

**City of Rock Island**  
**City Council Budget Session**  
November 18, 2019 - 5:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor  
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island IL

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderman Randy Hurt, Alderman James Spurgetis, Alderwoman Jenni Swanson, Alderman Dylan Parker, and Alderman Mark Poulos

Absent: Alderman Dave Geenen and Alderman Ivory D. Clark

Staff: City Manager Randy Tweet, City Clerk Judith Gilbert, and other City staff

**INTRODUCTION**

Mayor Thoms thanked staff for their effort and hard work on the budget.

Finance Director Stephanie Masson said the CIP plan and the budget were reviewed for Council last week. She discussed the proposed tax levy and where the money would be going. The tax rate is being raised from 2.6570 to 2.8343. There will be a 2% increase for both Parks and the Library. Ms. Masson explained the Fire and Police pension increases total \$400,000. The General Fund will be transferring \$519,000 to streets. She presented a sample tax bill (redacted) and reviewed the detail for Council. She said she often gets calls from residents regarding their property tax bills and she takes the time to look at their tax bill to help them understand it better.

Ms. Masson stated that after the budget presentations tonight, the capital expenditures and balancing of funds will be finalized. On November 25, the CIP will be presented for approval as well as a review and approval of the City's Financial Policies. Between November 25 and December 2, a Truth in Taxation notice will be published in the newspaper. Ms. Masson said on December 9, there will be two Public Hearings; one for the tax levy and one for the budget. There will also be the first readings of the tax levy and the budget ordinances. On December 16, there will be second readings of the ordinances and Council will approve the tax levy and budget and pass the ordinances.

Alderman Parker asked if the Financial Policies were on the City's website. Ms. Masson replied they were.

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**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. COMMUNITY CENTER**

MLK Center Director Jerry Jones presented the center's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the cessation of volunteer-led programs and the reason. Mr. Jones replied it is because of lack of interest in the programs.

Alderman Parker asked about how the different funds are funded, i.e., the revenue source. Mr. Jones explained the breakdown of their revenue sources. Of the \$1.2 million budget, only \$169,000 comes from the General Fund. Mr. Jones explained those funds leverage other grants they receive. Mayor Thoms clarified that the General Fund is more than property taxes. Alderman Parker commended Mr. Jones and his department on working hard to diversify revenue.

Mayor Thoms asked about the summer camp program going from seven weeks to six weeks; he asked if the same kids attend each week or do different kids attend every week. Mr. Jones replied that the same kids attend every day, but they usually see a drop toward the end of camp. He said they start with 150 kids per day and during the last week, there are only 80 to 90 kids per day.

Alderman Parker asked if HUD funds any of their programs. Mr. Jones said \$144,000 comes through the CDBG grant that goes into the Activity Fund. Alderman Poulos asked if it goes into programs. Mr. Jones explained how the CDBG funds come through the CED Department and they are for programs only. Alderman Parker asked where the additional \$300,000 comes from. Mr. Jones said that additional funds come from local grants such as United Way and other grants, program fees, and sponsorships. He explained most of their fundraising is in that fund. Mayor Thoms asked when the United Way grant ends. Mr. Jones replied it ends June 30, 2020. He confirmed it was a three-year collaboration with the school system.

Mr. Jones invited Council to attend the MLK Thanksgiving dinner this coming Sunday.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Parks and Recreation Director John Gripp presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. He introduced Assistant Director Todd Winter and Kimberly Kruse, Parks Office Manager.

Alderman Spurgetis said the Parks Department is a great success story in Rock Island and congratulated the staff. Mr. Gripp said the department has great people. Alderman Spurgetis asked about their partnerships and how much money is generated. Mr. Gripp said that was tough to answer; he said it depends on what grants are available or what fundraising events are held. He stated in 2019, Friends of Douglas Park raised over \$30,000. He said Friends of Hauberg are very creative with their programming. He explained they have adopted the Parks model for events; he stated you cannot sustain a "free" model. Mr. Winter had created budget sheets for use with events and programs; expenses have to be covered. Alderman Spurgetis noted that Friends of Hauberg have a lot of volunteers that do work for the estate. Mr. Gripp recognized the other City departments that are partners with Parks.

