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WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

## Minutes

Westfield City Council Finance Committee  
June 9th, 2016

### **FY17 Budgets for Clerk's Office, Board of Registrars, City Council, Health Dept, Community Development, Zoning/Planning, Conservation, and Council on Aging**

Councilors Matt VanHeynigen and Dave Flaherty present  
Councilor Bob Paul absent

Councilors Babinski, O'Connell, Figy, and Onyski in attendance.

5:30 PM Opened meeting.

Motion from Councilor Flaherty to accept the minutes of the June 7<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting with the School Department. Councilor VanHeynigen 2<sup>nd</sup>, VOTED 2-0 to accept the minutes.

Councilor Flaherty started each session with departments by discussing broad goals of the Finance Committee with regards to reducing the budget to avoid massive tax increases and withdrawal of funds from limited Free Cash. Committee is looking for budget cuts and revenue opportunities. No recommendations will be made by the Finance Committee until Councilor Paul is back and the entire Committee can discuss, deliberate, and make recommendations.

#### CLERK'S OFFICE

Karen Fanion briefly reviewed the line items in the Mayor's FY17 proposed budget. She discussed staffing, elections, salary adjustments per contracts, need for occasional overtime related to elections, purchase of services and supplies.

Councilor Onyski asks about Municode. Mrs. Fanion explain the Municode was a web-based product that presents the Charter, Rules, and Ordinances of the City and that the budget includes annual updates so that the most recent Ordinance changes are available. She mentions that Municode has cross-referencing and that previous versions of Ordinances are available through the website. Councilor Flaherty suggests that \$5500 per year relates to about 50 hours of work for Government IT Contractors, and that maybe the city IT Department could provide similar website services for lower cost.

Councilors asked about Archival Preservation. She explains that the City Clerk has an obligation to preserve public records and that the Archival project has been going well. This is a long-term project and funding requests will continue to part of the budgets.

Councilors Flaherty and VanHeynigen asked about the voting machines that were in the Capital Budget discussed at a prior meeting. Mrs. Fanion said that are required by law within a couple of years, and that the City needs to upgrade the system shortly. Due to budget challenges and lack of immediate need, they are not in the FY17 budget. Due to the upcoming Presidential Election, the office is busy and the new machines would not be used for that election. She expects to submit a budget request in the near future.

Councilor O'Connell asked about the Clerk's Office website and updates. Mrs. Fanion explained that the Clerk's Office can post most things directly but needs occasional help from the IT Department.

Councilor Figy asked about the last time fees were raised. Mrs. Fanion says about 8 years ago. Councilors and Mrs. Fanion have brief discussion about fees and the efforts made by the department for fee-based services. Councilor Flaherty suggest the potential for raising some fees since the fees are low, "customers" need the services, and a small change in fees will not deter the demand for the services. Genealogy research fee is very low and does not cover the cost of providing the services. Councilors Flaherty and VanHeynigen suggest that City should evaluate fees, and will recommend action to Finance Committee and City Council as a whole.

Mrs. Fanion will be sending current fee chart to the Finance Committee.

#### BOARD OF REGISTRARS

Mrs. Fanion gives brief overview of FY17 proposed budget. She explains the Census and Street Lists process and books. Street Books that contain list of registered voters cost \$17 to print and sell for \$25. Electronic copies sell for \$10. Councilors suggest that fees may be increased.

Councilor Babinski asks if Voke can print the books. Mrs. Fanion not sure. Councilors suggest investigating that option.

#### CITY COUNCIL

Mrs. Fanion gives brief overview of FY17 proposed budget. Compensation is based on Ordinance. The expense line item decreased because the Photo Session for councilors was dropped because it's not required until next year when the 2016-2017 Councilor's photos will be taken for the archive.

Councilor Onyski asked about business cards. Mrs. Fanion says they are not available and that even she doesn't have cards. Councilor O'Connell says that Engineering Department prints them on-demand in small batches and suggests Councilor Onyski reach out to them.

6:05 PM - HEALTH DEPT

Director Joe Rouse reviews line items in proposed FY17 budget. Briefly discusses staffing, increase in costs due to contracts, small amount of overtime, and stipend paid for staff member to take minutes at meetings. A severance is still being paid to former Director.

