



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Michael Schnetzer, Chair
Karen J. Angelou
Merisa K. Bowers
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Stephen A. Renner
Trenton I. Weaver

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, December 4, 2023

City Hall, Council Chambers

Immediately following the regular Council meeting on December 4, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilmember Michael Schnetzer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. The agenda was published on December 1, 2023. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

1. Continued Discussion on FY 2024 Proposed Budget

Chairman Schnetzer initiated the meeting by acknowledging the single agenda item for the evening-a continued discussion on the fiscal year 2024 proposed budget. He noted the extensive list of questions, spanning three pages, which had been submitted for discussion. The attachment containing these questions was made available on the agenda for reference.

Expressing the intention to proceed systematically, Chairman Schnetzer indicated that he would read each question, wait for the administration's response, and then open the floor for any necessary follow-up from councilmembers. He encouraged members to raise their hands for additional clarification or questions. With that, he proceeded to the first question on the agenda.

[ORD-0080-2023](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

General Government

1. Chairman Schnetzer addressed the first item on the agenda, focusing on the general government section, specifically referencing Pages 27 and 40 through 41. The question revolved around the Capital Improvement fund and

the three major Special Revenue funds that receive income tax revenue. He requested the administration to be prepared to discuss the revenue sources, noting that it appeared there were more than just income tax contributions. The follow-up question involved identifying which year's funds were utilized for the current year's operational expenses and the specifics of the transfer out line item. Additionally, Chairman Schnetzer sought a breakdown of the funds allocated for salary and benefits, materials and supplies, and contract services for the years 2022, 2023, and the proposed budget for 2024. Acknowledging the complexity of the discussion question, Chairman Schnetzer recognized that the details requested might be intricate.

Director of Finance Joann Bury responded to Chairman Schnetzer's inquiry regarding revenue sources in the Capital Improvement fund and the three major Special Revenue funds that receive income tax revenue. She detailed the various revenue sources, highlighting that all four funds receive their respective share of penalties and interest associated with income tax, recorded as fines and fees. She explained that in the Engineering or Public Service fund, engineering fees were collected. In the Public Safety fund, fines and fees accounted for the school resource officer program, representing charges for services to schools utilizing those officers. The Parks and Recreation fund captured charges for services related to programs and activities such as pools and golf. Director Bury mentioned that on occasion, grant funding might come in, typically planned for the Capital Improvement fund, although none had been anticipated for 2024.

Director Bury addressed the question regarding the utilization of year funds for operational expenses. She clarified that, for the year 2024, all the revenue generated would be allocated exclusively towards operational expenses. This allocation adhered to both ordinance regulations and the levy passed by the voters. Director Bury emphasized that these funds were specifically earmarked for operational costs and confirmed that each department would utilize its reserve fund balance to cover a portion of the 2024 operational expenses. Director Bury then explained the concept of a "transfer out" and specified that the Public Safety Fund was the only fund involved in such transfers. The purpose of this transfer was to cover additional costs related to police pension obligations, supplementing the revenue from the property tax levy designated for the police pension fund. She directed council to refer to the relevant pages in the budget book for a detailed breakdown of expenses. Specifically, she highlighted page 115 for the Capital Improvement Fund and pages 134 to 137 for the three Special Revenue Funds, where expenses were categorized into salaries, benefits, materials and supplies, among others.

President Renner expressed gratitude to Director Bury for providing an overview of the various revenue sources. Seeking clarification, he inquired if the future income tax funds allocated to the three special funds were used for that year's operational expenses.

Director Bury affirmed President Renner's understanding, explaining that the budget for 2024 reflected the planned spending based on the anticipated income.

President Renner proceeded to inquire about the contingency plan if the projected funds did not materialize as expected. Director Bury said that the response would depend on the severity of the situation. Reflecting on past experiences during the pandemic, she explained that, in more extreme cases, the administration might propose a reduction in appropriations. However, in less severe instances, they would likely dip into the unreserved fund balance. The subsequent year would involve an analysis to determine if the shortfall was an anomaly or if adjustments to future projections were needed.

