

**BUDGET HEARINGS FOR 2019**

March 14, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Vincent called the 2019 Budget Hearing meeting to order for March 14, 2019 and welcomed the special guests.

Council Members present: Sandy Gentry, Connie Norman, Jan Bradshaw, Ann Gildow, Joey Osborn; J. Rob Sharrer, Steven Foreman, Mark Baker and President Daniel Vincent.

Others in attendance were Mayor Jeff Tilton; Keane Toney, Public Safety Director; Rhonda Heskett, Budget and Finance Director; the presenters: Fire Chief Jeff Bell; Craig Stemm, City Maintenance; Tim Smith, Code Enforcement and Chief Building Official; and Susan Culbertson, Clerk of Council.

Council President Daniel Vincent opened the Budget Hearings for 2019. This is the budget for 2019 which we passed on February 25, 2019. At that time we still wanted to go with the Budget Hearings to hear the information that I value and probably all of Council values. This gives us a chance to hear from different department directors and chiefs to hear what is going on in their departments. It is good to hear directly from them and is a good time for learning. Yes, we do look at the figures. In my history on Council for 18 years I have only known of one time where we changed the budget. It had to do with the Fire Department one year when overtime was out of control and Council made a big change. That is the only time I know we have made any significant changes, but not to say we couldn't. As Rhonda (Heskett) explained before, if there are things we feel strongly about and want to change; we can do that at a later date. Not to say if we change something money wise the Administration or the City will spend that money in that area, but we do have that opportunity to make changes. With that, Rhonda, do you have anything to say before we get started? I know you have done a great job explaining a lot of things and we have heard a lot of this in different parts.

Ms. Heskett: I will just be here and be happy to answer any questions that might come up if anybody has any, but I didn't really prepare anything.

Mr. Vincent: We appreciate your being here. I know it is pretty complex and you sure do a nice job as far as answering the questions we have. It is rare that we stump you. If we do, it is only briefly and it comes to you and you get our answer before we leave. That is impressive.

Ms. Heskett: I appreciate that.

Mr. Vincent: Thank you. We will turn this over to the Fire Chief.

Fire Chief Jeff Bell: I would like to thank everybody. This is my first budget hearing. I would like to thank everybody for inviting me down. I get to talk a little bit about the department and answer any questions you might have. I would like to start out with thank you. I would like to thank Rhonda for the assistance on the budget, Billy Rosser and the staff at Vehicle Maintenance as they save us a lot of money on maintenance of the vehicles, Building Maintenance and Craig Stemm for all the help on projects and overseeing our in-house work.

The same thing goes for the Water Department, Tony Coury (Police Chief) and the PD (Police Department), Jeff Shook in Streets. They have been wonderful to work with. They have helped us with hydrants and closing down streets.

We are working with the PD to get with their SRT (Special Response Team) and adding SRT Medics to it. We are in the early stages of it, but we have actually been working with them for the past year. We are getting them the certifications they can obtain, so lord forbid if anything happens that we have a mass casualty event, we are going to have people trained and ready to work with the SRT team.

The savings provided by the other departments working with us leaves us money for the tools and training that we need to serve the citizens.

If you look at our budget, of course our largest expenditure is also our most valuable, our personnel; so that is going to be our salaries and wages. Because of our Civil Service Office and because of our interview process and the process we go through to hire our employees; we are getting the best of the best and we are able to retain them. They want to stay with us. Retaining employees is kind of hard to do in this day and age. When you talk about keeping paramedics, keeping firefighters, and stuff; it is a destination where people want to test and they want to come and they want to stay. It is giving us the quality of candidates and the quality of employees that the City wants and the City is going to need.

A little information from last year is in our budget. We spent some on tools and training as we need to keep up on our skills, getting the tools, and equipment to do our jobs. In 2018 we did both of our turn-out rooms at 2 and 3 stations. That helps with the carcinogens. With healthcare costs going up and cancer being something the fire service is looking at trying to limit the exposure to those carcinogens. Those turnout rooms are a big step toward that. Our extractor we got last year is to clean the gear and is a big step toward that benefit and keeping those costs down.

The Street Department was able to help us. We bought the materials and they paved the parking lot down at Central Station. We were able to do that last year. The mattresses that we replaced enabled us to have new mattresses in all the stations. We had the old ones since about 2004. The guys are very appreciative. Again that goes with retaining employees because they feel they are cared about, so we get to keep them.

