

BEMIDJI CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Agenda

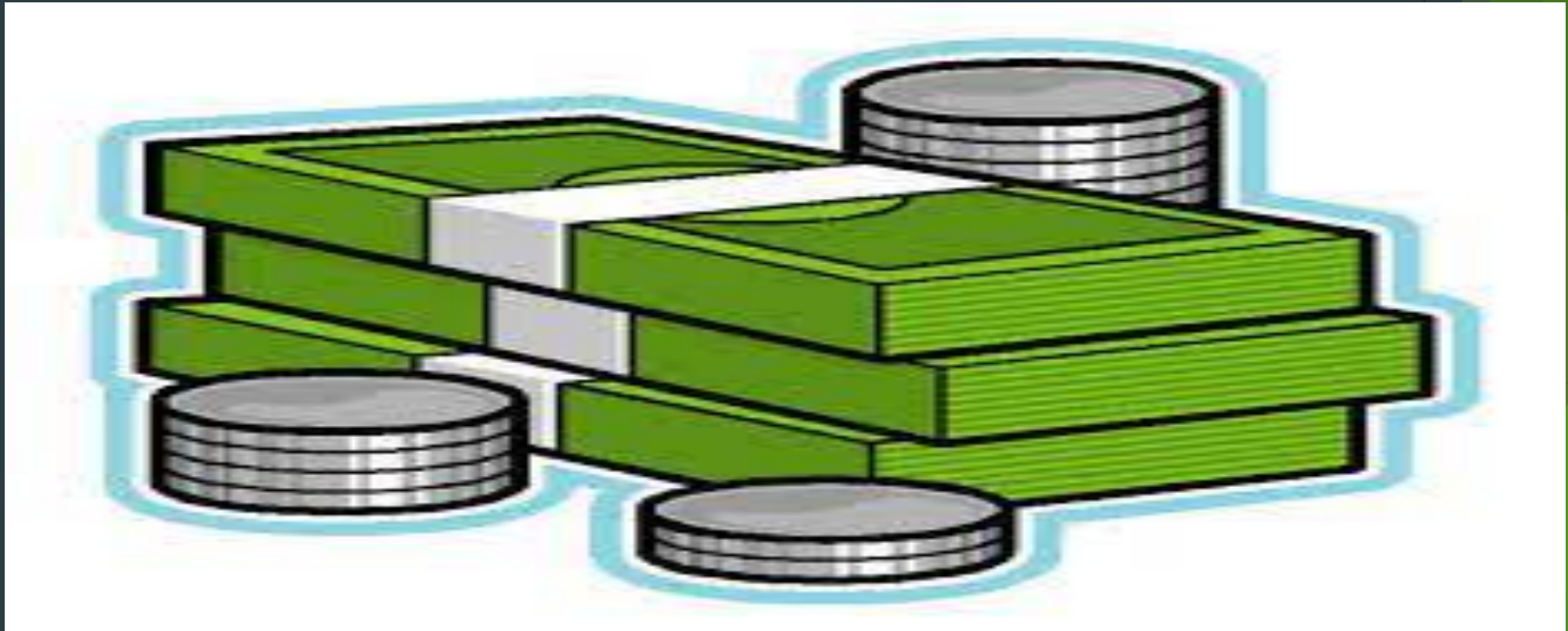
Monday, May 22, 2023

**City Hall
317 4th Street NW
5:30 P.M.**



1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL
2. 2024 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP)
3. ADJOURN

2024 Initial Budget Discussion



Introduction

- ▶ Review 2024 personnel, operational and capital issues
 - ▶ Department heads met twice to prioritize/discuss
- ▶ No decisions necessary now
 - ▶ Time to process/get updated information - July next mtg
- ▶ **Difficult decisions ahead - prioritize!**
 - ▶ Department narratives include more detail
 - ▶ Several repeat issues from previous years - capital & inflation
 - ▶ **Deferred capital maintenance** is a growing challenge for City
 - ▶ Not funding creates larger future financial commitment
- ▶ Budget is fluid/flexible document
 - ▶ Always new information and modifications

