

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 2022

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Mayor Skelly called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll:

PRESENT: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher,  
Kennedy, Powers, Rishe and Skamperle

ABSENT: None

Mayor Skelly said there was a need for Executive Session to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation, and Councillor Dillabough seconded the motion.

The vote to adjourn to Executive Session was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Upon returning from Executive Session, all members of Council were still present.

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Mayor Skelly moved to take a resolution to accept the 2023 Preliminary General Fund Budget and direct that the Preliminary Budget be filed with the City Clerk and the Comptroller of the City of Ogdensburg off the table, and Councillor Rishe seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE  
2023 PRELIMINARY GENERAL FUND BUDGET

WHEREAS, as required by the City Charter, the City Manager has submitted a preliminary general fund budget for fiscal year 2023 to the City Council on or before November 1, 2022,

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby accepts the preliminary general fund budget and directs that the preliminary general fund budget be filed with the City Clerk and the City Comptroller.

The vote to take the resolution off the table was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Interim City Manager Andrea Smith reviewed the highlights of the 2023 Preliminary General Fund budget. (A copy of her memorandum follows these minutes.) Councillor Rishe said it was most important for the public to understand that the County made the decision to amend the calculation for sales tax, and discussions with the City began in 2019. Councillor Rishe explained the County wanted the City to agree to the same calculation that applies to towns and villages, and the City decided to preempt and collect our own sales tax. Councillor Rishe said the City is facing a \$2.5 million deficit in that revenue line. Councillor Skamperle said he is not happy with the preliminary budget, and he is not happy about the proposed cuts to the Police Department. Councillor Skamperle said he would like to see the cost-effective hires to the Fire Department included the budget. Councillor Powers asked if Council can receive the sales tax revenue figures for January through March in 2022. City Comptroller Angela Gray explained December 2021 through February 2022 were still collected by the County, and sales specific to Ogdensburg are not available. Councillor Powers asked if we have any idea what those figures will be for 2023. Ms. Gray said the final quarter figures for December 2022 through February 2023 will be available in April 2023. Councillor Powers said Council has requested appropriations for the General Fund, Water Fund and Sewer Fund as well as the fund balance and without the audit, Council is using last year's numbers. Ms. Gray explained the City ended 2021 with an unaudited, usable General Fund balance of \$5.7 million balance, a \$2.5 million Water Fund balance and a \$3 million Sewer Fund balance. Ms. Gray said \$2.4 million of the useable \$5.7 million General Fund balance was appropriated for the 2022 budget. Ms. Gray explained the 2023 preliminary budget calls for an allocation of \$750,000 from the General Fund, leaving approximately \$2.6 million remaining at the end of 2023 assuming all budget lines funded as projected in 2022.

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Ms. Gray said if we use the recommended minimum fund balance calculation approach, we should retain between \$2.2 to \$2.3 million in the General Fund. Ms. Gray explained if the \$750,000 proposed in the 2023 preliminary budget is allocated that would leave \$375,000 available for use in the fund balance moving into 2024. Ms. Gray said she will forward the complete details of these calculations to Interim City Manager Andrea Smith to be shared with Council. Councillor Rishe asked if the proposed 2023 preliminary budget makes any changes to the Water Fund and Sewer Fund budgets which were already accepted by Council, and Ms. Smith said no. Councillor Rishe asked for the proposed increase in water rates, and Ms. Smith said a 4% increase is projected for water rates and a 25% increase to sewer rates in 2023. Councillor Powers asked if no additional revenue is projected. Ms. Gray explained there is no additional revenue projected in surplus to what was budgeted and suggested Council review each revenue line at a budget work session. Councillor Powers asked if Council could expect the audit anytime soon. Ms. Gray said she has reached out to the auditor and is awaiting a response. Councillor Rishe asked if all of the requested information has been provided to the auditor. Ms. Gray explained the focus in the Comptroller's office recently has been on preparing the preliminary budget, and staff will now work to begin to collect the documents requested by the auditor. Councillor Rishe said Council needs a starting point to begin working on the final budget, and he plans to vote to accept the preliminary budget. Councillor Fisher says he does not like either preliminary budget that has been presented to Council, but he thinks Council can balance it out. Councillor Fisher suggested we may have to bond for some of the required financing if raising taxes is proposed. Councillor Fisher explained the City paid a lot of debt off and spent a lot of necessary money in 2022. Councillor Rishe said he thought when Council voted to preempt for sales tax that Council instructed the former City Manager to work with the City Attorney to write legislation for the other one-half cent. Councillor Powers said legislation would need to be introduced for approval at the State level. Councillor Rishe said we need to reach out to the County to discuss the additional one-half cent and asked if a motion for a resolution to start that process would be supported by Council members. Councillor Powers said we just had an election and suggested our new representatives be invited to discuss the matter. Councillor Rishe said we need Home Rule legislation from the County. Councillor Powers asked for an estimate of the revenue from the additional one-half cent.

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Ms. Gray said it would be approximately \$600,000. Councillor Powers said he doubts if the preemption process will work at all. Mayor Skelly said the County can give the City the additional one-half cent if they want to. Councillor Rishe said the proposed cuts are a result of County actions. Councillor Skamperle said that is only some of the reason as he explained in a recent email to Council members.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher, Kennedy and Rishe

NAYS: Councillors Powers and Skamperle

CARRIED, 5 TO 2

2. Councillor Rishe moved a resolution to establish a public hearing date for the 2023 Preliminary General Fund Budget for the City of Ogdensburg, and Councillor Dillabough seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC HEARING  
FOR THE 2023 PRELIMINARY GENERAL FUND BUDGET  
OF THE CITY OF OGDENSBURG

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ogdensburg City Council hereby establishes a public hearing on the Preliminary General Fund Budget of the City of Ogdensburg for 2023, said public hearing to be held at 6:00 pm on November 28, 2022 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk give notice of such public hearing by publication, in the newspaper so designated for the publication of legal notices, at least seven days before the hearing date, of a notice setting forth the time and place and describing the proposed resolution in summary form.

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The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Councillor Rishe suggested budget work sessions be scheduled. Ms. Smith said that subject will be on the agenda for the November 14, 2022 regular meeting. Councillor Powers said he would like to discuss scheduling budget work sessions at that meeting. Ms. Smith noted that the 2023 Preliminary Budget will be posted on the City website now that Council has accepted it. Councillor Fisher said any member of Council that wishes to discuss the budget over the weekend can contact him.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.