

**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF SEAT PLEASANT
FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BUDGET HEARING
SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023
10:00A.M.**

1. OPENING

1.1.1 Call to Order

Councilmember President McCarthy called the meeting to order at 10:04a.m.

1.1.2 Roll Call

Present: Councilmember Monica Higgs Councilmember Hope Love, Councilmember Shireka McCarthy, Mayor Kelly Porter, Councilmember Gerald Raynor, Councilmember Kizzie Scott, Councilmember James Wright, Jr.

Staff: LaShaya Johnson, Staff Assistant, Dashaun N. Lanham, City Clerk, Myneca Y. Ojo, City Manager

Councilmember Wright gave the invocation.

2. Meeting Topics

2.1 FY2023-2024 Proposed Budget Hearing and Review

- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Council with the highlighted changes to salary, PGCMA Meeting, office supplies, professional development, council events.
- Council President McCarthy explained the purpose of the PGCMA cost center and increase, which is to allow the city to host a meeting.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the increased in the council salary is due to the approved increased by the previous council.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the City Clerk department with highlighted changes and recommendation to be reflective to the salary for the city clerk, Professional development, subscription services and meeting, refreshments, and election expenses.
- Council President McCarthy inquired of the increase in the cost for services for subscription services?
- Ms. Ojo stated that she anticipates an increase for licensing in DocuSign and a slight change in Civic Plus.

- Council President McCarthy inquired if there will be salary increases in every budget?
- Ms. Ojo stated that there are increases in salaries for certain budgets that are not merit increases. She believes that the salary increases are based upon the services and not merits. There are changes in Environmental Justice, NCC, and Public Engagement.
- Mayor Porter inquired about the compensation study for the city.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she had mentioned the compensation study and that they have met with three companies. The salaries are aligned with all the positions in accordance with the information from MML. The compensation studies are costly to perform. They have reviewed three companies to conduct the studies but have not investigated hiring a firm yet.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she did receive a proposal to conduct the compensation study for \$42,845 for a total comprehensive study that will include a compensation audit. They will conduct a job analysis and maintenance of salary of administration.
- Council President McCarthy stated that typically the compensation study would have been performed before the budget was submitted.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Office of the Mayor with slight increases in salary, Association dues and memberships, promotional activities, office supplies and Smart City Advisory Board.
- Mayor Porter stated the cost increase is not reflective and the modest increase across the board to allow the mayor to do the job effectively.
- Councilmember Wright inquired of the Association and Membership dues increase reflect the increase in the dues or to allow you to join additional associations.
- Mayor Porter stated that it will be affirmative for both the increase in dues and to join additional associations.
- Councilmember Wright stated that he believes that the mayor should have a part-time assistant.
- Mayor Porter stated that he appreciates the recommendation, but he has received help with the additional clerk.
- Council President stated that she has a concern with the increase in one board and she feels that the boards should be treated equally.
- Councilmember Love inquired if the council will be discussing the budget in another meeting for approval.
- Council President McCarthy explained that the meeting is for review of the budget.

- Council President McCarthy stated that the Staff Assistant works for all the elected officials.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Administration department which shows a decrease due to the removal of the American Recovery Act money. The city did well with the ARP funds and allotted the funding in the public or external services. The budget has an increase in salary, office supplies, association dues, contractual services, contingency, a decrease in the USDA, but requested for the verification of the payment information. The contingency increased to allow the padding for acquisition, and organizational changes, and reserve.
- Councilmember Wright stated that he wanted to praise Ms. Ojo for setting up reserves and moving in the right direction.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the IT Support will increase, which is reflected in the services being provided by the vendor.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she has concerns with the top-heavy salary increases. The contractual services verbiage needs to be spelled out to identify which will be utilized.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the contractual services will be for lobbyist services, and centralized services. She did not want to add information to the budget that the council has not approved.
- Council President McCarthy requested for an asterisk to be by the salaries and explanation for each cost center.
- Councilmember Higgs inquired for the council to be informed of the contracts and have them listed in the budget.
- Councilmember Wright stated that the City Manager is working without an assistant and doing the heavy lifting?
- Ms. Ojo stated that she utilizes the administrative staff to assist her, and her goal is to understand the departments, and she is more hands on.
- Councilmember Love inquired of the contingency for part of the reserve, and she had contacted MML to inquire about the amount should be included in the reserves and they stated that it should be 5-15% of the budget and two months of general operating expenses.
- Councilmember Love stated that the expenditures should be broken down for each purpose. The council agreed for the amount to be broken down for each expenditure.
- Councilmember Love stated that the raise should be provided after one year of performance on the job and not be implemented on July 1, 2023.

- Council President McCarthy stated that she will mention the increase for department heads throughout the budget, as the city is having problems maintaining officers but an increase to department heads is concerning. She is not sure if the ninety-day evaluation had been completed.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the salary increase for administration is not for one person but for anybody that will be in the position.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for Economic Development with an increase in salary, overtime, an additional part-time Market & Event Manager, office supplies, professional development, and to seek grants of \$400,000. The office supplies will be used for the purchase of tables, chairs, and linens for event services. The FY25 budget will reflect revenues coming in if this turns out.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she does not agree with the salary increase or the part-time position being under the budget. The part-time Events Manager should be under Public Engagement. She feels that the city needs to look at Grants position if they are only bringing in \$400,000.
- Council President McCarthy stated that every cost center should have written explanation with every cost center.
- Councilmember Wright stated that the Market and Event Manager should be under the Public Engagement development.
- Councilmember Wright inquired if the grant writing is expected to raise grant funds for the city.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the job description will need to be reviewed as the position is out of line, as the position was for an Economic Development Director.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she feels that the acquisition and the Market and Event Manager will fit better under Economic Development, as they will be bringing in revenue. The events can occur on the weekend and the person will be the front face for Economic Development for the city. She sees a disconnect between Public Engagement for the Market & Event Manager.
- Councilmember Love stated that the new position should be under Public Engagement.
- Council President McCarthy stated that Public Engagement department is the department that interface with the public and involved with the city's event. If the city had an economic development director position, she would be more amenable to having the position under Economic Development.
- Councilmember Higgs inquired if the discussion can be tabled until a closed session as it is pertaining to personnel.

- Council President McCarthy stated that as it pertains to the changing of the position description yes, it is personnel. However, when it is to add the position to the budget it is to be discussed in this session.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the City Clerk will poll the council for a Closed Session for next week.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Finance department with an additional position of Payroll Clerk, increase in Association dues, office supplies, postage and an increase or new cost for NetSuite Yearly Subscription, and capital outlay for the new positions. There will be a decrease in contractual services, and a need to have a contract to assist and rebuild the finance department to where it needs to be. The subscription services and USDA Rural Development loan will not be funded.
- Councilmember Love inquired if the Accounting Manager position can be divided into Accounts Payable and Receivable Clerks? There may be some changes coming in with the new CFO to make the department function.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the CFO position was vacant for so long and the Accounting Manager does not show an increase. She is uneasy about the increase due to the audits not being done. She is unsure of the city's finances. The Contractual Services mentions funds needed for the auditing services if the audit services in under the council budget. They should not be under two separate budgets.
- Ms. Ojo stated that there is no-one in finance to guide this process, so she let it remain as it was last year.
- Council President McCarthy stated that it was mentioned of an increase in utilities for the city. We had a meeting with Pepco to determine the cost and the lights in the city.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she will be increasing the utilities cost center, and this is for the city's current utility cost.
- Councilmember Wright stated that the Payroll Clerk should be in fiancé and postage is due to increase to sixty cents per stamp.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the increase in the postage is due to the current usage, and the mailing of Business Personal Property taxes, election services, and newsletters.
- Councilmember Love stated that concerning the salary for the CFO, and the person has been vetted and will be presented to the council, she would like to see the person come in and get the work done, we can consider evaluating her. The concern is a person that is used to sitting at desk to oversee but they

will not be overseeing but doing in Seat Pleasant. We can consider a raise in six months.

- Ms. Ojo stated that when she had come into the organization, she did not have a lot of knowledge and she wanted to ensure that the CFO understood where the city is, and an understanding of auditing, trial balances and getting a report. The audit addresses the internal control of the organization with how we maintain things. We had many involved with the audit as past management practices. We need to ensure we have a lot of documentation with historical knowledge. She totally agrees as it is reflected in what they have.
- Councilmember Wright stated that this will not be a 9-5 job as they will need to work evenings and weekends, and he agrees with Councilmember Love.
- Mayor Porter stated that he is looking at typo in USDA Rural Development Loan.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the cost center is zero as she is not sure why it was there. The payment is in another budget.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she is not sure how the council feel about the contractual service. The language specifically speaks of auditing and audit is under the council.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she cannot speak the language or in the budget. As she does not feel that anyone will be able to come in to determine what was going on at the time.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she feels the City Manager cannot sign contracts for over \$5000 and it should be under the council budget.
- Councilmember Higgs stated that she agrees that it should be moved to the Council Budget.
- Councilmember Higgs inquired if the USDA loan was paid off.
- City Clerk Lanham stated that the city was being overzealous by allocating the funds in FY23 in Finance and Administration. The finance department was not sure of the expenses that would have been associated with closing the USDA loan. There were costs associated with the USDA as they required the city to comply with certain requirements, but the entire funds were not used.
- Councilmember Higgs stated that she is concerned with the increase due to the financial status of the city, and the city looks like trash and the people are not being held accountable.

- Ms. Ojo stated that the city is looking at the completion of the FY20 audit and it was being done by people without the financial program, and the process not being followed. The assistant of the financial experts, but they can see the information is there. The city was operating out of two financial systems, and she was given access to the second system a few days ago. The auditor is looking for the receipts of payment not the financial aspects but the internal control process from three years ago.
- Council President McCarthy requested the position descriptions for the new jobs as soon as possible.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Human Resources department with an increase in the salary and new position, training, contractual services, recruitment/drug testing, and an increase in Health/dental and vision.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she has the same comment as far as the salary. The city has taken responsibilities from the Human Resources Manager position. She would like to see the difference in the responsibilities for the position. Please provide the position descriptions.
- Councilmember Higgs inquired of the status of the retirement plan, as she was told that the city does not have a retirement plan.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the plan is handled overseas, and they were looking into another plan.
- City Clerk Lanham stated that the city does have two retirement plans, a 401-A that the city contributes towards, and the 457-b that the employees contribute.
- Councilmember Wright stated that he would like to see a solid retirement for the employees.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she would like to see more money go into the retirement and some of the money in the contingency can be provided towards retirement.
- Mayor Porter stated that the city did discuss the retirement plan with the chief and it will require more funding. We need to seek a program that will be applicable to the city employees.
- Council President McCarthy stated that it will be better to hear from the Human Resources Manager and receiving the position description.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the Public Engagement department with the manager salary remaining the same but an increase in the Constituent Support and Transportation Support, reduction in overtime,

increase in training, reduction in Community events and advertising for activities, subscription services, newsletter, and capital outlay.

