

**MONTROSE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 29, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Brown called the regular Council meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. The meeting was held at the Montrose City Offices located at 139 S. Saginaw Street, Montrose, MI.

ROLL CALL: Present Council Members were Mayor Colleen Brown, Robert Arnold, Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Richard, Ryan Heslop, Andrea Martin, Also, present were City Manager Neil Rankin and no citizens. Members Todd Pangle and Aaron Burch were recorded as absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: Mayor Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: NONE

BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION

UNIFORM BUDGETING AND ACCOUNTING ACT

The Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act provides for the formulation and establishment of uniform charts of accounts and reports in local units of government; to define local units of government; to provide for the examination of the books and accounts of local units of government; to provide for annual financial reports from local units of government. This also includes advance publication and for hearings thereon with an advisory committee selected by the state treasurer from the local units and from other interested or concerned groups.

The uniform chart of accounts, when finally adopted, shall be published and made readily available to all interested persons. The city manager shall be responsible for the submission to the council no later than the first regular council meeting in May of each year, a recommendation budget covering the next fiscal year of July 1st to June 30th. Council annually moves to hold a June budget workshop before the regular council meeting. Shortly thereafter council will approve the recommended budget as the budget must be adopted by the first meeting in June. The State of Michigan prescribes the uniform chart of accounts which gets revised year to year. There was no revision this year after two years in a row of revisions.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The FY 2024 millage rate for the city is set at **16.5166** generating an estimate of **\$520,000** in property taxes. This operating millage rate remain the same as in 2022 as the Headlee Amendment Millage Reduction Fraction is at 1.0000 which is approved/set by the county based upon the rate formula. The original charter millage levied in 1968 was 20.0000 mills.

In November of 2018 voters passed a five- year 4.0 millage levy for public safety. The estimated revenue from the millage this year will be **\$121,000** with a millage rate of **3.8460**. The current millage will be expiring in December 31, 2023 as will the public safety contract the City has with Montrose Township to provide these services. The goal of the public safety millage was to allocate a dedicated source of funding for public safety and enhance the general fund to allow the city complete projects and make necessary purchases from unassigned funds from the General Fund. Council will need to decide if they wish to place the millage on the ballot in either 2023 or early 2024. Election dates

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have yet to set but a February or March 2024 would be the latest to place it on the ballot.

In May 2022 a special assessment of **\$45.00** per parcel was approved by voters for mosquito abatement. This assessment generates **\$31,275** and will expire in 2026. This assessment covers the contract costs of mosquito abatement through the months of April till the end of September.

Solid waste collection for residential properties is currently **\$208.56** per year. Residential refuse collection costs are established via written contract between the contract collector and the city. The charge for refuse service is paid by the city and then included on the July tax statement. Last year the city had to increase the charge by \$12.60 a year due to increase in fuel recovery costs as well as an increase in recycling imposed by the county that the contractor has no control over. Council indicated an interest in creating a Solid Waste Authority with Montrose Township which both local units could solicit proposals and could result in potential savings and additional services for residents. The City is budgeted a five percent increase as it cannot predict what the future contract will be and the city wishes to avoid using the General Fund to cover the shortfall. This would raise this cost to **\$219.28** or **\$18.27** per month. If the Solid Waste Authority can negotiate a contract

The Downtown Development Authority has requested that council approve the 2 mill levy to cover operational costs and to continue to make repayment on the 2006 DDA general obligations bonds and the repayment to the city water and sewer funds. This millage has been reduced this year to **1.8451** mills and will generate **\$13,717**. The tax capture is estimated \$109,000 this is an increase of around **\$24,000** as a result of the increase of **\$550,000** of taxable value within the DDA district.

For the year ended June 30, 2022, General Fund financing sources exceeded its financing uses by **\$116,205**, increasing its ending fund balance to **\$565,185**. In addition, State Revenue Sharing this year was **\$241,754** with projected 2024 revenue sharing increasing 3.5% to **\$250,267**.

