

21-APRIL-2010

PRESENT:

Committee Members: Chairman, Charles Trombetta, Jack Knapp, Phil Colla, Sal Tumino, and Paul Rotello

Ex Officio Council Members: Mary Teicholz, Nancy Deep Damici, Colleen Stanley, Joe Cavo, and Peter Nero.

Also in attendance: David St. Hilaire, Director of Finance; Leo Null, Building Official; Alan D. Baker, Police Chief; Geoff Herald, Fire Chief; Scott T. Leroy, Director of Health and Human Services; Susan Tomanio, LCSW, Director of Elder Services; Paul Estefan, Director of Civil Preparedness; and Wayne Sheppard, Chief of Staff.

Members of the Public

Chairman, Charles Trombetta called the meeting to order at 8:10pm. Chairman Trombetta thanked everyone for coming and their service to the City, and asked David St. Hilaire, Director of Finance to discuss the following Budget Accounts.

ELDER SERVICES: Mr. St. Hilaire stated that the decrease of \$36,000 was mainly from a defunded Program Coordinator. He further stated that contractual salary increases were absorbed by reducing other lines within the budget. He commended Susan Tomanio, LCSW, Director of Elder Services, for doing more with less. Mr. St. Hilaire noted for the committee that the fees paid for programs will be held in a separate fund to pay for additional programs. Ms. Tomanio stated that those severed by her Department were a very frugal generation and due to the generous donations from the Mayor's Ball and other donations they would have sufficient funding.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Mr. St. Hilaire commented as a whole Public Safety has an increase of \$550,000 above last year's adopted budget. The \$1.4 million increase in contractual salary increases has mainly been off-set by personnel salary savings. He noted for the committee that due to the decrease in staffing the over-time account has been slightly increased. Additionally, maintenance, heating, and motor fuel has increased.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Mr. St. Hilaire stated that the year to year comparison of the budget shows a \$130,000 decrease because the purchase of vehicles and other capitol items has been moved to the capital account of the budget. He noted for those present that capitol is any purchase which will last more than 1 year and cost over \$25,000. Police Chief Baker commented that he is satisfied with the budget and appreciated the Council's commitment to Public Safety. Chairman Trombetta thanked Chief Baker for his and the departments service to the City. He noted that any reductions made to the budget would not impact public safety. Councilman Knapp asked for clarification on the OT and staffing costs. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that there is a staffing plan in place which would add public safety officers that can be used when other officers were for example in training. However, this budget does not fund those positions. Councilman Colla asked the Chief if he is comfortable with the position cuts. Chief Baker stated that he was satisfied. Councilman Rotello asked for clarification of the increase when the capitol items that were shifts are taken into account. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that the increase would be about 3%. Councilman Rotello asked for clarification regarding the percentage increase in the contracted salaries. Mr. St. Hilaire remarked that last year the raises were given in steps and this year we are seeing the full increase. Councilman Knapp asked if the department communication system is properly equipped. Chief Baker stated that the communication system is sufficient. Chief Baker remarked that there are some band width requirements that need to be made this year. In addition there is a plan for a new digital communication system that would serve Police, Fire, and Emergency Services that is not funded in this year's budget.

ANIMAL CONTROL: Mr. St. Hilaire noted that the proposed budget is \$10,000 over last year's adopted budget with the bulk of that going to the purchase of a vehicle that was made midyear. Councilman Cavo asked if there was a typo in the Police Dept budget on page 132. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that it was and it would be corrected in the final printing.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Mr. St. Hilaire commented that the proposed budget was an increase of \$214,000. The majority of the increase was due to contracted salaries, heating and motor fuel. He noted that the contracted salary increase is \$855,000. There are 10 open positions which are only partially funded by this budget. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that

15 E 1

the salary increases were being absorbed by working with other departments to increase efficiencies. Councilman Knapp asked for clarification regarding line 5851 Volunteer House Maintenance. Chief Herald stated that this was based on historical data and covers some state requirements and fees. Mr. St. Hilaire discussed this account and the last three years of expenditures. Councilman Visconti asked if this amount was sufficient to maintain the Volunteer Houses, noting that some need a lot of work. Chief Herald stated that these funds are given to the Volunteer Council and they allocate the funds to the individual houses. A discussion ensued about the accountability of these funds and the maintenance of the Volunteer Fire Houses. Chief Herald noted that the Mayor has established a facilities task force to look at the feasibility of repairing existing Volunteer Houses or moving into new buildings. Councilman Rotello asked for a year to year comparison before items were moved to the Capitol account. Mr. St. Hilaire remarked that about \$100,000 is being shifted. Chairman Trombetta thanked the Chief and the Fire Department for their service to the City. Chief Herald stated that he appreciated the Council and the Mayor for recognizing that the 2 new pumper trucks and the air packs are critical to the health and safety of the department and the City.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Mr. St. Hilaire noted that the \$15,000 increase was due to contractual salary increases. He noted for the committee that there is no place to cut this budget. Councilman Rotello asked for a comparison of revenue from last year. Leo Null stated that they really have to wait until the end of the year and that permit fees were dependant on financing of projects. A discussion ensued regarding the number of projects being started, evening and weekend inspections, inspections on Fridays, and the comparison of revenue to last year. Leo Null noted for the committee that the purpose of building inspections was public safety. He remarked that fees were going to increase, and the committee has to consider the type of permit not just the number of permits issued. Mr. St. Hilaire directed the committee members to the area of the budget workbook that showed a breakdown of the size and type of permits issued.

