



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Background:

City Council adopted a budget on November 4. The Mayor presented council with a budget that included a 6.9% tax increase, Council amended the budget in a 5-2 vote, eliminating a number of positions and upgrades and making across the boards cuts to eliminate any tax increase. The amendment and Bill 95 are in the file. The Mayor vetoed council's general fund bill - Bill 95 as amended. Council failed to override the veto at the November 15th Council meeting; but reconsidered Bill 95 as amended. What is in front of city council at this moment in time is Bill 95 with the amendment that was adopted – reconsideration means they have the bill before them just before the final vote was taken.

At the November 15th Council Meeting, Mayor Tuerk responded to City Council's adopted budget and offered an amendment with a 2% tax increase. This was not acted on at that meeting.

This evening, there are two proposed Council amendments that if passed would replace and supersede Council's initial amendment passed at the November 4 meeting that reduced the tax increase to zero with the Mayor's 2% proposal as the basis; taking additional funds from the unappropriated balance to take the tax rate increase to zero. :

1. No tax increase: Suggested changes in Administrations 2% proposal - no new positions, retaining increases to Police Captains and EMS and reducing the unappropriated balance by an amount to have a budget with no tax increase - @ \$762,054. Mota, Hendricks, Affa

2. Add the Sustainability Position back into the budget - 11N at 66,976 in Parks and Recreation, funded from the unappropriated balance (evaluate end of 2024).
Hendricks, Santo

[15-6358](#)

Bill 95 2024 BUDGET AND TAX RATE

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing the General Fund, Administrative Order Fund, Risk Management Fund, Debt Service Fund, Equipment Fund, and Golf Fund Budgets for 2024.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No. 95 2024 BUDGET AND TAX RATE](#)

[Budget Amendments - Nov 4](#)

[Mayor's 2% Proposal Final](#)

[Councils Adopted Budget Amendment](#)

[Veto Message](#)

[Ordinance #15964 Bill No. 95 2024 BUDGET AND TAX RATE - Budget Amendments Final Action](#)

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that this is amended. For the record, he wants to tell them what the amendment is so there is no confusion. What happened is that the budgets were adjusted to include no upgrades to added positions and changed titles Pursuant in Memo I, except for the Inspectors Certification Program. The Inspectors Certification Program included seven positions. It also included a Building Standards Building Inspector Trainee to be unfunded at \$1 and flip that position into a Building Inspector at \$73,684. He stated that it was not totally clear, but they dealt with that. It also allows the Permit Technician IIs, there are three of them to be funded at a \$1. He stated that should have been included in the amendment. The other items, it moved the Front Desk Receptionist with the three percent salary increase to 2023 position and the Equity and Inclusion Coordinator at a three percent increase to the 2023 position moved from the Mayor's office to the department of Human Resources. It transferred \$130,000 budgeted for the Human Resources Consultant into the 02 Account for the HR Director. In the Mayor's office, it continued the 2023 positions into the 2024 budget with the appropriate three percent increase. That was the Communications Manager, the Special Assistant, and the Executive Assistant to the Mayor. It funded the Managing Director's position at \$1. It also did a 10 percent across the board cut in overtime budgets in the General Fund and did the five percent cut in Accounts 20 - 68 in the General Fund. He stated that is what was adopted at that Council meeting.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Hanlon and stated that he will now give the administration an opportunity to address Council. He stated that it is his understanding that Ms. Patel is going to speak.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated yes, he asked Ms. Patel to speak on behalf of the administration.

Ms. Bina Patel thanked Councilpersons and stated that she is going to

share her thoughts with them regarding the 2024 budget. From the Finance perspective what is presented in the city's real estate tax increase of \$762,000. She reduced the original proposed personnel changes by \$1.1 million, overtime budget by \$255,000, and operating expenditures by \$637,000. The reasons for the property tax increase of \$762,000 are: expenditures are increasing at a faster rate than revenues, the cost of running the city has increased, departments have to purchase materials and supplies to support the city services at a higher cost than last year. Personnel contractual increases for bargaining units have been negotiated at three percent through 2025. Property tax is uniformed in assessment of tax for residential and commercial properties. All properties are taxed on land and improvements at their respective current rate of 23.538 and 4.453 mils. She stated 1/5th of the real estate tax bills that the city mails are for commercial properties. However, the assessed value of this commercial property account for 47 percent of the real estate tax payments. In dollar values, it equates to approximately \$19 million. Meanwhile 4.5th of the bills are for residential properties. This means, 4 out of 5 bills are for residential properties. But, these payments account for only 53 percent of the city real estate tax revenue. In dollar values, it equates to approximately \$12 million. She stated as they can see increasing property tax becomes an equitable recurring revenue source for the city to support the services that they provide. She stated that properties within the Neighborhood Improvement Zone also called NIZ pay city real estate tax to the city and contrary to the popular belief, the city keeps that revenue. The city use the money to balance the General Fund operating expenditures. Unlike other tax revenues generated in the NIZ, the taxes that they remit to the state are business privilege tax, earned income tax, and local services tax. These are distributed to developers. Property taxes are not. Again, they retain city property taxes for operating purposes to balance the General Fund. In the initial 2024 budget, if there was no increase in the city tax revenue, the proposed incremental General Fund revenue would have been \$3.3 million, while expenditures would have been \$6 million, compared to last year. Hence, shortfall in revenues of \$2.6 million. To continue to sustain the same level of services for the city residents and taxpayers are used to, they need to keep the two percent property tax increase. There was another proposal from Council to use city cash to balance the budget. She stated that her professional recommendation is not to use cash to balance the budget. This is not a good management of our finances. Balancing the budget using cash from a bank account is a one - time solution. It does not address the structural issues causing the deficit. The city will face the same issue next year and also in the future years. Expenditures are increasing at a faster rate than revenues. If they do not increase the property tax now, they are looking at an increase of 14.1 percent for the 2025 budget. Again, if they are looking at an increase of 14.1 percent for the 2025 budget. A better practice is to engage in incremental increases

