

BUREAU OF COUNCIL
Molly Bundrant, President
Carl Sizer, Vice President
William James
David Koerth
Taylor Galaska



Robert Fiscus, City Manager
William J. Madden, City Solicitor
Daphne Parrish, City Clerk

SHARON CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

Meeting Held in Council Chambers
Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 6:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER AT 6:30 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Council:

President Bundrant

Mr. Sizer

Mr. James

Mr. Koerth

Mr. Galaska

Robert Fiscus, City Manager

Attorney Madden, City Solicitor

Daphne Parrish, City Clerk

News Media:

The Herald

Department Heads:

Jason Tomko, Finance Director

Edward Stabile, Chief of Police

David Tomko, Director of Code Enforcement

Mark Settle, Public Works Director

I.) **LEGAL NOTICE** – *The City of Sharon will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 6:30 PM in City Council Chambers, to present the City of Sharon's 2023 Budget.*

II.) The purpose of the hearing is to discuss the proposed 2023 Operating Budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

The proposed budget was reviewed by Section and Line Item. The following items were discussed:

Revenues:

310-200 through 310-500 – Earned Income Taxes and Local Services Tax - Mr. Sizer asked if the 2022 Actual amounts reflect revenues received through November 30, 2022. Mr. Tomko said the deposits from Berkheimer are through the third quarter, or September 30, 2022.

331-200 – Demolition Payments – Mr. Fiscus said this revenue is from any property owners who entered into an agreement or were ordered to make payments for demolition of a property. An emergency demolition fund was set up a few years ago with these restitution funds.

340-100 – Interest Earned – Mr. Tomko said this is interest earned on the Money Market account. The interest rate at the start of 2022 was 1.3% and has climbed to 3.1%; this is likely to increase further due to the economy.

350-500 - State Pension Aid – Mr. Sizer asked why the 2023 budget amount is lower than the 2022 actual. Mr. Tomko said this revenue is based on unit values and other calculations. The City’s actuary provided a formula to assist in calculating the projected amount for 2023. Mr. Fiscus said the amount varies since the formula is based on the complement of active police officers and firefighters.

381-100 – Employee Health Care Contributions – Mr. Fiscus said this revenue increase is a result of the plan premium increases. Each CBA outlines premium sharing as a percentage of the premium with no cap.

Capital Improvements:

Mr. Sizer asked if the four projects listed (STU Project–East State Street; STU Project–Gateway to Sharon; Multimodal Transportation–South Irvine Avenue; and Little League Field) are the only projects budgeted in Capital Improvements. Mr. Tomko verified.

For the South Irvine Avenue project, the City will need to seek a loan for the match in the amount of \$480,000.

The East State Street Project will replace sidewalks and provide stormwater improvements on East State Street between Oakland Avenue and Sharpville Avenue.

Little League Field – A \$25,000 grant was awarded from DC&R for Rivergardens Park. The amounts in the budget are for Engineering costs. Mr. Fiscus said as of today, the property owner requested the subdivision process be placed on hold.

Mr. Sizer asked if the City’s portion of Multimodal funding would be provided from proceeds from the beginning balance in the capital improvements fund, interest, and proceeds from long-term debt. Mr. Tomko verified.

Expenditures:

Mr. Sizer asked for an explanation of the increases to Employee Benefits, as this impacts every department. Mr. Fiscus said the renewal for the City’s healthcare policy was received with an initial 55% premium increase. Mr. Tomko worked with the insurance company and reduced the increase to a 45% premium increase. Ultimately, the plan was redesigned, which increased deductibles, and increased the premiums by 11%. Since the City co-funds the deductibles, this increased amount also was included in the budget. Mr. Tomko said the comparisons from 2022 to 2023 will not reflect 11% as there are a number of status changes and deductible co-funding was calculated based on a 4-year history of HRA payments. The employee’s responsibility of the annual deductible in 2023 is \$250 for individual coverage, \$500 for family coverage; except for AFSCME employees, which is \$750 for individual coverage, \$1,250 of family coverage. Mr. Fiscus commended Mr. Tomko for his work with the insurance company.

402-670 – Consulting Services – Mr. Fiscus said part of this amount is grant writing. In prior years this also included other necessary outside services.

403-000 – Finance Director/Assistant Finance Director Salary – Mr. Sizer asked if the Assistant Finance Director position has been filled. Mr. Fiscus said yes, this will be on the agenda for the December Workshop meeting. Mr. Tomko said the position was filled by Jessica Flynn, who has past audit and accounting experience. She has knowledge of GAAP and GASB and will be able to assist with strengthening of internal controls. Mr. Sizer asked if the Sewer Authority pays a portion of the Assistant Finance Director’s salary. Mr. Fiscus said one-half of both the Finance Director and Assistant Finance Director salaries are paid by the Sanitary Authority.