Required Personnel Costs

- ▶ **Staff recruitment/retention/workload needs addressing**
- ▶ Increases related to existing staff and union contract terms
 - ▶ \$342,000 - Cost of living/Step increases
 - ▶ \$ 52,000 - Payroll taxes/Retirement (FICA & PERA)
 - ▶ \$128,000 - Fringe Benefits - insurance costs (2023 underestimated)
 - ▶ \$ 67,000 - Increased workers compensation premiums
 - ▶ **\$589,000 - TOTAL - 8% levy increase**
- ▶ Asst Manager/Comm Dev Director included in personnel costs
 - ▶ Addressed in subsequent slide

Personnel issues in priority order

- ▶ Job study results - report due this week **\$465,000**
 - ▶ Recommend implement in 2023
 - ▶ Results indicate 6% market increase
- ▶ Drug Task Force Officer - Hire 7/1/2024 - **\$49,000**
- ▶ Fire Dept staffing - long term goal of 7 additional full time
 - ▶ 42% cost shared with Rural Fire Association
 - ▶ Included in other new revenue
 - ▶ For 2024 - hire 2 full-time **\$170,000**

Personnel issues - Continued

- ▶ Parks & Recreation staff - **\$90,000**
 - ▶ Parks Maintenance and Recreation outreach positions
- ▶ Legal assistant - **\$87,000**
 - ▶ Position depends on Victim Assistant Grant
 - ▶ Attorney versus legal assistant
 - ▶ Number of misdemeanor prosecution cases handled
 - ▶ See department narrative
- ▶ Other positions/costs
 - ▶ See department narratives

Critical Operational Issues

- ▶ \$120,000 - 4% inflationary increase for non-personnel costs
- ▶ \$125,000 - Law Enforcement dispatch services - **new**
- ▶ \$ 75,000 - Law Enforcement Center capital costs - **new**
 - ▶ Preliminary amounts - June/July to finalize
- ▶ \$200,000 - JPB dissolution and related cost increases
 - ▶ Maintain staff levels - current deficit budget
- ▶ \$ 20,000 - County IT/Assessing/Police IT increases
- ▶ \$ 5,000 - Public Works Bond payment change

Critical Operational Issues

- ▶ \$ 42,000 - Increased City Hall/Public Works Bldg costs
 - ▶ Capital and operations
- ▶ _____
- ▶ \$587,000 - Total critical operational increases - **8% levy increase**

Important operational issues

- ▶ \$20,000 - City code codification - last completed in 2006
- ▶ \$20,000 - City pay plan update for union negotiations
- ▶ \$50,000 - JPB Planning & Zoning ordinance update
- ▶ \$20,000 - Seasonal wage levels

Capital Issues - repeats from previous years

- ▶ Sanford Center upgrades/maintenance - \$800K
- ▶ Park Improvement/Maintenance - \$175K
- ▶ Proactive City Building Maintenance - \$250K
- ▶ Street reconstruction - \$250K
 - ▶ Currently at \$385K annually for 150 year street rotation
 - ▶ Inflationary impacts & unfunded projects
- ▶ All of above issues are REGIONAL assets utilized by many
 - ▶ Funding option is sales and/or special use tax
- ▶ Increase in 5 year equipment requests - \$260,000
 - ▶ Inflation and more police, streets and park equipment needs

Capital Issues - continued

- ▶ New City Hall/Fire Station funding
- ▶ Railroad Corridor
- ▶ Future of Neilson Reise Arena - Demo or repurpose
- ▶ Fire Station # 1 upgrade - office space and structural
- ▶ Lakeview Liquor upgrades
 - ▶ Cooler replacement and building needs
- ▶ Tourist Information Center upgrades - \$350,000
 - ▶ Restroom and Building upgrades
- ▶ Beltrami County Historic Depot - \$80K to \$100K

Prioritized Capital issues

- ▶ \$260,000 - Increased 5 year average equipment requests
 - ▶ Inflation impact and additional equipment

Previously discussed Capital Issues

- ▶ \$ 175,000 - Annual park improvement/maintenance funding
- ▶ \$ 250,000 - Annual street reconstruction increased funding
- ▶ \$ 250,000 - Proactive building maintenance funding
- ▶ \$ 800,000 - Sanford Center (any operations savings to capital)
- ▶ \$1,475,000 - Total (listed on last slide)

