

May 9th and 10th Council Small Group Session Questions

Q. What are the current salaries of the City's executive-level staff?

A.

Executive Staff Compensation			
Department	Position		Salary
Mayor, Council & City Clerk	City Clerk	\$	124,972.64
City Manager's Office	Assistant City Manager		192,632.96
City Manager's Office	Assistant City Manager		173,680.00
City Manager's Office	Assistant City Manager		166,738.00
City Manager's Office	Assistant City Manager		178,880.00
City Manager's Office	City manager		255,309.43
City Manager's Office	Construction Mgmt & Capital Project Director		140,608.00
City Manager's Office	Internal Audit Director		125,009.56
Marketing & Communications	Corporate Communications Director		137,800.00
Budget & Evaluation	Budget & Evaluation Director		130,000.00
City Attorney's Office	City Attorney		205,000.00
Finance	Chief Financial Officer		137,800.00
Human Resource Development	Human Resources Dev. Director		153,019.36
Human Relations	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Director		129,792.00
Information Technology	Chief Information Officer (Vacant)	120,166 - 187,459	
Police	Police Chief		166,400.00
Fire	Fire Chief		138,000.00
Development Services	Development Services Director		150,396.48
Public Services	Public Services Director		161,536.96
Parks, Recreation & Maintenance	Parks/Rec./Maint. Director		159,965.52
Economic & Community Development	Economic & Community Dev. Director		133,685.76
Airport	Airport Director (Vacant)	120,166 - 187,459	
Transit	Transit Director		135,200.00

Q. Can I see a comparison of 25 recommended personnel to 24 budgeted?

A. Yes, on page C-9 of your 2025 Recommended Budget Book.

Q. What is in the budget or taking place for the Rosehill Road sidewalk, Johnson Street, Helen Street, and the Bonnie Dune area?

A.1 The Rosehill Road sidewalk from Country Club Drive to Rosehill Road is a partially completed project and the remainder is out for bid. Bids open on May 23, 2023, and the project will take about a year to award and complete. The estimated budget is \$1.2 million.

A.2 The Rosehill Road Sidewalk near Mulranny Drive or College Lakes Elementary School is a small project to fill in the gap. They are trying to purchase the last easement to construct. The budget is \$20,000.

A.3. The Helen Street sidewalk from Stansfield Drive to Johnson Street is in the design phase. The design will be completed in January 2025, pending an easement acquisition. After the design phase and cost estimates are completed, construction funding should be provided from the GO bonds.

A.4 US 401 Country Club Drive sidewalk from Murchison Road to Ramsey Street has been awarded \$1.1 million in NCDOT LAPP funding. Once the municipal agreement is in place, the design phase will start.

A.5 Stacy Weaver Drive Sidewalk from McArthur Road to Southland Drive has been awarded \$170,000 in DOT LAPP funding. Once the municipal agreement is in place, the design phase will start.

Q. Will they start using the tennis resurfacing funds in 2025 and, if so, with which courts?

A. Yes, resurfacing will start in 2025 with Mazarick Park.

May 16th Council Work Session Questions

Q. Can we have a detailed explanation regarding sales tax revenues?

A. To be provided at a work session.

Q. What if we increased the Office of Community Safety funding by \$1.5 million?

A. That would result in a recommended \$.01 ad valorem tax increase, providing a projected \$1.54 million in funding.

Q. When will we have a status update on the stormwater tiered system?

A. Current status is that the aerial imagery collection is complete for the City. The quality control of the imagery is taking place now. They have collected surveys and identifiable photo points for ground control to utilize during the triangulation process. The next phase of the project is the Impervious Area Analysis. Information on the tiered rate structure should be available in January 2025.

Q. What is the five-year adopted budget versus the revised budget versus actuals for the police department?

A.

PD Expenditures			
	Adopted	Revised	Actual
FY2020	\$ 55,561,174	56,156,195	52,035,939
FY2021	56,151,612	57,642,100*	53,284,107
FY2022	56,504,671	62,003,659	59,916,017
FY2023	59,021,160	62,489,098	60,434,774
FY2024	66,388,213	69,697,366	N/A

*FY2021 Revised Budget value is based on FY2021 Budget Ordinance and Ordinance Amendments and is not reconciled with the FY2021 ACFR.

