MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020, 4:30 PM
CITY HALL, ROOM 207

A. ROLL CALL.

Present: Barbara Dorff, Veronica Corpus-Dax, Kathy Lefebvre, Bill Galvin.

Also present: Ald. Mark Steuer, Ald. John Vanderleest, Public Works Director Steve Grenier, Public Works Operations Director Chris Pirlot, IT Director Mike Hronek, City Attorney Vanessa Chavez, Finance Director Diana Ellenbecker, Assistant Finance Director Pam Manley, and others.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

Moved by Ald. Kathy Lefebvre, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to approve. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

1. Approval of the Finance Committee minutes from the January 7, 2020 meeting.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to approve. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

D. REGULAR BUSINESS.

1. Consideration with possible action a request by Department of Public Works to use 2020 budget savings from Operations Division table of organization change to fund a pick-up truck for the Building Maintenance Technician for $35,200.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Kathy Lefebvre to approve the Department of Public Work's request to use 2020 budget savings from Operations Division table of organization change to fund a pick-up truck for the Building Maintenance Technician. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

2. Consideration with possible action on a request to increase fees for liquor licenses effective 7/1/2020.

Moved by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax, seconded by Ald. Bill Galvin to approve the fee increases for liquor licenses effective 7/1/2020. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

3. Request approval to award a 3 year contract to ESRI for GIS Mapping Software for $188,400 ($62,800 annually).

Moved by Ald. Kathy Lefebvre, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to award a 3 year contract to ESRI for GIS Mapping Software for $188,400 ($62,800 annually). Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

4. Request to create a resolution that the City of Green Bay pays off more general obligation debt each year than new debt created. Nearly 18-20% of each yearly City budget pays solely for interest on City debt. We must do a better job to reduce our total debt and prioritize our capital expenses so we are not crowding out core services. Many cities and counties are facing these fiscal pressures and the City of Green Bay needs a plan to reduce our debt in the short and long term.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to refer to staff. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

5. Property taxes increased roughly 4.1% for the City of Green Bay property tax payers in 2020. Couple this increase with the water bill rate changes and the average Green Bay home owner had a roughly $100-120 increase to their property taxes. I propose that property taxes for the City of Green Bay <u>would NOT increase more than 1% for the 2021 budget</u>. Green Bay is already one of the highest property tax rates in Brown County. This is causing new home buyers to purse other less expensive properties due to the disparity in property taxes. Ashwaubenon and Bellevue are $450-$500 less on the average home to Green Bay. This is critical if we wish to remain competitive in Brown County for future development and growing businesses.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to receive and place on file. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

6. Report of the Claims Committee

The Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Section 19.85(1) (g), Wis. Stats., for the purpose of conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved. The Committee may thereafter reconvene in open session pursuant to Section 19.85(2), Wis. Stats., to report the results of the closed session and consider the balance of the agenda.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Kathy Lefebvre to receive and place on file. Motion carried.

Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

E. INFORMATIONAL.

1. 2019 Contingency Account:
$53,526.33

2. 2020 Contingency Account:
$150,000.00

3. The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday February 11, 2020 at 4:30 PM

F. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Ald. Bill Galvin, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to adjourn. Motion carried.
Yes- Barbara Dorff, Bill Galvin, Kathy Lefebvre, Veronica Corpus-Dax, No- None, Abstain- None

G. VERBATIM MINUTES.

- Go. All right, it's Finance first tonight, so I'll call the January 28th meeting of Finance to order. Roll call, Alder Galvin?

- Here.

- Alder Corpus-Dax?

- Here.

- Alder Lefebvre?

- Here.

- And Alder Dorff here. I'll entertain a motion for approval of the agenda.

- So moved.

- So moved. Second.

- Moved by Alder Lefebvre, second by Alder Corpus-Dax. All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Approval of the minutes?

- So moved.

- By Alder Galvin.

- Second.

- Second by Alder Corpus-Dax. All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- And, let's do Regular Business. Okay, consideration with possible action on a request by the Department of Public Works to use the 2020 budget savings from Operations Division table of organization change to fund a pickup truck for the Building Maintenance Technician for $35,200.00. Staff.

- At this point there was quite a bit of back-up you have in there, one is the recommendation, the request, and then behind it was also the back-up, when the restructure happened in December, it came from Personnel Committee. I'm not sure if you have any questions, of course we have the Department of Public Works here to speak to this item.

- Yeah.

- Alder Galvin.

- Sure. Is this a new truck added to the fleet or replacing a current truck?

- [Steve] New truck added to the fleet.

- Because we've added on personnel?

- [Steve] Not because we've added on personnel, this would actually be the primary vehicle assigned to the BMTs, that would be the take-home vehicle that they would be responding with. We have found ourselves short of vehicles.

- Okay, so the BMT vehicle is decked out to respond to situations?