Alderman Parker asked about the three funds totaling \$6.3 million; he asked how much is from property taxes and from user fees. Mr. Gripp replied that one-third is from property taxes (\$1.8 million) and two-thirds is from user fees. Ms. Masson stated that you don't see that in most parks departments; they are usually funded primarily with property taxes. She said they do a separate levy for the Parks Department. Mr. Gripp noted that their budget is very weather dependent affecting both expenditures and revenues.

Mayor Thoms thanked the department staff and said he appreciates their hard work.

## **LIBRARY**

Library Director Angela Campbell presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. Also in attendance was Kellie Kerns, Director of the Business Office and Facilities. Eudell Watts III, Library Board Chair, was also present in the audience.

Ms. Campbell asked Council to reconsider the Library board's request for a 4.99% property tax increase this year.

Alderman Spurgetis stated the Library Foundation is a huge part of the Library's funding sources. He asked how someone would go about donating for a particular project; would it be through the Foundation or the Library. Ms. Campbell explained that donations to the foundation can be designated for specific projects or programs and the foundation is a pass-through. She said checks can also be written directly to the Library and donors can state their intention.

Alderman Hurt asked about the significant increase in the personnel costs. Ms. Campbell said it is because of health care and negotiated raises for union employees. Ms. Masson added that professional development

costs used to be covered by the foundation. She said the budget includes what the union received the previous year since they are currently in negotiations. Ms. Masson said they received updated health insurance premium costs in recent weeks from the original 10% budgeted. Ms. Campbell said when they budget for open positions, they budget for the full family health insurance to be used which is approximately \$15,000 per year.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the contingency amount for \$151,000. Ms. Campbell said those are grants they anticipate receiving.

Alderman Parker asked about contracted services and if these are all listed on the City website when they are bid. City Manager Randy Tweet said all RFPs are posted on the website and also sent to regular vendors. Ms. Campbell pointed out that vendors can sign up for email notifications when RFPs are posted.

Mayor Thoms thanked Mr. Watts for his service.

## **FINANCE / HUMAN RESOURCES / GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **FINANCE**

Finance Director Stephanie Masson presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council.

Alderman Parker said a resident asked at Unplugged 3 about using credit cards to pay bills and getting cash back. Ms. Masson said the City's purchase cards are an efficient way to pay small bills which amount to \$50,000 to \$70,000 every month. She said they do get a rebate of 1% from the purchase card purchases which is deposited in miscellaneous revenue in the General Fund.

Alderman Parker asked about how in years past, Finance was funded by Gaming and Adopt-A-School. Ms. Masson explained that Finance houses City-wide expenditures and they do use Gaming funds for contracts so it shows up in Finance's budget. She noted there is a marked increase in Programs and Transfer which are tax rebates to companies that are funded by the General Fund (GTI, Dunkin Donuts, etc.). She added the revenues to pay those rebates are coming into the General Fund. Ms. Masson explained further that most redevelopment agreements are being paid out of TIF funds, but there are those rebates that don't get paid from TIFs. She stated that she reviews all requests.

Alderman Parker asked what CIP projects Finance has. Ms. Masson replied there are no CIP projects, but she would like one for software. She said in 2018, there was one for a Northstar utility billing upgrade which was \$75,000 and was paid for by Gaming. She reviewed Transfers that have been made or will be in 2020.

Alderman Poulos asked about the 1433% increase in Programs. Ms. Masson replied those are property tax and sales tax rebates; there are some new agreements.