408-150 – Fire Hydrants – Mr. Fiscus said the increase in expenditure is due to Aqua’s rate increase.

409-490 - Covid Cleaning – Mr. Fiscus said cleaning will continue; sanitizing will be discontinued.

409-430 – Building Maintenance/Repair – This amount increased by \$12,500 from 2022; Mr. Fiscus said as things break, they are being repaired and/or maintained. Historically this was not done. Mr. Fiscus said the boilers at the Huntington Bank building are being evaluated to determine if they can be used in the City Building.

410-050 – Sick Time Buyback, 410-070 – Longevity, and 410-080 – Vacation Buyback – These amounts all decreased; in 2022 there were five police retirements; only one police officer is eligible for retirement in 2023. Mr. Fiscus said as more senior employees retire from the police, fire and street departments, these costs will decrease and eventually not exist, since these benefits will no longer be available.

410-740 – Physicals – Mr. Fiscus said this line item is budgeted for \$0 since it was not utilized for the past few years. Chief Stabile said there is interest this year in physicals and they are in the process of scheduling prior to year-end. Mr. Fiscus said an amount for 2023 will be put back into the budget. Chief Stabile will advise the level of interest so an amount can be determined.

411-000 - Fire Wages – This amount increased due to the addition of four (4) firefighters provided by the SAFER Grant. The grant covers the cost of four firefighters, including benefits, pension contributions, and healthcare for three years. One of the four positions would be a full-time Fire Inspector. Mr. Fiscus said an MOU with the IAFF is required to outline that these positions will be eliminated if future funding is not received. The full-time Fire Inspector will provide improvements to the rental and fire inspection programs. The grant does not provide funding for turnout gear; however, this should be minimal as current part-time employees will likely be utilized for the three (3) full-time positions. This change will decrease the current need for part-time firefighters by half. Mr. Sizer said the SAFER grant was applied for prior to the change in the healthcare deductibles. He asked if the grant can be utilized to fund the increase in the deductible amounts. Mr. Fiscus said there could be a buffer for the increases since family healthcare was budgeted for these individuals, and some may require a lower level of coverage.

411-050 - Sick Time Buyback – Mr. Fiscus said four (4) firefighters have indicated interest in retiring in 2023.

411-730 – Firefighting Equipment – This includes the purchase of Air Packs; the City received a grant in the amount of \$199,000 to purchase the Air Packs.

421-000 – Code/Zoning Officers – This amount increased due to the addition of two full-time employees.

421-910 – Rental Inspections – This item is budgeted at \$0; it was payments to Jeff Richardson for rental inspections. At the December Workshop, Mr. Fiscus will share a cost analysis of the rental program. The City is losing money on the program, which should be money neutral. If there were a higher compliance rate, the cost would decrease. 1,200 licenses should be issued each year, but since we are not meeting this benchmark, the cost is high.

437-420 - Vehicle Repair – Mr. Fiscus said vehicle repairs have increased due to the higher cost of parts and labor.

437-980 – Grant Writer – Mr. Tomko said this expenditure is for grant writers for the Multimodal Grants.

431-010 – Street Department Salaries – Mr. Fiscus said this increase is due to one additional full-time employee in the department.

437-510 – Communications Expense – Mr. Tomko said this increase is for GPS Trackers in the vehicles. Mr. Fiscus said this information will be made available to employees to help them improve their service by

being able to determine what streets have been plowed and treated.

450-300 – Shenango Valley Animal Shelter – This increased due to the Animal Shelter’s dues increase for 2023.

450-900 – Sharon Recreation – This amount will be offset by the amount owed for the Firehall roof replacement project.

456-100 – Building Loan Payment – This amount is for the Library’s roof replacement loan.

460-300 – Economic Development – Mr. Tomko said this amount was reduced to zero. He will review and report back to Council.

463-000 - Economic Development Director – Mr. Fiscus said this position is funded with the expectation of being able to quickly hire when the right candidate becomes available.

485-100 – Litigation/Arbitration – Mr. Fiscus said \$45,000 is budgeted if arbitration is necessary for negotiations related to the fire and/or police Collective Bargaining Agreements.

480-310 – Retiree Health Insurance – Mr. Tomko said this amount increased due to retirements in 2022.

490-250 – CD Salary – Mr. Tomko said this amount decreased due to Melissa Phillips’ resignation.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM

Motion: Mr. James

Vote: YES Mr. Koerth

YES Mr. Sizer

YES Mr. Galaska

Second: Mr. Koerth

YES Mr. James

YES Mrs. Bundrant