

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET SESSION MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
MAY 7, 2018 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:03pm.

Council Members Present: Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Mekjian and Director Barr

City Manager Boyer stated that the direction to Departments was to follow the guidelines from last year. There is no new revenue coming in so the budgets are fairly flat as they have been for the past 5 to 6 years.

Questions were raised regarding the increase in health care costs and fluctuation in accounts. Finance Director Barr responded that health care fees are up but not by much and some of the increases have to do with staff opting out in some years and then perhaps taking advantage of the coverage the next that causes the that fluctuation in the Department's budget.

City Manager Boyer stated that the fluctuation in certain accounts is not intentionally cushioning any account as they are always looking at ways to save money; but that the budget process is started in January and Departments have to project what costs may be for the next year and half out. Director Barr added that the difference is often also caused by back filling positions that have been vacant and that cause significant increases or proposed increases the next fiscal year.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Director John Randle stated that his Department's focus has been on cost savings, diversity, health/safety and employee morale. The biggest issue Human Resources is facing is finding qualified employees. He stated that the sourcing and selection process is time consuming and has increased advertising dollars in order to advertise in more locations to attract more diversity.

With regard to health care costs, it was explained that the Human Resources Department works with a third party administrator to develop creative ways and offer different plans in order to save the city money and provide options for the employees.

The budget figures were reviewed by Council and staff. The calculation of longevity pay and reason for fluctuation in various line items was discussed.

CENTRAL SERVICES

Director of Central Services Kelly Monico stated that the Central Services Department is customer service based, first serving the city departments and ultimately the residents. She reviewed several line items within her budget that had increased and reasons for the increase. Director Monico noted the following:

- The City continues to be a leader in cooperative purchasing in the State
- Several large initiatives taking place within the department includes Security Mentor, which serves as a learning tool for all of staff to better secure their computers; a new e-mail retention software called Retain, Virtual Desktop Initiative recently discussed with City Council at the last study session and enhancements to GIS offerings
- The department switched over to Network on Demand that has allowed more flexibility
- Moving to Microsoft product is still under review
- Website traffic is up 40% with the most hits for the Activity Center Guide and Property Maintenance Site
- This is the 3rd year that the City has been assisting the City of Farmington with IT and they are seeking assistance for a new phone system and work on their BS&A system

Discussion was held on shared services and other opportunities for joint ventures as well as Central Services role in maintaining the website and posting of events.

The budget figures were reviewed by Council and staff.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lerner commented that he would like to try and keep cellular service costs down. Discussion was held on the planned Unified Communications platform included in the Capital budget. Director Monico confirmed that the intent is to move away from using land lines and more information would be coming to Council on this at their next meeting with regard to hiring a consultant to assist towards unified communications.

Related Capital

Director Monico reviewed the other items budgeted in the Capital budget.

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Director of Planning and Community Development Ed Gardiner thanked City Council for their guidance and support this past year. He noted quite a bit of turn-over in Building Department personnel and struggles with finding full-time inspectors. Recently a part-time plumbing inspector was hired and a full-time mechanical inspector. Staffing in other divisions has remained static. Highlights for the department included:

- Initiating an email inspection scheduling process and automated email notifications of inspections results to customers once complete
- Purchase of tablets and new software will be forthcoming to allow inspectors to conduct “real-time” inspections on site
- Stronger enforcement with regard to temporary signs and LED lighting

It was suggested that weekend enforcement is reviewed as many signs are still being placed out on weekends when staff is generally not available.

Planning Division

Director Gardiner stated that the Planning Commission has updated the City Master Plan to include Grand River Corridor. The Master Plan is required to be reviewed every 5 years.

Discussion was held on increased permit fees to cover increased costs and the time frame for processing permits. City Manager Boyer responded that the city will be reviewing fees city-wide. It was suggested

reviewing the possibility of an expedited process with higher fee associated in addition to the normal processing times and reviewing moving the process up to less than 5 days if possible. Director Gardiner clarified that the 5 day processing time is for planning review and not building permits.

The budget figures were reviewed by Council and staff.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Director Gardiner noted that the CDBG program funding was approved by City Council at their last meeting and they just received word from HUD that funding received would be increased by \$30,000.

City Council took a 5 minute break

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Jon Unruh commented that the current and previous budgets have allowed the Fire Department to purchase the needed equipment, make the necessary building upgrades, provide training and also helps maintain good employees. He explained that the department recently went through the ISO operative, which is the evaluation of response readiness and they expect to receive the results in June. Upon review of the fires experienced in the city, Fire Station #1 was not meeting the minimum requirements for response to all fires in their area. Runs have also increased by 31% so the corrective action suggested is shift some staff and increase staff to 4 employees at that station with 24 hour operation. In order to accommodate this he is requesting 4 new hires over a period of time as the department would like to hire within from their Paid-On-Call staff.

Chief Unruh discussed C.E.R.T. program noting that in conjunction with staff liaison from his department, policies and procedures have been prepared on how C.E.R.T. will operate and he expects Farmington members to join them soon. The cost for the program would be \$1,800-\$3,000 annually in the budget.

Discussion was held on Paid-On-Call recruiting and retention. Chief Unruh explained that he is working on a relief plan based on comments from POC members to reduce the percentage of runs overall and also provide for opportunities for vacations.

The budget figures were reviewed by Council and staff.

Public Safety Millage

City Manager Boyer explained that the Public Safety Millage covers both Fire and Police Departments and the budget documents shows the breakdowns between departments.

Related Capital

Chief Unruh outlined the capital items proposed in the Fire Department budget.

Discussion was held on tracking maintenance for the vehicles. Assistant City Manager Mekjian noted that the Fire trucks do not have a tracking device but that has recently been deployed for the DPW snow plow trucks to track snow plowing throughout the community.

Chief Unruh provided an update on the new ladder truck recently approved by City Council that should be put into service at Station #1 in September.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

City Clerk Smith remarked that her budget is fairly consistent from year to year and is mainly administrative costs and costs related to the elections held that fiscal year. She noted that line items such as election workers, part-time and over-time would be increased this next fiscal year due to two election – the State Primary Election in August and Governor Election in November. She mentioned that election supplies actually went down for the next fiscal year as many of the supplies were included in this year's budget as they had to be ordered prior to July 1, 2018. Printing services also increased significantly this year due to required notification for temporary precinct location changes and proposed changes in legislation that may affect ballot instructions for upcoming elections.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Charles Nebus explained that he continues with recruiting efforts. He noted that 29% of the patrol division is currently on probation due to being newly hired and their biggest expense is vehicles and in-car service cameras.

Discussion was held on connecting with the businesses, enhancing the wellness and fitness for employees and the proposed renovations for the dispatch area.

The budget figures were reviewed by Council and staff.

Chief Nebus suggested the moving the radio system replacement out of forfeiture fund accounts in order to save the city money. City Manager Boyer and Finance Director Barr concurred.

Chief Nebus discussed the items proposed to be purchased from the capital fund that included body cams and new vehicles as well as replacement of in-car cameras. Discussion was held on body cams with regard to policies, use, weight, etc. Chief Nebus stated they would most likely be implemented towards the end of the fiscal year and could show Council how they are utilized once they have them in place.

Mayor and Council thanked all of the staff that came in to present their budgets for their hard work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Massey adjourned the study session meeting at 8:46pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk