



City Council Special Meeting Minutes Municipal Budget Presentation Wednesday, May 16, 2022 - 6:00 p.m. Upstairs, Franklin Public Library

Council in attendance: Mayor Jo Brown, Councilor Olivia Zink, Councilor Bob Desrochers, Councilor Paul Trudel, Councilor April Bunker, Councilor George Dzujna, Councilor Jay Chandler, Councilor Ted Starkweather, Councilor Vincent Ribas and Councilor Valerie Blake

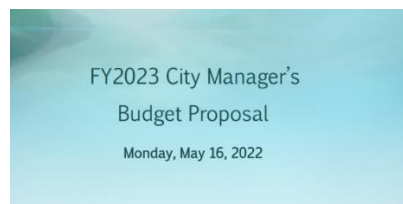
Absent: None

Others in attendance: City Manager Judie Milner, City Department Heads, Lt. Dan Poirier and members of the public

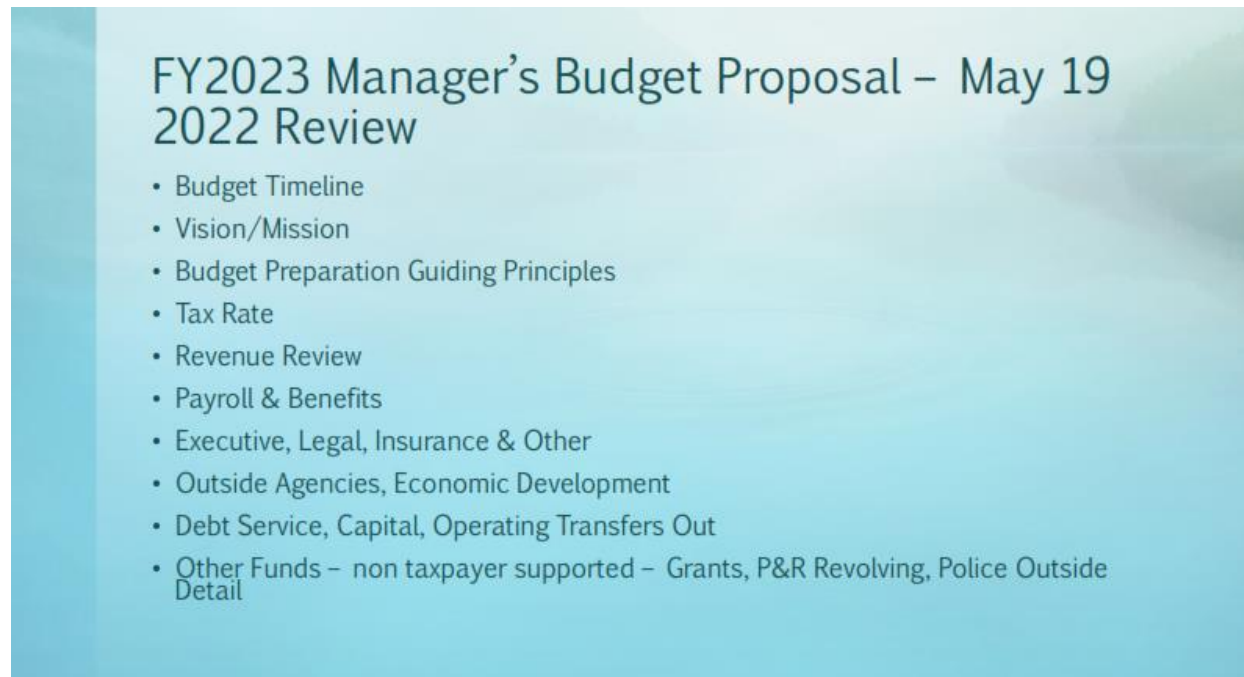
Mayor Brown called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m. and led a salute to the Flag.

Mayor Brown stated that this is the second FY23 municipal budget presentation and asked City Manager Milner to begin.

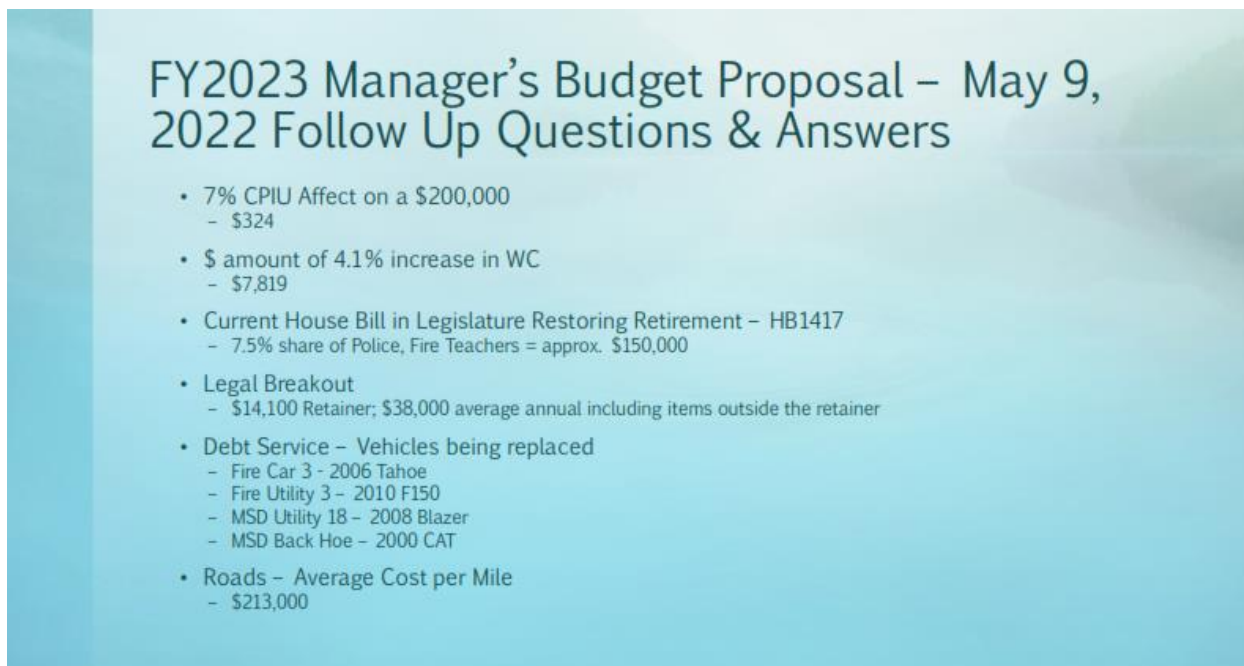
City Manager Milner introduced all of the department heads and started the presentation with the following slides:



| FY2023 Manager's Budget Proposal – Professional Staff | |
|---|-------------------|
| Judie Milner, City Manager | |
| Finance Director | Esaundra Gaudette |
| City Clerk/Tax Collector | Michelle Stanyan |
| Fire Chief | Michael Foss |
| Library Director | Robert Sargent |
| Municipal Services Director | Justin Hanscom |
| Planning/Zoning Director & Special Projects Coordinator | Seth Creighton |
| Police Chief | David Goldstein |
| Recreation Director | Krystal Alpers |



City Manager Milner went through the followup answers from questions that came up at the previous budget hearing on May 9, 2022. These are listed in the slide below.



The information on Workers' Comp. and Retirement can be found in the City Manager's Budget Proposal on page 21.

For the vehicles being replaced, to answer the second part of the question of what they are being replaced with; Chevy Colorado's for the Fire Department at \$51,350/each with outfitting, Trailblazer for MSD at \$31,000, and a brand new back hoe for MSD will be \$180,000. These would come out of the Debt Service line in the budget, which is on page 150.

FY2023 Manager's Budget Proposal – Follow Up From Last Week

- FY2014 Pay & Class
 - \$1.2M to implement fully
 - Slowly implemented partially over last 10 years
 - Some positions are still \$2-\$3 under FY2014 pay & class recommendation
 - Incorporated fully paid benefits into study
 - Recruit employees need to hire step 6 or greater

Milner explained the FY2014 Pay & Class in more detail, per the above slide. There is a new Pay & Class study being done at the Department Head meeting tomorrow.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget – Follow Up From Last Week

Cost of Capital

C-32B = 18 cents on tax rate per \$100,000 of added expenditure (using current rate)

Resets Tax Cap to include capital

Road program approx. \$800K per year (\$1.44 on tax rate)

The above slide is a portion of the tax cap that City Council had met. This proposal would mean that the tax rate would take effect and increase by double on this year's December tax bill, but the following year each tax bill would be increased by half of the December's added amount.

For example, based on a \$200,000 house, this July's tax bill would have no increase, December's tax bill would be \$288 more, but every other tax bill going forward would be an increase of \$144.

FY2023 Manager's Budget Proposal – May 16, 2022 Overview

- City Clerk/Tax Collector
- Finance & IT
- Planning & Zoning
- Recreation
- Library
- Fire
- Police

The above slide shows the departments that will each be giving a presentation tonight. Milner stated that Finance will actually start before City Clerk/Tax Collector.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget – Expenditures

- Finance (page 113; statistics page 76)
- IT (page 115)

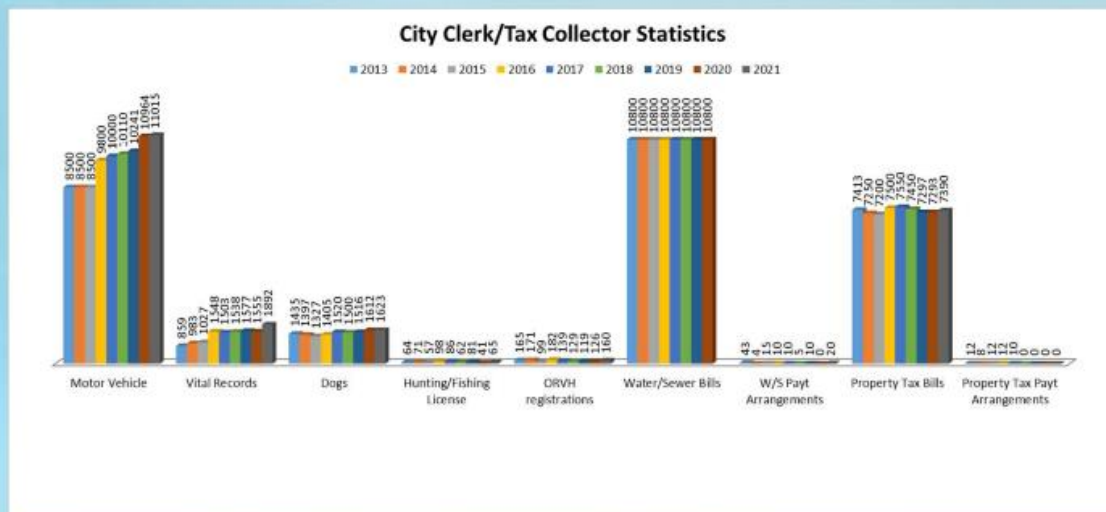
Finance Director Gaudette stated that she added a miscellaneous expenditure line for a new shredding company so that her staff was not spending so much time shredding manually. This line also covers other miscellaneous items like stamps for notaries.

Councilor Zink asked if the finance department has a lot of overtime and Finance Director Gaudette stated that during COVID there was a lot of overtime but her department has cut back on it now.

Gaudette also added that for the IT department the current company they use for security is no longer insuring schools or municipalities due to being more of a high risk. She is waiting for answers and pricing from some other companies.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget –
Expenditures

–City Clerk/Tax Collector (page
111; statistics page 73)



City Clerk/Tax Collector Stanyan went over the statistics on the above slide. She also noted that in the proposed budget packet that her department handles about 11,000 motor vehicle and boat transactions, 1,892 vital records, 225 NH Fish and Game transactions, 1,600 dog licenses, over 10,600 annual water and sewer bills, and almost 7,400 annual property tax bills. They also send out the late water/sewer, dog renewal, and motor vehicle renewal notices.

Stanyan also stated that the Clerk's office is also responsible for all of the elections for the city. Some years are as small as one election in a year, and every four years it is as many as four elections. This year there will be three elections, the NH State Primary on September 13, 2022, the City of Franklin on October 4, 2022 and the General Election on November 8, 2022. This is the largest line increase on the budget from last year, due to the amount of elections increasing this year verses the last physical year.

The increases in the rest of the budget are mainly due to rising costs for supplies and vendors. Other than that, the budget closely mirrors most of last year, minus the inflated costs.

She also wanted to mention that her staff has an amazing level of customer service and it has been noticed by a lot of residents that come in.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget –
Expenditures

–Planning & Zoning (page 116,
statistics page 79)

P&Z Director Creighton gave everyone the below handout:

Planning, Zoning, Building Dept. FY 2023 Budget:

A) Who we are:

1 part-time Administrative Secretary (32 hr./week).

1 full-time Director.

The good: Your staff believe in Franklin! We are constantly cheerleading the City's efforts to better itself while working on ways to make ideas become reality. We also aren't afraid to say "no" or "stop" when we see something that isn't allowed and will be a detriment to the City.

The bad: Your staff are overworked and wear too many hats.

B) What we do (some of it, not all):

We are the "land-use" department. This means we are tasked with guiding and processing permits for everything from sign permits, to changes-of-use, to sheds, to additions, to new parking lots, to new homes, to new apartments, to new industrial facilities, to senior living facilities, to complete rehab and reuse of nearly an entire City block.

We work with the Economic Development Task Force to secure millions of dollars in grants.

We act as enforcement (land-use police) with regards to land-use and property codes.

We are tasked to create plans for how the City wants to be (grow/change/etc.) and then we write rules to ensure that these desires become reality and are applicable to all development.

We assist customers with permitting, understanding what they can/can't do on the land, understand property lines, septic systems, and State and Federal rules such as Shoreland Protection/Wetlands/Flood Zone, etc.

We staff the Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Heritage Commission. Each board is scheduled to meet monthly; both staff members also attend these meetings:

Annual night meetings:

36 Board meetings

12 City Council meetings

12 Other night meetings (i.e.- Task Force, special projects, Regional Planning, etc.)

Total annual night meetings: 60 +/-. *(This represents the need to work a night meeting on 23% of the days worked).*

C. What we need:

More staff. Separation of “Building” from “Planning”. Compensation for staff (Administrative Secretary).

As the City grows, the applications and applicants will become more complicated. All of the easily developed land is already built/rebuilt. Codes will continue to become more complex. This means that each application will become more time-consuming.

To start, the Department needs to increase the Admin. position to full time, this will at least provide office coverage during open hours and a few extra hours to accomplish work. The City Manager's budget has included the proposal to add eight more hours/week to the Administrative Secretary, thus becoming full-time

We are spread thin, and too much of our time is spent turning-our-wheels constantly reprioritizing what is priority. In addition to it being impossible to do it all, having just one or two people do-it-all is also confusing to customers. Most customers can't understand why we are '2-faced'. I.E. - I wear my “Planner” hat to work with someone to get a good

project approved, when it makes sense to approve, even if it doesn't quite meet the rules. But at the same time, I have to be the Zoning Administrator and tell them why the project can't be done due to a generic "Zoning" code. Even worse are the times I work with someone that has a great project that meets all Planning and Zoning rules, but then gets stopped at the Building Permit stage because of a Building Code issue, which I end up enforcing and delivering the bad news on (the Building Inspector enforces Building Code, but my department administers the building permit review process).

The addition of another full-time Planner or Zoning Technician, and/or creating a separate Building Department to house an additional employee, would alleviate much of this.