Q. What caused the increase in PD's Specialized Services Bureau between the FY24 and FY25 budgets?

A. Changes in the placement of personnel expenditures and increased capital outlay drove the \$7,881,594 increase between the FY2024 revised budget and the FY2025 recommended budget of the Special Services Bureau. Personnel increases in this classification are offset by a decrease in Patrol & Investigations. Capital Outlay increases are due to the addition of the In-Car Radios, Radio Upgrades & Additional Consolettes, Replacement RMS, and Public Safety Camera Replacement TIP projects into the operating budget.

A.

Specialized Services Bureau		
Expenditure Type	FY24 Revised	FY25 Recommended
Personnel Services	6,717,536	14,240,498
Operating Expenditures	1,429,842	1,252,970
Contract Services	30,033	21,219
Capital Outlay	195,746	812,284
Other Charges	7,814	-
Transfers to Other Funds	64,406	-
Total	8,445,377	16,326,971

Q. When a budget line says that it's from ARPA, does that mean it is one-time funding, and potentially this year is the last time that that dollar figure is available?

A. ARPA funds are a one-time funding source available for a limited period. Once spent they are no longer available.

Q. How were the 35 terminal vacancies determined?

A. The 35 terminal vacancies were based on the current level of vacancies and how many the City can put through their training academy in a year. The number of current police officer vacancies is 35 vacancies above the number that could be trained in a year.

Q. What is the cost of moving all officers into the step that equates to one step with one year of service? What are the salaries for each step of the new recommended step plan?

A. The estimated expense to transition 107 officers to the step corresponding to each officer's years of service amounts to approximately \$1,382,408. This would be in addition to the \$8,267,523 needed to increase Public Safety salaries to market, for a total of \$9,649,931.

Current Step Plan		Proposed Step Plan	
Step	Salary	Step	Salary
0	\$ 43,860	0	50,555
1	45,900	1	53,300
2	47,940	2	56,600
3	49,980	3	59,900
4	52,020	4	63,200
5	54,570	5	66,500
6	56,610	6	70,250
7	58,650	7	73,550
8	60,690	8	76,850
9	62,730	9	80,150
10	65,790	10	83,450

Q. What are the step plan salaries for peer-city police departments?

A. Peer cities employ different pay structures, with some utilizing multistep and lateral models while others don't employ step plans, opting instead to use salary ranges. Various job titles exist, whereas we exclusively have police officers. Efforts were made to reconcile these diverse factors to integrate them into the City's step plan.

Peer City Police Officer Salaries				
Organization	Pay Grade Minimum	Pay Grade Midpoint	Pay Grade Maximum	Employees In Position
Asheville	\$ 47,461.44	57,093.53	66,725.62	106
Cary	56,035.20	80,807.70	105,580.20	144
Charlotte	56,347.00	71,781.00	87,215.00	1,372
Concord	43,887.76	58,809.11	73,730.45	86
Cumberland County	50,750.00			
Durham	47,938.00	61,153.00	74,368.00	280
Greensboro	55,019.00	83,811.50	112,604.00	69
Greenville	48,672.00	60,673.60	72,675.20	75
Raleigh	50,301.00	64,046.00	77,791.00	195
Wilmington	47,196.24	61,359.48	75,522.72	138
Winston-Salem	52,500.00	76,389.62	100,279.24	51
Fayetteville	43,860.00	54,825.00	65,790.00	287

Q. How much would a 3% raise be compared to the proposed 4% raise? What if there was a one-time \$1000 end-of-year bonus with a 2.5% increase?

A.

Full Step Increase						
Percentage of Midpoint Salary	Salary	1% increase of 401k	Step Increase	Total	Change from Recommended	
4% (Recommended)	\$2,669,011	516,581	1,375,908	4,561,500	0.0%	
3%	2,001,758	511,415	1,375,908	3,889,081	-14.7%	
2%	1,334,506	506,249	1,375,908	3,216,663	-29.5%	
1%	667,253	501,084	1,375,908	2,544,244	-44.2%	

Half Step Increase						
Percentage of Midpoint Salary	Salary	1% increase of 401k	Step Increase	Total	Change from Recommended	
4%	\$2,669,011	516,581	687,954	3,873,546	-15.1%	
3%	2,001,758	511,415	687,954	3,201,127	-29.8%	
2%	1,334,506	506,249	687,954	2,528,709	-44.6%	
1%	667,253	501,084	687,954	1,856,290	-59.3%	

