



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Council Meeting: Public Works Budget Review

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Natalie Santos

Excused: 1 - Joshua Siegel

Public Works, Solid Waste, Liquid Fuels, Stormwater, Fleet Maintenance

Mr. Mark Shahda thanked Mr. Zucal and stated good evening, Mayor, City Council and members of the public. He stated that he is grateful for being here as the Director of Public Works. While he was involved in the budget process in the past, this year, with the help of his Bureau Managers and support staff, they are presenting his first department budget for Council consideration. He stated that his confirmation hearing was 4 1/2 months ago and thanked them for their support and opportunity to lead this important department. Across the city, he is honored to work with such knowledgeable professionals and tonight he is joined by several of them, his Public Works team leaders. Preparing a zero-based budget was eye opening and the different approach than anybody was used to. It allowed us to reassess all areas of the budget and realign our cost by prioritizing the needs and areas of the department. It further allowed us to reevaluate what is required to provide high quality services to our residents. Overall, the General Fund Budget in the Public Works department has increased a little over \$1.2 million and that is attributed to bringing in Fleet Maintenance Repair in-house, consolidating all utility costs from other departments and Building Maintenance and the implementation to the wayfinding signs and new personnel wages increases for all employees. As you have heard from other Budget Presentations, he is reiterating that the Public Works department will not be able to run efficiently and effectively without our hardworking and dedicated employees. He thanked them for their continue work on behalf of the citizens of Allentown. That is why in order to achieve and improve on the services we provide, we not only recognize our staff, but also realize where we need to increase staff and positions. These changes will allow us to improve the quality of life for our residents by maintaining paved and clean streets, operational traffic signals, and streetlights, stormwater infrastructure, the city's fleet such as firetrucks and

emergency vehicles within the in-house garage. Additionally, they will continue to operate 24/7 during inclement weather to allow for safe travels citywide and provide essential services such as trash and recycling collection. He stated that he can spend hours talking about everything that is happening within Public Works, but wanted to take time to highlight a few things.

The Office of Compliance received

The Office of Compliance received ARPA funding for multiple projects saving customers money on their water bill. One project in particular is Sewer Rehabilitation which will decrease wet water flows to the Wastewater Plant and provide additional plant capacity. The increase in capacity encouraging the plant development and will promote job growth. For better workflow, the Office Manager that was partially paid in compliance will be returned 100 percent to Building Maintenance and a new part-time Confidential Clerk for Compliance has been added into the budget. This will allow the Office Manager to fully support Building Maintenance and the Facilities Manager projects such as the assessment and implementation of repairs in the city buildings. Building Maintenance will be in a position to provide enhanced customer service to city buildings by adding a new custodian for janitorial services in all city buildings, including the new fire academy. Over the years, the maintenance of city buildings was deferred causing a backlog of building projects. Deferring projects can potentially increase the cost of repairs. A tradesman was added to address these deferred maintenance plan and it is the administration's policy to have ongoing maintenance to city assets. We want to create a welcoming environment where residents and employees feel engaged when entering out buildings, showing a positive reflection of our city by demonstrating this level of care that we all can be proud of. To improve efficiencies, field employees will be receiving tablets to have access to building maintenance parts and supplies to save time. A facility assessment will be started in 2023 to better understand facility upgrades and what repairs are needed to make our facilities more energy efficient. Staff will be changing out all LED lights within 2023 to make our buildings more sustainable. Traffic planning plays an essential role to provide safety for both our pedestrians and vehicles traveling in our city to make it safer for children walking to school and reviewing each school and what it is needed to make it safer. They have applied for a grant to replace all 45 existing school flashers with new technology and add vehicle speed boards to slow down drivers making it safer for children walking to and from school. They have added a Maintenance Worker II and made the existing part-time employee to a full-time to truly support the ongoing maintenance of all street signs and paving markings. Currently, there is only one full-time person maintaining over 8,000 street signs citywide and that does not work