Franklin Planning, Zoning, Building Dept - SWOT Analysis

| | |
|---|--|
| <u>Strengths</u> Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intelligent, supportive, customer friendly staff• 30+ cumulative years of experience in/with municipal/local government• Frugal• Work well with all departments• Connected to others in local and State government roles.• Progressive thinkers while respecting the NH way. | <u>Weaknesses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper reliant (lack of permitting software)• CIP lacks Planning related items such as: masterplans; main street (Central St) plans and improvements.• Outdated regulations and zoning ordinances.• Too few employees.• Administration of too many divisions.• Insufficient collaboration with other departments. |
| <u>Opportunities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant funding available (for regulation updates and tangible projects)• Time is perfect to reinvent the City – increase tax base while shaping development patterns.• Improve processes.• Build better relationships. | <u>Threats</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff burnout.• Customer dissatisfaction (customer satisfaction will decline as staff becomes overwhelmed with applications and processing times lengthen.• Mistakes will be made (due to things being rushed in an attempt to keep up).• Misguided development.• Investment will go elsewhere if Franklin's process isn't smooth. |

Planning, Zoning, Building Dept. related pages in the Budget Book:

Pages 5: Proposed Fees

Page 79: Calendar year summary of some, but not all permits processed

Page 98: Revenues

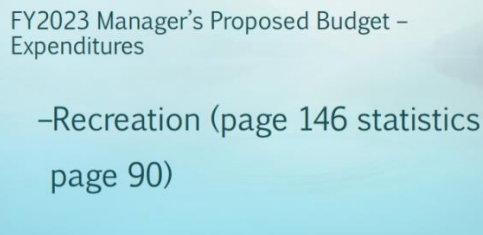
Pages 116 – 117: City Manager’s supported budget for Planning & Zoning

Pages 176, 177, 179, 182, 185, 186: Existing Fees

P&Z Director Creighton went over the items on the handout. He also mentioned that his part-time administrative assistant is extremely knowledgeable and a huge asset. Her 32 hours a week prevents having her there to greet people when her shift is over and being able to help answer questions if he is out of the building for appointments with residents. She would like to go to full time status, which he stated she is ready for, and he mentioned that he needs her to be full time as well. That is included in his budget.

The Assessing Technician position was also revised and includes some duties that were part of Planning & Zoning and this position will be working under Creighton.

City Manager Milner stated that her and P&Z Director Creighton had two interviews last week and will be interviewing this week as well. She stated that they are fairly certain they have the right candidate for this position.



Parks & Recreation Director Alpers provided the below handout:

Franklin Parks and Recreation - SWOT Analysis

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated Personnel• Affordable programming and Child Care provided for the community• Community Connections – programming and collaboration• Bessie Rowell Community Center (BRCC)• Strong relationship with tenants in BRCC | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff pay• Youth Sports Coordinator• Executive Assistant – only dept without• Vandalism• Limited space at BRCC for growth• Staff turnover• Beach Management |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Great parks • Community Beaches • Flexible department adapting to community needs • Hours of operation - 6:30am-6pm • Capital planning for BRCC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Vehicles • Parent Involvement • Lack of capital park planning • Lack of volunteers |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Programming – Middle School/High School • Youth Sports • Existing programming growth • Community collaborations – new partners • Capital planning | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Local Businesses Hourly Wage • Lack of grant funding • Vandalism • Lack of space to grow • Staff turnover • Beach Management • Park upkeep • Capital funding |

Alpers started off by acknowledging how amazing her team is to work with, including her fellow department heads and the City Manager. The Recreation department is not always seen as essential, however, this team has never viewed recreation as a less important department than any other.

She continued explaining that they have had to drastically change the way that they do many things over the past two years, due to the pandemic. They are starting to shift back into normal operations. The pandemic did shed some light on how important child care is for families. There has been a waitlist for most of the school year, as they are at maximum capacity within their facility. Summer camp has been full for over a month and filled up within 2 weeks of being advertised.

Alpers stated that her group of recreational professionals are underpaid and burnt out. Due to the part time nature of the job, it is often a second job for most. \$10-\$15/hour is not a reasonable amount for pay for what the staff has to deal with, especially considering the rate of pay elsewhere in positions that are not as stressful. Through the 21st Century Grant, COVID funding and childcare stabilization funding, she has been able to pay her staff at a more comparable rate to other local employers for the last year. COVID funding is coming to an end and she will not be able to keep that rate at that point.