yearly or every other year. This tax increase is what the city has done in the past. She stated that she does not want to continue this practice in the future nor is this kind of increases fair to the taxpayers. The cash used to balance the budget could be invested elsewhere. Generating investment revenue and increasing the city's financial resources over time. Using the cash for the immediate budget needs means forgoing this potential benefit. When cash is used to balance the budget, it is no longer for unexpected expenses for emergencies. This can leave the city vulnerable to economic downturns, natural disasters, or other unforeseen events. The 2008 financial crisis had a huge impact on the city. It was a major factor in leasing the Water and Sewer assets, resources for 50 years. Relying on cash reserves to balance the budget is irresponsible and will negatively impact the city's credit rating. This can make it more expensive for the city to borrow money in the future. Potentially increasing the cost of infrastructure projects and essential services. It undermines confidence, sending a negative signal to investors, creditors, and residents. It can raise concerns about the city's financial management and its ability to meet future obligations. A more responsible approach is to reduce expenditures which the city has done. An increase revenue which they are proposing by increasing the city's real estate tax revenue by \$762,000. She stated that her final comments: Not increasing the property taxes in the 2024 budget means a property tax increase of 14.1 percent in the 2025 budget. Not increasing property tax in 2024 and taking cash from the city's bank account to balance the budget will impact their bond rating and will increase the borrowing costs for future anticipated infrastructure projects. Increasing property taxes in 2024 is an equitable way of increasing revenue.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Ms. Patel. He asked if there were comments from his colleagues.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked Ms. Patel how did she reach that 14.1 percent tax hike for 2025.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that if they are not increasing revenues, so that \$762,000 will not be available for the 2024 budget, many of the expenditures that they are seeing now in the two percent budget and the zero percent increase will be postponed for 2025. That is just postponing the services or equipment or materials and supplies they need for the future years.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated as of October 2023 Financial Report the city showed that it only used \$3.4 million or \$9.4 million from the adjusted budget for 2023. Where is the other \$5.7 million.

Ms. Bina Patel asked if he is looking at the revenues or expenditures. She stated that she is not certain of what numbers they are referring to. She stated that she knows what numbers they are seeing, but she is not certain.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked Ms. Patel if she is not certain where they are from.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that she is not certain whether he is referring to revenue numbers or expenditure numbers.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated it is from the adjusted budget.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked Mr. Zucal what are you talking about.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that Finance Report from October 2023 showed that the city only used \$3.4 million of \$9.4 million of the adjusted budget for 2023 under Other Contract Services.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that she does not have the exact details for him, but she can provide that. She stated that they can email that to him.

Mr. Ed Zucal state two other things she talked about reducing costs or funds. They are going to have to use this money from the adjusted appropriated balance. In the budget for the last three years, there have been four vacant management positions in IT. Four, in the last three years which means that you obviously don't need them. There is a \$200,000 savings there. In the CEDC department for the last three years, there has been two project managers vacant positions which is \$150,000. That is \$350,000.

Ms. Bina Patel stated to Mr. Zucal that they have specifically and CED have challenges to fill the positions. It was very difficult to find certified officers.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that he understands. He talking about the vacant positions. He stated to Ms. Kistler that maybe she can answer that a little bit better.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated that they only have three vacant positions in DCED. Those three positions are two Clerk positions and a Community Housing.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked what is the total of that.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated that one is grant funded. It is no cost to the city. The other two are two Clerks.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated and what is that.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated they will be filled as soon as the Bid comes in.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked what is the current vacancy funding for those two. What is the funding for those two Clerk positions.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated the General Fund.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked how much.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated from the top of her head, she does not know, \$50,000 each with benefits. They are union positions.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated about \$100,000.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he wants to clarify that the inability to fill a position is not a reflection of the need for that position. He thinks that everyone on Council would agree that we need more Police Officers. They are about 20 vacancies. Because the city can't fill those positions, sometimes it is a reflection of other conditions.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated but in three years.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated to Mayor Tuerk that Mr. Zucal may be thinking of the Project Manager that Council to an Enforcement Manager. That position is filled.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that then they will disregard that one.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he would point to the City Engineer position which is a critically needed position. The market is not such that they can easily fill that position.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated if they look at the \$200,000 that takes them down to \$562,045 that they would actually need instead of the 762. Those have not been filled in three years. They are not going to come here now and say that we need to fill them tomorrow. They haven't been filled in four years, three years.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated to Mr. Zucal that the IT positions in the beginning of 2023 did have four open positions. They filled three of those positions in the 2023 term. They have one open position at this point. It was part of an upgrade for 2024. They are looking to fill that in early 2024.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that there aren't going to be any upgrades.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated understood, but currently they only have one open position, not four. The other three were filled.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there was anybody else on Council.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if they were to do the two percent increase based on the assessment provided, they would then need to increase taxes by 12 percent next year instead of 14 percent. If they were to do two percent, they would not have to increase taxes next year or how would they have to next year.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that they would postponed until the following year.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that there will be no tax increase next year. What is the difference of not doing it this year versus not doing it next year.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that if they do the property tax and if they go with the proposal that's in the budget that means they are able to provide the services then procure the services.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that means next year if they don't increase taxes they won't be able to provide services.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that it is not an addition problem. The revenue that they generate with the two percent increase fundamentally change the structure of the revenue for the 2025 budget. The hope is to as they build the 2025 budget is to avoid any property tax in 2025 on the back of a small increase in 2024. He stated that they can be certain that if they don't raise property taxes in 2024 that they will have to raise them in 2025. It is not meant to be a threat by any stretch of the imagination. He stated multiple times to each of them that they believe in a two percent increase to ease the burden on taxpayers in future years. Ultimately, it is up to Council. You have a choice to make. the choice you make related to a tax increase will be borne more heavily on future generations. So the 2025 taxes will have to be higher to make good on the lost revenue in 2024.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach thanked Mayor Tuerk and asked is it broken out so if they were to do two percent this year there will be nothing next year and then the following year, it will be what.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that when they did the five year projection, they are anticipating something less than 10 percent in subsequent years. Something less than. He stated 2026 is too far out to project at the

