

[Subscribe to List](#)[View Past Issues](#)[RSS](#)[translate](#)

+1



Like

C

Update on the budget, the Agenda and on the horizon.



Dear neighbors,

This week much of the Council's focus will be on the City's budget, as we vote to amend and approve the City Administrator's proposed budget. Underlying all of the discussion at Council will be two considerations:

1) The proposed budget represents a hold-steady state. The City's revenues increased slightly over the past two years, so the available funds have not been severely impacted by decisions taken outside Ann Arbor (in Lansing and Washington). However, funding for some programs and activities has decreased, while demand has increased.

2) Because there's a sense that the next year won't be as bad as the City staff thought last year (the City approves an annual budget, but plans in two-year cycles; this is the second year of the current two-year cycle) the Council will have to decide whether to be optimistic (spending fund balance in the hope that additional funds will appear), pessimistic (putting all the funds possible into savings -- i.e., into the fund balance), or realistic (using fund balances judiciously for one-time projects but not for recurring expenses).

Safety Services:

Both Jane Lumm and Margie Teall have resolutions drafted to increase the number of fire staff from 82 to 88. Both use General Fund dollars (using the fund balance) to pay for these positions. Both anticipate that the City will receive funding from grants and from the State that will offset at least some of the costs (estimate is \$477,594). Neither proposes that these funds (State funds and possible grants) will provide a complete offset for this or any subsequent year. Council member Lumm proposes offsetting any shortfall with funds from the General Fund, by amending the budget to take funds from the High Speed Rail Match.

Please note that, if the City receives grant funding to cover the cost of additional fire fighters, with or without either of these amendments the City will hire more staff. If the State increases its fire protection monies, and if those dollars are sufficient, the City will use them to pay for some or all of the cost of hiring additional fire fighters. These two amendments propose using the current General Fund reserve to cover salaries and benefits, whether or not the City receives State and grant funds.

Councilmember Stephen Kunselman has offered an amendment that would alter the mechanism for identifying DDA revenues from TIF capture (Tax Increment Financing). He would have the City amend both the DDA and City budgets by applying the new mechanism. Revenues accruing to the General Fund would then be used to support additional fire fighters. These would be recurring funds.

Jane Lumm also has a draft resolution that would require the City to hire an additional five (5) police officers. In her draft, she relies on using fund balance to hire the police officers, but hopes that the expenditure will be offset by the City's ability to get grant funding. She also recommends withdrawing funding from a variety of budgeted activities: reduce the training budget by \$20K, amend the contract with AATA so that more of the police officer costs are transferred to AATA from the General Fund, reduce the contingency fund, and require the City

Administrator to find additional funds from Public Services, Human Resources, the 15th District Court and the

budget for Mayor and Council.
Subscribe to List

View Past Issues

RSS

translate



+1



Like

C

Human Services:

Jane Lumm has drafted a resolution to add \$93,798 to Human Services Funding. \$47,899 would be allocated from General Fund reserves; \$46,899 would be allocated from the monies set aside for the High Speed Rail match. This resolution would return the Human Services budget to last year's level and would increase it.

Margie Teall and Sandi Smith prepared a draft resolution that provides supplemental funding to the Housing Commission (\$78,000) from the General Fund reserves to offset an increase in retiree healthcare expenditures. The City changed its methodology for calculating and allocating retiree healthcare. As a result, the Housing Commission faced an unbudgeted (in their budget) requirement for \$78,000. The loss of these funds would result in the need to eliminate staff positions and programs.

Solid Waste:

There are two possible amendments that would affect the Solid Waste budget.

Councilmember Lumm proposes an amendment to restore fall leaf pickup and holiday tree pickup services. In order to fund the restoration of these services, the City Solid Waste budget would need to be amended to add \$683,484. She's identified the use of fund reserves and a reduction in services.

Councilmember Briere (yes, that's me) has proposed an amendment to eliminate funding for RecycleBank (\$103,xxx this year). The 10-year contract with RecycleBank allows the City to end the contract early if there are no funds in the budget. The Solid Waste budget includes \$103,500 for this contract. Per the contract, the City would be responsible for \$90K to cover the cost of purchased equipment (depreciated) and contractual notice (\$17,200). There would be no effect to the Solid Waste Fund budget for this fiscal year.

District Court:

The budget for the District Court was reduced last year. The Court chose to eliminate a position (a Senior Secretary) because one of the judgeships was vacant. Christopher Taylor has drafted an amendment that would restore funding for that position (\$76,193) from the General Fund reserves.

Jane Lumm would reduce the District Court budget by \$94,617 to offset some of the costs of hiring new police officers.

Both of these amendments rely on recurring revenues to cover these recurring costs (personnel changes, whether hiring new police officers or a secretary, are recurring costs).

Percent for Public Art:

Councilmember Kunselman would alter the budget for public art by returning funds currently in that account to their funds of origin: Water, Stormwater, Sewer and Street millage. This change would reduce the budget for the Percent for Art by \$307,299. These dollars would not be available for personnel (Safety Services) but would be available for increased construction.

Mayor and Council:

Councilmember Briere (still me) has proposed an amendment to eliminate \$6,500 from the Mayor & Council budget (in General Funds) that was set aside for conference registration and travel costs. The Council eliminated this item from the budget in 2010, but it was added back this year. All of the money (\$6,500) would return to the General Fund.

Councilmember Lumm has proposed using \$8,957 from the budget for Mayor and Council to offset the cost of hiring new police officers. She does not identify the effect of this change.

The draft budget:

[Subscribe to List](#)
[View Past Issues](#)
[RSS](#)
[translate](#)
[+1](#)
[Like](#)
[C](#)

The draft budget includes several indications that it's intended to keep the City at its current level of staffing and funding, with some minor but significant changes.

Last year the City Council approved a conceptual budget for this fiscal year (2013) that called for eliminating 9 police officers. Over the course of the year, positions became empty due to retirement or other personal reasons, and the City allowed those positions to go unfilled, anticipating a need to consider more police department reductions. This year, the City Administrator advised hiring back 9 police officers and adding one more. This isn't a big increase, but it has a big impact on the budget. This adds more than \$1.1 million to the budget -- that's \$1.1 million more than was anticipated last year. The City is also implementing a 'cadet' program, which will bring 5 part-time police officers onto staff (\$150K). These officers will not work full time, and will not receive benefits. But they will be able to staff a desk, walk the downtown streets, and become familiar with Ann Arbor's procedures and expectations. As positions in the police department become available -- due to retirement or for some other reason -- these cadet officers will be able to apply for permanent, full-time positions, and will have a much smaller learning curve.

Last year the City administration anticipated that the City would need to eliminate 5 (five!) fire fighter positions. As firefighters left the corps over the course of the year, the City allowed those positions to remain empty. The budget calls for filling those positions (bringing the number of fire fighters back to 82). The impact to the budget is an increase of about \$559K over the anticipated amount.

I mention this because it's important to understand where the City is with regard to Safety Services funding. The budget prepared on behalf of the City Administrator shows an increase in funding for Safety Services (over what we anticipated a year ago) of about \$1.3 million.

If this is what the expenditures look like (more or less) what do the revenues look like?

Last May the budget anticipated revenues of \$77.8 Million (total). This year, the City anticipates revenues of \$79.2 Million, with increases in the coming year. No one can really tell what will occur in the future, but the City tends to be very conservative on its projected revenues. The difference, of course is \$2.4 Million, almost all of which is reflected in the increased allocations for safety services.

Anything else?

When I first joined the City Council, I had a difficult time understanding why the City didn't fund many things using those big fund balances. It took me a little time to really comprehend that, like a savings account, you cannot use fund balance for monthly expenses. (You know what I mean: if you have 6 months salary in your savings account, you cannot start using it to pay the mortgage and buy food, just because you decided to use your income on that trip to Paris - after you lost your job. Monthly and yearly expenses come out of income; anything left over you shove into savings/investments. That's what the fund balances are.)

Three years ago I committed to understanding the budget. It took a while, but I get that one-time expenses (like that trip to Paris) can come out of fund balances, and that you can put unspent dollars into fund balances to prepare for a big expense (like that trip to Paris). Recurring expenses, like the mortgage and the food on the table, the utilities and insurance, need to come from revenues (income). I'm very cautious with your money.

On the Agenda

Other than budget

There are a number of annexations on the agenda, a clarification of responsibility for sidewalk maintenance in the downtown business district, and some minor (to me) contract and grant issues.

Public Hearings

The Council will hold public hearings on six (6) rezonings from township to City (to single-family residential). The Council will also hold public hearings on the rezoning (from Office to Parking) and site plan (for new construction

and for parking) for the AAA building on Main at Keech.

Subscribe to List

View Past Issues

RSS

translate

g

+1

f

Like

0

Ordinances

Each of the public hearings requires a change to the City's ordinances, or requires site plan approval, or both. These will be voted on prior to the budget.

