Personnel and Finance Committee Meeting

November 10, 2025

Attendees: Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck, Gray, Sanford, and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Safety Service Director Hitchcock; Auditor Shinn; Law Director Moore; Chris Doseck; Jeremy Uhlenhake; Kerry Duncan-WWTP; Roxann Shaffer-Tax; Brian Davis-Fire; Tom Wale-Police; Council Clerk-Kari Fox

CM Clausen called the Personnel and Finance meeting to order at 6:00 pm to discuss the 2026 budget.

Roxann Shaffer, Tax Administrator, discussed Budget Review

1. Capital Expenditures:
2. none planned for 2026
3. Payroll:
4. confirmed as 100% general fund; no significant changes
5. Software Changes:
6. Notable increase in incidentals due to purchase of new authority tax software as older software was sunsetting
7. Introduction of e-filing capability (added costs)
8. Additional software for CPA- submit client tax returns (Insource), resulting in extra software costs
9. Major differences in 2022 verse now attributed to software upgrades

Brian Davis, Fire Chief, discussed Budget and Capital Expenditures

1. Capital Expenditures:
2. Miscellaneous Tools & Hose Fittings-$3,000-standard annual replacements, stable expenditure
3. Confine Space-$2,000-standard annual replacements, stable expenditure
4. Water Rescue-$2,000-standard annual replacements, stable expenditure
5. Personal Thermals-$1,600-(Thermal Imaging Cameras) transition from large expensive units (cost $5,000-$15,000 each) to smaller portable units ($700 each); plan to equip all firefighters entering fires, up from shared equipment previously; currently 3 in service; this purchase will provide 2 more, covering a whole shift except the driver
6. Dry Suits-$4,000- (Dive Equipment) new diver doesn’t have a suit; potential private donation may cover this expenditure
7. Desktop & Laptops-$4,500-2 laptops and 1 desktop- carried over from last year; need for laptop upgrades to update vehicle software (e.g., Knox-Box Keys)
8. Battery PPV Fan-$5,000-(Positive Pressure Ventilation Fan- battery powered) 1 new lightweight battery powered ventilation fan to replace heavier fuel-based model
9. Insulation Vacuum-$4,800-upgrade to a wet/dry insulation vac for more effective use during fire clean-up
10. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) (2)-$5,000-adding 2 units for medic vehicles to allow quicker response from the field; supports both staffing flexibility and rapid deployment
11. Station SUV-$50,000 & Station SUV Upfitting-$25,000-propasl for and SUV command vehicle ($75,000 total including upfitting); expected to improve response times for command staff and reduce usage/wear on other apparatus; modeled after St. Mary’s command setup: includes radios, lights, and gear storage; would reduce mileage/costs on existing trucks and prolong their service life; purchase is timely, ahead of schedule truck replacement in 2027
12. Fire Station Engineering-$1,500,000-$1.6 million in planned spend against a $3.1 million fund balance; $160,000 budgeted for engineering (estimated 10% of total station cost, range 7-12% possible); intended for future fire station improvements
13. Operating Budget & Staffing:
14. Payroll:

* Fully staffed upon replacement of a retired Lieutenant
* Payroll projections include potential retiree payouts (Jon Schumm eligible in 2026/2027 but actual date uncertain)
* Assistant Fire Chief salary included as contingency
* Discussion about the fluctuating ambulance payroll line, explained by retirements (high-end salaries being replaced by lower starting salaries) and adjustments for county EMS levy support ($300,000 increase allowed more staffing)

1. Uniform Allowance:

* $37,000 budgeted, covering new hires and turnout gear/equipment upgrades beyond contractual uniform allowance
* Contract stipulation- $420 per person uniform allowance; additional funds cover gear replacements and heat-related upgrades

1. Training and Travel:

* Increases to support full staffing and professional development
* Includes support for 2 members at fire school, conferences, and hands-on training for younger staff

1. Fire Prevention Budget:

* Budget increased to rejuvenate fire prevention programs following personnel turnover and inactivity in 2024
* Intent to purchase supplies like helmets for public education
* Career-Day events (recently attended Tri-Star’s Career Day), high school outreach planned, but recruitment through high school was stalled- new leadership yet to be assigned for youth/mentorship program

