



Watertown City Council
Work Session

Mayor Michael Walters
Fred McGuire
Adam Pawelk
Dan Schuette
Kay Thul

9/26/2023 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Mayor Walters called the Watertown City Council work session to order at 5:30 p.m. on September 26, 2023, in the council chambers of City Hall.

Council Members Present: Michael Walters, Adam Pawelk, Fred McGuire, and Kay Thul.

Council Members Absent: Dan Schuette.

Staff Present: City Administrator Jake Foster

Others Present: None.

2. New Business

2.1. 2024 Enterprise Budget Workshop

Jake Foster present the information regarding the 2024 Enterprise Budget Workshop. up until this point, City Council has discussed the 2024 general fund budget/tax levy and Capital Improvement Projects/Program (CIP). As part of the 2024 budget process, City Council will need to adopt budgets for the City's enterprise funds (water, sewer, and stormwater), and subsequent utility rates to support each fund.

Due to the increase in costs for the wastewater treatment facility expansion project, the second water tower project, and various capital and operational items throughout each of the funds, staff had the City's financial advisor update the data relating to the City's rate study and enterprise fund rate increase recommendation outlay.

Additionally, the City previously used one "utilities" capital improvement fund from which all enterprise fund capital expenditure were funded. Per the recommendation of the City's auditors and financial advisor, this fund was broken into three separate accounts (water, sewer, stormwater) which are operated dependently from each other.

Overall, there are not significant changes in operating expenditures for each of the enterprise funds. Some of the larger percentage increases are typically representative of nominal monetary increases. However, there are some significant increases in the sewer fund that have been increased to account for increases operational costs for the new wastewater treatment facility. Time of these operational costs will be unknown until the new facility is on-line, but staff is budgeting rather conservatively to cover these costs.

Mr Foster also Included two versions of the rate study. Scenario B includes a property acquisition cost of \$700k for the second water tower site. Scenario A does not. These scenarios are identical other than the property acquisition in Scenario B.

2.II. Personnel Discussion

Jake Foster presented the topic of the current personnel and began with, the City has had a vacancy for the Deputy City Clerk position for several weeks. There has also been one staff member on medical leave for a similar duration.

Staff has been discussing alternatives for filling the vacancy and addressing workload throughout this time. Staff has identified a very well-suited candidate for the open Deputy City Clerk position that also represents a budgetary increase in salary. Staff has also seen the market for wages for front desk/permit support positions increase in the region and with comparable cities. Connie Kammerer has also been a great asset to the City filling in while City Hall is short-staffed.

Staff would like to discuss the idea of hiring the identified external candidate to fill the Deputy City Clerk role, provide more competitive market adjustment for the current administrative assistant/permit technician, and hiring Ms. Kammerer as a permanent employee to fill the role vacated by Nancy Pysick earlier this summer. Ms. Pysick's position has not yet been included in the 2024 budget, however, due to some potential impending developments and continued commercial growth, staff expects 2024 to be a much busier year in terms of building permit numbers, revenue, and subsequent workload.

Staff recommends that Council approve each of these personnel transactions but would like to receive that direction from Council prior to updating job descriptions, reallocating these positions (some of them will need to, and should be spread across the enterprise funds and general funds), and adjusting budgets as it will require a somewhat significant amount of staff time.

Based on the direction provided by City Council, staff could then provide the necessary actions for Council to approve on the November 28 Council agenda. If Council decides to move forward with the external candidate, a formal offer would be extended and a start date could be determined for some time shortly after the formal approval from Council at the November 28 meeting. Budget Impact:

A rough estimate of the entire budget impact would be approximately \$75,000 - \$85,000. This would include an increase to the wage an hours of the Deputy City Clerk position, a market adjustment to the Administrative Assistant/Permit Technician role, and the addition of another 32 hour/week Administrative Assistant position. As stated above, these positions could be reallocated to spread the cost across the enterprise funds where warranted, so the general fund levy would not need to bear the entire cost.

3. Adjournment

Michael Walters, Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Jake Foster, City Administrator