

Finance Committee Budget Workshop
Virtual Meeting
May 27, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Clark called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and stated due to the Safer At Home Order, all Committee Members are participating virtually. For virtual meetings, Committee Members will be muted until asked to be heard. When there is a vote, it will be necessary to conduct a roll call vote. A Committee Member will be recognized, raise their hand, and state their vote.

Present:

Council Member Robert Clark, Chair
Mayor Pro Tempore Denise D. Adams, Vice Chair
Council Member Jeff MacIntosh
Council Member James Taylor, Jr.

Additional Attendees:

Mayor Allen Joines
Council Member John Larson
Council Member Annette Scippio
Council Member Kevin Mundy
Council Member Barbara Hanes Burke

Mr. Garrity made opening statements noting this year's budget is a budget of compromises. He stated this is a tax re-evaluation year and the rate will be adjusted down but not down to revenue neutral. He highlighted the that the budget consists of employee compensations and will create new personnel positions for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department. He reminded the Committee that this budget is a proposed budget and he, as well as staff, are prepared to respond to the request and changes made by the Elected Officials.

1. Citizens' Budget Advisory Council Report.

Patrice Toney, Budget Director, recognized the following Citizens Budget Advisory Council members that were participating in the meeting:

*Nathan Borne, Chair
Dr. Haysetta Shuler, Vice Chair
Ross Griffith
Sheila Garcia*

Council Member Clark thanked them for the service and asked they provide their recommendations to the committee.

Nathan Borne, Citizen Budget Advisory Council Chair, provided highlights from the report. He commended the City for allocating \$1 million dollars for social justice as well

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as creating the new department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Some recommendations mentioned were, equity as it relates to social justice for zoning and planning, exploring different ways to mentor small businesses, and getting the fund balance back to 14%.

Mr. Griffith echoed Mr. Borne's remarks regarding restoring the fund balance back to the 14%.

2. Overview of Proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget.

Ms. Toney presented the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Proposed Budget.

She provided a graph of a total budget of \$530.9 million which is up from \$470.6 million from last year. She noted conservative efforts were made based on the uncertainty of COVID. She stated this budget is not only about compromise but restoration and recovery as well. She explained the property tax base grew by 11% and contributed the growth to this being a reevaluation year. The local option sales tax is the second largest revenue funds which reflects a 2.5% growth from 2021 projected year-end actuals. She provided the following highlights that were listed in the budget:

- 1. Property tax rate decreases by 1.5 cents.*
- 2. Maintains core services to citizens with no reductions.*
- 3. No budgeted use of general fund balance reserves and will meet reserve City policy.*
- 4. Investment in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office to include four new positions.*
- 5. Investments in employees by reinstating merit pay, increase minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour, and provide a 2% increase for sworn Police Officers and Certified Fire Fighters.*
- 6. Funds \$4 million in capital outlay, including 75 new police vehicles, a fire aerial/ladder, and two new engine trucks for Fire Stations 12 and 13.*
- 7. Supports community and art-based non-profits with a 1.1 million dollar investment from General Fund and 1.6 million from other funds.*

She stated some proposed added positions included a Fire Inspector, Water and Sewer Assistant Attorney, Water and Sewer Assistant Utility Plan Superintendent, and a Solid Waste Heavy Equipment Operator.

She explained the statutory revenue neutral property tax rate is 58.42 cents and noted the proposed tax rate is reduced by 1.5 cents. She said projected tax bills for single family resident homes showed a 14.8 % average growth.

3. Overview of 2022-2027 Capital Plan.

Ms. Toney listed some highlights of the 2022-2027 Capital Plan and noted the plan is a guide and it is subject to revision based on Mayor and Council decisions.

4. Other Topics for Discussion.

Council Member Taylor stated due to the increase violent crime, he is proposing a Public Safety Plan which includes engaging neighborhoods by having peace walks, community meetings and town hall meetings. He asked for increase funding for SOAR and

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YouthBuild by utilizing additional ABC sales in a one-time commitment of \$400,000. He also asked that the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office and the Winston-Salem Police Department form a task force to help combat crime. He asked Staff to research his proposal and bring something to Council for consideration.

Mayor Joines agreed with Council Member Taylor's efforts for combating violence noting that he too has been communicating with various members regarding a program called Violence Interrupter.

Mayor Pro Tempore Adams stated the community wants to be involved in decision making in their neighborhood and noted that the community is very concerned about the parks and recreation centers in the high crime areas. She asked that staff research resources for programs to help get the community involve in mentorship programs for high crime areas.

Council Member Burke asked staff to research preventative youth programs such as conflict resolution initiatives and programs such as the YWCA Teen Court.

The following questions and concerns were raised by the Mayor and City Council Members.

- 1. What is the funding for street improvements as this was a top priority of the citizens survey.*
- 2. Status and funding for recreation and deferred maintenance projects.*
- 3. Funding for sustainability.*
- 4. Violent crimes have increased in the City, what is the cause.*
- 5. Information regarding the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion positions.*

Next Steps:

- a. Finance Committee Budget Workshop - Thursday, June 3, 5:00 p.m.
- b. Finance Committee Public Hearing - Thursday, June 3, 7:00 p.m.
- c. Finance Committee Budget Workshop - Thursday, June 10, 4:00 p.m.
- d. City Council Meeting Public Hearing and Budget Adoption - Monday, June 21, 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.