

STUDY SESSION
FY2023-2024 Proposed Annual Operating Budget &
Capital Improvement Programs
CITY HALL, Fifth Floor
6801 Delmar Blvd., University City, Missouri 63130
Tuesday, June 20, 2023
5:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, Mayor Terry Crow, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay arrived at 5:38 p.m.
Councilmember Aleta Klein arrived at 6:30 p.m.
Councilmember Steven McMahon
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson
Councilmember Dennis Fuller

Also in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr., all of the City's Directors, and Deputy City Manager, Brooke Smith.

2. CHANGES TO THE REGULAR AGENDA

None

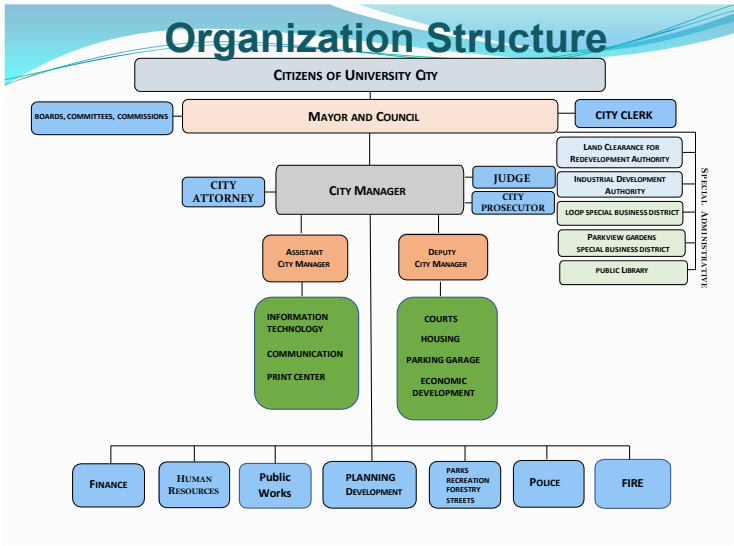
3. FY2023-2024 PROPOSED ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Rose thanked Council for the opportunity to present the Proposed Annual Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program. He then recognized all of his Directors, Deputy City Manager, Brooke Smith, who did much of the work, and gave special reverence to Finance Director, Keith Cole and his staff.

FY2023 has turned out to be a very challenging year. No one expected that on top of COVID, there would be a historic flood. So, while the City is still recovering, it survived and is still in a very strong financial position.

Priorities Established by Council

- Economic Development
- Public Safety
- Improved Infrastructure
- Community Quality of Life & Amenities
- Encourage High-Quality Growth
- Prudent Fiscal Management
- Employees



- The positions of Judge, City Prosecutor, and City Attorney, now align with the City Manager
- The Public Area Maintenance Division; currently known as Streets, is being proposed as a new division in the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department.

Residential Property Taxes - Where Does it Go

Description	Rate/\$100	% of Tax Bill
State of Missouri	0.0300	0.4%
St. Louis County	0.4180	5.5%
Community College	0.2787	3.7%
Special School District	1.0495	13.9%
Metro Zoo Museum District	0.2528	3.3%
University City School District	4.3430	57.6%
City of University City	0.5810	7.7%
University City Library	0.3520	4.7%
Miscellaneous	0.2413	3.2%
Total	\$ 7.5463	100.0%

Residential Property Tax Bill

Example: House Market Value - \$215,000

Assessed Value \$40,850 (19% of Market Value)

$$\text{Tax Bill} = 40,850 \times 7.5463 / 100 = \$3,083$$

Description	Amount	% of Tax Bill
State of Missouri	\$ 12	0.4%
St. Louis County	170	5.5%
Community College	114	3.7%
Special School District	429	13.9%
Metro Zoo Museum District	102	3.3%
University City School District	1,776	57.6%
City of University City	237	7.7%
University City Library	145	4.7%
Miscellaneous	99	3.2%
Total	\$ 3,083	100.0%

- Based on this scenario the City will receive approximately \$237.00

FY2024 Annual Budget

Major Highlights - FY2024

- Assumes a Reduced Tax Rate being recommended by St. Louis County, compared to FY2023
- Provides a 2% COLA increase; (*separate and apart from the 5% Merit increase*)
- RPA-2 Fund Changed to the Third Ward Revitalization Fund

- Reflects Additional Revenues to be Received from the Markets at Olive Development, i.e., Costco
- Reflects Additional Revenues to be Received from the Marijuana Tax
- Creates Public Right-of-Way (R-O-W) Maintenance Division
- Reflects A Portion of the 2019 Recommended Solid Waste Increases
- Establishes an Equipment Replacement Fund; *(puts the City in a position to stagger the purchase of equipment when it reaches life expectancy)*

All Fund Summary - Governmental Funds

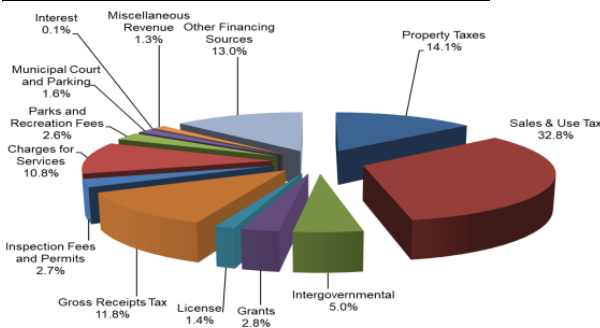
Total Revenues:	\$40,245,239
Total Expenditures:	\$42,253,516
Ending Fund Balance:	\$18,332,617

FY2024 Revenue Sources - All Funds

	Amount	Percentage
Property Taxes	\$ 7,046,214	14.1%
Sales & Use Tax	16,378,000	32.8%
Intergovernmental	2,517,054	5.0%
Grants	1,382,769	2.8%
License	723,284	1.4%
Gross Receipts Tax	5,907,000	11.8%
Inspection Fees and Permits	1,329,500	2.7%
Charges for Services	5,367,000	10.8%
Parks and Recreation Fees	1,300,000	2.6%
Municipal Court and Parking	781,780	1.6%
Interest	41,534	0.1%
Miscellaneous Revenue	637,493	1.3%
Other Financing Sources	6,503,696	13.0%
Total Revenue	\$ 49,915,324	100.0%

- **Most of the cities' revenue is derived from the Sales & Use and Gross Receipts Taxes. As a result, the Hancock Amendment exemplifies the importance of working to diversify the local economy.**

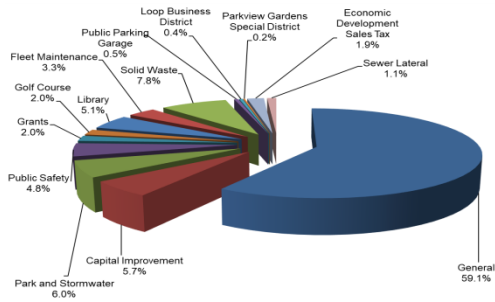
FY 2024 Expenditures/Percentages



FY2024 Expenditures - All Funds

	Amount	Percentage
General	\$ 30,744,129	59.1%
Capital Improvement	2,976,337	5.7%
Park and Stormwater	3,131,914	6.0%
Public Safety	2,487,548	4.8%
Grants	1,035,315	2.0%
Golf Course	1,022,204	2.0%
Library	2,677,831	5.1%
Fleet Maintenance	1,723,784	3.3%
Solid Waste	4,077,093	7.8%
Public Parking Garage	252,416	0.5%
Loop Business District	208,700	0.4%
Parkview Gardens Special District	103,500	0.2%
Economic Development Sales Tax	1,010,165	1.9%
Sewer Lateral	555,908	1.1%
Total Expenditures	\$ 52,006,844	100.0%

FY2024 Expenditures/Percentages



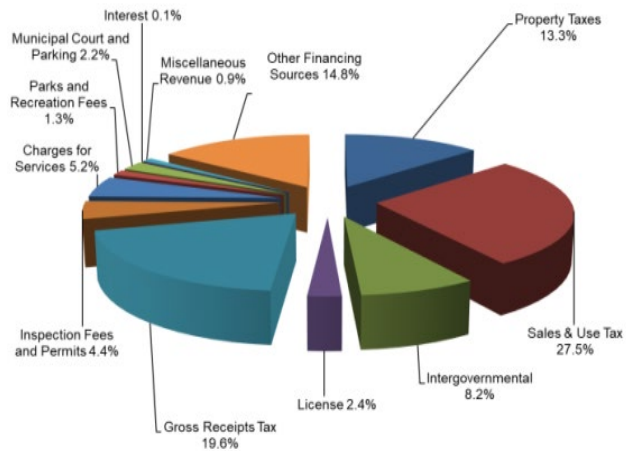
FY2024 General Fund Highlights

- Maintains Current Staffing Levels
- Provides Funding for Public Safety Equipment and Training
- Provides Funding for Gallup Surveying and Training
- Creates a Public R-O-W Maintenance Division under Parks, Recreation, and Forestry
- Establishes a 37 percent Reserve Fund Balance; *(expected to increase due to the Charter settlement of roughly \$950,000)*