President Renner sought clarification on the communication process in such scenarios. Director Bury assured him that, as in the case of the pandemic, the administration would come before the Council to report on any necessary reductions in appropriations or adjustments due to revenue shortfalls. President Renner acknowledged and clarified that any such need for adjustments would be communicated to the Council for consideration.

Vice President Weaver brought attention to House Bill 296 and its potential impact on the Ohio police and fire pension fund. He inquired whether the administration was already monitoring this legislation, noting that it would mandate additional contributions from employers.

Director Bury responded, acknowledging awareness of the bill, and explaining that it was a topic further addressed in the agenda. She emphasized the administration's approach not to budget for legislative changes until they were officially passed. Director Bury mentioned that they were closely monitoring the progress of the bill through the House and examining any amendments made. The administration would act only when the legislation was confirmed to be passed, ensuring a proactive response to any changes in pension fund contributions.

2. Chairman Schnetzer directed attention to the second question, referring to information on page 33. He noted that investment income was currently at a cycle high but anticipated a fall after fiscal year 2024 as interest rates normalized lower. The specific inquiry was whether there were estimates regarding the magnitude of the expected decrease in dollars in 2025.

Director Bury responded, providing insights into the projections. She explained that early predictions indicated a gradual decline in interest rates through 2024, with expectations of bottoming out around 3% in early 2025. Red Tree, the investment advisor, had conducted a five-year projection, considering this gradual decline. In terms of dollars, Director Bury mentioned that they were estimating approximately a \$500,000 decline in investment income heading into 2025.

3. Chairman Schnetzer addressed a specific note on page 37 under the operating expenses section, pointing out that the fifth sentence suggested a 9% increase in Water and Sewer fees by the city of Columbus. He sought clarification on whether this was a typo and requested details about the services and total amounts referred to in that note.

Director Bury responded, explaining that it was not a typo. The noted increase pertained to Gahanna purchasing water and sewer services from the city of Columbus. Initially, they had anticipated a 9% increase based on preliminary discussions. However, after Columbus had its rate-setting meeting, it was confirmed to be a 10% increase, with 5% for water and 5% for sewer. Director Bury referred to a previous presentation by Senior Deputy Director Corey Wybensing, emphasizing that these increases were a significant driver in the overall rates for Gahanna. Councilmember Angelou sought clarification, asking if it was 5% for both water and sewer, and Director Bury confirmed this, specifying a 5% increase for water and a separate 5% increase for sewer services.

4. Chairman Schnetzer referred to a note on several pages throughout the budget book (pages 31, 99, 122, and 123), mentioning increased maintenance efforts by the streets division that could place funding pressures on the general fund and the public service fund. He inquired about the extent to which levying the permissive license tax at the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) cap would alleviate cost pressures on these funds.

Director Bury provided information, stating that based on the most recent report available in October 2023, with an estimated 36,000 registrations at \$5 each, the permissive license tax could generate an additional \$180,000 per year. This additional revenue could be allocated to support street maintenance efforts, potentially alleviating some of the funding pressures on the general fund and the public service fund.

5. Chairman Schnetzer directed attention to page 60, requesting information on the goals and objectives of the Citizens Academy program and whether any funding is associated with it.

Mayor Jadwin sought clarification as there was a Mayor's Advisory Committee mentioned on page 60 and a Citizens Academy program. Vice President Weaver clarified that the question referred to the Citizens Academy.

Mayor Jadwin explained that the Citizens Academy program is modeled after similar initiatives in various municipalities. It aims to engage the community by providing residents with insights into different city departments over a multi-week period. The program covers various aspects, such as Police Operations, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and others, fostering a better understanding of local government operations. Regarding budgetary aspects, Mayor Jadwin mentioned that approximately \$10,000 is allocated in the budget. This covers potential venue costs, materials printing, or any expenses associated with hosting the program. The goal is to offer the Citizens Academy twice a year, with sessions in the spring and fall.

