

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET STUDY SESSION MEETING  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
MAY 17, 2022 – 6:00PM

The special budget study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:05pm.

Council Members Present: Barnett, Boleware, Bridges, Bruce, Knol Massey and Newlin

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, Directors Mondora, Monico, Randle and Skrobola.

Mayor Barnett requested moving the Public Services budget up on the agenda as Councilmember Knol had to leave the meeting early and this was one of the largest budgets for the city.

City Council reviewed the following budgets with the City Attorney and respective Department Directors and the following highlights, significant changes in budgets, requests, or amendments were noted:

**Public Services/Municipal Street Fund/Major Road Fund/Local Road Fund/Major and Local Road Funds Summary/Related Capital**

- The budget increased due to the summer storms and staffing and clean-up associated with those storms; however, there was some reimbursement
- Major projects in the budget were discussed including a robust major and local road program, Asset Management Plan, two large water main replacements, and a long list of needs for drainage system improvements
- The sick and vacation line item for administration increased for FY 2022/23 due to a potential retirement
- In response to Council, it was noted that maps of the roads and who has jurisdiction over the roads is on the city website.
- Contracts significantly increased and that was due to a couple of large road projects
- The city's recycling contractor was changing over to GFL and they have worked with the previous contractor Waste Management to keep their bins and will replace them as needed with like-colored bins. The program itself is unchanged from the previous program other than it is a different vendor
- Request to coordinate projects with the state and county as much as possible
- Suggestion to monitor oil and gas prices that may impact the budget for construction projects
- Suggested that if the Engineering interns have time, they could potentially assist the city with rewriting summaries for the historic district homes.

**Central Services/Related Capital**

- Discusses IT support for offices but also the pilot "work from home" program that was implemented during the pandemic and going forward for certain positions

- Working to limit the city's vulnerabilities to the "bad actors" trying to access city email servers
- GIS activities include assisting departments with creating maps for elections, sidewalks, invasive species,
- The city is a leader in cooperative purchasing and works with other agencies to match them with minority vendors – **Council suggested that this is included in the budget as one of the formal goals for this department**
- Citizen reporting module will be rolled out soon so residents could report issues in real time to the city – this is not for general information but to report blight, down trees or wires, etc.
- Future projects highlighted included another phase of disaster recovery, cameras for various city buildings and locations, enhanced safety and security features for city hall, replacement of over 100 desktop computers, SMART digital signage, text security measures, the new ERP and website updates
- The city renewed the agreement with the City of Farmington for IT support
- Suggestion by Council for a study session on SMART City initiatives. City Manager Mekjian stated that staff may be ready to provide more information on this by August
- The increase in education and training is for city-wide DEI training and more software training as needed for new hires
- Emergency contracted services line item increased due to the storm damage experienced this past year
- Security Mentor used to education staff on suspicious emails has been working well

### **Human Resources**

- The department has been busy managing the increase in retirements and anticipated retirements going forward and working with departments on hiring people for those positions
- Hiring in general has increased significantly due to the HAWK and number of seasonal hires required
- Anticipate the new human resource information system that is part of the ERP will help to decrease some of this workload once fully implemented
- Spoke to the cost-effective benefits offered to employees
- The department hired a new benefits coordinator to replace a long-term employee this year
- A grant was received through Municipal Risk Management Authority (MRMA) to reconstruct the entrance to the department for added security
- Employee consultations are up due to COVID, retirements and job postings
- A salary survey was completed where the city had 40+ positions reviewed to retrieve compensation data and the salary for some positions were increased in the proposed budget based on this survey
- Labor grievances are low. The city is currently in negotiations with 5 out of 6 of the bargaining units

- The proposed budget includes the addition of one Human Resource Analyst that will focus on training/development and areas of compensation
- Comment on the need to continue to work to diversify the work force.
- Request for review and update of job descriptions

### **City Clerk**

- Staffing changes included a retirement in 2021/22 budget that affected the sick and vacation line item and subsequent promotions were made within the office due to that retirement
- A new staff person was hired in August 2021 for the vacant Clerk I position
- Deputy Clerk Carly Lindahl received her next level certification in planning for office succession
- The Clerk's budget fluctuates based on election cycles and the FY 22/23 budget included two major elections.
- One correction to the budget was noted – Election Workers for the requested FY 22/23 budget should be \$170,470; not \$229,540. The budget for Election Workers was based on two days for absent voter processing in the event the legislation allowed for this
- There are increases in equipment maintenance costs going forward as the election equipment when purchased through state contract included 5 years of maintenance and that 5 years is up and the maintenance is now the city's responsibility
- Other items mentioned included the installation of a new absent voter drop box and mailing of new Voter ID cards to all voters due to redistricting

### **Boards & Commissions/City Council/City Administration/Brownfield Redevelopment Authority/Corridor Improvement Authority**

- Discussion was held on funding for boards and commissions and it was suggested changing the budget to \$2500 for each board and commission with exception of Farmington Area Youth Assistance, 47<sup>th</sup> District Court, ZBA, Assessment Board of Review and Planning Commission – keep as is in budget) and have \$40,000 unallocated that could be used for any board and commission
- Changes in the budget for City Council included adding funding for Council to attend the National League of Cities conferences in the future and U.S. Conference of Mayors - It was suggested that the city book the hotel for Council members for these conferences and that flights would be booked by the members to allow for more flexibility
- The City Administration budget changes include money for an EDC Consultant as well as a placeholder for an Assistant to the City Manager (DEI position)
- Director Skrobola explained the fund balance and how funds could be utilized for both the Brownfield Authority and Corridor Improvement Authority
- The Mayor inquired about the use of brownfield funding to remediate the Costick Center; staff indicated they would look into this option

### **Finance/Post-Employment Benefits/Inter-fund Transfers/Debt Funds**

- The FY 2022/23 budget includes one additional full-time staff person

- The line item for consultants in the Assessing Division is increasing as appraisers are used for large appeals and the city will maintain that budget figure going forward in the event appraisers are required
- Training and education are proposed to increase based on an effort to have all staff trained to earn their Green Belt Certification
- A Request for Proposal is going out for the city to review payment options to make payments cheaper and easier for users and to try and tie all payments into one system – The ability to use e-checks was suggested
- It was noted that the new ERP system would assist with two gaps that the current system has which is integrating human resources and budget modules.
- A new drop box will be installed soon for the collection of tax payments and inside safes installed
- In response to Council, it was noted that the city has a very healthy reserve with and the goal is to get to where the debt is sustainable. The city has plans in place to do this so the city's financial state is good
- The banking fees and books/subscription line items have increased due to the cost of the remote safe and subscriptions to keep up on property values and commercial real estate
- The city has been paying down the debt service so most of that is projected to decrease; the HAWK was constructed so that is new debt but overall debt is minimal; the city is not raising taxes
- The effects of Headlee rollback cost the city \$1 million this year

### **City Manager Wrap-Up**

City Manager Mekjian thanked all of staff for their efforts in putting together the budget and City Council for their patience in going through the process over the past couple of days.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments

### **Adjournment**

The special budget study session adjourned at 9:58pm.