

May 09, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

City Council Budget Workshops Begin May 10

The Springfield City Council will use its Tuesday, May 10, lunch meeting to hold the first of several workshops to discuss the Fiscal Year 2012 Proposed Operating Budget. The meeting begins at noon in the 4th floor conference room of the Busch Municipal Building.

Two more Council workshops are scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 12 and noon, Tuesday, May 17. A fourth workshop, if needed, is tentatively scheduled for the evening of May 19.

The full budget document is available online at www.springfieldmo.gov. The proposed budget is put forth by the City Manager with extensive input from City staff. The workshops allow City Council time to discuss and consider the budget in detail and put forth any suggested changes. Council must approve a final budget before the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

The proposed budget is summarized in the City Manager's budget message to Council members at the beginning of the document. In it, City Manager Greg Burris said sales tax revenue, the City's primary source of revenue, has experienced a modest gain of 1.7 percent compared to the year before. Use taxes, fees and fines, and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from City Utilities also increased this year. Though the increases are modest, they come amid the backdrop of a no-growth budget for the current fiscal year in which expenses were below budget, as well as a two-year freeze on hiring and pay increases for employees.

Highlights of the proposed budget include:

- Spinning off the Public Works Department's Clean Water Services Division and Solid Waste Division into a new Environmental Services Department. This move will help the City better manage an increasingly tight regulatory environment and will further emphasize the City of Springfield's continual focus on protecting the natural environment of the Ozarks.
- Fill vacant positions that include an assistant fire chief in charge of training, a fire marshal, three police services representatives, two animal control officers, and support staff in the City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, Human Resources and the Municipal Court.
- Restoring funding to some non-profit organizations. This funding was mostly eliminated two years ago as revenues declined. The restored funding is mainly limited to three organizations that provide services the City would otherwise have to provide, including: the Urban Neighborhoods Alliance, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, and the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks.

- Restoring merit step pay increases for those employees who are eligible, and a salary increase of \$1,000 for employees who are already at the last "step" in their pay grade. The feasibility of funding merits step increases will be evaluated on an annual basis going forward.

For more information, contact: Mike Brothers, Department of Public Information, (417) 864-1119.



Department of Public Information

840 Boonville Avenue • P.O. Box 8368 • Springfield, MO 65801
417-864-1010 • Fax: 417-864-1114