



# Allentown

435 Hamilton Street  
Allentown, Pa. 18101

## Minutes - Final

### City Council

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Wednesday, November 20, 2024

5:45 PM

Council Chambers

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#### Special Council Meeting

#### Roll Call

**Present:** 6 - Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos, Candida Affa, and Santo Napoli

**Absent:** 1 - Ce-Ce Gerlach

#### Budget Review: Human Resources Information Technology City Controller Mayor General and Civic City Council

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she will start this off with the Mayor on Human Resources.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he will be presenting the Human Resources Budget Summary. He trusts that they had an opportunity to review the budget in the Budget Books that were presented. He stated that this is probably one of the most straight forward budget presentations that you are going to get. He stated that they had an opportunity to discuss the highlights of the HR Budget with Councilwoman Affa a couple weeks ago and they can just walk right through what's on here. This is a budget that is very similar to last year's budget. He stated what he did in the sheet that was provided to them is that he detailed the organizational structure of the HR department which leads with the HR Director who is responsible for labor relations and strategic leadership in that department. Exactly the same as the previous year. They will have a Senior HR Generalist who has more complex employee relations responsibility as well as policy responsibility and then five HR Generalist which are the five Generalists that serve the various different departments in the city. He stated that the city has a Receptionist and an HR Coordinator position. The Budget for Human Resources is per Council's move last year. It also includes the Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Budget that he has in front of them, it puts the HR operations budget and the Equity and Inclusion Budget

together for their view. Simply stated the bulk of their work to view and asked if Council had the breakdown that he provided to Mr. Hanlon.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated yes, they all have it.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated great and so as you can see the bulk of the HR budget is in personnel. He stated \$1,016,053.00 into the budget. Most of which is permanent wages. The additional expenditures associated with the HR budget are operating expenses of which contract services makes up the majority. The details within contract services as he sure from last year is parking expenditures. He believes it is a \$385,000 component of that budget. If you flip to the back page you will see where the key changes are from the previous year. There is a small increase from 24 in permanent wages, largely related to step increases and cost of living adjustments for staff. No other adjustments to wages for HR employees. The operating cost changes are fairly minimal. They are detailed there and they are detailed in your budget narrative book. For the most part, it is a flat budget. The increase in training and development, it is actually a decrease in training and development from HR. Most of the training and development budget is covered by each individual department with the exception of the CDL contract that is managed out of HR. It is pretty straight forward. It is a slight decrease in the proposed budget and you had an opportunity to review. He stated that he is happy to answer any questions that they might have based on the materials presented to them.

Ms. Candida Affa asked are there any questions from the dais for the mayor. She stated seeing none or any questions for the public. She stated that she would assume that it is it.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that is it.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is it. Simple, flat budget.

Ms. Candida Affa stated the next thing they have is Information Technology.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that the budget for the IT department ensure all essential services continue. They are funding all ongoing projects in 2025 and they include no personnel changes. They are fiscally responsible less than a one person increase over 2024. Just to demonstrate that fiscal responsibility in 2023, the IT department spent approximately \$7,600.00 per employee for IT services. The national average is over \$10,000.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that they are having a problem finding it in their book. She asked in the big book.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated in the big book. He stated that he provided Mr. Hanlon with an overview.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated it is on IT. He can flip it up if you want.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if they knew what page it is.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that it is not in the book.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he provide you with information.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that he will give them an overview of the entire departmental budget. He stated like they did in the committee meeting a few weeks ago.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that the tab is called Managing Director.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that he believes Page 67.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated 165.

Ms. Candida Affa stated 165. She stated that she is sorry and he can continue.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that the biggest changed you will see in the departmental budget is the additional of Account 31. Account 31, consolidates all software throughout the city. It is in the IT budget for overview of the IT department. They are going to be paying the bills and making sure that the contracts get renewed and all of that. The city's budget hasn't changed because of that move. They are taking departmental funds from whatever department that particular software came from. There is no increase in the overall city budget. That is the one big change you will see in out budget. Otherwise they are flat from year to year. He is happy to entertain any questions. He really doesn't have anything else to present because the budget has basically remained the same. There are no personnel changes or no request.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if there was anything from the dais.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that on Page 162, under Account 56 Uniforms. You have \$500 for uniforms and asked what kind of uniforms.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that he would like to make sure that if the IT staff goes to a conference or anything, they have some branded shirts.

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Mr. Anthony.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked for the charger.

