

MINUTES

Workshop of the Aurora City Council

Saturday, October 5, 2024

COUNCIL	Mayor Coffman	Angela Lawson
MEMBERS	Stephanie Hancock	Françoise Bergan
PRESENT:	Steve Sundberg	Crystal Murillo
	Danielle Jurinsky	Ruben Medina
	Alison Coombs	Dustin Zvonek

COUNCIL	Curtis Gardner
MEMBERS	
ABSENT:	

1. **DISCUSSION OF BUDGET RULES FOR THE DAY**

2. **BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

Budgets by Deputy City Manager Group

2.a **Council / Commission Appointees**

a) City Attorney (F-20)

b) Civil Service Commission (F-27)

CM Jurinsky asked where the savings come from 24 to 25.

Staff stated it is going down from the projection to the proposed.

J. Batchelor added that the reason Civil Service is over-budget is due to higher volumes of testing.

c) Court Administration (F-38)

Staff shared they are where they need to be. She said they have some extra overtime because they are fully staffed and started a very intense training program. She added they are working on changes to their building and working to improve the security for the front entrance.

CM Jurinsky asked if the probation numbers would go down since they include projected DVs.

Staff answered yes.

Mayor Coffman inquired on how many officers they were short on in detention.

Staff responded they have four, but are doing much better.

CM Coombs asked if finding a solution that is not an in-house solution is with the \$700,000 provided last year on technology.

Staff said that their system is integrated with other systems, so if they made it off the shelf, it would cost millions, so they are staying in-house with a web-based platform maintainable by anyone.

CM Coombs asked who has access to that information and if they are providing access comparable to the state or other courts.

Staff expressed they are working on that, and it depends on the person or entity on what access they get.

CM Coombs inquired on how they anticipate virtual courtrooms affecting cases in other counties they are working with.

Staff voiced they offered to do virtual appearances with Arapahoe. She noted there are some concerns with pre-trial services, but are in talks and open to it. They are trying to minimize direct booking as much as they can.

CM Coombs asked if they can book people into our jail and then have them transported if we stop prosecuting DVs here.

P. Schulte responded they asked Arapahoe County what they could do to avoid issues about transporting, and he mentioned figuring out how to put a couple terminals from the county in our jail and cross-deputize marshals for Arapahoe, so when the officers come to the facility, they will be direct booked into the Arapahoe County Jail.

CM Coombs asked if this would increase cost for them in terms of transportation for that.

P. Schulte answered no from a legal perspective.

d) Judicial (F-115)

CM Coombs asked if there was anything to add in terms of the court process and complying with state legislature on moving DVs out of their court.

Judge Day responded no.

CM Bergan asked where they were on the H.E.A.R.T. Program.

Judge Day said they paused so Chief Chamberlain could come on board, so they can coordinate with him and his team, but they are still hopeful to get it up and running soon.

CM Lawson asked for an update on the modernization and the stakeholder groups.

Judge Day responded he has spoken to the new Chief Justice, and they are very interested in working together and coordinating with all municipal courts. He said his team has done an amazing job building to our specific needs.

CM Coombs asked when the system would go live.

Judge Day answered optimistically sometime in 2025.

CM Coombs noted she did not see anything about legal counsel for defendants in the H.E.A.R.T. court. She asked if jail is being waived and what is the cost impact of that.

Judge Day explained that if the person volunteers to participate in the program, they will be diverted from the criminal justice process and put into the H.E.A.R.T. program.

CM Coombs asked about the need for additional interpretation services.

Judge Day answered there are challenges in relation to bringing in in-person interpreters of different dialects.

CM Coombs asked when they are going over the budget, where do the funds come from.

Staff said they are currently way over budget, so they have filed space and money from other places to cover whatever they need. She added they also increased salaries for Spanish speaking interpreters this year.

e) Public Defender (F-174)

2.b Roberto Venegas - Deputy City Manager

a) Communications (F-30)

CM Bergan asked how many FTEs they have in communication currently.

Staff answered 26.5.

CM Bergan asked if police's communication person is under that or separate.

Staff responded there is a lot of coordinating that happens between them.

CM Bergan inquired if they have anyone specific for crisis management.

Staff said media, staff, and public relations work together on that.

b) Finance (F-51)

CM Jurinsky asked why there is a \$20 million increase proposed budget to 2025.

Staff answered that they transferred risk management into the finance department from HR.

CM Lawson asked for the exact amount that was used for the Nome Apartments.

J. Batchelor said they spent about \$60,000 on the abatement and \$127,000 for hotels for emergency re-sheltering.

CM Lawson inquired if these other apartments close, what would they approximately use for the same situation.

J. Batchelor said they have been working hard to get the property owner to step up and take over the property. He expressed they are hopeful to not close properties and have mass re-location.

c) Housing and Community Services (F-83)

Mayor Coffman shared they lost one of their palliative home communities and are now down to one.

CM Bergan asked if they are ready with the Navigation Center.

Staff said Advance took over operations of the Day Resource Center last week and will work on a plan for a few of the winter months to be open every night to help. The Navigation Campus will likely start

some operations in the spring and have full functioning by late fall of next year.

CM Jurinsky suggested using the open building for space for more emergency vehicles for law enforcement.

CM Hancock asked if the pallet shelters going to the Navigation Campus would be stood up or stored.

Staff answered they would just be stored.

CM Jurinsky stated that could create a problem and suggested looking into bus tickets to a Denver shelter while they are waiting on the Navigation Center.

Staff noted the outreach specialists offer shelter in other places.

CM Lawson asked about the purpose of the CDBG funds and also about rental assistance.

Staff voiced the CDBG funds for rental assistance are typically used for rehabbing, preserving affordable housing, acquisitions of land for housing, or site improvements.

CM Coombs asked if money is available for programming for younger youth.

Staff explained some of the organizations they partner with, service younger youth.

d) Human Resources (F-95)

CM Bergan asked about the recruiting climate.

Staff shared they are in a good spot with very minimal vacancies.

CM Jurinsky asked why the Office of People, Culture, and Belonging are almost \$400,000 a year.

Staff said they shifted that group to focus on employee experience.

CM Bergan asked if the \$392,000 was for the two positions.

Staff said yes, and also money for supporting city community engagement events.

CM Murillo pointed out that the Office of People, Culture, and Belonging is a shift in the industry in how they talk about inclusion and belonging.

CM Hancock shared this seems to be a rebranding of DEI, and believes departments individually should be focused on making sure community and employee engagement is part of their culture intrinsically. She felt this is a waste of money that could be used for something else.

CM Coombs asked if the shifts in duties include the employee town halls.

Staff responded that yes, they have integrated them.

Mayor Coffman inquired about how much time is dedicated to events related to different cultural groups in the City.

Staff stated they are trying to have them devote 30% to events like those and pull more of their time toward employee wellness.

CM Jurinsky commented that the Wellness Program has a full-time employee that is focused on wellness, and that office is costing \$339,000. She asked what that person was doing if all these other people are focused on employee wellness and DEI stuff.

Staff explained that position is part of their benefits team and more of the physical and wellness is part of their benefit package to help employees.

CM Jurinsky stated they have four employees under another department called Benefits. She inquired that if Wellness is doing Benefits, Office of People, Culture and Belonging are doing Wellness, and Wellness is doing Benefits, what was Benefits doing.

Staff answered that the Wellness position should be eventually put underneath benefits.

CM Jurinsky recommended eliminating the Office of People, Culture, and Belonging, and taking one of the FTEs from that department over to Wellness to focus on Employee Wellness and not Benefits.

CM Coombs asked if the programs those programs are intended to address issues that impact retention and recruitment.

Staff responded yes.

CM Coombs inquired if they eliminated to the ability to undertake employee engagement surveys and follow up on them, what impact would that have on recruitment and retention.

Staff answered there would be less focus on employees, services and response times, benefits and programs, and information and data, so they would have to cut down on the services they provide.

CM Murillo asked how many employees they have for the City of Aurora that HR manages and addresses HR work for.

Staff answered they have 38.5 full-time HR employees to service 4,000+ employees.

CM Murillo shared she appreciates HR being mindful of industry trends, and it sounds like the functions of the HR employees serve a practical and needed purpose to understand why employees come here or chose to leave.

CM Hancock inquired how they empowered employees and helped them grow and develop before 2023. She said the pendulum has swung wildly in how they engage people and culture. She added they want to make sure employees feel valued and important, but that should be part of who without special department.

CM Jurinsky proposed getting rid of the higher paid position, and the lower paid position should be put under the Wellness Program.

J. Batchelor explained going into and coming out of the pandemic they saw turnover significantly increase, so the last several years they have had a deliberate focus to understand why employees are leaving or staying, whereas before it was more external focus.

CM Bergan voiced there seemed to be an overlap of certain duties. She said it is important to take care of their people employees and their satisfaction, but also be efficient in how they manage the City.

J. Batchelor said the DEI office was created a while ago under previous Council and administration for a different purpose and the rebranding and refocusing now is dealing current needs.

CM Murillo said they have all year to ask these questions about redundancies and if they want be efficient, and she is frustrated that on the spot Council is pretending they know how HR functions when really they want to eradicate anything DEI.

CM Jurinsky said the new proposal is to do away with the office completely, but re-orb them under another program.