\$1000 Bonus + Full Step						
Percentage of Midpoint Salary	Salary	1% increase of 401k	Step Increase	Bonus	Total	Change from Recommended
4%	\$2,669,011	567,401	1,375,908	2,088,702	6,701,022	46.9%
3%	2,001,758	612,547	1,375,908	2,088,702	6,078,915	33.3%
2%	1,334,506	606,873	1,375,908	2,088,702	5,405,988	18.5%
1%	667,253	601,199	1,375,908	2,088,702	4,733,062	3.8%

\$1000 Bonus + Half Step						
Percentage of Midpoint Salary	Salary	1% increase of 401k	Step Increase	Bonus	Total	Change from Recommended
4%	\$2,669,011	567,401	687,954	2,088,702	6,013,068	31.8%
3%	2,001,758	612,547	687,954	2,088,702	5,390,961	18.2%
2%	1,334,506	606,873	687,954	2,088,702	4,718,034	3.4%
1%	667,253	601,199	687,954	2,088,702	4,045,108	-11.3%

Q. *How much fund balance was used in FY23?*

A. No General Fund fund balance was used in 2023. There was fund balance budgeted to be utilized in the 2023 budget. Due to actual revenues exceeding budgeted revenues, and budgeted expenditures exceeding actual revenues, there was no need to use fund balance as projected.

Q. *What made up the FY23 police designations to FY 24?*

A. To be answered later. The staff is working on providing the information.

Q. *How much communication/networking budget do we spend annually and with whom, what companies: Radio, Newspapers, Digital news, etc?*

A. To be answered later. The staff is working on providing the information.

Q. *When will we have an update on potential subscription fees for loose leaves and yard waste?*

A. To be answered later. The staff is working on providing the information.

Q. *Of the Community Safety grant, how much was allocated to the Office of Community Safety activities, and which department handled the funding?*

A. To be answered later. The staff is working on providing the information.

Q. *Can we have information regarding the water and sewer extension to Johnson Street and the Bonnie Doone area?*

A. To be answered later. The staff is working on providing the information.

May 20th Council Work Session Questions

Q. What made up the FY23 police encumbrance carry-forwards to FY24?

A.

General Fund	
Expenditures	
Description	Amount
Data Connectivity	\$ 1,016
Equipment - Motor Vehicles	2,263,670
Equipment - Maintenance	46,282
Medical Services	6,865
Other Contract Services	68,548
Other Equipment	12,336
Small Equipment - Not Computer	12,249
Software License - Data Storage	5,965
Supplies	68,522
Telephone	14,200
Travel, Training & Conferences	1,365
Uniform Rentals	6,514
Utilities	220
Vehicle Expenditure - Other	127,346
Vehicle Fuel	79,089
Total	\$ 2,714,187

E-911	
Expenditures	
Description	Amount
Equipment – Other	\$ 205,617
Office Equipment	403,775
Total	\$ 609,392
Grand Total	\$ 3,323,579

Q. When will we have an update on potential subscription fees for loose leaves and yard waste?

A. Staff are working on a potential subscription fee program design. This is anticipated to return to a work session for discussion.

Q. Can ARPA funding be used for Alternate Response? Can ARPA funding fund the Office of Community Safety until the revaluation? How can we ensure these funds are designated for the Office of Community Safety?

A. Certain aspects of the Office of Community Safety may be eligible for ARPA funding. Because all of the funding has been allocated for ARPA, other projects would have to be reduced to provide sufficient funding. Also, the ARPA funding would have to be allocated by 12/31/2024. If the Council desires to reallocate ARPA funding, staff must work on a plan and strategy to remain compliant.

Additionally, the City Council has full budgetary control. If the City Council appropriates funds for an Office of Community Safety, staff is legally obligated to use that funding as outlined in the City Council's adopted budget ordinance.

Q. What are the potential cost implications of outsourcing 911 calls to the County? What impacts might arise from transferring 911 services to the County?

A. Cost will be based on the County's proposal, which we have not received.

Q. What are the expenditures for the Central Business Tax District Fund? Can we reduce the tax increase from \$0.221 to \$0.15?

A. If the recommended tax rate is lowered to \$0.15, fund expenditures would need to be reduced by \$92,162 of a subsidy from the general fund.