Councilmember Padova inquired about other communities implementing similar programs, and Mayor Jadwin mentioned Westerville as a specific example, noting that many municipalities, both in central Ohio and across the state, have embraced the Citizens Academy concept.

6. Chairman Schnetzer referred to page 62, noting the 2023 recap mentioning the use of a grant consultant. He inquired about expectations to bring this in-house in 2024 and the associated funding.

Senior Director Vollmer provided information, stating that, as discussed in previous staffing reports, there are plans to internalize some of the grant-related functions and compliance. This involves requesting a management analyst position within the Department of Administrative Services to handle these responsibilities.

Human Resources

7. Chairman Schnetzer asked about the proposed salary and benefit projection, specifically in relation to anticipated increases in employer contributions to the OPF pension fund due to House Bill 296. He noted the earlier discussion and inquired if there was any additional context to add. Senior Director Vollmer responded succinctly, stating, "No."

8. Chairman Schnetzer raised a question regarding the staffing numbers in the 2024 budget request compared to the 2023 appropriated figures.

Director Bury clarified the process, explaining that the staffing plan is initially established in August or September of the prior year, and adjustments are made throughout the year based on various factors, including vacancies, changing needs, and the evolving operational landscape.

President Renner sought clarification on the current appropriated staffing numbers. Director Bury explained that the numbers captured on page 12 of the 2024 budget accurately represent the staffing situation, accounting for changes made during the course of 2023. She highlighted that adjustments were made during 2023 due to factors such as vacancies and increased seasonal hiring, particularly in the Parks and Recreation department.

Chairman Schnetzer sought confirmation that the figures of 205 full-time and 212 part-time on page 12 accurately reflected the current staffing snapshot for 2023. Director Bury confirmed that this was correct.

Councilmember Bowers inquired about the relationship between existing vacancies in departments and the requested new positions. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that, as of the current moment, there were few vacancies due to low turnover. She specified that most of the new hires in the current year were for positions added to the budget in 2023. The remaining vacancies were primarily in the police and communications departments, with active hiring processes in progress. This clarified that there wasn't significant overlap between existing vacancies and the newly requested positions.

9. Chairman Schnetzer addressed the question regarding the 2024 contribution to employee Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), clarifying that this

contribution is not subject to collective bargaining agreements.

Senior Director Vollmer informed the Council that the city has budgeted \$2,000 for employees on a single plan and \$4,000 for those on a non-single plan, maintaining consistency with the contributions in 2023. This approach has remained unchanged since the transition from a PPO plan to a high-deductible health plan.

Councilmember Bowers sought clarification on the consistency with the previous year, and Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that the contribution structure aligns with the practices established in 2023.

10. Chairman Schnetzer addressed the question regarding the \$133,000 refund from the Central Ohio Healthcare Consortium (COHCC) and sought information on how this amount is being allocated for employee benefits.

Senior Director Vollmer clarified that approximately \$250,000 from the HR budget has been designated for employee wellness, safety, and relations. The funds will be utilized to support various programs and initiatives, including the gym, replacement of gym equipment, activities organized by the wellness committee, and expenses related to the OSU urgent care agreement. The refund will contribute to financing these employee-centric initiatives.

11. Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the factors contributing to the \$137,000 increase in HR revenue, specifically questioning if this change was linked to the Central Ohio Healthcare Consortium (COHCC).

Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that the additional revenue is indeed associated with COHCC. She elaborated that the remaining portion of the revenue stems from reimbursements for professional development by various teams. For instance, the economic development team receives reimbursements through MODE, and the HR team receives reimbursements through OPELRA. These reimbursements effectively offset the costs incurred for professional development initiatives.

Public Service

12. Chairman Schnetzer directed attention to the Public Service special revenue fund, noting a substantial year-over-year increase of approximately 65% in planned expenditures. He requested a discussion on the key drivers behind this expenditure growth and clarification on whether these expenses constitute one-time costs or signify the establishment of a new expense baseline.

