



City Council Work Session Agenda **MINUTES**

November 16th, 2023

6:30 pm

1. Trenton Police Memorandum
2. Planning and Zoning Administrator, Bill Jones
 - a. Discuss Motion
 - i. Regarding BZA appointments
 1. Two people have resigned from the BZA board, two people have stepped up to join the BZA board. Tim Johnson is the owner and operator of four eights component. William Steele is retired and would be honored to serve on the board.
 2. If anyone is interested in serving on the planning commission to email Bill Jones.
3. Service Director, Rob Leichman
 - a. Discuss Motion
 - i. Regarding authorizing the city manager to enter into an agreement with the lowest and/ or best bidder for the installation of a pedestrian crosswalk. Located at the intersection of Clara Drive and West State Street.
 1. Several residents have approached in regards on ways to get across State Street. There isn't a crosswalk on State Street unless someone approaches Wayne Madison, or the city building. This crosswalk would make it more accessible for citizens to walk across the street, which will have two lights and two solar powered lights to light up the intersection.
4. Finance Director, Matthew Mesisklis
 - a. Discuss Correspondence
 - i. Regarding October Financial Snapshot.
 1. Discussed October Financial Snapshot, discussed \$3,000,000 transfer from the general improvement fund and the ban payoffs for the industrial park which will be coming in the November snapshot.
 - ii. Regarding Budget Memo.
 1. See attached Memorandum below.



- b. Discuss Ordinances
 - i. Regarding amending section 894.01, imposition, and rate of tax; motor vehicle defined.
 - 1. Matthew discussed that this legislation would be a \$5.00 license fee that if passed before July of 2024 would be collected during 2025. Expected revenue would be \$68,000 and would be offset if council chooses to have the city pay for ADA ramps and curbs. The \$5.00 fee would only go directly to the street fund.
 - ii. Regarding adopting new chapter 892 of title four of the code of ordinances of the city of Trenton regarding municipal income taxes for taxable years beginning January 1st, 2023.
 - 1. Matthew discussed that this legislation is a new tax chapter that was recommended by OML, due to changes to municipal tax deduction, from the Ohio State House in the very high level. The changes may or may not affect municipalities. Matthew and the tax commissioner recommendation is to go with the state level. In high level there is a reduction of the annual \$150 late filing penalty to \$25 per year. The requirement of the tax administrator to waive the first year of someone not filing, which is the current city practice.
 - iii. Regarding to make annualized appropriations for current operating expenses and other expenditures of the city of Trenton, State of Ohio, during a period beginning January 1st, 2024, and ending December 31st, 2024.
- 5. City Attorney, Nicholas Ziepfel
 - a. Discuss Ordinance
 - i. Emergency Ordinance Regarding Electric Aggregation Program.
 - ii. Emergency Ordinance Regarding Electric Aggregation Program.
 - 1. Discussed that this legislation would be on the upcoming March 2024, ballot.
- 6. City Manager, Marcos Nichols
 - a. Discuss Ordinance
 - i. Regarding amending section 660.05, duty to keep sidewalks in repair and clean of the code of ordinances of the city of Trenton.
 - 1. Discussed amending the language to section 660.05, duty to keep sidewalks in repair which excludes ADA crosswalks.



- b. Executive Session Request (**see regular council meeting minutes**)
 - i. To consider confidential information related to marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets, or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance and to confer with legal counsel.
 - ii. To consider employment or compensation of a public employee or official.

***Agenda is subject to change**

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF TRENTON

TO: Mayor Calvin Woodrey
City Council
Marcos Nichols, City Manager
Directors and Chiefs

FROM: Matthew L. Mesisklis, Finance Director

DATE: November 16, 2023

SUBJECT: 2024 City Budget

Mayor and Members of Council,

It is my honor to present the City of Trenton 2024 Budget. In format, the Operating Budget has not changed – City Council appropriates money by fund and spending category, which is then tracked and handled by City personnel on a more detailed line-item basis. In strategy, the 2024 Budget continues the Finance Department’s commitment to decreasing city debt while simultaneously pooling funds toward substantial capital and infrastructure improvements without raising taxes or utility rates on Trenton residents. Also included in this budget are earmarks for improvements from the Parks Master Plan that have been noted as priorities from the Trenton Parks Board.