Michigan Transportation Funding (Act 51) has been projected to increase over the next 5 years allowing for the city to complete more preventative maintenance of streets and potential grant funding for larger projects. State MTF revenue is **\$208,285** in 2023 with a slight increase going into 2024.

Current water has not increased in six years and a healthy fund has allowed for projects to be completed. At the start of 2022 sewer rates were increased to cover future county treatment costs. Genesee County Water and Waste will be making significant improvements to the sewer system/ treatment facilities to prevent releases during storm events and upgrade aging infrastructure. Water and Sewer Funds should be stable as rates with the Karegnondi Water Authority will limit rates hikes as communities connect to the system. However, the increase costs of fuel, labor and treatment chemicals will put pressure on minimal increases. The City has invested in a wireless electronic metering that can identify water loss and the completion of the water study will help address cost savings.

The current Public Safety contract will expire on December 31, 2023, and the proposed contract will see a five (5) percent increase to \$414,785 for 24/7 police and fire coverage. The public safety millage covers roughly \$121,095 leaving the General Fund to cover around \$280,000 or around 40%. The public safety millage has funded 30% of the public safety contract and the increase in the levy has kept pace with the increases in the contract. Council will need to look to renew the millage by at least

The City has two major liabilities the first is Long Term Debt related to improvements issued as either General Obligation (GO) Limited Tax Bonds or Water Revenue Bonds. The other liability is legacy costs/future obligations of current and former employees as unfunded pension. Water Revenue Bonds are set to retired in 2054 for a total \$743,000. This has resulted in governmental and business activities liabilities being reduced by \$157,739 last fiscal. OPEB related liability at the end of FY2020 was \$731,000

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and saw a reduction of \$ 137,000 in the last fiscal year. As the financial picture changes with the retirement of bonds the City should examine one-time payments in order to accelerate fully funding the pension liability. It should be the resolve of council to ensure that this liability is shouldered by current employees in a fair and equitable manner.

The Michigan Employee Retirement Systems in FY2024 will see an increase in the employer contribution. Employees will continue to contribute 8% of gross wages and the employer will be contributing 12.64%. This increase was a result of changes to investment rate of return and level of inflation. The employer contribution is based on the actuarial plan managed by MERS and is based on actuarial facts beyond the city's control.

COMPETING PRIORITIES

The Montrose Planning Board at its November 2022 meeting amended the Capital Improvement Plan which was then subsequently approved by City Council at the December 2022 meeting. Ten of the twenty-two projects in the six-year capital improvement plan are street related projects. These projects will easily exceed \$10 million dollars and the only means to address some of these projects will be grants requiring matching funds, levying of street millage/special assessments or bonds. These projects will need to coincide with regular street maintenance and those related costs.

Staff budget projections anticipate to see an improved General Fund over the next three years. This is due to a number of factors including the passage of the Public Safety Millage, ARPA Funds, state funding for roads and water, increasing home sales/values and an economy that despite inflation and other issues as the world moves out of a post pandemic are relatively positive. This is also allowing the city to address projects and make purchases including park improvements, GIS mapping and DPW equipment. Regular street maintenance should be a priority as well as identifying future road projects. It would be recommended to incorporate smaller street and water projects when pursuing funding when developing plans to address the larger street projects such as Feher Drive and Hickory Street.

The historic American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law on March 12, 2021, delivering \$65 billion of direct and flexible aid to America's cities, towns and villages. These funds are designated to be used for investment into infrastructure. Over the last two budget cycles the city has expended over \$60,000 on storm water improvements on Washington Street in 2021. The second tranche was disbursed last June into the 285 Fund (unearned revenue) of \$94,278 and has funded the development of the new master plan in the amount of \$50,000. The cash on hand as of June 1st, 2023 is **\$69,735**.

Governmental funds include all activities that provide general governmental services that are not business-type activities. This includes the General Fund, special revenue funds, debt service funds, capital project funds, and permanent funds. The City reports the following funds as "major" governmental fund.