In response, Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering, explained that the increased expenditures are related to specific one-time expenses. These include updates to part nine of the streets and utilities section of the code, aligning with Planning and Zoning efforts in part 11, specifically the Thoroughfare Plan update. This plan is scheduled for revision every 10 years

and review every 5 years. The last review occurred in 2019. Additionally, Komlanc mentioned an FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) sign inventory for retro-reflectivity of regulatory roadway signs. These initiatives collectively contribute to the planned expenditure growth for the Public Service special revenue fund.

13. Chairman Schnetzer directed the discussion to the street tree fund, noting the availability of funds on page 24 but the absence of expenditures. He referred to page 170, which detailed expected expenditures for the program, and sought clarification on planned activities in 2024 and the funding source for these expenditures.

Director Bury clarified that the street tree fund is distinct from the general fund. On page 170, the expenditures were from the general fund, which had a new division called the street tree division within the Parks & Rec Department.

Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks & Recreation, provided insights into planned activities. The focus in 2024 would be on planned removals to establish a foundation for a comprehensive street tree program. This approach aimed to ensure the health of the existing canopy before moving on to new plantings.

Chairman Schnetzer sought confirmation that the planned removals would be funded from the general fund, and Director Bury confirmed this.

Councilmember Bowers inquired about the timeline for replanting trees after removal, recognizing it as an operational question. She expressed awareness of resident inquiries and sought clarification.

Director Ferrell responded, stating that the replanting timeline was contingent on additional funding. While there had been a prior opportunity to assess replanting during a large removal due to the emerald ash borer, she acknowledged the need for funding to expedite the process. The goal was to move more quickly than initially planned, with a planting cycle anticipated within 2025, facilitated by code reviews, updates in 2024, and planned removals.

Parks & Recreation

14. Chairman Schnetzer shifted the discussion to Parks and Recreation, specifically addressing the planned expenditures in the Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund, which reflected a roughly 25% year-over-year increase. He requested an explanation of the key drivers behind this growth and clarification on whether these expenditures represented one-time costs or a new baseline expense anticipated to recur.

Director Ferrell responded, identifying programming as the main driver for the expenditure growth. She mentioned the completion of a full program cycle in 2023, which included seasonal employment. Additionally, the Parks

Master Plan highlighted expanded services deemed crucial by the community. The increased demand led to a need for additional staffing and contractual programming. Director Ferrell also highlighted significant cost increases in materials and supplies, such as a notable rise in the price of chlorine. She emphasized that both revenue and expenditures increased in tandem based on the enhanced programming levels.

Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the recapture rate, acknowledging its significance as a critical metric within the department, to which Director Ferrell affirmed, referring to it as the cost recovery rate.

Dept. of Law

15. Chairman Schnetzer directed the discussion to page 55, focusing on the Department of Law Contract Services. He noted an expected decrease of approximately \$46,000 in 2024 compared to the 2023 appropriated amount. The Chairman inquired about the total expenditures on outside counsel for 2023 and sought clarification on the factors driving the anticipated decrease in the following year. Additionally, he asked about coordination with the incoming City attorney to ensure alignment with the department's needs.

Director Bury responded, explaining that the projected decrease in 2024 was primarily due to a settlement agreement with a former employee in 2023, which was not anticipated to recur in the next fiscal year.

City Attorney Mularski added that the Contract Services budget had been consistently underutilized over the past three years. He mentioned that, at the end of the previous year, there was a surplus of \$40,000, and the current year had about \$101,000 remaining, which would be rolled over. Mularski expressed confidence in the budget's adequacy, highlighting a successful track record with minimal legal challenges.

Councilmember Bowers sought clarification on whether there had been coordination with the incoming City attorney to align the budget with anticipated department needs.

City Attorney Mularski responded that there had been no outreach or coordination with him regarding the budget. He explained that when he initially assumed the role, he had limited input into the budget, and as of the current time, no discussions had taken place concerning the budget's alignment with department needs.