Station 2 (Eppley Station) lighting project-we were able to get the lights on the apparatus floor with Craig's help and our guys doing a lot of the work. We are going to start looking at Station 3 as a lighting project. Craig and I have been talking about that. When the time comes with AEP we want to make sure we get the best deal that we can as far as being reimbursed for everything. So, when we do it we are going to do it as one big job so we get our total reimbursement if we go LED up there. We are still looking to make sure that is the best use of our funds for the year.

Last year we redid the downstairs bathrooms at Station 3. Our firefighters did the tiling, the re-plumbing, and the beginning of this year we started on the upstairs one. We are re-painting

stuff, we removed some of the stuff we didn't need, and we have put in new tile. New doors on everything are being worked on now. The guys have been stripping and spraying doors. We have new locks ordered for all the stations for security. There are new latches for inside and outside.

Some of the other things we are working on this year. If you get down by Central Station this week they are putting the garage doors in. They have been getting one door a day. The lowest bid was a local business so we feel good about that too. They are putting our garage doors up. They have three of the front ones done so they have one more in the front and next week they will start on the rear ones.

We got our two Toughbooks (laptop computers) ordered. I just gave Lisa the P.O. for that and we will get new Toughbooks in all of our frontline vehicles. The reason that was important was we had started out with Surface Pros that really didn't hold up to the kind of job that we do. They were separating and they were not made to be turned on all the time, the rough environment that we have, and the way we use them. We went with the Toughbooks and paid a little more, but we are not going to have to replace them near as often as we did with the Surface Pros. The Surface Pros are still being used, but we are going to give them to our other departments so when we are doing inspections or other things we can use them even for education. We are still getting use out of them, but on the trucks they weren't really durable for what we needed.

We are looking this year at replacing the 1998 pickup down at 2 Station. We have that in our budget. We are looking to replace windows at Central Station. We are discussing the parking lot at Station 3. It is a big area and we would like to at least do the Leonard Street side where the truck pulls out. It is a lot of area and we haven't decided what we are going to do with it. We don't want to pave the backside of the lot until we find out what we want to do with it. We might want to put up an additional building for equipment or how we are going to use it. We have been talking with the City Administration on this.

We also need equipment, hose, and nozzles. Our big expenditure this year is the MARCS radios. Our communication is usually where we find our problems or things fall short. These MARCS Radios help us on our communication. We have been all over the area and all over the state and we can hear from the southern part of the county to closets inside Genesis. We have clear communication and those will be put into service. We are hoping in the next couple of weeks. Right now our officers have them because all the officers' radios are dual band. They can use the MARCS system or the high band we are using right now so we have the radios out there for the officers and they are using them on high band. It also connects us to all the county departments. It connects us with the PD at just the flip of a switch. Like I said it opens up the whole area. With the MARCS Radios we can hear you anywhere you are: in any room anywhere in the City. It was a big piece out of our budget, but well worth it.

Mr. Vincent asked if that was from the Capital Outlay line item for MARCS Radios.

Ms. Heskett said this year it shows up

Chief Bell said I think we have \$59,000 a year is our budget. It is not in our Capital Outlay.

Ms. Heskett: It is under Equipment Lease. (Fund 270, Fire Operating-pg. 13)

Chief Bell said we are leasing them. We also have our vehicle lease payment and that would be for Engine 3. That is being paid for by the building rent of the Fairview Road property. If you look at that we are getting \$81,900 for it and that more than covers our vehicle lease payment of \$65,500. I believe we have four more years on that and we are still holding a bond. I think we have three more years on our Engine 2. As of right now in all of our meetings starting at the end of last year and through now our needs are being met. Everything in the budget has been approved that we need and Rhonda and the Mayor and I have sat and talked. We will start talking about our long-term ideas. We are already formulating those. There was talk about our niceties depending on how the rest of the year goes. One of the big projects we have right now is kind of exciting for the City was the TR Building. Craig has been in there and they have been renovating it. We have the PUCO office in there, the Safety Director, and we are able to use it for the training. I talked about using it for the Tactical or Mass Casualty. They came in and we used that building for it. Once the detectives move over to there and we have access to their vacated area it is going to open up the rest of the Public Safety Building for some of the projects and stuff that we are looking at. It will change our training room. It will change the way we do our interview room, our investigation bureau that we are developing, and some of the funds we are looking at on our Capital Outlay because actually Rhonda gave us more than we asked for this year. It is a nice thing to know that you can have some extra funds sitting there for when we do those renovations that we need to on those buildings. I think that is all I have. Does anybody have any questions on the budget?