Mr. Michael Hanlon asked Mr. Anthony is he going to buy the modules to manage the ABCs.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she is thanking Mr. Anthony because he makes things a lot easier.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that his staff made sure that they got everything they needed.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Mr. Anthony and his staff. Ms. Candida Affa stated that she had no idea what it was.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if there were any questions from anybody in the audience.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier commended the administration and IT for consolidating the software on the one account. For the past three or four years, it has been an explosion on software and different kinds of software and computer portals that different departments use and from an accounting point of view and an account management point of view, it was becoming difficult for departments to purchase and administer some of this stuff. Creating an Account 31 to put all this in is a good move. This is what these guys deal with all the time. They will make sure we get the right stuff. They will make sure that we get it at the right price and they will make sure that it is administered properly. That is a really good move. He stated something else Gerry didn't mention is some of the computer peripherals and hardware that the departments can buy on their own: keyboards, mouse and stuff like that are now centralized in this budget either. That is not a whole lot of money, but once again, it is making sure you get the best equipment, the right equipment, at the right price, and if there is a problem, they can be the first line of response for it. Those are two really significant improvements that this department has made in 2025.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if there were any questions from anyone. She thanked Mr. Anthony.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated you are welcome.

Ms. Candida Affa stated next of the agenda, is the Controller.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier stated the audit and compliance is really pretty much last

year's budget. He stated that they haven't hired anybody and haven't fired anybody. He still have one full timer and one part-timer. The balance in the 04 are the interns. There is a program that is wildly efficient for the city because all these interns do great work and deep dives on the projects they do. He stated that if they are smart enough, they take the findings to heart and implement as many as we can so we have better processes and better results for our employees and for the public. Beyond that, he thinks the 34 is probably a little bit less than it was last year. They went to Munis in 2024. They are not going next year so that saved them some money. He stated that is about it. He stated to follow up on what he said about the IT budget, if you in Account 72, you know we are down from \$100 to 0. He stated that it is only two and a half of them. When they need a mouse or need a monitor or they need a keyboard, they would expend that from their own budget. Now, that money is essentially moved over to IT and once again, they searched around the best piece for the Controller's system so that they would get a good deal. He stated that he would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated just one and obviously he saw the decrease in the 34. That is excellent. He stated in 04, Mr. Glazier talked about the temporary wages and asked is it a \$1,000 increase. He asked Mr. Glazier if he is going to add another or two employees.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier stated that he thinks that it is made up of two components. One is they have someone that is in, 10 to 14 hours a week, except the two weeks she is on vacation and then the interns. He stated three interns and that covers that. He thinks the part-time one of the things he doesn't fill in what personnel costs are. There is position budgeting and for something like this, the city determines what they are paying part-time employees for 2025 and they plugged that number in. So if there is an increase, that is what it is. You will really see that across the budget.

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Ms. Affa.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if it was anyone else from Council or the public.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he would like to offer from the mayor's office perspective to Jeff's point, the interns are some of the best bang for your buck you are going to get across the city. They have seen three classes of interns now during his administration and every time they bring some valuable information, some valuable insight, some valuable process improvement to help them do a better job as a city administration. He stated he doesn't think there is any question how valuable that is. This is your IT dollars at work.

Ms. Candida Affa asked anything else on this subject here. She stated that they will continue on to general and civic.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated similar to the HR summary that he provided you all with the summary of the mayor's office that details the key positions in the mayor's office. The key responsibility of the mayor's office, the budget and the key differences from the previous year's budget. He stated as they know that the mayor's office consists of the mayor, his executive assistant, special assistant, communications manager, a video content manager, a graphic designer, and they also include the office of civic innovation. There is a manager of civic innovation within the mayor's office budget. Their responsibilities of the mayor's office are broadly to meet the constituent needs of a city of 125,000 people that is increasingly diverse and increasing in size. The people that work in the mayor's office do a tremendous amount of work with a pretty limited budget. When you do look at the budget, the mayor's office total budget for 2025 is just over \$1 million dollars. It is \$1,000,084. The bulk of the mayor's office budget is made up of wages and personnel expense, totaling to \$862,000. Most of what the city population gets out of the mayor's office budget is hard work just from seven individuals that put in a tremendous amount of hours to not just serve the residents of the city of Allentown, but supports the entire city administration. He detailed the changes in the mayor's office budget. They are proposing to decrease the mayor's office budget by a total of \$44,000 in the 2025 budget. Again, it is something they ask every department to do to look hard at the potential improvements to the budget to help them get to that zero percent tax increase which they are able to achieve. There is some small increase in permanent wages. Again, largely due to step increases similarly to HR. A little bit extra in training and development to ensure that people can get to valuable conferences to help them better serve the residents of the city of Allentown, but an overall net decrease. He stated what they do in the mayor's office is laid out in seven pretty neatly described bullet points. One is a citywide policy development and implementation which is kind of bookended with seven points there which is legislative coordination with the Council and Controller. He stated that they work to help the City Council deliver legislation and improves outcomes for Allentown residents. The second big thing that they do is service delivery oversight and efficiency so they provide administration oversight of the various different departments. Efficiency is one where he really needs to spotlight the manager of civic innovation who acts and helps everybody do a better job across the city. He stated that Ms. Ballek helped each department through development of a service audit to understand all the things that they do which they then make sure every department in the city understands all the things that they do and looks for places to improve. Communications and media relations is another enormous part of the responsibilities of the folks working in the mayor's office. They have put a

