

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET SESSION MEETING  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
MAY 6, 2019 – 6:00PM

The special budget study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:02pm.

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

Council Members Absent: None

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

City Manager Boyer outlined the budget process and explained that each budget started with 0% growth with the exception of a 2% increase in salaries across the board and then if additional increases in any areas were submitted, those were reviewed by him for each department and if approved, included in the budget before Council this evening.

The following budgets were reviewed by City Council this evening with the following comments:

**CITY ATTORNEY**

This budget included proposed increases in the categories of prosecution and non-prosecution which had not been increased since 2007 and 2012, respectively. Looking ahead to next year's budget there was an additional increase of \$5 on the non-prosecution side. City Manager Boyer stated that he supports the proposed increases.

The office currently has 25 attorneys on staff with the intent to hire a few more attorneys and law clerks.

The office has been busy with several large legal matters in Farmington Hills, which is the reason the projected totals are higher than budgeted.

Several Councilmembers expressed their support for the proposed increases.

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

The biggest challenge was the number of eligible retirements in the near future and losing that institutional knowledge in the city. The city has taken a pro-active approach in hiring retirees as is allowed in order to maintain some of that knowledge. Any increases proposed in the budget are in areas of recruitment.

Internal/External recruitment was discussed. It was suggested that future budgets include the number of eligible retirees, particularly in the area of public safety.

Finance Director Barr noted that Council will see a decrease in worker compensation wages over the next several years with a city-wide savings of over \$400,000.

**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Several retirements and personnel changes were noted within the divisions under Planning and Community Development. Highlights included technology upgrades including the use of tablets by the

Inspectors in the field and an upgrade to BS&A to allow for on-line permits. Plans for several large projects have been submitted.

It was noted that the performance objectives for Housing Rehabilitations completed were significantly lower than anticipated in last year's budget document. This may be due to the fact that the department has used some of the money anticipated for those projects for capital projects; however, the figures will be reviewed again for accuracy.

Discussion was held on the single-family inspection program. Director Gardiner is working with the City Attorney on drafting a letter that includes stronger language in order to get more compliance within the program. The program is not expanding to apartment buildings as Council has not yet provided that direction to staff.

#### CDGG Fund

It was noted that this budget increased by \$13,000 this year. Related capital included playground equipment for Olde Town Park and sidewalk installation.

#### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

City Manager Boyer distributed a chart showing both the general fund and public safety millage fund for both the Fire and Police Departments.

Highlights included the following:

- ISO rating after the accreditation process went from a 4 to a 2 with 1 being the best score, which reaffirmed what the Department is doing right. One weakness noted as response time by Station #1 to a section of the city and the city authorized 4 additional staff members that allowed Station #1 to be a full-time station.
- A matching grant was received that allowed the hiring of an additional 4 firefighters
- The Department received a 96% approval rate for EMS delivery of service
- A grant was received for smoke alarms and the Department is hosting a smoke alarm blitz to donate smoke alarms and they are starting with the Flamingo Trailer Park

One challenge is maintaining the overtime budget, but they are utilizing Paid-On-Call (POC) where permissible and have been creative with staffing while providing the same level of service.

POC burn-out has been discussed over the years and a new program was started a year ago to reduce the number of calls in which the POC had to respond and this year there has been no loss of POC employees due to burn-out. The Department lost 8 POC to their own full-time staff and 6 POC to external positions.

The department is looking to sustain what it has with regard to equipment and only replace aging equipment as needed.

Discussion was held on POC burn-out and the number of runs they are required to meet. A new program is starting next week where the Department will allow POC to respond to two different stations for those that would like the additional runs. POC can also choose their shifts – 4 hours, 13 hours, etc so there is a lot of flexibility in the programs offered.

It was noted that the Fire Department switched all of its hose from 4" to 5" hose that helps with water pressure to address the dry areas in the city and the Department has provided additional training on those areas.

City Manager Boyer indicated that they are also addressing this issue in the master plan.

Council questioned the impact of the new hotels, assisted living facilities and apartments on the Department. It was noted the Department had 210 runs last year to the 23 hotels in the city and 1300 runs to assisted living facilities, which is consistent with the one run per bed they mentioned as typical response to those types of facilities. The Department did not have a breakdown for runs to apartments only but could provide that to Council at a later date.

The increase in membership/licenses was due to the required training for the new Fire Marshal.

#### Public Safety Millage

Finance Director Barr noted an increase in property taxes that created an increase in millage money overall.

#### Related Capital

Capital included roofing at Station #2 and site work at various stations.

In response to Council, it was noted that old gear was donated to other departments when appropriate.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Police Chief Charles Nebus mentioned the following highlights and projects:

- Last year was the lowest percentage of crime in the City for the past 45 years
- Police Department recently went through its accreditation process
- The city-wide open house was re-established this past year
- Training opportunities
- Instituting body camera program this year
- Dispatch building renovations
- Expansion of conference center for command and control center

Chief Nebus mentioned that the Department was able to recover 13% of its overtime in grants for a total of \$133,000.

Discussion was held on training for dispatch and it was clarified that they obtain mental health and first aid training as well as additional training specific to their job.

In response to an inquiry about the impact of new hotels on the Department, Chief Nebus indicated that they have very few calls to the new hotels and the majority of their calls would be with a couple of the existing motels.

It was noted that 4-6 employees of the Department would be eligible for retirement in the next year. Chief Nebus felt that the Department would be able to hire those additional employees to keep their employees numbers status quo.

#### Public Safety Millage

Director Barr reviewed the Police portion of the public safety millage noting that they are replacing 3 unmarked cars from the budget and all vehicle purchases were moved from department budgets to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

Federal Forfeiture Fund

It was noted that this fund was audited by Plante & Moran and all activity was well documented. Chief Nebus added that the Department maintains good records and always clears any expenditure of funds with the City Manager. The Department received a \$30,000 grant for the body camera program.

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**

City Clerk Smith reviewed her budget noting the following:

- Budgets related to the Elections have increased for the next fiscal year due to the new legislation allowing for no reason absentee voting and the unknowns at this time as to how much absentee voting will increase and increase the need for supplies and staffing while also maintaining all of the city precincts and staffing.
- Conference and Workshops budget is increased slightly to allow for the Clerk's Administrative Secretary to attend the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerk's Institute that is a 3 year program towards earning her certification in light of succession discussions and plan for the Clerk's Office.

Related Capital

Two additional high speed scanners and related software have been budgeted in anticipation of processing more absentee ballots in the future due to the new legislation.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Massey adjourned the study session meeting at 8:23pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk