

CITY OF SALISBURY  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
May 15, 2023

Public Officials Present

Council President Muir W. Boda  
Council Vice President April Jackson  
Councilmember Michele Gregory

Mayor John R. Heath  
Councilmember Angela M. Blake  
Councilmember Megan Outten

In Attendance

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Water Works Director Cori Cameron, Fleet Auto Mechanic Chase Bennett, Deputy Field Operations Director Sam Ireland, Field Operations Director Mike Dryden, Chief Tull, City Attorneys Heather Konyar and Ashley Bosché, and Assistant City Clerk Julie English

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The City Council convened in a hybrid Budget Work Session at 5:04 p.m. in Council Chambers.

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow reviewed the changes made to the initial budget due to previous comments received from the public. He added that there were representatives from several City departments available in the audience to answer questions or further explain items in the budget.

Proposed revenue increase changes:

- Elimination of the Fire & Life Safety Fee tax
- Universal property tax increase of 5 cents
- Water & Sewer rate increase of 10%

The actions to follow these changes would include:

- Re-advertise the Constant Yield Tax Rate on Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>
- Public Hearing on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>

Proposed cuts, reductions, reallocations and savings:

- Reduce City staff pay raise by 2% (\$720,000)
- Cut Master Electrician position (\$82,151)
- Reallocate SFD radios to PayGo (\$145,000)
- Cut increase in SPD vehicle maintenance (\$45,000)
- Cut Tactical Team stipend (\$40,000)
- Cut canine care and maintenance stipend (\$24,059)
- Cut CID on-call stipend (\$20,800)
- Cut Employee Recognition (\$10,000)
- Cut Code Compliance Demolition Funding (\$8,000)
- Cut increase in Poplar Hill Mansion budget (\$55,000)
- Cut increase in Government Office Building improvements (GOB) (\$50,000)

- Elimination of ballistic vests for firefighters (\$107,000)
- Cut four patrol vehicles (\$300,000)

Total savings: \$1,607,010

### **Questions and Comments**

Ms. Jackson asked if the ballistic vests would be completely eliminated. Mr. Kitzrow responded that it was one of the recommended proposals.

Ms. Blake questioned the four patrol vehicles. Mr. Kitzrow noted the ballistic vests and patrol vehicles were added to the budget at the Council level. In reference to the police vehicles, there were ten vehicles on order plus an additional two. The proposal would defer purchasing four additional vehicles for the FY24 budget.

Ms. Gregory asked for clarification on the vehicle maintenance. Mr. Kitzrow clarified that a \$90,000 increase in vehicle maintenance was requested by the Salisbury Police Department and \$45,000 was approved. They are proposing to take away that \$45,000.

Ms. Jackson revisited the topic of ballistic vests. She asked, for their safety, if there were any grants available to assist in obtaining the vests for the fire department. Mr. Kitzrow clarified that the vests were an “all or nothing” purchase. Chief Tull addressed Council and explained that there are limited opportunities for grants and that they generally come from FEMA. The grants are funded based on the higher priority and currently that would be the police department. He added that the vests were fitted to the individual and could not be worn by multiple people.

Ms. Jackson asked if Chief Tull was satisfied with the elimination of the vests. He explained that the calls they received without police presence were the most difficult. He acknowledged he was not ok and disappointed with the decision but understood the position the City was in with the budget.

Ms. Blake asked Chief Tull if he knew when the fire department would be co-responders with the police department to the mass shootings at schools. He responded that he did not know. Ms. Blake wanted that kept at the top of everyone’s thoughts.

Ms. Gregory requested information about the GOB improvements. Mr. Kitzrow explained the west wall of the building had experienced water issues and needed improvements but there may be another source of funding available.

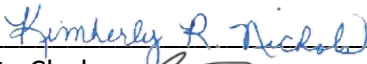
Mr. Kitzrow responded to a question by President Boda regarding Poplar Hill Mansion. He explained that the exterior of the mansion needed painted to stay in line with the necessary standards and an application for grant funding had been submitted.


Ms. Blake addressed the canine care and maintenance cut since the City had recently obtained a new canine. Mr. Kitzrow addressed all three of the stipends that were cut. The stipends were for the employees in those respective positions. They were unfunded liabilities paid for from the vacancies of officers. If the department continued to have vacancies those stipends may be reinstated using salary savings.

Ms. Blake questioned how the salary reduction impacted the fire department's steps. Mr. Kitzrow explained that the reduction would take one step off the proposal but the salaries that were out of line would still be adjusted.

Council reached unanimous consensus to move the proposed budget forward.

With nothing further to discuss, the Budget Work Session adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

  
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City Clerk

  
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Council President