Dept. of Planning

16. Chairman Schnetzer turned the discussion to the Department of Planning, specifically referencing page 103. He addressed the need to refresh the land use plan, a topic previously mentioned in workshops and other forums. The Chairman inquired about the possibility of including this in funding requests for other plans.

Director of Planning, Michael Blackford, responded that it might be premature to consider a land use plan update at this point. He emphasized the interconnectedness of the land use plan and zoning code. Blackford suggested focusing on getting the zoning code adopted and implemented first, which would take a few years to observe development patterns and identify areas for improvement. He proposed revisiting the idea of a land use plan refresh in approximately five years, viewing it as more of a refresh than a complete overhaul.

Dept. of Economic Development

17. Chairman Schnetzer directed attention to the Department of Economic Development, referencing page 86. The question raised concerned the factors driving the \$95,000 increase in contract services. Additionally, the Chairman requested a breakdown of the Contract Services requests. He sought insights into how the requested budget aligns with the identified priorities and addresses the challenges faced by the department.

Mayor Jadwin responded in Director Hamons' absence, explaining that the budget increase was allocated for the economic development strategy, as previously identified in budget presentations. The Mayor highlighted the priorities of the department, emphasizing the implementation of a refreshed economic development strategy, pursuit of development opportunities, and collaboration with the school district. She noted that funds were allocated for outside counsel to guide negotiations on economic development matters, particularly the school compensation agreement.

Councilmember Bowers expressed interest in learning more about the Workforce Development programs proposed by Director Hamons.

Mayor Jadwin provided an overview, mentioning that Workforce Development programs involve building stronger relationships with the school district. The goal is to create a bridge between the business community and the school district, facilitating the development of a pipeline for future workers. Further details on the Workforce Development programs were deferred to Director Hamons, who was expected to provide additional insights upon his return next week.

ARPA Funds

18. Chairman Schnetzer shifted the discussion to the section concerning ARPA funds, directing attention to pages 24 and 128. The specific inquiry was about identifying other costs or budget items that ARP dollars could potentially be allocated for, with the aim of offsetting the use of the general fund, proprietary funds, or any special revenue funds.

Director Bury responded, stating that the remaining ARP funds, amounting to \$550,000, were designated for the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and grants. She clarified that these funds were the last portion of the ARP allocation, and all other funds had already been committed or obligated.

Chairman Schnetzer sought clarification on whether there were any additional permitted uses for the ARP funds beyond those already mentioned.

Director Bury elaborated, explaining that for non-entitled units of government like Gahanna, the funds could be utilized for any governmental purpose, as per the revised guidance. However, she emphasized that the CAD project was already underway, representing the second year of funding. If not allocated from the ARP funds, the financing for this project would need to be sourced from another fund.

Opioid Settlement Fund

19. Chairman Schnetzer moved to the next agenda item, focusing on the opioid settlement fund. Referencing page 24 of the budget book, the inquiry was whether the opioid settlement fund had been earmarked for a specific project or expense. Additionally, he sought details on the total settlement amount received by the city and how these funds were utilized.

Director Bury provided a detailed response, stating that none of the opioid settlement funds had been utilized yet. She specified that the \$6,258 reflected the 2022 amounts received, and an additional \$28,070 was received in 2023. These funds are intended for specific purposes, including evidence-based substance use prevention, treatment services, and supporting recovery. The city was still in the process of deciding the best direction for utilizing these funds, with discussions ongoing between Public Safety and the City Attorney.

Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the structure of the opioid settlement fund, comparing it to the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, and whether it was expected to continue indefinitely.

Director Bury acknowledged the similarity to the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and confirmed that the opioid settlement fund would persist. City Attorney Mularski added that while there was a specific pot of money, he did not have information on the exact end date. Director Bury mentioned she would look into and provide the end date for the fund.

Chairman Schnetzer sought clarification, asking if the fund distribution would continue in perpetuity like the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

City Attorney Mularski clarified that the opioid settlement fund was a one-time settlement for a set sum of money and would not continue indefinitely.

