

CITY OF MUSCATINE
CITY COUNCIL BUDGET REVIEW SESSION
City Hall Council Chambers – February 6, 2021 – 8:00 a.m.

Mayor Diana Broderson called the meeting for the City Council's budget review session for Saturday, February 6, 2021, to order at 8:00 a.m. Councilmembers present were Malcolm, Froelich, Brackett, Hopkins, Jindrich, Brockert and Gordon

Senator Mark Lofgren

Senator Mark Lofgren was present to share proposed state legislation.

Public Works Equipment Services

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Public Works Equipment Services Budget. Councilmember Jindrich had questions regarding the Air Conditioner Recovery process used.

Equipment Replacement Fund

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Equipment Replacement fund Budget.

City Administrator stated that the decisions for the replacement of equipment is very carefully gone over to determine cost of repairing compared to cost of replacement.

Councilmember Nadine Brockert asked if new vehicles purchased were undercoated. Randy Moeller stated that some are coated prior to the City receiving them and others are done internally.

Transit

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Transit Budget.

Amy Fortenbacher shared how the transit department was affected by COVID-19. She stated regular routes were cancelled for a period of time and only shuttle services were available. Ms. Fortenbacher stated that the revenue is still down and she feels it is because of people not going out as much and staying home to be safe.

Ms. Fortenbacher stated that a majority of her staff are elderly and chose not to drive during the worst part of the COVID outbreak.

Mayor Broderson had questions regarding the night JARC busses and the need to expand. Ms. Fortenbacher states that they are not as full since the pandemic but will watch for the need of expansion.

Councilmember Malcolm suggested that the Chamber of Commerce gets the word regarding the bus services offered to local businesses.

Councilmember Froelich had questions regarding the cost share of the proposed wash bay that were addressed by Transit Supervisor Amy Fortenbacher and Public Works Director Brian Stineman.

Brian Stineman stated that the current wash bay is manual and it is difficult to reach under or on top of large vehicles. New proposed wash bay is an automatic drive thru that will save time and better serve its purpose.

Mr. Stineman shared information regarding the mini bus and how it would accommodate the need of residents that require wheelchair assistance.

Parking

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed budget for the Parking Dept. Ms. Lueck also shared how the pandemic has affected the parking dept. revenue.

Mayor stated this is an area that City Council gets a great deal of feedback from citizens. Mayor stated that there had been discussion on creating a group to look at parking.

City Administrator Webb stated that parking policies are created to turn traffic over and not as a revenue item.

Mayor Broderson stated there was discussion regarding adding more representatives to the Parking Appeals Board.

Nancy Lueck stated the current members include a Police Rep, Finance Rep and an at large member.

There were questions from City Council regarding the use of parking meters that would accept credit cards payments.

Nancy Lueck stated there are plans to start the replacement of the meters as finances permit.

There was discussion with City Council regarding the use of loading zones and possibility of changing the verbiage of the loading zones signs.

City Admin Web suggested we do not approach any big changes in parking until after the pandemic.

Councilmember Gordon stated confusion on the wording of some of the signage and questioned it really get the message across.

Councilmember Gordon, suggested looking at other options of parking meter replacements such as kiosk that allow payment by debit cards.

Councilmember Brackett suggested signs be changed to red lettering, take off the 15 minute limit and state active loading only.

Mayor stated there needs to a group of various people to look at the parking policies.

Public Works Administration

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Public Works Administration Budget.

Roadway Maintenance

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Roadway Maintenance Budget.

Councilmember Brackett suggested more public information regarding roadway maintenance be available for the public.

There was discussion on the frustration of citizens when they cannot get through to a live person when they have a complaint. Staff stated they would look into options to help improve the communication system.

Questions from Councilmember Brockert how they determine the amount of salt, and brine needed with the unpredictable weather.

Randy Moeller stated he just looks at past winters and tries to estimate what they think they will need and try to have extra to plan for winters like this.

