

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MONDAY – NOVEMBER 11, 2019, LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
380 N. WILMOR ROAD, WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

Mayor Manier called the regular Committee of the Whole meeting of November 11, 2019 to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Library meeting room at Five Points Washington.

Present: Aldermen Adams, Black, Brownfield, Butler, Dingledine, and Stevens.

Absent: Aldermen Cobb and Yoder.

Also present: City Administrator Forsythe, Controller Baxter, Public Works Manager Schone, P & D Director Oliphant, Police Chief McCoy, and City Clerk Brown.

MINUTES

1. Aldermen wishing to be heard – None.
2. Citizens wishing to be heard – None.
3. Approval of Minutes: Alderman Dingledine moved and Alderman Brownfield seconded to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
4. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - A. Council Goal Setting Workshop Executive Summary – City Administrator Forsythe provided a summary of the workshop noting the following top six Council goals that were recommended in priority order: 1) complete new Comprehensive Plan; 2) consider comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan; 3) adopt Capital Improvement Plan; 4) create Master Development Plan for the W223 property; 5) visit roles and responsibilities of mayor, council, staff & citizens; and 6) reduction in spending. He added that the summary will be coming as a resolution at the next Council meeting for adoption. It was noted that it will be made available on the City’s website once it is in final form.
 - B. Washington Fire Department SAFER Grant – City Administrator Forsythe provided a summary of the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant noting its challenges with the short turnaround time to officially accept (November 13, 2019) the grant as well as not having a projected funding source in place to cover the additional expense of six new full-time Fire Fighter/Paramedics beyond the three-year grant period. He shared in reviewing the financials he recommends working with the Washington Volunteer Fire Department in finding other solutions to their staffing needs. Fire Chief Traver shared their commitment to move forward in looking at other options as well. Further discussion ensued on how the trend has changed in the area on volunteer availability during daytime hours and its challenges; the benefits of having dual roles of fire fighter/paramedic; and how the City and Fire Department will continue working together to provide the best possible service to the residents.
 - C. Stratford Bridge Water Main Extension – Public Works Manager Schone provided information on the Stratford Bridge project noting the following: project was bid in June 2019 and came in over engineers estimate so it was rejected; the moving of the water main was not a part of the original scope of work and we were unaware of the need until engineering progressed on the project; pricing was sought on the cost to move the water main and came in estimated at \$75,000 to bore PVC from Kingsbury Drive to Yorkshire Drive; Hutchison Engineering had IDOT pull the project from the bulletin schedule to allow for the water main extension to be included in the bidding; and a new bid opening date will be discussed soon with hopes of a late December date. Alderman Brownfield shared that Public Works Committee discussed and is in support of this item being added to the scope of work. It was the consensus of Committee to move this item forward to City Council for consideration.

D. Tax Levy Options – City Administrator Forsythe shared that four options are being presented for consideration noting that the levy for fire and ambulance is being identified this year which is a more transparent way to budget for this service as we move forward and will no longer be considered a General levy. Controller Baxter shared the following based on the FY19-20 budgeted revenues and property tax distribution of taxing bodies: City property taxes account for 5.6%; the City's tax represents 5.52% of the entire tax bill; 2018 the tentative EAV for 2019 is \$350K and we are adjusting to \$348K to take care of year end adjustments that occur, resulting in a virtually unchanged EAV compared to the prior year rate of \$348K and is the third consecutive year the EAV has been or is projected to be flat; the special levies require a total tax levy of \$1,387,142 which is a \$75,486 increase from the prior year largely due to a required change in the mortality table for the Police Pension Fund. She shared the following options for consideration: Option 1) establishes fire and ambulance levy equal to prior year General Fund levy, increase of \$75,486 with no change in the funds available for the fire and ambulance contract due to the increase in the special levies and no change to the EAV, and increases tax rate to \$.49447 from prior year of \$.47292; Option 2) increase General Fund levy to pre-tornado level, establishes the fire and ambulance levy up to a total of \$360K which was the 2013 levy amount for the General Fund, net increase of \$23,915 in funds for the contract and the overall levy would increase by \$99,401 which also reflects the increase to the special levies, and the tax rate would be projected to increase to \$.50133, resulting in an overall increase of 6.03%; Option 3) includes 75% of the fire and ambulance contract costs in the levy, net increase of \$215,642 for the contract and the overall levy would increase by \$291,128 which also reflects the increase to the special levies, and the tax rate would be projected to increase to \$.55635, resulting in an overall increase of 17.67%; and Option 4) fully funds the fire and ambulance contract costs from the tax levy, net increase of \$399,551 for the contract and the overall levy would increase by \$475,037 which also reflects the increase to the special levies, and the tax rate would be projected to increase to \$.60912, resulting in an overall increase of 28.83%. She mentioned a historical tax rate table was included dating back to 1981 as well as information on the Police Pension Fund actuarial study results. It was noted that a truth in taxation hearing would not be required under option 1 but would be required in options 2-4. Further discussion ensued on the following: limited options in funding from other sources; increased expenditures in funding planned and future capital improvement projects; increasing costs to taxpayers and finding solutions to help alleviate the burden; having dedicated funds that cannot be shifted around; revenues to fund council goals from recent workshop and how accomplishments will play a part in increasing our EAV; educating residents on the tax levy fundamentals; some favorability in reallocating funds differently and determining how we make better spending choices without increasing the levy vs. the feasibility of impacting the tax levy prior to knowing any potential budget decreases, showing some favorability in setting the levy somewhere between options 2 and 3; and how a 0% increase impacts capital improvement projects, recent goal setting accomplishments, and increased costs. Following discussion, direction was given to prepare options showing a 7.5% and 9.5% increase in the levy as well. Alderman Stevens commented that it would be a good faith gesture to speak to other portions of the property tax bill and Mayor Manier shared that he has had conversation with someone who shared ideas on this topic and plans to arrange a meeting to talk on this topic. Alderman Stevens asked if the parking follow up meeting has occurred with High School Superintendent Freeman and City Administrator Forsythe indicated it had not taken place yet. She asked if the parking signs will conform to what is in the ordinance as some streets have different signage and City Administrator Forsythe indicated that more follow up work on the signage is needed as they relate to what is written in the code and they will continue working together on the parking issues.

5. Other Business – None.

6. At 7:58 p.m. Alderman Dingledine moved and Alderman Adams seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Patricia S. Brown, City Clerk