- [Steve] Yes.

- And do these employees live outside the City of Green Bay?

- [Steve] I believe there's--

- [Chris] Several do.

- [Steve] Two of the three do, yes.

- And how far out do they live, roughly?

- [Chris] One is the south side of Suamico, about 15 to 20 minutes is the maximum response time, if they'd go to the, actually, to the west side shop. But the idea, of course, on a call is you respond to the scene.

- Right.

- 'Cause you never know how--

- Yeah.

- You never know, it could be far, I guess part of the reason I'm asking is because I know the Police Department does not allow employees that should have a take-home vehicle, that live outside the city, to take home a vehicle, and I'm not sure what it is with other departments--

- [Steve] Parks does.

- Parks does.

- Yes.

- Okay. And I guess my concern is the mileage, how often do they take home this vehicle with this new schedule?

- [Steve] It's on a rotating basis. There are three BMTs, so it would be once every, each person would have it once every three weeks for the weekend.

- Okay, so it's only for weekends?

- Yeah.

- Okay. And do you have any other take-home vehicles?

- [Chris] There are other take-home vehicles in DPW, our electricians bring vehicles home.

- [Steve] As matter of fact we've got electricians--

- [Chris] As far as Luxemburg.

- [Steve] Yeah, well, still?

- [Chris] Yeah, that's right, Ryan went to DMV.

- [Steve] And Jeff was in Denmark.

- Because the potential is we could have someone living as far north as just south of Sturgeon Bay, and all the way out to the far side of Shawano County, if I understand the residency correctly.

- [Chris] For our DPW, our working policy has remained from the time you take the call to the time you respond, our first responders, if you will, in the operations division, electrical, sign shop, you have to live within 30 minutes.

- [Steve] 30 minutes.

- Okay, oh, all right.

- [Chris] So it does limit it quite a bit.

- It does limit where you live.

- [Chris] Pulaski's probably about the furthest that someone can make it. Denmark there's actually one, on an application, I check the addresses for even applicants, and Denmark is just right around the cut-off for the south.

- [Steve] The individual that lives on the south side of Suamico can actually respond to the west side shop in a more timely fashion than I can from my home within the corporate city limits of Green Bay.

- Well that oughta change. They're building town homes on the other side of the river. Okay, thank you.

- [Steve] You're welcome.

- Does anyone else have any concerns?

- No.

- No.

- I'm real okay with taking vehicles home, I think it saves time, and so I have no problem with that.

- Yeah.

- A quicker response.

- [Steve] And again, this is not an additional expense to the city, we're funding the vehicle out of the savings that the city's going to realize this year by changing the BMT program and going from four down to three.

- Three.

- Right, right.

- [Chris] And of course this is a one-time request, it's not from now on it'd be replaced under the regular deal. But there's probably an alderman in here, at least one, who might say that technically it is costing the city because when we agreed to this we were thinking savings to the city meaning less cost to the taxpayers. So I understand it's kind of awash.

- [Steve] What I would say in response to that is talk to Finance Department. DPW is one of the departments that consistently comes in at or under budget each year. Not all departments can say that. And we do it on a pretty big scale sometimes.

- Okay.

- [Steve] This is not something we're just asking for willy-nilly, this is a need.

- I don't think so either, no. You have to have the ability, with the restructuring, it makes sense, and you have to have the ability to respond quickly because the biggest gripe I have is response time with some of our situations, so, all right.

- I'll entertain a motion.

- Motion to approve.

- Second.

- Motion made by Alder Galvin. Second by Alder Lefebvre. Any discussion? All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries. All right, number two. Consideration with possible action on a request to increase fees for liquor licenses effective 7/1/2020.

- Okay, this is the first time we're bringing this to you in many, many years. So we want to open up the door, open up the request, and have a discussion on a proposed liquor license. What's included in the packet is a chart of which licenses we would like to increase from 250 up to 500, or from 400 to 500. It does show roughly, based on the volume we have, how much additional revenue that could bring in on an annual basis. A couple of bullet points there, that liquor licenses are determined locally and must be within the max and the mins. Municipalities are free to set the fees anywhere within the ranges, and they do not have to justify their costs. So again, that's just something that's something that's kind of important to know it. And then these increases would be in line with other municipalities, and you can see the chart below of the different type of fees where other municipalities stand. The reason why we're bringing it now is renewal letters for liquor license go out early March. And that would be effective July 1st, so that's why we want to bring it to you, so you can start opening up this discussion and see what questions you have for us. Of course our clerk is here, so have you any questions, we can certainly discuss them.

- Okay.

- How come we're not raising the fermented malt beverages, Class B License?

- Kris Teske, would you be able to talk to that.

- [Kris] That's at the limit.

- Oh that is at its limit?

- Yep.

- Okay.

- Yeah.