- Council President McCarthy stated that she is concerned about this budget as the Public Engagement department is the department that interfacing with the residents. There should be more people being added to the newsletter, and text-em-all services. We need to put money aside for the community.
- Ms. Ojo stated that most of the council knows her background is in event management. The budget is not reflective of the people but giving raises based upon the work. The events can be captured through social media and allow the department to work with the resources they have. She believes that the city can obtain money from elsewhere for Seat Pleasant Day. The city provides the services for the events. The budget does not reflect what we provide to the community but providing the services effectively to the community.
- Ms. Umoh stated that the newsletter mailing was adjusted, and tons of the newsletters were being returned. They had to remove old names and new names. The Council president was added to the mailing list, and they were returned due to the addresses not being vacant.
- Council President inquired if the newsletter cost center reflective for a twelve-month period.
- Ms. Umoh stated that the amount reflected in the budget is enough to cover for a twelve-month distribution. They are using another system to translate the newsletter in Spanish. The city does not have a bi-lingual mailing list. The mailing list is for the residents that opted in to receive the newsletter.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the newsletter should be sent to every home in Seat Pleasant.
- Ms. Umoh stated that she will inquire with the vendor the cost to mail to every home as she is sure that the cost will increase.
- Councilmember Love stated that the Public Engagement department is the most important department as far as the residents are concerned. The newsletter should be sent to every home in Seat Pleasant. The driver and the Constituent Support should receive a raise. The city needs to hire a part-time driver to provide services on the weekend,
- Council President McCarthy stated that the driver is currently listed as part-time, and it needs to be changed to full-time.
- Councilmember Love stated that the Constituent Support should receive a raise.

- Ms. Ojo stated that the Constituent Support has received a raise every year, and they are receiving one this year.
- Councilmember Wright stated that he agrees with the increase for the transportation driver, the newsletter should be given the resources to be bilingual and monthly. The businesses in Seat Pleasant can contribute to Seat Pleasant Day.
- Councilmember Raynor stated that the newsletter should be sent to every occupied home.
- Ms. Umoh stated that the Transportation Driver is an important aspect of the community, and the part-time hours require him to be rushed. The Constituent Support salary can be increased a little more as she is taking the course to become a notary.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she does not feel that city residents should be charged with notary services. They had gone to Annapolis to fight for the services.
- Councilmember Higgs stated that we continue to discuss youth, and we have children that have aged out of the PAL program, teenagers from ages 13-up.
- Council President McCarthy stated that some of the money can be placed in the Public Engagement budget from contingency.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for Environmental Justice has increase in salaries, supplies, special events overtime, general services, subscription services, snow removal, street repairs and resurfacing. The budget reflects the removal of a safety program.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the Environmental Justice department has the required language in the document.
- Councilmember Love stated that the uniforms were reduced and, but the work boots were increased. This line needs to be increased based upon the new employees.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the uniform rate is based on the amount that was based this year.
- Councilmember Wright stated that the training increase will allow the employees to seek more certification training. He would like to know if the city has snow removal equipment.
- Mr. Barber stated that the city does have the snow removal equipment that was purchased.
- Councilmember Love discussed the salary regarding the engineers that work in the elements for \$33,000 and they should receive at least a \$3000 increase. The budget needs to be broken down by increasing their salaries.

- Council President McCarthy stated that this is her reason for not wanting to increase the top-level positions to allow the position in EJD to be increased. They were not increased last year and to see that there is no increase in the budget for the salary or COLA. If the position can be consolidated just as you had abolished one position.
- Ms. Ojo stated that she had talked about restructuring the department and they abolish the foreman position for a position that is more meaningful for the city to maintain the buildings. The recommendation for the Facilities Maintenance Engineer for \$65,000, Inventory Clerk and Safety Officer positions.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the last year salaries need to be next to the proposed salaries. Can the city use speed cameras for street repairs and snow removal?
- Chief Harris stated that the snow removal and street repairs are deemed public safety issues and they need to be moved to speed camera budget.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she would like to see a list of repairs that need to be completed.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the proposed budget is formatted in the same manner as last year's budgets.
- Mr. Barber stated that he had recommended the new position to allow the supervisors to manage the field, logs and data can be the responsibility of the Safety Officer.
- Ms. Ojo stated that they currently have someone operating in the safety position category.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the line items to be moved to Speed Camera should be listed in the budget if you do not have an automated program.
- Mr. Barber stated that he feels that it should be funded listed in the Environmental Justice department as they repair the streets as well.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the city has a fender base program, and it needs to be used for the city.
- Council President McCarthy stated that there was no increase for the EJD Director that oversee so many employees.
- Ms. Ojo stated that the increases are reflective of the going pay for each of the positions. They did look at without the compensation study being conducted. The Compensation study will take about three to six months to complete.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the public safety department that reflects a decrease of 15.11 percent. The salaries are reflective of the request