FY2024 General Fund - Revenue Sources

	Amount	Percentage
Property Taxes	\$ 3,998,285	13.3%
Sales & Use Tax	8,288,000	27.5%
Intergovernmental	2,470,000	8.2%
License	720,300	2.4%
Gross Receipts Tax	5,907,000	19.6%
Inspection Fees and Permits	1,329,500	4.4%
Charges for Services	1,556,000	5.2%
Parks and Recreation Fees	400,000	1.3%
Municipal Court and Parking	667,400	2.2%
Interest	37,000	0.1%
Miscellaneous Revenue	282,000	0.9%
Other Financing Sources	4,457,696	14.8%
Total Revenue	\$ 30,113,181	100.0%

FY2024 General Fund Revenue Sources/Percentages



FY2024 General Fund - Transfers In

Capital Improvement	1,186,000
Park & Stormwater	1,466,674
Public Safety	1,366,362
Sewer Lateral	57,220
Solid Waste	45,000
Parking Garage	153,220
Golf Course	93,220
Econ Dev Retail Sales Tax	50,000
Total Transfers In	\$4,417,696

- Utilizing the General Fund to make payments simplifies the financial trail for auditing purposes
- The FY24 Budget proposes that all funds begin to pay back the General Fund; (additional details contained in the transmittal letter provided to Council)

FY2024 General Fund - Transfers Out

Third Ward Revitalization Fund	\$92,000
Fleet Internal Service Fund	\$1,654,000
Total Transfers	\$1,746,000

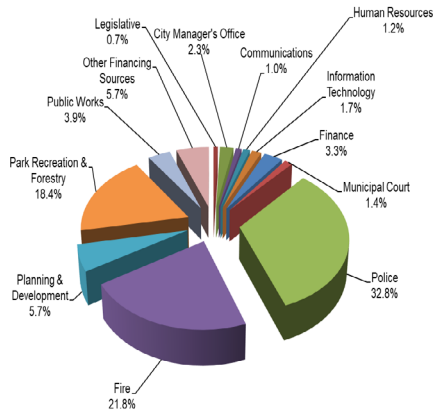
- The actual transfer recommended for the Third Ward Revitalization Fund is \$108,000.
- The Fleet Internal Service Fund provides maintenance for all equipment

FY 2024 General Fund - Expenditures

Expenditure by Department	Amount	Percentage
Legislative	\$ 227,280	0.7%
City Manager's Office	719,495	2.3%
Communications	309,831	1.0%
Human Resources	367,433	1.2%
Information Technology	515,923	1.7%
Finance	1,008,718	3.3%
Municipal Court	435,965	1.4%
Police	10,088,531	32.8%
Fire	6,697,796	21.8%
Planning & Development	1,767,020	5.7%
Park Recreation & Forestry	5,668,460	18.4%
Public Works	1,191,677	3.9%
Other Financing Sources	1,746,000	5.7%
Total Expenditure	\$ 30,744,129	100.0%

- 73 percent of all funding is allocated for public services; Fire, Police, Parks, Recreation & Forestry, and Public Maintenance

FY2024 General Fund Expenditures/Percentages



General Fund Summary

Total Revenues:	\$30,113,181
Total Expenditures:	\$30,744,129
Ending Fund Balance:	\$11,495,490 + Settlement

Department Highlights

City Manager's Office

- Maintains Current Levels of Service
- Will seek Amendment to Add Citizen Satisfaction Survey; *(conducted biennially)*

Finance Department

- Will seek to elevate an accountant position to fill the need for a Purchasing Agent/Manager
 - Currently, the City does not have the capacity to monitor minority participation and generate interrelated reports
- Maintains Current Service Levels