- And what is the maximum limit for the other three? I see that De Pere has some that are higher than the $500.00 that we're asking for.

- [Kris] Yeah, I'm not sure why that is.

- Maybe we shouldn't stir the pot for them or what?

- [Kris] I didn't question, 'cause I got the same answer in 2016 and I just, it's not--

- So your understanding is, are we at the max with these asks?

- [Kris] We would bring it to the max.

- Okay.

- [Kris] Which most municipalities do.

- All right, thank you.

- Yeah.

- Yep.

- You can see we got the other ones too here.

- Alder Steuer.

- [Mark] Thank you, thank you Chair. I just want to know when the last time we did this, raised these prices?

- [Kris] Liquor licenses, it's been a while.

- I know Kris, you said since you've been here, your eight years, you have not increased them. So it's been at least eight years.

- Well, my understanding is the state tax on liquor has not gone up since the '60s either, so. True.

- Truly?

- Truly, it's a very strong lobby.

- Oh.

- Oh.

- Mm hm.

- [Mark] So what are the--

- It would go from 250 to 500 for Class A.

- [Mark] Fair enough.

- A total of 47,000.00.

- [Mark] How much?

- 47,000.00.

- Okay.

- Combining Class AB or Class A Liquor and Class B Liquor.

- [Mark] Has there been any push-back at all?

- I imagine we'll--

- We'll find out now.

- Okay.

- [Mark] I don't know if they're privy to any of this.

- They're probably not. I mean, it's open for them to look at, but if no one noticed it, and they didn't get the Tavern League involved, I'm sure after this, we probably will be hearing something.

- There was, the Mayor has requested that we reach out to the Tavern League. Celestine, the Chief of Staff, had reached out to the Tavern League, and I forget the gentleman's name who's the head of the League.

- [John] Don

- [Steve] Mjelde?

- Yes, one more time, the name?

- [Steve] Don Mjelde.

- [John] Yeah.

- Celestine talked to him, and as long as we stayed within the range of what other municipalities had, he was fine with it, that's the direction I had gotten from the Chief of Staff, that she had that conversation and she said he said that he was fine with it. So we did bring it to their attention, I think, potentially it was on Friday, Thursday or Friday of last week. They let them know it was gonna be going in the packet.

- Okay.

- So that was one of the groups.

- And I think that 500 is not outlandish at all.

- No, not really, it's right in there with like Hobart, and Howard and Ashwaubenon and Bellevue.

- Yeah.

- So.

- Yeah.

- Mm hm.

- All right, okay, any more discussion? I'll entertain a motion.

- Motion to approve.

- Motion to approve by Alder Corpus-Dax.

- Second.

- Second by Alder Galvin.

- Sorry.

- Okay.

- He thinks we usually--

- Any further discussion? All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries. Request approval to award a three year contract to ESRI for a GIS Mapping Software for $188,400.00, $62,800.00 annually.

- So I'm not sure if you have any questions. There's some information in the packet, a copy of the contract, and of course the Director is here to speak to the item.

- Director, would you like to say a few words about your item?

- [Mike] This is our third renewal of the software for three years each time. This software is used in basically every department. We manage the sewers, the roads, the water utilities use it for their pipes. So we're managing $400 million worth of assets with this software. Recently we put trackers on the police officers' phones. We know exactly where they are during Lambeau Field or special situations. So it's logistics management software also. It's basically the front end of request for services. If you put in an address, this will let you know what forward-street technician to send to, east or west side. It routes bulk trucks, electronics trucks, things like that.

- You can actually save money and time, right?

- [Mike] Yeah, it does.

- That's good.

- Mm hm.

- Yeah, Alder Steuer.

- [Mark] Thank you. Mike, I was just gonna ask, this is the lot for the licenses, for this?

- It's an unlimited license of use.

- [Mark] Unlimited license?

- Yeah, mm hm.

- [Mark] So how many do we have with the city, or is that just--

- Well, we put it on every desktop. Some people don't use it, but most people use the dynamic interactive website.

- [Mark] But what I saw was the $188,000.00 correct?

- For three years.

- For three years.

- [Mark] Three years, so that's within reason as far as?

- Yeah, in fact this, we're covered under the Small Government Enterprise License Agreement, which only goes up to a population of 100,000, and they let us squeeze in there. So we would not be able to afford this software if we didn't have that, so we pay as much as Appleton does for its software.

- Great.

- [Mike] But yeah, it's a great deal.

- All right, motion?

- A motion to accept the contract.

- Okay, a motion by Alder Lefebvre.

- Second.

- Second by Alder Corpus-Dax. Any further discussion?

- No.

- All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries.

- Thank you.

