**FINANCE COMMITTEE – BUDGET SESSION #1**

Date and Time: Thursday, October 15, 2020 @ 6:30 pm., Council Chambers
Members Present: *In person*: Rasmussen (C), Martens, Herbst; *By WebEx:* Watson and Ryan
Others Present: Groat, Rosenberg, Goede, Kaiser, Barteck, Bliven, Barnes, Jacobson, Klein, Kujawa, Lindman, Polley

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Lisa Rasmussen.

**City of Wausau 2021 Budget link**:
https://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Finance/Documents/2021_BudgetBook.pdf

**2021 Budget Deliberations**
Maryanne Groat provided a PowerPoint Presentation of the 2021 budget:
https://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Finance/Documents/2021_Budget_Powerpoint.pdf

Highlights:
- Levy Change - $862,209 (2% increase, lowest since 2015)
- Strong Net New Construction 3.28%
- Estimated Assess Tax Rate of $10.48 versus $9.67 (decrease of .81 cents or 7.75%)
- Equalized Tax Rate $9.61 (decrease of .52 cents)

The presentation can be viewed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EubVXlW7HRI
*Committee discussion followed***.**

Rasmussen suggested that Department Heads present discuss their supplemental request**s.**
**Supplemental Requests link:**
https://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Finance/Documents/2021_SUPPLEMENTALPACKET.pdf

Parks Department
- Jamie Polley stated her first supplemental request was for an Update to the Recreation Plan; the current plan is 2017 – 2021. The update will go through everything in the current plan to see what is completed or what we have yet to accomplish and add anything new that has come up.
- Polley's second request was regarding the retirement of their Recreation Superintendent, which is a position that is funded 80% by the city and 20% by the county. The main duties are the pools, splash pad, and all of the summer recreation programs. This request will, with the retirement, revamp the Superintendent position and add another FTE specifically for aquatics. Most likely not hired until April or May.

Police Department
- Deputy Chief Matt Barnes summarized his request for funding for additional CSO's to take them from 12 to 20; to add $35,000 for the hiring of two part-time police officers, ideally retired, to lead the CSO's; $75,000 is additional funding to cover overtime for Wausau officers at special events; and to allocate funding if we need to hire officers from other agencies to meet the staffing expectations at large events.
- Barnes stated our social media platform relies on the videographer who understands editing, software, and filming. He felt for the success of the city to develop trust with the community, be transparent, and to educate and inform, there is absolutely room for a full-time position to be available to all the departments. He indicated the Police Department is willing to supervise the position and make it available. Mayor Rosenberg felt this position was very important and encouraged them to give it serious consideration.
- Chief Ben Bliven spoke regarding two requests for Mental Health Evaluations and Physical Therapy/Athletic Training which are wellness initiatives. The policing profession is difficult both mentally and physically. These programs helps officers be in better condition, return faster from injures and offset work comp costs. Mayor Rosenberg agreed the mental health check in is super critical right now. She stated she would also like to see the physical therapy expanded to the rest of the city departments. Maryanne Groat commented the city had self-funded health insurance and a current self-funded dental plan that has some reserves which could be used for this program and then could be stepped into the operating budget in a strategic way. She suggested phasing in the program for all employees.

Department of Public Works

- Eric Lindman stated they do need Motor Pool technicians, but do not have space for them right now, so they would like to phase them in 2022.
- Lindman explained because we are short-handed for the Motor Pool maintenance and repair service we need to provide, we are contracting out more and more and that continues to escalate. He indicated they have hired Mercury to study this again from staffing to our facility. He felt when the report is done they'll have a good idea what direction they need to go.
- Lindman stated once the old Tate radios fail they have to be replaced, there is no repair on them; $30,000 will replace all the 2 way radios before they fail. He noted they will be replaced with Motorola radios.
- Lindman stated over the last couple of years between the Park & Rec Committee and Alderpersons there has been concern about the preservation of the city's tree canopy. As street projects and sidewalks are done there are times trees have to be taken or are damaged. There are now a new specifications developed for planting and removing trees, as well as a maintenance manual. He stated DPW doesn't have the expertise on staff and the Parks Department doesn't have the time to review plans in detail or be on site during construction projects. He proposed a person be hired for a part-time position, Preservation Coordinator, specifically focused on our infrastructure, tree canopy, landscaping, and inventory.
- Lindman stated the problem he found with hiring an additional Street Maintainer for plowing is that we would then need to bring on more equipment. He commented when we bring on new people they should consider the level of service being provided by the department. (*Request withdrawn.)*

Option 3

Groat stated when we implemented the salary study all senior employees were entered at mid-point even if they had enough experience with the city that they would be higher. It was done this way due to expense to implement it any other way. In the 2020 budget the individuals that deserved to be beyond mid-point were provided an extra step on January 1st. The Council could grant an additional step to these employees under that same program so that they would step on January 1 and step on their anniversary. She noted 26 employees would be impacted and the cost would be approximately $21,000, however, some of those employees may be in non-levy related areas. She indicated she would bring that information to the next meeting to determine the actual cost.

## Adjourn

Motion by Herbst, second by Martens to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.