

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET MEETING
Monday, August 26, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nyenhuis at 6:30pm. Pardun, Ward, Miller, Anderson (7:00) present,
Citizens Present: Glen Mills, John Goodfellow, Paul Paladie

Mayor Nyenhuis opened the meeting for the purpose of discussing the 2025 proposed budget.

Clerk Peterson reviewed the budget changes from 2024. There is a request from the Planning Commission for \$20,000 for Planning and Consulting services, with an additional \$25,000 request from the Multi-Generational committee for planning and public engagement services. Miller stated that this was a ballpark number as they are still waiting for the proposal from HKGI. Pardun stated that the City received approximately \$35,000 per year in fiscal disparity and would like to use that money to offset the Planning budget. The Council agreed and reduced the Planning and Consultant budget from \$50,000 to \$15,000.

Clerk Peterson stated there is currently a tree maintenance line item is the cemetery, parks and rec and roads fund. Public works has requested that each one of those be increased from \$2500 to \$10,000. To simplify things, she would like to remove the three individual line items and create a new tree maintenance line item under the Capital budget items. The Council agreed with the suggestion, however, believes \$30,000 is a lot to budget for tree maintenance. Pardun is not comfortable budgeting that amount based upon the assumption of how many trees may need to be removed next year. He stated if a tree goes down, the City is going to pay to have it removed. Ward noted that the Forest Advisory committee is going to be working on a tree inventory for the cemetery. The Council thought that was a good idea and it was suggested that an inventory and maintenance plan be done for not only the cemetery, but the parks as well. This will allow the Council to better plan for this budget item in the future. After discussion, the budget was reduced from \$30,000 to \$20,000.

Pardun stated that he and Nyenhuis met with staff to discuss the annual wage increase. Both 3.5% and 4% were discussed and Nyenhuis believes that the difference between the two was insignificant enough and agreed to the 4%. Pardun also stated that he and Nyenhuis had met with the City Clerk to discuss her job description. Currently the job responsibilities are very similar to a City Administrator with the biggest difference being the administrator role also oversees all staff. Pardun has also looked at the salary range for this position which is \$20,000 - \$40,000 more than the City is currently paying. Pardun and Nyenhuis have discussed this with Clerk Peterson, and she would to change the job title to Clerk/Administrator. Pardun stated they would also like to increase her salary by \$10,000 in 2025 and \$10,000 in 2026. Anderson noted there has been substantial turnover in this role within neighboring communities, and he believes this will also help with retention and recruitment in the future. Anderson would also like to see an updated job description, which Clerk Peterson has already put together and will distribute to Council.

Discussion was held on the \$9,000 under Stormwater. Ward stated that the maintenance of the stormwater basins is now the City's responsibility, and that will be approximately \$4,200 next year. She would like to use the remaining amount toward the Millstream project with the Watershed. It was noted that there is currently \$8387 set aside from the Millstream Association that is slated to be used for that project and therefore that line item was reduced by \$4800 to \$4200.

Pardun reviewed the request for \$30,000 towards a new maintenance shop building. This would include the addition of a septic system as well. The Council would like more detail on the plan, including an idea of what it would look like. After further discussion, it was decided this line item would be removed and revisited next year.

Pardun stated the firm doing the plans for the Village hall renovation has visited the site and is working on getting the final cost of the project. He noted he had been reviewing the Treasurer's report, and there are several funds that have been stagnant for several years and total just over \$74,000. He is suggesting that those funds are held for possible use of the renovation project until the bids come in. If all of those funds are not required, then he believes that money could be used to offset the 2025 budget numbers. Pardun reviewed the funds that would be a part of this reallocation, which are Village Water, Land Acquisition and VC Signage. Nyenhuis does not believe this is the proper time or place for this discussion as there was no information given to Council in advance. Anderson believes the budget meeting is the perfect time and place to discuss this topic as the treasurer's report is part of the budget. Miller also believes this meeting is the proper place to discuss this issue. Nyenhuis believes if there is no more discussion on the proposed budget line items, then he directed the City Clerk to prepare a summary of those reserve funds that could be included in Pardun's proposal to present to Council for discussion at a later time.

Nyenhuis moved and Ward seconded to adjourn. Nyenhuis aye, Pardun, Anderson and Miller nay and Ward abstained. Motion failed.

Discussion continued. Ward questioned if Pardun's proposal for the reserve funds would all be used for the Village Hall project, or only a portion. Pardun stated that the entirety of the \$74,000 would be held in case it was needed to help pay for the hall renovations, however if it is not needed or only a portion is needed, then he believes the balance could be applied to some of 2025 budget line items to help lower the overall percentage. Nyenhuis would like to review those reserve funds and discuss whether or not some of the money should be retained for future use. He believes there should be additional time for Council to reflect on this proposal. Pardun agreed and believes that this is the time to have those discussions. Additional discussion ensued and Anderson called for a motion to adjourn with Miller seconding.

Anderson moved and Miller seconded to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

The Council will approve the maximum levy of \$1,145,822.56, which represents a 9.46% increase over 2024, at the September 12th Council meeting.

Minutes taken by Lynette Peterson, City Clerk (budget attached)