- All right, four. Request to create a resolution that the City of Green Bay pays off more general obligation debt each year than new debt created. Nearly 18 to 20% of each yearly city budget pays solely for interest on city debt. We must do a better job to reduce our total debt and prioritize our capital expenses, so we are not crowding out core services. Many cities and counties are facing these fiscal pressures and the City of Green Bay needs a plan to reduce our debt in the short and long term. And I believe this was from Alder Vander Leest?

- [John] That's correct.

- Would you like to speak to it?

- [John] I guess the reason I'm coming up and talking about it is all the time that I've been on the council, we've never really talked about our debt, how we're gonna manage it, how we're gonna move forward. And I think our city of over 100,000 people, we take in over a $100 million, and I think that the debt should be addressed as far as how we can reduce it, how we can do a better job of reducing our expenses in that way. It's just good management that, my thoughts, it's good management, and if we issue less, in other words if we do less bonding than we make, in other words, if we retire more debt than what we're gonna create for the next year I think that's a start. And I think the city staff and the mayor's office and our financial director can be of great service to figure out ways where we can reduce some of our debt in that way. And that's the main reason I'm bringing it forward. And it'll help the city overall if we can reduce our debt. And that's my thought on that one. On the next, on number five--

- Well let's--

- We should stay with four.

- [John] Okay, that's fine. Anyway, I would ask that you refer it to our city staff, as far as our director, our financial director, and the mayor's office, and see if they can't come up with a plan to move forward and address the issue. I guess that's the main thought, is that they could address the issue of our debt.

- And they can, and I think in the end, it comes to Council to approve bonding. We need to know what's needed, what's requested, what's needed, what we approve, because what's in the city budget, I believe that there's a certain percentage that is kind of an acceptable percentage, is that right, for debt?

- Yeah, our budget policy says that we can go up to 25% of our budget as debt.

- And we're at like 16.8%?

- Correct, that is the one major recap that I had put in there, what the 2020 budget was, and how it's split out by funding sources. So 9% of total annual budget was for general levies, GO debt, and then of course you have parking utility, Bay Beach, TIF, sanitary, storm, and parking, and they all, again, parking, two different types of debt, but they all pay for their own, 100% supported by another funding source. So 9% of the total $110 million budget was general levy debt.

- So we're at 9% and our policy, which we would never want to do, but our policy allows us to go up to 25?

- Correct, and actually that would be, you would be looking at the 16.8% as part of the 25.

- Got it.

- Correct. That was just in general we want our budget to be over 25%, because that's an impact to the tax-payer.

- But of that 16.8%, 9% of that is funded by the taxpayers. The rest is not coming out of the taxpayers' pockets. And we did start a policy last year of a five year bonding plan, where we're trying to keep the bonding at 8%, a cap of 8%.

- $8 million.

- 8 million.

- I'm sorry.

- $8 million of borrowing, it was a goal, with the direction by the financial advisor, 'cause that would help, that's roughly the amount that we're paying off on the general levy, and that would help, that was a direction.

- Right.

- Try to keep it, yeah.

- [John] So let me ask you this then, Diana. By doing that, what will we be reducing our debt by in the long term, or the short and the long term?

- I don't have those numbers in front of me. But those are specifics I can look up. If we were to do $8 million for the next five or 10 years, I could get some kind of estimate on what that would do for paying off. But again, $8 million is only a portion of the borrowing. What I'm gonna say is that, I'm gonna actually look to the Director of Public Works, sanitary and storm are some of the utilities and some of the borrowing that has been larger in the last year or two, and I think projected for 2020 request is also, we're talking some of them are $6, $8 million alone, just for sanitary and storm, those are not levied borrowing, so in some cases, they may have a year where they all are paying off a million or two, but they might be asking for $8 million in a year. So I think we have to be careful when you're talking about paying off, I think, are you specifically asking what affects the taxpayers' tax bill?

- [John] Well the taxes, definitely.

- Okay.

- Because the problem with locking, say we locked it in at $8 million for 10 years. But everyone knows that the cost of one mile of road in 10 years is gonna be a lot more than what it is today.

- [John] I'm not saying to lock anything in, I'm just asking if we can look at the overall picture.

- Pay off more than what we're adding to with the debt. And that's certainly what we're trying to do by setting a cap over the next five years, to try and get that locked in tighter so that we do start seeing some reduction there. But when you throw out that our current debt is 16.8%, that seems high, even though we're allowed to go to 25, but when you realize outta that, only 9% is what's really the taxpayers are paying for, that makes me feel a little bit more comfortable. Again, we'd love to see that go down, because if we didn't have any debt, that'd be a huge savings to the taxpayers, it'd be a little bit more money than we could use to really get thing done that we want to get done also. But--

- But it's pretty unrealistic.

- That is, it is.

- Most people can't go out and buy a house, they've gotta have a mortgage.

- Yes.

- Or some mortgage.

- But when you look at some of these numbers, I think we're doing good, can we do better? We should always be looking to do better, absolutely.

