

**COMMON COUNCIL – BUDGET MEETING
CITY OF NOBLESVILLE
AUGUST 13, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Noblesville met in special session on Tuesday, August 13, 2024 in rooms A213 and A214 at City Hall. Darren Peterson called the meeting to order pursuant to public notice at 4:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mike Davis, Evan Elliott, Pete Schwartz, David Johnson, Aaron Smith, Todd Thurston and Megan Wiles. Mark Boice arrived at 4:55 p.m.

Also present were Mayor Chris Jensen, City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Deputy Mayor Matt Light, Community Development Director Sarah Reed, Chief Financial Officer and Controller Jeffrey Spalding, department directors, staff, and an interested citizen.

Mayor Jensen displayed a PowerPoint presentation. He stated the guiding principles from the past five years remain unchanged. He stated areas of emphasis in the budget are investments in priority projects, staff, and the community. He stated Noblesville is a growing community, but decisions by the State may affect revenue. He stated economic indicators remain strong. He stated the \$1.10 tax rate will be maintained for the fifth year. He stated the City would maintain healthy cash reserves and continue investment in priority capital projects and staffing in order to keep pace with increased service demands. He reviewed cautionary considerations, such as potential property tax reform by the legislature; new administrations at both the federal and state level; uncertainty regarding the maximum levy growth appeal process; and the economy. He thanked the Council for meeting with department heads to review their budgets.

Mr. Light reviewed the 2025 budget review process. He stated the Fiscal Plan is a key document that is continuously refined. He stated the same methodology has been used since 2022. He stated the Fiscal Plan focuses on an eight-year window: the last two years; the current year; and projections for the next five years. He stated the average of the eight years provides a preliminary 6.3 percent growth trajectory. He stated some revenue will be certified later this month. Mr. Spalding stated information in the Fiscal Plan is as objective as possible. He stated uncertainty in the future is recognized without undue optimism or pessimism. He stated the document is designed for others in the future to use as well, and not just this administration. Mr. Light stated wherever possible, the Fiscal Plan provides apples-to-apples growth targets and performance comparisons.

Mr. Light stated during these budget meetings, the Mayor's vision will be presented, then departments will present their budgets. He stated once the meetings are concluded, Mr. Spalding and consultant Michael Reuter will compile the requests to fit within revenue and strategic spenddown of reserves. He stated projections will remain conservative. He stated a cost of living wage increase for employees is yet to be determined. He stated 15 new positions for staff have been requested. He reviewed a list of capital projects and those funded from outside sources. He stated priority Public Safety projects are the new Police Department headquarters and Fire Station 78. He stated other considerations are mid-year budget adjustments and the encumbrance of the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. He stated a final request will be presented once the Local Income Tax distribution is certified, and Council feedback has been reviewed. He stated an operating agreement for the event center and an operating budget is expected in November.

Assistant Fire Chief Uriah Eddingfield presented the Fire Department budget.

Mayor Jensen left the meeting.

Assistant Police Chief Brad Arnold presented the Police Department budget. He reviewed approved development in the City that will increase staffing needs and the number of runs. He reviewed the drop in the property crime rate compared to other cities in the county. He stated Noblesville is using a proactive approach, but it is important to have enough officers to maintain the current level of service. He stated Noblesville was recently named the 12th safest suburb in the nation. He stated Noblesville ranked in the top three regarding violent crime and property crime. He reviewed the upcoming Hamilton County Police training facility and range. He stated it will be important to budget for the City's share of responsibility for the facility.

Mayor Jensen rejoined the meeting.

There was a discussion concerning Public Safety needs and resources.

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Mr. Boice joined the meeting.

Street Commissioner Patty Johnson presented the Street Department Maintenance and Administration budget.

City Engineer Alison Krupski presented the Street Improvement and Rehabilitation budget. Mr. Spalding stated the Engineering Department manages the budget. There was a discussion concerning paving and patching of City streets. Mr. Boice asked if trail maintenance will be transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department. He stated he currently receives more complaints about trails than streets. Mr. Light stated the issue is being discussed.

Ms. Krupski presented the Engineering Department budget.

Mr. Spalding stated the mid-year budget adjustments on the Council agenda could change the 2025 base budget amounts.

Mr. Schwartz asked if all City vehicles buy fuel from the same source. Ms. Krupski and Ms. Johnson agreed that several departments purchase fuel at the Farm Bureau Co-op. Mr. Spalding stated each department sets its own policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

DARREN PETERSON, PRESIDENT

ATTEST:

EVELYN L. LEES, CLERK