

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL  
Date of Meeting: November 6, 2017  
Time of Meeting: 7:00 PM (Following the EDA Meeting)  
Location of Meeting: Conference Room #1  
Purpose of Meeting: WORKSESSION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The meeting was called to order at 7:55 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr., Buesgens and Novitsky  
Also Present: Walt Fehst; City Manager, Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Joe Kloiber; Finance Director, Kevin Hansen; Public Works Director, Joe Hogeboom; Community Development Director, Lenny Austin; Interim Police Chief, Gary Gorman; Fire Chief and Katie Bruno; City Clerk

#### Insurance Update

Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager reported the Medica contract may not be available until mid-December. The plan includes a 1% decrease in rates from 2017, as well as additional available plan options.

#### **2018 Budget Discussion**

##### General Government

Finance Director Joe Kloiber reported the following functional areas are included in the General Government section; City Hall, Recognition/Special Events, Contingences, Transfers, and Capital Equipment Replacement.

Mayor Schmitt asked about the item for window replacement, inquiring about which windows are being replaced. Kloiber stated that the item is basically a place holder, in the event replacements or services are required. He indicated that allotment is generous because of the age of city hall.

Kloiber indicated that Sister Cities has requested support in the amount of \$600 to support an Art Event. Mayor Schmitt questioned if the Police Department is paying for the community picnic. Councilmember Buesgens stated that all departments will now participate in the picnic. Kloiber indicated the \$1,000 was likely not included in the 2017 budget, but will be going forward.

Mayor Schmitt suggested reviewing the years of service recognition gifts following the 2017 event. Kloiber indicated the recognition amounts are a minimal area of the budget.

##### Police

Interim Police Chief Lenny Austin distributed an overview of the Police Department's 2018 Budget. Increases include an increase in part time CSO hours, adjusting overtime hours to be more accurate, the purchase of seven new computers, and expanding the use of cell phones. Increases in Capital Equipment include two outfitted Ford interceptors, encrypted squad radios, portable radios, handgun replacement, and building security updates.

Mayor Schmitt asked when the car wash agreement is due for renewal. Austin indicated there is not a sunset date on the current contract, and could go out for bids for both the car wash and the tow agreements.

Mayor Schmitt asked about vests for CSO's, commenting that the female CSO's have had concerns with the fit of the vests. Austin indicated that new vests are purchased for sworn staff, and civilian staff acquire the used vests. Councilmember Buesgens suggested checking with other cities to work out a sharing program. It was noted that it is difficult to see the difference between a CSO and a sworn officer.

### Public Works

Public Works Director Kevin Hansen reported that Public Works has 15 departments. Approximately 25% of funding comes from the General Fund, and includes the following departments; Engineering, Streets, Street Lighting, Traffic Signs & Signals, Parks, and Urban Forestry. The remaining 75% of the budget comes from Enterprise (utility) Funds.

Hansen reported upcoming projects include street rehabilitation program; Main St and 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. A maintenance position will be moved from the sign department to the street department.

There has been a higher incidence of on street parking, which has been affecting the operations. Additional projects include street lighting and back lit street signs change out to LED. Newly designed street signs are being installed, these will meet FHA regulations.

Staff is looking at Gauvette and Keyes parks for possible soccer fields. Mayor Schmitt asked about tennis courts in the city. Hansen indicated the only courts are in Sullivan Lake Park, and will need to be reconstructed. Mayor Schmitt asked about Wargo Court Park. Hansen indicated that will need to be redone in 2019 or 2020.

Hansen reported additional trash and recycle containers have been added in the parks and throughout the city, and if necessary public works staff will empty them. Hansen reported staff is continuing to treat EAB issues. A 2.9% increase from the city of Minneapolis is expected for water rates. HVAC costs for the new library will continue to be monitored for efficiency. Additional maintenance expenses are anticipated for the Circle Terrace Park building.

Capital Equipment requests include a lawnmower, which will replace three machines. A new Total Station (used for surveying) is being requested, the current model is about twenty years old.

Replacement of the 2001 Ford Taurus with a 2wd pick-up truck is requested, and replacement of two 1 ton trucks. Finance Director Kloiber explained an internal loan is an option to cash flow the utility fund if necessary. Kloiber indicated staff will be conducting rate studies in the coming year.

### Fire

Fire Chief Gary Gorman reported the overall Fire Department Budget has increased due to contract wages and wage adjustments.

Gorman reported it has been difficult to recruit and retain paid on call firefighters, commenting that is a metro-wide concern. Gorman indicated different staffing models are being explored for paid on calls.

Councilmember Buesgens questioned the cost for training. Gorman reported between \$8,000 and \$10,000. Mayor Schmitt asked if many explorers continue on to firefighting. Gorman indicated only a few do. Gorman reported that recent findings related to increased serious medical issues may also be a deterrent to potential recruits.

### *Capital Equipment*

Gorman indicated a replacement ambulance is requested, as well as radios and pagers. Half of the radios would be replaced on 2018, and the other half in 2019. Gorman reported Anoka County may pay for the pagers.

### *Inspections*

Chief Gorman gave a brief history of the City's inspection program. It started with the Community Development Department conducting inspections of apartment buildings in 1990. This was very time consuming, and the Fire Department assisted. In 1992 all licensing was moved to the fire department. In 2007 grass, storage and garbage inspections were added to the fire departments responsibilities. It was most efficient to have all inspections originate from the same department.

Gorman indicated this is a good program, but it has outpaced the department making it difficult to conduct fire related duties. It is also problematic when fire calls preempt scheduled inspections. Councilmember Buesgens asked how many fire calls are received. Gorman stated average of 7 calls a day, 2,800 annually.

Discussions have taken place, suggesting moving the inspection program to the Community Development Department. Staff would need to be added to Community Development, this would be dedicated to inspections. Gorman suggested various options, including sharing some of the inspection duties.

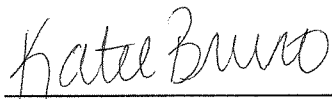
Mayor Schmitt asked Community Development Director Hogeboom how many additional staff would be needed during a transition of duties. Hogeboom indicated he would need 1 or 2 inspectors and would look at space needs as we consider a new city hall. Gorman indicated he too would need additional inspectors and an increase in hours for the clerk typist.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. questioned if it would be feasible to hire additional firefighters that could do inspections and answer fire calls during the daytime hours. Gorman indicated that coverage would be inconsistent.

City Manager Walt Fehst stated the strain on the fire department is greater than ever and other options should be considered. Councilmember Buesgens requested staff compose a plan for council consideration.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:33 PM

Respectively Submitted,



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Katie Bruno, Council Secretary/City Clerk