

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2019  
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Michael C. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.
3. Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Michael V. Radtke Jr., Maria G. Schmidt, Liz Sierawski, Michael C. Taylor, Henry Yanez, Barbara A. Ziarko.

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, City Attorney; Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk; Carol Sobosky, Recording Secretary.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, to approve the Agenda as presented.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

5. **BUDGET WORKSHOP DISCUSSION**

- A. **Budget Overview (continued)**
  - Public Library**
  - Police Department**
  - Fire Department**
  - Public Works Department**
  - Parks & Recreation Department**

Mayor Taylor stated this is a Special City Council meeting, which is the second of two budget workshops. He stated there will be a number of presentations from City employees and administration.

Mr. Vanderpool stated this is a continuation of the budget hearings for the proposed fiscal year 2019/2020 proposed budget. He explained, like the first hearing, they have a number of presentations wherein department directors will highlight a number of significant initiatives in their proposed departmental budgets, and there will be plenty of time for audience members and City Council to follow up with comments and questions. He advised that, at the conclusion of the presentations, the budget amendments will need to be introduced this evening so they can make sure they are incorporated into the final Appropriations Ordinance for approval on May 7. He informed the City's proposed budget is available online for anyone interested. He added that the departmental budgets presented this evening continue the principles outlined in the City's Visioning 2030 plan, and he introduced Budget and Finance Director Jennifer Varney to provide a summary of the budget as scheduled for discussion this evening.

Ms. Varney stated they will continue their budget workshop, including discussion of the last four General Fund departments, the Water and Sewer Fund and the Parks & Recreation Fund. She provided an overview of the budgets being considered this evening with the use of a PowerPoint presentation. She talked about the Public Library fund, which represents 2.8% of the \$105 million General Fund budget, with 13 full-time and 26 part-time employees, and the budget of \$2.9 million is primarily made up of personnel costs. It increased about \$33,000, or 1.2% over last year, and she outlined the

changes and proposed expenditures, including proposed capital outlays. The next department is the Police Department, which is the largest city department totaling over 33% of the General Fund budget. There are 206 total employees in four divisions, and the budget totals \$35.2 million, with over 90% of the budget being attributed to personnel costs. The total budget increased \$1.1 million, or 3.3%, with most of the increase due to contractual wage increase and increase to pension funding. She outlined the proposed expenditures and capital outlays. Ms. Varney reviewed the Fire Department, which makes up nearly 20% of the General Fund budget and includes 103 full-time and 2 part-time employees, totaling \$20.9 million and consists of three separate divisions. The total budget represents a \$1.1 million, or 5.4%, increase over last year, primarily due to personnel costs. She outlined the proposed expenditures and capital outlays. The third largest department is Public Works, which when combined with refuse, makes up about 10.4% of the General Fund budget. The department is made up of four divisions, with 48 employees along with numerous contracted services. The budget totals \$11 million, including \$4.5 million for refuse, which is a \$59,000 increase, or 0.5%, from last year, and she outlined the proposed expenditures and capital outlays. Ms. Varney stated that concludes the overview of the General Fund, and she provided detail on the Water and Sewer Fund, which makes up nearly 23% of the total City budget and totals just under \$54 million. This fund includes three divisions with 34 full-time and 13 part-time employees, and about 78%, or \$42 million, of the

costs of the Water and Sewer fund are controlled by the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) and Macomb County Public Works Department. Of that \$42 million, over \$35 million, or 85% of those costs, are fixed, which means the City incurs those costs regardless of how much water is used. She explained the breakdown of the costs, with the cost of water from the GLWA increased by 5%, sewer costs from Macomb County Public Works will increase by 2.2%, and there was no new sewer debt issued this year so that will only be a slight increase. City costs are increasing 5.2% due to wage and pension increases, as well as the addition of a temporary part-time clerk. She reviewed some of the other proposed expenditures, including capital outlay. In order to cover these costs, a 3.3% Water and Sewer rate increase and a small fixed-fee adjustment of \$1.25 per quarter, will be passed on to Water and Sewer customers. She estimated this will cost the average residential user about \$3 a month, which will bring the average monthly cost to \$80 a month, up from \$77 a month this year. She noted this is a lower increase than last year, that the lowest increase in eleven years. She explained another factor that contributes to rate increases is the decline of water usage, and she showed a chart depicting the decline in water usage over the years, not only in Sterling Heights but over the entire GLWA customer base. Lower usage reduces the City's revenue but not their costs. She claimed the City's water and sewer rates are still lower than most of their comparable communities, and she showed a chart comparing other similar-sized cities. She explained they will continue to build up Water and Sewer

reserves that have eroded over the past ten years, noting that is important for future infrastructure improvements and can help mitigate large rate increases.

Ms. Varney stated Parks and Recreation has its own fund in Special Revenues, which this year totals \$17.8 million, with the department having 13 full-time and 4 permanent part-time positions, along with a lot of seasonal staff. The budget is mainly capital expenditures funded through the proceeds of the *Re*Creating Recreation bond issue two years ago. She explained the pre-existing Parks and Recreation expenses and contractual park maintenance are funded through a transfer from the General Fund, which this year totals \$2.8 million. She outlined the expenditures, which have decreased due to this being the third year and most projects are nearing completion. She reminded residents that their new on-line tool, Budgeting Balancing Act, which allows the residents to view a graphical representation of the budget and provides the ability to drill down for additional information, is available on the City's website and is updated for the proposed budget. The Taxpayer Receipt tool is also updated with the millage rates in this proposed budget and offers residents an opportunity to see their estimated tax bill for next year by ending their 2019 taxable value.

Mr. Vanderpool invited Library Director Tammy Turgeon to give a presentation.

Ms. Turgeon explained the library is an integral part of the community, and its major goal is to enhance the quality of life services they offer for their residents.

She highlighted four areas: technology, collections, programming and

community. She outlined some of the latest technology additions, including their wi-fi hotspots, which patrons can borrow for seven days to gain unlimited internet access to help students with homework and provide those without internet access in their homes the ability to access educational and entertainment resources. She provided further information and statistics about this technology and some capital outlay items proposed for purchase, including additional wi-fi hotspots, an interactive games table for children, a simple scan station, along with a translation service, which will translate a scan into a PDF file or MP3 audio file in one of sixty languages. She gave a brief overview of their collection budget and programming, including the addition of Hoopla, which is a digital media service for eBooks and audiobooks, and the library only pays for the titles their patrons borrow. The library offers books and magazines in twenty-three different languages, and they continue to support the diverse community. Ms. Turgeon stated a major focus for the library continues to be their programming for children, and she explained many of the programs available for all ages, providing statistics on number of classes and number of attendees. She stressed they have reached many new library users through these creative new programs and are encouraged that they will become lifelong users of their programs and services. She stated the Library is all about community, noting they received over \$9,000 in donations last year from individual residents in memory of or in honor of someone they love. She stated the Friends of the Library is a volunteer non-profit group

organized in 1976 dedicated to enhancing and improving library services for the community, and they are contributing \$54,000 this year to support adult and youth programs, maintain and improve collections and provide new technologies and capital improvements. She informed they had 132 people volunteer 8,190 volunteer hours last year to assist their staff and work in all areas of the library, with an estimated value of the service they provided is early \$175,000. She stressed they are truly grateful for the hard work and dedication of all of their volunteers. She concluded her presentation by urging residents to take part in an online survey through the month of April, which can be accessed at [www.shpl.net](http://www.shpl.net), or through their new app, SLC Libraries Mobile.

