

CITY OF EDEN, N.C.

A special budget retreat meeting of the City Council, City of Eden, was held on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 10 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 308 E. Stadium Drive. Those present for the meeting were as follows:

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| Mayor: | Neville Hall |
| Council Members: | Gerald Ellis |
| | Jerry Epps |
| | Kenny Kirkman |
| | Greg Light |
| | Bernie Moore |
| | Bruce Nooe |
| | Tommy Underwood |
| City Manager: | Jon Mendenhall |
| City Attorney: | Erin Gilley |
| City Clerk: | Deanna Hunt |
| Media: | Roy Sawyers, Rockingham Update |

MEETING CONVENED:

Mayor Hall called the 2023 Budget Retreat to order and welcomed those in attendance, noting he appreciated Roy Sawyers of Rockingham Update for attending and providing coverage.

Updates on Progress from FY 22-23 – what was accomplished in the current fiscal year:

Mayor Hall called on City Manager Jon Mendenhall.

Mr. Mendenhall noted page 2 of the agenda packet listed the accomplishments of the fiscal year. They would go down the list in order and staff would make their presentations.

Marketing:

- Purchase a camera outfit with lens – completed

Marketing and Special Events Manager Cindy Adams said photographs were a big part of Marketing. They brought Eden to life through photographs on social media, ads, different things. To be cost effective, instead of hiring a professional photographer, they really needed a good camera and were able to purchase one through the Peg Grant. It would be used a lot in the media room, which was a work in progress. She invited Council to look in there as it was coming along. She would be using the camera that day. She appreciated the camera and would use it often. She would make it available to any department that needed it.

Finance:

- Hire one full-time Billing & Collections Clerk – completed
- Hire one full-time Accounting Coordinator – planned for second half of fiscal year

Finance and Personnel Director Tammie McMichael said in the current budget, funding had been planned for the two positions. The accounting coordinator would work with Assistant Director Amy Winn as Ms. Winn prepared for her retirement. Both of the positions had been filled. They were very honored to have India Taylor in the Billing & Collections Division and Michelle Wyatt, who was there in the meeting, and was training with Ms. Winn. She thanked Council for funding both of the positions.

Information Technology:

- Transition office licenses to Microsoft Office 365 – planned for second half of fiscal year
- Completed laptop and desktop lifecycles

Information Technology Director Kevin Taylor said that year Microsoft Office licenses were being transitioned to Office 365, the cloud service offered by Microsoft. It would get the City out of the email business as the email would be moved into the cloud, no longer tying that to a physical server. It also opened up a tremendous amount of collaboration tools that the City did not currently have with the Microsoft Office licenses. The laptop lifecycle replacements had been completed and the desktops were on site with two deployed so far and the rest would be completed by the end of April.

Division of Design and Construction:

- Hire professional services to design replacement of Park Road bridge/culvert – planned for second half of fiscal year
- See memo on large projects

Design and Construction Manager Bev O'Dell said there were funds budgeted for him to contact an engineering firm to look at the possible replacement of the bridge on Park Road with a culvert. Last year about this time, an inspection had been done and issues were found. The firm who did the inspection was who he had been talking with off and on. They still had not come to a final resolution on if they would be doing the work or not, but the last time he talked to them they were still very interested so he was going to try to finalize that in the next little bit. On the water construction side, he had some funds that were budgeted for hiring a firm to do surveys and design work on a couple of streets. They had picked Ray and Riverview streets that would be done shortly. Some of the work that had already been done was still in the works for C&D to put in the ground. There were about three of those projects that should have already been started. One that had already been designed – Maryland Avenue – was what they would be requesting funds for in the upcoming budget for the materials. They had already purchased the materials for Circle Drive I and II and Maple Lane. On a good note regarding the Phase II waterline project that had been going on forever that had been stopped by RailPros, they were able to finally able to get the bore done under the railroad east of Dry Creek early in March and yesterday had put in the last stick of 16-inch pipe for that. Today, they were working on putting in some concrete thrust blocks. Then the line would be loaded and tested. That project would soon be done.

Planning & Community Development:

- Continuation of small area plan funding – Draper Small Area Plan ongoing

Planning & Community Development Director Kelly Stultz said her department had always been pretty small and so had a tremendous amount of turnover within the last year including two retirements, one resignation to go to a different place and one employee reassigned. The only two people left in the department that were there a year ago were herself and Chief Codes Inspector Bob Vincent. Mr. Mendenhall had reorganized the department in a way that she thought was working extremely well and much more efficiently. Chase Lemons was doing grant work and economic development stuff while Ken White was working on economic development and Main Street. Jeff Alderman was hired as the new planner, taking Debbie Galloway's spot. GIS Analyst Debra Madison had returned after retirement for a few hours a week to work on GIS. She thought they were making progress with grants. The Leaksville small area plan was finished in the last fiscal year and they were very close to being finished with the Draper one. The final draft before it went to the citizens and the Planning Board was in hand and those meetings would be scheduled after Easter. The plan would come to Council for approval after the Planning Board. The bids had been let finally for the Draper CDBG-Neighborhood Revitalization and she thought they would get started on a house in a couple of weeks and were pretty excited to start to see some progress on that grant. The department was extremely busy but it was a lot of fun. It was an election year so local code enforcement would be at the top of everyone's minds. The City had paid their money in 2019 for the sidewalk on Pierce Street. NCDOT was supposed to be let this summer.

Parks & Recreation:

- Prowlers Rebranding Efforts – three youth sports offerings (baseball, football, basketball underway now)

Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Ray Thomas said rebranding was underway. Baseball and softball were currently underway with 121 total players signed up, 74 boys and 47 girls. Football would then be coming up followed by basketball. He thought everything went pretty well and was running smoothly. They had good coaches and people who had stepped up to the plate.

Council Member Kirkman asked what rebranding the Prowlers was.

Mr. Thomas said the City had taken the Prowlers under its umbrella and were looking after it.

Council Member Ellis said it was the first full year.

Mr. Thomas said it was. It was going well. They had some good people take the reins and run with it. They were in good shape with that.

Police:

- Radios – procurement underway (ordered)
- Cars – procurement underway (ordered)

Police Chief/Assistant City Manager Clint Simpson said there were some capital outlay items for 22-23. One was to remain in the 10-year plan for vehicle replacement purchasing five vehicles, three patrol and two detectives. All vehicles had been purchased and were on site. Two patrol vehicles – Durangos – were outfitted and in service. Three new F-150s had been purchased. Two would be assigned to the investigative unit and one would be tested in the field on patrol. They were scheduled for upfitting in the next three weeks. Regarding the Viper TDMA radios, to become compliant by July 1, 2025, all radios had been purchased and were deployed with the exception of about five which they would hold and use as vehicles got rotated out instead of paying to have the radios installed twice. They had all the radios and they were working extremely well.

Fire:

- Repair metal work on roof at Fire Station 3 – planned for second half of fiscal year
- Self-contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs) – procurement underway (ordered)
- Repair Station 2 (not a goal from last year, but a project developed based on emergent circumstances)

Fire Chief White said the repair of Station 3's roof was budgeted in 2022-23. Three bids were submitted. Big Dawg Roofing won the bid and were supposed to start the work March 21. The SCBAs were ordered in early December. They were projected to be here in March but due to delays were set to be delivered in June.

Council Member Ellis asked if they were a change from what had been used in the past.

Chief White said yes, they went with Scotts. He did not have an update on Station 2. He did not know if it was a funding problem, if they were waiting on grant money. He did not know what the holdup was on that.

Council Member Ellis asked if the plans were back for the person who was finishing the project or if they were on hold.

Chief White said he did not have any plans. He met with Ms. Stultz and Mr. Thomas at the end of December or first of January to determine exactly what they wanted. He had not heard anything since. They met to determine things like types of flooring they wanted, etc.

Council Member Ellis asked Ms. Stultz who was doing it.

Ms. Stultz replied from the audience that currently, the architectural firm was dealing with the plans. Originally it was Cirrus Construction. She expected to have the documents that week from the architectural firm. Those had to come from an architect. Once the plans were received, it would have to be rebid.

Council Member Ellis asked if Cirrus bid on it to begin with.

Ms. Stultz said they did. The work was stopped. Cirrus would be eligible to bid on the rest of the project.

Council Member Ellis asked if bids had been sent out.

Ms. Stultz said not yet, she was waiting on the architect.

Council Member Underwood said he would like to see the project expedited.

Ms. Stultz agreed.

Chief White said he knew the truck bay had been repaired.

Streets:

- Dump truck – ordered in 2020 (previous budget goal) – delivered

Streets Superintendent Darren Gatewood said in the process of being delivered, the motor of the truck came loose. Fleet Maintenance Superintendent Jason Barnard had worked it out so the City got a whole new dump truck. That, and Covid issues, had caused the delay. Everything was now good.

Council Member Underwood said he thought a tandem dump truck had been budgeted for that year. He asked the status.

Mr. Mendenhall said it was budgeted in C&D as well as a rubber tire excavator and he wanted to say a chipper as well. None of that had been procured. They were looking at the construction crew to see what was needed and what was working there. The thought process was they were going to rent equipment for a while to see how that all worked and let them get started. They had rented equipment for the fuel system to be done. Looking at the number of dump trucks the City had, they felt there were sufficient numbers right now. It was not optimal for construction, but they needed to get a little construction experience under their belt before they started expending money and purchasing those assets. They were waiting to see how it all shook out.

Council Member Underwood said he did not think the City had a tandem.

Mr. Mendenhall said all the dump trucks were single axle and asked Mr. Gatewood if that was correct.

Mr. Gatewood said it was.

Council Member Underwood said he believed there was a need for that but they would see.

Collection & Distribution:

- Dump truck chassis replacement – procurement underway
- Removal of Byrd Street elevated storage tank – in progress

Fleet Maintenance:

- Fuel system – procurement underway

Mr. Barnard said the fueling station was under contract through Sourcewell and Blue Energy. PetroServe and Foy-Workman would be doing the install. Equipment was six to eight months out.

Council Member Underwood asked if that would be taken care of out of the current budget.

Mr. Mendenhall said it should be. The fiscal year ended June 30. If it exceeded that and went into the next fiscal year, what was spent that year would go to retained earnings and they would have to re-appropriate the balance. For instance, if it cost \$100,000 – and he wished it cost that but it was a whole lot more – and the City only spent \$50,000, \$50,000 would go into the savings that year to be re-appropriated out of savings for the balance into the next year if it bridged the two fiscal years.

Council Member Kirkman said they had budgeted \$500,000 for it. He asked what the actual costs currently were.

Mr. Barnard said the purchase order was for \$732,103.

Council Member Kirkman said they were up a quarter million dollars.

Council Member Underwood asked why there was so much difference.

City Attorney Erin Gilley said she could speak to a little bit of that. The original bid came in and it went up because the contractor that was desired did not have a North Carolina contractor's license and that was required. It cost more. Anything over \$300,000 by statute had to have a performance bond and a payment bond. That went up about \$18,000 so there was increase in costs there. That was why they may not have it completed in the fiscal year. The contract had to be done right if they wanted that particular person to do the job. That was a portion of the increase in costs. She did not know what the extra would be.

Mr. Barnard said it was a material increase.

Council Member Ellis asked about the contractor requirement regarding the state.

Ms. Gilley said they had to have a N.C. contractor's license and they did now. The contractor went back and subcontracted with a N.C. contractor to do the job.

Council Member Kirkman said Petroserve was in Summerfield.

Ms. Gilley said she thought who they were working with was Blue1 out of Virginia. They needed a N.C. contractor's license and that was Foy-Workman, who the City was actually contracting with. Petroserve was who staff wanted.

Solid Waste:

- Knuckle boom truck – procurement underway

Solid Waste Superintendent Dusty Curry said the needed knuckle boom had been ordered. He appreciated the approval to purchase that and was just waiting on delivery.

Water Plant:

- Painted two sludge scrapers
- Replaced two valves
- Replaced PLCs

Utilities Manager Melinda Ward said one of the sludge scrapers had been painted and they were waiting on warmer weather to do the other and would try to paint another one at the same time, dependent on how the work went, the weather and money. Two valves had been replaced. She thought they were working on the PLCs and deferred to Water and Wastewater Superintendent Dena Reid.

Ms. Reid answered from the audience that the PLCs went to the generator and had not been completed yet.

Ms. Ward said they were still having problems with the generator but were in the process of getting the work done.

Water Resources:

- Ongoing support of EPA AOC related pump station replacement

Ms. Ward advised they continued to help with crews on the EPA work.

Wastewater Treatment Plant:

- Order replacement for bar screen
- Design of north basin replacement

Ms. Ward advised the bar screen for the replacement had been ordered and they hoped it would be there by the end of the month or at least by the beginning of April. The north basin replacement work was in the process of being designed. Everything had been funded and they were just in the process of waiting for the design work to be completed so they could review it and start that process. Hopefully it would be going out to bid by the end of the year but it depended on how long it took everything to go through. She noted the Byrd Street water tank had been removed and staff was working on cleaning up the yard around the area.

Council Member Underwood asked where the funding for that came from.

Ms. Ward said she believed it came from water and sewer construction.

Mr. Mendenhall said it came from C&D as part of the distribution system.

Review of the budget process – the anticipated timeline for budget ordinance adoption, conditions facing other localities, revenue discussion, etc.:

Budget adoption schedule:

Tuesday April 18, 2023 Regular Meeting – Budget Presented – Budget Message

Tuesday June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting – Public Hearing and Adoption of the Budget Ordinance

Conditions facing localities

- This is the fourth year past re-valuation; the next re-valuation will be in 2024 (a move forward 3 years to accommodate an assessment to sales ratio of 85% or less).
- It is recommended that conservative budgeting continue and that this budget be a continuation of previous spending patterns adjusted (as necessary) to account for material inflation and for the previously identified projects in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Personnel

- Review pay study recommendations.
- 2% cost of living increase.
- Up to 3% merit on a graduated scale, based on performance evaluation is recommended.

Discussion

- Administration would like to propose no tax increase this year.
- Administration would like to propose no fee increases this year:
 - Additional rate increases may be necessary only if vendors raise rates (e.g. solid waste).
- As a matter of practice, Council will be asked for a general direction and instruction to the city manager on preparing the budget and establishing a tax rate so that revenues can be estimated and budgeted; this will occur later in the day today.

Mayor Hall called on Mr. Mendenhall.

Mr. Mendenhall said the budget schedule was being adjusted this year. The budget would be presented at the April 18 regular meeting with the budget message presented to Council. June 20 would be public hearing and presentation of the budget and ordinance. It would be adopted as required by law prior to June 30. He read from the conditions facing localities points and advised the next revaluation would be effective not in the upcoming fiscal year but in the next one. As they all knew, taxes were raised based on valuation but

also based on rate. It was like a two-level type system. Values more than likely would go up. The tax rate would have to be looked at which was where the discussion came in about revenue neutral or not. First, people would receive the notice of reassessment and would see that their values went up. That could create a bit of heartburn because they thought their taxes would go up, multiplying that new value by the current tax rate. People needed to keep in mind that in N.C., it was required by law to publish what a revenue neutral rate would be. It would be up to the governing body if they wanted to set the rate revenue neutral or keep the rate the same or a compromise in the middle of those. People did not need to get excited that they would be paying more in taxes because they may not be. He continued reading from the conditions facing localities. The City was seeing very high material inflation, with the fuel system and every stick of pipe was much more expensive than it had been. It would have been a good investment three years ago if they had bought tons of water and sewer pipe because the value was very high. Bid returns were coming in very high, including across the region and state. Every time they went out to bid, there were fewer bidders and the prices were higher so that needed to be accounted for in some of the operating lines. There were projects that were in the CIP they needed to be sure to budget. Some projects needed to be advanced because of maintenance and ongoing maintenance concerns and also the timeliness of implementing some capital items. It seemed like things were taking much longer. A third emergent item under conditions was financial uncertainty in the broader macro-economic environment. The bank situation was very fluid and subject to change. The financial picture on revenue was not going to be in a steady state type situation. Revenues and tax revenues in North Carolina were good but the City needed to be very careful not to overextend themselves in such a way to bring risk in the time of adjustment and uncertainty in the banking situation. He wanted to put that out there to everyone as a cautionary tale. He moved to the personnel item. A memo reviewing the pay study recommendations had been given to Council that morning. Ms. McMichael would talk to Council and make a recommendation on that. Council would have to decide whether to take the recommendation in the memo which went along with the second and third bullet points. If Council decided against the recommendation, it would invalidate those two bullet points. Council had directed staff to get pay study prices and staff did. As they did every year, staff studied the N.C. League of Municipalities (NCLM) pay study information. Based on that information, and they knew in a steady state they could budget and had the money and revenue to budget for it, staff recommended a two percent cost of living increase and up to three percent merit on a graduated scale based on performance. That could be budgeted. They could take the percentages and multiply it across the board. If they went with the pay study recommendations there was uncertainty in how much they would have to pay. The cost of the pay study was one thing, very doable. The real cost would be implementation costs of whatever they came up depending on regional comparisons. Administration recommended doing the known costs versus the unknown costs.

Council Member Ellis asked if the NCLM prepared a study for all cities in the state each year.

Mr. Mendenhall said they did a salary study broken down by size and unit. It was voluntary with about 75 to 80 percent of municipalities participating. They had every position, how many were in that position, how much they were paid, the minimum and maximum salaries. They all used about the same job descriptions so it was all compared apples to apples. The NCLM hired the MAPS Group, using member dues, to conduct the salary study annually. The NCLM then published it looking at salaries, fringe benefits, the whole component of compensation.

Council Member Ellis asked how long the City had been using the salary study from the NCLM.

Mr. Mendenhall said at least during his tenure and he thought it was annually for the last 20 years, which Ms. McMichael confirmed.

Council Member Underwood said he would like to see them do what was best for the employees. They were the backbone of the City. They did a good job and he addressed them in the audience and thanked the employees for what they did. He wanted to see what was best for them and that was money.

Council Member Epps said he would like to see the City make up for what they had to subtract previously and go a little higher than two percent if that was possible. He would like the two changed to three percent.

Mayor Hall asked if that was going to take the budget out of balance.

Mr. Mendenhall said it would have to be looked at but it probably would.

Mayor Hall said the money would have to be taken from something else that was budgeted.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was correct. They did need to make sure everyone was of one accord on that. There were multiple ideas around the dais and he wanted to make sure everyone had their chance to speak and direct as needed. He asked for direction.

Council Member Ellis said it was important to maintain a balanced budget as the mayor had just said. If the funds could be found for up to three percent, he would like to see that happen but he did not want to see other important items cut. The City needed to maintain its history of having a balanced budget. That was up to Mr. Mendenhall.

Mayor Hall told Mr. Mendenhall that he had basically already created a balanced budget assuming a two percent increase.

Mr. Mendenhall said that correct.

Mayor Hall said to take the increase from two to three, Mr. Mendenhall would have to take funds from something already planned in the budget and put that toward the increase. He did not know department or item someone was asking for was going to be the victim of the money.

Council Member Underwood asked how much problem that would be for Mr. Mendenhall to look at.

Mr. Mendenhall said he could take a moment and tell Council exactly what one percent cost.

Mayor Hall noted by statute, the City had to have a balanced budget. The problem was if they took money to increase one pot, it was taken from another one.

Mr. Mendenhall said staff would bring the item back.

Council Member Kirkman said staff could get up to a three percent merit so an employee could get up to five percent. He wanted it to be left as it was, stay balanced and move on.

Mr. Mendenhall read from his discussion item.

Council Member Epps asked how much an increase would be if vendors raised their rates.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought it would be \$1 per year. They were in a \$1 increase for five years and were in year four. There would be one more the following year and should be where they needed to be. At the end of the meeting, Council would be asked for general instruction and direction for the city manager on preparing the budget, establishing a tax rate so that revenues could be estimated and budgeted.

Council Member Nooe asked where the charge for outside water and sewer users fell, if that was a fee.

Mr. Mendenhall said it was a fee adopted in the fee schedule annually. The schedule covered everything from parks and rec fees to water and sewer customers and it was in that.

Council Member Nooe said instead of saying no increases, he would like to review those and see if they needed to modify any outside city user fees.

Council Member Ellis said he thought in recreation, they may need to look at outside city user rates. He thought a lot of people came from outside the area to use it, including Virginia. He thought it may be the only public pool open in the area.

Mr. Mendenhall said he believed it was the only public pool open in the county. There were a lot of people from the county and Virginia, maybe up to half some days. The fee discussion may need to be brought forward soon so Council could look at and talk about it so it could be incorporated into the budget. Fees sounded bad to the public but a lot of the City's revenue was generated based on user fees – outside users, recreation users, even inside rates of what people paid, everything was tied to a fee. If Council started adjusting fees up, they would start adjusting revenues up. If fees were adjusted down, they were accordingly adjusting revenues down. Staff would need to do a fee presentation, maybe at the regular meeting in March, so there would be enough time to look at the fee situation.

Council Member Nooe said when there was discussion about the pump station, there were fees being charged for sewer that were in line with what residents were paying. He did not think that was where they needed to be on that.

Mr. Mendenhall said staff would bring that and recreation fees forward.

Council Member Epps asked if that would jeopardize doing business with outside companies if Reidsville offered them a better rate.

Mr. Mendenhall said he did not think so on water and sewer because there was only one vendor. Typically on the water side, it was either the City or Dan River. Reidsville was not in the picture. On the sewer side, it was typically just the City unless it was the county line that went to Hilltop Store and to Wentworth. The General Assembly had looked at for a couple of years a historic practice that if someone lived outside the corporate limits and were not paying corporate taxes, utility rates would automatically be doubled. That was really where the City was unless there was a contract rate like the water and sewer contract with the county. There were a lot of people in the General Assembly who took umbrage that people outside the limits had to pay double. To date all those bills had failed but they could be brought back up. If they were, they would be addressed at that time. He just wanted Council to know that moving forward.

Mayor Hall said going back to personnel, he wanted to make sure it was understood that there was an estimate of \$25,000 to hire the MAPS Group to do the study. It was the same company that already did it for the NCLM that the City paid dues to. He asked if they agreed that they were not hiring the company to do the pay study. He asked Mr. Mendenhall if it was correct that the MAPS Group would not be hired.

Mr. Mendenhall said that correct. Ms. McMichael would make a presentation to Council shortly and he believed the recommendation was to do what they had always done in house, utilizing the NCLM who had always utilized the MAPS Group.

Departmental requests – Council to hear requests by departments grouped by functional area:

Marketing:

- Two additional festivals to be added to the calendar

Ms. Adams said she had been to two great conferences the past week. Friday, she went to the Piedmont Legacy Trails Conference in High Point. It was amazing. She got home last night from the Main Street Conference in Statesville. It was very inspiring. She had lots of ideas for things she would like to implement and would talk to Council about in the future. The state was on the move and a leader in a lot of things, particularly in Year of the Trail. They were a go-to for that and had partnered with some great organizations in the county. Two new events had been added, both in April. On April 1 was the first ever Native American Youth Powwow. It had gained so much momentum across the state. There were kids coming from Montana and all over the eastern part of the state. There were 50 dancers contracted for it. There would be drums

and Aztec dancers. People from all over the county and beyond were talking about it. She thought there would be an incredible crowd there. It would be in Grogan Park. She had talked with Chief Simpson about having traffic control at the corner of Pierce Street and Stadium Drive. She had talked to the high school about using all of their parking and the officers would help visitors get across safely. In case of rain, the gym at the high school had been secured. She gave a shout out to the Rockingham County and North Carolina Arts Councils who had put money into it. Three weeks leading up to the powwow, Native Americans had been in the school system talking to students, showing pottery, demonstrating drums at Rockingham Middle School. A lady in full regalia talked about dreamcatchers and students got hands-on instruction in how to make them. Ms. Adams met a teacher the previous Friday who was so thankful for the experience saying the students and teachers had enjoyed it so much. It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of experience for them. When the banners for the powwow were put up, the organizers told the City to keep them for next year. That was impressive that they liked what staff had done so far. She thought they would be impressed by Grogan Park which would be pristine and ready for visitors. The arts council put in \$15,000 in order to bring the artists in, bring in four mentors for the kids on site at the powwow. It was an incredible contribution. Tourism had contributed money and the actual Blackhawk Nation had raised money as well. She hoped Council would attend. The second event was the Year of the Trail presentation with things planned all year long. There would be some public art installation, some gatherings and trail building. The county had really jumped on it. There was a 15-member committee working on it including the Dan River Basin Association and parks and recreation directors. Everyone had come together to make it really nice. The big kickoff was the Trails Day Weekend from April 21 through April 23. On Friday, it would start at Reynold's Brewery with fun, food, live music and a twilight hike on the greenway which included headlamps for the walkers. On Saturday, there would be seven scheduled hikes across the county including Eden. There were foot trails, bike trails and paddling. There were opportunities to do things all day long. They were partnering with the Eden Chamber of Commerce that night for Sip, Shop and Celebrate the Year of the Trail. They were bringing merchants into it who would be open late. There would be educational opportunities. There would be live music and beverages and food tastings. It would be a great night downtown. On Sunday, there would be self-guided hikes. Staff had worked with the county to produce a beautiful rack card. She thanked them for doing that and publishing it. It was a checkoff list with all the trails in the county listed. It could be used all year long. The City had ordered swag, including cups that would be used at lunch that day. They would notice stickers on businesses. Year of the Trail was designated by the governor. People all across the state were doing things just like they were to bring awareness to trails just like the City was. Trails were economic drivers. The state, governor and legislators had recognized that. They needed more connectivity. She encouraged Council if opportunities came up down the line and it was affordable to connect the City. It got people out and connected from one part of the town to the other. There had been discussion at the Main Street Conference about connecting trails to the downtowns. It did cost money but there were ways to do that. She hoped Council recognized the importance of not only the walking trails but the paddle trails and what they meant for the City.

Council Member Epps said there was a calendar on the webpage. He would like to see all the events listed there.

Ms. Adams asked if he was talking about the Visit NC calendar and noted that was being added to every day. The Trails Day Weekend had been added that week. The Visit Rockingham site collectively had everything listed in the county. The list of things going on all year long was impressive.

Council Member Underwood asked Ms. Adams about the EDDI resolution regarding tourism funding.

Ms. Adams advised the EDDI was the Eden Downtown Development Corporation. They were part of Main Street and did a lot of work in the downtown areas. A lot of the members of the group were her key volunteers at events. Fundraising had become a challenge. The cost of events had gone up tremendously. They did not want to go back and take anything away from events, they still wanted to grow. There was an effort to get more funds coming from the City's general fund into the tourism account. Tourism money was collected from the occupancy tax from the hotels. That funded part of her salary, all the marketing, the

website design, ads and different things, all separate from events. Tourism put in \$25,000 to \$26,000 into events to supplement those. She raised the rest of the funds. Ms. Winn had been kind to set up separate accounts for each event and they all had their own budgets. Collectively, there was \$128,000 that had to be raised to put the events on. Tickets sale fees could be backed out for Oink & Ale and Grown & Gathered. It still left about \$115,000 that had to be found. The EDDI recognized that and how hard it had become. It was a challenge with all the work she had to do in marketing, communication, tourism and special events. It was a grassroots effort out of that group.