Human Resources

- Maintains Current Service Levels
- Fund Gallup Surveying and Training; *(assists in providing employees with the best environment, training, and working experience)*

Police Department

- Fund Speed Trailers/Radar Signs
- Fund Surveillance Cameras for the Parks
- Fund Replacement Vehicles & Equipment
- Fund Unmanned Aerial Vehicle/Drone
- Fund the Updating of Computer Servers/Software

Fire Department

- Maintains Current Staffing Levels
- Fund Communication Radio Replacement
- Fund Drone Replacement

Public Works

- Fund Renovation of Annex & Trinity Buildings
- Fund Street Maintenance Program

- Fund Curb and Sidewalk Maintenance Program
 - Reduced funding is being proposed for the Maintenance Programs as a result of the 2 million dollar investment
 - Canton Avenue improvements were not included in the 2 million dollar investment
- Proposed Funding for Automated Side Alley Loading Truck; *(from the Solid Waste Fund)*
- Proposed Funding for (1) Dump Truck Replacement
- Allocate Funding for Bridge Maintenance

Planning & Development

- Fund Nuisance Abatement Lots
 - Demolition Costs
 - Emergency Board-Ups
- Maintain Current Service Levels
 - There will be a need to review the Zoning Codes after the Comprehensive Plan has been updated

Parks, Recreation & Forestry

- Proposed Funding for Jack Buck Field Restoration
 - \$300,000 in improvements
 - Golf course improvements will be undertaken if the City is successful in securing a grant
- Proposed Funding for A Dump Truck Replacement
- Proposed Funding for Annual Tree Trimming Program
- Proposed Funding for the Dog Park Restoration
- Proposed Funding for A Skid-Steer Loader Replacement
- Proposed Funding for the Tree Replacement Program
- Proposed Funding for the Hazardous Tree Removal Program

- **The Heman Park Pool is scheduled to reopen on Saturday. The daily hours of operation will be from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.**
- **The cost of restoring the gym at Centennial Commons is estimated to be 1 million dollars. The City has the option of waiting for FEMA's approval or utilizing funds from the Capital Improvements and Parks & Stormwater Funds**
- **FEMA has granted approval for the City to move forward with the restoration of fencing and the Dog Park**

Summary of Other Funds

Public Safety Sales Tax Fund

Total Revenues:	\$2,291,000
Total Expenditures:	\$2,487,548
Ending Fund Balance:	\$ 372,501

Capital Improvement Fund

Total Revenues:	\$2,801,200
Total Expenditures:	\$2,976,337
Ending Fund Balance:	\$1,791,274

Parks and Stormwater Fund

Total Revenues:	\$2,001,000
Total Expenditures:	\$3,131,914
Ending Fund Balance:	\$ 902,990

- This Fund was severely impacted by the flood
- Council approved the construction of a detention basin which the Corps has estimated to be 14 million dollars. Staff is recommending that the City's portion of that cost, which is 3 to 4 million dollars, be covered by the General Fund and reimbursed from the Parks & Stormwater Fund

EDRST Fund

Total Revenues:	\$1,000,500
Total Expenditures:	\$1,010,165
Ending Fund Balance:	\$3,098,438

- Anticipated Proposal for a Beautification Project from the EDRST Board

Third Ward Revitalization Fund

Total Revenues:	\$ 304,000
Total Expenditures:	\$ 0
Ending Fund Balance:	\$3,292,000

- This ending fund balance still needs to be reconciled

Equipment Replacement Fund

Total Revenues:	\$ 100,000
Total Expenditures:	\$ 0
Ending Fund Balance:	\$ 100,000

- This balance represents a transfer from the Solid Waste Fund

Amendments

- Citizen Satisfaction Survey; (estimated cost \$25,000)
- Increase Transfer from General Fund to Third Ward Revitalization Fund; (16,000)
- Award In Charter Settlement; \$817,000 to \$950,000

On The Horizon

- Financing Construction/Renovation of Annex and Trinity Building
 - There is a need to identify a mechanism that can be used to retire this debt
- Solid Waste Rate Increase
- Detention Basin Construction Project
- Non-uniform Retiree's 2 percent COLA
 - The last COLA adjustment was in 2007
- Uniform Pension Plan
 - No COLA recommendation is being made for this plan since it falls under the 80 percent requirement needed for additional financial impacts
- Flood Recovery
 - The purchase of equipment
 - The repair of non-emergency facilities; i.e., Public Works' yard and
 - Centennial Commons

Councilmember Clay posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. Are there any projects related to IT being proposed?

