

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, October 24, 2023
6:30 PM –Budget
Common Council Chambers

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by Mayor Steve Hass with the following attending:

Paul Russell – District 1 - excused
Michael “Gus” Caylor – District 2
Nathan Meyer – District 3
LaDonna Fermanich – District 4
Dick Lupton – District 5
Mike Rick – District 6 - excused
Mark Weix – District 7
Steve Sabatke – District 8

Other’s present: Mayor Hass, Finance Director Unertl, City Attorney Hayden, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Police Chief Bennett, Public Works/City Engineer Akey, Facilities Maintenance Manager Wszalek, Fire Chief Klug, Library Director Ollhoff (remote), Enrichment Center Director Mrachek, Park & Recreation Director Wendorf, Street Superintendent Bonack and Merrill Community Media.

II. Roll Call was taken.

III. Public Comment: There was no public comment

IV. Update on overall 2024 Budget and proposed 2023 Tax Levy:

Finance Director Unertl gave an update to the Committee. It was her suggestion to hold off on 2023 borrowing until early 2024. She is anticipating a 2.5% tax rate increase.

V. Consideration of General Fund – Tax Levy 2024 Operational Budget requests:

It was decided to go through the budget packet in detail. The following are the motions that occurred during that discussion:

Nathan Meyer motioned to increase the Mayor’s office supply budget to \$300.00 and reduce the mileage to \$100.00. Alderperson Caylor seconded and the motion carried on a 7/0 voice vote.

Mayor Hass made a motion to remove \$3,200 from MADC (Merrill Area Development Corporation). Alderperson Sabatke seconded and the motion carried on a 7/0 voice vote. Page 33 in the budget packet.

Mayor Hass made a motion to remove \$12,500 from the LCEDC (Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation) marketing request. Alderperson Caylor seconded and the motion carried on a 7/0 voice vote. Page 108 in budget packet.

Alderperson Caylor made a motion to increase the Social Media contractor budget by \$6,500 and decrease the Marketing contractor budget by \$6,500. Alderperson Meyer seconded and the motion carried on a 7/0 voice vote. Page 108 in budget packet.

Alderperson Sabatke made a motion to eliminate \$7,000 from the Historical Society funding. Alderperson Caylor seconded for discussion. Following discussion, Alderperson Meyer requested to amend the motion. Alderperson Caylor removed his second. Alderperson Meyer made a motion to decrease the Historical Society funding by \$2,000 (from \$7,000 to \$5,000). Alderperson Sabatke seconded and the motion carried on a 6/1 voice vote. Alderperson Weix voted no. Page 113 in the budget packet.

Alderperson Fermanich made a motion to reduce the funding for the Humane Society from \$15,000 to \$9,000. Alderperson Meyer seconded for discussion. Following discussion, the motion failed on a 2/5 roll call vote. Alderperson's Caylor, Lupton, Weix, Sabatke and Mayor Hass voted no. Page 113 in the budget packet.

VI. Consideration of Tax Incremental Districts (TIDs) 2024 Budget requests:

Finance Director Unertl gave an overview of the TID information that was included in the budget packet. Alderperson Fermanich questioned an item from TID7 regarding the \$100,000 loan repayment from FreMarq. She referred to page 30 in the budget packet. The item was referred to the Interim CA Akey who stated he was informed FreMarq is ready to start repaying that loan. There was discussion regarding the interest payment of \$9,000 on the loan between Alderperson Fermanich and Finance Director Unertl. A question was raised by Alderperson Sabatke regarding the repayment of the loan. Following the TID overview, Alderperson Fermanich asked about the loan repayment. Interim CA Akey stated the payments were delayed due to Covid and FreMarq will start making payments per a discussion he had with Ms. Frederick.

VII. Adjournment – Alderperson Meyer motioned to adjourn. Alderperson Lupton seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Minutes prepared by: City Clerk Lori Anderson-Malm