Council Member Underwood thanked Ms. Adams and said he thought Council should do everything they could to help her as a group.

Finance:

- Pay study recommendation

Ms. McMichael wrote in a memo: Staff has received two salary study proposals. The MAPS Group is willing to do the salary study for \$25,920 plus itemized expenses for mileage, lodging, printing and supplies (estimated at around \$2,000.00) and actual travel time at \$25.00 per hour-this price is good through June 30, 2023. They are currently booked at least through August 2023, so they do not know when they could start. The process typically takes somewhere between 4 and 5 months. The Piedmont Triad Regional Council proposed \$36,000. They would start the salary study in July 2023 and present the final summary in November 2023. In the past, staff has completed our own salary study using the data from the North Carolina League's salary survey. We have completed this comparison for the 23-24 Budget. If the proposed 2% Cost of Living Pay Increase is approved, we believe our current Grade and Positions Classification is in line with other municipalities our size. Should Council want to move forward with a salary study it is Staff's recommendation to move forward with the MAPS Group.

Ms. McMichael said the city manager had given a good introduction to the salary study proposals that were received that Council had requested. The City wanted to make sure their current pay was competitive to what other cities were paying. Council could see on the memo that prices for people to come in and look at the job descriptions, job titles and pay categories just to make sure they were in line with other cities who had people doing the jobs the City had. The MAPs Group would do it for \$25,920 plus itemized expenses which may increase that another \$2,000 plus travel time. It would probably take them four to five months to do the study. Their price was good through June 30. A proposal from the Piedmont Triad Regional Council was \$36,000 and look at job descriptions, job titles and what the pay was and compare it to others. She had been with the City 18 and a half years and they had always used the annual salary survey done by the NCLM, which used the MAPS Group, and compared it to the current pay grade and classification. The last couple of years when pay increases had been given, it was for employee retention, more than the City not being in line with other people. It was hard to get people to work. When she first started, an advertised job would have 100 or more applications. If they received 20 applications now, they were doing good. The City had good employees, good benefits and she felt like good pay. The City needed to continue to take care of them but could only do that to the extent it could afford to pay them. They could pay someone to come in and do a study. She asked how it would be funded if they told the City their pay was way behind. She asked if they would increase their taxes or water and sewer rates. She agreed with Mr. Mendenhall that 75 to 80 percent of other municipalities participated in the NCLM survey, including Eden. Staff believed, if the two percent were given and the merit increase was between one and three percent, that every position the City had would be in line with other municipalities the same size. She asked if anyone ever was paid enough for what they did. There were good people who dedicated their lives to the City in providing good services to the citizens. The City realized they could only afford to pay the money they had. Staff's recommendation was to continue using the NCLM survey but it was completely up to Council and staff would honor their request.

Council Member Underwood asked if there was a fee for the NCLM survey.

Ms. McMichael said there was not.

Council Member Underwood said there was then no question for him. He thought the City needed to cut out all wasteful spending, because there was some. He asked if they would get the same results using the NCLM survey.

Ms. McMichael said that was correct.

Council Member Epps said he agreed to go with the NCLM survey as well.

Information Technology:

- No requests

Division of Design and Construction:

- No requests

Planning & Community Development:

- Small Area Plan Draper
- Downtown initiatives/façade grants/supporting funds
- Funding for appointed boards and commissions (based on project submittals)

Ms. Stultz said staff hoped that year to continue and finish with the Small Area Plan projects. They had some downtown initiatives, façade grants and supporting funds for that. Staff requested funds for boards and commissions for projects they had submitted.

Mayor Hall said he would like to get back to funding the commissions that had been established. He knew it was not something Ms. Stultz could really control. The City had created these groups of volunteers and asked what they would like to do. For the last two years or more, the City had said they could not fund the projects they brought forward. In Mr. Mendenhall's defense, because of Covid, they did not know if they would have funds to do anything. He would like to see them start funding the requests of their citizens again.

Ms. Stultz said all the volunteers would appreciate that.

Council Member Ellis agreed with the mayor. The members were citizens and volunteered their time for the City. The City could at least inspire them to continue to help.

Ms. Stultz agreed. It was hard to keep them motivated when they had no way to move through a project. She appreciated it.

Council Member Moore said they were limited in what they could do and could not really do anything if they did not have the resources to do it with.

Ms. Stultz said she was certain if someone came up with a rocket sort of project, they could come back and ask for funding but what they were asking for were fairly small and concrete things they could do.

Parks & Recreation:

- Concept of senior center addition to Bridge Street

Mr. Thomas said there had been discussion about this addition at the Bridge Street Recreation Center. He had spoken with Mr. Vincent about the construction. Mr. Vincent had steered the construction toward metal because it cut down on costs. There would be no need for an engineering design and the building would already be stamped. There would be a concrete floor. If the floor were polished and stained, there would be no upkeep. It could be made nice for the seniors with art rooms, a large multipurpose room and bathrooms. There were a lot of seniors in Eden.

Council Member Ellis asked if the Bridge Street Rec was handicapped accessible.

Mr. Thomas said it was and an addition would be as well.

Council Member Ellis asked where it would be located.

Mr. Thomas said it would be off the community room that was there now. That room was rented and used by Meals on Wheels. A breezeway could be placed between it and the addition. The addition could be nice with a brick façade and nice windows.

Council Member Ellis asked what would happen to the building in Spray.

Mr. Thomas said there had been different ideas about it, including renting it out as they did the CB Hut. It would still be used. The seniors were packed in the Spray building. A lot of people used it.

Council Member Ellis asked how many people used it, if there were 50 people a day.

Mr. Thomas said probably so. He visited the other day and there were 25 or 30 people in there playing cards and sitting around talking. Taxes were done there too. It was a good thing.

Council Member Underwood said the City needed to look after the seniors.

Council Member Kirkman said he was still confused on where the addition would be placed.

Mr. Thomas said the basketball courts were on the left. It would be where the shelter was and come back toward the road.

Council Member Epps asked what size it would be.

Mr. Thomas said they had looked at two different sizes: 30 x 40 and 40 x 50. Any bigger would take up a lot of area there.

Council Member Epps said 30 x 40 sounded good.

Mr. Thomas agreed. It would be 1,200 square feet. If it was set up and used right, there would a lot of room.

Council Member Ellis asked if Mr. Thomas had numbers yet.

Mr. Thomas said he had talked with some people about it. An unfinished building only was \$20,000 to \$30,000 put up. He did not get into other details because he tried to get information on the building.

Council Member Ellis asked if employees could work on the interior construction.

Mr. Thomas said the City could design it the way it wanted and set up the offices how they liked.

Mr. Mendenhall said the City did not have enough electricians and mechanical people to do some of the trades-type work. He said it was a question of utilization if they could get it done in a timely manner. The City would have to hire trades people, electricians, plumbers.

Council Member Ellis understood that. He asked if there was anyone capable of building the rooms and such.

Mr. Thomas said if time allowed, staff could do some of that.

Council Member Epps suggested folding divider doors would be better in one big open space rather than putting up metal or wood walls.

Mr. Thomas said that was something they would have to look at as they got further into it. It would have to be designed the way Council wanted it. Buying a metal structure would mean they would not have to hire an architect. The building would come stamped.

Police:

- Implement Police Apprenticeship Program

Deputy Police Chief Paul Moore said since 2020, law enforcement agencies across the U.S. had faced difficulty with retention of the officers they had and recruitment of new officers. Eden had faced some of those challenges as well. In response to those, the department looked at some of the things they could do better. Staff came up with the Eden Police Department Apprenticeship Program. It was in partnership with the Training and Standards for N.C. who offered a scholarship program. The department had been in the schools, ran recruit visits, and were looking for a student who would be qualified for that scholarship on a two-year police-related program. The department would hire them to work part time to bridge the gap from their graduation at Morehead High School until they were old enough to attend a BLET program. It seemed to be one of the best sustainable answers. They would start recruiting students out of Morehead High School, getting them at the department and teaching them the insides of the department. By the time that person was ready to go to BLET at 19 and a half years old, the department would send them to BLET as a paid trainee and when they graduated, they would work for the department. Staff felt it was very beneficial and they would actually be able to recruit from home. That was their best option at that time.

Council Member Ellis asked if they were starting out with only one.

Deputy Chief Moore said currently they were only looking at one. If they had interest, they would speak with the city manager about expanding the program because they needed officers. As a pilot program, the concept was to begin with one. There was not the same interest in law enforcement that there once was. The students who were looking to be law enforcement officers were looking to go to four-year universities and leave the area. Several students had been identified at Morehead who were interested in applying for the position.

Council Member Ellis asked if it was at Rockingham Community College (RCC).

Deputy Chief Moore said in theory, if they applied for the grant through the state and were selected, there was a high chance they would be selected to get their education at RCC paid for. They would go to RCC for that program and come back to the department to work in the agency. It was a way for the department to keep them interested. The gap needed to be bridged between 18 to 19 and a half when they could go to BLET and could test at age 20. It was a great way to bridge that gap and become part of the department's culture and who they were as a family.

Council Member Epps said it sounded good. In high school in Florida, they were called junior deputies. He ended up being a deputy later. It was a good process.

Council Member Underwood asked how the attendance was in BLET overall, if it was dropping off.

Deputy Chief Moore said it was a huge issue. When he attended, there were 25 to 35 students in every BLET class. He thought there were four left in the current program. The interest had fallen off. The department was working to do better on their end to build that program back up but it would take time.

Council Member Epps asked if the department would be the sponsor for the person going to BLET.

Deputy Chief Moore said yes.

Council Member Underwood said they needed to focus on that because it was where the future lied.

Mayor Hall said if Training and Standards was behind the program it would not have any kind of insurance implications. He asked if they had seen it work before.

Deputy Chief Moore said Training and Standards was behind the fellows program for the education, which would be separate and apart from what the department would do in the apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship program would be run just like all other part-time City employees.

Mayor Hall said he would love to see it be a Morehead or multiple Morehead students but he thought staff may need to look at Rockingham County High School since they had the emergency services program.

Deputy Chief Moore said that was the goal. They wanted to focus here to start. If they had local kids at Morehead they wanted to get to them first.

Mayor Hall said if they saw the kids at Rockingham were in that academy, they knew they were interested in some form of public safety.

Deputy Chief Moore agreed and said they were extending it to RCC's criminal justice students as well.

Fire:

- Implement Fire Apprenticeship Program
- Fire Officer life safety upgrades and health risk management

Chief White said the department wanted to separate the deputy chief and fire marshal positions and add three firefighters. Having a full-time fire marshal would take a ton of work off the deputy chief. As it stood now, the deputy chief's role was to oversee the day-to-day operations assigned by the chief, oversee inspections, oversee training for the department, fire investigations, fire prevention, and help with administrative work. Over the last several years, the deputy chief had been on call 24/7 365 days a year without relief. With the rapid increase in call volume and investigations, the position had been overwhelmed with investigations of origin and cause. With the multitude of job functions of the deputy chief, it was hindering the successful completion of any one task of the job. The response of the part-time call force firefighters had dwindled tremendously over the years and the number of personnel needed on scene per ISO was 4 per engine and ladder company; therefore, making a response of 16 total. The part-time call force personnel only counted as a third of a full-time person, so it would take three part-time staff being on scene to equal one full-time position. This addition would also allow the shift captain to be able to perform the duties as a company officer on the way to scenes and on arrival, which included doing a complete 360-degree evaluation of structure, giving command assignments on the way to calls and while on scene. It would also allow the captain to not have to pump a fire, set up water supply, or driver duties instead of captain duties. The second item was due to health and safety factors of the employees, the department was looking to replace the command staff vehicles. The current vehicles were 2009 Chevrolet Tahoes. The purpose of replacing them was safety precaution to the employees. There was no way to separate the personnel from the contaminated turnout gear and evidence in the vehicle. The contaminated gear had to stay exposed to the interior of the cab. With no separation between the cab and the rear compartment and the ventilation system continuously circulated contaminated material and particles throughout the vehicle. With the rise of cancer-causing agents in structure fires, the current method of storage was putting employees at higher risk. Staff was looking at Ford F-150s that would enable them to put the gear and evidence in the back of the vehicle, separating the employee from the contamination.

Council Member Ellis asked how many miles were on the vehicles.

Deputy Chief Slaughter answered from the audience there was a little over 100,000 on one and 86,000 on the other.

Council Member Underwood asked what would be done with them.

Chief White said they could be sold on govdeals.com unless another department had use for them.

Council Member Underwood said Mr. Taylor was indicating his department needed one.

Chief White said if the vehicles could be purchased, they could make that happen.

Council Member Underwood asked where the department was on getting the radios.

Chief White said they had the estimates in and were waiting on authority to order. They were looking at 16-18 months wait time.

Council Member Underwood noted 2025 was coming and would be there before they knew it. They would cut that switch whether the department had radios or not.

Chief White said they would get into the radios in another presentation.

Council Member Epps said when he was in Statesville, fire departments would go to industries and do practices with the employees. He asked if the City did that.

Chief White said they could. They were looking at expanding their public education and looking at ways to get the public more involved. They did go to nursing homes and daycares and do yearly fire inspections with them.

Council Member Moore asked if the department had their own props.

Chief White said they were working on those now. He had reached out to Signs and Trophies for an estimate on doing wraps on a 4 x 8 piece of plywood, which he thought would be better with less upkeep than them having to paint props.

Council Member Underwood said he was mainly referring to the fire extinguisher prop. He thought the department needed their own.

Chief White said he was currently working on filling out a grant for it. The department really wanted to get a fire extinguisher prop and a sparky outfit. The grant application was due by the end of the month.

Council Member Underwood said he would like to see them focus on that.

Council Member Ellis said there was a new grant writer who hopefully could help.

Chief White said he had been in touch with him. They were working together on it.

Council Member Underwood said he thought the grant writer was doing the City justice.

Council Member Ellis said he was happy with Chief White and the fire department. He liked that Chief White was trying to upgrade and keep the firemen, especially with Purina starting up. He hoped he could hire the three positions he was asking for.

Council Member Underwood said he would like to see him get more.

Chief White said he would like to get more too. In past years, they had hired from within and the internal applicants had dwindled. He thought when they hired again, they would have to go outside.

Council Member Ellis said it was a great group that fought the fire in Spray and he was happy for what they did.

Chief White said that was a conjunction between the whole county. He had not received anything from ISO yet.

Council Member Underwood asked how much longer he thought it would be.

Chief White said they had 90 days and had rated the City on Jan. 11, so it had been 65 days to that point. He had called and talked to Brian Cox who told him he knew the grade but could not tell it. The inspector, Vernon Ward, had told him they could not get better numbers unless they hired personnel. If they ever wanted to become a Class 1, they would have to hire.

Council Member Moore said he, Council Member Underwood, Mr. Mendenhall and Chief Simpson met with Chief White and there were three different options they could take. He had asked Chief White which one he thought was the best and that was the one he had come up with. Chief White was the fire chief and

knew what he needed. He thought what he was doing was right in line. He appreciated it. He told Chief White to let Council know what he needed.

Chief White said he thought they had to move forward as a City in general. Using mutual aid helped and he appreciated them coming to help and vice versa. It was all a conjunction when there was a structure fire.

Council Member Underwood said they could not do everything they wanted to all at one time.

Council Member Moore agreed and said Chief White was in the right direction.

Council Member Epps said he thought it was very impressive how Chief White handled the fire at the mill.

Chief White said he had a great deputy chief who was there. It was not just him.

Street Division:

- None

Collection & Distribution:

- None

Fleet Maintenance:

- None

Solid Waste:

- None

Water Filtration, Water Resources, Wastewater Treatment:

- Wastewater Treatment Plant – North Basin

Ms. Ward said this was the continuing work for the north basin. They would be in the process of moving everything from one basin to another to get ready for the construction work. Crews would be working to get aerators moved over. They were working on the first contract to get the sludge removed. That would be preparation for when construction did go out, work could start.

Goal setting – Council to set goals for the City for the year:

Mayor Hall said annually, Council was asked to set goals for the City for the new fiscal year. Staff suggested the following for consideration.

Mr. Mendenhall advised at this point, Council needed to go through the items and advise their thoughts. It was time for Council to give direction.

Marketing:

- Two additional festivals to be added to the calendar

Mr. Mendenhall said Marketing had presented two additional festivals. That was in the budget requests as well as additional funding for the festivals.

Council Member Kirkman asked what the festivals were.

Ms. Adams answered from the audience they were the Youth Powwow and Trail Days festivals.

Council Member Kirkman thanked her – he had misunderstood and thought there were two more.

Finance:

- None

Mr. Mendenhall said there had already been some direction on the personnel compensation.

Information Technology:

- No requests

Division of Design and Construction:

- No requests

Mr. Mendenhall noted Administration did not have requests either; however, it had received outside funding requests. Historically, the City had not increased the budget for outside agencies. Four Square in Wentworth who worked with victims of violence and abuse had submitted a request that was being evaluated. There was also a request from David Johnson of Dan View Cemetery. He noted the letter had been placed at Council's seats.

Council Member Underwood would like the City to support it.

Council Member Nooe asked if it was a privately-operated cemetery.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought they were operating as a board. They did not sell plots so they were not perpetual care like the one at Indian Hills. They did not have the state statute perpetual care going on. It was a group of people who had loved ones buried there who raised money. He thought they did a fundraiser.

Council Member Underwood said they did candles each year. It was not enough to support the maintenance of mowing they were facing. He thought Council needed to help them.

Council Member Nooe asked if they gave the plots to City residents for free since they did not sell them.

Council Member Underwood said he owned his own plot there.

Mr. Mendenhall thought they were deeded to individuals. It was not a perpetual care so there was no trust fund. It was like the cemetery in Spray where people mowed their family's plot. Instead of doing that, they had a board that sold candles and that sort of thing. They contracted individually. He had talked with Mr. Johnson about the request and he had listed the reasons why and wherefore in the letter. The cost of getting someone to cut the grass was going up. There were issues with some City roads going through the cemetery. They were like neighborhood streets that were cemetery access roads. He had listed all that. More importantly, he had talked with Mr. Johnson about in all the cases of outside funding, the problem they had, and it was a situation that was a policy question for Council, once they did for one, they opened a Pandora's box of equitably treating all the other cemeteries. He talked with Mr. Johnson about that and Mr. Johnson believed, and Mr. Mendenhall thought he was absolutely right, the risk exposure may be one or two other cemeteries. The City could have two or more people coming regarding active cemeteries. There were inactive smaller cemeteries – on Short Morgan Road with at least one or two gravesites there next to the City right-of-way that were not a cemetery and the City had to go in and maintain because the City had damaged them during waterline work. There was the old sanitorium on Bridge Street with a cemetery there, although he did not know the size and scope. The City could have more people coming forward and that was the whole point behind all that. They needed to be prepared with either a policy or something equitable. Mr. Johnson made a very good request but Council needed to be aware of the unintended consequence that if they started funding cemeteries, it may not be the only one and Council would need to have guidelines.

Council Member Nooe said he knew even with the cemeteries with perpetual care, the return on investments was extremely low and any of them were struggling to make it. He dealt with Overview and it was tough. They needed a policy if they did this so that they did the same for any others who came in.

Council Member Underwood said he agreed. He thought they needed to support them.

Council Member Ellis said the letter noted that City streets went through the cemetery and garbage trucks used cemetery roadways to do their garbage collection. He asked if they ever asked for repaving for that.

Mr. Mendenhall said they had not yet. He noted some of the streets there were public. The street running to Dodge was public. The street running back to the east was not, it was a hodgepodge of public and private.

Council Member Epps said he thought the cemetery only accepted paupers who did not have any money unless someone already had a plot.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought that was correct. He thought the request was meritorious. They did not need to have a Dan View line in the budget. They needed to have a cemetery maintenance grant fund or something starting at \$1,000, realizing that some other people may come in and apply. Draft a policy for Council to adopt. If anyone else came forward they would go through the same process. If it was the pleasure of Council, Mr. Johnson would receive the money for Dan View Cemetery and there would be a process for anyone else that was all equitable and fair across the board. There would be no direct allocation to Dan View, just a grant program almost like the façade grant program. If someone came forward and was able to meet the requirements, they would receive the funds.

Council Member Epps liked that process. He asked if Boone & Cooke would match the \$1,000 if it were given.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought there were two funeral services who would. Both Boone & Cooke and Fair would give \$1,000, plus the City's \$1,000, providing funding of \$3,000.

Council Member Epps thought the application Mr. Mendenhall suggested would be the best way to handle that.

Council Member Nooe asked if it would be a yearly request.

Mr. Mendenhall thought it would have to be yearly.

Council Member Kirkman said he hoped they did not open a Pandora's box by doing it. He understood the need. He did not want the City to have to take them all on. They had one on Church Street now that was not active that some people were asking for funds for online. It dated back to the 1800s. He had one in his yard he maintained himself, the first family in Eden was buried there. They could probably find 50 more in the City.

Council Member Ellis suggested including a number of graves at the site in order to be considered.

Mayor Hall said like Council Member Kirkman said, he was concerned at what this might open. He brought up the idea of a church with an aging congregation and no one to mow. He asked why they would not be just as justified to get help from the City, or any organization who did not have the funds or personnel to do it. He would love to help them, and it sounded like they probably would, but he was afraid if they starting doing it, they could not tell the next one no.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was the slippery slope. He thought that would require the policy to be tightly and well written. Council would have to prepare for the possibility that people would not qualify for the policy and appeal to Council for some sort of relief. There were a lot of cemeteries, church and private including old home place. He was afraid there were probably more than they realized.

Mayor Hall said a burial plot was the most expensive land on earth per acre. Whoever was selling plots should put some money in a reserve fund to get keep it mowed forever. Someone got rich on that cemetery and now the City was bailing them out.

Council Member Ellis said he did not think the City was bailing them out. He thought the City was using their property for the streets going through there.

Mayor Hall said the City was using its own streets.

Council Member Ellis said before they were given permission to use that street and call it Dodge Street.

Council Member Moore said if they did not have the street, they could not have a cemetery there because they could not have funerals.

Council Member Underwood said he was afraid it would fall back on the City if the group currently looking after it stopped doing so.

Mayor Hall said it would fall back on the property owner and asked Ms. Gilley if that correct.

Council Member Epps said Overlook had just sold to a new firm. He had paid a fortune for two plots. You never knew what was going on with the graveyards.

Mayor Hall said someone did own it and should be responsible for it.

Ms. Gilley thought that was correct. She did not know all the details but she knew there was a definite statute authority and regulations regarding cemeteries and she did not pretend to know them. She could look into it if they were thinking about a policy.

Mayor Hall suggested they consider a policy more so than a contribution to that particular request.

Council Member Nooe said he had just received a text asking for a different cemetery if they were going to contribute to Dan View.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was probably the tip of the iceberg.

Mayor Hall said they would look at a policy as opposed to making an annual contribution for one particular request.

Mr. Mendenhall reviewed the contributions to outside agencies. The funding was being kept steady state, meaning no increased funding. They had received requests from additional agencies and their typical response was the City tried to be very careful and did not duplicate contributions, particularly if the county was contributing. They felt like Eden taxpayers contributed to the county tax coffers as well.

- Rockingham County Arts Council - \$2,000
- Library - \$2,600
- Eden Chamber of Commerce - \$20,000
- Eden Rescue Squad - \$12,000
- Eden Historical Museum - \$3,600
- Eden Preservation Society - \$1,000
- Eden Strategic Plan - \$15,000
- Historic Preservation Commission - \$5,000
- Tree Board - \$500 for Arbor Day Tree
- EDDI - \$3,000
- Planning and Zoning Board - \$7,000

Mr. Mendenhall explained some of these were in the Planning Department budget while others were in special appropriations. He wanted to pause and make sure everyone was OK with it or if there needed to be adjustments or special provisions. The Fourth of July fireworks had also been funded at \$10,000 in a fund associated with Parks & Recreation. He asked if everyone was happy with what they had across the board.

Council Member Moore asked if that was what they had the last year.

Mr. Mendenhall said yes, it was in the current year and they would carry that forward. Some of the projects in the Planning Department would change a little bit. They would all have funding associated with them

and carry forward that way. In the previous budget, the Planning Board had \$7,000 but none was billed out. Historic Preservation had \$5,000 and \$1,000 was billed out. EDDI had \$3,000 and billed out \$3,295. He thought some of the incidentals were covered by the department.

Council Member Underwood asked regarding the Historic Preservation Commission, what the status was for the plaque for the Ferry Road.

Ms. Stultz replied from the audience that staff was trying to find someone to make the sign. They were also working on the Gus Shein Mural.

Council Member Underwood asked about the timeframe.

Ms. Stultz advised she would find out and get back with him.

Planning & Community Development:

- Small area plan Draper
- Downtown initiatives/façade grants/supporting funds
- Funding for appointed boards and commissions (based on project submittals)

Mr. Mendenhall advised the small area plan for Draper was ongoing and was a priority. He thought that was the original intent of funding the Planning Board. He thought it had been billed out in the department line under professional services. Downtown initiatives and façade grants were in the current budget and would be in the new budget, as well as the funding for boards and commissions and that sort of thing. He asked if anyone had any issues with those items.

Mayor Hall said he would like to ask Council that when the Draper Small Area Plan was presented to them, that they give some serious consideration as opposed to some other plans they had and did not adopt any of the recommendations.

Parks & Recreation:

Mr. Mendenhall said it was left blank as there was a thought process of trying to keep the maintenance of square footage in control and not overly expand. They had heard a request that was brought forward by the constituents of the senior center who wanted to do a center at Bridge Street. It had not been included and was not in the CIP. It was a request from a citizen and the department agreed with the citizen that they would bring it forward. He asked if Council would like staff to investigate doing a center at Bridge Street. They had talked about doing it at Spray Cotton at one time and doing some senior activities in Draper at one time. Staff was open to hearing Council's direction on it. Staff was trying to not increase the footprint for maintenance. Staff needed direction on how to proceed there.

Council Member Epps thought they did need to look into Bridge Street.

Council Member Ellis asked if there was any idea what areas of the City people were attending the senior center from.

Mr. Thomas answered from the audience that they came from all over the City he had noticed. They were not isolated to one area.

Ms. Stultz spoke from the audience and said her department had purchased some software as part of economic development efforts that allowed staff to pinpoint a property and it would report where the cars were from that could be used for that.

Council Member Ellis said it would be nice to know

Police:

- Implement Police Apprenticeship Program

Mr. Mendenhall asked if anyone had any direction on it or if they were satisfied with it.

Council Member Epps said he liked it.

Fire:

- Implement Fire Apprenticeship Program
- Fire Officer life safety upgrades and health risk management – authorize funding now as part of the current fiscal year

Council Member Ellis said protecting their health was important. He understood there were stricter efforts being put into place now like washing off gear before they left a scene. It should be a main objective of the City to do anything they could to help out the police and fire.