Capital Improvement Plan

20. Chairman Schnetzer directed the discussion to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), focusing on references to page 113. The first question pertained

to how the table on page 113 aligned with the approved CIP, specifically the line item for land acquisition. Additionally, there was a question about whether this allocation was intended for land acquisition or the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC).

Director Bury clarified that the allocation of \$200,000 was intended for the Land Bank Program. However, depending on Council's decision regarding the CIC agreement, it could be used for additional items associated with land purchases.

Senior Director Schultz provided a note, mentioning that the initial request in the CIP was for \$200,000, but they would amend the CIP to reflect the additional \$300,000.

Vice President Weaver expressed some confusion, stating that his notes from the CIC meeting indicated a request for \$300,000.

Mayor Jadwin acknowledged the discrepancy, noting that the initial plan was indeed to present a request for \$300,000. However, considering the real estate market conditions and the primary purpose of the CIC for land acquisition, they recognized that acquiring property for \$200,000 or \$300,000 might not be feasible. Consequently, the budget amount was increased to \$500,000. Mayor Jadwin suggested amending the CIP to reflect this adjustment, and she sought direction from Director Schultz on the process for amendment.

21. Chairman Schnetzer addressed concerns regarding the feasibility of pausing the requested appropriation for the action sports park to explore partnering with the Gahanna Parks and Rec Foundation for the capital campaign, grants, or private support.

Director Ferrell explained that, while they had seen significant interest and support for the project, they needed to establish the project parameters first. The funding requested would assist in gathering public input, studying the preferred location, and providing cost estimates, making the project eligible for additional grant funding. She noted that partnerships with organizations like the Parks and Recreation Foundation could still be pursued.

Councilmember Bowers expressed support for the project but questioned the requested appropriation of \$660,000. She recalled that this amount was roughly half of the anticipated project value discussed during CIP meetings.

Director Ferrell clarified that the estimate included the removal of the existing skate park, and the cost would be refined throughout 2024 as the project details were established. Senior Director Schultz added that any remaining funds after the planning phase would be adjusted based on the actual costs.

Councilmember Bowers requested a more tailored estimate for the 2024 phase, considering overall spending trends. Director Ferrell acknowledged the preference.

22. Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the Link to Literacy Trail's eligibility for grant funding and its consideration in the requested funds of \$710,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund and \$500,000 from the Permanent Improvement Fund.

Director Ferrell confirmed that the Link to Literacy Trail was eligible for grant funding, and they had applied for the Clean Ohio Grant Trail funding, expecting a decision by year-end. She clarified that the \$500,000 referenced was the maximum award from the Clean Ohio Trail funding, and the \$710,000 estimation covered the full project cost.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification, confirming if the \$710,000 was the estimated cost, and the \$500,000 was the potential grant amount. Director Ferrell clarified that the full cost was \$1.2 million, and if awarded the grant, the \$500,000 would be covered by alternative funding.

Chairman Schnetzer expressed the public might see that \$1.2 million and have concerns about the perceived high cost, especially considering the trail's relatively small section. He asked if more elaboration could be made as to what was involved.

Director Ferrell explained that the project involved two waterway crossings, contributing to the increased funding. She noted that constructing trails, even without bridges, was expensive, and each mile of trail could cost around \$1.5 million.

Chairman Schnetzer acknowledged the community's strong desire for more walkability and trails, emphasizing the associated costs and expressing gratitude for the efforts to fulfill this community need.

23. Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the placement and duration of the interactive speed warning indicators mentioned on page 113.

Chief Spence outlined the plan, emphasizing tight parameters for deployment. The indicators, equipped with radar and electronic flashing capabilities, were proposed for locations challenging for effective speed control, such as Clark State Road, Hines Road, and the approach of Route 62 from the north.

Vice President Weaver sought clarification, initially assuming the discussion involved temporary trailer-mounted signs. Chief Spence affirmed that these were permanent fixtures similar to those used in other communities, citing New Albany as an example.