Mr. Vanderpool highlighted that, thanks to a strong collaborative effort between the men and women in the Police Department, residents, businesses and other stakeholders, Sterling Heights continues a long tradition of being one of the safest cities in the country, and he introduced Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski to give a presentation on a number of successful programs outlined in the Police Department's budget.

Chief Dwojakowski highlighted several different areas in this year's proposed budget. He explained they increased their social media by starting a Facebook page this year. They now have almost 8,000 followers on Facebook, and each month they reach over 200,000 people, and growing monthly. He added that 99% of their feedback is positive, and he talked about many of the specific posts. Chief Dwojakowski talked about their SMART Moves Program, which

stands for Skill Mastery and Resilience Training, and they talk about drinking, smoking, vaping, drug use, and improper social media use to all sixth graders in the Utica Community Schools and all fifth graders in the Warren Consolidated Schools. It is a ten-week program, in 19 elementary schools and 1,500 children graduate each year. There are ten specially-trained officers who teach these classes. He talked about their other programs, including their Community Services Bureau, the CERT Program, Citizen's Patrol Program, the Citizen's Police Academy, the CORE Program, Babysitting and Home Alone Safety with Parks and Recreation, National Night Out, and other events. He thanked Council for allowing him to backfill some of the positions.

Chief Dwojakowski mentioned accreditation shows that industry-proven best practices have been met. He explained the new accreditation process, MLEAC (Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission) which is much less time-intensive than the former program and about one-third of the cost, with grants available to pay for about half of the cost. They anticipate it will take about a year-and-a-half to complete and he explained some of the details going through the process. He outlined some of the capital purchases included in the budget.

Chief Dwojakowski concluded his presentation by providing some statistics on their Safe City status, noting that this past week, SafeHome.org rated Sterling Heights, Michigan the ninth safest city in Michigan with populations over 50,000, and they were in the top 12 percent in the United States. Last year,

Sterling Heights was named the sixth safest city in the United States by Alarm.org and this was all made possible because of their Safe Streets millage passed in 2013, which allows all of these programs to continue and flourish. They not only keep all of the officers on the road, but he is proud that the City added three new police officers to the budget over the last year: a full-time police officer at Henry Ford High School; a full-time police officer at Stevenson High School and a full-time police officer as part of the County drug unit, FANTOM (Federal Anti-Narcotics Team of Macomb). He thanked Council and appreciated their support.

Mr. Vanderpool pointed out the common themes in these presentations are volunteerism, use of technology to make jobs easier and do more with less, and continuous improvement. He invited Fire Chief Chris Martin to highlight initiatives in the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Martin provided highlights in the Fire Department budget, crediting great employees and a supportive City Council and residents. He talked about the trends, providing statistics on the number of incidents. He stressed training is very important to their organization, and training hours have been on the rise in recent years due to the number of newly-hired employees; however, fire inspections have remained lower because of the number of man hours the prevention division is forced to dedicate into numerous problems they are facing across the City with a couple of establishments and in keeping up with all of the new renovations. He outlined the capital projects included in the

budget, and he showed photographs of existing conditions. He noted training initiatives and programs, one of those addressing the response to an active assailant, and the City's Police and Fire Departments were instrumental in the development of a countywide initiative in this area. Blue Card Command training is for lieutenants and they are looking into fire department accreditation programs to determine which would be best for the department. He talked about recruitment, holding an open house and also beginning recruitment directly in the high schools.

Chief Martin talked about their transport service and some of the details of that program, noting they have responded to more incidents than anticipated, and although revenue was higher than expected, personnel costs were lower. This budget proposes the addition of a mechanic in the Department of Public Works, funded by the transport model. He noted it was discussed when they implemented the program, and although he commented they have been well taken care of by Buff Whelan, there is no doubt that using the DPW and its professional mechanics will beat any service they can get from the outside. Although it will be a tight fit at the current DPW site, it is part of the improvements for the new DPW facility. He is requesting a budget item to fund a Staffing and Efficiency Study so they can look at the system and provide a non-biased assessment to determine the best way to move forward. He concluded his presentation stating the most important thing on their horizon this year is the renewal of the Safe Streets Millage. He stressed since its

inception in 2013, it has allowed the Police and Fire to provide excellent service to the community, with lives saved and/or significantly altered for the better. He indicated if it is not passed, services will be significantly altered, and they will be forced at a minimum to close one fire station permanently and another depending upon daily staffing.

Mr. Vanderpool recognized the good work of the DPW employees removing snow at all hours of the day and night over these last several months. They also have to deal with water main breaks and when they are not responding to emergencies, they are performing critical maintenance on the City's massive water and sewer system, installing signage, repairing roads and maintaining hundreds of vehicles and various pieces of equipment. He stated on behalf of the Mayor, City Council and himself, he thanked the DPW employees they do every day, especially in the winter. He invited DPW Director Mike Moore to highlight some of their budget initiatives.

Mr. Moore stated the highlights of this year's budget include the new DPW building, an update on recycling and the City's reforestation efforts. He showed the site plan and provided details on the new building and improvements to the site. Through a PowerPoint presentation, he showed artist's renderings of the new building, including a virtual "walk-through" of the building.

Mr. Moore provided an update on the City's recycling program, noting in 2016, the City was able to procure weekly curbside recycling collection for all residents at a reasonable annual cost of \$57. The decision was made at that

time to continue to operate the three recycling centers based on the perceived popularity of that option to recycle for residents who might otherwise not be able to recycle. He explained in that time, there have been some reasons to cause the DPW to reexamine the viability of the City's three recycle centers, including China no longer accepting plastic and paper exported from foreign nations due to their anti-pollution crackdown, and contamination of recyclables by dumping of garbage and liquids into recycling bins, rendering the entire bin contaminated to the point where it has to go to the landfill. He added it was profitable at one time for the City to sell the recyclables, but the collapse of the recyclables market has driven the prices so low that the City must now pay \$150,000 annually to operate the centers and have the materials collected and hauled away. He noted the reconstruction of the recycling center is estimated to cost nearly a half million dollars at the new DPW facility. The DPW is recommending that the City phase out the three recycling centers as follows: 18 Mile center to close July 1, 2019; 15 Mile center to close July 1, 2020; and Clinton River Road center to close July 1, 2021. He reviewed some of the advantages of this schedule, including the ability to reevaluate the market for recyclables and possibly develop one of the two remaining sites if market conditions and resident demand dictate a continuing need for a recycling center. He reminded that the curbside recycling is still available at \$57 per year. The elimination of the recycling centers would result in a refuse millage decrease.