Alderman Parker asked about budgeted contracts and some which are funded by Gaming. Ms. Masson replied that none are funded by Gaming in next year's budget. He asked about the change to a new process where regular bills are no longer funded by Gaming. Ms. Masson stated first they want to cover principal and interest payments outside of enterprise and TIF funds with Gaming funds. In the past, they have used Gaming to pay for General Fund contracts in several departments. She reminded Council they are trying to close the gap in the General Fund of \$1.1 million. She explained a possible source to fund that gap is using General Fund reserves. She said one day of reserves equals \$105,000; so they are looking at using four to five days of reserves which she is comfortable with that amount. Another source is using Gaming Fund reserves. In 2019, they used seven days of reserves to fund the deficit. Ms. Masson said they have gone through the budget to identify contracts such as body cameras to be paid with Gaming funds.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the parking enforcement and parking software contracts and their costs; he also wanted to know if the parking tickets cover the costs of both of those contracts. Ms. Masson replied the parking enforcement contract is for an employee from Per Mar for \$34,000; the software costs are \$18,000. She said that parking ticket revenues cover the costs, but not by a lot.

Alderman Hurt said he was speaking for several Council members and they appreciate her continued excellence in the job she does. Mayor Thoms echoed the sentiment and said she puts in a lot of long hours.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Human Resources Director John Thorson presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. Also present was Risk Manager Chris Castelein.

Alderman Poulos said the Wellness Center was a phenomenal benefit; he asked about the savings due to having the Wellness Center. Mr. Thorson replied that it is hard to measure. He explained that it is dependent on the nurse practitioner interactions; the nurse practitioner must have good people skills, so people will want to use the center. He added if employees went to their own doctor for things that could be covered by the Wellness Center, that would drive up costs. Mr. Thorson said there are long-term health benefits with having the Wellness Center. He is optimistic that the City is saving money.

Alderman Parker asked if the City gets interest on the cafeteria plan. Ms. Masson stated the City gets interest on all of its cash balances. She added the cafeteria plan is pre-tax for the employee, so the employer is not paying taxes on the amount in the flexible savings plan. Mayor Thoms asked if an employee leaves, does the money stay with the health plan. Mr. Thorson replied yes and it goes into the health fund. Ms. Masson added it goes both ways; an employee could use all of their funds for the year at the beginning of the year and then leave. Mr. Thorson said the health fund would have to pick up the difference. Ms. Masson explained employees can spend ahead.

Alderman Parker asked if the City was still looking into changing to the IML Risk Management program. Mr. Thorson said he expects an RFP to be done in early winter; they are working on it now. He explained one of the benefits of the IML program is the City pays a set fee and IML takes over all of the claims. Currently, the City is self-insured. Mr. Thorson said the City would lose its autonomy with what happens with claims if they go with IML. Currently, there is a committee that reviews all claims. He said IML will have strict adherence to tort immunity protection and will say no to a lot of claims. Mr. Thorson said there will be advantages and disadvantages. He will also get the Finance Department's perspective when they receive the proposals to see if it will save the City money.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

City Manager Randy Tweet presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. He noted the one change will be if Council approves the changes to the video gaming licenses. The fee structure will be different with a minimal fee of \$50 per machine to the establishment owners and a \$1,200 per machine fee to the operators of the terminals. Mr. Tweet said it would result in an additional \$93,000 in revenue.

## **CITY CLERK**

City Clerk Judith Gilbert discussed the role of the new Deputy Clerk who starts tomorrow. Besides learning the duties of the City Clerk to be able to fill in for the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk is primarily tasked with records management. Ms. Gilbert reminded Council that the City is the keeper of the records and records are in six different locations within the City. She explained the Deputy Clerk will be doing a detailed inventory of the existing records, determining which ones can be processed for disposal, and perhaps begin digitizing permanent records. Ms. Gilbert said they also plan on updating a records management policy for the City.

Alderman Spurgetis asked how the Labor Day Parade and Red, White and Boom were funded. Mr. Tweet replied they are funding through Gaming. Ms. Masson noted that the parade also gets donations of approximately \$3,000 of the \$17,500 budget. Mr. Tweet added it is run by an independent committee and they do great work.

