

**BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL**  
**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**April 26, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Mike, Ed

Staff Present: Andy, Chris, Kevin, Jessica Fust, John Caterino, Rich St. John, Pepper Valdez, Gina Dahl, Brittana Park

Call to Order (00:00:00)

Approval of April 12 Meeting Minutes (0:00:50)

**Ed moves to approve, Mike seconds, minutes adopted as presented on unanimous voice vote.**

Public Comment (0:01:05)

No members of the public present

FY24 Budget: Department Review (0:01:14)

a) New City Hall

Current projection is \$2.5M less than design/development option, due to additional value engineering and good competitive bidding. User experience remains a priority, even with additional value engineering. Construction Manager at-Risk is giving good guidance and helping project move forward.

Staff are recommending adding some project alternates back in, specifically window replacement and full building generator backup. The construction of these particular windows makes replacement in the future difficult; easier to replace or repair while building is in a shell, then fully finished.

Committee members discuss the need for and timing of the generator recommendations, including whether it could be installed later, what the needs are for the building and backup systems, and emergency planning. Staff indicate that current building design is to back up emergency systems (police, EOC, one elevator, mechanical/HVAC systems.) only. Whole building back-up would support a larger disaster recovery effort if needed. Staff further note that the proposal recommends

using a Public Works generator that isn't in use and has only had limited run time (approx. 150 hours). Cost difference is mostly infrastructure, but PW will be reimbursed for generator.

Committee discusses window proposal. Only limited energy modeling to understand savings is available. Some unknowns still, including intersection with Historic Tax Credits. Windows will be non-operable (easier to maintain and control), need to be as true to original design as possible. HVAC system is designed to bring much more fresh air into building than what is currently in building, making operable windows unnecessary. Building will have more individual thermostats than typical, so there will be user control.

Committee discusses risk of unanticipated costs as construction goes forward. Staff indicate that there are good contingencies still in the base bid, which limit the risk of unexpected overages. Base bid includes a contractor contingency inside for subcontractor overages and an owners contingency for unforeseen costs. Total contingencies are approximately \$1.8M.

Committee discusses risk due to generator location (basement). Staff report minimal risks from a canal breach and further note that there are mitigation steps that can be taken. CM Boyett requests estimated energy recovery/incentives. There may be IRA incentives/federal rebates. Staff are still unclear as to what the potential HTC amount will be.

Total dollars spent so far on New City Hall: \$17.2M - acquisition, due diligence, preconstruction, bid package 1 (long lead time, demo), design fees, abatement. Current timeline projects some departments moving in approximately August 2024.

**Ed moves to recommend inclusion of project alternates to the full Council (29:50).  
Mike seconds, motion adopted on unanimous voice vote.**

b) Fire (0:31:29)

FY23 focus has been on implementing two new programs – MRT, CRU. Also had two major recruit classes, which caused a significant training impact (PPE costs, overtime). Dec 1 was first MRT deployment, second one starts July 1. Still working through logistics of CRU – should start in next month-6 weeks.

Department has been concentrating on facilities and deferred maintenance in FY23, using some one-time dollars to catch up. Also working on brand new key access system at all facilities – better security control (people are making false calls and then robbing stations). Good new facilities person on staff, doing facilities conditions statement to identify needs comprehensively. Admin trying to look better and ahead on facility needs so that deferred maintenance list is not so long.

Station 1 needs a new remodel (kitchen is from 1970s, windows are from a garage sale). 2 concrete pads need to be redone at Station 2&3. Ripping out carpet at all stations, found MRSA in the carpets. Future need (beyond FY24) – all fuel pumps at fire stations are coming to end of lifecycle or beyond.

911 center is looking at different deployment models. Also focusing on recruitment and retention – new HR system is resulting in more applications due to easier process.

Staff may recommend reprogramming some unused funds from FY23 to FY24 facility needs (may see an amendment in May).

Total budget change is \$791,000. Due to some O&M and personal services.

BUFSA – contract expires June 30, no new contract requested. No BUFSA board since 2018, unclear if county intends to renew.

Station 8 remodeling is underway.