CIVIL PREPAREDNESS: Mr. St. Hilaire noted for the committee that re-negotiating a contract for communication services accounted for a significant savings. P. Estefan remarked that the emergency notification system is used for emergency evacuations as well as water main breaks and other similar situations. He stated that he was able to save about \$22,000 without changing the system. The system is used by Fire and Police as well. In addition, they operate the 311 system and they have not had complaints. Councilman Rotello asked if City Hall could be operational if there was a black out. Paul Estefan stated that over the past several years they have received grants to insure that the generator and the IT battery back-up work if the power is out.

CONSUMER PROTECTION: Mr. St. Hilaire noted that there is not significant change.

UNIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD INSPECTION TEAM: Mr. St. Hilaire noted that the decrease to this account is due to a defunded position. This department utilizes services of other departments. Councilman Rotello asked if the positions have been eliminated or moved to other departments. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that there was employee attrition. Councilman Cavo pointed out a typo in this section. Mr. St. Hilaire noted it and will correct it.

HEALTH, HOUSING AND WELFARE: Mr. St. Hilaire stated that the decrease in this department is due to defunded positions. He noted for the committee that this department was effected by the retirement incentive from last year. There are some open positions that will be filled. Mr. St. Hilaire remarked that the grant items were decreased by 10%. Scott Leroy, Director of Health and Human Services commented that due to the retirement incentive they lost a lot of experienced individuals. It is positive from a budgetary prospective and he has developed a re-organization plan which will include additional training for new employees. Councilman Cavo commented that he was impressed with Scott Leroy ability to get grant dollars for his department. He thanked Scott Leroy for that effort.

VETERANS SERVICES: Mr. St. Hilaire stated that there is no change to this account. Councilman Knapp asked for clarification on the retirement status of the director. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that the Director did take the early retirement package, but was now working part-time to help with the transition. He noted that in a department this small it is critical not to lose the institutional knowledge.

ELDERLY TRANSPORTATION: Mr. St. Hilaire remarked that there was no change.

GRANTS TO HUMAN AND SOCIAL WELFARE: No discussion

15E2

COMMUNITY SERVICES: Mr. St. Hilaire noted the account was decreased by 10%. Council Member Rotello asked if these outside agencies were providing services that are mandated. Mr. St. Hilaire stated that this is correct in some instances but the amount is negotiable. A discussion ensued regarding services provided by outside agencies. Councilwoman Deep Damici asked why the United Way receives this amount. Mr. St. Hilaire and Councilman Cavo explained that the Council had asked the United Way to be the gate keeper of funds for all organizations that came before the Council. Wayne Sheppard commented that the United Way was utilized as they have a process to vet and evaluate programs. In addition they evaluate the effectiveness of programs and the agencies delivering the services and obtaining additional funding. Additionally, they are more aware of other similar or duplicate services within the community. A discussion ensued regarding the history and effectiveness of utilizing the United Way as the gatekeeper for these funds. Councilman Cavo noted that since this program was put in place the funding for this line has decreased significantly. Councilwoman Stanley noted that the United Way was very effective at administering these funds and the Council should not consider decreasing the funds further. Councilman Rotello agreed that the United Way has a skill set unique to evaluating those requesting money, but by using them it removes the tax payer one step more from control over how their money is spent. He suggested that there should be a balance, and requested a quarterly report of fund allocations so they are able to speak to their constituents regarding these funds.

Councilman Knapp asked if the Ambulance Fund should be part of the discussions.

AMBULANCE FUND: Mr. St. Hilaire stated that this account was increased by \$80,000 due to fee requirements to pay for collections. He further stated that transports are increasing and with that costs increase.

A motion was made by Councilman Knapp and seconded by Councilman Rotello that the committee recommends to the City Council that the Mayors budget for Health, Housing, Public Safety, and Social Services be adopted. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Knapp and seconded by Councilman Colla. *The motion carried unanimously at 10:01 pm.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Chairman, Charles Trombetta

Jack Knapp

Phil Colla

Sal Tumino

Paul Rotello