Mr. Moore talked about reforestation, and following their 2030 Visioning Plan, the DPW began in 2016 to apply for grant funds to plant trees back into the community. Their largest grant was awarded through the U.S. Forest Service in the amount of \$100,000, which helped plant over 400 trees. He showed pictures of where those trees were planted. They also received grants from the County. He indicated that recent roadway improvements have resulted in almost 1,700 trees being planted. He advised that they are offering a \$50 discount during the month of May for any resident who would like to purchase a right-of-way tree for fall planting. The true cost of the tree is \$300, but it will be discounted to \$250 in May, and that includes the planting of the tree and a one-year warranty. He explained they have been awarded another grant and he outlined the areas where those trees will be planted, stating their goal is to plant trees in neighborhoods where the Emerald Ash Borer made a significant impact in the loss of trees. In conjunction with *Re*Creating Recreation, they have planted 325 trees in neighborhood parks, Dodge Park and the Skate Park, and more will be planted with the reconstruction of Delia Park and the Community Center. He concluded his presentation by noting that, in conjunction with the Macomb County Public Works office, they used \$1.2 million in grants to transform 2 miles of the 5.2-mile Sterling Relief Drain to better serve the community.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the last presentation this evening is Parks and Recreation Director Kyle Langlois, and the work completed by Mr. Langlois and

his entire team over these past two years has been transformational and has been recognized by many. Two years ago, the City Council was selected by the Michigan Parks and Recreation Association for their foresight in creating the massive *ReCreating* Recreation Initiative, and this past year, Mr. Langlois was recognized for his leadership in bringing the projects to life. Components of the initiative have been awarded as well, including the Skate Park.

Mr. Langlois provided an update of the first two years of the *ReCreating* Recreation Initiative, as well as the projects that are anticipated for this year. He added this year will likely be the most intense year of construction that will be wrapped up as they complete this third year of the program. They will be renovating five restroom buildings as well as the renovation of Delia Park, and the project is anticipated to be completed by the end of August. For each location that supports a City-sponsored activity, they will be placing portable toilets at that site to compensate for the restrooms being out of order during construction. He noted Delia Park is home to the City's largest tennis complex, which was renovated in 2017. They will be installing LED lights on the tennis court, making it the only illuminated tennis complex in the City. Another amenity for Delia Park is the City's first-ever dedicated cricket field, and the two-acre dog park is anticipated to be open in October. He provided details of the dog park, noting patrons will be required to purchase low-cost annual pass to access the park via an electronic key fob, adding that senior citizen discounts will be available. He provided an update on the new 98,000-square-foot

Community Center, which will be the new home to the Parks and Recreation Department and a true resource for the community. He outlined some of the programs and activities that will take place in the new center once it opens, which is anticipated to be in December of this year. He showed some construction photos of the new building and provided updates on the 3.5-mile non-motorized trail between Delia Park and the Nature Preserve, the indoor bocce ball courts at the Senior Center and the renovation of the remaining neighborhood parks. He concluded his presentation by stating he is anxious "to get to the finish line" of park improvements, and when this initiative was approved, they committed to their residents they would complete construction in three years, which seemed very aggressive at the time. He stated he is happy to report that, with the help of many City departments and the architects, they are on schedule to achieve this goal, and he is proud of the transformation that has taken place throughout the park system, adding it has brought new recreational amenities to the residents and set the standard for quality of life in Southeast Michigan and beyond. He stressed they must continue to make sound investments into their park system and increase their focus on annual maintenance.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that concludes the budget presentations. He acknowledged the managers and directors who presented, noting he is blessed to collaborate every day with the best and most skilled managers and directors in business, and he thanked them for their hard work. He extended a

special thanks to Finance & Budget Director Jennifer Varney for her hard work putting the budget together, and he recognized Budget Management Coordinator Janice Schoenrath for her hard work as well. He reminded there are three amendments for Council's consideration this evening.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments.

- Mr. Charles Jefferson – library serving as a community center; SMART program compared to the former DARE program.

Councilman Yanez questioned why training hours in the Fire Department's budget have been significantly reduced. He also requested a brief explanation as to what type of training the firefighters get.

Fire Chief Martin replied they are still training every day, but over the last few years, there was an influx of new employees, so they were not only doing their own training prescribed to them, but also additional training with each new person. He assured they are not slowing down but they do not have the number of new employees that had to go through the additional training. Every day, other than weekends or holidays, there is some type of EMS-related or Fire-related training, along with any of the credentials they have to maintain. Councilman Yanez inquired as to whether the training budget is impacted by overtime in the Police Department.

Police Chief Dwojakowski replied it is not the overtime, but it is the training involved with new officers. He cited the example of Crash Investigation certification, which requires up to 13 individualized classes. The budget was increased the last few years to get the new officers trained, and they receive

money from the state for training as well. They have officers working three different shifts, with different days off, so it is not a problem.

Councilman Yanez inquired as to recruiting efforts in both Police and Fire Departments and questioned whether they anticipate going back to the days of hiring untrained personnel and sending them to the academies.

Fire Chief Martin stated it may be a possibility in the distant future. He felt they are on the right track to bring in the trained individuals. If they were to bring in candidates and send them to the Fire Academy and paramedic classes, they would be hiring an individual that they would not have on a fire truck for two years, yet the City would be paying them, and they would be taking a chance that they could ultimately pass the test after all of the training. He is hopeful that the recruitment efforts will bring them a lot of good candidates, adding that City is a destination for firefighters looking for a good community.

Police Chief Dwojakowski stated other communities are having difficulty getting candidates, and the City of Warren is offering top-pay to candidates with experience from other communities. Shelby Township is offering a signing bonus. He stressed Sterling Heights has candidates, noting they ended up with forty-six or forty-seven on their final list when they only needed three. If those numbers decline, he could see where they would hire someone and send them to the 17-week police academy; however, it costs about \$7,000 and they would be paying them for the four months they are at the academy plus the cost of the academy.

Councilman Yanez asked DPW Director Mike Moore as to how much the City pays for yard waste disposal as opposed to trash pickup.

Mr. Moore replied he does not have that exact figure, but he recalled the budget is about \$4.125 million annually. As far as the yard waste, that is only for thirty-six weeks, so he estimated that would be about 40% of the total cost.

Councilman Yanez noted they are using less water, most likely a result from conservation efforts by residential and commercial customers, but he questioned how much of a savings when broken down individually.

Ms. Varney explained they charge by the unit, so they save in the year they are not using the water, but the next year the rates have to be raised to recover what they are using.

Councilman Yanez questioned whether customers are being charged more than what they are actually saving by reducing their water usage.

Ms. Varney reminded that 85% of their costs are fixed. A big part of their rates is based on max day and peak hour usage. The GLWA picks a random day in the summer and measures what the City uses in that day, down to a certain hour, and the system has to be able to handle the capacity of what is used at that peak time. Over the three-year period of the contract, if they can get that number down, when they go to renegotiate their rates, they can be lowered. She informed that happened in the last year of their contract negotiation, and they had a decrease of over 5% from the GLWA. Using less water for a length of time can eventually reduce rates, but it does not reflect an immediate

reduction on the water bill. She pointed out they have the odd-even voluntary system in the summer as a part of trying to do this.