Mr. Mendenhall said on behalf of the fire department, the concern about cancer, ash, smoke and other byproducts, the fires were not clean. They were burning plastics, textiles, furniture and all that. There were harmful byproducts. It had been seen on a large scale in Ohio with the burning of the plastic rail cars, very cancerous and toxic. No one knew what the effects were. This was on a much smaller scale. They were putting gear in the car and recirculating it through the HVAC. He would not want to put anyone in that situation. He thought it needed to be addressed. He would like Council to consider on a consensus basis addressing it immediately and getting the carcinogens out of the car. Getting the right vehicle that separated the equipment and the turnout gear and the evidence separate from the vehicle passenger compartment so they were able to be safe. Their health and safety were a top priority for the City. If Council would consent to that, staff would go ahead and take care of it right away.

Council Member Underwood asked if the trucks would have covers on the beds.

There were multiple answers from the audience that they would.

Council Member Kirkman asked the estimate for the trucks.

Chief White answered from the audience that the estimates he had with the trucks completely outfitted was about \$60,000 per vehicle.

Council Member Kirkman asked if they were two-wheel drives.

Chief White said they were four-wheel drives.

Council Member Underwood asked if they could use the lighting from the Tahoes if they were being given up.

Chief White said they would not be compatible with the vehicles.

Council Member Ellis asked if they were two or four doors.

Chief White said four. He did not think the lighting system would work.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said from the audience that the way they were designed now was that the lighting packages were specific to each model.

Council Member Underwood said they could use some of them, maybe not the ones in the windshield. There may be some savings there.

Council Member Nooe asked what the interior was made of.

Chief White advised it would be leather.

Council Member Nooe said there should be something that could be wiped down and cleaned. No matter how hard they tried, stuff would get in it.

Chief White said the ones he had seen had washable floorboards.

Council Member Nooe asked if leather was the best thing or if there was a vinyl that would be easier to clean. He did not want to spend a lot of money and wind up contaminating the interior of the vehicle and not being able to clean it. He suggested Chief White check into the best interior to keep clean and keep staff safe.

Council Member Ellis asked if it had a towing package.

Chief White advised it did.

Council Member Underwood asked if this would be taken care of now.

Mr. Mendenhall said if there was a consensus among Council to approve, staff would find the money to do it.

Council Member Underwood said he did not have a problem with it.

Council Member Kirkman said he was not against it but he understood this was for two people. He asked what they would do for the guys in the trucks. He asked where they put their gear after they got through. He asked if it was going to be put in the back of these trucks.

Chief White said they would get into that when they talked about the CIP. They were working on a program to have two sets of turnout gear for each employee so that when they did come out of a fire, they could take the gear to Station 3 to wash it and would have a clean set at the station.

Council Member Kirkman said that did not answer his question. He asked where the turnout gear would go for the driver who went in the fire.

Chief White said it would go in the back of the truck.

Council Member Underwood asked if he meant the cab of the fire truck.

Chief White said it depended on the situation. Some had to go in the cab and some had enough compartment space to store them.

Council Member Kirkman said there was still a problem.

Chief White said if they had two sets of gear, there would be minimal time with the contamination.

Council Member Kirkman asked if it would be simpler for the two staff to do the same thing without having to buy a truck.

Chief White said it would be good if they had two sets of gear but they did not. Cleaning turnout gear was a three-day process.

Council Member Kirkman said he understood that, but he was trying to justify two trucks for two people versus every other man in the city who had the same problem.

Mayor Hall said if the concern was that they were riding in an enclosed cab with dirty turnout gear and leaving a fire they could throw the dirty gear in the back of the truck under the camper shell, the other firemen got back in the red fire truck and their gear was in the cab with them.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said the firemen could put their dirty turnout gear in the back of the new trucks as they left the scene and it could be transported to Station 3.

Mayor Hall asked if it was going to help eliminate the problem of riding with dirty gear and if they could put it all in one truck or two trucks.

Council Member Moore said it used to be that the contaminated gear was put into big red bags and zipped up to prevent contamination.

Council Member Kirkman said they still did that in Draper and that was why he was asking.

Council Member Moore said those bags were probably \$50.

Chief White said the bags were breathable.

Council Member Epps said after the guys worked hard fighting fire, there did not need to be a cumbersome procedure for handling the gear after they were worn out. It was a whole lot easier to put it in the back of the truck.

Council Member Ellis asked if they were getting rinsed off at the fire scene.

Chief White said that was correct but they were getting rinsed off with water to keep the ash and dust out of the truck.

Council Member Ellis said he was in favor of purchasing the two truck as suggested by Mr. Mendenhall.

Council Member Kirkman said he was not against it but they had not resolved the issue he was asking about.

Council Member Ellis said that issue could be resolved after they had the two trucks that could also be used in icy weather and used to tow trailers. He said go ahead with the trucks.

Council Member Kirkman asked if the F-150 would be a big enough vehicle.

Chief White answered that it would.

Council Member Moore asked if they would have a V-6 motor or if they were V-8.

Chief White advised they had the emergency traffic package.

Council Member Nooe asked if the department needed another set of turnout gear to make the plan work. He did not want to do it halfway – they needed to think it through and make sure everyone was as safe as they could be with what they were trying to do.

Council Member Ellis asked if they were any grants that could be applied for to help with the cost as they were looking at another set of gear in order to keep one set clean.

Chief White said he could work on that.

Council Member Epps said he was in favor of looking into the purchase of additional turnout gear.

Council Member Nooe said just what they needed to be as safe as they could be. If they were going to spend money, they needed to know what they were trying to get to.

Chief White said a set of turnout gear was about \$3,500 times 21 full-time personnel.

Council Member Ellis asked if having an additional set of gear would be a selling point for firemen.

Chief White advised yes.

Council Member Ellis asked if the gear was washed only when the firemen went inside.

Chief White advised it was done only when there was an interior tackle. It was not washed with every call. The department averaged 30-40 working structure fires a year.

Street:

- None

Collection & Distribution:

- None

Fleet Maintenance:

- None

Solid Waste:

- None

Water Filtration, Water Resources, Wastewater Treatment:

- Wastewater Treatment Plant – North Basin

Mayor Hall advised this was the last item and he thought they all would agree on that one.

Mr. Mendenhall said by way of update, it was not a cost to the utility rate payer. It was 100 percent grant funded through the DEQ budget or the Economic Development Administration through the feds. Approximately \$10 million had been brought back to the City to do the north basin. That needed to be highlighted.

Mayor Hall said that was a great job by the staff getting the \$10 million. He knew Mr. Shelton had worked on it.

Ms. Gilley said regarding the purchase of the trucks that were not included in that year's fiscal budget, they needed a formal vote on it, though that may be when they had the actual bids and prices. If they were talking about the next year's budget, it could wait.

Mayor Hall said he thought it would make sense to put it in next year's budget. They could go ahead and start looking for a procurement.

Council Member Underwood asked what Mr. Mendenhall recommended.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought Ms. Gilley made a good point. They could get the quotes readily included in next year's budget. There was some immediacy to it. Anything decided there was doable, the problem would be finding inventory on the ground. They may decide to do it that day but there may not be any inventory and they would have to wait for an order bank to open up somewhere. If they waited until July, they may have the same problem. They had the issue with police cars, with dump trucks and he felt like they would probably have it with the pickup trucks.

Council Member Epps asked if it was about an eight month wait.

Mr. Mendenhall said unless it could be found on the ground.

Council Member Epps said if they ordered those now they would get a better price before they went up eight months later.

Mr. Mendenhall said it would probably go up a couple times between now and eight months.

Chief White said from the audience that he had talked to the company the other day and they actually had two on the lot they could reserve if it was approved that day.

Mayor Hall said they would break for lunch in the Eden Room.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

Mr. Mendenhall said several members of Council had asked about Fire Station 2 and Draper Elementary School. Those were tied to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), federal funds passed to the

state. The grants were run through the Planning & Community Development Department. He asked Ms. Stultz to give an update.

Ms. Stultz said funding for Fire Station 2 had been attached to the Draper CDBG-NR (Neighborhood Revitalization) funds. The problem happened after the mold, mildew and moisture problems were found on the outside. An architect had been involved designing French drains and those kinds of things to prevent it from happening again. She had talked with the architect that week who said he would have plans the next day or the following Monday at which point they could move forward. Everything that could be given to the state for it had already been done. The state had to review the scope of services, it would be bid and then the project would be completed. Funding for Draper School was attached to the Covid grant the City already had. The rules for that had been changed a time or two. The City was finishing up getting everything to them so the project could be finished up as well. Both projects needed to be done as quickly as possible. She wanted them to be completed as much as the citizens and Council did.

Council Member Ellis asked if the bids had come in for the roof as requested at the last meeting.

Ms. Stultz said two bids were received and both were over \$90,000. One of the flat roofs had failed since the previous summer.

Mr. Nooe said the plan was to take care of Draper School without City funding and that was why he had gone along with it. There needed to be a discussion before that kind of money was spent on the school.

Council Member Ellis asked if they could ask the person with the lowest bid to hold it for up to 120 days and have the Covid money come in by then.

Ms. Stultz said she would have Mr. Vincent speak with them. It would all have to go through the federal procurement requirements when they got ready to bid it all out.

Council Member Nooe said staff had been instructed to get bids to possibly pay for the roof with City funding. He was not agreeable to that. If it were done with grant money it was a whole different process. It had to be bid by grant rules.

Ms. Gilley said she was not sure it could not but it needed to be verified because the rules got changed a bit. It was hard to say for sure that staff would not have to go out and get additional bids. There may be strict requirements on the grant process.

Council Member Ellis said to then throw the bids out.

Ms. Stultz said she did not want to do that.

Mr. Mendenhall said when they got into the grant requirements, there was the Davis-Bacon Act which required that certain things be done and tabulated, that minimum wages were paid that exceeded the federal and state minimum. Typically it was not a problem but it added a whole lot of paperwork. When dealing with federal money, a simple bid process turned complex. He asked Ms. Stultz if she knew what all the steps were for procurement.

Ms. Stultz said among them were reaching out to the minority and women owned contractors, publish notices in the newspaper, put on the City's website and the state's website for contractors. A lot of those things had been done before they started up in December for the fire station and then the state decided there were additional hoops that had to be jumped through. Nothing had been done for the school yet. It was like anything else, it was not really free but had a lot of strings. The City could not afford to harm their relationship with the Department of Commerce or the feds by not following the rules on grants. She would love to put a roof on the school. If the City did it now, it could not be included in the grant.

Mr. Mendenhall said asking them to guarantee the bid number may be good. If they got a whole bunch of burdensome things attached to it, someone may just have to pull their bid. Staff did not require a bid bond

so it would be OK for someone to pull their bid. Someone might hold their number, it could be a good compromise.

Ms. Stultz said there was always the possibility that if the City did not jump through the hoops and use all the money, they would have to give it back.

Capital Projects – review of Capital Improvement Program and delivery of capital projects in upcoming fiscal year:

Marketing:

- Enclosed trailer for events

Ms. Adams said she was asking for a 16-foot enclosed trailer at approximately \$10,000. E-track in the walls and floor would hold items in place when it was being moved and it would have lighting as many of the events were held in the nighttime hours. It was needed to haul event materials for the 10 signature events. There was one trailer in service that carried the 40 round tables, six-foot tables, eight-foot tables, cocktail tables and chairs. It was much more efficient to leave the items on the trailer instead of loading and unloading into the shed. The second trailer was used to haul the tents, coolers, signs, cones, barricades, barrels, lighting and all of the other props needed. Both trailers were full at the events. Staff from Facilities and Grounds and Streets had found the trailers were much more efficient. The division had borrowed and was using a trailer from Streets that Streets had never been able to use. It needed to be given back to Streets as storage for their 911 equipment that needed to be ready at any time. She had asked for a lot for events but she believed, and she thought the community believed, they were a good investment. They did have an economic impact on the hotels, restaurants, gas stations and merchants. They were a way to give back to the citizens. So many of them did not have the opportunity to see live concerts or to see the Purina Dog Team or enjoy the ninja apparatus that would be at 2023 RiverFest. It was the 10th anniversary of Shaggin' on Fieldcrest, 20th anniversary of Piedmont Pottery Festival and the 20th anniversary of RiverFest. They were solid events and well attended. RiverFest had been chosen three years in a row for the people's choice award for the best festival in Rockingham County. Purina was always asking for things for their employees and contractors to do. It was a solid investment.

Finance:

- Meter upgrades (AMI)

Ms. Ward said she had been asked to assist Finance by looking into AMI, Advanced Metering Infrastructure, a new technology for meter reading. Currently the City had radio reads which had been purchased about 10 years prior. That warranty provided 100 percent replacement for anything that went wrong on the meters for the last 10 years and the next 10 would be prorated, meaning the City would have to pay for a portion that would steadily increase over the next 10 years. It was time to look for new technology or the potential for it. She had found a lot of systems were going to AMI if they could. The City currently had radio read so staff had to drive by the meter to read it going by each house individually. They were able to see if there was a water leak but only after the meter had been read. If there was a water leak it could be a month potentially before they found out. AMI allowed readings every 15 minutes through cellular technology. It was a continuous read and office staff would be able to see the readings daily. The system sent an alert for any high usage that was different than the day before. Staff could call customers and let them know if something was different and that they may need to have a plumber come out and check for a leak. Sometimes it could be as simple as a stuck toilet. Customers could also check the system and see what their water usage was on a regular basis using an app on a phone. She had looked at two different systems. The first was Veolia, formerly Utility Services, who offered up services similar to what was done with the water tanks now. They proposed replacing everyone in the system and paying for it on a yearly basis. They would maintain them completely, which was great except they would like to replace everything and that was very costly. The second company she looked at was Badger. The meters were still good and

had the potential to last another 20 years. The technology on top was really what needed to be switched out and it could be done at anywhere from \$140 to \$180 per meter depending on how many were done at a time. It was a matter of keeping up with technology.