Rob Sharrer: Chief, you built the new turnout rooms and everything; does every station now have an up-to-date turnout room?

Chief Bell: All three stations have an up-to-date turnout room with exhaust fans and everything else. That is, we are encapsulating the gear in there, so when it is off gassing, guys are washing their gear, and they do all of that, but when you come back and you put it away the carcinogens and stuff are off gassing so you keep the room closed. You have an outside vent and it pulls all that air to the outside so it keeps that air fresh. All of our new trucks have a regen on them. Some of the older vehicles and stuff you want to keep the gear away from it because if you start up that pickup just like if you would in your garage the carbon monoxide would form. We start them up and we pull them out. We are trying to keep the gear from being exposed to that also. All three stations do have functioning turnout rooms right now.

Mr. Vincent: Does anyone else have questions? Okay, that was easy.

Chief Bell: That was painless. They are saving it all for you, Craig. Thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

Mrs. Osborn: I have a question before you leave. Is it a boat that needed to be replaced or was that done last year? Is your boat old?

Chief Bell: No, our boat is fairly new. Our new boat, we have I want to say it is less than 5 years old. The boat has been good.

Mrs. Osborn: Okay.

Chief Bell: As far as the age of our vehicles we are in a good spot. Anything that we are thinking of right now is strategic on how do we plan ahead for the replacement. Our oldest front-line vehicle right now is Engine One and we have had some issues with it on maintenance. I think in the ten years that we have had it we have put \$94,000 in it for repairs and that number is muted a little bit because Vehicle Maintenance does most of our stuff on it so they are doing it at a discounted rate. It was also not counting that it was down for two months that we sent it back to Sutphen to get everything redone on it. All of our other vehicles are in good shape and are running well and we are formulating a plan, but we want to be smart about it. We already have a lease, we have a bond, and we have the MARCs radios, I would rather not have another big payment like that right now so we are going to first look at grants. It is kind of hard. Zanesville is in a good spot, but sometimes when it comes to the grants, we are too small to be big and too big to be small. When they are looking at a ten year old vehicle and they are looking at us sometimes they are looking at the department out there that is running a twenty year old vehicle, but they don't know that that vehicle might go out twice a month and we are going out seven or eight times a day. We are looking at other ways to find that money. Times are good right now, but we want to be able to tighten our belt later if we need to and we are working on that.

Mr. Vincent: This \$94,000 on Engine 1 does that kind of fit in on the maintenance and ongoing costs on the fire truck or is it just tired?

Chief Bell: It is very high. When you figure out days lost and stuff like that; it has had a lot of electrical issues. There are a lot of days it is down which means that our old Engine 1, which is now our Engine 8, now has a lot of days where it is pressed into service. We are thinking of that, but that is strategic thinking. We don't want to feel forced into making a quick decision that we would regret later. We are looking at everything. The Mayor had brought up let's look at grants first. Let's be told no first before we start looking at how we are going to finance it.

Mr. Vincent: So, reliability comes into play and later on, when looking at replacing vehicles, whether this company has more issues than other ones.

Mayor Tilton: You can bet we are not going to buy another one of those.

Chief Bell: It is going to figure in.

Keane Toney: It was \$400,000 to purchase and \$94,000 plus to keep it running.

Mr. Vincent: So a real lemon?

Keane Toney: Yes, that would be an appropriate term.

Dan Vincent: Unfortunate. Alright, thank you again.

Chief Bell: Thank you very much.

### **Craig Stemm, City Maintenance Division**

Craig Stemm: As far as the budget goes we are about the same as we were last year. I don't see any issues. It is pretty much the same. I don't think there will be any problems, but if there is then we will come to the Mayor and Rhonda and go from there if we have some unforeseen circumstances.

