

**APPROVED MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
JULY 26, 2023
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Lisa Iverson called the Budget Work Session Meeting of the Wyoming City Council for July 26, 2023 to order at 6:00 P.M.

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming City Council were present: Councilmembers Lisa Iverson, Linda Nanko Yeager, and Claire Luger

Absent: Councilmember Dennis Schilling and Bret Ohnstad

Also Present: Robb Linwood- City Administrator, Neil Bauer - Public Safety Director, Fred Weck-Building Official/Zoning Administrator, Joe Keding- Acting Public Works Superintendent and Jessi Sturtz- Abdo Financial and Jeff Potts – Executive Director MN Police Chiefs Association

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Mayor Iverson determined a Quorum was present.

PLEDEGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2024 Budget Discussion

City Administrator Linwood – Stated that Finance Director, Jessi Sturtz from Abdo Financial would be giving an overview of the Draft 2024 Budget. One of the talking points tonight would be regarding the current shortage of Police officer candidates and shortage of applicants in the state. To start the meeting and being conscious of his time we would like to have the Executive Director of the Minnesota Chiefs Association, Jeff Potts discuss the current staffing issues in the industry.

Jeff Potts, Executive Director Minnesota Chiefs Association – Mr. Potts stated that as of today there are 194 job openings on the Post Board for Police Officers. Currently enrollment is down almost 50% in schools that provide peace officer degrees and training. The good news is in the last 6 to 8 months there is a small uptick in enrollment. Some of the strategies you are seeing right now in communities for recruitment is large signing bonuses in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range. You are seeing departments utilize CSO and Cadet positions to lock in individual who are in school currently so they can be offered by departments and hired for police officer positions right out of school. The state has also come up with some ideas in regards to a grant called pathway to policing program provide a route for nontraditional candidates to be hired as licensed Peace Officers in Minnesota. Once candidates pass the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) exam, grantees are eligible for the reimbursement of 50% of compensation, training and associated expenses. He stated the state also allocated \$5 million for programs to help with salary and academic costs.

Jessi Sturtz- Abdo Financial – Mrs. Sturtz gave an overview of the first draft 2024 city budget. She did explain that the tax capacity was just received from the county prior to the meeting and that her presentation would differ slightly to the packet the council receive prior to the meeting. She summarized key items including:

- LGA will increase by approximately \$131,230 for 2024.
- The total 2024 tax levy is proposed to increase \$512,366 or 9.98% from 2023.
- The general levy increased \$521,406 or 14.36%
- The debt levy decreased by \$125,311 or -13.65%. This is due to the scheduled bond payments.
- The capital levy increased \$84,271 or 14.64%.
- The street replacement levy increased by \$100,000 or 33.33%.
- A part-time Community Service Officer position is added in 2024.
- All employees are projected to receive a COLA increase of 3% and eligible employees will receive a step increase.
- We have estimated an 8% increase to Workers Compensation, 10% increase in General Property Insurance.
- We have estimated a 10% to health insurance and is split 50/50 between employer and employee.
- The proposed tax capacity for 2024 is it going up by 1.3 million or 10.41% and the estimated city tax rate is looked like it will go down .15%

Expenditure Key Changes:

City clerk office

- Increase in wage and benefits due to COLA and step increases
- Increase in workers compensation and property/liability insurance premiums
- Increase in network municipal computers by \$5k.
- Elections – increase due to three elections in 2024

Police Department

- Increase in wages and benefits due to COLA and step increases
- Part-time Community Service Officer position is added in 2024
- Increase in workers compensation and property/liability insurance premiums
- Maintenance contracts increased by \$32k due to cloud based records management system
- Added wellness line item for \$12k, recruitment line item for \$3k, and medical supplies and equipment line item for \$3k

Fire Department

- Increase in wages and benefits due to COLA and step increases
- Added other equipment line item for \$16k for replacement lifting airbags for accident scenes, hose replacement and replacement tool sets.

Building Inspection

- Increase in wages and benefits due to COLA and step increases

Hwys, streets and roads

- Increase in wage and benefits due to COLA and step increases
- Increase in motor fuels \$6k, increase in utilities

Individual Department Heads gave brief summations of their budgets:

Fred Weck – Building Official/Zoning Administrator – Gave an overview of his department that the only changes were some increases for COLA's and step increases and the addition of a small truck as a replacement vehicle in the 2024 capital budget.

The council had a discussion regarding with building revenues down in 2024 if an inspector was still necessary in the department. Staff stated that there has been some downturn, but at this time they do not have plans not to have an inspector in the department. The majority of council felt the position was still necessary.

Public Safety Director Bauer – Chief Bauer gave an overview of some of the items in his budget and stated he mainly wanted to discuss some hiring strategies with the council tonight. Chief Bauer talked about the department has had openings since December 2022 and they have had 11 applications, 8 interviewed, 4 backgrounds initiated, and no job offers given. He stated that they will be having a department meeting and discuss strategies on their current traditional route to attract potential officers.

It was suggested by to use of recruiting videos to highlight the department and officers.