tremendous amount of effort into making sure all of the residents in the city of Allentown are as informed as possible of all the things that they do in the city of Allentown. They do everything they can to spotlight the phenomenal people working in the city, to spotlight the incredible businesses that are investing in the city and make sure the residents are well informed on the various city services available to them. Physical policy management is our oversight, continued oversight, administrative oversight from various different departments working with the Controller and with the Finance Director to make sure we are appropriately spending taxpayer dollars. He stated when they talk about constituent services and community engagement, it is another place where Odemaris, our Front Desk Receptionist and Jei Lopez do a standout job of engaging our residents with whatever our challenges. They might find as they try to approach city hall and get to a solution. It is also a place where Laura really shines as our civic engagement manager. He stated that they just had last night another session of CHAT (City Hall at the Table) at Jefferson Elementary where they invited residents from across the city to join them for a discussion with city employees about the challenges they face in their neighborhoods and collectively work on solutions to those challenges. It is among the many things the Office of Civic Innovation does to bring residents together and they are getting phenomenal results. The final piece in terms of the things that they do is the oversight of Boards, Authorities, and Commissions. This is one of the things that keeps people involved. It is an extension of that constituent services work in a way, but it also helps all of them in city government to make sure they are delivering the most affective government possible. He stated that he would add another piece to this and want to state off of the summary that they have. This is the office that is out there chasing down grant funding, looking for ways that they have find philanthropic support to make efficiency improvements, to be innovative, to use data to better serve the residents. Laura, in particular is been the person that he goes to every time and he is able to find support for something that they want to do. Laura ends up project managing it. She is working on the city data alliance that would help them deliver a citywide data strategy in January. She has been spearheading and managing the Love your Block team that has invested in the neighborhood around Franklin Park. All this rolls up to the work that Laura does. Overall the city and the residents of the city of Allentown are getting a lot for the million dollars that they spend every year through the General Fund from the mayor's office. He stated that he can leave it there and answer in questions that they might have.

Ms. Candida Affa asked if they had any questions.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that is it.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked if the public had a chance to comment on the City Council's budget.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he would just say this, is the only thing that they added significantly to the budget for next year is your investigation. He stated that is the big cost.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated and that totals to.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he does not know what the total is going to be. He knows what they budgeted in the vicinity of \$400,000 bucks.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked \$400,000.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated so you have \$300,000 encumbered and you spent some.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked what is the budget for 2025.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he does not know what the budget is going to be. It is all contingency. He asked what is the budget going to be for the Solicitor's office. He stated that the other discussion was to look at either doing a Legislative Aide or using Granicus to do some minutes and hiring someone. That is just an internal discussion. It might affect the Budget Amendment.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he doesn't think anybody can hear the conversation. It is a discussion about investing in a Legislative Aide or more Granicus work.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he is not saying what they would do, but there was a discussion of a Legislative Aide, a part-time person, or Granicus has the option now where they would do minutes for Council meetings.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that they haven't decided yet.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they have seen the power of Artificial Intelligence to do transcription or minutes of Council meetings. It is something you can acquire through Granicus. It is a phenomenal tool that helps people that have auditory difficulties understanding exactly what is happening at City Council. He stated that he thinks that Council had proposed a Legislative Aide in the 2024 Budget that ultimately got amended out. From the perspective of the administration, they enthusiastically support the creation of a Legislative Aide position for City



Council to help the administration collaborate with you on developing legislation.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Mayor Matt Tuerk.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that it is the same except for the increase in money for the potential litigation.

[15-7291](#)

Budget Information

Link for Proposed Budget: Pick this site up after going to the City Website.

<https://www.allentownpa.gov/en-us/Government/Departments/Finance/Budget-Administration/2025-City-Budget>

**Attachments:** [IT Staff as of 10.30.2024.pdf](#)

[2025 IT Budget overview for Council\\_Final.docx](#)

[2025 BUDGET MEMO 115 Fund.pdf](#)

[Controller Memo on GFR Projections.pdf](#)

[Solicitors Office.pdf](#)

[Parks Budget Presentation.pdf](#)

[PD 2025 Budget Presentation.pdf](#)

[Budget Schedule.docx](#)

[Budget Procedures.docx](#)

**ADJOURNED: 6:09 PM**