MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL
300 NORTH HIGH STREET
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

SPECIAL MEETING: 6:00 P.M., 1st Floor City Hall Auditorium.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Dan Gibson.

ROLL CALL:	**PRESENT**	**ABSENT**
Aaron Clark	X	
Ro Selvey	X	
Troy Ingram	X	
Jeff Green		X
Jeff Robinson	X	
Brandon Garrett	X	
Brad Polk	X	
Jerry Dishman	X	
Roger Overbey	X	

TOPIC OF DISCUSSION:

President Robinson welcomes everyone and informs this being the first scheduled meeting to review the proposed 2023 municipal budget. The process is going to look very similar to last years as they plan to bring forward each Department Head, allow them to point out any major differences in their budget and to answer questions from the Council. They also want to provide time for comments and questions from the public, as it is their money after all. After the Council completes their questioning of each Department, they will open the floor to provide that time. He does ask anyone with questions or comments direct those to the Council. If the Council cannot answer your question or dress your comment, they will ask the Department Head or the Controller to do so. Also, please try to limit your comments to around 3 minutes and he asks that any public comment be relevant to the topic being discussed. The only difference this year is these meetings are not Finance Committee Meetings. They are Special Meetings of the Council. Making these Special Meetings allows them to take official action in the event changes are requested or desired on the fly. He thinks that'll make things a little bit more efficient and since all nine members are part of the Finance Committee he thought it would be appropriate to make these Special Meetings rather than Finance Committee Meetings. Questions called. Robinson adds he wanted to schedule the easiest departments to handle first this evening to get everybody warmed up as they head into more of the complex aspects of the budget. So, tonight should be a walk in the park.

FINANCE DIVISION (CONTROLLER)

Craig Wright, Controller, approaches the podium. Robinson wishes to start with some general housekeeping and confirms that the revenues presented in the budget are true and accurate according to the Department of Local Government & Finance. Wright states that is correct and they were certified by Ryan Burke. Robinson then clarifies the budget was prepared in accordance with Indiana Code 36-4-7-6 which is the I.C. on the procedures the City shall take in preparation of the municipal budget. Wright states yes. Also,

Robinson asks if all local ordinances and Interlocal Agreements followed during the preparation of the 2023 budget. Wright answers yes they were. Robinson says that is great and that is all he has. He asks if there is anything in Wright's budget that he would like to point out to the Council before it is opened up for questions.

Wright explains this is the exact same budget as this year. He will say on all the budgets, especially the ones being heard this evening, are all basically the same with the exception of having a 2% increase in salaries for this upcoming year. That is for per the agreement as far as the AFSCME contract so they do have to abide by that. Anything dealing with the payroll is increased by 2%. Additionally, any fuel charges on the budgets were increased by 20% due to the inflation. (However, there are no fuel charges in the Controllers budget). Other than that, the Controller budget is the same and had no increase at all. Questions called.

Robinson thanks Wright for all his hard work on the overall budget and states he knows this is not an easy list. He appreciates that and appreciates him being responsive to the request of the Council the past couple of weeks to get some additional documents. Wright states they are doing everything they can going into next year and throughout next year in trying to trim it and be as budget conscience in the Department's as much as they can with the inflation that is going on. They do not see it decreasing next year so the City will do everything they can to watch the budget lines and not go over.

MAYOR

Mayor Dan Ridenour states his budget actually had a small decrease overall but did include the 2% pay increases. There is nothing majorly adjusted on his budget. Robinson guesses the change that the Mayor was referring to was the Part-Time line item #101-01-411046 that dropped to just under $5,000. Mayor Ridneour answers yes. Questions called.

Robinson lets everyone in the audience and everyone at home watching the live stream know that he sent the Clerk's office an email today requesting that they upload a link to the 2023 proposed budget to the City Council webpage of the City website. Being sent early this afternoon he anticipates it being posted within the next day or so. In the meantime, ord. 33-22 can be found in Municode or along with the other documents on the City webpage.

CITY ATTORNEY

Craig Wright, Controller, explains there is only one line item for the City Attorney, which is their retainer fee. That fee is still the same. Since it did not increase, there are absolutely no increases whatsoever in this budget. Questions called. Wright, again, informs that line item is strictly for the retainer and any additional charges (of course) would go to the Department they are doing the work for.

I.T.