Councilman Yanez expressed concern about shutting down the recycling centers. He understands the situation but stressed recycling is still very popular, and he felt the recycling markets could come back. He suspected there is far more contamination in the single-stream recycling than there is at the multi-stream recycling they have at the recycling centers. He felt there is still a need for recycling of plastics such as water bottles, and also for corrugated cardboard. He suggested having a discussion at another meeting, asking GFL to attend and talk about the future of recycling. He appreciates that it cost \$150,000 a year but noted this is part of a budget where there are many costs involved. He felt this helps keep neighborhoods and the City clean, and they need to look closely at this. He hoped the City Council would direct the City Manager to schedule an agenda item or a special meeting to talk about the future of recycling.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski questioned the grant funds received for reforestation, specifically the \$100,000 grant to pay for 400 trees, and she inquired as to whether that was a one-time grant that they are unable to apply for again. She questioned whether there are other funds available.

Mr. Moore replied that was a one-time grant through the U.S. Forest Service and those trees have since been planted. He replied to further inquiry they are trying to find them, and they were recently awarded a \$15,000 grant. They are

working with the Clinton River Watershed Council, the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources to look for further grant opportunities, noting they are notified by these entities right away if something becomes available.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski commented that, as a resident living close to Dodge Park, she has never observed the soccer field empty, and it is a wonderful asset. She indicated it is the same with the skate park. She inquired as to what type of fencing is proposed for the dog park.

Mr. Langlois replied the dog park will be completely fenced in, with two different areas in the dog park, one for larger dogs and one for smaller dogs. When patrons enter the dog park, they will enter into a common guest area and they can choose to go into one of the other areas. He indicated it will be bi-coated cyclone fencing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski thanked the presenters, adding the City has some phenomenal services for the City and she is pleased they have been able to stay within budget as much as possible. She is pleased to hear the Police and Fire Departments are getting up to full-staff, and she hoped the Safe Streets millage will be renewed. She commended Ms. Turgeon for her work in diversifying the Library and felt libraries will always have a function to lend to residents who cannot always afford their own books or other media.

Councilwoman Koski commended Ms. Turgeon for her fantastic job, especially with the children's programming. She complimented her on the teen advisory

board. She complimented the Police Chief and those responsible for the social media, noting they are doing a fantastic job. She stated she is going to make a motion this evening to see if they can get some uniforms for the CERT and Citizen's Patrol Program, adding that they are great volunteers. She is pleased to hear they are the sixth safest city, and she commended the work being done on the SMART Moves program. She addressed Fire Chief Martin, stating she is very pleased they have Squad 1 in service, and she felt he is doing great job on training. She liked the idea of CPR classes and hoped they will occasionally be offered to residents. She likes the idea of student recruitment in the local high schools. Councilwoman Koski addressed questions to Mr. Moore, asking whether there has been any thought to having a part-time monitor at the recycling centers to oversee what is being dropped off. She suggested it would possibly be a good job for a student, noting the problem seems to be people dumping things where they do not belong.

Mr. Moore replied they have been discussing the possibility that, if the centers are to remain open, they need to cease the 24/7 operation because those are the hours when the culprits of the dumping are coming in. He felt the right way to operate them would be to have hours of operation, with someone monitoring it at the gate and checking ID's to confirm residency and inspecting what is being dropped off.

Councilwoman Koski inquired as to whether that could be looked into as to the cost to fence it in and have monitors on site, and request Mr. Vanderpool bring

it to City Council for further discussion. She has had feedback from residents over the years that they love the centers. She requested that the suggestions for lowering water usage, such as avoiding peak hours, could be made available to the public in the hopes they can achieve another reduction in water costs. She requested an explanation of how the water costs are determined.

Ms. Varney replied there are a lot of factors that go into determining the rates, but the big part is what they use on max day and peak hour. The GLWA picks a random day and measures how much water the cities use on that day. Within that day, they select a random hour. When the cities negotiate, they have some say, but there are penalties if they go over it. When the contracts open and they look at that number, they look at history. If they can get residents to use less water and it goes down, when they renegotiate, they could reduce that max day and peak hour, and hopefully reduce the rates. She added it also depends on what all the other communities in the GLWA do as well. If everyone reduced their max day by 20%, their rates would probably not go down, but if Sterling Heights could reduce theirs when other communities did not, they could see a decrease. Another factor is how far away they are from Detroit, which is something they cannot control. The costs they can control the most are the City's costs. She mentioned that she and Mr. Moore may be able to work on an informational campaign.

Councilwoman Koski felt if that information could be simplified it would help the residents.

Ms. Varney stated they can work on getting that information out and reminding residents that making these efforts to reduce water usage during peak times could have a positive impact on reducing water rates in the future.

Councilwoman Koski commended Parks and Recreation and is looking forward to December, when the new Community Center is anticipated to open. She referred to a section of "General Expenditures" and one of those items is membership in the National League of Cities (NLC). She recalled the City had a membership in this organization a number of years ago, but she felt the membership in the Michigan Municipal League (MML) was a better choice because MML is closer and have the same programs but they deal with issues that affect Michigan. She would like to continue the membership with MML but not obtain a membership with NLC at this time. She inquired as to Mr. Vanderpool's opinion on this.

Mr. Vanderpool replied the NLC is the "parent company" to the Municipal Leagues across the country. The NLC has a voice and a platform on issues that are common to municipalities across the country. He indicated when they were originally members of the NLC, although it was before his time here in Sterling Heights, he did not believe they were as active as they are now in the MML. He noted City Council participates in a lot of MML activities, and he indicated it is hard to say whether one group is more effective than another.

He stressed being active in the MML has paid dividends to the City, and there is some interest of City Council members to join the NLC at an annual cost of approximately \$9,700. It is the Council's prerogative to be as active as possible in the MML and either test or forgo membership in the NLC.

Councilwoman Koski felt being involved with MML would be a better choice. She noted Mayor Taylor is involved with the US Mayor's Association and Mr. Vanderpool is involved with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) so that will provide an avenue for them to determine what is going on at the federal level. She stated she would like to make a motion to delete that from the budget when they get to that point. She inquired as to whether Council training has been increased, and she felt that training could be obtained from their City attorney, such as planning, zoning, Robert's Rules of Order, etc., which would allow all members of Council to benefit from the training, rather than only a specific council member going to a course. She would like to reduce the amount of that line item as well.

Councilwoman Schmidt expressed disappointment that the recycling centers will be closing. She inquired as to how the schedule for closing was determined.

Mr. Moore replied the decision to start with the 18 Mile location is because that is where the DPW Building is being constructed. The dates of closing the other two sites were based on usage, and he confirmed that the Clinton River Road location has more usage than the 15 Mile Road location.

Councilwoman Schmidt liked Councilwoman Koski's suggestion of a fenced-in, gated recycling center that is locked at night. She knows there are gates at some of the parks, so she felt it would be the same rotation for locking the gates and the parks, although those may be two separate departments. She is excited to see the new DPW Building in place. She requested clarification on water rate increases, noting that the GLWA rate increased by 5%, the City costs rose by 5.2% and Macomb County Sewer and Debt Service charges increased by 3%, resulting in a 13.2% increase. She questioned that they are only passing on a 3.3% increase to residents.