moment. She stated that it still will be a big tax increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked how do you define big.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated less than 10 percent which would be 9.9 percent.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they have adjustments that they have to make. He doesn't anticipate a 14 percent tax increase for 2026 based on adjustments they will make in 2024.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that it looks like no matter what and if they don't raise taxes this year in the future there is going to be a significantly larger tax increase in the future. If they do raise taxes, either way it is going to be a big tax increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk referred Ms. Gerlach to the comments that Ms. Patel made in regards to the increasing cost of doing business in the city. They have three percent increases, contractual increases with the city's bargaining units that you can count on in 2025. You can count on increase cost of labor in 2026, 2027, and far in the future. Things do get more expensive and they in the city has to adjust to increasing cost environments.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there was anybody else on Council.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he will mention too that he thought about what Ms. Gerlach said about this year versus next year. One of the things he thinks about is trash. Next year, the city's contract is up. He stated that they don't have a crystal ball. He stated that they don't know how much the trash is going to go up. He stated that they kind of do. He stated that he is reading articles in the local media about neighboring municipalities and seeing the trash hikes that they are experiencing. He can tell them that they are in for a trash hike next year. A significant one. Based on what they are seeing around them. He looked at it and thought about it for months and voted for the two percent before and will vote for it again. It is better to put it now. It is not coupled with a trash hike next year and that is going to ease the burden on residents. He stated that he does not want to see them get hit with two hikes, if they can avoid one of them. He stated that is his stance and everything has gotten expensive. He is in the business world and everything has gone up. The national average has been up eight percent for inflation. The administration is proposing two percent. It is something that as their costs have gone up, he believes that the two percent is manageable. He believes that based upon what he learned about the added program for seniors from Harrisburg and the options that

seniors have to recoup more of that money in a tax hike. It will ease a burden on them. He thinks that next year it unfortunately going to be a lot of discussion about trash and how expensive it is to dispose of it. He stated that is his stance why the two percent that he is favorably to it for this budget year to ease the burden for next year.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she is going to echo Mr. Napoli. He almost took all the words out of her mouth. To pin the Mayor on are we or are we not to have a tax next year is not fair. They don't know what is coming. She stated that her concern is the bond issue too. They just become A and struggled for that. To pigeon hole the mayor to say that there will be no is foolish. It is foolish for him to make that kind of statement because we really don't know. She stated what she believes what the Finance Director is advising them, what our Controller is advising us is very important. These are professionals. This is what they do. This is a business and someone you would hire in your business to tell you exactly how to raise your prices and what to do. She stated that her fear is next year if they don't do this, they could be sitting here and she is not saying 14 or not saying 10, but she thinks it would be more than two percent. If they just do the two percent and hopefully next year they will have one percent or two percent or no percent. As they sit here tonight, they need to take the advice of their professionals. They know what they are doing and she will put her trust in the Finance Director, the Controller, and the powers that be ad she believes that they are all here and want the citizens and everything to be fair with them. She stated that they talked to the Mayor and talk to Finance and speak with a lot of people. They have knowledge and is educated all the time. You can only trust them and believe that Council is believing in them. She stated that she too is going to vote for the two percent.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if they vote for the two percent again, how much revenue they are going to get.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he will be brief and has this number seared into his head. He stated that it is \$142.9 million, rounded in revenue.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked how much ahead.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated \$142.9 million. He stated that the \$762,000 is the incremental revenue. The total city revenue would be \$142.9 million.

Ms. Cynthia Mota thanked Mayor Tuerk.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that the exact number is on your sheet on the top of the page, \$762,045.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if now he should make that motion or after public comments.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that as he said from the start, the mayor proposed a 6.9 percent increase. He stated that the Mayor did negotiate down and they were able to negotiate down to two percent. All new positions were removed. He stated that he thinks it is a little difficult for them to expect not to have any increase, yet all of the employees they are obligated to give them a three percent increase. The average homeowner will be paying \$17 additional in taxes. That is not overbearing. It is the old story here, you can pay me now or you can pay us later. He fears that later, next year perhaps in 2025, it's going to cost us a lot more because of the increased cost in borrowing, bond funding that they are going to be looking for. They are looking at replacing Central Fire. They are looking at replacing the Police Station. These are going to be critical components to future generations and all of those and all them here tonight. These are the things that they can't continue to kick down the road and by not increasing this small amount now, again it is going to cost them that much more going forward.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that when they adopted their amendment and he knows he focused on the Inspection Certification Program, but you also put in your amendment one new telecom technician in the Police Department, 12 Firefighters, a Financial Analyst, a Sweep Officer in Solid Waste, you move the MWIII to an 11 M, and you allow neutral physical changes. He stated what he thinks Mr. Zucal was doing is taking the Mayor's budget and allowing everything to float in that, except for the Sustainability position. He asked if he is correct on and the Sustainability Position will be adopted with a separate motion. He asked Mr. Zucal is that what you are saying.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that is what he is saying.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they shared a document with the City Clerk, they shared it with the City Council that had a two percent spending plan. This is what they have been referring to it as. The total spending was about \$142.9 million.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated just to be clear, the Memo II, there is no tax increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated correct.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that the \$700,000 or so will be taken from the unappropriated balance.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated correct. To restate, a zero percent tax increase

will result in approximately \$142.2 million of revenue and they are also suggesting a spending plan of \$142.9 million which will leave them with approximately a \$700,000 deficit.

Attorney Charles Smith asked Mr. Hanlon we are we procedurally. Mr. Zucal made the motion and it was seconded.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that Mr. Glazier wanted to.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier stated that he has some comments. He echoed what Finance, Ms. Patel said. First of all he would like to say according to the city Charter, one of his jobs is to review the budget and make nonbinding recommendations to the Mayor and Council. Recommendations are also like advice. He is going to give them the best advice he can. One of the things that they discussed in the city for years is to have a Fund Balance Policy. A Fund Balance Policy can cover a fair amount of real estate. It can be how much money you want to set aside. It will also discuss how you want to use your fund balance. For instance, a good use of Fund Balance might be to set it aside for an emergency. Might be to use it for capital. Basically, nonrecurring expenses to move this proposal forward, it is essentially to borrow money from the Fund Balance to use it for a recurring expense. It is going to happen in 2025 as well. You are going to have the same expenses, except now instead of having a \$700,000 hole that you are filling in 2024, you are going to have a \$1.5 million hole that you now have to fill in 2025. He stated that you can't tell him that makes sense. That is and he sat with them and sat and sat across the street and made the decisions you are going to make tonight. It is an easy way out. It is not a good way out. One of the things they all need to do is to have vision for the future. What does it look like a year or two down the road. What does it look like five years down the road. To use the Fund Balance for current expenses sets a bad precedent going forward. It's not what you want to do. It is not a responsible use of that Fund Balance that they all worked so hard to attain. Look, in two or three years when they are ready to do some building for our Public Safety employees, if they needed a couple of a million dollars so they wouldn't have to borrow money, what a great use for that kind of money. It is a nonrecurring expense that is that much less you need to borrow. It is a win for everybody. Using Fund Balance to pay for current expenses is not the way to go. Next year, they will be sitting here with whatever hole they are in because of the 2025 expenditures, plus another \$1.5 million because taking money from the Fund Balance. He stated that he understands that they don't want to raise taxes. This isn't a way to do it.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Glazier and stated that it is a Motion on the floor made by Mr. Zucal, seconded by Ms. Gerlach.