Alderman Parker asked for confirmation of the personnel costs in the General Administration, the City Clerk's office, and the Mayor and Council. He asked about the \$150,000 in personnel costs for the Mayor

and the seven aldermen; did that include salaries, health care benefits, IMRF, etc. Mr. Tweet replied yes. Alderman Parker asked about the salaries of Council members and the Mayor. Mr. Tweet said he could send a breakdown of the personnel costs for the Mayor and Council. He explained the costs are up because more Council members are on the health care plan. Ms. Masson noted that the Other line item has gone down from \$31,949 to \$20,850 due to the decrease of the Representation funds. Professional Development was added to the personnel costs line item. Previously, all expenses were paid out of the Representation fund. Ms. Masson explained that "Other" also contains supplies and some other items. Mr. Tweet will send out the detailed spreadsheet to Council.

*A break was taken from 6:47 p.m. to 7:03 p.m.*

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Jeff VenHuizen presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. Deputy Chief Jason Foy and Lt. Ben Smith were introduced. Chief VenHuizen stated Lt. Smith handles the day-to-day budget issues and assembled the 2020 budget.

Alderman Hurt asked what UCRs in Performance Measures means. Chief VenHuizen stated those are Uniform Crime Reports which are made to the State of Illinois and the Crime Index numbers are in turn reported to the FBI. There is an annual report of crime trends within the United States. Alderman Hurt asked about the number of calls to the downtown for service; he asked why the numbers are increasing again. Chief VenHuizen said they have seen an increase in nuisance calls to downtown. He said they are using several different initiatives to address it including increased patrols, special investigations, and a pilot program with three officers trying a non-traditional law enforcement approach. Chief VenHuizen explained that they can't just make arrests to solve the situation; they are trying to address the root problems and provide resources through social services agencies to the homeless in the downtown. He said the initiative is about connecting with the resources and handing off some issues and it is also dependent on available manpower and available resources.

Alderman Hurt asked about the extra supervisory position. Chief VenHuizen replied they have reorganized the department over a period of years. He said the Crime Suppression Unit evolved into the Tactical Operations Division. He said the span of control was too big; the Tactical Operations Division is staffed and overseen by a lieutenant.

Alderman Hurt asked about changes in enforcement related to the new cannabis law; what will be the needs, the challenges, and costs of this change. Chief VenHuizen said there are still a lot of unknowns. He said there are trainers coming in December and in 2020 for the Department regarding the new cannabis regulations. He explained the biggest issue they will face is driving under the influence. Chief VenHuizen stated there is no testing device for driving under the influence of cannabis. They don't have a certified drug recognition expert which would require a substantial commitment of time and money for training. He said they will have to see when they go to court with some of the standard DUI protocols if they will suffice and see what is challenged. Chief VenHuizen believes it will be up to the municipalities to fund the specialized training; there may be grant opportunities. Alderman Spurgetis asked if they could share the cost with other cities. Chief VenHuizen replied they have shared costs with the County when they bring in trainers when they need to do a lot of mandated training of personnel in one setting. He discussed the Mobile Team Training Unit.

Alderman Parker asked about the Narcotics Unit and how much time of the two officers is taken up with cannabis special investigations. Chief VenHuizen said he would have difficulty quantifying that. Alderman Parker asked if cannabis is no longer illegal, would he transfer some of those resources to another division. Chief VenHuizen said no; there is plenty of work in the Narcotics Unit. He explained there is also the expungement factor with the new legislation. He said in the first round, there are 30 to 40 cases they will have to expunge. Chief VenHuizen discussed felony possession. He said the unit spends a lot of time on more in-depth drug cases and conspiracy distribution cases. He added there are officers assigned to the DEA Task Force.

Mayor Thoms asked if the City still has a canine unit. Chief VenHuizen said they do; one is currently

working and one is scheduled to be replaced in 2020 due to an injury. Alderman Hurt asked about the cost to train a canine. Chief VenHuizen explained the initial cost is \$9,500 for a dog with certain characteristics. Then the dog attends a ten-week school at the Illinois State Police Academy which runs between \$7,000 to \$8,000. Chief VenHuizen said a squad car also has to be outfitted for the canine; start-up costs are significant.

Chief VenHuizen thanked Council for their continued support and the Finance Department for their assistance with the budget.

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Public Works Director Mike Bartels presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. His assistant Michelle Martin was also present. Mr. Bartels explained this was his first year in preparing a budget for the whole department.

Alderman Poulos asked if they had additional contracted employees for snow removal. Mr. Bartels replied no; only regular full-time employees do snow removal.

Mayor Thoms asked if contracting is looked at as a whole across the City for mowing and snow removal or by individual departments. Mr. Tweet replied Public Works does most of the snow removal for City facilities; the problem is getting to the Library fast enough and that is why they contract out their own snow removal. Mayor Thoms asked about the pest control contract. Mr. Bartels replied Public Works handles pest control for the City facilities that the department is responsible for maintaining. Mr. Tweet said mowing is bid jointly. He explained some facilities have different needs.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about refuse collection and if it was all done in-house. Mr. Bartels replied they contract out the recycling portion to Republic; the five-year contract is up in 2021. Mr. Bartels explained Public Works handles refuse for City residents and City facilities. Alderman Poulos asked about the waste removal contract in the Fire Department. Mr. Bartels explained that refuse is an enterprise fund and departments pay Public Works for that service.

Alderman Parker said he agrees with Mayor Thoms; why is the City not bidding jointly on contracts such as pest control. Mr. Bartels said he could look into that; however, the contracts are on different contracts and timelines. Mr. Tweet said most of the buildings are covered by Public Works. He said the Library is not a City department. Mr. Tweet added they have done joint bidding before. Alderman Hurt agrees that it should be looked into for the future. Alderwoman Swanson asked that the Library be included. Alderman Parker asked if they could look into a memorandum of understanding with the Library Board. Mr. Tweet said they have looked at joint bidding, but when they are not doing it, there's a reason why it didn't work in the past. He thought it had been looked at within the last four years.

Alderman Parker asked if City Hall was locally landmarked and if the Preservation Commission is consulted before changes are made. Mr. Tweet said when they replaced the windows, they checked with the Preservation Commission. He does not believe that it is locally landmarked, but he will check. Alderman Parker asked if permits are pulled when the City does its own improvements and when projects are contracted out. Mr. Bartels replied yes, permits are pulled.

Alderman Parker asked if they anticipate that rates will go up. He also asked if the expenses of maintaining the infrastructure are included. Mr. Bartels replied yes to both questions. Alderman Parker commented they are just concluding one Long Term Control Plan and now they have to do another one. Mr. Bartels replied it is never ending.

Alderman Poulos asked if the City does its own levee inspection or if it is contracted. Mr. Bartels said they have tried to do it themselves, but with the amount of debris and the corrugated metal pipes, the City's equipment can't do it. He said it is contracted out.

Alderman Parker asked if there was any professional with the Sustainability Consortium who could provide assistance with the contract for the phosphorous study. Mr. Tweet didn't think so. Alderman Parker asked if

the consortium was still meeting. Mayor Thoms said they meet as needed; they will be involved with the performance contracting review.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the budgeted repairs for the hydro plant. Mr. Bartels said the gears and turbines are non-functioning. They had put out an RFQ and will be making recommendations soon. Mr. Bartels said the hydro plant has not run the entire year due to the water levels. He will be updating Council at a study session in 2020. Alderman Spurgetis asked if the performance contract will include the hydroelectric plant; Mr. Bartels replied no. Alderman Spurgetis asked if it was in the black or in the red. Mr. Bartels and Mr. Tweet both replied it is always in the red. Mayor Thoms said they need to look at shutting it down. Alderman Spurgetis said if it's not working out for the City, they need to look at it again.

Alderman Hurt asked about department staffing and the positions in the Fleet division. Mr. Bartels explained the staffing in the division. Alderman Hurt asked with the proposed leasing program, if there is still a need for that many mechanics. Mr. Bartels replied yes due to the age of the fleet and the lack of fleet replacement; he was speaking in particular about the trucks and the amount of equipment maintenance that needs to be done on an ongoing basis. Mr. Bartels clarified the City would also be doing routine maintenance for the leased vehicles such as oil changes. Alderman Hurt asked if the City gets back the reimbursement for oil changes and what was covered under the warranty for major repairs. Mr. Bartels said major repairs will be done by the dealership for the leased vehicles; there will be minimal maintenance for the leased vehicles. Ms. Masson stated the leased vehicles are a small percentage of the total fleet. She said the number of vehicles and equipment that the City is maintaining should be added as a performance measure. She explained they do evaluate positions when they become vacant; they may not fill them right away or they may eliminate the position(s).

Council discussed asset sharing with larger machines and special equipment.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the rationale for increasing rates. Mr. Bartels said they do a cash flow analysis and plug in projects that need to be done; that determines the rates. He said a lack of funding is why many projects are not getting done. Mayor Thoms said Rock Island has the lowest water rate in the Quad Cities. Alderman Poulos asked about the purpose of doing a rate study. Mr. Tweet responded the rate study is to make sure that the City's rates are correct; the City is not an expert in setting rates. The rate study provides a baseline. He said you should expect the water and sewer rates to go up 3% to 4% every year. Ms. Masson said that unless there is new growth and development to offset the fixed costs, rates will need to go up. Mr. Bartels said they do a comparison of the City's rates to other communities; the City is right in the mix.

Alderwoman Swanson said when she lived in another community, she had to buy leaf bags and stickers. She does not think the free leaf pick-up program is a benefit that is fully appreciated. Alderman Parker said the leaf pick-up should only be done in the spring for environmental reasons and if they want leaf pick-up in the fall, they should pay for it. Alderman Hurt said it would clog the storm drains if the leaves were not picked-up. Mr. Bartels said he would like to eliminate one collection of leaf bags.

Council thanked Public Works. Alderman Hurt expressed his gratitude for all the great work and all that Public Works does for the City.

*A break was taken between 8:16 p.m. and 8:24 p.m.*

## **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Budget and Grants Manager Colleen Small-Vollman presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council.

Alderwoman Swanson asked if they would fill all five vacant positions. Ms. Small-Vollman replied they will wait until they get a director. Alderman Hurt asked for clarification on the vacancies. Mr. Tweet said the vacancies are the CED Director, the Chief Building Official, the Economic Development Program Manager, an Office Assistant II, and an Urban Planner II. He said everything is on hold although they do need to fill the CBO position and they need a director; but what form that might take, they don't know yet. Mr. Tweet

said there are no immediate plans to fill the others. He said no one will be hired before March. Ms. Masson said one of their strategies to reduce costs is to reduce personnel costs by delaying when filling positions. Ms. Small-Vollman said most CED people are funded from multiple funds; the splits are very complex.

Ms. Small-Vollman stated that a progress report on their Gaming grants will be provided to Council by the end of the week.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the \$100,000 budgeted for the Watchtower site and what it funds. Ms. Small-Vollman said it is for a redevelopment agreement with IMEG, Black Hawk College, and State Farm which is being paid out over 20 years or \$2 million whichever comes first; it has nothing to do with future development. She said some of the redevelopment agreement payments will begin falling off. Ms. Masson said they will need to find a revenue source for maintenance of the City-owned DeSoto building after the Downtown TIF expires in 2020. She also noted there are no budgets yet for the Century Woods and Heather Ridge/Millennia TIFs; those distributions will start in 2021. Ms. Masson stated she is making the recommendation to extend the 11th Street TIF because it is a viable TIF and there is still potential for growth. She explained this will take state legislation and they will have to consult their TIF attorney.

Alderman Parker said the potential economic development services agreement may fundamentally change the CED Department. He asked if the budget can be modified if changes are made to how economic development is done. Mr. Tweet responded that he doesn't think economic development will be done differently and DARI funds are currently for a different cause; any changes will be cost neutral. He said they had a conversation with DARI this afternoon. Mr. Tweet stressed that Mr. Poole was the **Community** and Economic Development Director; the majority of his job was community-oriented, not economic development. Mr. Poole was very involved in economic development because there was no one else. Mr. Tweet said Mr. Poole was also the manager of the entire department. Mr. Tweet said funds would be reallocated for any services agreement. Ms. Small-Vollman said the City would continue to do economic development in the TIF districts because the City is the jurisdiction; the City is responsible for those funds and projects.