2024 Revenue Increases

▶ One time Public Safety Aid (waiting)	\$ _____
▶ LGA Increase (waiting for info)	\$ _____
▶ Northern Township Revenue Sharing	\$ 28,000
▶ Various other line items - adjust to actual	<u>\$ 273,000</u>
▶ Includes increased Rural Fire contribution	
TOTAL	\$301,000

2024 potential expense changes

▶ Personnel Costs - Required	\$589,000
▶ Implement Job study results	\$465,000
▶ Final report out shortly = to 6% market increase	
▶ Additional staff	\$396,000
▶ Drug Task Force, Parks & Rec, Fire, Legal assistant	
▶ Remove Asst City Mgr/Comm Dev Director	\$(130,000)
▶ Critical Operational cost increases	\$587,000
▶ Law Enforcement Lease ends	\$(200,000)
▶ Prioritized Capital equipment increases	<u>\$260,000</u>
▶ TOTAL	\$1,967,000

Summary

- ▶ New revenue \$ 301,000
- ▶ Increased recommended expenses \$1,967,000
- ▶ Shortfall \$1,666,000

- ▶ If no cuts or new revenue, equates to **22% levy increase**
 - ▶ Doesn't fund several important issues
 - ▶ Tax increase on average home (\$193,000) = \$170/yr
 - ▶ Tax increase on average business (\$401,000) = \$711/yr

- ▶ Special use tax to fund regional assets/services - \$1,475,000
 - ▶ Funding for parks, streets, building maintenance including Sanford Center

- ▶ Questions/comments

MEMORANDUM



TO: City Council
FROM: Finance Director
DATE: May 22, 2023
RE: 2024 Finance Department Requests

Personnel – Finance staff levels have been constant for nearly 20 years. In order to remain constant during this time, we automated functions including utility billing, payroll and accounts payable direct deposit, utility customer auto pay and later this year, timesheet processing. Despite the automation, there is a need for part time assistance, particularly in the payroll processing area. The accountant position is currently performing these duties and could do higher level work, particularly grant administration and monthly accounting procedures.

There will be finance staff retirements in the near future. It would be beneficial to have “overlap” between departing staff and their replacement. By this I mean having the departing employee work with their replacement for a period of time, on a part time basis, for training purposes. I would characterize this transition expense as a one-time cost well worth the investment.

Operations – Similar to other departments, non-personnel expenses have increased. Professional services, such as audit fees and software support costs are a large part (65%) of the Finance Department non-personnel operating budget. These services typically have annual inflationary increases.

Capital – The primary capital need for finance is updating financial software to a more current version including going to cloud based operations. This cost of \$70,000 is included in the 5 year capital improvement program.

MEMORANDUM



TO: Ron Eishens, Finance Director
FROM: Katie Nolting, Bemidji City Attorney
DATE: May 3, 2023
RE: 2024 City Attorney Budget Needs and Requests

The needs of the Bemidji City Attorney's Office for 2024 are focused on personnel to meet the large case loads currently experienced in both the criminal and civil divisions.

CRIMINAL DIVISION REQUEST

The Criminal Division of the City Attorney's Office consists of two full time criminal attorneys and a paralegal. In July of 2022, at the Council Work Session on the City Attorney's Office, it was projected that the Criminal Division would handle 2,132 cases in 2022. In reality, the Criminal Division in 2022 handled 2,879 cases, with over 780 of those cases having victims (approximately 30%), most of which are victims of assault and theft. As a reminder, the Guidelines per the National District Attorney's Association from 2002 is for a prosecutor to handle 400 misdemeanor cases a year.

With the large volume of cases the office handles, we have one paralegal who is responsible for opening the files, answering phone calls, downloading all of the body camera and other videos, preparing evidence for trials and contested hearings, answering discovery requests, keeping victims notified as to the process and progress of his/her case, filing documents with the Court, coordinating witnesses, just to list of few job requirements.

The City has submitted a grant application for a Victim Services Coordinator through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. If the grant is received, this would allow the City to hire a Victim Services Coordinator to assist with community outreach and prosecution of cases. This position would relieve some of the duties of the paralegal, as the Victim Services Coordinator would be able to handle and work with any file that has a victim.