Attorney Charles Smith stated comments from Council and the public.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were comments from Council.

Attorney Charles Smith asked if Council had anything to say. He stated that he would open it to public comment.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks opened the comments to the floor. He asked would anybody else wishing to comment.

Ms. Betty Cauler asked Council to think about a property tax freeze for those that are 65 and older. A property tax freeze and an assessment tax freeze. There plenty of other states that do this, other municipalities that do this. She stated give us a break. They are on a fixed income. They don't get raises every year like the police do. She stated think about that. They are on a fixed income. It doesn't go up. Inflation goes up. Inflation keeps going up, up, up and their income is not going up. So many people she knows are being taxed out of their houses and they just had a 27 percent increase in 2019. They are still recovering from that. They are going to have at least \$100 in the water bills this year. They know the gabage is going up next year. They know everything else. She is not asking for them to put a property tax freeze on J B Reilly. She is asking for those that are over 65 and on Social Security, on fixed incomes. A property tax freeze, a property tax assessment freeze. It seems like since Covid, the 2008 housing crisis, since getting laid off at 53, instead of 66 like she thought she would. She had to really tighten her belt. She had to do without a lot of things so that she can pay her bills and she just can't see why the city can't do the same thing.

Ms. Bina Patel stated to Mr. Hendricks that she recommends that they don't vote on this and raise the property taxes by two percent. She stated that this is her request to Council.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that the result of this vote will be hitting the General Fund. He stated that so everybody is clear, if you vote on this as an amendment without an additional amendment.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any other comments from the public.

Mr. Talib Shively stated that this is childish. He stated that they are talking .6 percent with the \$760,000. He stated that is not a lot of money. In the grand scene of things for him, it is 10 years of his salary, but for the city, it is nothing. That is going to be more and more money that is spent year after

year if they don't do it. He stated that actually he thinks they should be doing this every year, the two percent. It sucks for some people, but it is good for the city as a whole. He stated that they can do more with that as a city. You can come up with new ideas and new programs. The Mayor can implement new ideas and new programs that can help us city out. He requested for Council not to vote the zero percent. It is not going to be good for us in the future, now. It is just not going to work. He stated that he has a paper that he wants all of them to read that he is doing for a college course on the benefits of incremental tax increases. As small as two percent a year, one or two percent. Not a lot. That he wants them all to read when he is done with his college course. He stated that it will be insightful for all of them to see and he wants all of them to kind of think about this going forward, if they can do him that kindness as a citizen of this city.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there is anybody else.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked if they vote yes, is there an opportunity to make an additional vote increment a tax.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated no, you can't do that.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that if this Motion passes, that is the budget that is passed by Council.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he was sort of thinking if this passes, you need a Motion to adopt that Budget Memo II. He is assuming that there could be a Motion to increase the taxes by two percent.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she has a question. This two percent and the number 2 with no tax increase. She asked would it affect the Police Captains, EMS and the unappropriated balance. She stated that means they are getting nothing.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated no. It allows the increases for the Captains, for the paramedics, and he thinks there were two supervisors. It allows that to happen. The only thing that he thinks it takes out in positions is the Sustainability position. It takes from the reserves and the unappropriated balance. Whatever you want to call it with the \$762,000.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that this funds that budget with General Fund revenue as opposed to making a slight increase in taxes.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked are you ready to vote.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated yes.

Mr. Santo Napoli asked Mr. Hanlon if he can make an amendment to change it to the two percent.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated to Mr. Napoli that he would ask Mr. Smith.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that you are better off addressing that now than after you vote on the zero percent. He would say that if you want to make a Motion to the two percent, he thinks now is the appropriate time to do that. That gets considered. The other way around it would be if this zero percent, taking the \$762,000 from the unappropriated balance if that wasn't passed. He stated that he thinks that they can get to the two percent.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that he thinks that they have to vote on this Motion first.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that if they want to get to the two percent first, now is the appropriate time to consider it.

A motion was made by Ed Zucal, seconded by Ce-Ce Gerlach, to Adopt Budget Memo #2 which is a No Tax Increase. The suggested changes of the two percent proposal increase. No new positions. Retaining increased to Police Captains and EMS and reducing the unappropriated balance by an amount to have a budget with no tax increase resulting in \$762,054.

Yes: 5 - Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Natalie Santos

No: 2 - Candida Affa, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 15964

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Mr. Napoli is saying that he wants to increase the taxes by two percent to capture that \$762,000. That what it would do.

Attorney Charles Smith stated and not pull it from the unappropriated balance. It is in lieu of pulling it from the unappropriated balance. The Motion is to have a two percent tax increase and not pull the \$762,054 from the unappropriated balance. He stated that is the Motion in front of you and it has been seconded. He stated that Motion should be discussed and there should be comments on it.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if they could just confirm that Natalie has heard everything and is following. She stated that she knows sometimes connections get choppy.

Ms. Natalie Santos stated that she is here. She thanked Ms. Gerlach and stated that she hears everything.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked for comments from his colleagues.

Ms. Natalie Santos stated that she has a question. She stated that she wants to make sure she is understanding clearly. The amendment that is being proposed right now with the second amendment does that mean they are not able to vote on it to add back the Sustainability position.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is a whole other and it is still available. It sounds like now that Mr. Napoli amendment gives Council the opportunity to decide up or down on a two percent tax increase. If they were to pass that as a body, then they can move on to the amendment that Mr. Zucal presented that would have a change funding mechanism. He asked Mr. Zucal is that is correct.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that is correct.