Mayor Hall asked if there were about 6,000 meters.

Ms. Ward said yes.

Council Member Epps asked if it would eliminate a reader.

Ms. Ward said yes because the reads would come into the office and no one would have to go out. One of the problems they had was tying up staff going out and doing meter reads twice a month. There were a lot of complaints of people not confident in the read who requested staff to go out and do a re-read. With the AMI, the customer could see what the reading was so there would be no reason to go out. It was something staff would like to do in the future. The company had offered a trial for staff. The process used Beacon Software, which staff had been using for meter readings since 2020. It was something already available and could be used even more with the new system. There had been a large increase in the number of cutoffs, especially since Covid, which took a lot of staff's time. Staff spent several days working on cutoffs. There were a lot of repeat cutoffs and staff was trying to figure a way to deal with it. Cutoffs required pulling staff from C&D to help out. There were 100 plus cutoffs at a time.

Council Member Epps asked if the cutoffs could be accomplished through the office.

Ms. Ward said there was a way to do it but it did require replacing the whole meter. The Badger meters were good and only needed the technology changed out but to put on the valve that could be turned off in the office would require a different type of meter. They could look at changing the meters for the accounts that were commonly turned off. They would replace the meter and put the valve on. If they targeted the commonly cutoff people for new meters, that may reduce the time spent on the cutoffs and turning the meter back on as it could be turned on in the office after payment. A lot of businesses were switching to the technology. The company had said it was possible staff could do some of the switchover in house. There was no need to replace meters for everyone, only the ones who needed the controllable valve. New meters would also allow pressure zones, determining where there might be larger leaks or problem areas in the system. It was possible to upgrade the system with staff as the meters were upgraded.

Council Member Moore asked if the cost was \$140 per meter.

Ms. Ward said the cost depended on the amount purchased with bulk being cheaper. There would be another expense because the project required cellular technology which would be 95 cents per meter per month.

Council Member Nooe asked if the valves were part of the new meter.

Ms. Ward said yes, a new valve would be part of meter and connected to the cellular park. There was a battery pack that controlled the whole unit and it should last between 15 and 20 years. Badger offered a 10-year warranty with a prorated system after that. They would replace anything that needed it the first 10 years. After that it would be a little more each year the City would be responsible for.

Mr. Mendenhall said it all started during and toward the end of Covid as the cutoff list kept growing. The quickest way to get anyone to pay their water bill if they were delinquent was to cut them off. The problem was staff could not get all of the cutoff list turned off without people coming in and paying and demanding the water be turned back on so staff was in the middle of cutoff and had to go back and cut people on. There was one meter reader and no one wanted to see him lose his job. There would be no cost savings in personnel. When it was time for cutoffs, maintenance employees were pulled from that division to do cutoff. It was hard for them to staff a crew fully because they were all going to do cutoff. Staff needed some way to effectively take care of the repeat customers who were routinely on the cutoff list every month. They did not have any problem paying the late fees. The cutoff list had been as high as 180 but averaged out to 150 times the two cycles in the month. The problem was not in the reading side but the cutoff side in losing

productivity by pulling those maintenance staff out. The thought process was to remedy it through technology.

Council Member Epps asked if the technology would be operated through the water plant or in Billing & Collections.

Ms. Ward said staff in Billing & Collections would be able to look at it through their computers as would other staff who created an account and could have access to certain aspects of it.

Council Member Nooe said the \$140 to \$180 per meter was just to replace the technology portion. He asked what the new meters cost compared to the old.

Ms. McMichael answered from the audience that it was \$650 per new unit and the meter lids would have to be replaced as well. They were estimated to be \$40 to \$50. A new meter for the existing AMR was \$245 per unit.

Council Member Nooe asked how long the meters had been in the ground being used other places.

Ms. Ward said they had probably been around 10 years. They had just started being used when the City was putting its AMR system in.

Council Member Nooe asked if she had talked with anyone using the AMI.

Ms. Ward said there were quite a few places using it. Larger cities like New York were definitely using it and smaller towns all around Eden – Martinsville and Stoneville – were using them.

Council Member Nooe asked if they had good luck with it.

Ms. Ward advised yes.

Council Member Kirkman asked Mr. Mendenhall if Brunswick County used it.

Mr. Mendenhall said he thought that was correct.

Council Member Kirkman said he left his home there one day and left the water on, and a pipe burst. It was remotely cut off with the AMI technology after staff noticed a high water read.

Council Member Epps asked how notifications would be sent regarding impending cutoffs.

Ms. Ward said some of it would have to be figured out but people would get their late notice as usual. Currently they sent someone out to turn the water off with no further notice as people knew what day their water would be turned off. The same thing would happen on the cutoff day at the office – it would just be turned off.

Council Member Underwood asked if there was a total cost for the project.

Ms. Ward advised no because staff had not looked at a systemwide changeout. They had looked at how many were typically on the cutoff list to deal with those first. Staff had discussed getting 10 units to see what the technology was like for everyone in the billing office. Replacing 10 units – not the meters but just the technology portion – was about \$2,200 and the lids would be another \$300 to \$400. That would be just to see what everything was like and to get used to it.

Mr. Mendenhall said he did not think anyone was comfortable with a systemwide changeout because of costs and how it worked, notices and that sort of thing. The thought process was to pilot some and just see if they got good cell coverage. Draper had notoriously bad coverage and it could be a problem. He thought they needed to go slow. Staff needed to make sure it was effectual and good for the residents, utility customers, and that it was also beneficial for staff. They did not want to buy it if it was not going to do what they thought it should do. There was no way to know unless they test drove it to find out.

Council Member Nooe asked if it would be a problem operating two systems and if the software the City had would handle it.

Ms. Ward said staff had asked some of those questions. They would have to figure out the bill creation as it would be a little different. It would be up to the company to create the software a little differently because it was currently based on staff going out. At least within 10 years, the batteries would be gone for the current system in place so they would need to be replaced at some point. Some of them already went out every now and then and had to be replaced. That would increase as they aged. Instead of continuing with the existing system, they would like to look for something that was a little more advanced, user friendly and beneficial to customer service as well.

Council Member Epps asked if it could be paid for piecemeal out of different annual budgets.

Ms. Ward replied yes. Rates were cheaper if it was done in bulk but there were still cost savings regardless. It could be done in sections at a time. Several cities did that.

Council Member Nooe asked if the monthly fee would still be 95 cents per unit.

Ms. Ward replied it would go up a little if there were not that many. The more they had, the cheaper that was. If everyone were on the system it would be about 95 cents per month. That technology would send readings pretty much every 15 minutes all day long every weekday and on the weekends readings would come in every day. Customers could tell what their readings were and owners would be able to tell what was going on at rental properties.

Mr. Mendenhall said to Council Member Epps' point, it could be phased in. The copy of the CIP for the current fiscal year, in year seven or eight, \$2 million was put in that CIP to do a replacement because that would be about when the battery life of the current meters would die. If it was phased in, they may be able to do it with current cash cycling through every year. If they waited and did it all at once, it would be \$140 times 6,000 and would likely have to be financed. It would be about six years out and would have to be done all at once as batteries started dying. Once the batteries died, there was no way to read the meters or collect the revenue.

Council Member Nooe asked if it went through general fund or if it was in water and sewer and would add to those bills.

Mr. Mendenhall said water and sewer.

Council Member Moore asked if the testing could be done on the 300 accounts being cutoff every month and see if it made a difference.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was what staff would like to do. He did not know about doing 300 all at once, maybe starting slower. Some of the accounts were on the cutoff list every month. It was a bad problem.

Mayor Hall said he thought it was important to note that the technology was the \$140 to \$180 portion. To be able to cut the water on and off was another \$700, so they were talking about \$1,000 times 300 people.

Mr. Mendenhall said what that meant was there was a meter in the ground, a metal lid with a battery pack and antenna, a manual valve inside which required a person standing above it to turn it off. The idea was to automate the valve so when the signal was activated there was not a person standing there, it was an automatic valve that would turn. The lid was about \$40.

Council Member Epps noted that some of the 300 accounts were able to turn their water back on themselves and it was not noticed for a month.

Mr. Mendenhall agreed and said that did happen as well.

Ms. Ward said with the new technology staff would get a warning that the meter had been tampered with.

Mayor Hall said there was a ton of ARPA money restricted to water and sewer projects. He asked if staff had looked at the possibility of a grant for the project.

Mr. Mendenhall said no. A lot of ARPA money had been allocated on a bleach project at the water and wastewater plant to be reviewed shortly.

Mayor Hall noted money was still being pumped into infrastructure.

Mr. Mendenhall asked Ms. Ward to make a note to look for grant money. He advised an idea had just to come to him about tampering – Council could increase the cutoff fees. There were cutoff and reconnect fees. Whoever was on the list so often could be paying for the technology component. It could be put on the user, they were utilizing the employees to come out monthly to cutoff and cut back on. Those accounts were putting a lot of demands on the employees to do all that. The money could be recouped every so often.

Ms. Ward said extra fees for repeat offenders had been looked at so that was an option.

Council Member Nooe said before they went into the meters and valves, he would like to do enough with the communications portion of it to see if the software worked before they got too deep into it.

Ms. Ward said staff felt about 75 percent of the City would have no problem with it working. There were sections of Draper that may have a problem and would require someone to go out and read but it would be an improvement over what they had now. They could still use radio reads if they had to for those sections.

Information Technology:

- Desktop lifecycle replacement
- Laptop lifecycle replacement
- Server lifecycle replacement

Mr. Taylor said in 1965, Intel cofounder Gordon Moore observed that processing power doubled every two years. Since that observation, he had not been proven wrong and it had come to be called Moore's Law. It was one of the reasons staff did lifecycle replacements on desktops, laptops and servers. Staff did not need to replace servers – that would be in the next fiscal year. The request was to continue with the desktop replacement with about 25 percent being replaced, meaning the entire desktop fleet was replaced every four years. Ten to 15 laptops were replaced every year which was done to accommodate a three-year lifecycle on laptops. The majority of the laptops were in patrol cars where they were exposed to heat and cold, dust, vibration and heavy use for 12 hours a day. The request was for \$20,000 for desktops and \$27,500 for laptops.

Mayor Hall said part of the plan had been to get on a cycle with all of the major expenses.

Division of Design and Construction:

- Water/sewer line replacement as listed in CIP, street resurfacing as listed in memo

Mr. O'Dell wrote in a memo: Below is some information received from Kevin London that I have revised for possible use in the January 2023 budget retreat package(s):

Street Resurfacing Proposed Work for FY 23-24: The streets maintained by the City of Eden are currently listed in a spreadsheet showing 633 street sections that are eligible for Powell Bill maintenance funds. Of those 633 street sections, 619 are asphalt pavement and 14 are gravel sections. We currently have 85 paved sections, or 13.7%, rated in poor condition. We have 268 paved sections, or 43.3%, rated in fair condition. Combined, 57% of our streets rate in poor to fair condition based on the Pavement Condition Ratings for 2022.

Currently, there are 11 street sections scheduled to be resurfaced in FY 23-24 at an estimated cost of \$386,000; with 5 street sections to be included for Micro-Surface Pavement Preservation at an estimated cost of \$64,000. With the rising cost of street resurfacing, we are looking to make a slow transition toward micro surfacing, which can be done at approximately one-third the price of asphalt resurfacing. Our streets have to be in good condition to be considered

for micro surfacing. Were we to pave those 5 street sections instead of micro surfacing, it would cost \$116,860 using last year's spring asphalt pricing. This is a savings of \$52,860.

We anticipate our annual Powell Bill allocations received from the State of North Carolina to be approximately \$500,000 for the upcoming budget year. Based on recent discussions with the City Manager regarding our Powell Bill 10-Year CIP Plan, no request for extra funding for street resurfacing is anticipated for the upcoming budget.

Water Construction Projects Update

SoVA Megasite at Berry Hill- Phase II NC Water: In January 2023, Haymes Brothers, Inc. will be trying to schedule a time to bore under the railroad tracks east of Dry Creek that will also work with the schedule of RailPros personnel. Only a little over 200 feet of 16" water main needs to be installed to complete the tie-in for the section of new water main along N. Rickman Street and the easement north of Mill Avenue.

WL design work by LKC Engineering, PLLC: Recent conversation with Paul Dishmon indicates that the new Construction Crew is anxious to begin work in early 2023 on a few projects that were expected to have already been completed. The crew is likely to start on the Maple Lane WL replacement project first, then move to Carolina Heights to complete the replacement of 2" galvanized water mains along two sections of Circle Drive.

Mr. O'Dell said Projects Coordinator Kevin London prepared a list of 13 streets to be looked at for possible resurfacing the next year. Out of the 13, 10 or 11 would be selected to get close to \$386,000 estimated cost for those. At the same time, staff was now in the process of considering a different type of maintenance called micro surfacing. There were five street sections in Grand Oaks that had been selected, in good shape still, and they qualified for using that slightly cheaper method of maintaining the streets. The estimated cost for those was \$64,000 and that would get them to the 10-year CIP of \$450,000. Through either Streets or Parks & Recreation, there was \$90,000 for micro surfacing Freedom Park's three parking lots and an entrance road as part of a package deal. If Freedom Park was not approved, they would probably not get the lower cost for the five in Grand Oaks which meant they would not do any of that but would try to get all the 13 sections. Powell Bill funding each year was a little under \$500,000, not enough to do all they needed. Staff was trying to save money in the package deal. Mr. London had figured out switching those five streets would save about \$53,000 just that year so that almost paid for what they were trying to do at Freedom Park. Regarding water construction, nothing was really changed in the CIP. They had some projects designed. In the next year or two after, they would try to buy the materials and get those put in. Some of the ones on the next year's list did not need design work as they were short streets that C&D may could do. It was a matter of buying materials. The year after that they would probably get back into a little more design work.