Alderman Parker asked which department claims the hotel/motel tax. Ms. Masson said the tax is collected locally by the Finance Department and goes into the General Fund. She said they don't assign that revenue to any department. A portion of the tax does go to the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau and CED processes the payment. Alderman Parker asked if the hotel/motel tax funds any specific program or staff other than the QCCVB. Ms. Masson said she has not seen any reference to it. Alderman Parker compared it to the local gas tax; he thinks it should be used for tourism related programs in the future. Ms. Masson said the QCCVB wants more money; she said our percentage was higher than other communities and the City only has two hotels. She said the hotel/motel tax is declining. She suggested using it for streets and public safety. Alderman Parker would like to think about what the City is doing for tourism such as a heritage tourism plan or the City's cultural assets. Ms. Masson said they could look at specific projects to be funded with those tax dollars. Mayor Thoms said he serves on the Visit QC board (QCCVB); he took Mr. Poole's place.

Ms. Small-Vollman said they continue to work across departments including Police, Public Works, IT, and Parks to fund projects with CDBG money when they can.

Mayor Thoms commended Ms. Small-Vollman for her work with HUD to get the City's issues straightened out; he thanked her for those efforts.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Jeff Yerkey presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council. Also present was Assistant Chief Bob Graff who is in charge of Operations and Training.

Alderman Spurgetis asked about the red/green light installations for garage doors. Chief Yerkey responded the interior lights indicate when the door is all the way up; the trucks can't move until the light is green.

Mayor Thoms said they should check with the Parks Department for someone to spray the lawns. Mr.

Tweet stated they do, but then the Fire Department would have to pay the Parks Department. He said it is too much for Parks Department to do the whole city.

Alderman Hurt asked about Supplies and the huge increase and then a decrease. Chief Yerkey said that was the AFG grant which was funded by the federal government for the new breathing apparatus. FEMA covered 90% (\$230,000) and the City matched the 10%.

Mayor Thoms asked for confirmation that the ambulance service runs at a loss. Chief Yerkey explained Medicare and Medicaid only pay a certain rate. He said private insurance only pays so much too.

Alderman Parker asked what was funded through Gaming. Ms. Masson said it was the ambulance billing contract for a portion of the fees (approximately \$75,000 to \$80,000). She said Gaming also paid for the 10% match for the AFG grant.

Alderman Hurt thanked Chief Yerkey and the department for all they do. Chief Yerkey said the members are doing great work out there especially with cardiac arrest cases.

Alderman Parker asked about the status of overtime. Chief Yerkey said it is still over budget due to injuries, but the added FTE has helped; it could be worse. Alderman Parker asked if there will be more firefighters starting training. Chief Yerkey replied one started today, one will be starting in December, and one position will start next year.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

Information Technology Director Tim Bain presented the department's CY 2020 Budget summary to Council.

Alderman Parker asked about fiber optic rentals. Mr. Bain replied they have had the fiber optic network since 2006. He said some areas have excess capacity which they lease to Rock Island County and Uniti Fiber. He added they are working on another lease. Alderman Parker asked about fees or taxes on fiber in the public infrastructure. Mr. Bain said not to his knowledge Mr. Tweet said the City does not have taxes or fees on fiber optic. Alderman Parker thought it could be additional revenue.

Alderman Spurgetis said there is an elaborate shift with the library technician duties being shifted to IT. The technician used to take care of the public access computers. Alderman Spurgetis asked if records are kept of IT's services to the Library or if they are billed. Mr. Bain said the time is not billed, but donated in-kind; although the time is tracked for the number and types of calls as for all departments. Mr. Tweet explained fees are paid back to the General Fund through transfers; Library pays a fee for different administrative services like for payroll and IT.

Mayor Thoms asked about cell phone tower leases. Mr. Tweet said Public Works coordinates all of that; the leases are negotiated.

The Budget session concluded at 9:32 p.m.