Proprietary Funds/Enterprise Funds- distinguish operating revenue and expenses from nonoperating items. Operating revenue and expenses generally result from providing services and producing and delivering goods in connection with a proprietary fund's principal ongoing operations. The principal operating revenue of the proprietary funds is charges to customers for sales and services.

Fiduciary funds include amounts held in fiduciary capacity for others. These amounts will be used to

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operate the City's own programs. Activities that are reported as fiduciary include: OPEB, Pensions, escrow for programs/grants.

ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS

Several months before the beginning of the next fiscal year, the manager meets with the department heads of all requirements for the upcoming budget process. This includes year to date expenditures for each department and departmental budgets from previous years. Things that are considered include:

- Salaries, benefits, and any other costs related to current or expected new employees.
- Operating expenses are the costs for everyday operations including all costs related to the provision of service and supplies.
- Capital outlays include equipment or other tangible property that a department needs to purchase which exceeds a given dollar amount and expected lifetime. These budget items are usually included in the Capital Improvement Plan (**CIP**).
- Making incremental approach based on costs from recent years with small changes
- Yearly adjustments for inflation
- Standard Costs – Estimated cost of supplies for one employee multiplied by the number of employees

The treasurer and manager create a single budget spreadsheet based on the requests from departments and the direction given by the governing body/CIP. Expenditure details in this spreadsheet will include information on prior-year actual expenditures, budgeted expenditures for the current fiscal year, actual (estimated) expenditures for the current fiscal year, and a recommendation for the new fiscal year. This detail will provide the city manager and elected officials with a snapshot of spending in recent fiscal years and gives some perspective for the budget requests.

The city manager is responsible for predicting the revenue sources and amounts for the upcoming fiscal year. The several sources of revenue include:

- Property taxes
- Service charges and fees
- Fees for licenses and permits
- Fines and forfeitures
- Grants
- State Revenue Sharing

Legislative Body Review. The manager will explain how the council's priorities are being met through the recommended budget. The presentation should also include an explanation of any changes in the millage rate or anticipated changes in other revenue sources. At this time, the city council may choose to add or delete items from the budget or make other adjustments.

The requirements for advertising and conducting public hearings for local government budget adoption are specified by the Budget Hearings Of Local Governments Act 43 Of 1963.

Budget Adoption. The city council may move forward with adopting a balanced governmental fund budget by resolution at a public meeting as advertised in a local newspaper

Budget Implementation. Once the budget is adopted and the new fiscal year begins, the plans outlined in the budget may be implemented. Department heads carry out their approved budgets, and appropriations are spent to deliver services. The city manager or budget officer is responsible for exercising general fiscal control over the budget, making sure department heads stay within their budgets, providing regular reports and tracking actual revenues against forecasted amounts. Monthly budget reports are also provided to elected officials.

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OVERVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT BUDGETING ITEMS

DDA/DEPOT

The DDA FY 2024 budget will see a fourth-year increase on the revenue side as the tax capture will increase an estimated \$19,800 over the end of FY2023. The DDA had 1.8562 mill levy last year and the DDA ends this fiscal year with a fund balance of \$174,294. The police millage will generate roughly \$6000 for the DDA, however that capture has been earmarked for police services that would be a transfer in/transfer out.

In 2017 DDA Board Members and City Council entered into an interfund loan agreement to retire the 2006 DDA Bonds. Over the last payments over six year the savings alone on interest was be \$2,897. The last payment of **\$26,240** will be made on November 30, 2023.

Appropriations for the DDA will be in the amount of \$102,210. The larger budget line items include the façade grant which will provide up to \$20,000 for two qualifying business this year and repairs to the Depot.

I would recommend council to approve the DDA request to the City Council for FY 2024 fiscal as noted in both resolutions, the DDA Millage will have to be authorized each year by both the DDA Board and the City Council. The DDA Millage was initially levied in the maximum permitted amount of 2 mills. In accordance with Act 197, the DDA Millage will be levied and collected in the same manner as City ad valorem taxes and the first levy will coincide with the levy of the City's other taxes on the July 1, 2023 tax bill and levied at 1.8541.

