

Ald. Causier said she would be voting in favor of the motion. She was a little alarmed that no one seemed to have a handle on what the county was going to do. She challenged the fire department to look at their inefficiencies.

Ald. Ewerdt said that 25% of the city taxes collected is for the fire department. He said he would support the motion wholeheartedly. He noted that the staffing is at the decision of the Chief and didn't think that service would suffer.

Roll call vote taken – Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Wilson)

Public Health

The public health portion of the budget was held on September 23 for further discussion.

Dr. Kreuser said that the immediate question in their budget is the vacancy of the public health specialist position. In budget terms this amounts to approximately \$53,700. This position has been vacant for nine months. This position originally was created from a nursing position at a lower pay grade.

Dr. Kreuser said they have checked with the state to see what the ramifications would be if they don't do an update of the state-mandated community assessment. The state said they would do it for the department and then bill them.

Lori Nielson said that the state was talking about non-compliance issues that are willful. If that did occur for whatever reason, the state would charge the municipality. She said grant funding would be lost and the responsibility as to who would do the assessment would be deferred to the regional office.

Ms. Nielsen said she contacted the regional office and was told the department would be decertified. Then there would be no local authority to apply local statutes. Any revenues collected would revert back to the state and they would charge the municipality for the services. Ms. Nielsen said she asked if any other fines would be imposed and she received no answer. She thought the state would hire another municipality to do the assessment and then Wauwatosa would have to follow those plans or policies.

Ald. Wilson referred to alternate #1 to contract out or hire someone 20 – 30 hours a week; this would save on benefits. With the healthcare reform, hospitals must assist with assessments. Ms. Nielsen said that Froedtert Hospital is interested in assisting with a part-time person.

Ms. Nielsen explained what the public health specialist position does during an outbreak is communication. They develop flyers and work with developing educational communication with partners.

Ald. Berdan concurred that she called the state and got the same answers. She felt if another governing body came in to do the work and the state charged us it could be scarier than H1N1.

Ald. Donegan felt if the assessment is not done it could cost the city more in the long run.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Berdan
to recommend returning \$50,000 to this budget for the
purpose of proceeding with the assessment alternative 1,
with the funding coming from half-levy and half-surplus – Ayes: 7

Municipal Court

The budget line item was questioned by the committee at a previous meeting why there was an increase in wages in this budget. The answer is that the city clerk and deputy clerk have part of their wages in this budget line.

Moved by Ald. Hanson, seconded by Ald. Berdan
to recommend approval of the Municipal Court budget – Ayes: 7

Roadway Maintenance

This item was brought back for further discussion. There was a budget reduction of \$52,573 for seal coating and \$25,000 for crack filling at Executive Review.

The committee determined that the less road maintenance is done, the more street repairs that will be needed later. The consultant reiterated to the council that this is an important part of road upkeep. The committee decided that the department needs to keep with the maintenance program.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Wilson
to recommend adding \$52,573 for seal coating and \$25,000 for
crack filling with the funds to come from Surplus Supply – Ayes: 7

Consolidated fee schedule

Mr. Archambo said that the fee schedule is reviewed annually along with the budget and changes are made as deemed necessary.

Moved by Ald. Berdan, seconded by Ald. McBride
to recommend approval of the Consolidated Fee schedule – Ayes: 7

Budget recommendation

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Hanson
to recommend the budget as amended and set a public
hearing date for *November 9th at a special meeting of the
common council at 7:00 p.m. – Ayes: 7

Meeting adjourned 9:58 p.m.

*(note: the public hearing was subsequently scheduled for November 16, 2010.)

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa

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