Adam Williams, I.T. Administrator, believes everything for the proposed 2023 budget remained the same as 2022. Robinson states yes, exactly the same. Selvey has a general question and mentions the software upgrades for each department and wonders if that is paid for by I.T. Williams answers unfortunately that depends on the software specifically or if it is an enterprise-wide solution if those are handled through I.T. budgets as well as the general maintenance of the payroll application. The Police Department, obviously, has their own budget for such things. The larger groups like Police and Fire do their own financing of those kind of upgrades. Selvey thanks him. Questions called.

BOARD OF WORKS

Craig Wright, Controller, informs there was only one line item that changed this year in BOW and that was on the 911 Communications Center line item #101-19-432041. It went from $900,000 this year to $1,000,000 for next year. Robinson asks when the Council could anticipate seeing that Interlocal Agreement

filed. Wright states he can get it for the Council. Robinson explains they will need to introduce it presumably by the end of the year to pass by the end of the year if they are going to be entering into that on January 1. Gibson advises yes, if there is a new Agreement then that should be done as soon as possible. Wright makes a note of it. Robinson comments he would be happy to see it ahead of filing with the Clerk's office so if Wright has it and could send it out to the Council, they would really appreciate it. Therefore, they anticipate that Interlocal Agreement being introduced at the November meeting. Wright states okay. Questions called.

Robinson has a question just out of curiosity referring to Unemployment line item #101-19-4513065. He knows it is $0 for 2023 but had $10,000 allocated in 2022 and 2021 to unemployment and wonders what employee would come out of that line item. Wright explains they just move those funds around and that those are funds that are going to be available to be put in other lines. Robinson comments that was just something he was curious about. Wright adds that is why they didn't even put it in. Robinson concludes stating everything else is exactly the same. Questions called.

BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Craig Wright, City Controller, mentions the Building Commissioner's office had the 2% increase in pay like everything else but there were also some fuel charge increases. Robinson acknowledges the change is about $942 on the gas and oil. Wright hums uh-huh. Robinson questions the percentage in which that was adjusted. Wright explains they informed everyone to do a 20% increase. Wright is aware of Building Commissioner Selvey making some adjustments already this year so he just increased on top of that. They were both in agreement on the budget that has been entered and it is exactly what he needed, aware he has had many additions over the last year along with some extra work. Questions called.

Ingram questions the Zoning/Structural Inspector line item # 101-10-411038 being one position or two. Wright answers that is two. (And then jokes if not, he would resign and take it himself). Questions called.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Carl Malone, Parks Superintendent, answers Robinson's question (if there was anything he would like to point out before opening it up to questions) and states they plan on staying and playing within the 2022 budget for 2023. They had no additional parks and the added monies they received this year through the support of the Mayor and Council such as bond money has really helped with some of the projects they were not sure how they were going to be done. They think they will be okay and just have to tighten up and have met with the Controller to do over a few things but think that they will be fine to continue 2023 as they did in 2022.

Selvey refers to Grant Expenditure being $0 and wishes an explanation on it going from $9,971 to that. Malone explains they just did not see a need to have any dollars in there. They do have grant writers that have been writing grants for them and a board member has helped receive some funds through her efforts as well (Shannon Powers).

Robinson doesn't expect exact receipts but asks what typically comes out of Other Services & Charges line item #201-27-439071 at $51,500. Malone answers quite a bit, actually. They have repairs that may come up or small items they might need. That is a line item in which a lot of the funds for Tuhey's supplies and concessions comes out of. Additionally, minor stuff that is needed within the parks such as tools or screws. Anything needed to make repairs. Moreover, any additional office supplies they may need.

Ingram refers to the Part Time line item 201-27-411051 being kept at $100,000. He is aware there are very few and far between but issues like high grass and Guthrie Park and a few other places, if Malone feels like that should be increased to help in that upkeep. He is also aware the new splash pads require maintenance. Malone answers they have had a conversation with the Controller about that and may need to

look into bringing in more seasonal help next year to help with that as far as part time. Ingram states that was his concern because it has been the same it has been for the past 4 years. He didn't know if an increase there would help stop those small issues they have had. Malone claims if they could get some added support in that line, the Controllers' office and the Parks Department would be happy to be able to increase that. Malone then thanks him for noting that. Ingram is happy to do so. Questions called.