A. Yes. And I can provide you with a list of those projects.

Q. I would ask that staff look at two issues; Cyber security, which has become an increasing threat, and automation upgrades that enhance a citizen's ability to access City services. Having the ability to pay online or perform more services online could lead to a positive fiscal impact.

A. Cyber security is a top priority that will require additional investments. And staff will present its recommendation to retain a new cyber security firm at the next Council meeting. As it relates to the second suggestion of advancing to a City Hall that is accessible 24/7, this is a project that has been identified by the IT Department and should have been included in the Work Plan.

Q. Is Jack Buck Field inoperable?

A. Yes.

Q. When do you anticipate that it will be up and running again?

A. If we are successful in obtaining the grant that will allow us to invest a large amount of money upfront, and the goal would be to have it ready by next summer. And while Council has the option to decide whether this should take precedence over some of the other improvements, keep in mind that Public Works is still performing many of its operations out of the community center.

A. (Mr. Dunkle): The other issue is that the entire outfield is located in the floodplain which may require special permits along with the restoration. So, at this point, they are looking at other locations in the event an alternative plan is needed.

Mayor Crow stated his understanding was that the City would be the party responsible for issuing permits. Mr. Dunkle stated depending on the level of work permits may have to be obtained from the Corps of Engineers since it is in the floodplain.

Councilmember Clay asked Mr. Rose if he could provide a broader explanation of the proposal to Fund Nuisance Abatement Lots? Mr. Rose stated staff has resumed the abatement and demolition of dilapidated houses, which is a major undertaking. So, the intent is to continue funding that program. Councilmember Clay asked how many houses had been demolished? Mr. Rose stated the last demolition that occurred was under the direction of Clifford Cross.

Councilmember Smotherson posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. Are you aware of what type of beautification project the EDRST Board is interested in proposing?

A. The project is geared towards implementing the Olive Corridor Plan established in 2007/2008. And while some amendments may be necessary, it does provide an opportunity to review what was proposed for sidewalks, lighting, and a potential theme for creating notable entryways that traverse throughout the Corridor and Delmar Boulevard.

Q. Page 26 states that the recommendation is to reduce the funds for street maintenance. Can you explain why?

A. Yes. The proposal is to reduce funding for FY2024 and return to the full amount next year. Because in addition to what has been highlighted under Streets and Curbs, is work that needs to be completed on Canton. And the funds for that work were not included in the 2 million dollars allocated for improvements. Canton represents a major project and Public Works has a lot on its plate, so that's why he recommended the reduction.

Q. Will the funds being requested for the Fire and Police Departments be used to replace their existing drones?

A. Yes, that is correct.

Q. Are you recommending that \$92,000 be taken from the General Fund and placed into the Revitalization Fund?

A. No. To be consistent with the Redevelopment Agreement I am recommending that \$108,000 be taken from the General Fund and CID, and placed into the Revitalization Fund.

Mr. Mulligan stated technically, the CID is not generating revenue for the City, it reimburses the costs associated with the redevelopment project. So, while the City will receive sales tax revenue from the development; as well as certain payments identified in the Redevelopment Agreement, \$92,000 represents that annual amount. And if the developer is successful in securing a significant grocery store operator then that amount will increase.

Mr. Rose apologized and stated that the \$108,000 will come from the City, but \$92,000 of that amount is derived from the CID.

Mr. Mulligan stated hopefully, both the \$92,000 and \$16,000 will come from the TIF if they can secure a grocery operator. And additional sources of funding that include the sales and property taxes received from the RPAs will be made available for the 3rd Ward's revitalization.

Mr. Rose stated the idea was to provide 10 million dollars over twenty-three years for the 3rd Ward's revitalization. And the funding structure approved by Council will accommodate that.