Chairman Schnetzer sought confirmation if this initiative was a multi-year program. Chief Spence explained that, for now, the plan focused on addressing specific locations with strict deployment criteria, including potential sites like West Johnstown Road. He outlined the challenges of placement, including the difficulty of installing signs on the approach of

Route 62. The discussion concluded with Chief Spence providing insights into the proposed fixed signs and their intended role in targeted speed mitigation efforts at specific roadways.

24. Chairman Schnetzer raised a question regarding the Hannah to Headley Connector Trail, as listed on page 113 of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He inquired whether the initial request for \$150,000 was contingent on an expected eligible grant award that could potentially expedite the project timeline.

Director Ferrell explained that the Manor Home TIF's boundaries encompass Headley and Hannah Parks, facilitating progress on the project. Chairman Schnetzer acknowledged the positive impact of property reappraisals on such developments.

Inquiring further, Chairman Schnetzer sought details about the trail's anticipated characteristics, questioning if it involved an underground component due to its significant budget allocation.

Director Ferrell clarified that the project aimed to connect Hannah to Headley Park, despite their close proximity, with complexities arising from traversing challenging terrain. The allocated funds were intended to identify the safest route for this connector trail, emphasizing the importance of careful planning in achieving the project's goals.

25. Chairman Schnetzer noted the final question, referencing page 114, seeking details on the areas planned to be addressed with the approximately \$900,000 allocated for stormwater system maintenance in 2024.

Director Komlanc responded that specific projects were in the identification process. The city had enlisted a consultant to integrate historical drainage data, create heat maps, and map tributary boundaries. This comprehensive approach allowed for hydraulic assessments, guiding the selection of target areas. The maintenance work would involve cleaning, televising, and, if necessary, lining and point repair, with condition assessments conducted on storm infrastructure.

Chairman Schnetzer acknowledged the ongoing need for stormwater maintenance, emphasizing the recurring awareness each spring of the substantial investment required for the city's stormwater system upkeep.

Additional Budget Deliberations

Chairman Schnetzer addressed the conclusion of the prepared questions and proposed the upcoming committee meetings on the 11th and the budget vote on the 18th. He sought input on the need for additional meetings to finalize the budget.

Senior Director Vollmer requested any changes or additions to the budget to be submitted by the end of the meeting on the 11th, allowing time for Director Bury and her team to ensure accuracy for the amended budget

presentation on the 18th.

President Renner expressed his struggle to articulate his concerns regarding the budget. He emphasized his experience in public administration, particularly managing a department with a budget of approximately \$20 million. He highlighted the challenges of staffing and expressed reservations about the current budget request of \$1.4 million, especially in light of the projected operational revenue falling below expenses in the out years. President Renner acknowledged the need for increased wages and salaries and the expansion of the organization in response to calls but expressed concerns about specific budgetary allocations. He indicated his support for public safety, fleet, and maintenance worker requests, but expressed difficulties understanding the remaining requests. President Renner pledged to ask more pointed questions, seeking clarity on various aspects of the budget, and stressed that he was having difficulties understanding the overall picture.

Chairman Schnetzer expressed reservations about the year-over-year increase in the budget, particularly in terms of new staffing rather than cost-of-living adjustments. He highlighted the importance of managing expenses, considering past challenges faced by the city in allocating funds for essential services and staffing adjustments. Referencing the promises made during the passage of previous tax issues, Chairman Schnetzer emphasized the need for new revenue to be resident-facing, focusing on capital improvements, public safety, public service, and parks and recreation. He suggested a careful balance between approving necessary positions and managing administrative overhead.

Mayor Jadwin responded, acknowledging the concerns raised by Chairman Schnetzer. She proposed a detailed conversation around staffing in an executive session, providing a more candid discussion on specific requests and considerations. Mayor Jadwin suggested that if the council decides on a reduction, they should specify a dollar amount, and the administration would determine the best way to achieve that reduction while meeting the city's needs.

Senior Director Vollmer supported the idea of an executive session for more detailed staffing discussions, emphasizing the importance of respecting the laws governing open meetings and public records.