Ms. Natalie Santos thanked Council.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were comments from the public.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that just so we are clear, a no vote means that they do not suggest the two percent. A yes vote means they are against it.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that a no vote means zero percent tax increase.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated before you vote on the budget as amended could you adopt Budget Memo II.

A motion was made by Santo Napoli, seconded by Candida Affa, to Add the two percent tax increase to the Bill.

Yes: 3 - Candida Affa, Daryl Hendricks, and Santo Napoli

No: 4 - Cynthia Mota, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Natalie Santos

Enactment No: 15964

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that this is just to arrange some accounts that were wrong in the budget.

A motion was made by Ed Zucal, seconded by Ce-Ce Gerlach, to Adopt Budget Memo II.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 15964

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he guesses Natalie was asking about the Sustainability position. He stated that is another possible option you have now to add the Sustainability position back into the budget and take the

money from unappropriated balance. If anybody wants to make that Motion.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he thinks Mr. Hanlon lost them on Number 2. He asked Mr. Hanlon how did he describe it.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that all it does is change some accounts. It is a Budget Memo from Bina. it just changed some numbers. Some accounting numbers. He stated that they just got that recently.

Attorney Charles Smith asked has anybody made a Motion to add the Sustainability position back into the budget. He stated that he does not believe that has happened.

A motion was made by Candida Affa to Adopt Budget Memo #2 which is a No Tax Increase. The suggested changes of the two percent proposal increase. No new positions. Retaining increased to Police Captains and EMS and reducing the unappropriated balance by an amount to have a budget with no tax increase resulting in \$762,054.

Enactment No: 15964

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that they got a first and a second. This was add a Sustainability position back into the Budget. It would be 11N at \$66,976 in the Parks and Recreation and it would be funded from the unappropriated balance. It was a note that they will evaluate this at the end of the 2024.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any comments from his colleagues.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that this has come up a few times and he did not know much about it, but he made some phone calls, did some research, and the more he learned, the more he realize that this is a position that is going to really benefit our residents. He stated that when they talk about environmental justice, they talk about what this Coordinator can do for our residents. He made a phone call to the Sustainability Coordinator in Harrisburg who has been doing it for a few years. He stated that he filled him in and talked about the benefits to this position. For starters, he brought in more grant money than what he was paid. His position was essentially budget neutral based on the grants that are coming in. What really interested him was how they benefited their residents in Harrisburg. By having a Sustainability Coordinator, they partnered with PPL and used funding from the grants that they received in the city of Harrisburg, the Sustainability Coordinator, but also the grants that PPL had and together they went into homes, many of them low income and found ways to reduce low energy costs for residents. It is one thing that they have been hearing for months at the podium how residents are overburdened with costs of of

everything. The more he looks at the Sustainability Coordinator, he looks at it as a way to help the residents to actually get their energy costs reduced. There isn't a cost to the city based on grants that are coming in. It is a position that he believes that they have to invest in. He stated that he is used to that. He recently opened up a new business and paid a lot more for mirrors than he should have. The reason why he paid a lot more for fitting room mirrors is because these mirrors have lights in them and they really look great. He wants to sell more clothing. No doubt about it. Folks love them. His point is that they have to invest in a position to get the rewards of that position. If they keep looking at it as \$66,000, they don't want to do it, but they have to look at what it is going to bring in and how it is going to impact our residents. He stated that again, he is hearing it nonstop, our residents are struggling. Here is an opportunity to help them and to him that is something that he has to look at and again, he made the calls, he has done the research. He asked them to Google Sustainability Coordinator, the first 50 that shows up, 48 of them are cities looking for them. He asked are they going to be one of the cities that and is obviously something that is important to a lot of other folks. It makes sense from a business standpoint and he looks at it as a way and always saying that they have to help their residents. This is a great way to do it. He stated that he is for it and he hopes his colleagues will be too.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Napoli and asked if there were any other comments.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that the only thing that he is not sold on is Mr. Napoli mentioned that they get grants and things like that. He stated that the city has a Grant Coordinator already. To him, they are duplicating the service. He stated that he is not saying that it is not any good in it. He stated that they are duplicating what they already do.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that is his thought process too. He spoke to the gentleman and his name is Chris and has been there for a few years, recently left, but he said the same thing that the Sustainability Coordinator position was to procure grants that were only available if that position was there. There are grants out there that they will say ok, we have this much grant money and we are going to give it to these cities, but they need to ensure that there is someone there that they know it was allocated properly. If that position isn't there, that city becomes disqualified.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated to Mr. Napoli that he can speak to a very concrete example. The Biden -Harris administration just announced \$2 Billion in funded through a Notice of funding opportunities for Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change grants which will award 150 cities around the country grants of up to \$10 million for Climate Change

mitigations. It would include investments in homes and increasing energy efficiency in homes. They will have a very compelling application here in the city of Allentown. The grant deadline is March of 2024. Should Council fund and the administration hires a Sustainability Coordinator that would be job one to partner with a nonprofit organization in the city of Allentown to apply for funding under that program. There are a host of things and smaller grants that are available like that and could be competitive on. As they said they would evaluate the position at the end of 2024 and make a decision at that time about the ongoing sustainability of the Sustainability Coordinator.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked about the current Grant Coordinator the city has doesn't have that ability to do that.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they can complete the application, but typically the application is looking for as Mr. Napoli mentioned, somebody who holds a position and who coordinates around that particular works. So Grants Coordinator or Grants Manager for the city is managing a host of different grants including our Fire Department, our Police Department, but they don't have those police skills. They wouldn't be able to receive those types of grants if they did not have professionals within the city who could act as Grant Liaisons. In a similar vein, if they are applying for grants under a Sustainability Program, they are unlikely or unwilling to make awards to organizations that don't have somebody with that area of expertise. That is where the opportunity is for it.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that it is a great opportunity if it is going to bring money to the city. If in 2024, they can take a look at that and see if it is bringing revenue and if it is not, they can not fund it anymore. She stated that she thinks that is fair.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that her concern is that they just voted to not raise taxes and to take money out of the bank account which means that this will be another \$66,000 and benefits and whatever comes up. She stated that she gets the importance of the position, but also takes seriously the fact that they are taking money out of their bank account and taking more money. She asked is it possible, she was just on the EPA's website and asked are there grants to cover such positions since this would be more like a Pilot position rather than taking money from our Fund Balance and instead getting a grant to cover this.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated possibly unlikely. He stated what he will offer to them and he is sure they read the news that the city of Bethlehem just received \$10 million for the Safe Roads and Streets. That is because they did the hard work years ago to make investments in planning to prepare