If, however, the City is not awarded the grant, the need for a Legal Assistant is still there. At this time, when our Paralegal is out of the office, all of the attorneys in the City Attorney's Office step up to fill in the gaps of opening files, downloading videos, and sending out discovery. While the attorneys are more than willing to help, the time taken to fill the support role takes away from other legal work that could be done, such as reviewing and charging out crimes. Even with our Paralegal in the office, a legal assistant would be beneficial to allow our Paralegal to do more advanced work, such as assisting in drafting complaints, plea petitions, and other legal documents.

The cost of a legal assistant is \$87,000 including benefits.

CIVIL DIVISION REQUEST

The Civil Division of the Bemidji City Attorney's Office has historically been just the City Attorney. For approximately 2 years prior to Al's retirement there was 1 ½ attorneys doing civil work. Since that time, the work load of this division has grown. From data requests, personnel issues, and complicated legal work on various projects, the need for a second civil attorney is strong. To be able to respond to all the City departments, the Council, Airport Authority, Charter Commission, and all the boards and commissions of the City on legal issues in a timely manner, a second civil attorney is needed.

The cost of adding another attorney to the Legal Department is \$127,000 including benefits.



Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Vision Statement

Bemidji sets the standard as an award-winning leader in parks and recreation. Our parks and trails will reflect our natural resources with innovative, high quality and thoughtfully designed facilities and programs that will sustainably improve the health and vitality of the community. Programs will focus on fun, healthy and inclusive activities that are accessible to the entire Bemidji region and beyond, delivered through broad and diverse collaboration.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Bemidji Parks and Recreation Department is to improve quality of life by connecting everyone to healthy activities and natural places.

Priorities

Strategic planning – Support the Commission’s initiatives. Identify priorities and barriers to participation and use in the Parks, Recreation and Trails System. Implementation of initiatives/priorities additional **175,000 in capital improvement fund annually. Funds would be used for improvements and match for grants**

Staffing Needs for Parks and Recreation Department – 2FT \$90,0000

Recreation Programming staff needs -Recruit and retain staff – matching with programming demands and community needs. Public outreach and creating partnerships was identified as a continued need in the Strategic Plan. With the move to the Carnegie and shifting of duties, needs for additional staff to support outreach and partnership. The full-time support staff’s focus would be on outreach to ensure all inclusivity, social media, creating/sustaining partnerships and volunteer recruitment.

Parks Staffing needs –2024 – with increased trail construction 1.5 miles added in 2023 (additional planned for 2024/2025, additional park and safety/access concerns as identified in the Strategic plan; Staff (turn-over) identified the need for additional Parks Maintenance Staff.

Tourist Information Center – Staffing and Operation. Generating a revenue stream to fund the staffing of the center to promote tourism and meet needs of the community. Hire/recruit and retain staff both full-time and seasonal. Remodel projects for revenue/improved operations. Larger remodel to meet the park users and use within the center -long term. **Estimated Cost for remodeling the restrooms and tourist center area: \$300,000 to \$400,000.**

Parks Department Equipment and Supply Storage Space. The Parks Department parks many of the seasonal vehicles and some equipment outside year round due to lack of storage space. Additional space is needed. Options for better utilization of the mezzanine for supplies at the Parks Shop in Public Works if additional space is made available at the Carnegie. Additional Storage Building is needed at the Public Works or other Park Area.

Forestry – continue tree inventory in order to establish proper maintenance/care of urban forest including boulevard trees. Increase forestry operational budget – additional planting, and equipment related to maintenance, care and EAB. **Cost: \$5,000 - \$10,000.**

Neilson Reise Arena – **Council determine future plans.** Continue to maintain shuttered building/heat/maintenance as change in use impacts site and leased spaced to the Curling Club. Based on Preliminary Feasibility Study (2022) **Renovate building costs range: 1.1 M to 4.5M**

Bemidji Police Department
Chief Mike Mastin
Policechief@ci.bemidji.mn.us



MEMORANDUM

To: Nate Mathews, City Manager
Ron Eischens, City Finance Director
From: Mike Mastin, Chief of Police
Date: March 15th, 2023
Re: 2024 Police Department Budget needs.

Aside from the capital needs already identified in the current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the following items /ideas are needs of the Bemidji Police Department.

