

MINUTES  
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
300 NORTH HIGH STREET  
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



**OCTOBER 16, 2023**

**SPECIAL MEETING:** 7:00 P.M., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall Auditorium.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Denise King followed by a Moment of Silence in remembrance of Lesia Meer, once President of the Beech Grove Cemetery Board of Trustees and having worked in the County Clerk’s Office for many years.

<b>ROLL CALL:</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Aaron Clark	X	
Ro Selvey	X	
Troy Ingram	X	
Jeff Green	X	
Jeff Robinson	X	
Brandon Garrett	X	
Brad Marshall	X	
Jerry Dishman	X	
Roger Overbey	X	

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:** DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES OF THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2024 (ORD. 15-23).

**PERSONNEL**

Mikah Wilson, Personnel Director, points out consideration of 5% increase for next year’s wages being the only increase in her budget. Those line items would be for positions of Personnel Director (101-13-411024), Personnel Specialist (101-13-411030), and Secretary (101-13-411032) as well as the expenses related with FICA (101-13-413011), Medicare (101-13-413015), PERF (101-13-413017), and Health Insurance (101-13-413025). Life Insurance (101-13-413026) did not increase. The rest of the items should be exactly what was provided in the budget for last year. She has been able to work with those funds and continue to provide the services needed for employees of the City. Questions called.

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Yvonne Thompson, Human Rights Director, requests to move \$1,000 from Office Supplies (line item #101-18-421011) to Training, Fees & Travel (line item #101-18-413085). The Human Rights Commission has not had a chance to go to any conferences or trainings for new Commissioners. President Robinson confirms with the Council Attorney that they can do that since the total amount advertised is not changing and this just moves within lines so the total will still be the same. Attorney Murphy makes sure they are in the same category, which Robinson answers yes, so Murphy says it is okay. Since a recommended amendment has been made, Robinson feels it is easier for them to address

that now. A motion was made by Robinson and seconded by Overbey to amend ord. 15-23 in the Personnel Budget by moving \$1,000 from line item Office Supplies (421011) to Training, Fees & Travel (413085). A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. Motion carried. AMENDED.

Thompson stated other than that, everything else is pretty much the same from last year. She appreciates the 5% increase in Director (101-18-411035) and EEOC Investigator (101-18-411049). Questions called.

## **CITY COURT**

Amanda Dunnuck, City Court Judge, begins by mentioning the increase in wages. She toggles back and forth between the General Fund and Probation User Fees trying to get as much out of the Users Fees as she can instead of the General Fund, which is tax dollars. That is why there are two separate budgets and some line items will go back and forth depending on the year and revenue. She believes they lowered Computers (101-08-444072), which not a lot has been spent out of and will not unless it is needed. If it is decided it is ultimately needed, they will figure that out if and when that time comes but if it is not needed then it is just money sitting there. President Robinson explains so the Council knows the Adult Probation Service Fees can be found at almost the very bottom and is almost the last of the categories in the budget itself. Dunnuck explains with Adult Probation User Fees is a non-reverting user fee fund that when people are placed on probation there are fees associated which go into that fund. Being paid out of that is the Court Secretary (268-08-411020), Probation Officer (268-08-411031), Bailiff (268-08-411075) and all of their benefits. More is being spent than what is able to be brought in in a year so the surplus she was able to selfishly acquire up until about 2020 will be dwindling and they will eventually have to move things back.

Councilman Marshall refers to Other Services & Charges (101-08-439071) having a significant change there and questions the additional costs in that category. Judge Dunnuck replies yes, language interpreters are needed as they are starting to see a lot more Spanish speaking and sign language defendants coming through. They currently use Andrea Johnson from Victim's Advocate but she is not necessarily state certified but able to interpret and at a lower fee than what the state certified ones have. They try to schedule them all on one day because she charges \$60 a day. They just keep seeing an increase. Questions called.

Audie Barber comments that everyone so far has mentioned the 5% raise for employees and asks if it is an AFSCME raise and been approved by the new contract or are we just assuming that is what they are going to accept. President Robinson believes the positions that have received the 5% raises are not AFSCME employees so he cannot comment as far as the contract. These 5% raises are not Union employees.

## **CITY CLERK**

Belinda Munson, City Clerk, points out the 5% raises and some lowered and increased expenses. The Overtime (101-05-411160) was dropped by \$500 and Unemployment (101-05-413065) was dropped from \$5,000 to \$2,000. Training, Fees & Travel (101-05-413085) was increased by \$2,000. Maintenance of Equipment (101-05-436011) was increased \$1,000 based on spending. Other Services & Charges (101-05-439071) was detailed in an email she sent out prior to the presentation of the budget at the City Council Meeting. She requested that to be increased to \$10,000 from \$1,000 because she doesn't have any legal counsel and per statute the City Clerk can have their own legal counsel.