Mayor Jadwin shared insights into the extensive budget preparation process, highlighting the rigorous discussions and considerations that occur among the administrative team before presenting the budget to the council. She emphasized the importance of understanding each requested position's role, anticipating their contributions to various programs.

Chairman Schnetzer sought guidance from City Attorney Mularski regarding the appropriateness of discussing positions covered by collective bargaining agreements in executive session. City Attorney Mularski initially expressed the potential appropriateness but indicated the need for further clarification.

Councilmember Bowers expressed openness to scheduling a special meeting for executive session discussions if advised by the City Attorney. She also suggested considering interim reductions in operations without significantly impacting residents.

Chairman Schnetzer suggested tentatively scheduling an executive session for the following Monday after the Committee of the Whole meeting. President Renner clarified the need for a special session due to board and commission interviews, and Councilmember McGregor proposed starting the executive session at 6 PM, potentially suspending the meeting, if needed, and then coming back into session.

The council tentatively agreed to start the executive session at 6 PM on Monday, awaiting further confirmation for the special session.

Chairman Schnetzer addressed the Finance Committee, outlining the upcoming proceedings. He suggested that the committee would engage in a free-flowing conversation based on the discussions that had taken place. Acknowledging the need for further questions, Chairman Schnetzer reminded members of the existing process, which involved submitting questions to him by Thursday at 5:00 pm for discussion in the finance meeting the following Monday.

Considering the limited time for potential adjustments, Chairman Schnetzer raised the question of whether the committee felt that the proposed timeline was sufficient. He sought input on whether an earlier meeting might be necessary to allow for a thorough review and discussion of the budget. In expressing his stance, Chairman Schnetzer mentioned that he personally had no additional questions regarding the budget and was eager to move into the decision-making phase, emphasizing the importance of evaluating and potentially adjusting aspects of the budget.

Vice President Weaver proposed a structured approach for the submission of specific items or concerns regarding the budget, suggesting that these could be communicated in the form of bullet points or with a dollar figure attached.

Chairman Schnetzer sought clarification from Mayor Jadwin regarding the preferred method of communication-whether through bullet points highlighting individual staffing items or a more comprehensive dollar figure approach.

Mayor Jadwin and Senior Director Vollmer expressed a preference for the dollar figure approach, emphasizing its utility in understanding the overall impact on existing staffing levels and associated initiatives. Mayor Jadwin highlighted the importance of justifying each ask and ensuring responsiveness to council concerns.

The discussion then shifted to the need for a more detailed breakdown of initiatives tied to specific staffing positions. Chairman Schnetzer suggested

categorizing positions as 'mandatory,' 'need to have,' and 'want to have.' Senior Director Vollmer clarified that some positions were directly linked to initiatives in the budget and prioritizing them would be beneficial. Councilmember Bowers expressed she had concerns about this.

Chairman Schnetzer cited the example of a building inspector position, emphasizing its critical nature and the need for succession planning. Senior Director Vollmer provided insights into the specific position and others tied to upcoming retirements.

President Renner clarified that there were no positions in the 'like to have' category, focusing on needs and wants. Mayor Jadwin highlighted the absence of any positions in the 'like' category and categorized positions as either 'need to have' or 'want to have.'

Chairman Schnetzer proposed a deliverable for Monday, seeking a prioritized list of positions with an emphasis on the General Fund (GF). Senior Director Vollmer sought clarification on whether this would include only GF positions, as some were tied to proprietary funds.

President Renner affirmed that the primary focus was on General Fund positions, acknowledging the criticality of Public Safety positions. The conversation concluded with a tentative plan for the Finance Committee's next steps, including an executive session, prioritizing GF positions, and potential additional questions to be submitted by Council. The plan was to reconvene for a special meeting, then Committee of the Whole and Finance meeting next Monday.

Recommendation: Further Discussion scheduled for Finance Committee 12/11/2023; Second Reading/Adoption with final public hearing scheduled on Regular Agenda on 12/18/2023.

C. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Finance Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

*APPROVED by the Finance Committee, this
day of 2023.*

Michael Schnetzer

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council