out on preventative maintenance on crosswalks and pavement markers. They are also asking for a Travel Control Foreman because they currently do not have a supervisor in the field and ensure all work is being done in accordance to PennDOT rules and regulations. Additional responsibilities includes scheduling preventative maintenance of all street signs, crosswalks, pavement markings, traffic signals and signa equipment. A wayfinding study is being performed and planning to provide direction for community stakeholders. When it is time to implement, the traffic employees will be installing all the wayfinding directional signs throughout the city. The final phase of LED streetlight conversion is scheduled t begin in January and will take approximately six months to complete. This will save on energy costs and will save approximately \$350,000 by completing the working in-house. The department has been awarded over \$5 million in grants to update the intersection of technology on various projects. Recycling and Solid Waste focuses on trash and recycling collection to assure the residents are provided with this essential service. The cleanliness and beautification of Allentown is an important driver for community and economic development. The bureau has programs to address litter and illegal dumping issues. There has been a significant increase in recycling materials collected and a Waste and Recycling Operator has been added to assist with the increase hauling needed. Currently, there are two employees who haul recycling materials and there has been a need of hauling assistance from the streets department. By adding this position, it will allow the streets employees to return to their normal duties and cutdown on overtime, essentially funding this position. The Office Manager is being reinstated in order to fully support the Bureau Manager and the needs of the bureau. In 2021, there was a reorganization in Public Works which combined the Office Manager and the Public Works Operation Manager to one position. This do not work due to the extensive job duties each position requires. By investing in these new positions and allows for the streamline of operations and is an investment in our department. The Sweep Program continues to use advanced technologies such as Art GIS Quick Capture. The Quick Capture App works with the city's GIS mapping system, capturing locations field conditions and even photos quickly to support Sweep investigations. This has afforded the Sweep Officers the ability to quickly evaluate and investigate in a field full property history and required contact information for property owners. Year to date, Sweep has investigated over 3600 complaints and issued over 8,000 tickets. Education is provided with each sweep ticket and the violator may appeal each ticket for further evaluation. Sweep success addresses issues of trash, litter and illegal dumping is attributable to our four officers who canvas the city daily. In the Stormwater Bureau, the City Council has invested \$5 million in ARPA funding for the storm lining project and completed the lining of roughly eight miles of the 240 miles of storm pipes surrounding the city. In this budget, they have invested another \$1

million to continue this project and expect an additional one to two miles in 2023. Many of the city's stormwater pipes are in excess of 75 years old which is beyond the industry's expectation of functionality. Lining provides an additional 50 plus years of useful life at a fraction of the costs in comparison of pipe replacement. An Environmental Compliance Specialist has been added to ensure city compliance with MS4 Permit mandates for three programs. This position will double the current rate of annual priority of industrial inspections, allow for completion of 860 industrial site evaluations within the three-year time frames versus five. This will also increase the frequency of high-risk facility inspections from an annual to a quarterly basis. Three Stormwater Vegetative Maintenance Technicians have been added to complete 11 miles of roadside mowing, tree trimming along the street cleaning routes, and community tree plantings. Additionally, these employees will be maintaining 13 detention basons, conveyance and treatment systems to include 44 swells and a number of currently installed planned rain gardens. Adding these three positions will allow the existing employees to perform their daily functions by increasing pipe network, cleaning and inspections by an additional 10 miles per year. Last, but not least is the Fleet Maintenance Budget. They have been discussing the garage and the problems for some time and the administration agrees with City Council that bringing the garage in-house will deliver a better service for our police, fire, EMS and other city vehicles. King George was issued a letter by our legal department, ending our contract on Friday, December 9th. The garage will be under city control on Saturday, December 10th. There are some one-time costs that will be in the 2023 budget to purchase tools for the mechanics, buying stock items for the current contractor, to purchase the computer software that houses equipment information. The new budget consists of 15 employees to service the 614 vehicles under the city's fleet. In response to the concern to maintain the existing employees, eight of the King George employees will be transferring to city employment. This consists of the office manager and seven union positions. The following positions were posted today and consists of three day shift Diesel Technicians, two Emergency Vehicle Technicians, a Chief Maintenance Supervisor, and a Middle Shift Emergency Vehicle Technician. They will begin accepting the applications immediately and interviews will begin as early as next week. He thanked Council for all their support and will be happy to answer any questions they may have.

The Office of Compliance received

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Mr. Shahda and the men and women who work in Public Works. There is no question that the Public Works department is without doubt the largest and most important department in the city. They have everything from the streets to the snowplowing, to everything. It really