Alpers mentioned that she also needs more staff. The Recreation Department is the only department in the city that does not have an Executive Assistant and that position would really help to free her and upper level staff up to alleviate being spread so thin. She also mentioned that the parks and beaches need to be kept up and will need money to be put aside for replacement costs at Odell Park and other city playgrounds as they are starting to age. Odell Park is 14 years old and the average life of a playground is about 20 years.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget –
Expenditures

–Library (page 159, statistics
page 93)

Library Director Sargent stated that the library is continuing to get better. Circulation is up 63% over the same period last year, however, he kept the spending down this fiscal year since they had not returned to programming. The library did spend trust fund money on the interior painting of the main floor and the front stairwell. They were also able to expand their operations by an additional 10 hours a week last month, bringing the total to 55.

Sargent mentioned that the Library Board of Trustees and himself are seeking a level-funded operating grant. Since they will not be expending all of their allotted resources in the current budget, it was not necessary to ask for more.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget

- 1ST Responder Focus Group
 - Mental Health
 - Fatigue
 - Stress
 - Burn Out

City Manager Milner stated that the above slide shows that the 1st Responder Focus Group created a survey for the fire and police department employees that was quite telling and this group has been coming up with ways to help with stress, burn out and mental health.

Milner stated that the Fire Department budget presentation was next, which starts on page 126.

Mayor Brown called for a quick break at 7:50 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 8:02 p.m.

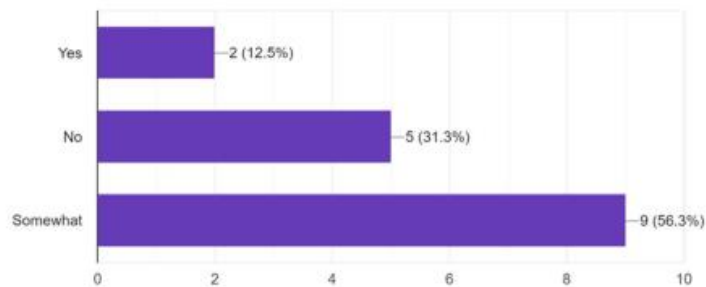
Fire Chief Foss started his presentation with the below slides, which show some survey statistics that were completed by his employees. These surveys asked about whether they had a good work-life balance, whether compensation or benefits were more important and if they felt they had enough time off to sustain a healthy mental state.

FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget –
Expenditures

–Fire Department (page 126,
statistics page 83)

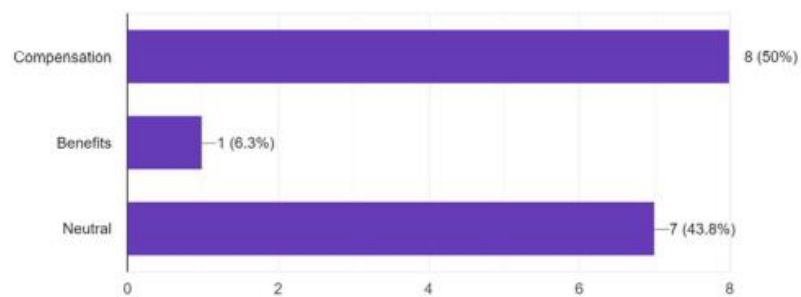
Fire Department Survey

Do you have a good work-life balance?
16 responses



Fire Department Survey

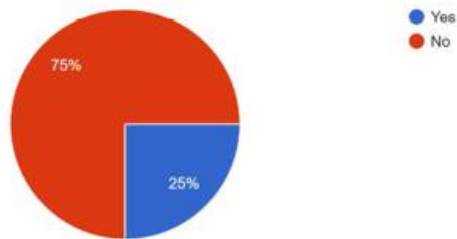
What is more important to you, your compensation or your benefits?
16 responses



Fire Department Survey

Do you feel you receive enough leave time to remain emotionally healthy at work?

16 responses



Foss stated that he believes that if they implement the 5% COLA that is presented in the budget that it will help stabilize the staff and get the department in the ball park with other comparable communities.