Public Safety Director Bauer – Talked about how other departments have utilized Cadet Programs, CSO's and reserves to help fill Police officer positions in their departments. He proposed evaluating the following process's to help fill current and future vacancies as the Police Department will have retirees coming in the next few years.

Wyoming Police Cadet Position

The position would be posted for a vacant position or in anticipation of future vacant police officer positions. The applicant would be hired as a "Police Cadet" (part-time employee) and must be enrolled full-time in a 2- or 4-year law enforcement degree program. The Cadet would work a flexible part-time schedule working in a uniformed capacity performing non-sworn responsibilities (e.g. animal control, parking, nuisance ordinance issues, vehicle maintenance, any additional operational duties). The Cadet position is available for a 2-year period of time, or can be extended until the Cadet can participate in a police officer hiring process. The cadet would eligible for tuition reimbursement throughout their participation in the program in the amount of \$2,000, twice a year, for a maximum of \$8,000 per individual. Upon graduation and eligibility to be POST licensed, the Cadet would participate in a police officer hiring process. If selected, the Cadet would be required to work as an officer for 3 years for the City of Wyoming. If they leave the department by choice or as a result of a disciplinary process, they would be responsible for reimbursing the City a pro-rated amount of tuition reimbursement that has been paid.

Wyoming Police Reserve Cadet Position

The position would be posted for a vacant position or in anticipation of a vacant police officer position. The applicant would be hired as a "police reserve" unpaid volunteer and must be enrolled full-time in a 2- or 4-year law enforcement degree program. The Reserve Cadet would perform police reserve duties during their degree program (e.g. animal control, parking, nuisance ordinance issues, community events), for a minimum of 12 hours per month. The Reserve Cadet position is available for a 2-year period of time, or until the Cadet can participate in a police officer hiring process, for no more than 4 years. The cadet would eligible for tuition reimbursement throughout their participation in the program in the amount of \$4,000, twice a year, for a maximum of \$16,000.

Intensive Education and Skills Grant Program

This is new legislation that was approved this year to establish an intensive curriculum that will provide eligible candidates that have already completed a 2- or 4-year degree in an unrelated field, with the law enforcement education and skill training needed to become an officer in the State of Minnesota. The program will be designed to be completed in less than 8 months. The program will be funded by an OJP grant program that will pay for the education and salary for the candidate, up to \$50,000. The department would select a candidate to attend the intensive program with the understanding that they will hire the individual as a police officer upon completion.

This will be a highly competitive program that will have a rapid selection process. Additional details will be available at any point.

If this becomes available December 31, 2023, and we participate in the program, the candidate would potentially complete the program late in 2024. The understanding is we would be pre-hiring an officer for two anticipated retirements.

Police Internship (Future potential use, not proposing currently) A Police Intern is paid temporary position with flexible scheduling (day, evening, and weekend hours), for 8-10 hours a week for no more than 8-12 weeks in duration. The Intern should be exploring policing as a career or could be enrolled in a law enforcement education program. They will work on operational, administrative and support functions, many of them project based, and will be mentored by a Wyoming police officer. The Intern may also assist at community events. The Intern will conduct ride alongs and other activities to provide exposure to policing. This position would be a long-term strategy to establish relationships to recruit police reserves, future community service officer, and police officers. This would be offered three times a year: Spring semester, fall semester and summer.

Public Safety Director Bauer is proposing utilizing Public Safety Aide money for the potential Cadet Position and Reserve Tuition in 2024. The police aide money is a onetime use.

The council asked questions regarding if this would possibly make the department very young. Secondly, it was discussed if the positions were continued if they would be part of future year levies. Staff explained that it could make the department young, but many of your lateral positions are looking for signing bonuses and higher wage. The positions would be requested to be supported future year levies after 2024.

Public Safety Director Bauer discussed a Network project at the PD for functionality that they will utilize existing capital for. The current network is giving operability issues for the department and needs to be remedied. The total cost of the project is anticipated at \$31,950 and will not be part of levy request.

Public Safety Director Bauer did discuss the Pro Phoenix Record system and going to a cloud based server, there would be more costs annually, but would eliminate the need for future servers and staff to handle updates. Currently we believe that 1 other city entity in Chisago County will be moving towards the cloud and potentially more to follow. There is benefit to multipole agencies on the system as it will reduce costs. Chief Bauer then discuss the State Public Safety Aid funding and potential uses including in car cameras, thermal cameras and a UTV for the fire department, the cadet and reserve positions and a potential vehicle.

Acting Public Works Superintendent Joe Keding – Mr. Keding highlighted some budget items in the department including increases in wage and benefits due to COLA and step increases, an Increase in motor fuels and utilities given current pricing and use. They have upped their salt budget and added to street materials due to the extreme amount of material being used to patch streets.

City Administrator Linwood – Highlighted the administration budget having increases in elections due to the three elections in 2024 and now operating two precincts. Increases from projected COLA's and steps in the department and contracted services in financial management for financial services and IT services.

MAYOR IVERSON ADJOURNED THE JULY 27, 2023 WORK SESSION MEETING AT 7:41 PM.