Councilmember Smotherson stated Heman Park is falling apart, yet he was unable to find any plans for these much-needed improvements:

- The graveled parking lot
- The dilapidated wooden rails encompassing the parking lot
- Additional lighting, and
- The antiquated platform and stage

He stated U City has had one of the most popular concert series in the City of St. Louis for several years, so he thinks these improvements are long overdue. Mr. Rose stated Council has the ultimate authority to make decisions on what improvements should be made, and that includes allocating a portion of the budget for improvements in the Parks & Recreation Department. However, as indicated in his transmittal letter, this budget is focused on getting the City back to its normal operations because the impact of the flood has resulted in the need to expend more than 14 million dollars. And while some of that will be reimbursed by FEMA, a substantial portion of that dollar amount will have to be incurred by the City. Council's direction to staff was to give top priority to restarting the City's emergency services and resuming its normal operations. So, some of his recommendations are related to funding these areas since he has no idea if or when FEMA will grant approval to move forward or what the exact costs are going to be.

Mr. Rose stated he believes Herman Park is a beautiful facility and a wonderful amenity for the community. So, while he may not necessarily agree that it's falling apart, he does agree that it needs some improvements. It's just a question of establishing priorities when there is limited funding and so many needs. And that's what he believes this proposed budget does while ensuring that the City maintains its very strong financial position.

Councilmember McMahon posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. Street maintenance is mentioned under Parks as well as Public Works, can you explain the difference between the two?

A. *Public Works will focus on the annual capital improvements for curbs, sidewalks, overlays, and minor engineering projects. The street maintenance mentioned under Parks refers to the recommendation to change the Street Division to the R-O-W Maintenance Division, which places it under Parks, and creates a combined maintenance division that focuses on the routine maintenance of streets and parks.*

A. *(Mr. Dunkle): The Parks Department will now undertake the day-to-day maintenance of potholes, cracks, sealing, striping, sign replacements, leaf collection, snow removal, etc., and Public Works will be responsible for capital improvement projects.*

Q. While there was an increase for the smaller projects Mr. Dunkle mentioned, will that be enough to account for inflation and ensure that the City can maintain the scope of work conducted in the past?

A. *Yes. In fact, the reason he is recommending that the two divisions be consolidated is to give staff the capacity to do more repairs than they've been able to complete in the past.*

Q. Were you able to determine whether the rate increase for Solid Waste would allow you to roll yard waste stickers into the customer's bill so that staff no longer has to deal with those stickers?

A. *Funding has been proposed to update the 2019 Solid Waste Study, where one of the goals will be to look at rolling yard waste stickers into the bill.*

Q. Does this budget include the staffing levels that will be needed to manage the operations at Centennial Commons once the renovations have been made?

A. *The objective is to marry the improvements with the staffing levels needed to ensure that the facility runs smoothly. In addition, staff has recognized that the City needs to do a better job of marketing its facilities and letting people know about these wonderfully competitive amenities.*

Councilmember McMahon stated he would agree that the City's interface with residents needs upgrading. He stated residents are still complaining about their inability to find things on the website, and the commission/board members have not been updated since he was the liaison, and that was years ago. Councilmember McMahon stated he was at Heman Park on Sunday and also noticed that the wooden barricades were falling down.

Councilmember Fuller asked what the charges for services under Revenue Sources entailed? Mr. Cole stated in the General Fund they include ambulance services, weeds, debris, and police contributions related to resource officers. In the Solid Waste Fund, they include refuse fees.

Councilmember Hales posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. Is residential trash billed twice a year?

A. Yes.

Q. We are not the only City that has had solid waste budget challenges. Clayton never billed for trash but will begin to do so this year. Their six-month proposal is about \$100 more than what U City currently charges, however, they will be billing on a quarterly basis. So, given some of our challenges with collections, might it be a better strategy to bill quarterly? There will be additional costs associated with mailings, but it would be a smaller bill. I don't recall what the 2019 Study suggested, but it would be interesting to learn what other communities are doing.

A. *Any proposed rate increase will be presented to Council before going into effect to ensure there is a clear understanding of the impact it will have on residents and businesses. So, it will not go into effect automatically once the budget is approved. Off the cuff, I believe the study suggested a 3% increase for residents and a larger percentage for multi-family and commercial.*

Q. While I don't think our municipal property tax rate of .581 per \$100 of assessed value has changed in roughly seven years; my understanding is that the County was making an effort to identify properties that were flooded and conduct reassessments. However, some of the comments I've been hearing and reading on social media seem to indicate that the County's efforts may not have been successful. Has the County been in touch with the City about any of its flooded properties?