Elizabeth Edgell asks why the legal counsel is needed. Clerk Munson explains since she has been in her positions for the last three years, the Council Attorney works for the Council and the City Attorney

works for the City. No one works for the Clerk and whenever she needs help she (somewhat) has to go back and forth. She has some ordinances she would like to review and there are some more things that need to be updated. The entire municipal code has not actually been updated yet although it was supposed to be done. It is easier for her to work with someone that is dedicated to her and she is allowed that by state statute. Questions called.

## CITY COUNCIL

Councilman Robinson relays in looking at the City Council budget the increases are 5% raises for councilmembers next year with everything else staying pretty much the same. He thanks Controller Craig Wright for being here to address any questions. Robinson refers to the new councilmembers coming in January regardless of how the election turns out so he would like to see funds for those new councilmembers to attend the Association of Indiana Municipalities Training for new elected officials taking place in late January. He recommends whoever is successful in the upcoming election that they put together or recommend putting together an additional appropriation ordinance at that January Meeting. That training was great as several of them that were on Council in 2020 attended and it was very valuable. He suggests adding at least several thousand dollars into Other Services & Charges (101-11-439071) for that training. Controller Wright knows that as of right now, year to date, \$863 has been spent so they will have to review it to see, as he is not aware of the cost. However, it is an item that is not used that much.

Councilman Clark comments he would be happy to recommend the pay increase being moved for that training. The rest of the Council agrees. The Council budget does not have a line item specifically for training but can use the Other Services & Charges line. Councilman Marshall would actually rather see a line item for Training, Fees & Travel versus any other expenses. Robinson asks if there is such line. Clark believes there was in the past but does not see it now and neither does Robinson. Clark figures that amount would be \$6,441. Councilman Ingram questions if they should add the line item then. Clark figures some more, subtracting from the salaries and into the Other Services line. A motion was made by Clark and seconded by Robinson to move \$6,441 from Common Council Salaries (411016), representing the 5% increase, into Other Services & Charges (439071). A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. Motion carried. AMENDED. Marshall asks if by doing this, they also need to adjust FICA and Medicare as well. Robinson comments that being a great observation and that there will be slight decreases in Medicare (413015), FICA (413011) and PERF (413017) although probably negligible. Wright assures he will get those totals together.

Audie Barber confirms they just agreed to give the new City Council a 5% raise and then spent it for them. Robinson answer yes, although, the raise wasn't agreed yet as they haven't voted on the budget. Barber assures he knew what he meant and he just wanted to note it for the record. Robinson states four out of the nine people elected in 2019 received the training. When you come into this position, there is nobody telling you what to do. You have to come in and figure everything out yourself and the training that many of them went to is really going to be much appreciated. Barber asks how long the training lasts and how much it costs. Robinson notes it was two days as they spent the night in Indianapolis. There were dinners and things like that as well.

Councilwoman Selvey did not go through that training and had to rely on the fellow councilmembers to explain how things work. She wishes she could have experienced that training and believes it will be great for the new Council coming in.

Mikah Wilson, Personnel Director, just wants to let them know that the Association of Indiana Municipalities (AIM) offers this training all the time. It is just an email and they can set something up. The situation we have here in Muncie is really not that unique and it is actually becoming more common

with people switching in and switching out and moving locations and things like that. Robinson makes note that 5% raise on \$14,400 a year, which is what the Council is paid, is really not that much. Questions called.

### **BEECH GROVE CEMETERY**

Troy Watters, Beech Grove Cemetery Superintendent, notes he probably has more changes than most Departments but everything he is going by is what he has found to keep the Cemetery running as it is now and refrain from how it was from before he started. They have added \$20,000 to Part Time Labor (215-31-411046) just to be safe. They went from having three (3) Part Time Employees to having eight (8) or nine (9) in the summer and two (2) permanent Part Time plus Full Time help. They work all day long keeping things going. Last year, \$1,500 was in Unemployment (215-31-413065) with one employee filing while the rest wasn't used. It was then decided to put \$2,500 there for a safety net in case something did slip through and there was a file. There was \$800 in Office Supplies (215-31-421011) last year but they went through it quick, leaving a \$17.52 balance since March. That has been increased to \$2,000. Telephones (215-31-432031) has an increase of \$200 because they are on a really old phone system that works half the time. An newly built addition of an office is coming along as well so there will be need for a third phone for the Part Time Office help. A new system will be needed eventually but Watters is unsure what that will cost so they've increased it. Foundations (215-31-439200) is a newly added line item and they are beginning with a \$3,000 budget. Several thousand dollars has been brought in since starting their own foundations last year and foundations are coming in every day. Before, Beech Grove Cemetery received a \$25 locate fee for locating the grave where the foundation went. The monument companies hire a contractor to come in and dig them but now Beech Grove does it themselves. The only thing not made off of it is the employee's salary and materials to do it. That has been a big plus, however, they have to have something budgeted for the materials to start with. Regarding the materials, Watters found a way to get it by the skid (with a savings of \$500-something a pallet/skid) and believes they are using about two skids a year (maybe three). Moving on to the fence repairs, Watters and Beech Grove Board President Zac Bow sat down and agreed that they could put \$10,000 a year in for fence repair and use it for normal repairs. It would help get something done on it. Regarding Mowers & Vehicles (215-31-444059), Watters advised he would like to purchase another new smaller mower to get into tighter places as well as a few weed eaters. They went through two last year that just became wore out after being constantly ran every day. He also wants to purchase some new equipment for the grounds. They are good on vehicles right now unless something blows up. He mentions they requested the same 5% increase on salaries and believes that is about it.

Audie Barber wonders if they can contact the state before turning the state highway over to the City to maybe get a guardrail and let the state pay for it. Maybe that will save some wear and tear on the fences. If not, then maybe when the City does take it over in a couple years then we can look at straightening that road out to where it isn't so curvy. Watters advised they had discussions about a guardrail but if putting a galvanized guardrail up they might as well take the historic fence down. He would rather find a way to get a lower deductible or someone take action on the people that hit it. Barber comments maybe they should straighten the road. Robinson thanks him for the suggestion. It is a beautiful fence and sometimes, unfortunately, people just cannot stay away from it.

### **AMENDMENTS**

President Robinson notes the two amendments made earlier this evening and questions if there are any other amendments to be made or motions to amend the budget in any way.

Craig Wright, City Controller, just wanted to thank the Council for listening to the various Departments regarding next year's budget. He makes note the recommended adjustments will be made. They want to see all the Departments succeed and believes they have a balanced budget that the DLGF and state agree with. A couple members of Council even sat in on that discussion. Let's work with the budget. Budgets aren't always perfect and if they are not then they can certainly come before the Council next year to make any additional adjustments needed. He thanks everyone for his or her considerations over the third meeting.

Councilman Marshall has a question about the City Clerk budget and questions if the legal fees go into Other Services & Charges and if it would be appropriate to put that in the line item for legal fees and services. Marshall is aware they all heard that discussion but next year it may not be as clear for the future. Deputy Controller Matt Wagley is not sure they can make that adjustment in this budget but they can certainly adjust the budget for next year making sure it that it goes to legal fees. Clerk Munson thinks maybe if she had an Attorney, they could write an ordinance and she could have a line item for that. Wagley assures they can do that in the Controller's Office. Robinson adds she can email a councilmember anytime and author an ordinance through the Council Attorney as well. Wagley adds or the City Attorney even. He is not sure what legal fees would be under (whether it be 421 or 411) but will certainly get it done. Questions called.

Audie Barber is concerned that some of these employees getting the 5% raises fall under the AFSCME contract. He believes the Beech Grove Cemetery employees do and in giving them 5% raises, not knowing what the negotiations are with the contract or if there are even any negotiations going on at this time. All he asks if they tread lightly in giving these raises. He is not saying they do not deserve them but just thinks they need to fall under the contract if they are Union contracted. Robinson states unfortunately they don't have the luxury of doing that because there is a contract still withstanding and by state statute they have to pass the Municipal budget but October 31. Barber is just stating it for the record.

Mikah Wilson, Personnel Director, assures the 5% raise is just a contingency. That does not necessarily mean that will be the amount, it is just what they responsibly think they need to budget for. Clearly, there might be some changes from negotiated contracts so they are just trying to be responsible and put something in place there. If those negotiations come out leading to be a different number then obviously, whether it needs to be an additional appropriation or whatever else, then that would be what they would be looking at come that time.

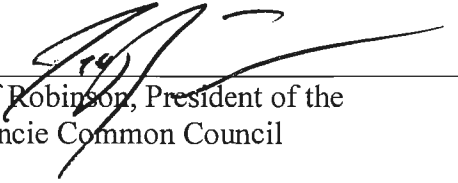
Clerk Munson states there wasn't as much revenue during the Covid year so the following year none of the non-union employees got a raise. They went from one year to the next staying exactly the same. She just wanted to state that for the record.

## **VOTE**

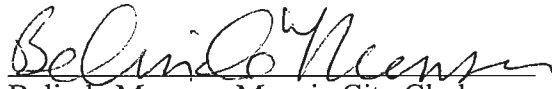
**ORD. 15-23 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (CITY 2024 BUDGET).** A motion was made by Ingram and seconded by Selvey to Adopt as Amended. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. Motion carried. ADOPTED AS AMENDED.

**ADJOURNED:**

A motion was made by Overbey and seconded by Ingram to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 7 yeas and 2 nays (Robinson and Ingram). ADJOURNED.



Jeff Robinson, President of the  
Muncie Common Council



Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk  
of the Muncie Common Council