Ms. Varney noted that the percent increase of each line item cannot be added together for the total increase. She indicated on page 284, the summary of the Water and Sewer Fund, so looking at the \$53.9 million versus the \$53.4 million, it is a total of .9%. The reason the increase is higher is because of the lower water usage. She explained spreading more cost over lower usage results in an increase of rates, which she added is unfortunate. In a fixed rate cost structure, she has to collect the same amount of money. The comparison between the local communities shows that the City is doing a good job in keeping the rates down.

Councilwoman Schmidt appreciated all she has done to keep the rates down. She inquired as to whether there has been any feedback on the new tennis court surface.

Mr. Langlois replied they have not received a lot of feedback, which he took as good news. He acknowledged there are differences of opinion and stressed the City builds their parks for recreational users. If someone has an issue, he stated they tend to be a higher-level player that may be looking for a different type of surface. He has been very pleased with very minimal damage to any of their parks updated with the SportCourt surface, and they still look brand-new with no wear and tear. They are experiencing an increase in the usage of these facilities. He added they found this surface is not as good for pickleball, so they are backing off of that surface for those courts. He replied to further inquiry that the lights on the tennis courts will be very similar to the lights at the baseball fields. The new technology allows them to set the lights to a timer, and when they are in use seven days a week, they will set the lights to go on about 15 minutes before dark and will shut off a few minutes after 10 p.m., which is when the parks close during the summer months.

Councilwoman Schmidt observed the fee schedule for the dog park indicates a \$12 annual fee for residents, and \$24 annual fee for non-residents. She stated she would like to see the non-resident fee a little higher. She felt out of respect for the residents, a non-resident should have to pay a little more than \$24 a year. She noted that the non-resident fee for the summer program also seemed low to her at \$169 for the summer. She commented that is the cheapest babysitting program anyone could ask for. She stressed it is an awesome program but non-residents paying \$169 for the entire summer is "too

good of a deal." She stated she is excited to see the five CPR machines on the ambulances, noting they are impressive and is a great tool. She questioned what happens when the high school students pass their EMT certification, and whether they can go on to the Fire Academy through one of the local colleges. Fire Chief Martin replied the EMT program at the high school is about one-quarter to one-third of the way to becoming a paramedic. The local colleges have an academy-style EMT program, with some offered through the summer through private EMS. They can then continue on and go through the paramedic program, which is about a year or more with clinicals, or they can go into the Fire Academy and come out with Firefighter I and II, and the EMT license, which can qualify them for some fire departments.

Councilwoman Schmidt was pleased to see Chief Martin at the high school and felt it is a great program. She asked Chief Dwojakowski how long applicants can stay on the active hire list.

Police Chief Dwojakowski replied it is a one-year process each year. They ask for applications in October, interviews are in November, and the list becomes certified every January. It is good for one year, and although they used to establish two-year lists, they do not do that anymore. They are at full staffing and do not see a large turnover of staff, noting the majority who will be leaving in the next round still have five more years. He anticipated in six to nine years, they will see about thirty to forty officers retiring. He replied to inquiry they are

notified where the stand on the list and are aware it expires at the end of the year, so hopefully if they are not called by October, they know to apply again.

Councilwoman Schmidt inquired as to whether they looked into the possibility of having solar speed signs rather than battery-operated signs.

Chief Dwojakowski replied the problem is the power needed to put a strobe light that runs all day, and there is no solar power that would charge that battery; however, it has generally served its purpose by being in one location for seven days, and residents have gotten the message to slow down. He replied to further inquiry that they will still be using the trailers because it is easier when they do not have a fixed sign on the side of the road. They have double the power and the flashing lights, although they are more difficult to move from location to location.

Councilman Radtke stated he was impressed with all of the presentations. He questioned when the police vehicles ordered last year are expected to be delivered.

Police Chief Dwojakowski replied the model, a Ford Explorer, was remodeled for 2020. He explained they place their order in July and generally receive them in October; however, they received no cars and were originally told they would be in by April or May. They are now anticipating October or November. They purchased a couple of Dodge Chargers and they found a couple of Ford Explorers at a dealership in Florida, so they have done some stop-gap things to

get cars out there. He replied they still need four more cars plus ten from this budget year.

Councilman Radtke inquired as to the Chief's thought on a Deputy Chief model rather than three Captains.

Chief Dwojakowski replied they used to have four Captains and are down to three. He acknowledged a lot of departments have a Deputy Chief model, and it makes it easier because he could tell one person what to do if he is not there, and that person has full power over the Police Department. He currently has to coordinate with three separate individuals. There are some pros, but he indicated that is a budgeting item and needs to be considered by City Administration.

Councilman Radtke felt converting one of the Captain positions to a Deputy Chief would be helpful to the Chief and his department. He commended Ms. Turgeon on the changes taking place in the library, noting that memberships for the library have greatly increased, and he inquired as to what has been done differently to achieve this type of increase.

Ms. Turgeon explained over the last two years they have promoting their Virtual Library Card program through the Utica Community Schools and Warren Consolidated Schools and every student in those schools has a virtual library card so they can access all digital resources, including their online tutor program. Many of those students have brought their parents in to get full library cards so they can check out print materials, DVD's and more.

Councilman Radtke recently attended the bi-annual volunteer luncheon and added it was great to see the amount of money they are saving through all of those volunteer hours. He noted it is documented as \$175,000 in savings from 132 volunteers. He felt they deserve a lot of recognition, and he would like to submit a budget amendment to ask for \$2,000 for their department so they can host the volunteer luncheon on an annual basis.

Ms. Turgeon stated they hold the bi-annual event for the Friends of the Library and all of their volunteers to recognize the Volunteer of the Year that the Board chooses, as well as a special thank-you. She noted all of those volunteers are also invited to the City's Volunteer Dinner, which they all attend as well. She stated they are happy with how it is being done, but they are open to hosting it once a year.

Councilman Radtke felt the recycling centers should be closed and they should go to curbside recycling. He recalled GFL had submitted a proposal years ago indicating each resident would be charged \$9 extra in taxes per year to bring curbside recycling to their homes. He was not on Council at the time, but they did not agree to extend it at that time. He does not know if they can still get that type of pricing, but he would like Administration to approach GFL and ask them what it would cost to add curbside recycling to every home, and further questioned how much of that cost would be offset by closing down the recycling centers, which are being contaminated. He added if it does not ultimately make sense to close them, he agreed with his colleagues that they

need to be secured and locked at night because it does not make sense to have recycling bins that are being contaminated. He also questioned the possibility of charging a stormwater run-off fee.

Mr. Moore replied they have not looked into a stormwater run-off fee, but he stated they would be willing to look into it and provide feedback.

Councilman Radtke complimented Mr. Langlois on doing a fabulous job on the parks, and residents express through feedback that they are very excited about the things the City is doing. He has received questions about the City not participating in National Little League programs like some cities do, and he questioned why they do not participate.

Mr. Langlois clarified that they do not run the Sterling Heights Baseball and Softball Association, so they have the final say. They have been an independent organization for a number of years. Recently the softball side affiliated with ASA, which is now USA Softball. When the two groups merged, they talked to them about possibly affiliating with the national organization. The issue with Little League is that a chapter has to be started, and they have boundaries. Currently Clinton Valley Little League extends into Sterling Heights, covering from Hayes to Mound and from 16 Mile to M-59, and it is not easy to get them to relinquish the City's boundaries. They will continue to see if there is a way to expand into Little League, but he indicated it is ultimately their decision.