One way to also help staff, and this would be city wide, would be to add some days off for employees. He mentioned they are working on a new personnel policy that possibly adds a few extra personal days off.

Next, Police Chief Goldstein went over the bellow slides for his department. He also went over some of the same surveys as the fire department, which shows a slightly better result. Goldstein stated that they are fully staffed right now but there are not enough supervisors.

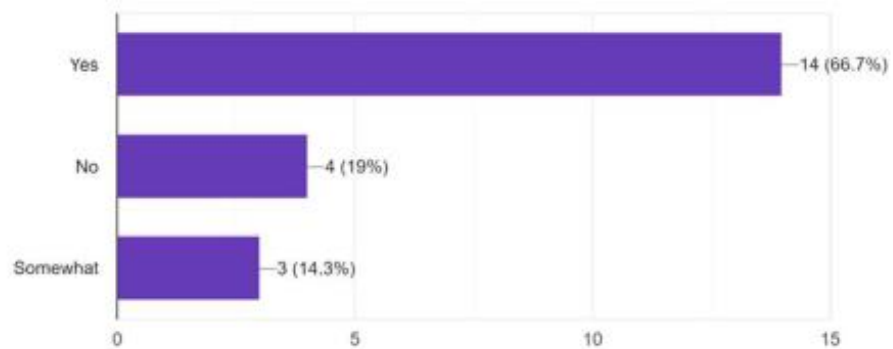
FY2023 Manager's Proposed Budget – Expenditures

–Police Department (page 121,
statistics page 80)

Police Department - Survey

Do you have a good work-life balance?

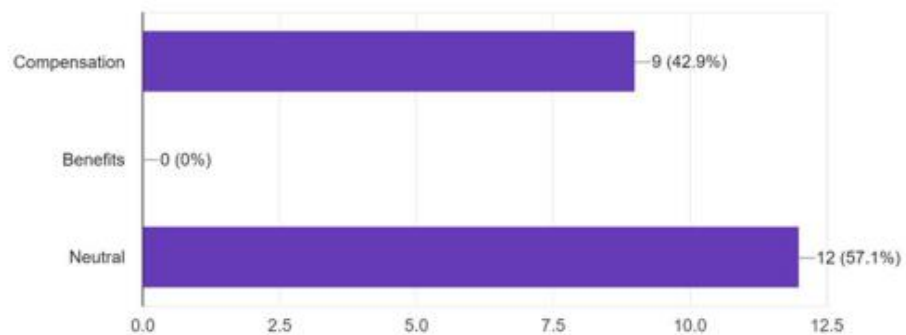
21 responses



Police Department - Survey

What is more important to you, your compensation or your benefits?

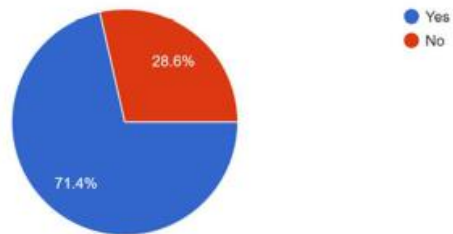
21 responses



Police Department - Survey

Do you have the equipment to effectively do your job?

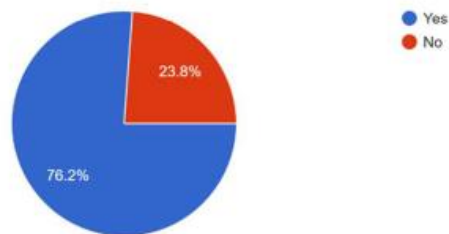
21 responses



Police Department - Survey

Do you have the software to effectively do your job?

21 responses



Goldstein added that the Police Department supplies everything except for socks and underwear for the officers. There was also some discussion about the statistics on page 80 in the FY2023 City Managers Budget Proposal packet.

Milner stated that this concludes the second part of the municipal budget presentation and reminded the council that the last part will be held on May 23, 2022 and that this would be covering the Municipal Services only, as that is the last department to go over.

Mayor Brown thanked all of the department heads and stated that she appreciates all of the time they put in, their hard work and for being here to present their budgets.

There was no further discussion.

Mayor Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Jones

Executive Secretary