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Town of Bladensburg  
Mayor and Council FY24 Budget **Work Session #2**  
Monday, April 24, 2023

Mayor James opened the meeting at 5:30pm and called the meeting to order. Attending was Mayor James, and Council Members Brown, Blount, Route, McBryde. Staff attending were Acting Town Administrator Charnovich, Treasurer Tinelli, Chief Collington, Public Works Supervisor Hall, and Code Enforcement Supervisor Rinehart.

Mayor James welcomed the Council, public, and staff to the second budget work session. She handed the meeting over to Treasurer Tinelli to continue with the budget discussion.

Treasurer Tinelli summarized the revenues reviewed last budget work session which are slated to be just over \$9.5M. This is much higher than normal years due to the influx of revenues from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the speed camera revenues.

Departmental Expenditures – the administrative departments were reviewed first. These are the Mayor and Council, Town Administrator, Clerk, and Finance which are only 14% of the total budgeted expenditures while 86% of the draft budget goes to providing a service to include Public Safety, Public Works, ARPA, and Grants.

Mayor and Council Budget

- Increased health insurance and for all departments by 5% for projected increases and for changes in enrollments such as from single plan to a family plan.
- Pension costs increased 3% to all departments due to higher administrative fees paid to the State. Employees contribute 7% and the Town matches 7% plus an additional 3% of fees.
- Business Development – increased from \$15K to \$22K for the Mayor and Council to attend MML, National League of Cities, PGCMA, etc. This is the only chance the Mayor and Council have to meet with their counterparts to share ideas and discuss issues facing similar sized cities and towns.
- Treasurer Tinelli said the Mayor and Council compensation has not changed in over a decade and we have a very active Mayor and Council, and he said as a former elected official, it really is a full-time job. Often times elected officials have to use their job’s vacation time to attend conferences and meetings for the Town. Acting Town Administrator Charnovich and Chief Collington agreed to improve the compensation of the Mayor and Council. Per the Charter, any increase would not take effect until after the election.
- Mayor James polled the Council and they agreed, even though it is a small stipend it has not increased in many years and has not been adjusted for inflation. Staff will come back with a recommendation.
- Employee Recognition budget and Council Projects remained constant at \$8K and \$2.5K respectively.
- Fire Department donation remained constant at \$30K but we also just purchased the ambulance box for \$261K through the ARPA funding.
- Community Grants was re-introduced this year for \$12K which will be awarded based on an application basis. There has been no activity this year because of the activity with ARPA with rental assistance but the same amount is budgeted for FY24. Mayor and Council asked to add

\$5K of this to scholarships for Bladensburg high school students and create a new account to track these.

- Community Events increased from \$44K to 65K based on an increase of Town sponsored events for community outreach. Almost a third of this is for our annual July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. Mr. Charnovich and Mayor James recognized our Marketing Specialist Jeffries for the quality of the events being held this year and the expansion of new events which the residents appreciate. Mayor and Council requested increasing this for the college and vocational workshops in partnership with our high schools.
- Public Safety also has their own budget for Community Events as well which are oriented around the police department.
- Senior Citizen Projects of \$4,500 is to fund activities at the three senior buildings. This increased slightly last year with ARPA funding but has remained the same budget amount here.
- Town Meetings has increased slightly from \$4K to \$5K which cover the video production costs and refreshments for Town and Community meetings. There was also a duplicated line item under Town Administrator budget but this will be removed and reflected under this line item.
- Wireless Communications is for the monthly cell phone allowance but we are looking at issuing Town phones which may be cheaper. The Mayor and Council and staff use their own phones for work since we have our emails through our phones, our chat feature, and the Town phone system application runs on our personal phones.
- Insurance and Membership budgets remained constant from FY23 to FY24. Membership may be increased for the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO) which is a subchapter with National League of Cities (NLC).

#### Town Administrator Budget

- Compensation is for the Town Administrator which a search is currently being conducted. The salary line item is a placeholder since this will be determined by contract. This was reduced this year due to the vacancy but should be increased since we had to broaden the search.
- Transportation was reduced this year from \$60K to \$43K, we need to increase this again back to \$60K based on the resident's usage of the Port Towns Call-a-Bus. Mayor and Council asked staff to look into local transportation options to replace this service.
- Legal will have to be increased for the annexation and land use legal guidance from \$20K to \$40K.
- Contractual Services will be increased from \$70K to \$100K for annexation consultant.
- Advertising was increased from \$25K to \$30K as we provide more marketing and community outreach. The quarterly newsletters run about \$5K per run which are responsible for \$20K of this budget.
- Other line items remained the same from FY23 to FY24.

#### Town Clerk Budget

- Compensation discussion for all the Town departments started around the cost of living increases (COLA's) for the FY24 budget. Inflation is anywhere locally and regionally between 4 and 6%. 5% was budgeted to keep up with inflation along with a 2% merit increase.
- There was a generous increase last budget year for police officers and public works to remain competitive with those positions. The Mayor and Council agreed to keep the 5% COLA and 2% merit to the Public Safety, Public Works, and administrative departments such as Clerk and Finance.

- Treasurer Tinelli noted for every point of increase with COLA and/or merit is around a \$60K increase.
- Most of the line items remained the same from FY23 to FY24. Software contracts were increased by \$2K to include meeting archive software and a scanning software package. Mayor James asked if these contracts could be started now out of this year's budget since unused which would take the pressure of next year's budget.
- Postage decreased slightly but this was questioned for the mailing of ballots for the election.
- Utilities were increased slightly by \$1,000 due to higher energy costs.

#### Finance Budget

- Compensation includes the 5% COLA and 2% merit. Pension contribution increased for the increase in the quarterly administrative fees payable to the State.
- Professional development decreased slightly from \$3K to \$2K since only attending local conferences. Travel also decreased by \$500.
- Audit charges were increased \$5K for the extra for a single audit because of the influx of the federal funds from ARPA.
- Other line items remained constant from FY23 to FY24.

Mayor James said this was a good stopping point with the completion of the administrative departments. Acting Town Administrator Charnovich said a grants person is much needed because our small staff just does not have enough bandwidth anymore to take on additional projects. Mayor and Council asked for staff to come back with a recommended amount.

Treasurer Tinelli said our Constant Yield advertisement is being ran next week in the PG Post which is the only local print media option. He also requested an additional budget meeting for the following week to discuss our largest departments which are Public Safety, Public Works and ARPA. Mr. Charnovich will poll the Mayor and Council to see what day works best next week but it will be tentatively scheduled for Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30pm.

Mayor James called for a motion to adjourn the budget work session. This was seconded by Council Member Blount, motion passed 5-0. Meeting ended at 7:16pm.

*Minutes taken by Vito Tinelli, Treasurer*