1. Health and Fitness:

* $16,000 yearly to cover:
* Over $9,000 covers annual physicals for staff
* Shift from gym memberships to bulk equipment purchases and in-house gym maintenance
* Staff has forfeited the $210/yearly for in-house gym equipment

1. Equipment Maintenance:

* Noted spike in 2024 (up to $71,000), attributed to unexpected repairs, later decreased by cutting non-critical costs

1. Fire Pension Transfer:

* Line item based on payroll, no change in allocation approach

1. City Hall Building (Fire Department manages):
2. Heating Repairs:

* Budget adjusted to previous spending levels after one-time boiler repair in 2024
* Current reliance on gas-forced heat systems; boilers now off-line

1. Cleaning:

* Routine janitorial services for City Hall (including Courts); not included for Fire Department Facilities

1. Capital Improvements:

* Noted some City Hall areas remain in disrepair awaiting renovation as part of comprehensive project (restrooms, former dispatch area)
* No immediate action until feasibility study/renovation plan finalized

Tom Wale, Police Chief, discussed Budget and Capital Expenditures

1. Capital Expenditures:
2. Patrol Vehicles- request for 1 new marked and 1 new unmarked vehicle (Durango):

* Marked Patrol Car (Durango)-$45,000; Upfitting-$25,000
* Unmarked Car (Durango)-$42,000; Upfitting-$15,000
* Marked Car- state bid pricing, may be supplemented by local dealer competing on price (Buds)
* Upfitting includes lights, radios, cages, with differences in spec between unmarked (street appearance) and marked (patrol/interior durability)
* Vehicle choice based on reliability and agency trends, preference for Durango midsize SUV
* Discussion on retiring older vehicles (2013 Charger or Truck), potential interdepartmental transfer (Truck- to Parks/Public Works)

1. Computers (4)-$10,000- ongoing annual replacements for both desktops and mobile units; issue noted: cradle point routers (GPS/wireless in vehicles) now unsupported and replacement cost much higher, now $2,400 each (up from $800-$900); plan to purchase for new vehicles with gradual replacement in existing fleet
2. Firearms and Gear:

* S&W M&P40 optic ready (20)-$12,500
* TLR1 Lights for Weapons (20)-$4,000
* Trijicon RMR Weapon Sights (20)-$11,000
* Holsters (20)-$3,200
* Planned replacement of service pistols and related equipment (every 10 years as standard)
* New sidearms: Smith & Wesson M&P 40 2.0 (metal frame, optic ready)
* Lights and red-dot sights- (Trijicon preferred after field testing)
* Holsters upgraded for new sight systems; all weapons/holsters are firearm specific
* Trade-in of old pistols expected to defray purchase cost
* Current sidearms are also M&P40, new purchase maintain ammunition compatibly
* Modernization improves accuracy, safety, reduces liability; tested/trained during year prior to request

1. Operating Budget & Staffing:
2. Payroll:

* Full staffing except 3 officers still in the Police Academy (expected to graduate in April 2026)
* No major cash-outs/retirements anticipated; previous years budget higher due to payouts for retirements

1. Radio Maintenance:

* Maintenance and replacement costs up due to new radio needs and batteries; recent individual replacements cost several thousand dollars
* Related service contracts also rising, reflecting software and hardware support

1. Prisoner Sustenance:

* Increase costs for inmate care/hospitalization when prisoners booked under city code requiring medical attention
* Challenges in recouping these costs: city must pay, per law/judge
* Some costs (e.g., reading CT scans) are exceptionally high and not always negotiable, despite requests for “Medicaid rates”
* Officer judgement needed on when to hold or release suspects to manage costs and risks

1. Staff Fitness and Training:

* Extra attention to new hires in academy; increase focus on physical readiness to ensure completion- officers participating in additional runs and fitness checks
* Some academy failures historically come from fitness shortfalls

CM Clausen scheduled a Personnel and Finance Committee Meeting for November 17, 2025, at 5:00 pm.

CM Clausen adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Kari R. Fox, Clerk of Council