Central Business Tax District Fund	
Expenditures	
Description	Amount
Utilities	\$ 16,299
Stormwater Fees	7,776
Credit Card Fees & Miscellaneous Expenses	5,141
Ambassador Program	60,000
MSD Management	234,898
Total	\$ 324,114

Q. Is the Parking Fund self-sustaining? If not, how much is the General Fund subsidizing?

A. In FY 2024, the parking fund is budgeted for a general fund transfer of \$494,858. The general fund is budgeted to for a parking fund transfer of \$158,726. The parking fund also included debt service of \$127,518. For the FY 2025 recommended, no transfers out of the parking fund or budgeted debt service exist. For FY 2025, the parking fund operating subsidy is \$25,839.

Q. What are peer city municipal tax rates?

A.

Ten Largest NC Municipalities Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Ad Valorem Tax Rates							
Municipality	Population (State Demographer 2023 Certified Estimate)	Last Year of Reappraisal	2023 Sales Assess- ment Ratio	Proposed Tax Rate	Effective Rate	Annual Equivalent Cost based on \$100,000 Home	Rank (Low to High)
Charlotte	894,866	2,023	0.9661	0.2754	0.2661	266	1
Raleigh	476,401	2,024	1.0000	0.3550	0.3550	355	5
Greensboro	301,532	2,022	0.8495	0.6725	0.5713	571	9
Durham	292,939	2,019	0.7664	0.5962	0.4569	457	7
Winston-Salem	254,200	2,021	0.7007	0.6610	0.4632	463	8
Fayetteville	213,032	2,017	0.6411	0.5895	0.3779	378	6
Cary	180,367	2,024	1.0000	0.3250	0.3250	325	4
Wilmington	121,309	2,021	0.7036	0.4225	0.2973	297	2
High Point	116,589	2,023	0.9851	0.6475	0.6379	638	10
Concord	110,886	2,020	0.6279	0.4800	0.3014	301	3
Top Ten Average		2,021		0.5025		405	
Top Ten Median		2,022		0.5348		366	

Q. Each year, the City Council appropriates funding for various projects across the organization. Please send a total of unused funds across all departments, including Enterprise Funds.

A. The year-end projection considers the estimated expenditures. At the end of the fiscal year, through the audit process, the actual revenue and expenditures will determine the usage of or contribution to the fund balance. In addition, during the year-end process, capital projects are closed, and the remaining funding is made available for the following year's CIP or is used by City Council capital project ordinance amendment to fund current projects that require additional funding.

The recommended budget includes using the \$1,574,523 general fund balance for 1x items, including funding for transit routes during the equity study, equipment, and other costs.

Q. *Can the vacancy savings from the unfilled police officer positions be used to fund the additional \$1,382,408 to align police officers' years of service and steps?*

A. The recommended budget recognizes about \$2.5 million from 35 "frozen," terminally vacant police positions. To fund the additional \$ 1.4 million, 19 positions would need to be frozen. In addition, the remaining vacancy savings above \$2.5 million have been included in the recommended budget as a cost reduction.

Q. *How much of the general fund balance is available if the City Council maintains the 10% policy and not the 12% goal? Could that money also be used to fund the compression and step plan?*

A. The difference as of June 30, 2024, is \$4.2 million. This funding may be used for any lawful purpose; however, the use of the fund balance is a one-time revenue source. Using fund balance to fund salaries and ongoing operations causes a structural imbalance in the budget. In addition, when the City filed its last audit, the LGC use of the fund balance indicator showed use in FY 2023. The primary concern of the LGC is when a local government uses fund balance for ongoing operations, which indicates insufficient revenues to fund the operations.

Q. *Of the Community Safety grants, how much was allocated to the Office of Community Safety activities, and which department handled the funding?*

A. Staff is working on gathering the requested information.

Q. *Can we have information regarding the water and sewer extension to Johnson Street and the Bonnie Doone area?*

A. Water Engineering at PWC is currently working on gathering the requested information.

Q. *How much communication/networking budget do we spend annually, and with whom, what companies: radio, Newspapers, Digital news, etc.?*

A. Staff is working on gathering the requested information.

Q. How much does the City pay for its security officers at City Hall? Can they be used anywhere else where police officers are short-staffed (SRO, etc.)? How much does Ft. Liberty pay its entrance gate contractors? Can they also be an alternative for where we have a shortage of officers?

A. Rough Rider is the company that provides security for City Hall. Armed security guards are paid \$31/ hour. The civilian security personnel at Ft. Liberty are federally contracted DoD civilians. This means that each employee is an independent contractor rather than contracted out through a company. Their pay varies between individuals based on qualifications, experience, etc.

Staff are researching the remainder of this question.