Staffing: The City of Trenton created several much-needed positions in 2023 that continue to support operations. Our Planning and Zoning Assistant has taken over in-house code enforcement and has addressed blighted properties all over the City. Our Public Works Admin Assistant has assisted that department in various projects, including a facilities and needs assessment to address some aging buildings and develop a plan for future facilities. The new full-time Clerk of Council has been digitizing old documents and massively reducing the space required for physical document storage. Our Tax and Finance clerk continues to work hard addressing the back tax issues affecting many residents and businesses. She also joined our Tax Administrator at Madison High School giving a presentation on the why’s and how-to’s of municipal income tax filing. The 2024 budget still includes some unfilled positions, such as a licensed utility operator, a part-time tax clerk, and seasonal mowing positions to upkeep the parks in our busy summer months.

Fire Department staffing has also been a topic of concern this year. Although no levy was placed on the November ballot, Council has stated that public health and safety are a priority,

and have included in this budget, and guidance for future budgets, a \$300,000 annual transfer to the existing fire levy to fund 5 part-time firefighters around the clock, as well as competitive raises to attract new talent to serve Trenton.

Debt Policy: 13 months ago, The City had \$7,354,000 in short term debt. Historically low interest rates made issuing debt a reasonable course of action for economic development projects. Short term interest rates have increased 1,078% since those BANs were issued. Using the General Fund balance, all such debts have been paid in full, paving the way for continued infrastructure and facilities improvements to be sought with internal funding or more stable long-term debt.

Fund Balance Policy and Street Paving: The City's largest-ever street resurfacing project has drained the reserve once held in that fund to the tune of \$1,030,000. Routine street paving will continue annually, with 2024's budget set at \$290,000.

Rate Increases: I am pleased to report that although inflationary pressures continue to increase the costs associated with the City's water and sewer systems, Trenton's water rate and sewer rates for all users below 20,000 gallons per month will not see an increase. For reference, a typical family of 4 averages 7,000 gallons/month. Water and Sewer rates above 20,000 gallons will be increased by 3.2%. The City's Stormwater fee sheet was set by the city in 2016, and will increase from \$3.40 to \$3.50 per month per dwelling unit. The streetlight assessment is unchanged.

New Projects: The Parks Master Plan will be pursued, along with the design of a proposed Veterans Memorial. These expenses are applicable to the City's Tax Increment Equivalent fund, and budgeted at \$2,000,000. Those monies have been in City custody from the building out of new subdivisions as well as development of the Industrial Park. The City is also undergoing a Facilities and Needs Assessment to modernize and streamline city buildings. Once completed, a design-build firm will be sought to address the needs described and to design a new Civic Hall prepared to host city services and provide for staff and public safety needs for decades to come. Some funding for this project will come from the newly-enhanced Capital Improvement Fund, but long-term debt may also be necessary, depending on the final price tag.

Development of a new 5th water well station is also being pursued, with total buildout costs budgeted at \$1m. Also included in the budget is \$10,500,000 for development of a 1.5 million gallon elevated storage tank, design for which we have already received an interest-free loan from the OWDA. An application for an OWDA loan for tower construction will be sought when the design phase concludes. Police Operations continue to modernize with the joining of Lexipol to provide standardized comprehensive training manuals and operations structure and continued support of FLOC camera systems which have been instrumental in solving various crimes, including armed robberies in both Trenton and Sharonville, various warrant arrests, stolen vehicle investigations, and assistance in a mental health emergency. 2024 operations will

see a targeted reorganization of the property room, and potential inclusion of PD facilities in the newly-designed civic hall.

In totality, the 2024 budget capitalizes upon the city's decreased reliance on debt and provides for a simpler capital improvement plan to build the facilities that Trenton needs to grow and achieve its 2050 Strategic Plan. 2023 has seen tremendous modernization of city practices in the form of new technology and training support for the Police, a digitized record management system for building permits, Mayor's Court, and the Tax department, improved efficiency of building usage, water system upgrades, a large city paving budget, and plans to tackle the Parks Master Plan. I would like to thank all city staff and council committee members that have contributed to ensure this budget is a policy document geared toward achieving Trenton's Strategic Pillars of fostering Connected Community, improving Economic Vitality, managing Public Safety, and building Strong and Secure Neighborhoods.

Regards,

Matthew Mesisklis – Finance Director