Mr. Rouse talked about dump stickers and heavy traffic to office. Councilor Flaherty asked why stickers weren't processed in collector's office since they handle other payments. Mr. Rouse likes the idea and said it will free up some of his staff time for other work load.

Purchase of Services includes: conferences related to certifications and staying of top of current issues, certifications for inspectors, soil evaluator required for perc test, vehicle repairs, and printing.

Councilor VanHeynigen asked about conferences. Mr. Rouse explains that they are an opportunity to get education for certification in one setting, and are a good use of time and money.

Councilor Flaherty asked about fees, Mr. Rouse explains they haven't been raised in a few years. A brief discussion takes place between councilors and Mr. Rouse about various fees and work effort required for inspections and re-inspections. Some fees may not cover the cost of providing the services. Mr. Rouse explained that they also handle billing and collection of fees. Councilor Flaherty asks why doesn't department just enter the bill into the computer and let a finance department worry about billing and collections? Mr. Rouse likes the idea, but says integration between departments would be needed to ensure compliance, and that he's not sure Munis can do it. Councilors VanHeynigen and Flaherty suggest that fees be evaluated by Health Dept, Finance Committee and City Council.

#### NURSES

Mr. Rouse reviews line items in nursing budget, and explains the role of Public Health Nurses. Discusses concerns and demands related to public health issues, refugee population, and inoculations.

#### LANDFILL

In order to provide Mr. Rouse and Finance Committee to spend adequate time on the Landfill Budget, Mr. Rouse agrees to return on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 (since changed to 5:00 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>).

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / ZONING / PLANNING

Director Peter Miller provides councilors with a copy of a detailed document dated January 22, 2015 entitled "FY 2017 Budget Request" that he submitted to the Mayor. It's a nicely written summary that he uses to present his budget request to the committee.

He reviews staffing, projects, change in funding for his position (using CDBG funds for portion of salary), shared admin, and occasional overtime. Councilors and Mr. Miller briefly discuss economic development, parks, and other initiatives of page 3 and 4 of the document. Mayor reduced requested budget of \$34,520 to \$23,520. \$10,000 of request is to pursue a PARC grant – state program that may help fund park enhancements. Maybe Hampden Ponds? May ¾ baseball field? Councilors not excited about \$10,000 Parking Study.

Mr. Miller reviews \$20,000 request for Economic Development. It's pre-development costs that are required to get projects shovel ready.

Mr. Miller discusses \$6,800 board line item. There's an issue regarding whether or not this is supposed to be paid. He says we'll know more shortly.

Mr. Miller explains CDBG process and budget. He received unexpected income from old projects that has given him some extra funding this year. He briefly discussed Best Retail Practices programs and grants. Not sure of effectiveness of grants, but training is well attended and beneficial. Some grant recipients have since closed-up shop. He wants to expand Housing Improvement Program that help low-income residents repair life-safety or roof issues with homes, and improves quality of life and home values in target areas. He briefly discusses: Library and Park upgrades, and Soo's acquisition and demolition with councilors.

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Karen Leigh quickly reviews proposed FY17 budget. One staff member and commission.

She explains the role of the Conservation Commission and the interactions she has with developers. Councilors ask about fees and fines. She recalls only a couple of fines in recent years. Councilors suggest opportunity for more revenue. She thinks that in most cases the builder, developer, or property owners are cooperative once they understand the law.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

Executive Director Tina Gorman review proposed budget for FY17. She discusses increase in services provided at new Senior Center. Daily volume is way up (300 seniors per day). Budget is up due to new center and higher volume of services provided. She operates on a tight budget and as promised she is returning some unused funding from FY16 budget (\$5,300).

Councilors ask about opportunities for revenue in fees or rental of facilities. She explains that in the past the primary audience was very low income (she can tell based on their address and the state and federal services they receive or qualify for). The new facility attracts a broader mix, and

maybe there could be new opportunities? She'll think about it with her board. She's not excited about facility rentals. Other facilities have had problems and revenue hasn't justified the headaches. The janitorial staff is on very limited hours and can't cover events. She's worried about damage to kitchen or other parts of facility. Limited staff is available to supervise events, and limited resources are available to promote and manage rental transactions. It's not their core business, and they are swamped as it is.

She thanked the Friends program who has raised a lot of money to support the Senior Center.

VOTED 2-0 to adjourn the meeting.