comes down to you guys and what you do. He asked a couple of questions: He asked about Capital Projects and will it come from the General Fund or ARPA. How many total positions you are seeking in the Public Works Department. He asked if some will be paid through Stormwater, Solid Waste and those programs. He asked is it fair to say those programs are solid and the future is stable. He stated that five years from now the taxpayers should not be concerned on whether or not they will be paying out for that. Those programs will continue to grow.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that building assessment for all city buildings in 2023. He stated it will come from General Fund. He stated total number positions are 11 positions. He stated that the Recycling and Solid Waste will be funded through recycling. The Vegetative Maintenance Technicians and Environmental Compliance Specialist will be funded through the Stormwater Fund. He stated that they are stable and healthy fund balance in both Enterprise Fund. He stated that they will continue to grow. Funding will continue to come in and they feel pretty confident that they will continue that they will continue to be able to fund those positions over the next couple of years.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated let's discuss the in-house Fleet Maintenance Program. He stated that Mr. Shahda gave each Council member a personnel summary. He stated that he believes it is going to be extremely affective. It has been a long time coming. This is a great move. He went over the salaries and thanked Mayor Tuerk, Mr. Shahda and Mr. O'Neill for all the work they put in. He stated that the work Council put into this from Mr. Hendricks, all of Council, and this was one of Mr. Siegel's main goals. He asked questions of the Detail Book on page 37 - part of Mr. Shahda's salary and other departments. He asked about on page 39 - Part-Time Confidential Clerk is one of the new positions. He asked about how many hours roughly a week for the part-time position. He asked about page 44 - under Rental, Number II the plotter lease. Under page 42 - Account 42 Repairs and Maintenance is a 60 percent drop. Page 45 under 46 - Engineering Consultant for Surveillance Services. He asked if the city has an Engineer. Page 47 under Account 20 - Electric Power. Page 51 under Temporary Wages Part-time Maintenance Worker I (Custodian). How many does that include? Page 52 - Lights in the Parkway has been transferred to another account. He went to Stormwater Page 245 - Wage adjustments \$8,580 difference. What is that increase for?

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that a portion of the salaries are in here and the Director and Deputy Director were brought in at a lower salary. That's why that number is a little bit lower. He stated that is correct. That is adding the position to take over the duties of Building Maintenance Office Manager. He stated 25 - 30 hours per week for the part-time position. He stated that

was moved from Account 26. He stated that is for the Auto Cab Maintenance Lease Agreement and was moved to Account 68. He stated that they are in search of a City Engineer. We did have one, but he was promoted to Deputy Director. The electric power is moved to the Building Maintenance budget. He stated that it is for five employees. Under Solid Waste, Page 225 - Number 1 under Temporary Wages is going to be covered under the Solid Waste. Page 226 - Rentals, Warehouse for five months.

Ms. Casandra Magliane stated that they are steps during Position Budgeting for manual adjustment.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that lease will actually end in May. They use the warehouse space on S. 12th Street to store recycling bins and other supplies that are needed for recycling materials.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked what is the plan after the lease expires.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that the plan is that they are currently working at Bridgeworks reorganizing their garage and moving a lot of supplies to the Bridgeworks facility and also the yard waste site.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated just to follow up on Downtown Business District cleaning. Didn't last year Mr. Zucal and Ms. Mota made an amendment to do something with kids cleaning. What ever happened with that?

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that was before his time.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that it never went anywhere.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she is just looking at that price.

Ms. Gabrielle Heiney stated that actually moved to Parks.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if they know if anything ever happened. She stated for the Downtown Business District cleaning, we use the Rescue Mission for that.

Ms. Gabrielle Heiney stated she does not know.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that is corect.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated the people that are in the Christina Living Program.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated yes.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if there were anyone else from Council.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated on Page 55 - Repairs and Renovations as needed for the city owned rental properties. He stated that his understanding. He stated that the rents have gone up significantly.

Mr. Mark Shahda stated that the repairs were budgeted in General and Civic and now moved into the Building Maintenance budget. He stated that he is really not sure what the rents are, but Finance can speak to that.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that is correct. In the past what they used to do is provide the properties a lower rent and put the burden of maintaining the properties on the tenants. However, that was not working out where they found when the inspectors went out to inspect the properties they were not maintained. At the end, the city had to fix whatever was not working. What the city came up with was to increase the rent and then the city would fix whatever is not working. We will maintain the properties. That is why it is budgeted.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that hopefully the city will be making some money back by charging the higher rents.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that is correct.

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Mr. Hendricks and asked if there were any questions from the public. He thanked Mr. Shahda for a very good presentation.

ADJOURNED: 5:57 PM

[15-5454](#) Budget Memos

Attachments: [1 - BM Personnel Changes](#)

[2 - BM Various Changes](#)

[3 -BM Various Changes](#)

[4 - BM Garage](#)

[Budget Memo #5](#)

[15-5389](#) Budget Information

- Attachments:** [Budget Schedule](#)
[Building Standards and Safety - Rental](#)
[APD proposed Budget 2023](#)
[2023 EMS BP V2](#)
[2022 Police PP 1](#)
[2010 NIST Study](#)
[Cedar Crest College - Police Summary of Services Report](#)
[Human Resources Department Current Organizational Structure](#)
[Human Resources Department Proposed Organization Chart](#)
[COA Active Litigation Nov 2022](#)
[Legal fees for the 2019 through 2022](#)