

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
City Council Committee-of-the-Whole**

9:00 AM  
July 27, 2024

**MINUTES**

Tibbetts Manor  
750 17th Ave. NW

**COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Councilmembers:*

Barbara de Michele  
Zach Hall  
Victoria Hunt  
Russell Joe  
Tola Marts  
Chris Reh  
Lindsey Walsh

*Administration/Staff:*

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor  
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator  
Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator  
and Interim Chief Financial Officer  
Tammy Mueller, Acting City Clerk  
Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City  
Administrator  
Susie Monsell, Budget Manager  
Nathan Hatia, Financial Analyst

**CITY COUNCIL RETREAT: BUDGET PRIORITIES**

a) **Welcome**

Council President Walsh called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

b) **Public Comment**

Connie Marsh, resident, spoke regarding potential new funding options, opposing utility tax increases and bond measures.

c) **Overview**

City Administrator Bobkiewicz provided an overview of the agenda topics. He provided a copy of the Issaquah Police Department Monthly Review, June 2024 report for review and invited Police Chief Schwan to provide the Council with an update on Police staffing.

d) **Budget Outlook & Priorities**

Deputy City Administrator and Interim Chief Financial Officer Andrea Snyder and Budget Manager Susie Monsell presented the Administration's budget outlook and priorities.

The City Council was asked to consider:

1. Do you agree with these priorities? Are there others not listed?
2. Among these priorities, which are most important to you?

City Council feedback included:

- Determining a specific number of priorities to focus on.
- Court and public safety costs should be prioritized, along with the top-most priorities of residents beyond public safety.
- A need to have hard conversations about what services to reduce or eliminate to close projected budget shortfalls.
- Considering use of community volunteers to help accomplish some of the City's environmental goals and priorities.

- Ask for additional clarity and transparency regarding Eastside Fire and Rescue's budget requests for its member agencies, including how contribution costs are calculated for each member.
- Consideration of the Administration's proposed staffing position additions and whether it makes sense to implement them when facing a budget shortfall. Would like to better understand how the proposed Permit Coordinator position will help mitigate the risk of missing deadlines and subsequent fines against the City.
- Understanding the need for contract increases to prosecutor and public defender contracts.
- A desire for more data and analysis comparing Issaquah with neighboring municipalities that have their own police departments and what levels of service they are offering and their levels of resident satisfaction.
- More information and conversations are needed in the coming months to assist Council with making budget decisions.

e) **Potential New Funding Options**

Deputy City Administrator and Interim Chief Financial Officer Andrea Snyder presented potential new funding options to the Council.

City Council feedback included:

- Requesting more information regarding resident usage of water and sewer utilities and comparisons of other municipalities' utility taxes and resident usage.
- School zone red light cameras should only be used if there are proven safety issues, not as a strategy to generate revenue.
- Consideration of including overhead costs for capital and infrastructure when evaluating our costs and contract renewals for services provided to partner agencies, such as for jail services.
- Consideration of property surplussing.
- Pushing at the State level to ensure that taxes and other surpluses are distributed back to municipalities.
- Requesting more information on how raising business and operating taxes might impact the budget.
- Whether smaller funds, like the Arts Fund, would be exempted from being considered for budget cuts, instead focusing on larger budget items, or whether everything was on the table for consideration.
- Consideration of community survey results in determining priorities and cuts to City services.

f) **Lunch & City Council Break Out Sessions**

The City Council broke for a lunch break at 11:49 AM. While eating, they participated in Break Out sessions at two tables led by Council President Walsh (Group A) and Deputy Council President de Michele (Group B).

The meeting reconvened at 12:36 PM. Council President Walsh and Deputy Council President de Michele provided summaries of their group discussions. The notes from the groups are attached to the minutes.

g) **Potential Budget Reductions**

Deputy City Administrator and Interim Chief Financial Officer Andrea Snyder presented potential budget reductions to the Council.

City Council feedback included:

- That the anticipated decreased income and increasing expenditures are likely a new normal, so potential cuts should be seen as long-term.

- Further consideration for whether any specific departments or services would be exempt from consideration for budget reductions. More information regarding service level evaluations was requested to assist with this decision.
- Public safety and mobility should be prioritized.
- The community survey should be used as a guiding document for considering any potential service cuts or reductions.
- Considering obtaining community input regarding the surplussing of any property.
- Would like more information regarding the City's IT infrastructure and costs.
- Further consideration on whether smaller funds, like the Arts Fund, should be considered for budget reduction or reallocation of funds, or whether they should focus on larger funds.
- Caution in lowering service levels in areas where the community is happy with services and reallocating to areas where the community would like to see improvements; being cognizant that the high satisfaction levels are likely attributed to the current level of service. Cutting the budget and level of service could decrease community satisfaction. Further, Parks programs assist the City in obtaining grant funding.
- Programs that pay for themselves, such as Parks Recreation, should not be considered for cuts.
- Considering monitoring the permitting division and determining later whether staffing or other changes should be made as the City moves from the large-scale development of the past and into an age where redevelopment will become the norm.
- Prioritizing the transportation project list to what projects are most likely to make a positive mobility difference.
- Be mindful of making any cuts that would reduce the sales tax.
- Desire to determine community support for whether and how to lease or build a new city hall facility.
- Pavement management projects should not be deferred as deferring can be more expensive in the long run.
- Consider internal administrative staffing cuts, understanding that City services may become slower.

Staff will continue to monitor and update forecasts in the coming months and provide Council with updates.

**h) Public Safety Facilities Follow-up: Leasing, Next Steps**

Due to the lack of time left in the meeting, City Administrator Bobkiewicz briefly informed the Council on the Mayor's desire to appoint a resident task force on city facilities, and that they will bring the subject to Council in September, and that the Administration intends to pursue a lease with King County for court services.

City Council feedback included:

- Consideration in recruitment of the task force to ensure a representative group from every community, having at least 20 members in the task force to accomplish this.
- Numerous options should be provided to the task force, with broad conversations and discussions encouraged.

**i) Public Comment**

Connie Marsh, resident, spoke regarding water infrastructure, Parks and Recreation funding and revenue, limiting the number of capital projects and ensuring that they are completed, and rising costs burdening residents in the area.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

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Lindsey Walsh, Council President

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Tammy Mueller, Acting City Clerk

## **Group A**

Mayor Pauly

CP Walsh

CM Reh

CM Joe

## **Group B**

DCP de Michele

CM Marts

CM Hunt

CM Hall

# What do you hope the City will accomplish in the long-term?

Manage our facilities assets more proactively -  
sell or repurpose underutilized assets

Communications - value

- Regional public safety actions
- Facilities - new needs
- Sound Transit + Central Issaquah

# What do you hope the City will accomplish in the near-term?

- Strategy for state-level shared revenues - with SCA?  
AWG?
  - collaborative relationships, strengthen
- Collaborative approach / regional approach to public safety - with Sammamish
  - Develop relationship
    - Police - Court
    - EFR
- Facilities - surplus

# What topics on Council interest you most?

Permitting + Housing

Capital Projects

Budgets

Police + Courts

Children @ Chambers

# What are you looking forward to in the next year for the City?

- Robust priorities discussion
- How do we use community survey data
  - Different from board feedback
- Cutting ribbons
- Housing + Parking
- Facilities - Maintenance + Surplussing + 1
- ICAP Implementation
- Resiliency

What do you think we don't talk about enough?

Property we own, underutilize, landlord

Talking about what we shouldn't do - or who should do it instead

Communications to community, businesses, engagement  
Highlight the work we do; relate it to proclamations

## **Group A**

Mayor Pauly

CP Walsh

CM Reh

CM Joe

## **Group B**

DCP de Michele

CM Marts

CM Hunt

CM Hall

# What are you looking forward to in the next year for the City?

- ① Finishing TOD-OC - Breaking ground
- ② NW Sammish Road - setting up to get to breaking ground
- ③ Rebranding of trails system - Peaks to Creeks
- ④ Title 18 Whiteboard Items
- ⑤ Discussion of ~~city~~ <sup>Central Business</sup> MFE
- ⑥ Surplusing properties

# What topics on Council interest you most?

- ① Public Safety
- ② Emergency management - Redihead
- ③ Multi-modal - Bikel/pedestrian
- ④ Light rail - positioning ourselves w/ Sound Transit
- ⑤ Arts Fund
- ⑥ Surplusing properties

# What do you think we don't talk about enough?

- ① Arts
  - ② Emergency Preparedness
  - ③ Power Grid - Energy - Utilities (EV infrastructure)
  - ④ Communications and public engagement  
How do people get information about cities
  - ⑤ Civic Engagement - (identifying future leaders.  
encouraging  
cultivating)
  - ⑥ Better protections
  - ⑦ Regional collaboration (animal control, EFR, <sup>public health</sup> transportation)
  - ⑧ State advocacy for increased revenue
  - ⑨ Marijuana public safety fund -  
Cannibus
  - ⑩ Epidemic of loneliness - 3rd Place - Social Services - Senior Services
- ⑪ Lake Sammamish State Parks
- ⑫ youth
- ⑬ Drugs and youth