



Council Worksession  
August 23, 2022  
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas  
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle  
Councilmember Graeme Allen  
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Absent: Councilmember Pam Axberg

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Gina Foschi, Craig Schlichting, Jennifer Fink, Tony Paetznick

Guests in Attendance:

CIP Overview Discussion

Massopust reported staff would be presenting the draft CIP for 2023 to 2032 to the Council.

Foschi presented the 2023 to 2032 draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Council and commented on the benefits of having this type of plan in place for future capital planning purposes. The timeline of the CIP was reviewed along with the budget planning process. She commented further on the major purchases for the next ten years and asked for comments or questions from the Council.

Discussion ensued regarding how inflation would impact the CIP and General Fund forecasted levies.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested further information on the proposed increases for 2024. Foschi explained this was due to adding the Assistant City Manager position while also adding a second police officer to the budget. Massopust noted there was also a debt issuance in 2024.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented the Council would need to be thinking about alternate funding options to assist with the levy increase in 2024 and 2025.

Councilmember Allen discussed how the City's tax rate has been increasing which would help with covering these increases.

Councilmember Dunsworth thanked staff for their efforts on the CIP and reiterated that the CIP was an estimate for financial planning purposes. She reported the numbers for 2024 were alarming and she was glad the Council had this information so they could prepare for the proposed expenditures and inflation.

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## 2023 Budget Discussion

Foschi presented the 2023 City Manager recommended budget, including recent changes. She discussed the items that were being deferred per the recommendations of the directors and explained the proposed levy increase was now 9.88%, which was down from 11.35%. She commented further on the 2023 budget and asked for comments from the Council.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested further information from Director Paetznick on the recruiting process for the Public Safety Department. Paetznick stated recruitment was a challenge at this time for local law enforcement. He reported he was authorized to have 31 licensed peace officers and he currently had 28. He believed the department was in a good position compared to other agencies. He explained he had 13 candidates for the last recruitment process. He commented on the pathways to policing programs that were in place through PSO's and Explorers noting these programs have helped with recruiting.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned how competitive New Brighton was compared to other departments and asked if there were any options the Council should be considering for 2023. Paetznick stated the department has a lateral job posting that was running on a continual basis. He reported many departments were doing this, while also offering cash incentives with preloaded vacation and sick leave for lateral transfer officers. He stated he has not had any success with this, but noted other agencies have more money to offer as incentives. It was his understanding some departments were boosting pay to assist with retention and recruitment due to how competitive the market was at this time.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked when the City would be negotiating the contracts with for the Public Safety Department. Massopust reported this would be done in 2023.

Councilmember Dunsworth reported the market was so hypercompetitive right now for all jobs. She stated she was really proud of the type of service and the level of service the New Brighton Public Safety Department was providing to the community.

Councilmember Abdulle supported the City focusing on the staff they already have to make sure these staff members know they are valued and appreciated in these unusual times.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked the team for hearing the Council's concerns and for bringing the levy increase down to single digits. She questioned what the implications would be if the City were not to make a contribution to the fire relief fund in 2023. Paetznick discussed how the municipal contribution assisted with raising the benefit level for the relief association, which was a positive for the organization.

Worksession adjourned at 5:53 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk

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