Malcolm asked about a partnership with businesses regarding paving on streets that are heavily travelled by large trucks for their businesses.

Traffic Control

Finance Director gave an overview of the Traffic Control Budget and stated that Muscatine's traffic control budget is funded lower than other cities because MPW provides street lighting and traffic control lights at no cost to the City.

There was discussion regarding the solar lights for the stop signs regarding where they are and how many there are.

Snow and Ice

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Snow and Ice Budget.

Brian Stineman and Randy Howell gave an overview of how 2020 went for Snow and Ice Removal.

Street Cleaning

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Street Cleaning Budget.

Brian Stineman shared about the Street Cleaning Dept. and specifically leaf pickup and the issues that came with that program this year.

Councilmember Brackett had questions regarding if the leaf pickup was comparable to other cities. Brian stated some have it others done and it is done in a variety of ways.

Building and Grounds

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Building and Grounds Budget.

Engineering

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Engineering Budget.

There was discussion regarding a title for a new position into the Engineering Dept.

Councilmember Froelich stated he is pleased to see the City moving to an in-house engineering dept.

There was discussion on a timeline for the City to be completely in house with engineering. Brian Stineman stated that once we are done with Grandview Ave the work load will decrease.

General Fund Discussion

Nancy Lueck reviewed funds included in the General fund including transit subsidy, Equipment Replacement Fund, Airport Operations Subsidy, Assigned Funding Allocations, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Councilmembers had questions regarding the additional 40,000 requested by the Chamber of Commerce and suggestions included working with the Chamber on a more ala carte option rather than a lump sum in order to see what the City was getting for the money invested.

Councilmember Brackett stated his opposition every request that comes from outside sources unless the utility franchise fee is reduced. He states this fee was a temporary increase and has not yet been reduced.

Councilmember Jindrich stated the City Departments had to cut back on spending because of COVID and feels that the outside agencies should do the same.

Mayor Strugge with giving funds to outside agencies until we are able to fund in house requests.

Councilmembers had a consensus to not fund Vision 2020 at this time, fund MCSA, Humane Society, the Chamber, and Senior Resources at the same amount as previous year. There was discussion on creating contract agreements for the outside agencies for services provided.

Discussion regarding the Cyber Security Package for the City of Muscatine. Councilmember Brackett stated it is an important factor that needs to be implemented for the City to monitor all network activity to prevent a security breach to the City systems.

There was consensus with City Council to move forward with funding this project in this budget.

Collection and Drainage

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Collection and Drainage budget.

Councilmembers had questions regarding Houser area storm drain and Mr. Burr's issue.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman stated that the completion of Phase 5 of the Sewer Separation Project should take sewage from that area to help alleviate the issues. He states they could also divert sewer north to take some of the load from that area.

There was discussion regarding a past settlement agreement with Mr. Burr regarding this issue.

City Council requested information regarding Lake Park Blvd flooding issues. Mr. Stineman stated a proposal had been requested and funds identified for a study to determine the plans and costs for this project. Mr. Stineman stated this project would take place this year.

Refuse Collection

Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Refuse Collection budget.

Brian Stineman shared the departments need for a new trash truck.

There was discussion regarding the startup of a recycling drop off area for Muscatine residents located at the Transfer Station and issues with the cardboard recycling container located at 3rd and Cedar Street.

City Council had questions regarding the decrease in injuries due to the new automatic trucks that had been purchased that were addressed by Solid Waste Manager David Popp.

Landfill

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the landfill Budget.

Dave Popp stated he was working on putting together a booklet on the history of the landfill, how it works and who can use it etc.

Transfer Station

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the Transfer station Budget.

City Council had questions regarding the replacement of the Transfer Station tipping floor that were addressed by Mr. Popp, stating it would be bid out after July 1, 2021.

Councilmember Brackett moved the meeting be adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Webb, City Administrator