Councilman Radtke felt it would be great advertising for the City, and he felt this is a large enough city that should be able to have its own baseball team. He urged Mr. Langlois to look into it further. He mentioned the pathway to Moravian Park from the south and inquired as to a timeline.

Mr. Langlois replied that is in the last group of the park improvements and will be the last item that goes out to bid. They hope to start in June and finish it in October. He added Moravian Park is almost done, and a lot of the path is in good shape.

Councilman Radtke stated he is excited about the new Community Center, Music in the Park and the Farmer's Market. He is pleased with the reforestation efforts, and added he is proposing a budget item to add more money for reforestation so they can add trees to neighborhoods that were hardest hit by the Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm Disease. He has talked with residents who feel they are losing a lot of their trees with new development, and they do not feel there are enough new trees going in. He pointed out that this budget includes increased training for all department heads, so he felt cutting the Council while adding training funds for everyone else is the wrong idea. He felt the NLC fee is not too expensive, but what they get back from it is essential, so he will be voting in objection to cutting that from the budget.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated the library is one of her favorite places, and she felt the library programs are progressing with the needs of their residents and society. She indicated some of their funding is based on square footage of the

library, and she suggested investigating the possibility of opening a small branch at Lakeside Mall if it could be cost neutral and Lakeside could provide them with a good deal on one of the storefronts.

Ms. Turgeon urged residents to fill out the online survey, noting one of the questions addresses expanded locations. She is very interested in researching another location, and although they do not have the funding for a new location, they could possibly do something creative and find some funding.

Councilwoman Ziarko appreciated Ms. Turgeon's willingness to look into her suggestion. She questioned if Ms. Turgeon was given \$2,000, would she prefer to use it toward a luncheon or toward materials and programs.

Ms. Turgeon stated she would consider it special to provide the extra luncheon, plus the City also recognizes them every year at their volunteer dinner. She noted that they always have needs at the library, and she can always use more money for collections. She explained they are behind other libraries such as Troy, because they spend more money on collections; however, she stated she will leave that decision up to City Council. She did not feel their volunteers are unhappy about having a luncheon every other year.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated she is excited about the SMART Moves Program and inquired as to the similarities and differences between that program and the former DARE program.

Police Chief Dwojakowski replied that DARE was a fourteen- to sixteen-week program. It took two weeks to become a certified DARE officer, and everything

had to be purchased through their program. He stated he was a DARE officer, but the SMART Moves program is more fluid. They left 80% of the program unchanged and changed what they felt needed to be changed, making it a custom program. They have shortened it to ten weeks. He stressed it is a powerful program, with lessons learned about crime and consequences, and right from wrong. He replied to further inquiry that, regarding speed signs, they have two large trailers and two of the small portable signs. He anticipated all four will be in use all the time, although he indicated there is usually one broken down with a dead battery or other technical issue. He assured he will have all four being used as much as possible.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned Chief Martin as to when CPR classes will be available for Council members or residents.

Chief Martin replied once they enter the new budget year, they will begin to develop schedules, noting they have to have a certain number in order to hold a class. If the Council members would like a class, they can arrange that at any time, and he indicated they also offer it to their Survival Coin recipients and their families.

Councilwoman Ziarko inquired as to what percentage of the City's employees have gone through CPR training and are certified.

Chief Martin replied Parks & Recreation requires certification for their employees who are working with students in the various classes. He added that Police Department and Fire Department employees are also certified in it,

but as far as the rest of the City's employees, he could not provide a percentage. He indicated they have done initiatives on "Hands Only" CPR.

Councilwoman Ziarko agreed that a new DPW building is needed. She inquired as to the impound lot.

Mr. Moore replied it operate basically the same way, but there is a building that Parks & Recreation will no longer use. The towing lot will go from their trailer to that building, and the Police Department intend to use that building as well for fatal inspections. There will be a separate entrance off of 18 Mile Road with signage and an address for the tow yard.

Councilwoman Ziarko inquired as to whether input from the employees was sought when planning the new building.

Mr. Moore replied that has been the key goal for the entire project, and he noted the architect has met with multiple people, adding the floor plan for that building came from the staff's determination of needs and wants.

Councilwoman Ziarko inquired as to whether GFL has indicated any problems with contamination in the curbside single-stream recycling.

Mr. Moore replied that has been a topic of discussion, and it comes up often that there is a lot of contamination in curbside. He is not able to provide a percentage. He replied to further inquiry that as the curbside container is mechanically dumped into the truck, they cannot see its contents. If there is something non-recyclable in the container, such as oil or other type of liquid, that comingles with the entire load. It drops the load, and there is a staff at that

center that will go through every piece of material on a conveyor belt and sort what is good and what is not.

Councilwoman Ziarko felt there are people who cannot afford the additional fee for curbside recycling but faithfully use the recycling centers. She indicated since they have to close the 18 Mile location due to the construction of the new building, possibly they could reevaluate at the end of the year to consider whether to keep the other two centers open for a while. She suggested having an extra "Shred Day" and "Hazardous Waste Day," possibly in the fall as well as in the spring.

Mr. Moore replied they receive astronomical response to those events, and people are pleased to be able to get rid of those items. He agreed they can look at possibly hosting additional events in the fall.

Councilwoman Ziarko inquired as to the size of the right-of-way trees that are offered for discount purchase.

Mr. Moore replied they are about 2-3/4 inches to 3 inches in diameter, and range in height from 8 to 12 feet, depending upon the species.

Councilwoman Ziarko felt people do not want to replace their trees because they do not want the job of raking leaves. She is not sure she would be willing to put more money into reforestation, not because she does not like trees, but she felt the money would better be spent for retiree health care, pensions, liability costs, etc. She commented that people should be encouraged to put their trash in plastic containers rather than garbage bags that are not in

containers, although she did not feel they need to purchase them from GFL. Councilwoman Ziarko addressed the ReCreating Recreation, stating she is so pleased that the Moravian Park pathway is being paved. She liked the trail around the nature preserve, and she commended Mr. Langlois on his wonderful staff. She questioned whether Mr. Langlois compares resident and non-resident rates to those in other communities.

Mr. Langlois replied affirmatively, noting the summer playground is one of the services they often compare to other communities, as well as how much they are paying staff people versus how much they are charging. He felt they have a competitive fee structure. They want to make sure recreation in the City is more available and that is why there are no fees for a number of amenities. Residents who want to enjoy the dog park will pay about half of what residents in other communities pay for their dog parks. He noted they have found what works well in one community will often work well in this community.

Councilwoman Ziarko agreed with Councilwoman Koski's suggestion to cut the National League of Cities membership fee from the budget. She would rather see some money used for Library programming. The City is very active in MML, the Mayor attends the national conference and the City Manager attends the ICMA Conference. She questioned whether the City has hired lobbyists in the past.

Mr. Vanderpool replied they have used federal lobbyists, noting once was the closure of the Sterling Heights Assembly Plant to help lobby for the needed

changes to help the failing automotive industry, and it also helped Chrysler reverse their decision and purchase that property out of bankruptcy. The second time was for the Innovate Mound project, where they helped secure \$97 million federal grant to help construct Mound Road from I-696 to M-59.