911 Ops/EOC – building itself has some warranty issues, other than flooding, building is mostly fine. High priority to get alternate EOC location; technically and financially feasible to have secondary location. Police agrees that priority is high. Contingency plan for 911 now is to co-locate mobile command center with sheriff. Options for remote location at airport, ops center, national guard center.

Facilities requested amount is lower due to desire to keep budget flat. Have some more urgent equipment issues. \$300000 ongoing would help and be about what fire department can manage annually.

Rural ambulance – AMR stuck in a moral dilemma. Service agreement expires in 2024. May consider contract that gives FD operational control that limits ability to go into county. AMR not doing well on paramedic recruitment. City may need to consider augmenting services.

Station 9 – looking at reservoir for location. Sen. Tester is pushing for a bill to give FDs some funding, unclear what that likelihood is at this time. Fed lobbyists watching it.

Fire union contract still not settled. May be completed around budget time, dollars in the budget are close to what the contract is likely to settle at.

Some interest in committee amendment on deferred maintenance.

c) Police (1:01:27)

Department Budget focuses on CPSM, PSML implementation, consistent with four strategic priorities.

Technology is expensive, difficult to stay current. BPD has a lot of tech – software and maintenance costs are high. Records issue that will impact move to Stillwater. High cost to transfer, destroy, or digitize records. Separate costs from records for City Admin. Overtime is a real problem – big incidents, vacancies. Air show will have massive impact, unclear who will pay for it at this time.

Committee members discuss various budget issues, including evidence processing, body cam footage, use of civilians on to do fingerprinting. May need some additional personnel to process evidence more quickly. Court and prosecutor do see some delays, but some may be strategic. E-tickets are better than written tickets. Need printers in every car.

Committee discusses staff alignment with Council priorities. BPD is most effective in being proactive on top three priorities. When resources can not be responding to calls, can focus on hot spots with increased physical presence. Did that last summer in the downtown – made a significant difference (9% decrease in calls for service). Have to keep patrol adequately staffed – currently at risk of pulling off K9 and SROs to cover 11 still in training. BPD has fully staffed units for violent crime – homicide, agg assault. Downtown and traffic have specialized units. Presence makes a difference.

Jennifer raises questions of crime mapping, CPTED interface, understanding data around hot spots better.

CSOs working well, active, making face-to-face contact with people. Will be more aggressive – have them investigate property. Can be sworn to make citations, but not arrests. Need to figure out how to get volunteers re-engaged and figure out what they do vs. CSO.

Contract for TA on Family Justice Center is under final review this week; using unspent prevention dollars from FY23.

d) Legal (1:46:07)

Budget has a 1% increase - \$35KK difference.

Three PSML positions: VW was added early, 2 prosecutors have not been added yet. Legal having trouble getting viable candidates for positions. Have 3 attorney positions open and one admin position.

Committee discussion about getting interns/summer programs to help grow the hiring pool. Possibly hire more widely. Need to think creatively.

Department Priorities: victim services, filling DV prosecutor vacancy, FJC.

e) BMC (2:05:15)

Budget reflects overall 7% increase, due to PSML new judge and staff. Staff plan now (before court assessment) is legal assistant and courtroom clerk. Baliffs will rotate. One Court Administrator shared between judges.

Fines collections are improving. Transitioned from old collection agency to a new agency. Started collecting on new cases in February – collected \$23,000 through end of March.

Committee Discussion (2:15:30)

Budget may be out Friday, first work session on Monday.

Discussion of calendar and order of presentations.

Review of SUD/MH 2 mill revenue and expenditures. Revneues are coming in as expected or a little high. There will be unspent 2 mill dollars. Staff plans to put excess into a reserve. MJ revenues are being lumped in with 2 mill.

Committee discussion of transparency on accounting for SUD/MH dollars. MJ funds may need to be considered differently, because they have less restrictions legally (Council policy is to combine at this time, except for 5-year commitment to Stillwater).  
FY24Budget will include \$625,000 for SUD/MH, with no recommendations.

Discussion of Future Agenda Items & Meeting Schedule

None.

Adjournment at 11:47 a.m. (2:47:10)

***Next meeting: May 10, 2023 @ 9 a.m.***