them to receive that type of funding. They could apply for a grant for, but he doesn't think one is available, but let's just say there is a grant available through the EPA. They go through the grants process. It would take months to hire the person and that it would then put them in a position to apply for additional funding. They have an opportunity to do that. You just setting yourself back a significant amount.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated when the EPA stated on the website that they offer technical assistance.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated technical assistance is when you call into the EPA as a grant writer and they walk you through preparing the grant.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked about implementing a plan.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they are not hiring an employee for you.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if the mayor thought the first year the \$66,000 can come back to them.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he was recently at a conference where there was funding made available for a Youth Climate Action Program that he expressed interest in and will continue to pursue that started off at \$50,000 to activate youth and climate change projects. He is hopeful that they can win a grant like that. It is more likely to be awarded if they have somebody on staff who has that in-depth knowledge. They have a great Environmental Advisory Council. They will speak to the need of this position, but they are not full-time staff. They are volunteers. They can only do so much. They are funding opportunities through various different philanthropic organizations through state government, through the federal government for climate change mitigation. It is money that they don't typically have access to and don't have a professional staff that is focused on climate change and sustainability.

A motion was made by Natalie Santos, seconded by Santo Napoli, to add back the Sustainability position into the Budget.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 15964

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that he would like to suggest a Motion that they make this contingent on a one year Pilot Program and at the end of that year, let's review it and see how they have done.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that you can do that and he knows that it would chill the applicant pool. An applicant may not be interested in taking a job. He stated that he believes in the market too.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that for those that are reluctant, that is something to certainly look at.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she would possibly look to supporting that through a one year. It would be helpful to understand. There are a lot of different positions that would be great to have. How the administration determined that the Sustainability Coordinator and originally the Equity Office was supposed to have a second position. How is it determined that this is the position to kind of fight for versus the other positions. It would be helpful.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they spoke with member of Council to express some interest in supporting this position and other members of Council who did not express interests in supporting other positions. He stated that Ms. Gerlach's own awareness of the potential revenue generating ability of a position may increase in Council supporting the position.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked Mayor Tuerk to speak about the benefits again of having this position.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that there is a host of grant opportunities that are available. At a previous meeting, a member of the public talked about finding revenue through federal grants, through state grants. The one that he brings up is the one that was forwarded to them by the Environmental Advisory Council. The deadline for applications is March of 2024. The awards will be in May of 2024 and dollars would start to hit in 2024. That was one particular program that offered up to a \$2 billion total funding across the country. In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, they specifically mentioned funding 150 communities at about \$10 million for Tract I which is kind of a more intensive grant, and then they mentioned funding 20 communities of about \$3 to \$4 million for Tract II. That is probably one of the larger opportunities available to the city of Allentown. There are a host of smaller opportunities in the \$50,000 to \$500,000 range.

Mr. Ed Zucal asked if there is a chance that they can use that vacant IT position to fund it.

Mr. Gerry Anthony stated that they are hopeful to fill that position. He works for the city of Allentown and is here to do what's best for the city. That is something that they can discuss.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that when they propose a position that Council voted on in the Budget, they post those positions because they intend on

filling them. The 20 police officers that they have on the books, it is his intent to fill them. He is hopeful with the support of Council they would be able to accomplish that.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated fair enough and asked Ms. Patel are there any other place where they can get \$66,000.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that it is not that simple.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that bus left. He asked any other accounts. He stated that they are talking \$66,000.

Ms. Bina Patel stated that there expenses are so much. When they went with the two percent, the Department heads have given back.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated fair enough. He stated that he is good with her answer.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks opened it up to the public for comment. If anybody wishes to speak, step forward.

Ms. Dawn Godshall stated that she agrees with the mayor in that the position is a critical position in order to get certain grants that are involved. Community Action has told the city that they are interested in partnering with the city to get these larger energy sustainability grants and they are happy to do so. It is really important. Having that position is a heavy lift to write these grants. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of time. They need partners to do this. Even the person who is hired. She stated that she can't attest to who will be hired and whether or not they will do a good job, but you really do need this kind of position in order to get the kind of funding that the city is talking about trying to get for energy and sustainability. She stated that they are happy to partner with the city in that regard.

Mr. Dietrich Kretschy stated that he has been a resident for about a couple of years. He asked Mr. Napoli a question. What is the guy in Harrisburg getting paid? He stated that he does not have to answer. It is just a thought for him. He spent 15 years working at universities and he was at the beginning of when a Sustainability Directors were even thought about. He worked with 50 - 60 campuses and most of those campuses were 1,500 to now 80,000 students down in Florida and they started slowly hiring Sustainability Directors. They did that for one reason and one reason only. Because there was money to be had. They were wasting money on HVAC, on electricity, on gas, on water, on grounds. Nobody was controlling that. That had departments that they worked with on Solid Waste, but no one was sitting there overseeing what needs to be cut. When do they cut it? What companies they can go find? The industry has done an incredible job

in making sure that the environment is protected. No one is reaching out and knowing them. He stated however, Mr. Napoli said that trash is going to be a problem next year. The American public spends about 3.4 pounds per person in trash per day. That is going up to over five pounds per day. The United States use to recycle at about 30 - 32 percent recycling rate. That is dropping down to 19 percent and more. He stated to Mr. Napoli to his point about trash, it is going to get expensive and not because the driver is making more money. Because it costs more. A position like a Sustainability Director, and he is not going to talk about his position on the EAC in which he is a member. The reason they wanted him on is because of his experience on solid waste and working with universities. He stated that this position will get money. Does it get it the day after they get hired or she gets hired, no. Does it take time, yes. The person has to know how to write grants or get someone to write the grants. The grants are specific for the position. It is not the other way around. It is specific to the position. The person who comes onboard as the Sustainability Director oversees and takes a look at all the things that need to be done for the city and where is the most critical point. Where is the push button that has to be done in order to begin to fix the problem. There is a lot of money out there. He asked what is the guy getting paid in Harrisburg. It isn't \$60,000. You really has to think that through and no pain, no gain. You got to invest to make it back.