- [John] That's what I'm asking.

- So what would you like to see as a motion?

- [John] Well, just that it would be directed to the mayor's office and to our financial director, and they can look it over.

- And staff had said recommend it to defer to the capital improvement plan borrowing request.

- [John] That would be alright.

- Isn't that the recommendation?

- Correct, 'cause that is really something we're gonna be taking up in the next month or two when we're looking at the 2020 borrowing, and that would be a, put those two together in one packet.

- Put those two together and wait 'til we talk about that?

- [John] That'll be fine.

- Okay.

- I don't know how--

- [John] You know, if you look back at our city council, we've never really talked about our debt services and things. It's always been, in the last administration, it was never mentioned I don't think once. I've been on the council almost four years. We haven't talked much about the debt and how we want to move forward, how do we want to manage our city, basically.

- Well, and there's certain things that we're taking out debt for that are ridiculous, and I'm not poking fun, but at the police department, bonding for cars that last four years.

- [John] That's not a good idea.

- That's not a good idea, so obviously, some of these savings, if we can institute some of those savings, that'd be one place to go at right away so that they have the budget to buy the cars when they need them without having to take our a loan, which what are we paying for these cars over the long term, it makes no sense. I know they had to do it because they had to get the cars, they were literally falling apart, and you can't have them driving cars that aren't safe.

- [John] They're probably paying an extra half the cost of the car probably.

- I have no idea, but if you're paying a penny more, that's--

- [John] It's too much.

- It's too much.

- Right, right.

- You make good sense, and it's a discussion I think we need to be addressing on a continuous basis going forward.

- [John] Okay.

- So we're not actually gonna create a resolution. What we'll do is, we're gonna, should the motion be to defer, or to incorporate this into the discussion? I'm not sure how you'd make a motion on this.

- [Vanessa] I would recommend referring it to staff, and then staff can come forward with a recommendation.

- Okay.

- Sounds like a great plan.

- Is that okay with you?

- [John] It's okay with me.

- Mark?

- Alder Steuer.

- [Mark] Yeah, thank you, Chair. Alder Vander Leest and I were talking before the meeting, and John, I don't know if you want to bring that up, too you were talking about each department, the idea of a contingency fund of some sort, or did you want to elaborate on that a little bit or not.

- [John] Well, the only thing I was saying, that each department should have, let's just say our police department has like a $24 million budget, close to $24 million. It would be nice if they could designate 2% of their budget, and keep it within their own fund, and use it for what they need it for--

- You're kind of talking like Bay Beach has their segregated fund.

- [John] We don't have much of a contingency fund, I think, in the City of Green Bay, that's another problem, I think, that we should have more of a contingency fund.

- And that would require us to somehow increase our revenue, because at the same time, for the police department to create a contingency fund, first we wouldn't--

- [John] I'm talking within their own department.

- Right.

- I'm talking, so within their own department, so within their own budget, if they were to create a contingency fund, the first thing I'd say is, let's quit bonding for squad cars. So boom, the contingency fund is gone. Say they recreate it again, I would say then, I want them to be able to over-hire officers or use it for things like that, but the same time I know from working at the police department, we were always creating surpluses of funds to use for things that suddenly popped up, came up, or were suddenly needed--

- [John] Are they doing that yet today?

- I don't know, but for instance, DPW created a contingency fund by reorganizing part of their staff so that they could find the money to buy this new truck that they're doing. And I think every department does that.

- [John] Okay, I think these are creative ideas as far as, that did have money like that, disposable to them that they could use it at their discretion, where they're not gonna be wasting it.

- Right.

- [John] And I think, I don't know exactly what the police department fund is or the fire department. I know it's over the $20 million range. And within that kind of money there should be some little bit of leeway that they can manage some of their own money, and not be so strapped for dollars.

- We try to take away most of their leeway though.

- [John] Pardon?

- We try to take away most of their leeway during the budget.

- [John] I don't think we've taken away too much.

- We took away a lot.

- [John] I think the city council's been pretty generous, I think.

- Well, when you take away 14 officers.

- That's right.

- Yeah.

- [John] But here's another thing on the 14 officers, our Chief can say the same thing. He might have 10 retiring and it might take him twice as long to find 10 more that will replace them, and it's not only here in Green Bay, it's all over the country.