When collected, the proceeds of the DDA Millage are to be paid to the credit of the Authority's general fund to be expended in accordance with the purposes and uses set forth in Act 197 and the DDA's Amended and Restated Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan.

Further, the DDA Millage will be subject to reduction under operation of the Headlee Amendment much like City's general operating millage makes up roughly a quarter of the DDA revenues.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Over the last five years the City has entered into agreements with contractors for vacant lot mowing, cross connection inspections and emergency water service repairs. This has been a vital part to free our DPW to tackle other various projects and non-routine work. Water testing has become also a significant component as well as street maintenance and the goal is to have a department that is trained to wear many hats.

Significant investment in equipment and training will be a priority. Investment over the next three budget cycles includes purchase of equipment and facilities repairs to equipment to ensure DPW equipment is good running condition.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT

With the improving financial outlook and stable finances within the city over the last several years officials should invest funding and resources towards economic development in the downtown, commercial and industrial properties. This would include infrastructure, acquisition and redevelopment of distressed properties and working with other agencies to attract and retain talent and develop a diverse workforce. This effort could be pursued in coordination with Montrose Township and Montrose Community Schools.

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NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT

In 2020 the City of Montrose was awarded a \$30,000 Neighborhood Enhancement Program Grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Funds allowed qualified homeowners to make exterior home improvements. This grant was well received and was awarded again in 2023 in the amount of \$45,000. Code enforcement, funding opportunities, capital projects such as park improvements and neighborhood events will grow neighborhood pride and property investment. This will help grow desirable housing stock and property values.

MAJOR STREET AND LOCAL STREETS

In the past the city did very little preventative maintenance on both local and major streets. Moving forward this budget continues to address funding for crack sealing and patching to ensure the city is taking measures in extending the life out of the roads in the city. This will be a multi-year/on-going investment to see results but this is based on best practices. The increase in state road funding (ACT 51) anticipates revenues of \$ 216,853.27, for 2022-2023 that is around a 7% increase.

WATER AND SEWER

In the last three years there has been an increased push by state and federal agencies (DEQ now EGLE, EPA) in addressing the safety and quality of municipal water supplies and systems. DPW will keep informed of new testing and requirements related and provided by State Agencies. This year the state will be testing for (PFOS) Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid as it is now showing up in drinking water throughout the state. The city was awarded \$177,000 EGLE Grant to test for lead in residential water lines. The staff is also anticipating funding from the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund. This process is ongoing but should have a clearer picture regarding funding and scope of project by the start of FY 2024. The employees of the City of Montrose are committed in providing the highest level of service and utilizing resources in a prudent, efficient and equitable manner and they will continue to strive to address the current and future needs of the community.

CAPITAL PROJECTS AND PURCHASES FOR FY 2024.

- **Water main extension project - \$2,450,000**
- **Lead Cooper/Potholing - \$177,000**
- **Feher Drive Reconstruction -\$850,000**
- **Latting and Russell Street Construction- \$180,000**

City staff have also had several possible grants from MSHDA, MEDC and MDOT that are in the review process and may be added to the above list.

Overall, the City is in a stable position to continue to provide a high level of public services during fiscal year 2024. The administration will seek out grants from the State of Michigan, Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (CDBG) and local foundations to assist in financing many projects. Uncertainty in state revenue sharing and MTF (Act 51) will likely affect future budget cycles. Fortunately, home sale prices have improved throughout Genesee County over the last 5 years leading to many homes to be uncapped raising taxable property values.

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The city manager and treasurer will utilize city funds to prioritize investments by security, liquidity and rate of return as well as leverage funds to minimize the need to take on long term debt whenever possible.

As the financial picture comes into focus the adopted budget for FY 2024 and proposed budgets will help council and staff in prioritizing projects, services as well as being a useful indicator of the city's financial health.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: NONE

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.
Prepared by City Manager, Neil Rankin