A. *Yes, they have but I don't recall what they were planning to do with that information internally.*

Dr. Wagner stated staff sent the County Assessor a variety of spreadsheets several months ago, but he has not received a response or any additional information. Councilmember Hales stated some people saw significant increases which were probably not warranted based on the tremendous suffering they've already incurred as a result of the flood. So, it would be wonderful if the properties on those spreadsheets could be reassessed. Dr. Wagner stated he has had conversations with a few of the impacted homeowners who informed him that they had been successful in getting their property taxes reduced. So, if Mr. Rose approves, he will send a message to the Assessor to see if he can get an update.

Mayor Crow posed the following questions to staff:

Q. On several occasions the auditor has recommended that the City continue to look for ways to separate functions in the Finance Department, and I'm not seeing any proposed changes in that area other than the creation of a new position. Are there any other plans to address those concerns?

A. *Yes. The audit's constructive criticisms in this department were to reconcile the bank accounts and reduce the number of journal entries being made at the end of the fiscal year. I know that Mr. Cole has taken action to address both issues, but I'll let him provide you with the details.*

A. *(Mr. Cole): The main thing was the reconciliation of grants and the number of journal entries needed to accomplish that task. We are working with other departments, like Public Works; which generates the vast majority of our grants, to reconcile the funds anticipated versus those received.*

Everyone seems to have a handle on how to mitigate this problem, so I'm optimistic that this issue will be resolved before the next audit.

Q. Page 8 indicates that 13% of our revenue is coming from "Other Financing Sources". And I think that anything over 10% should be identified and not merely listed as other or miscellaneous. Is there some way for you to explain or identify what those sources are so that everyone understands what constitutes that percentage?

A. (Mr. Cole): Yes, I can include a description or add a footnote. For this fiscal year, the 13% is made up of transfers-in, totaling \$6,503,000, and insurance reimbursements totaling \$40,000.

Q. Does the 32.8% and 21.8% listed on page 17; represent constant percentages for the City's Public Safety budget?

A. (Mr. Rose): Yes, it's been relatively constant. But it's not unusual for any municipality to have a large percentage of its overall budget dedicated to Public Safety. Now, as we continue to grow our commercial businesses those numbers will probably increase because additional staff will be needed to provide adequate policing services for developments like the Market at Olive once it is nearing completion. However, the hope is to balance that out by encouraging businesses to hire their own private security.

Q. How many open positions do we currently have in Public Safety?

A. (Chief Hampton): While we are over 80% staffed, our problem is related to the attrition of our staff. Two graduates will be sworn in on Friday and hit the streets on Saturday, but we've had one 26-year veteran officer and another 25-year veteran officer that have recently retired. So, we seem to be trading personnel for institutional knowledge. I'm working with Mr. Rose on sponsoring a police academy utilizing innovative techniques that I believe will assist us in staying above that 80%.

Q. Are the percentages about the same for Fire?

A. (Chief Hinson): Fire only has one opening and the hope is that we will have it filled by next week.

A. (Mr. Rose): Keep in mind that for both Police and Fire, this is a very difficult time for trying to recruit personnel, which means that we need to start focusing on technology, like drones, as well as staffing, to maximize the balance and assist us in our policing efforts.

Mayor Crow stated he thinks everyone recognizes that the jewel of the City's parks system is Heman Park. Yet, he cannot recall ever having a conversation about the unpaved parking lot or any of the issues being mentioned. So, while he certainly appreciates these conversations, he's also trying to find the disconnect. Why haven't some of these issues ever risen to the top of Council's list of priorities or even been discussed? He stated his understanding is that the vast majority of improvements that occur in the Parks Department are derived from the community. And he remembers that Parks used to send out surveys to determine what citizens were seeking from these amenities, but he's not sure if he's seen one in quite some time.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he thinks the disconnect is twofold; people attending these events are not involved in the administrative process; and none of the members on the Parks Commission have even attended a concert. So, when making appointments, he would ask his colleagues to consider stressing the point about the need to participate in events that fall under the purview of those commissions.

Mayor Crow stated Ms. Reese has expressed some concern about the vacancies on some of our commissions; especially those that require specific skills and knowledge. So, he would ask his colleagues to take a look at these and make an effort to fill some of these slots.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the Study Session at 6:55 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk, MRCC