- But the reality is, that money is already worked into their budget going forward. They actually, every year when they're doing their budget, they anticipate a certain amount of people leaving, and that there's a gap between them leaving and the hiring, and so the savings of wages and benefits is already being factored into their budget, which there's a department down in that Valley, Neenah, or, I think it's Neenah, they actually budget so they can over-hire so that when an officer retires, the day he retires, a brand new officer is sworn-in and takes over so there's no loss in service to the department or the community. That's something I think is kind of a unique idea, but they obviously have a budget and tax base that is pretty generous. But yeah, these are certainly things that would be neat to see if we could do that, but we're still in a hole here that we painted ourselves into by using monies like the tax refund, and the one year we took out of our savings account so we didn't raise taxes, we painted ourselves into a hole that we're still trying to get out of. And so, what you're saying makes absolute sense, but first we gotta get out of this hole. We have to raise our revenue, and try to keep our costs as suppressed as much as possible, and then I think we can start looking at what you're talking about, so that every department has a fund that if they can save that money they can use it for projects and things that they've been putting on the shelf.

- [John] Okay.

- And we're trying to balance it with departments being able to do their job, what needs to be done too.

- So I'll entertain a motion on number four. You might as well stay right there, 'cause you're number five. The motion should be--

- Refer to staff.

- Refer to staff.

- Refer to staff.

- Okay, by Alder Galvin.

- Second.

- Second by Alder Corpus-Dax. Further discussion? All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries. Okay, number five. Property taxes increased roughly 4.1% for the City of Green Bay property taxpayers in 2020. Couple this increase with the water bill rate changes, and the average Green Bay home owner had a roughly $100 to $120 increase to their property taxes. I propose that property taxes for the City of Green Bay would not increase more than 1% for the 2021 budget. Green Bay is already one of the highest property tax rates in Brown County. This is causing new home buyers to pursue other less expensive properties due to the disparity in property taxes. Ashwaubenon and Bellevue are $450 to $500 less on the average home than Green Bay. This is critical if we wish to remain competitive in Brown County for future developments and growing business. So this was also from Alder Vander Leest, a communication that was put in. And discussion.

- John, the only thing, I don't think Bellevue was a good example because they do not have the amount of roads that we do, the police issues, they're kind of a rural--

- [John] I understand that Green Bay, we have a lot of footprint.

- And they get Brown County to help with a lot of the roads and things. No, I'm just saying, so I wouldn't put Bellevue in there. But yeah, it's kinda hard to compare sometimes, different communities. Where's Ashwaubenon getting their money from that they can have it less, well they've got the Packers. And they get a lot of revenue coming in because of that, into their communities and that, and they get more businesses, they stole, a lot of our businesses went to Ashwaubenon. So we're trying to work around all that too for us.

- [John] I know Green Bay's the biggest venue as far as in the community here, but I think we can do a better job as far as--

- Well, we're trying, I'll tell ya, we are trying.

- How we're doing things. Another thought on this statement here. Where the city's done some shifting of, basically, from the water bill, they're shifting it and then putting it on the fees, in other words, the higher fee. And a lot of people weren't too happy about that, and they weren't too happy about the tax increase as well. Not a lot of people are, you know, not real crazy about it, I don't think they want to see another big property tax increase for this next year. You take, between the Wheel Tax, the property tax increase this year, and with your fee increases of $25.00, which is already an unpopular tax, I don't think we wanna have the next year come out as a high increase. I'm talking about a 1% increase would be the max for me.

- And I do believe that this is probably a discussion better saved for when we have a budget, because we can't just make--

- [John] Well I'm just asking that the staff, in other words, the mayor's office, basically, he sets the, basically the tax rate, his office does. I think that it could be directed to him as far as looking at things, how we can, I know that there's different programs out there, how they go about a zero increase, and I've talked to the Mayor about it.

- The ZBB, zero-based-budgeting.

- [John] And he talked to me about it and things, but it's a discussion, but I think that the taxpayers of Green Bay, they need to have somebody to at least speak up about it.

- It's good that you spoke up.

- [John] I feel that we can keep our taxes down this next year.

- I guess my counter-argument to that would be, well first off, I'd always, we have a small city, De Pere, within Brown County, and then we have Green Bay. The rest are villages and towns and this and that. And people always say, well, my taxes are this and that and the other thing, and I would want to see an apples to apples comparison. What do the taxes in Green Bay get you versus the taxes in Ashwaubenon, Howard, Suamico, De Pere? Because I think Green Bay offers a lot more than those other communities offer. And where do a lot of those people go? They come to Green Bay, then they go back to their homes in Howard, De Pere, and this kind of thing, and it's kind of like with the public pools. Kids from outside the city come here to use our pools and things like that, they use our City Deck, they use our Bay Beach, they use our, our, our things, and then they go back to their homes and they're paying less taxes. And I think the city has a lot more going for it that if we were to shut off those services--

- [John] I'm not talking about shutting off services.