Councilwoman Ziarko also stressed the important of renewing the Safe Streets millage and encouraged everyone to get out and vote to keep these services going. She felt volunteer hours has increased greatly over the last few years, and she noted that there is a lot of service-sharing between communities. She questioned how many of the City's employee suggestions are implemented.

Mr. Vanderpool replied a large percentage of employee's suggestions are implemented. He cited numerous programs throughout the years where they encouraged more formal feedback, and depending upon the ideas, employees would be rewarded with a gift card or something similar. He stated they engage with employees on a regular basis, and collaboration occurs almost daily.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned whether they could start implementing the gift card rewards once again.

Mr. Vanderpool felt it is a great idea, but they are exploring, through their Human Resources Manager, a more robust program beyond gift cards. They may be able to allocate an actual reward program through a bonus. He added it becomes more difficult when talking about collective bargaining agreements.

Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Vanderpool and Ms. Varney, as well as all of the City employees and directors, for their hard work with regard to the budget presentations. He agreed the public library probably the most heavily-trafficked area of the City, aside from the recreation areas at Dodge Park. He stated he is proud to be a part of this organization because of the Police and Fire Chiefs who have set the tone for those departments. He is excited about the Public Works Department and the new building that will fit how important they are to this organization. Regarding discussion of potential budget amendments, he stated he has been involved with the United States Conference of Mayors and MML, and they are both worthy. Learning from others and taking advantage of the resources they provide is invaluable and should be encouraged. He noted there are only five cities in the State of Michigan that are a comparable size to Sterling Heights, compared to about 225 comparable-sized cities across the United States. He felt it would be beneficial to have membership in the NCL. He asked Ms. Varney as to how much money comes from the federal government for roads.

Ms. Varney stated she does not have that number but noted that they are getting \$98 million for Mound Road.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the match is generally 80% on the main roads, and the balance would be split with the County.

Mayor Taylor talked about opportunities that they have when being involved in federal organizations so he would not want to see that eliminated to save

what he considered a relatively minor amount of money. There was talk about consolidating training through legal counsel, and he is sure legal counsel would not mind providing some training, but each Council member has their different areas of expertise and interest, and he would not want to see a budget that eliminates those opportunities for those making the decisions for the City. He has been contemplating a Mayor's Youth Counsel, possibly meeting with structure and bylaws once a month to advise the Mayor and City Council on issues impacting them. He felt they need to look at a Sustainability Commission, looking at such issues as water usage, energy usage, recycling, etc. He indicated it may be early to request a budget amendment for either, but he may bring it up at a future meeting to look into it further. Because of the number of comments and some conflicting comments on the recycling issued, he inquired whether Mr. Vanderpool needs direction on closing the recycling center on 18 Mile Road.

Mr. Vanderpool stated it would be helpful to have some direction. He believed he heard the Council reluctantly agreed, in light of the new DPW building that needs to be constructed on that site, to close the 18 Mile recycling center, but try to implement other monitoring procedures and measures, possible a direct oversight and limited hours at the other two facilities to keep them open as long as possible.

Mayor Taylor inquired as to whether any of the Council members object to removing the recycling center at 18 Mile Road from the budget. None of the

Council members indicated they were in objection. He understood there has been a swing in the recycling industry, and where China used to pay for recycling materials, they are now charging to take them. As a result, the recyclers are losing a lot of money on their contracts. He felt if the City went out now for a bid on universal curbside recycling, the costs would be considerably higher now than it would have been.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**

Because it is past 9:30 p.m., Mayor Taylor stated they will open the floor for citizen comments at this time.

- Mr. Charles Jefferson – inquired about ordinance for decorative lighting.

**5. BUDGET WORKSHOP DISCUSSION (continued)**

**B. Budget Amendments**

**Item #1 – CERT & Citizen Patrol Uniforms**

Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to increase the 2019/20 General Fund Proposed Budget by \$8,500 to purchase uniforms for the members of CERT and the Citizen's Patrol.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

**Item #2 – Increase Tree Plantings**

Moved by Radtke, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to increase the 2019/20 General Fund Proposed Budget by \$100,000 for the purchase of additional trees.

Councilman Radtke noted this is the biggest issue people contact him about, and he felt it is important to add trees as they have lost so many. He replied to

inquiry that he is open to discuss a different amount of money for this. He talked with Administration and they felt it is a fair amount, noting he would like to budget \$100,000 each year for five years for this cause.

Mr. Moore replied to inquiry that \$100,000 would purchase about 350 to 400 trees. He replied to further inquiry that the increase to the tree canopy for this number of trees is minor, adding SEMCOG did a study and to increase the tree canopy by 1% would equate to millions of dollars of trees. They would most likely target a local neighborhood decimated by the Emerald Ash Borer, and that neighborhood would see a major impact with 350 to 400 trees planted on their streets.

Mayor Taylor indicated he will be voting in favor of this. He questioned whether this will come back as a Consideration item.

Mr. Vanderpool confirmed it would be listed as an item on a Consent Agenda once it is bid out.

Councilwoman Ziarko looked at requests from other departments. She inquired as to what \$100,000 would buy for DPW that was not requested in their budget.

Mr. Moore replied they could purchase equipment, vehicles or investment into underground infrastructure. He noted his number one concern is the underground infrastructure because it cannot be seen. Through the SAW grant, they are already uncovering some concerns with the underground infrastructure.

Councilwoman Ziarko stressed that, although she has nothing against trees, she is not hearing people requesting trees. She felt \$100,000 is a lot of money, and with liability costs, she is not in favor of it at this time. She pointed out that amount of money could buy a lot for many other departments.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned if this is approved, they would purchase 350 to 400 homes and plant them in road rights-of-way in front of homes. She pointed out the people who paid \$300 for a tree will be calling to find out why others are getting free trees. She could not see why the money for these trees would be allocated in neighborhoods. She felt spending that kind of money and not having it make a dent in the tree canopy, she is not in favor of this amendment.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether the plan was to plant trees in Section 34, near 15 Mile and Maple.

Mr. Moore replied they received a \$15,000 grant to plant some trees in the 15 Mile/Maple area.

Mr. Langlois replied to inquiry that they have been working with the Macomb County Green Initiative and there is a tree/shrub purchase event taking place this Friday and Saturday, and to date, over 20,000 trees and shrubs have been purchased through this organization. They will be planting two trees in Donovan Park. This event is geared mainly for business and private sector in all different areas. Mr. Langlois replied to further inquiry that Mr. Moore has done

a good job looking for grants, and he has done the same, noting they received close to \$10,000 from ITC in grants for trees.

Councilman Yanez stated he likes trees, but the feedback he receives from the public is concern over developers cutting down large numbers of trees. While he appreciates this, it is about priorities, and he felt any of the department directors would have good use for \$100,000. He felt trees are further down the list than some of the other items, so he will not be supporting this amendment.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated she loves trees and nature, but it is about priorities, and she did not feel this is the best way to spend the taxpayer's money. She would like to see the City pursue ways to get the tree canopy improved, and although she appreciates Councilman Radtke's passion on this, she will be voting no. She suggested finding another funding source or changing the amount to a much smaller amount.