Ms. Betty Cauler stated that she just wants to address what Mr. Napoli said about the Sustainability person can go into low income homes and tell them how to save energy. There are all kinds of programs already that do that. She stated that 10 years ago and she thinks it was through PPL working with she believes the county. She stated that the next Council meeting she is going to try to bring the information. There are people that will do that. They went to her house and went through everything. They decided that her refrigerator was old and using too much energy. They gave her a new refrigerator, all new LED lightbulbs, carbon monoxide and fire detectors. They just went through everything. That was a free service and she paid nothing for it. Everything that they gave her was free. She stated that there are things out there that already do that. If they need this person to do this kind of stuff, it is not necessary. She stated maybe \$60,000 is a good price. She is a tree hugger. An ordinate recycler. She stated that she recycles everything. If this person really going to do something that is going to help everybody, but the kind of things that Mr. Napoli brought up, there are already programs that do that. PPL gives you money back if you recycle your refrigerator, your air conditioner, or that kind of thing. They give you money back. She wanted to let them know that there are programs that do that. She thinks it is through the county.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he wants to make sure that he is not

interrupting. He stated that he is not sure if he didn't speak clearly about it. He did mention to him that they work with PPL and they go into homes and do what PPL won't do. For instance, PPL will do exactly what you said. He wants to say it is Act 129.

Ms. Betty Cauler asked what else they could have done.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated gas service, water. He stated that the person told him that they work together with PPL.

Ms. Betty Cauler stated that this group was working with PPL.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that they weren't replacing PPL. They were working in tandem.

Ms. Betty Cauler stated that they would get you insulation if you need insulation. PPL doesn't do insulations. She stated that it is already there.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that is something that PPL would not do. It will fill the gaps. He stated no, because PPL isn't doing everything. They are filling the gaps.

Ms. Betty Cauler stated that she thinks it was a county group and stated please don't hold her to it. They came in with PPL, together and they would have done everything. She stated that she will bring the information at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that it is not all they do. It is just one of the things that they do. They do other things, like lowering the cost for the city services and city buildings. He mentioned that as something that intrigued him. He stated that the residents are struggling. They hear it a lot. He stated that it is important and a way to serve the residents and provide something to help them.

Ms. Betty Cauler asked by the next Council meeting if they can get a printout of what these people are going to be doing. What there job duties are for her information. She knows it is something that is worthwhile that is not going to be doubling up on what they already have as Mr. Zucal brought up.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is the job description for the Sustainability Coordinator that was provided during a previous Council Agenda.

Ms. Betty Cauler stated the whole job description, ok.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that she will look for it. Thank you.

Ms. Maria Ocasio stated that she is a resident of Allentown and the chairperson of the Allentown EAC (Environmental Advisory Council). She would like to say that the folks are very well aware that the city of Allentown is at a pivotal juncture and shape with our energy, our clean energy future. The city needs a dedicated Sustainability Manager to do so. She is thoroughly impressed that some of them did their due diligence and your research as to why. She thinks some clarification and some insight is needed. She heard what does this role do and what's the purpose of it. She stated that it is a valid question. The role would serve as a crucial link between the stakeholders, facilitating the efficient utilization of the federal, state, and other available funds to begin programs that would sustainably lower energy costs for both the city and its residents. Moreover, the position would be instrumental in addressing pressing issues like lead contamination in the homes, and a formulation of an affective Climate Action Plan. For residents grappling with the affordable housing programs that reduce energy expenses, this plays a pivotal role in enhancing housing affordability. The Allentown Environmental Advisory Council has put forth recommendations to the city which you can see online if you guys like to for implementing renewable energy and energy efficiency incentives to no financial burden to the city. However, the absence of a Sustainability Manager is blocking the progress of AEAC's proposal. She stated that herself and the other members here are adamant about what they do, but they are volunteers essentially. They need a full-time person who is committed to this role. It just can't be put together a piecemeal together by a volunteer committee. It is just not going to be effective. To fully leverage the funding opportunities, Allentown has access to, they need a Sustainability Manager to coordinate the execution of lead remediation and weatherization projects for the benefits of Allentown residents. This role will also be pivotal in securing additional funding to sustain and expand these projects. To herself and her members, it is concerning that Allentown has been lagging significantly behind other cities in accessing funding and establishing transformative programs due to the lack of dedicated funds to do so. Numerous cities have attested to the value of this role which Mr. Santo Napoli has rightly noted. She thanked him. Which not only pays for itself through cost-savings, but also generates additional funds through strategic incentives. As a citizen of Allentown, she implored them to please consider this opportunity. Do your due diligence and research. Again, this information has been available for some time.

Mr. Kyle Ropski, 528 N. Berks Street, stated that he sits on the EAC and speaking in support of the Sustainability Coordinator position. He can talk about the benefits of sustainability pretty much all day, but he wants to focus on the business side of this. He has been watching these meetings and it