- Out of the Maintenance there are really three components: Traffic Signals, Building Maintenance, and Street Lighting.
- The budget here is virtually for traffic signals when you get right down to it. A little of building maintenance comes out of it and it is just odd ball stuff from the General Fund just so our guys aren't just sitting around not doing anything. Building Maintenance in reality spends other people's (department's) money
- Street lights are a different line item out of Public Service. It is funded sort of separate.
- Most of what we worked on last year, we started out at the Police Annex in 2017. We spent two or three months there. Most of that came out of the line item from the Police Department. During the summer we pretty much worked on traffic signals and building maintenance stuff. The guys worked on servicing air conditioners and just whatever came along.
- We bought some LED pedestrian stuff last year for Main Street and pretty much changed them over, the pedestrian heads count down heads. We bought some stuff for Sixth Street. The guys started sticking that stuff in today.
- We also bought a new bucket truck last year and put it into service late last summer or fall. It was \$150,000 plus some stuff at maintenance. It is a nice truck. The guys use it every day.
- We did upgrade Blue and McIntire last year by putting a new cabinet in. We rebuilt all the signal heads, we put LED lights in, and we put pedestrian buttons in, and put some cameras in to help make the intersection run a little better.
- I had a few complaints starting out as we had changed some timing. I haven't really had any complaints lately so I think it is working. The cameras seem to be working to help get the buses out. Once the buses are out and the traffic is moving to Blue Avenue and letting it run so we can move traffic through. There is a lot of traffic on that road.

Mr. Vincent: When you say cameras, the cameras are up above?

Craig Stemm: The cameras are up above so instead of loops they are traffic cameras.

Mr. Vincent: So they are loops in the road that sense the metal and changes the magnetic field and triggers the light so the cameras actually spot the vehicle.

Craig Stemm: It does the same thing as a loop. There are three ways of doing it. There are loops, traffic cameras, and radar which is what ODOT is using. It is just starting to come into play. The reason for not putting loops in up there is there is no infrastructure there, so to put a loop out in the road you have to cut the concrete, cut curbs, and it just doesn't work right. These cameras seem to be getting better as we try them. They seem to be working real good there as far as I know. We put another one in down at 719 and Moxahala. I had more complaints down there and I am not sure if it is the location or by the river. It is working and most of the time it does a good job, but every now and then it seems like it holds traffic up especially coming north. We are still learning how to use them too. So that is where we are at on those.

We did put one up at Bell and Bethesda too to help move traffic there. It got zapped by lightening so I have it in for repair. That is the down side to some of those things. It doesn't make any difference. It could be a cabinet or something else, but we will probably buy a spare this year so we are not out of service like we are sometimes. The cost is about \$2,600 each. The cost of putting a loop in if we do it in-house it is cheaper, but if you are paying somebody usually it is \$2,000 plus, but then you have pull boxes and like I say to do it right, you need different infrastructure and we don't have the infrastructure so that is why we are using cameras. It is the same thing, like down at Moxahala and 719 I think I put it in four times down there and I just can't keep them because there are no pull boxes, infrastructure, and no conduit. So really in the long run it is cheaper where the stuff is already there, so sometimes it is cheaper to put a loop in. We may buy a couple more to put up at Maple & Taylor this year. The east side of Taylor the Columbia Gas Company cut our loop out there. On the west side the pavement is in terrible shape so I am not sure we can cut some in. We haven't made it that far yet. We are just working our way out of the annex now. We will get back to traffic signals. That is sort of what we did last year.

Most of the money this year is going to be spent on the traffic signal side. The first part, Pine and Maysville and Maysville and 719 are getting all new traffic signals put in. It is being paid for by the Ohio Rail Commission to get new railroad preemption down there for the railroad tracks. It was assigned to ODOT and they are doing the inspections. We will just be involved in it. We will have some hours in it, but it is really being paid for and done by them.

Mr. Vincent: What does that do? Does it help clear 719 where people could be held up on the railroad tracks?

Mr. Stemm: It is so they can't get on the railroad tracks. It ties the signals into it. It is a big thing for the Rail Commission. They pay for these things. It keeps people off the railroad tracks to keep them from being hit or ran over. When that train comes in it will put that signal in where it will stop it and put it red light so it will not permit any traffic to move. That is at 719. Then at Pine Street and Maysville it will let it move from Pine to Maysville, but it will stop Maysville. Then it is all on the updated standards and new equipment. What we own at Maysville and Pine it is obsolete and needs updated. It has a relay and controller in there from 1989. It has been in there running for 30 years.