Mr. Mendenhall wanted to commend Mr. O'Dell and Mr. London for the street resurfacing. There were about 14 percent of streets in poor condition. The proposal was not just about saving money. It was also about preventing future poor condition roadways, being more proactive doing preventative maintenance by going to the micro surfacing. It was a cost savings and was designed to catch some of the roads before they got in worse shape and that was basically mitigating the future costs. Street resurfacing was expensive. Finding a way to mitigate that cost was a really good thing and that was what staff was doing.

Parks & Recreation:

- Replace City Hall roof
- Substitute replacement of playground at Bridge Street with replacement of playground at Freedom Park

Assistant Director Ray Thomas wrote in a memo: I have recently evaluated the City's facilities and found that some changes need to be made. First request: The lights should be removed from Draper Ballpark and reinstalled at the all-purpose field at Freedom Park. This will allow the field to be used for Prowler's football practices. The cost for this project is \$65,000. Second request: WIFI at Freedom Park. This will allow for card payments at the concession stand, camera for safety, and visitor counters. The cost for this \$ 15,000.

Mr. Thomas said the roughly 28,000-square-foot roof at City Hall needed to be redone. He had reached out to Surry and Davie Counties, as well as Asheboro, who had all went from tearing off the roof to applying a fluid-based system which provided for no openings and no seams with all flaps closed. It currently had 60 mil roof. Adding another 80 would give 140 mil which was a whole lot better system in a roof. He would be going in a couple of weeks to look at one. Cone had done some of that type and were pleased with it. City Hall had some issues with leaking and it had two roofs on it currently. Another roof could not be put on it, the existing roof would have to be torn off which may require a shut down because of the noise. Fluid based was a liquid that was pumped on with no odor. It was not a simple process but it made more sense than tearing off and putting back.

Council Member Ellis asked if they would leave the two roofs on and then put the liquid on.

Mr. Thomas said the company would x-ray the roof, finding and repairing any bad spots. The rubber roof would be put back on and the new system applied to everything. It was no fail for 20 years and most systems like it lasted 25. He had talked to several people who said they had longer lifespans out of it.

Council Member Ellis asked when a roof was last put on.

Mr. Thomas advised it was when the building was renovated around 1998. It had issues. There was a bad leak over the back hallway and a leak over Planning. The last repair cost around \$3,800 just for the back hallway.

Council Member Ellis asked what was currently on it.

Mr. Thomas said it was a rubber roof. They were good and lasted a long time. He thought the fluid was starting to take the place of those.

Council Member Moore asked how it was applied.

Mr. Thomas said the fluid was pumped up and rolled on. It gave it a thicker base, which was now 60 mil but would be 140 after completed.

Council Member Epps said the method was similar to sealcoating.

Mr. Thomas agreed.

Mayor Hall asked if it could be done again in 20 years or if it would have to be taken up.

Mr. Thomas said he was told it would be a long time before any maintenance would be required on it. It may have to be torn off. It would have no gaps or air leaks. It would be white instead of the existing black so it may be a little better on cooling.

Council Member Kirkman asked for an estimate.

Mr. Thomas said about \$325,000.

Council Member Epps asked what the price was doing it the other way.

Mr. Thomas said the existing two roofs would have to be torn off so it could get expensive. They could get someone to do it but he did not know how well it could be done. It would also be loud inside the building which could require shutting the building down. As long as the weather was dry, the fluid-based roof could be done pretty quick depending on the problems found when the building was x-rayed.

Council Member Moore asked how the roof could be x-rayed.

Council Member Ellis answered that it was done by infrared.

Mr. Thomas advised staff wanted to replace the playground equipment at Freedom Park instead of Bridge Street based on the usage. Planning staff had been able to tell him there were about 56,000 one-time visits

annually to Freedom Park. The existing playground was put in when the park was built. The equipment he looked at would accommodate between five to 12 years old with the capability for 46 children to play on it at once. He thought some pieces could be added in for handicapped children. If the park was going to be the premier place to be, it needed to be up to scale.

Council Member Moore asked about the cost.

Mr. Thomas said it would be about \$120,000. Color could be added to fit in with what was currently there. It would look good.

Council Member Ellis talked about the playground equipment on Morgan Road given to the City by Kaboom nine to 10 years prior. He thought the equipment at Freedom Park would be a plus. He liked making it usable for special needs children, as a neighboring city did. It was very important for the City as Parks & Recreation rebuilt.

Council Member Underwood said the equipment there now was long overdue for replacement. He received complaints on it constantly.

Mr. Thomas agreed and said he did as well.

Council Member Epps asked about the putt putt course.

Mr. Thomas said he had talked to several contractors and work should happen at the former dog park in the next few weeks.

Council Member Epps said it was really successful.

Mr. Thomas said the weather had not cooperated in starting but he thought they would within a month.

Council Member Kirkman asked if staff would look at the existing dog park. It was a mud hole. There was apparently a drainage issue.

Mr. Thomas said Purina gave the City a grant to work on the dog park and it would be closed in a couple of weeks for renovations as the work started. Grass and trees would be planted and cement poured. The Street Division had put some rock in close by and it had helped a lot with the drainage issue.

Police:

- Vehicle life-cycle replacement (6)
- Replace K-9

Chief Simpson said to keep in line with their 10-year vehicle replacement plan, the department requested six police vehicles probably all assigned to patrol. The 2007 Chevrolet Impalas had just started being phased out of the investigative division so they had gotten their money's worth for those. In the 2023-24 budget, \$371,700 was projected for fully outfitted vehicles and that included a little built in for fluctuation and cost. As they had seen with recently purchased vehicles, a quote given today may have 10 percent added to it the next week for shipping or other costs. They hoped to come under. There was a K-9 in the CIP for 2024-25 to replace Blitz who was assigned to Officer Gourley. Blitz was nearly 11 years old and had developed some health issues in December, causing his vet to recommend he retire. The CIP request for the following year was requested now in 2023-24 to replace Blitz. The department was lucky to get 10 years from a K-9 before they developed problems. His service was appreciated.

Council Member Epps asked if the radios from any of the cars being phased out could go into the new ones.

Chief Simpson said they could. As they rotated cars out, any major components were switched. To Council Member Underwood's point earlier, they tried to use the equipment but often as they changed vehicles out there had been so many body changes and shape and angle of the windshield changes and that nature, it forced them to buy new equipment. If it was something they could transfer, they would.

Council Member Moore asked if staff was in the process of looking for a K-9 replacement.

Chief Simpson said yes. It was important that they have a couple of places to look at which they had learned with Officer Josh Ferguson who was part of one of the best K-9 teams the department had had in many years. It was important for the handler to go to the location and meet the K-9. They did not have to like each other but they had to be capable of working with each other. They were in a search but one had not been chosen at that time.

Council Member Kirkman asked about the cost.

Chief Simpson said about \$15,000 was about the average based on all the quotes they had.

Council Member Underwood asked how many vacancies the department currently had.

Chief Simpson answered five. There was one attending BLET as a trainee. One from another agency had been interviewed and he felt like that would happen in a couple of weeks. Two other people have been interviewed who wanted to attend the BLET course starting in August.

Council Member Underwood asked what the future looked like with retirees.

Chief Simpson said he was eligible April 1. Lt. Jimmy Hart was eligible July 1. Capt. Anthony Welch was eligible Feb. 1, 2024. Staff was looking at many different options to try to maintain and be stable. Part of that was people staying longer after they were eligible to retire, part was recruiting and part was the internship program presented by Deputy Chief Moore earlier. Deputy Chief Moore, Capt. Welch and Lt. Anthony Lovings worked extremely hard on the program and had been to the school. A 19-year-old had been interviewed the previous day. He wanted to attend BLET because it was home. It was not a problem exclusive to Eden. Greensboro had 120 vacancies. First responders did not seem to be at the top of the list for people to volunteer for anymore.

Fire:

- Turnout gear lifecycle replacement
- Radio replacements
- Station 1 roof replacement
- Replace concrete pad at Station 4 – Administration proposes to advance FS 4 total renovation to proactively prevent a FS 2 scenario
- Weather siren addition to improve coverage gaps

Deputy Chief Slaughter said Chief White asked him to address the radio replacement. As Council Member Underwood had stated earlier, the flip of the switch that was beyond the City's control would happen July 1, 2025, which was a later date than the original Jan. 1, 2025 date. Radio companies advised it was a lengthy process to get new radios. In talking with other agencies in the county, they were looking at six to eight months turnaround at that time. Currently, the thought was it would be a year to 18 months to get radios as demand for them grew. Staff was looking at a total of 36 portable and 15 mobile Motorola radios. The department was looking to add personnel. Radio parts were becoming difficult to get for their existing radios. The last quote they had received was \$312,000 so the department could be looking at between \$320,000 and \$350,000.

Council Member Underwood noted this was something they were not given a choice in.

Deputy Chief Slaughter agreed. Once the switch flipped if the radios were not in place, staff would be unable to communicate with other departments and with CCOM.

Council Member Ellis asked how it impacted the pagers.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said they simulcast on a different frequency. Once staff keyed up on a portable, any volunteer could be able to hear what the driver was saying. Staff had switched to the county's frequency.

The department did have its own channel but used it as a TAC channel. Once they were on scene, they switched to the TAC channel. CCOM often got very busy and did not have time to repeat what staff on scene said.

Mr. Mendenhall said he recommended Council authorize the Finance and Fire Departments to work together to place the order now realizing it could be up to 18 months before it was received. It was not going to be spent now but they could get the PO for it and it was in the CIP for the upcoming year. That could help avoid any other cost increase or issues with getting at the end of the deadline and not having what was needed. It could be a cost savings as there could be a cost increase in July.

Council Member Epps agreed with that proposal.

Council Member Underwood said 18 months would put them pretty close to the deadline.

Council Member Ellis asked about issues getting the vehicles.

Chief Simpson answered from the audience and said the orders had been put in an order bank a year prior and the orders got cancelled. The Dodges had been bought off at a dealership in Kentucky. Ford patrol vehicles were ordered. The colors they wanted were on the lot. The order was cancelled and they were purchased off the lot. They could have a delay but when it came to vehicles, it was not a delay that would put them in a bind.

Council Member Ellis said he thought they may be able to find the trucks in Kentucky as they had thousands of them at the stadium.

Chief Simpson said there were a couple of trucks on hold on a lot for the fire department.

Council Member Epps asked if the radios were related to the statewide towers that were now in place.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said yes. Currently each tower had six banks. Right now only one person could talk at a time. It would be expanded up to 12 banks so more people could talk in each bank throughout the state.

Council Member Underwood said at some point, staff could go on their own system.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said that would then have to go to the county to be looked at. Guilford County built their own system many years ago. Rockingham County decided to go on the Viper system.

Mayor Hall asked if staff looked at other manufacturers.

Deputy Chief Slaughter said yes, Kenwood had just switched to Viking and he did not get a price for that because they were trying to get themselves closer to Motorola. Motorola was ahead of the ballgame and the radio they were requesting had already been play at least five years. It worked, it was compatible, it met the standard and there were very few bugs out there with the current radios.

Council Member Epps asked about the radios in the budget.

Mr. Mendenhall said they were in the CIP for the next year. Staff knew the cost was coming. They had split police to do that year and fire the upcoming year to try and keep costs manageable between the two.

Council Member Underwood asked if Mr. Mendenhall recommended ordering the radios now.

Mr. Mendenhall said yes, realizing they would not encounter the costs until at least eight months down the line. If everyone was amenable, it would be put on the next agenda for a vote.

Council Member Epps said it sounded good to him.

Chief White said the second item on their list was to replace the roof at Station 1. The roof was leaking and water was coming in the bedroom. Contractors had looked at it and said the top membrane was split and the flashing around the pipes and vents were starting to fail. The termination bar that held the roofline along

the edges was starting to fail which was causing the leak. He was unsure how long the roof had been on the building and if it had one or two roofs.

Council Member Moore said it was put on in the mid-90s. He was working then.

Chief White said the roof was then close to 30 years old. The price range from three different contractors was between \$52,000 to \$112,000. The highest figure included the liquid applied roof like Mr. Thomas had described earlier. The lowest bid was to go back with a rubber roof.

Council Member Kirkman asked if that was tearing off the roof as well.

Chief White said yes. If it was not fixed, water would stagnate and create mold inside the building.

Mayor Hall said he would like to see staff go with the low estimate.

Council Member Nooe asked if the estimates included the same materials and same warranty. He asked if they were bidding the same thing against the same thing.

Chief White said the lowest estimate by Davis Roofing gave a 10-year workmanship warranty and 20-year membrane warranty.

Council Member Ellis noted the City was looking at replacing several roofs. He asked if it would be feasible to get estimates for one group to do all the roofing work.

Mr. Mendenhall said it was a good idea. It had not been looked at.

Council Member Epps agreed that the prices may be lower if one company were hired to repair all the roofs.

Mr. Mendenhall said staff could do a bid package and see what the returns were. There was another roof on page 11 that he was not sure would be able to be budgeted. There were more roofs in Parks & Recreation that did not get called out. He did not want someone in 20 or 25 years to look back and think the City replaced all of them in a single year, meaning they would all go bad in a single year. If the same contractor did them and the workmanship was good, that was good. If it was poor, they may all go at the same time. It would make sense to bid it that way and see what the bids were at least. He was a little concerned about replacing so many roofs in one year.