- No, but what I'm saying is, when they try and compare us to them with how much they're paying in taxes and that, I don't always think it's necessarily fair, because you're not comparing apples to apples. And on top of that, if we talk, say, there's been many years when we should've raised taxes, okay, there were two years that we did where we used monies that were one-time monies to offset raising taxes. And I didn't have anyone calling me up and saying, hey, thanks for not raising taxes, okay? But at the same time, the hole we painted ourselves into by doing that and not raising taxes as much as we should've, is now we're bonding for squad cars. We're putting off DPW projects. We're taking out more debt because we didn't raise taxes, just like you're referring to, and now some of those things are starting to bite us in the butt. And so, and I understand, nobody wants to pay any more than they have to. The reason why I moved to a smaller home is to pay less property taxes. But at the same time we have to be cognizant of our obligation, and I'm not gonna ask Diana, but we could say, Diana, just based on contractual raises we're agreeing to this year, how much would we have to raise taxes next year, and that may, in and of itself be more than 1%. Or if we wanted to raise taxes so we weren't bonding for squad cars, and paying that extra money, that may cause us to go over that 1%. So I don't want to lock in right now. But I think you're absolutely right. We do have to direct staff and the mayor's office, to be looking very hard when we're budgeting for next year's budget, and like we've also asked, too, on budgeting, we don't want to budget year to year, we want to budget looking five, 10, 15 years down the road. We have to look at what our needs are gonna be. And DPW is faced with the thing of storm water, flooding, and some of that infrastructure that's falling apart or is inadequate for what we're facing today. And so these are some of the things that the city, I think, has to look at, and we all know it's not gonna be inexpensive, it's not gonna be cheap, it's gonna cost us. But I think we do have to smart about how we're doing it and not be raising taxes frivolously. And when we do raise taxes at all, period, even if it's half of a percent, that impacts some people that really can't afford it, and those are the ones, it's hard, when they tell you, how they're living from check to check. And if these taxes go up, or, you know, the Wheel Tax, it's a tough pill to swallow, but I don't have any calls from constituents anymore saying, I'm getting a bill for $4,000.00, and I can't afford it. But they're very happy that they only have to pay $20 or $40 more a year in a wheel tax as opposed to coming up with $4,000.00 for their portion of the road. There are some communities in Brown County where the property owner is responsible for 100% of the road improvement in front of their house.

- Bellevue.

- Bellevue.

- Bellevue.

- So again, that apples to oranges thing comes up. But you're right, we can't be lackadaisical when it comes to budgeting, and I think staff is well aware of that, because they see where we are now. We've still got our backs to the wall when it comes to our budgeting. And we have to do better, we have to be smart.

- I have to call on Alder Steuer.

- [Mark] Thank you, Chair. Very good discussion. Some of my constituents have talked, and they said their taxes have gone up and they haven't really complained that much because partly is that over the last 10 years we didn't really raise it a lot. Even if we would have incrementally raised it over a 10 year period we wouldn't be having this issue now. So that's a part of it... I was gonna say something else about that too, but that's good for now, if it comes up I'll raise my hand again.

- Senior moment.

- [John] I guess my other comment would just be about shifting the fees, I don't feel that that's real popular.

- No, but I think it saved us from having to make some deep cuts in taxes this year. And I think moving forward, sometimes fees, like the Liquor Law fees, it's not a ton of money, but it's $47,000.00 that the taxpayers won't be paying.

- [John] I support that.

- Right, so I think there's times that we need to look at fees, and we need to be cognizant. Sometimes you just don't think about fees. And so if someone noticed this one with the liquor license, they looked at the surrounding communities, and I think it's absolutely fair what we're doing. I don't think anyone's gonna lose their business because of it, and so I think we need a deke again, keep staff looking at these other sources of revenue that are out there, 'cause every penny helps.

- [John] I think another one was mentioned that the event fees are going up. Some of the event fees, Bellin Run and different, those fees are going up, I think that's very wise. Some of the costs for taking care of the events was quite high, the city's losing money on the events, that's not really right, so I support those fees as well.

- And there's a balance there, because every tourist dollar or anything that's brought into here benefits those organizations within our city.

- [John] I think the city's been pretty fair on those, what we're talking about there, both with the, the liquor fees had been down.

- Alder Steuer.

- [Mark] Tried and came back. I don't know, I'm not in trouble or anything.

- I'd be right with him.

- [Mark] Yeah, I know, at times. So I talked to some of the city staff before we did our budget, and one of the things I got out of that was the fact that there are many communities that pay for leaf pickup and pay for snow-plowing and that.

- Garbage pickup.

- [Mark] Garbage pickup, all that. So you can measure that as well. So I think a lot of folks in Green Bay just take it for granted that we have this Cadillac of services. So you've gotta keep that in mind too. So if something doesn't quite work out then there's a lot of complaints and that, but it's like, well, you can pay for each of these individually then too, and then we'll figure that out after that. So I think we just have to step back sometimes and just kind of look at all this and say, you know what, I think we're doing okay. We still have some work to do, though.

- Oh yeah.

- Right.

- What is the Committee's wishes on this, number five?