Ordinances, First Reading

There's an [ordinance](#) to clarify responsibility for maintaining and repairing sidewalks in the downtown business district using funds from the sidewalk millage.

Resolutions

There's a resolution to add 3 (three) members to the North Main Task Force. The membership would be augmented by one member of Council, one representative of the Huron River Citizens (neighborhood) Association, and one representative of river users -- boaters and/or fishers. This task force represents one of the most exciting possibilities for our community, as it begins the process of actually making the connections between the proposed Allen Creek Greenway and the Border-to-Border trail. Requests to join the task force have been coming in constantly. If you requested, but are not nominated to this task force, please ask to be put on the mailing list and please come to the task force meetings. Your participation in this process is vital, if we are to really create a vision of what we want for these North Main parks.

The budget is always the last item on the agenda. If you cannot stay up for the end of the meeting, let me know what concerns you and I'll make certain you learn the outcome.



Talking about the Budget

The City Council will vote on the budget for FY2013 (from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013) on Monday, May 21. If you have questions or ideas, please share with [me](#).



Sabra Briere

First Ward, City Council
sbriere@A2gov.org
sabra.briere@gmail.com
995-3518 (home)
277-6578 (cell)
sabrabriere.org

Subscribe to List

View Past Issues

RSS

translate

+1



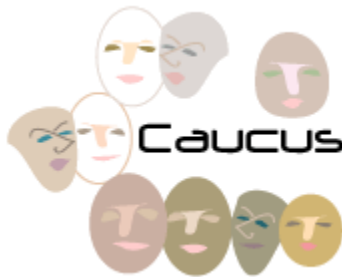
Like

C



Surveys

I've closed out the four surveys on Solid Waste and am analyzing them. I'll forward the results as soon as that work is done.



Caucus

The City Council holds a caucus meeting each Sunday prior to a Council meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for members of Council to discuss agenda items -- and pending issues -- with each other in public view. Members of the public are welcome to attend to bring issues to the attention of Council members. Caucus is held in Council Chambers and starts at 7 pm.

This week the Caucus has been cancelled. No one on Council was able to attend.



On the horizon

Wednesday, May 23 the City will hold a public meeting on the State Street Corridor Study. Please come to the meeting -- Malletts Creek Library, between 7 pm and 8:30 pm.

[Sunday, June 3, 2012, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. \(Dexter-Ann Arbor Run; closure times vary by street\): Many streets throughout Ann Arbor will be temporarily closed, including a 7:30 a.m.-noon closure of the M-14 exit ramp to Main Street; click here for the various event maps](#) (PDF)

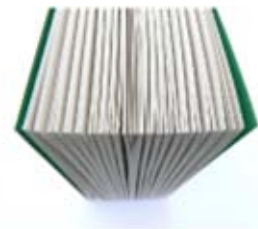


Coffee wakes some of us up

I hold office hours 7:30 to 9 am on Mondays at the Northside Grill.

While I'm there, I meet with neighbors from all over our community to discuss the issues that concern them -- potholes, parks, trash pickup, construction noise, planning, zoning, City staffing and changes they like or don't like.

The folks at the Northside put up with political talk early in the morning. If you see me there, please wave, and if you have time, please, join me for coffee and a chat.



What am I reading?

I continue to read "The Politics of Urban Runoff" by Andrew Karvonen.

I'm also reading "*Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*" by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck

So much to think about.

[Subscribe to this list](#) | [View Past Issues](#) | [RSS](#)

translate

 +1

 Like 0 

[Sunday, June 3, 2012, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. \(Taste of Ann Arbor event\):](#)
[Several city streets will be temporarily closed; click here for the event map \(PDF\)](#)

[Friday, June 8, 2012, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. the Mayor's Green Fair. Main Street](#)
 (which will be closed) between William and Huron.

[Sunday, June 10, 2012, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. \(Tour de Kids event\):](#)
[Several city streets will be temporarily closed; click here for the event map](#)
 (PDF)

Saturday and Sunday, June 9-10, The Mission Zero Festival will include live music and dancing, local food carts, re-skilling demonstrations, information on urban gardening and more. The festival will be held in the 700 block of Fountain from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 9 and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 10. It is free and open to the public.

[follow on Twitter](#) | [friend on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)

Sent to <<Email Address>> — [why did I get this?](#)
[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)
 Sabra Briere, Ann Arbor City City Council · 1418 Broadway · Ann Arbor, MI 48105