Councilman Radtke withdrew his motion.

Mayor Taylor withdrew his support.

**Item #3 – Fire Department Staffing Study**

Moved by Yanez, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to increase the 2019/20 General Fund Proposed Budget by \$20,000 to fund a staffing analysis for the Fire Department.

Councilman Yanez felt this is needed, noting they are very busy and want to make sure they have proper staffing.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

**Item #4 – Eliminate Membership in National League of Cities (NLC)**

Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to reduce the General Fund

Proposed Budget at the cost of membership in the National League of Cities (NLC).

Councilwoman Koski pointed out the Safe Streets millage is up for renewal this fall, and she felt they need to show residents they care how their money is being spent.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski inquired as to who pays for Council members to attend national events hosted through the NLC.

Mr. Vanderpool replied the City has historically covered events that are city-related and city business.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski felt the events could be costly because they would be out-of-state and involve travel and extended stay, whereas MML has local state events.

Mr. Vanderpool clarified it would be Council's prerogative whether conferences are attended. A membership does not necessarily mean a city has to be represented at the conference. The City Council makes the decision of who to send; he would be willing to collaborate with City Council on the issue. He replied to further inquiry that the membership and training element would be budgeted so it would not necessarily come back to City Council. It would go through an internal process if it is under \$10,000.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski agreed with Councilwoman Koski that this is a membership that could have a lot of additional costs, and although it is an

educational opportunity, she felt this may not be the best time to get back into this membership.

Mr. Vanderpool replied to inquiry his estimation that the City removed itself from the NLC around 2003.

Councilwoman Schmidt commented the City has done well in the last 16 years without that membership, noting they have a good relationship with federal legislators, they have gone to Washington DC, and the Mayor and City Manager have memberships in national organizations. She felt they still have a lot of communication and this City has been discussed on a national level as far as what they do in this community. She felt the potential for the membership could be costly.

Councilman Radtke questioned City Council's portion of the overall budget.

Ms. Varney replied it is a very small percentage of the overall budget.

Councilman Radtke stated the membership in NLC gives the City an opportunity to collaborate. He stated he is not looking to travel but felt paying the membership fee and belonging shows their support.

Mayor Taylor felt it is short-sighted to eliminate that membership from the budget and reduce training opportunities for the people who make the decisions for the City. He inquired as to how much money is budgeted for training, conferences, involvement in organizations for Police, Fire and General employees.

Ms. Varney replied they increased their General Fund training budget by \$175,000, so it is budgeted at \$476,000 this year for training throughout the whole City. She replied that includes out-of-state conferences, estimating that may involve a few dozen times throughout the year.

Mayor Taylor could not understand cutting a \$10,000 expenditure out of a \$250 million budget and thereby eliminating the opportunity for networking with similar communities throughout the country.

Councilman Yanez noted that City Council is part-time in a City Manager form of government, and although there is a lot of good training available, he felt it cannot be compared to city employees who answer 911 calls or the employees Mr. Moore has to train to go down into manholes and make sure they are safe. He agreed the Mayor and City Manager bring back invaluable information garnered from their conferences, but he also pointed out that the City will be asking its citizens to vote for Safe Streets millage renewal this fall. He stressed it is for the benefit of the residents, but he felt City Council should lead by example by "tightening their belts," and if the membership is not something they currently have, he felt they should wait and look at it in the future.

Yes: Schmidt, Sierawski, Yanez, Ziarko, Koski.

No: Radtke, Taylor. The motion carried.

**Item #5 – Reduction of \$20,000 in General Fund Training Budget**

Moved by Koski, seconded by Sierawski, **RESOLVED**, to reduce the 2019/20

General Fund Budget by \$20,000 which is part of the increase in training for City Council.

Councilwoman Koski stated their training budget last year was \$25,520, and this year it is \$52,730. She proposed obtaining training through the City Attorney, who does the training for Boards and Commissions. She added they can contract someone from MML to come out and train, and she felt it is important that all seven members of Council receive training and that it is not limited to one member. She explained that would give everyone on Council the training everyone else has, and it would still result in an increase of approximately \$8,000 in their training budget.

Councilman Radtke was felt this is short-sited and this will prevent the Council from getting further training.

Discussion took place regarding the Elected Officials Academy through the MML.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned whether this is still increasing the Council's training budget from last year's budget.

Ms. Varney explained the line item in the Council budget for "Other Charges" is not entirely for training, but this year's budget for training is \$36,240 which includes going to the MML Annual Convention, the MML Capital Conference and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. She noted that \$24,500 was added this year for Council to attend the professional development and training of their choice, so reducing that budget line item by \$20,000 will still result in an increase of \$4,500 from last year.

Yes: Schmidt, Sierawski, Ziarko, Koski.

No: Taylor, Yanez, Radtke. The motion carried.

**Item #6 – Increase Budget to Make Library Luncheon an Annual Event**

Moved by Radtke, seconded by Taylor, to increase the 2019/20 General Fund

Budget by \$2,000 to make the Library Volunteer Luncheon an Annual Event.

Councilman Radtke felt the City should reward the volunteers for all the hard work they do at the Library.

Mayor Taylor requested information on the Library Volunteer Luncheon

Ms. Turgeon explained it is an event that is held every other year, and they use funding from the Suburban Library Cooperative and do not purchase a computer the year they hold the luncheon. It is a catered event held at the library for all of the library volunteers, and the cost is approximately \$2,000.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski noted this is a wonderful group of volunteers but they already have an annual dinner hosted by the City for all volunteers. She expressed concern that this is setting a bad precedent because the City has wonderful volunteers in many areas of the City and they are already giving them a dinner. She would prefer that \$2,000 be used for the Library's computer. The bi-annual dinner is the library supporting their own volunteers with their own money, and not the City Council singling out one group of volunteers to provide them with an additional luncheon. She stated she is not in support of this request.

Councilman Yanez stated part of the budget presentations reflected the amount of money the City has saved through volunteers who give of their time to provide services to the City. He did not feel offering uniforms or a luncheon

is any different than an employee who would make a suggestion for the City to save money and receive a gift card or reward for that, adding they are all helping the City. He stated having no problem with a luncheon, adding they should be thanking the volunteers every day for the work they do.

Councilwoman Ziarko noted it is \$2,000, but when she asked Ms. Turgeon earlier as to what she felt her volunteers would prefer, her reply was they would most likely rather see some type of programming.

Mayor Taylor stated he will be voting no. He supported the motion and felt it is fine to reward volunteers, but he does not want to go through each item on the budget. He stated he is comfortable with the budget as it is.

Yes: Yanez, Radtke.

No: Sierawski, Taylor, Ziarko, Koski, Schmidt. The motion failed.

7. **REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Vanderpool addressed a citizen comment, noting that holiday lights are required to be removed within sixty (60) days after a holiday, so he urged him to call the City if he notices a violation.

Councilman Yanez felt they will need a broader discussion on Waste Management recycling.

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

10. **CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Kaszubski stated there are no items for Closed Session this evening.

11. **ADJOURN**

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Sierawski, to adjourn the meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

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MELANIE D. RYSKA, City Clerk