

**City of Columbus**  
**City Council Budget Meeting**  
**01.15.20**

In attendance were: Mayor Preiner, Council Members Hegland, Logren, Duraine, and Peterson; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, and Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Ron Hanegraaf, Dean Johnson, and Barb Bobick.

**1. Call to Order – 6:01 p.m.**

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion by Hegland to approve the agenda. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.**

**3. Fire Department Update**

Forest Lake Fire Chief Al Newman came forward to address the Council regarding a change in ambulance services. Effective 06.01.20 there will be a change from North Ambulance to M Health in the Columbus area.

He expressed some concern that municipalities have not been contacted about the change, although the decision was made on 12.03.19. Hegland commented that she hopes the change to M Health will move in a more positive direction and offered to attend future meetings with Newman. Newman said that after the first few meetings they will be bringing a larger group together to talk through the changes.

Newman continued to say that fire departments and local governments have little to say in changes like this because the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB) is in charge of licensing, renewals, accreditation, and management of the Primary Service Area (PSA). Fairview is the owner of Columbus' PSA. He is concerned about this change because things like slower response times for ambulance services will also affect police and fire response times.

Mayor Preiner asked Newman what the next steps are moving forward? Newman said that right now they have to wait. All individual meetings with public safety officials will occur before the end of the month, and once those meetings are over a larger meeting will occur to discuss all changes.

**4. 2020 Budget Discussion**

Mursko reported that budget materials have been updated. The City budget increased by roughly \$170,000, which is overall a net decrease. Although, she noted, some residents will see an increase in their taxes because of changes in property values.

The resolution to be adopted by the Council will allow for the budget to be inputted in the accounting system. If the Council wants to amend the budget during the year they are still able to.

Mursko continued by asking the Council if they had any changes to make? She noted that everything which was added to the budget was discussed previously.

Duraine asked what the comments were on page four? Mursko said that they were comments from Public Works Superintendent Jim Windingstad regarding the purpose for spending above last year's budgeted amount. Hegland asked what the purpose was for those expenditures? Mursko replied it was a combination of wages, cost of living increases, and on call hours.

Hegland asked what the percentages represented on the handout? Mursko said the percentages are not all calculating correctly but on the left is the percentage budget increase from the previous year, and on the right is the amount that has already been spent from the 2020 budget.

Duraine asked if the Senior Center has any expenses that the City will inherit? Mursko replied no, that the only expenses they currently have are exclusively the Senior Center's.

Mayor Preiner asked if they should expect significant increases in the sewer and water budget? Mursko said that it is a balancing act because the sewer and water budget funds itself. In the near future the City will reach a breakeven point where the fund will no longer be negative.

Duraine asked what the increase in the transportation fund equates to? Mursko replied that there were three areas which had to be increased in the transportation fund: streetlight liability insurance, streetlight electricity, and streetlight maintenance. These areas needed to increase because the City became responsible for additional street lights as a result of multiple transportation projects occurring in the past year.

Duraine asked why the City has to pay for streetlight maintenance for an intersection of two county roads? Mursko said that City could approach the county and ask for them to fund the maintenance, but that would likely result in an increase in taxes for Anoka County residents. Regardless, the cost for streetlight maintenance will be funded by the citizens. She added that the policy is the same for all Cities in Anoka County.

Hegland asked where the numbers for the 2020 water and sewer budget came from on the summary page? Mursko said it came from disbursements. She added that there will not be levy numbers for this fund because it is an enterprise fund.

**Motion by Hegland to approve Resolution 20-01, a resolution approving the 2020 final budget. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Duraine to adjourn. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator