

**CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION
October 1, 2024**

ATTENDEES: Council members Smith, Burbank, Green, Bergerson, Arsanto, Bender (via Zoom) and Anderson (via Zoom).

Also in attendance were Mayor Burkett, City Administrator Brunell, Finance Director Hines, Judge Berry, Court Administrator Cash, Parks and Recreation Director Snodgrass, Fire Chief Skogen and Police Chief Alfano.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith called the regularly scheduled meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Budget Presentations:

Court:

Judge Berry updated the Council that there aren't a lot of changes or things to discuss regarding the budget. The big ask for the Court is the purchase of Laserfiche software program and desktop scanners to assist in the transition to paperless Court files. City Administrator Brunell added that this budget request will be fully funded by a grant from the Dept. of Commerce.

Police:

Police Chief Alfano spoke to the Council that for the 2025-2026 budget there are just incremental adjustments with salaries and benefits. The biggest increase is in the professional services dispatch, this is due to an agreement with Pierce County and radio access fees. The Police Department did budget for a new police vehicle for each year and that will include outfitting the car and a police radio.

According to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan that was approved there should have been 14 officers in 2025. The police department currently has 11 and so the budget will include bringing on a new officer in 2026. As call volumes rise and the number of tickets the need for adding a new officer is needed to have 12 officers.

Fire:

Chief Skogen discussed that for the 2025-2026 budget the general fund position was greatly reduced because of the successful passing of the EMS Levy for 2025. What Chief Skogen would like to focus on for the upcoming budget would be to stay on top of repairs, take care of the vehicles that they have, and to stay on required maintenance that has fallen behind. He would like to slowly increase staffing to hire a 4th firefighter to ensure staffing 24/7/365.

As far as the capital reserve for fire engines and EMS vehicles, Mr. Skogen does not see a need for that in the next two years. The other funds just involve day-to-day operating costs. Lastly one request is to bring on the part-time administrative assistant to full-time, which is greatly needed to maintain the building to be open during office hours.

Parks & Recreation:

The Parks and Recreation Director Snodgrass spoke on anticipated key projects for 2025-2026 such as: Boards and Commissions, Buckley Hall, community recreation facilities, parks, senior center and youth center.

Requests that director Snodgrass is asking for is to replace the aging mower that mows larger open spaces, replacing the HVAC system before it becomes an emergency repair at Buckley Hall and youth center.

Council member Arsanto agreed now is the time to replace the mower before it gets worse. Council member Burbank asked if the HVAC systems will go out to bid and yes, they will Ms. Snodgrass answered.

Proposed Ordinance Regulating Camping in Public Spaces:

City Administrator Brunell updated the Council that the purpose of this is to present the proposed ordinance regarding camping in public parking and rights-of-way. Due to the opening of the White River Bridge Trail crossing the City is anticipating an increase in camping on public property. The Council members discussed options, and all members agreed a full ban is what they would prefer and no camping in a vehicle.

2025 Legislative Priorities:

City Administrator Brunell wanted to thank Council member Green for bringing this forward. This is providing an overview of regional legislative priorities and present an opportunity for the Council to discuss legislative priorities specific to Buckley.

Summary of 2024 legislative priorities included public safety, traffic on SR 410, and local revenue. In the memo that was included in the packet, it discussed priority issues, significant issues and support issues.

Council members Arsanto, Smith, and Bergerson all agreed and discussed they would like to see the citizens vote on the property tax and not the Council.

Council member Burbank asked Chief Skogen his thoughts on the firefighter safety and electrification response. Chief Skogen responded that he does support this and there is a need for it due to more electric vehicles and electric storage systems.

Council member Green added that he would like the Council to consider a list of their wish lists and discuss the legislative priorities further.

With nothing further, the Study Session was adjourned at 7:19 PM.



City Administrator



Mayor

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