Mayor Coffman urged this to be brought forward in the form of a resolution through the process.

e) Information Technology (F-106)

2.c Laura Perry - Deputy City Manager

a) Development Services (F-44)

L. Perry expressed this department was created this last year and the budget includes a financial reorganization, redistributions of existing funds from the Public Works Department and the General Management Department with a new zero change, The budget includes the addition of seven FTEs in this department.

b) Library and Cultural Services (F-122)

L. Perry stated there are no General Fund budget amendments. She noted that in the Capital Projects Fund they have \$125,000 earmarked for building improvements at library branches and cultural facilities.

CM Hancock asked if they will need additional personnel after they finish renovating the second floor of the Martin Luther King Library.

L. Perry responded at this time they do not have additional staffing to support the expansion, so they will be looking internally how to potentially close that gap. She noted there will be opportunity for additional programming with the new amenities.

CM Hancock inquired how they would fund those programs.

L. Perry shared that libraries do not charge, so they will be looking at the current budget to find ways to provide necessary services through the resources they currently have.

CM Bergan asked when the renovation would be done.

L. Perry answered they are hoping to start first quarter of this year, and it is an estimated 6 to 9-month construction period.

CM Lawson suggested being open less hours so they would not have to have so many FTEs.

CM Jurinsky shared she and CM Lawson have gotten emails from people asking for renovations at the Mission Viejo Library.

c) Parks, Recreation and Open Space (F-137)

L. Perry discussed several budget amendments, including making efficiency adjustments to move positions to contract, eliminating a recreation coordination, and moving and cost-shifting costs out of

the Rec Fund to other PROS funding sources that are non-General Fund of the Recreation Fund. She said they are adding one FTE in the Gold Enterprise Fund to support facility maintenance needs, four FTE park rangers to improve coverage, adding contractual dollars for private security, and two additional mobile cameras to float areas in various parks. They are also adding one development planning supervisor and associated contract services to support plan review and design of park renovations and new development projects in the Park Development Fund.

CM Bergan asked about adding signage and cameras in the parks.

L. Perry confirmed they will invest in those and mobile cameras.

CM Jurinsky asked what it would look like to sell some of the outdoor pools.

L. Perry said they can do that analysis and bring it back.

d) Planning and Business Development (F-151)

L. Perry noted there is one budget amendment in the Development Review Fund for planning, with the addition of one senior planner to support development and plan review and contract support to support planning for UDO updates.

e) Public Works (F-178)

L. Perry voiced there are no General Fund budget amendments. She said they added one transportation and mobility project manager in the Development Review Fund to focus on inspecting traffic control and providing updates of high impact work zones.

CM Sundberg asked how significant the acquisition of fines would be for developers or contracts that do not meet deadlines.

L. Perry said she would look into and get back to him on that.

CM Jurinsky asked if this will look different with what she is working on with CEO Works.

L. Perry responded there is not a cost savings, and PROs and Street Operations came together to look at a scope of work to support the citywide beautification efforts and that work will augment staff.

CM Lawson asked when the beautification program starts.

Staff responded that they have people actively working on it.

2.d Jason Batchelor - City Manager

a) Aurora911 (F-16)

J. Batchelor stated they were able to move the call takers out of the General Fund into the 911 Fund and they are getting fully staffed. He said they are going through a public safety capital master planning exercise to look at all the current and future needs for public safety facilities.

Staff expressed they are working hard to maximize efficiency with people, technology, and what they will need moving forward to continue to meet needs to address diversity and language barriers. She discussed potentially in the future building toward a direction to further deepen their partnership with police and fire to offload low acuity calls in a way to support immediate service to people.

CM Bergan asked if the technology identifying where calls come from is part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Staff responded they have technology improvements in progress right now, including a new calling handling system.

CM Jurinsky asked if the full staffing included firefighters doing 911 dispatching.

Staff answered they have a couple still doing that, but that is not the long term goal. She explained that when they bring call takers in it takes some time to develop skills sets and certifications.

CM Murillo commended staff on an innovative process.

Staff explained there are two layers of technology they are in the process of implementing, one that will help translate information in real time, get cars out to calls faster, and mostly remove reliance on a live translator and the call handling system will have built in technology. They are also building two ways to access in case of interruption on one side.

CM Murillo noted there are many different dialects and languages, so she is curious to see how the technology works.

Staff explained it's machine learning and there will probably be some hiccups when they first use it, but the system will learn and get better over time.

CM Coombs asked what would happen if it detected the wrong language and if there is some way to correct it.

Staff responded said there is already a lot of beta testers giving input all around the nation to help with that.

b) Fire (F-62)

Chief Alec Oughton expressed they have three FTEs being added, an EMS Battalion Chief, community engagement, and public information. He noted IT is getting a public safety GIS analyst to focus on planning work and how well the community is covered through travel network analyses. They have two reclassifications in the budget of lower level civil positions, which will give them three operational battalion chiefs on the line, and will end up doubling the size of their community medical service branch. Chief Oughton noted they received about \$4,000 to firefighters grant.

c) Police (F-159)

Chief Todd Chamberlain discussed the budget amendment requests and continuing the impound lot fee.