Mayor Hall noted that the roofs being asked for were different types and getting prices for those would probably be difficult if the contractor did not specialize in that.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was a good point. What was being asked for was diverse.

There was discussion about the bids and who made them.

Ms. Gilley said what Chief White had used for estimation purposes. The issue was in the budget for the next year. To actually get the bids, Chief White would go out again and verify the estimates.

Council Member Kirkman said he was curious if they were looking at local contractors.

Chief White said he did not know if they had anyone local who could do a roof that big.

Council Member Kirkman said he had the roof done on his commercial building at Circle Mart. It was \$5,000. That included taking the roof off and replacing the wood. It was not as big of a building but there was not that much difference between it and the fire station.

Chief White advised Station 1 was 8,000 square feet.

Council Member Kirkman said he was not sure the square footage of his building but even if the size doubled, that would be \$10,000 to \$12,000.

Chief White said he would call whomever Council wanted him to for estimates.

Council Member Kirkman said the \$52,000 seemed extreme to him.

Chief White said an estimate for a rubber roof was \$72,000 and the other was \$52,000.

Council Member Epps said Station 1 should be the priority because of the leak.

Council Member Nooe asked if there was someone on staff who specialized in maintenance who would be the best person to obtain the estimates so that they were getting estimates on material type, warranty, thickness, insurance, etc., so when the information was presented to Council the estimates were comparable in everything but price. He was not trying to slight anyone.

Mr. Mendenhall said what he was talking about was more in line with local government procurement, like a purchasing officer to ensure things were apples to apples and the spec was what they wanted. The City did not have one. It was a hodgepodge and something they probably did need to look at. If they were going around to different contractors and probably not doing a solid bid spec, saying the City wanted x, y and z. Staff relied on the vendors.

Council Member Nooe said Chief White noted the fluid roof was double the cost of the others and it was a tear-off job with a 20-year warranty but the City was looking to pay \$320,000 to put a liquid roof on City Hall and he did not know how that compared to tearing off and putting something else back on. It was a lot of money to spend and Council needed to have good information to make the best choices it could.

Mr. Mendenhall said staff would figure out how to internally compare the bids. Because there was no general services staff to compare services, staff relied on what other customers experienced. The county had done the same roof, as had Cone Health and Mr. Thomas could talk to them. He understood where Council Member Nooe was coming from. It was a huge risk.

Ms. Gilley said the estimates were reviewed more thoroughly when they were put out to the vendors at the time of purchase. What they currently had were estimates for budgetary purchases. She also looked at the bids when they came in to make sure they were apples to apples, especially for higher priced things.

Council Member Epps noted the roofs were oil based products and the price of that continued to rise.

Council Member Nooe said he agreed that a roof was needed and staff should proceed. If a dollar amount were not set at that time, he was good.

Mr. Mendenhall noted staff had to get estimates for the budget so it would balance. They tried to get a range and management usually took the low-end estimate to get the budget to balance. Staff would then have to go out for bids. Procurements took a while. The procurement of the fuel tanks was very complex and Ms. Gilley spent hours on it. There was a lot of risk that had to be mitigated the higher the value. Staff would make sure it was apples to apples and that they went through the right process.

Council Member Moore said it would nice in the future to have someone, like a superintendent, who would go to job sites to make sure the intended work was being done correctly.

Mr. Mendenhall said that was an excellent idea. It was not just the procurement but to make sure there was someone on site to see that the quantity of materials being used were what was in the contract.

Chief White said concrete at Station 4 needed to be replaced. The drainage system from the gutters went into the concrete and was then piped down into the yard leading to the spillway for the drainage. The system under the concrete was busted so it was not draining properly and was busting the concrete. It created a trip hazard and would puncture a tire on a fire truck. It constantly splashed dirt on the trucks as well.

Mr. Mendenhall said Station 4 had issues on the concrete and some structural issues. Rather than it go the way Station 2 had, he recommended advancing the renovation that was in the CIP in future years by renovating the station and doing the concrete. That way the station would be completely done and not pieced together. They would fix the structural issues of settling and unevenness in the floors. It was tied to

the concrete failing and the drains causing problems. It was a water problem. It did not make sense to do the concrete and come back in a couple of years and try to renovate. They could do it in such a way that it was good for 20 or 30 years out. Staff wanted to be proactive on it. He asked Council for their feedback before staff moved forward.

Council Member Epps said concrete had changed since the station was built and was now a lot stronger. He agreed with the decision.

Mr. Mendenhall said staff would work on a number to present in the budget.

Chief White said the final CIP item was the replacement of the weather siren at Station 1. There was an estimate to do four but he thought it could be cut to three. The siren at Station 1 was not on City property but was on the former JR's Archery building and it was not higher than the buildings on Washington Street so it did not get the sound out like it should. A proposal was to put the siren on a telephone pole behind the station, as well as a siren at the water treatment plant and at a pump station in the John Street/Summit Road area. Putting it at a pump station would allow a backup generator in case the power went out.

Council Member Moore said the City owned the building beside Station 1 when the siren was put there.

Mayor Hall noted that everyone had a siren on their phone.

Chief White said the sirens at Stations 2, 3 and 4 worked but would not reach the people in the Washington Street area.

Council Member Epps asked if staff had looked at placing the siren on the Hamilton Street water tower to cover that area.

Chief White noted it would need a backup generator.

Council Member Underwood said he thought the City had been asked to remove the siren beside Station 1 off the building it was on.

Chief White said he thought that was right and the City had a piece of property not on its property.

Council Member Epps recalled he introduced sirens 21 years before when there were none in the City. He was for getting it done.

Mayor Hall asked if the pump stations were lower than the buildings.

Chief White said the estimate of around \$30,000 per siren included putting them all on telephone poles. He thought they would be 60 feet in the air.

Mayor Hall questioned that the City only needed one.

Chief White said it needed one definitely.

Council Member Moore said they could take baby steps and do one at a time.

Mayor Hall said most everyone had a cell phone which sent out alerts.

Chief White said turnout gear lifecycle replacement was just a continuation of what they had been doing.

Public Works:

- Replace equipment shed damaged in straight-line winds (2022), insurance proceeds to cover a pro-rata share
- Replace roof on Public Works building

Mr. Mendenhall said straight-line winds damaged the east equipment bay on the east side of the yard. Staff had been working with insurance proceeds to cover it and had a design from a local construction firm for

an eight-bay shelter. He thought the insurance carrier was going to depreciate some things and there would not be quite enough funds to rebuild it the way it was. In doing all that, staff had counted the number of solid waste trucks, which were the highest value trucks other than the sewer vac and hydro excavator. There were about 10 of them and staff wanted to do a 10 bay instead of eight. It would cost around \$300,000 and insurance would pay \$265,000. The eastern-most shed was unsafe and would have to be demolished as the trusses had snapped in the wind. Due to the roofing fear he talked about earlier, he thought staff would try to hold the roof until the next fiscal year. Staff would prioritize the roofs and do the worst first so they were all on a cycle rather than being condensed in one year. The building had at least one known leak and it was unknown where it was coming from. If Council was amenable, it would be put into the CIP for the upcoming fiscal year.

Streets Division:

- Replace bucket truck
- Additional trailer
- Replace service truck

Mr. Gatewood said staff would like to replace a 2008 bucket truck that had 106,000 miles and 11,000 hours. The second replacement requested was a 2008 service truck with 115,000 miles and 15,000 hours. A 14-foot trailer was being requested to haul the division's roller for asphalt when street cuts for water and sewer were needed.

Collection & Distribution Division:

- Replace service truck

Mr. Mendenhall said it was on a routine cycle for replacement.

Solid Waste Division:

- Replace road tractor (transfer station disposal)
- Replace pickup truck

Mr. Curry said the road tractor would be used at the transfer station for garbage disposal. The City had two that were used daily. The one to be replaced was currently on its second engine and staff wanted to replace it with a used road tractor at an estimate of about \$70,000. The 1995 service truck had 143,000 miles and was the oldest of three pickup trucks in the fleet. The estimate to replace with a standard pickup was about \$40,000.

Water Filtration Division:

- Construction of Bleach Treatment System
- VFD upgrade
- Facility improvements
- Paint sludge scrapers (2)

Water Resources Division:

- Replace service truck

Wastewater Treatment Division:

- Construction of bleach system
- Replace influent grates
- Upgrade clarifier
- Replace samplers

Ms. Ward said one sludge scraper had been painted and another two would be done this year. Staff hoped to get the others painted in the next fiscal year depending on costs. Everything in the water plant was the same as it had been when it was built. Floors needed to be fixed, as well as tread on the steps which were a trip hazard, and other items to improve the look of the building. A VFD upgrade was requested for the high-service pump. In October 2022, the City received a letter from Harcros saying they would no longer provide gas chlorine. Staff was left with one choice as a source for gas chlorine and it was a company that did not have a great reputation for safety and service. Staff started looking at switching to bleach or hypochlorite. In November, staff contacted Dewberry Engineering for an estimate of what it would take to make that happen for both plants. The infrastructure was pretty much in place for the wastewater plant. A roof and tanks needed to be added at an estimated cost of \$274,000. By the time the project came around the costs would probably go up. At the water plant, a tank farm would have to be put in as well as tanks inside the building. The larger tanks would be outside and the smaller ones inside to feed from. The cost would be around \$676,000. The total engineering costs would be about \$114,000. Wastewater could probably find more options but there were not many for water treatment. It worked out well to have large bulk loads go to both places and save on the costs. Staff would like input on whether to move forward on the proposal.

Council Member Ellis asked about the taste difference between the two chemicals.

Ms. Ward said it was the same. Gas chlorine was turned into a liquid bleach form. What they would purchase in the bleach was just water and gas chlorine. It was safer for both the citizens and employees. Currently there was a very regulated risk management plan staff had to keep up with because they had the gas chlorine on site. If there were a gas leak, a large portion of the community would have to be evacuated. It depended on how much leaked and the wind speed, but it could be the entire community if it were a large enough leak or it could be everyone on that side of Highway 14.

Mr. Mendenhall said currently, both plants received cylinders that looked like household propane tanks. Water treatment was done with that chemical in a gas form. The change would be a liquid form, meaning they would lose the gas component from a safety standpoint as it was more dangerous than a liquid. He asked Ms. Ward if there were more vendors for the liquid.

Ms. Ward said there were a lot more vendors and the potential for vendors in the state to provide it without any interruption.

Mr. Mendenhall said ideally the City would not change anything because it was a very effectual cost of treatment; however, there was a tradeoff on safety. Fortunately, the City had never had a tremendous safety accident and that was due to Ms. Ward and Ms. Reid and their staff and their hard work on that. The problem was there was only now one vendor who sold gas chlorine and the City may run into the issue of there being no vendors one day and then there would be no treatment.

Council Member Epps asked for an update on the clarifiers.

Ms. Ward said there were four and two of the smaller ones had been painted. Staff wanted to paint one of the larger ones in the upcoming budget year.

Council Member Nooe asked about the cost difference in the gas and the liquid.

Ms. Ward said the gas was definitely cheaper which was why they had not looked at switching even though it would eliminate a lot of the safety hazards. For water treatment, staff had heard from different sources there was a chance that some other chemicals could be decreased so the increase of the bleach could be offset in savings on the other chemicals. They really would not know until they got into it because every plant and water chemistry were different. There would be an increase at the wastewater plant as there were not any areas to save on. They had looked at getting PAA but that did not work as well as they were hoping for.

Mr. Mendenhall said Ms. Reid had studied the issue extensively. He asked if she wanted to talk about the chemical tradeoff of bringing in the bleach. He asked if it was the caustic that was less.

Ms. Reid said she had spoken to someone in King who changed from sodium hydrochloride. They did not see a lot of cost difference. When chlorine gas was injected how it was injected at the plant, they were putting it into water so they were making sodium hydrochloride technically. In the future, it may come in a concentration that was a little lower than what they had now but the City needed to head in that direction.

Council Member Nooe said he understood the availability and safety issues. He asked if there was a projected cost increase on water and sewer rates for information. He asked if Ms. Ward could look at that and let Council know.

Ms. Ward said the chemical costs for the past couple of years had been unpredictable, including chlorine gas which was once a steady cost, maybe a slight increase every year, had been doubling. Depending on the chemical, there had been no determining. Staff used to do bids twice a year and because of the costs, vendors would not give bids anymore so it had to be switched to quarterly bids just because the costs changed so rapidly. It was hard to estimate from one month to the next what the chemical costs were going to be.

Mr. Mendenhall said to Ms. Ward's point, the costs were variable; however, staff had changed from chloramine to chlorine and there was a cost savings there. If the City used ARPA funds to take care of the bleach situation and make sure there was a secured source for the treatment chemical, there should not theoretically be a cost increase passed to the customer because all it would be less than what chloramines were. Staff had done chloramines as their hand was forced based on the raw water supply and what was going on upriver with bromide. Ms. Reid and her staff had done a good job monitoring and that enabled the chlorine change which was a benefit to the customers and line work in the distribution system. By going this route, based on other experiences, there may not be a huge increase passed onto the customers.

Ms. Ward said staff hoped to get the majority of the grates replaced that year so there was a chance they would not have them to do the next year. It was a wait and see situation. Water Resources had been looking for a service truck but hitting a dead end finding one that would work. They would be looking for one in the next year.

Budget Instructions and Direction – Council to instruct staff to prepare a budget, guidance on tax rate, etc.:

Council Member Epps said he was delighted there were no tax or water and sewer rate increases. It made him happy.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business to discuss, a motion was made by unanimous consent to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Hunt, City Clerk

Attest:

Neville Hall, Mayor