to reduce three positions to allow three new positions. They are recommending no cost-of-living increase. They have increased for Meeting and conventions, and decrease for the body worn program, background investigation, vehicle accidents, and the removal of the taser program, criminal investigation unit.

- Councilmember Love inquired if the city is still using the drone program and the mobile unit bus. If not, can the city sell it and obtain money from the sales?
- Chief Harris stated that the drone program was grounded last year due to a licensing issue. They now have a few officers certified, and they had disconnected certain services for the command bus, which they still use along with one of the drone programs. The usage of the command bus can be effective. The bus could be sold for approximately \$200,000 with the equipment.
- Mayor Porter stated that his concerns are retention and they had discussed the retirement program but want to address the retention concerns.
- Mayor Porter stated that it is better for the city to have the technology than not to have it.
- Chief Harris stated that some of the line items were decreased due to them being removed into the Speed Camera program such as the body worn camera. They moved some things from the general fund to move to the speed camera. The subscription services detailed list will be provided to Ms. Ojo. They moved items to the speed camera that can legally funded.
- Council President McCarthy of the bike patrol being zero and wanted to know if the repairs of the bike are under another program.
- Chief Harris stated that the bike patrol repairs were moved to equipment cost center 5554.
- Chief Harris stated that they can make changes in the budget with a budget amendment for Speed enforcement.
- Ms. Ojo stated the recommendation to increase the salaries for the police department for the officers by 5.4% to 20%. No increase for the Digital Evidence Manager and the Administrative Assistant with one of the Administrative Assistant positions being frozen.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she has seen a lot of advertisement for signing bonus for the police officers. She has an issue with top position increases but not the officers' position and she feel that the pay should be comparable to the city with the same crime rate. She feels that the money can be used else were for recruitment, retirement for the department.

- Chief Harris stated that it is an issue with retention nationwide, and he is concerned with the loss of the officers in the last year, and he feels that it should be an investment in terms of salary. When it comes to his salary the council and the city manager can work it out. He feels that it is because of the management with three departments and that they look at other options for certification. He needs the salary to be competitive to retain and recruit.
- Councilmember Wright stated that the council needs to look at crime and the management of the departments and he would need to take an exception because of the work that the department does. It is an intense recruiting effort.
- Councilmember Raynor stated that he agrees with Councilmember Wright.
- Chief Harris stated that they had frozen the position to qualify for the DOJ grant but still fund it, and the funds were already in the budget to accommodate the increase.
- Chief Harris stated that PALS is funded through a grant, but the DOJ grant is a federal grant, and the city must sustain the positions for thirty-six months, and we need to retain the position. They were moving positions into the grant, and they must fill the position with a new person to show sustainability otherwise it is a violation. The department is currently bringing in a lot of money, and the DOJ is asking for documents and none of them worked in the city during that time. It is a lot of work to obtain the required information.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for the NCC with a recommendation of an increase in the salaries, uniforms and equipment, and no cost-of-living adjustments.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she would like to see the two-position spelled out.
- Chief Harris stated that he feels that both positions need to be increased. He will be presenting some information to the Public Safety Committee.
- Council President McCarthy inquired if they are working the same schedule and they need to have someone work on the weekends to address community concerns.
- Chief Harris stated that they will be on a rotating schedule after the training is completed. When NCC is not on the clock the police department can address concerns, as they have more authority than NCC.
- Mr. Barber stated that they have a dumping concern in the city behind Keith and Sons. Although there are illegal dumping signs they know when to do it and it happens two-three times a year.