Wages and POST retirement Healthcare –

- Bemidji Police Officers handle more than 1200 calls each per year, which is more than all but one of our comparable cities. This is a direct result of Bemidji being the regional hub for services, retail, education, health care and the list goes on. The Bemidji Police Department wages are 24.9% lower than the average wage of our comparable cities. This is a deterrent to convincing new officers to apply here and to convince current officers to stay when all of the surrounding agencies pay more and have less calls. Our City needs to increase our current pay scale by more than 25% to attract and retain officers in this very competitive market. A 25% budget increase would be approximately \$730,000.
- Post-retirement health insurance for licensed officers who retire from the Bemidji Police Department at 55 years of age would be a significant recruitment and retention strategy that would absolutely set Bemidji Police Department apart from most of our statewide competition. Currently, this type of post-retirement healthcare is offered to all State of Minnesota law enforcement agencies through their collective bargaining contracts. It is important to ensure the physical and mental health of our officers while they are working for our city but, we must also recognize that this profession has a very high rate of heart disease, depression and other medical or mental health illnesses such as PTSD that affect our officers far beyond their years of service to our communities. Depending on the years of service required for this benefit (15 years Vs. 20 years) the first officer may not be eligible until 2025. After 2025, the number eligible increases by 2 or 3 officers per year until it reaches a maximum number of officers (16) in the year 2036. The current annual health Insurance cost per officer is currently \$7000.
- The City of Bemidji needs to recognize the numerous benefits of this post-retirement health insurance. One issue with a lack of retention is the cost of a

new officer and the added stress put on our training officers. Our department has 34 licensed peace officers. Since 2018 we have hired and trained twenty-five (25) officers. Sixteen (16) of those officers still work for our department today. That means that nine (9) officers were equipped and trained at a cost of approximately \$90,000 each however, they either could not complete field training or left to work for other agencies in less than four (4) years. The lack of retention has cost the city nearly \$810,000 or \$202,500.00 per year.

Drug Task Force Officer

- The increased occurrences of violence in the city may be attributed to increase in drug use and sales. Our city has experienced an increasingly egregious number of opioid overdoses over the last 5 years. In total, the Bemidji police Department has responded to 173 overdoses. Sixteen of those overdoses resulted in fatalities. The department seeks to add (hire) one full-time licensed officer who will be assigned to work drug and violent crimes as a part of the Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force. Arrangements are already in place for financial assistance from the federal government for overtime and vehicles expenses.

K-9 Program - scent detection and tracking (NOT apprehension -Bite)

- The City of Bemidji and surrounding communities have experienced an exponential increase in drug sales and drug trafficking. The Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force, of which have one officer as a member, was seen a significant increase in the number of cases and quantity of illegal drugs being transported into and through our community. The amount of heroin and fentanyl seized by the PBTF has increased by 409% while seizures of methamphetamine have increased nearly 1200%. These numbers are astonishing but, unfortunately these seizures only represent a small portion of the total amount of illegal narcotics that come to our community. Our patrol officers also work very hard to locate illegal drugs while performing their routine tasks. However, their success in locating illegal narcotics would drastically improve through the use of a K-9 and handler trained to find narcotics.
- The Bemidji Police Department receives nearly 200 missing / runaway reports annually. When available and appropriate the K-9 and handler would be able to conduct ground searches much faster and effectively than just an individual officer.
- The Bemidji Police department is currently seeking grant funding to support the K-9 program. The estimated start-up cost is \$92,000 with an annual cost thereafter of \$10,000

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Paul Bunyan", written in a cursive style.



BEMIDJI FIRE DEPARTMENT

318 5th Street NW • Bemidji, MN 56601 • 218-751-8001

Justin M. Sherwood
Fire Chief
firechief@ci.bemidji.mn.us

Michael K. Yavarow, Jr
Deputy Fire Chief
firecode@ci.bemidji.mn.us

2024 Fire Department Budget Request

1. Staffing: Full-time/Paid Firefighters

Bemidji Fire Department Administration requests hiring additional career staff for the 2024 Budget Year. Since 2005, Bemidji Fire Department Career Staff has stayed the same. Under the current staffing model, two members are scheduled each day. Bemidji Fire Department can guarantee a daily minimum staffing level of one.