PRAIRIE CREEK

Robinson advises he spoke with Dustin Clark earlier, Superintendent of Prairie Creek, and they are hard at work getting set up for Iron Man this weekend. The same thing occurred to them last year when they were on the schedule for their budget hearing the week of the Iron Man and Robinson switched it around for them. This year, they are hard at work again and D. Clark told Robinson their budget is exactly the same as it was last year with the exception of the 2% raises. Prairie Creek is as different from the Parks Department in that Prairie Creek gets their budget approved by the Parks Board and they are self-sufficient. So, they are very much like Beech Grove Cemetery (where their Board of Trustees really manage the day-to-day and the Parks Board is the authority on Prairie Creek). Robinson assures he said if there is a reason being where he is needed then D. Clark said he is more than happy to come in at one of the other meetings to answer any questions. However, from Robinson's perspective with as little change as happening there, he doesn't know that they necessarily need to have D. Clark come in and explain their budget. He did say he is always happy to take an email or phone call to answer any questions directly so encourages if there are questions regarding to Prairie Creek to reach out to Dustin Clark directly.

CHANNEL 60

Controller, Craig Wright along with Michelle Owen, Communications Director, approach the podium. Wright wishes to recognize Owen for competing in a full Ironman in Maryland this past weekend. He just wishes to tip his hat to her and mentions he is doing just the bike portion and that alone is killing him. That is an outstanding achievement. With that being said, Wright informs they have not changed any of the line items and it is the same as last year.

Michelle Owen, Communications Director, informs they will see the same 2% increase as the rest of the budgets but otherwise no changes.

Overbey congratulates her on her Iron Man. He acknowledges he is not familiar with how Channel 60 works anymore but knows back in the day it was called Channel 60 and now it is called Director of Communications, which is what she does. Owen states that is correct. Overbey asks what her duties are in that title. Owen states she does quite a bit. She manages the City social media pages to get information out to the public, writes press releases and manages the relationship with local news outlets as well as other miscellaneous duties. She sometimes field questions from the public or if there were concerns or issues connecting with specific departments she can act as a go-between just to make sure that citizen concerns are being met in a timely fashion and that transparency is maintained throughout the Administration. Overbey guesses she can understand his question when back in the day there was one person doing some of those duties as well as managing Channel 60. That is why it was called Channel 60 at the time. He was just wondering because that is one line item with the Council and the other, he believes, is out another funding source. He was just curious as to what her duties were with that.

Selvey appreciates everything that she does and likes receiving those press releases. They are on a timely manner and she communicates well with the public. She has seen even on the City Facebook page that she has answered some tough questions and does it with class and represents the City really well. Congratulations Iron Woman. Owen thanks her very much and indicates that is her goal.

Rick Yencer, former newsman and author, would agree with Selvey that there is a new era for communication in this Administration mainly because of Ms. Owen. He has some other general comments about spending of the budget, if they would allow him just a minute or two. The issues that he is hearing tonight sound like we are not going to have any tax increase because a lot of people had their taxes increased by 20 or 25 different tax Districts this year besides increase in assessed value of property and real estate. Some of the budget things he thinks needs to be addressed this year is to first put some limits on EDIT spending because a lot of people are wondering why the City spent half a million dollars to buy the YMCA just tear it down. There are still those that do not think the YMCA has a proper place on school grounds because it is a paid pay-to-play facility that doesn't take in people anymore. The other issue, too, with spending is it was noticed that somebody said that the Mayor is giving $1,000 bonuses to the employees. Owen states that is correct. Yencer claims others want to know why they aren't giving $1,000 to taxpayers like the stage, the federal government. That is our money. That's stemi money that, again, he has been up here harping about for what seems like ever. That should have gone to the people, it shouldn't go to infrastructure, it shouldn't go to government bailouts, it should go to the people. See, the federal government that provided that money kicked back to us not once but twice, even the state and their $6 billion dollar surplus gave us a few hundred. He thinks it's appropriate the local government give us something out of that money or anything out of that money because it's our money. Beyond that, he just hopes they don't raise taxes because a lot of people out there are watching and they're still concerned that government schools are doing whatever they want because (turning around and pointing to the audience) there is nobody here. That tells him that nobody cares. Questions called.

ADJOURNED:

This concludes this meeting. There will be the regular meeting on Monday, October 3rd that will not cover anything relating to the budget but the next budget meeting will be Wednesday, October 5th covering the Street Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Fire Department EMS, the Merit Commissions as well as the Animal Shelter. The third meeting will be Wednesday, October 19th.

A motion was made by Overbey and seconded by Ingram to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 8 yeas and 1 nay (Robinson). ADJOURNED.

Jeff Robinson, President of the
Muncie Common Council

Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council