has been a concern of Council and of the public and making sure the residents of Allentown are getting the best bang for their buck, making sure everything is efficient. The best way to talk about it he wants to also bring up the Sewer and Water rates. They have gone double digits. In the last few years. Everybody knows that. That is a real financial burden that people have to pay. He stated that they asked why are these rates going up. You guys know this. It is EPA, Act 537 Administrative Order and he doesn't need to speak about it. It is all public. This is transparent. It is on the website. We have the Environmental Protection Agency, placing regulations on the city and LCA and the taxpayers don't have to pay for this. He stated boil it down. That is what is happening. Unfortunately, more of these regulations are coming. In a couple of years, you are going to have the state and feds breathing down your neck asking you what have you done to reduce your Greenhouse Gas Emissions. What have you done to make your buildings energy efficient? How much of your fleet have you converted to electric vehicles? He stated that right now they may have some answers to those questions, but they don't have a point person to answer those questions. He stated that they may not personally agree with some aspects of Sustainability. They may not ever drive an electric vehicle. As a Councilperson, they have to do what's best for the city and need to except reality and reality is that these changes are coming and they are going to come with a price tag and the residents are going to have to pay for it. That is not cool. Right now, they have an opportunity to tap into billions of dollars of funds that are associated for Sustainability related practices. He stated to Ms. Gerlach that they would love to have the position funded off the bat, but unfortunately, they are not doing that. It is hard and it is few and far between. That is why Councilperson Napoli said if Google it, everyone wants one. Because it is that important. They have the money. It is available and an opportunity to do it right now. Even if the city wouldn't have that actual manpower to do some of these projects. As the mayor said, they can work with community groups and work with the people that are already here in the city doing work. Better yet, keep the money with them. Keep the money in the city. Stimulate the local economy and it is a win/win across the board. The return of investment with this is through the roof. If it is not through the roof at the end of the year, get rid of it. If it doesn't give back what they are telling it is, you can come and say Kyle, at the EAC you were wrong. It did not give us the investment, but stated that he is so confident that it will and this will be a good thing for the city. He employed them to include this. He stated that he knows it is bad that it is coming from the unappropriated balance, but they already kind of did that stating let's just roll with it. This is important to get rid of it on the basis of it not being cost effective is very fiscally irresponsible and factually ignorant. If you do a little bit of research on it, you will see what the rewards are. He implored them to please consider this position. It is a win across the board.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that he would just say that based on what he said, a one year trial is not unreasonable. If it doesn't work out, Council can pull it. He stated that is reasonable.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that Council does that through the Budget process.

Attorney Charles Smith stated to make an amendment to your Motion.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated to make it a Pilot Program and review it at the end of the 2024.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he is fine with that, but his only concern is obviously if they don't hire someone until April, it skews that. He stated hopefully they can find someone quickly.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated to give them a full year.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he would just offer.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that they are doing a Budget Amendment. He stated that he would just put the position in and they can evaluate anybody.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that is true.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that you can cut it in next year's budget.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that they have to vote on that.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that it might be difficult to hire if people know it is only for one year. She stated let's look at it in a year. She stated let's not put it in the amendment.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated to that point she means do they have Muhlenberg College. Do they have folks that are graduating?

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that he is sure they do. He stated that he received numerous emails from them. Probably in excess of 100.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that Mr. Ropski is a graduate he believes of Muhlenberg College.

Mr. Ropski asked if he could speak on it briefly. He did graduate from Muhlenberg in 2022. He was a part of the first graduating class of the

Sustainability major. He can speak and the program is growing. They have one of the best green buildings in the entire country, actually the world on an international level. It actually generates more money through the energy saving techniques it does. Now, in the past, Allentown has used Muhlenberg interns. There was a program actually developed by a Muhlenberg Alum Heidi. It was to help local and small governments develop a Climate Action Plan and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. They worked with a Muhlenberg Intern. Her name was Hannah and she was great to develop the Greenhouse Gas Emissions. That was back in 2019. This was pre Covid. Those numbers are not only not correct, but they were also done by a Muhlenberg intern. It was done by a college intern. They are not accurate. They are not good to reference especially four years later. He stated that they can look to Muhlenberg interns. The Allentown EAC is utilizing a Muhlenberg intern and they have used Muhlenberg interns to provide Reports and presentations. He stated if they recall last year, they gave Council a Report on energy efficiency and energy burden in the city, if they remember that. They have utilized them before, but having a Muhlenberg intern does open you up to the grand opportunities.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated to Mr. Ropski that Ms. Gerlach was asking does Muhlenberg have a pool of talent that they can draw from in hiring.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that they got Muhlenberg. She doesn't know if Cedar Crest is doing anything in this field now a days. it seems like Muhlenberg is the direct connect.

Mr. Kyle Ropski stated that he can't speak to if there is anybody that is in the pipeline right now.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she just Googled and on Salary.com, it is says that the average Sustainability Coordinator's salary in Pennsylvania is \$65,505. She stated that they are a little bit over that.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that was the motivation for it. They are setting it at an 11N.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that they are not going to have difficulties in finding a pool of people to hire.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that with Lehigh University, there is a preponderance of people in the market. He stated that he thinks Mr. Ropski is spoken for. There are other candidates out there as soon as they post the position, they should have a healthy pool to draw from.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that most folks voted in favor of the rezoning of

the State Hospital and in the ordinance, there were not any explicit statements in terms of what will be done with the buildings to make them more energy efficient. Like highly energy efficient. With this Sustainability position, would they dive into policy as well to make sure that developers and as a city that they are doing right.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is a huge opportunity for us. The key task to the Sustainability Coordinator would be to first assess the policies of the city of Allentown and see where those opportunities for improvement. Particularly as they are working right now on updating the Zoning Code, there is an opportunity for a Sustainability Coordinator to weigh in and center our activity around Sustainability in the same way they ask the Equity and Inclusion Coordinator to weigh in and center the activities and policies around equity and inclusion. The short answer is absolutely yes.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if it could hold developers accountable.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is up to you. As City Council people to pass legislation based on the recommendations that are offered to you by a coordinator. That is up to you.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he will add a Number 3, to raise awareness. It is very important. He stated that he thinks they need someone to really raise the awareness of what can be done and how they can do it.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that in light of that, he will drop the amendment as leave this open-ended. It is something that they will review and certainly put it on the administration. At the end of that year, to see if it is something that they should be continuing.

A motion was made by Daryl Hendricks that they make this contingent on a one year Pilot Program and at the end of that year, let's review it and see how they have done.

Enactment No: 15964

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 15964

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that this is their last chance to suggest to slightly increase.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if anybody wishes to speak.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Enactment No: 15964

ADJOURNED: 7:58 PM

[15-6503](#) Budget Information

Attachments: [BM 1](#)

[Budget Memo 2 - CED BSS Lead HHP Grant accounting change
12.12.23.JP](#)

[Mayor's 2% Proposal Final](#)

[BUDGET MEMO- BP's memo to council 12.12.23](#)

[Proposal](#)

[Admin Proposed](#)

[Budget - Charter](#)

[Financial Procedures \(7\)](#)

[15-6435](#) Veto Message
Mayor's second proposed adjustment

Attachments: [Veto Message](#)

[BP-Final-2 Percent Reductions One Page Summary](#)

[2 Percent Reductions One Page Summary_revised 11.7.23 4.00pm](#)