- To be honest, and no insult, John, I'd like to just receive and place on file. Or table it until we get closer to the budget process.

- [John] That's fine, I'm just trying to bring it aware.

- No, it's good, we should just be thinking about this come October. You're already thinking about, Diana, and you guys are already on top of this, but as a council, and not just during election time either, this is something that should be a monthly discussion that we're having about where this city's going and how it's getting there.

- Right, right.

- Right, so receive and place on file?

- Yes.

- Alder Galvin.

- All right.

- [John] Thank you.

- Thank you, John.

- Is there a second to that? Second by Alder Corpus-Dax. Further discussion? Thank you, Alder Vander Leest.

- Thank you.

- All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed. Okay, motion carries. Finally, the Report of the Claims Committee. It was very interesting, I will say that.

- It, was it?

- I thought it was very interesting.

- I didn't find anything like that.

- You didn't?

- I have no questions.

- Okay, but I have no questions.

- I don't have any questions.

- No questions.

- I approve of everything you did.

- Yes.

- Yep.

- No questions.

- All right.

- Receive and place on file.

- Receive and place on file or accept? What would you like us to do?

- [Vanessa] You can just receive and place on file this one.

- Okay, receive and place on file by Alder Galvin.

- Second.

- Second by Alder Lefebvre. All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries. Informational, Contingency Account, is for 2019, we're still rolling in the money.

- Is all that money dedicated, or just money for the bills?

- No, there is a remainder. We started with a little over 100,000. We've only at this point spent out, we have transferred out of the Contingency Fund about $60,000.00, leaving $53,000.00 in this account. However, we had talked about some additional costs that were in some of the different departments, we just didn't make a transfer over to DPW or out of Inspection and pull it out of the Contingency, so at this point there is still 53,000 left. What I am gonna tell you is there are two additional 2019 invoices, legal invoices, that I probably will bring to you in February that we just received in the last week, and these are for litigation against Procter & Gamble, right?

- [Vanessa] Georgia Pacific.

- Georgia Pacific, thank you. I knew that didn't sound right, Georgia Pacific. So what happened is we are actually looking for other funding sources to help pay it, with these legal costs we are looking at the school district and to other municipalities that have the same battle that they have with GP, and we're trying to look to have them, they're gonna help pay some of the legal costs. So we're looking at right now, but they haven't really split it up. Once we know how much they're willing to pay in, per the arrangement that we have with them, how much we can charge back, then how much will be the city's cost, and I will be bringing them back to the committee in February.

- Am I getting the horse in front of the cart to ask, eventually all the bills are satisfied, there's money left over, do we just roll that into the current contingency fund?

- No, that is something, that's just a budget. So when we put a budget out there, this is just remaining dollars, they don't just roll to the bottom as money unspent, it'd be like an expense account number that just didn't get spent, somebody underspent a budget account. So it just goes in the bottom of 2019. It rolls into your fund balance, and then that just, yeah, it just goes into, because it was money, well, it really was money that wasn't spent that you originally put in your budget.

- So what happens to it, it goes into a fund balance, but I'll be honest, I don't know what that means.

- Well, it's just like any expense. You were gonna spend $50,000.00 on something, and you didn't spend it in your budget. If everything else is exactly on budget, and you didn't spend this 53,000, you would have a budget surplus of 53,000 that would roll to your bottom line, saying okay, our fund balance now has got, our checkbook balance or fund balance--

- Like our savings account.

- Oh, a savings account.

- Yeah.

- It's like your savings account.

- Right, we have to have it high.

- It's an unspent expense.

- And we've been talking about trying to build that up?

- Yes, we need to, yes.

- Yes, yes, yes.

- Yeah.

- Yes.

- The only other item then, if you go into the next Finance Committee meeting, right now, we are scheduled for two meeting in February, but next council meeting, I believe, is March 3rd, so the discussion is whether or not we need two in February?

- I don't think we need two in February.

- It depends on how big those meetings are going to be.

- What's that?

- I said, it depends on how big those meetings are going to be.

- I would like to hold off on making a decision on that until we get a little bit closer to the--

- If we're gonna skip one, it should be the one on the 11th and definitely have the one on the 25th.

- Correct, but you're right, I could, middle of next week, I could tell you whether or not we have items pending at that point.

- If we have items.

- Right.

- Yeah.

- And this is just Finance. We could still end up with a Personnel meeting.

- Absolutely.

- Okay.

- One or the other.

- All right.

- Or both.

- All right.

- All right.

- Okay.

- So we're still having February 11th, right?

- As of right now.

- Well as of right now. That's the one though that we would look at, to not have, if we didn't have one. All right, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

- Motion to adjourn.

- Second.

- Motion to adjourn by Alder Galvin, second by Alder Corpus-Dax. All those in favor?

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries, we're adjourned.