Our request to add staffing is based on data related to firefighter safety, fire prevention, enforcement needs, response times, and recruitment/retention issues with paid on-call firefighters. A growing protection area and a dramatic increase in emergency calls back this data. Seven additional firefighters are desired to meet the NFPA 1500, NFPA 1710, and OSHA safety standards. Fire Department leadership understands the financial burden of this request. We request that a strategic hiring plan be implemented to work toward meeting our staffing needs.

Options to consider:

1. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire seven career firefighters to meet NFPA/OSHA staffing levels.
2. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire four career firefighters to begin working towards meeting safety standards. Additional staff will be hired at a time to be determined.
3. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire two firefighters annually until the desired staffing level is met.
4. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire two firefighters every other year until the desired staffing level is met.
5. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire two “full-time” and two “part-time” firefighters. Additional staff will be added at a later date.
6. In 2024, the City of Bemidji will hire four “part-time” firefighters to promote these positions to “Full-Time” within two years. Additional staff to be added at a later date.

2. Create a Training Officer Position – Career

A Fire Department Training Officer performs highly skilled professional work planning, coordinating, and directing classroom orientation and specialized practical training for firefighter recruits and fire department employees. This position coordinates the day-to-day operations of the fire department training plan, weekly and monthly training, and our facility. They must assist in maintaining national and state certifications of our members.

- Currently a Paid On-Call Job Description – Created in 2010
- A Career Firefighter currently holds the position
- No additional staff required – Internal posting – Application Period
- Pay increase – determined by a job study.



City Engineer/DPW's Office

2024 Public Works Department Budget

Background:

The Public Works Department is comprised of the streets department, water/sewer/refuse departments, wastewater department, engineering department, and GIS (Geographic Information System) department. GIS was placed under the City Engineer/DPW as of November 2022 from what was previously directly under the City Manager.

Personnel/Staffing:

Streets, water/sewer/refuse, wastewater, and engineering departments are currently staffed at appropriate levels. Additional staff were hired in anticipation of the 3rd and final phase of annexation from Anne Street NW to Lakewood Drive NW, but those positions have been filled and are currently budgeted moving forward.

The GIS department currently has one (1) full-time employee in the department, our GIS coordinator, Brett Case. Roughly 5 years ago, a part-time GIS Specialist position was created to assist with a number of tasks including maintaining our current GIS system, with layers related to water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater which is heavily used by city staff and the public, along with other department mapping requests and GPS survey field work.

The City was fortunate to have had the position filled by, at the time, a recent retiree from Beltrami County's GIS department, Jane Mueller, who had decades of experience and was integral in getting some backlogged tasks completed. With Jane's formal retirement from the position, staff have evaluated the position and are recommending that Council consider increasing the current GIS Specialist part-time position to a full-time benefitted position. I've attached a request document from Brett Case with additional information as well.

Summary of staffing: Consider funding the increase of a current part-time GIS Specialist position to a full-time position. Estimated cost to increase would be roughly \$53,000 annually.

Operational Costs:

The general theme this year is "inflation" for all departments. Everything from chemicals required for wastewater and water treatment to street infrastructure costs to other operational budgets.

An example is this note I received from our Wastewater Superintendent, Marty Katzenmeyer, about future chemical cost increases.

"The biggest Operations expense issue I am seeing is our increase in chemical costs. Our primary expense is for aluminum sulfate, which is used to remove phosphorous and keep us within our effluent discharge limits. With 3 price increases over the past 12 months, we have gone from \$452.50 to \$624/Dry Ton – a 37.9% increase. I don't have all of the 2021 data, but we should have been in the \$145k range. For 2023 I estimate we will spend \$200k for alum, a \$55k increase."

This is a good example of just one item that we've seen these increases on and will be a challenge to absorb these costs over time into our regular operating budgets. A utility rate study will need to be on the horizon in the next few years to ensure we can cover the operating costs of the new water treatment plant expansion and wastewater treatment plant final clarifier project, once they are both online.

Unmet Capital Needs:

Annual Street Renewal Program Funding

Construction costs have increased roughly 25-30% over the past couple years and closer to 40-50% over the past 6 years. This has required the amount of street reconstruction we complete on a yearly basis to decline to a point that we are closer to a 150-year street renewal program from what was closer to 100-year rotation or less. That means that if a street is reconstructed this year, it's not going to be touched again for another roughly 150 years.