- Council President McCarthy inquired about the camera being installed in the area as the city is paying additional fees to mitigate the dumping issues.
- Chief Harris stated he has NCC working to recommend a code change to increase the fines. They are working on it, but they have a shortage of staff. The county has a program with the ring camera program.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the topic is for the Public Safety Committee, and we need to stick with the topic of budgeting.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget for Automated Enforcement with an increase in salaries, field supplies, office supplies, uniforms and equipment, body camera program, overtime and special overtime, vehicle maintenance, drone aviation, vehicle purchases and lease, gasoline, systems/equipment, body armor, mobile command, building maintenance and permits, road repair, strategic communication, citywide camera installation and legal services.
- Council President McCarthy stated that she would like to see the cost centers spelled out in writing and ensure that the figures are accurate.
- Chief Harris stated that he believes that the numbers are off as the state statute states that we are required to turn in money to the State Comptroller anything over 10% of the budget. He is working on an overall road repair, and they have a list of items outlined for public safety.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the numbers are off, as the budget reflecting \$2,1 million, and the money needs to be allocated.
- Ms. Ojo stated that this is the proposed budget for automated speed.
- Chief Harris stated that the budget is incredibly low in comparison to what has been deposited and paid towards the fees.
- Council President McCarthy inquired if the frozen position can be allocated under the Automated Enforcement budget.
- Chief Harris stated that the positions can be moved under automated enforcement to include certain positions from the Environmental Justice department. We need to be cognizant of the items and allocations to ensure that they are following public safety.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed salaries with an increase in automated enforcement. They moved three of the positions from the police general budget to the speed enforcement.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed budget from the speed camera/environmental justice with a moderate increase to tree removal, brownfield, pavement markings and mosquito control, and the decrease in snow removal, signs, street repair/resurfacing.

- Council President McCarthy stated that the new brown landfill needs to have a cost center number assigned.
- Council President McCarthy inquired about the reduction in the street repair and resurfacing decreasing.
- Council President McCarthy stated that if there is no plan in place for the streets that needs to be repaired. We need to be proactive versus reactive. If we need to plan for a budget amendment in the future, we will do so.
- Chief Harris stated that he feels that we need to be cautious of the items that are listed that may not be applicable to public safety.
- Council President McCarthy requested an explanation on street repair and resurfacing.
- Ms. Ojo presented the proposed debt services the vehicles that do not reflect funding has been paid off.
- Council President McCarthy stated that the position summary had some errors and requested changes to the errors in the number of positions in Finance, Human Resources, Public Engagement, Economic Development.
- Council President recommended for the City Manager to obtain the recording from the meeting to ensure that all recommended changes are reflected in the budget.

3. 1. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

- There were no citizens in attendance for the Budget Hearing held on Saturday, April 15, 2023. The city added a message to the White Board to inform the citizens of the budget review will begin at noon. The zoom meeting was left open with a White Board message to the citizenry.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Review, Saturday, April 15, 2023, by Zoom Video from 12:00pm-5:00pm. Meeting link details will be on the city's website, Seat Pleasant, MD

4.2 Budget Review Meeting, Monday, April 24, 2023, by Zoom Video from 6:00pm. Meeting link details will be on the city's website, Seat Pleasant, MD

4.3 Regular Work Session, Monday, May 1, 2023, by Zoom Video at 6:00pm. Meeting link details will be on the city's website, Seat Pleasant, MD

4.4 Annual Seat Pleasant, Saturday, May 6, 2023, Parade at 10:00am, Goodwin Park Activities from 12:00pm-5:00pm

Adjourn:

The Budget hearing adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

The City Council adjourned the budget Review meeting at 4:34pm

Submitted by,

DocuSigned by:
Dashaun N. Lanham

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Dashaun N. Lanham, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED 05/08/2023