CM Murillo asked if there was cost benefit to building their own lot.

J. Batchelor said there is a significant capital upfront cost with building a lot. He stated it probably could cover its operation cost, but they would have to figure out the capital cost. He noted it is part of the public safety capital master planning effort.

CM Bergan inquired if other cities have their own impound lot.

J. Batchelor responded Denver and Colorado Springs have their own.

Chief Chamberlain expressed they are looking to add one data analyst, two record technicians, and four for the Compliance Quality Assurance Unit. He discussed several requests, including vehicle registration and making sure they do not just pull over people of color, gas mask kits, professional security service, quality assurance contractor, transcript services, and a victim service therapy dog.

CM Bergan said Ward 3 is constantly lacking PAR officers, so she hopes they will look for those resources.

Chief Chamberlain responded that they looked at crime analysis and how officers are reporting, and they now meet twice a week on that, so they can talk about the crime and what their strategies and focuses are. He said PARS are doing a lot of the homeless abatements right now, but they will supplement that soon.

CM Bergan voiced that police officers did not sign up to do only homeless abatements and should be done by non-police officers.

Chief Chamberlain noted that is only temporary.

Mayor Coffman asked if the officers have power to write trespass tickets.

Chief Chamberlain shared that they just rewrote the policy for trespassing and issued a special order.

CM Bergan inquired about user AI for reports.

Chief Chamberlain stated Axon is who does all their body worn videos and they have a huge opportunity to use machine learning, which will take data and information and generate it into a form.

CM Sundberg expressed that Colorado Springs' homeless outreach team officers have some hazard pay. He also asked if the Crime Center would have ShotSpotter technology with AI.

Chief Chamberlain answered that they do not have ShotSpotter right now, but they are looking at it.

MPT Zvonek asked what the cost of having ShotSpotter would be.

J. Batchelor responded when they looked at in the past, it was about \$1 million a year per square mile.

CM Jurinsky said where she sees the gray areas are when City legal with give an interpretation and it is not interpreted correctly or is disregarded by officers.

Chair Chamberlain agreed and said they have the opportunity to build that partnership.

Mayor Coffman stated he hopes they can build a supplemental or incentive in the budget for officers to stay physically fit if they cannot have a mandate.

d) General Management (F-72) (Fleet, CMO, City Clerk, Internal Audit, Intergovernmental Relations, International and Immigrant Affairs)

Fleet:

CM Jurinsky asked if they were able to hire mechanics in Fleet.

J. Batchelor responded they require certifications to work on Fleet and hiring people with all the certifications has been challenging, so they developed a program to help people get those certifications.

CM Coombs inquired if they have the administrative staff capacity to take advantage of grants available for charging infrastructure and securing Fleet vehicles.

Staff said there are plans out there for charging stations, but they have to have the mechanics piece first to maintain those.

City Clerk:

CM Bergan asked about the campaign finance system.

Staff said they implemented Civics, a campaign finance system, and are now looking at the code for campaign finance to be updated so they can make changes to the software system.

International and Immigrant Affairs:

CM Bergan inquired why they need \$700,000 with two FTEs.

J. Batchelor said that number includes their annual service contract with Sister Cities and Global Fest.

2.e Marshall Brown - General Manager of Water

a) Aurora Water (F-3)

2.f Greg Hays - Budget Officer

a) City Council (F-24)

b) Non-Departmental (F-129)

Mr. Hays discussed the two amendments.

CM Jurinsky asked if they were going to get the rest of the ARPA money to the animal shelter.

J. Batchelor responded yes, the animal shelter and the homeless navigation projects.

3. CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND AND ANY OTHER FUND REVIEW (if not discussed previously)

4. MISCELLANEOUS (Proposed Pay Schedules, Proposed GID Ordinances, Proposed Service Fees)

4.a 2024-2025 City Pay Table and Classification.

Max Agronin, Senior Compensation Analyst, Human Resources / Kim Skaggs, Assistant City Attorney

4.b General Improvement District 2-2011 (Aurora Conference Center) 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.c General Improvement District 1-2007 (Cherry Creek Racquet Club) 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.d Cobblewood General Improvement District 1-2016 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.e General Improvement District 3-2008 (Meadow Hills Country Club) 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.f General Improvement District 1-2008 (Peoria Park) 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.g General Improvement District 2-2009 (Pier Point 7) 2025 Operating Budget

Andrew Jamison, Debt & Treasury Supervisor, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

4.h Proposed 2025 Changes to Service Fees

Greg Hays, Budget Officer, Finance / Richard Goggins, Management Analyst II, Finance / Hanosky Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

5. ADJOURN