The current levy amount for street improvements is \$385,000. That number was reduced from \$425,000 a few years ago and special assessment amounts were increased from \$38/LF to \$45/LF of street frontage to try and cover the difference. A typical 1 mile curb & gutter street getting reconstructed, for every \$5 you increase the special assessment amount it equates to roughly \$30,000 in total assessments. On average we've relied on roughly \$200,000-250,000 annually in Construction Reserves funding to provide gap financing to supplement the program. Those Construction Reserves dollars are mostly used up and can't be relied upon moving forward.

Council should be looking to increase the levy allotment for the street renewal program to make up for the Construction Reserves (\$200K-\$250K) gap in the short-term and work out an annual increase plan to get the total levy amount double what currently exists today.

Additional Unmet Capital Needs:

- Downtown Reconstruction Study
- TH 197 Light Pole Replacement
- Alley Paving Program Designated Funding
- Additional Cold Storage (Refuse, PW, possible Police)

GIS (Geographic Information System) Department Request

Move the existing GIS Specialist position from half time to full time.

History

The GIS Specialist position was created as a half time, no benefits, position 5 years ago. This position has been used heavily for routine tasks of maintaining very detailed water, sewer and stormwater layers in GIS, mapping requests and GPS field work. Which allowed the GIS Coordinator time and opportunity to advance the City GIS to the level that it is today. GIS has expanded to the point where it warrants a full-time position to keep up the current level of service and to handle the increasing demand for GIS services.

This position was held by Jane Mueller. The City was fortunate to have Jane as she was already in retirement from the County GIS Director position and her income had to stay below a certain level. Jane also had a masters degree and years of experience which allowed the City to have a highly skilled employee at a low rate of pay. Her departure has created a void for, and an opportunity to obtain, a skilled fulltime GIS Specialist.

Tasks this person will assume and/or assist with:

Continued upkeep of Water/Sewer/Stormwater GIS layers.

Gathering utility infrastructure points with GPS (valves, catch basins, manholes, etc.)

Lead/copper water service inventory management. Recently mandated by the State.

Continued development of GIS as the tool for Water/sewer/stormwater maintenance tracking. (hydrant flushing, sewer line televising/flushing, valve exercising)

Continued work with the Parks department using GIS as a Park maintenance tracker. (tree planting/cutting, electrical pedestals, emerald ash borer tree inventory)

Public Arts Committee art inventory and Art web app.

Rental app used by Law Enforcement and Building Dept

E911 addressing

Mapping of Property lines, Right-Of-Ways, Easements and Street Vacations.

If Council members need more clarification or would like to see a demo of how GIS is being used, please contact:

Brett Case GIS Coordinator.

Email: brettcase@ci.bemidji.mn.us

Phone: 759-3595

Or come out to my office at the Public Works Building



Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board City of Bemidji Northern Township

317 4th Street NW Bemidji, MN 56601 Office (218) 759-3579 Fax (218) 759-3591

The basic purpose of the Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance is to ensure public health, safety, and general welfare in accordance with Greater Bemidji Area's Comprehensive Plan, and with adopted development goals, policies and proposals contained therein. The Ordinance has been adopted by the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board and is enforced through the Joint Planning Office.

2024 Budget Needs

As the Council is aware, the JPB is in the process of dissolving by either the end of 2023 or sometime in 2024 which presents some budgeting challenges going forward. The budget shortfall will be in the range of \$200,000 for the 2024 budget year if the dissolution is completed by then. This will be due to the unfunded Compliance Inspector & Site Analyst position along with permit fees and funding no longer coming from Northern Township. The budget needs are to keep current staffing levels and not a request to add any additional staff or capital improvements.

Other notable challenges to consider will be the updating of the Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan when the planning & zoning department come under just the City of Bemidji, as this could require outside consultant help due to current staff workloads. The JPB/City Planning Department plays a vital role in any development within the City. It cannot be understated enough on the importance of keeping our staff intact going forward. The JPB/City Planning Department is the 'tip of the spear' so to say when it comes to any projects/developments of any kind within the City. Additionally, enforcement of the Ordinance is critical in keeping the safety, general welfare, and public health of the citizens of Bemidji.

Thank you,

Jamin Carlson
JPB Planning Director