

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Osborn Room
305 East St., 2nd Floor
April 20, 2015

Council present: Aldermen Judy Stearns, Mboka Mwilambwe, Diana Hauman, and Scott Black, and Mayor Tari Renner.

Council absent: Aldermen Kevin Lower, David Sage, Joni Painter, Karen Schmidt and Jim Fruin.

Staff present: David Hales, City Manager and Renee Gooderham, Interim City Clerk.

Others Present: Senator Bill Brady, Senator Jason Barickman, Representative Keith Sommers, Jane Chamberlain, District Office Director at Representative Dan Brady's Office and Alex Henderson, Chief of Staff for Senator Brady.

Mayor Renner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Renner opened the Public Comment section of the meeting. He added that there would not be a response from the Committee under the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Patricia Marton, 1114 E. Grove St., addressed the Council. She noted two (2) articles that she had read on American Aging on Society, elder abuse and safety for elders and the younger generation.

Gary Lambert, 3018 E. Oakland Ave., addressed the Council. He questioned if any municipality had expressed admiration for the current Administration in Springfield.

ANNUAL STATE LEGISLATORS

Mayor Renner introduced the topic and recognized Senator Brady, Senator Barickman, Representative Keith Sommers, and Jane Chamberlain, District Office Director at Representative Dan Brady's Office.

Senator Brady addressed the Council. He noted that Gov. Rauner's budget plan was based from approximately \$6.8 billion in unpaid bills. The City was fiscally responsible. The same was not true in Springfield.

Mayor Renner noted that revenue and budget were challenges. He read from Resolution 2015 – 14 adopted April 13, 2015. He cited section 2 of same.

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. The City maintained fiscal responsibility and cooperated with unfunded mandates. He cited pension costs as an unfunded mandate. He noted costs were increasing; there were inflationary pressure and pension funding policy that challenged the budget. He cited City's the Fire and Police Pension Policy. Annual contributions over the next five (5) years would double.

Mr. Hales noted that Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget was balanced but was not sustainable. The trend over the next years was expenditure increase and decrease revenue. He requested that the Local Government Distribution Fund (LGDF) remain intact.

Council had requested staff develop a contingency plan for the possible FY 16 \$4 million loss of State shared Income Tax Revenue. He read from Fiscal Contingency Plan. He noted that Fire and Police budget would be reduced by \$1.8 million with a reduction of seventeen public safety personnel. Other Departments budgets would be reduced by \$2.2 million reflecting approximately thirty (30) fulltime employees (FTE). The employee reductions were almost fifty (50) FTE's or seven percent (7%) of the City's workforce.

He believed citizens wanted a balance of revenue increases with budget reductions. It was projected that FY 17 would have a \$7.5 million deficit. Sales tax revenue was on a downward trend. He believed the cause for same the elimination of 3,000 to 5,000 State Farm positions. Hotel Motel Tax had declined fifteen percent (15%). State Farm had conducted training here now same was sending personnel elsewhere. The City had eleven (11) collective bargaining units.

Mr. Hales stated that Illinois (IL) needed to create employer incentives. He believed the Worker's Compensation reform was an essential part of same. He requested support for: Senate Bill (SB) 1283; Worker's Comp – Arm – Shoulder – Comp, SB 1284; Workers Comp – Misconduct and House Bill (HB) 2422; Worker's Comp – Arm – Shoulder – Comp.

Mr. Hales noted that the IL Department of Transportation (IDOT) had proposed reducing spending/funding projects in District 5. District 5 received \$19,820,285 for bridges less than the second (2nd) lowest funded District and \$560,033 less per mile of roads. He believed that less funding resulted higher unemployment.

Jim Karch, Public Works Director, addressed the Council. He cited the following FY 2015 – 2020 IDOT projects: 1.) rerouting US Rt. 150/IL Rt. 9; 2.) Veterans Parkway and IL Rt. 9; 3.) resurfacing US Rt. 150 (Clinton St.) US 51N (Center St.) north of Downtown and elsewhere and 4.) Hamilton Rd: Bunn to Commerce. The City would be applying for the Tiger Grant 6 for the later IDOT project. He believed that the city lacked east/west connectivity.

He noted that the Fox Creek Rd. project was projected to receive Grade Crossing Protections funds in FY 18. The bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad was two (2) lanes with no pedestrian accommodations.

He cited the state roads in the community. June 30, 2015 the IDOT agreement for maintenance of same would expire. The city received \$92,000 to maintain plow, salt and patch state roads.

Chief Brendan Heffner, addressed the Council. He cited the increase in Freedom of Information Requests (FOIA). He believed same were beyond the spirit of the law. He noted that the volume of FOIA's was handled by the City Clerk's Office, Corporation Counsel and the Police Department.

Senator Brady noted the Public Works projects were geographically located. He invited Mr. Karch to Springfield to same. He questioned the Tiger Grant share amount. Mr. Karch stated same was unknown at this time. Senator Brady requested notification of same. He noted that a long term transportation program was being worked on to address the needs of the state over time.

Senator Brady acknowledged FOIA's challenges. He encouraged placing all City matters on the website. He requested assistance with determining the mandate costs. He cited worker's compensation and minimum wage as mandates. He cited his involvement with pension costs reduction.

Senator Brady noted Gov. Rauner's turn around agenda. The Local Distributed Fund (LDF) collected and returned was twenty percent (20%). Same would be reduced fifty percent (50%). The Governor had outlined a balanced budget, the first (1st) in twelve (12) years. He cited the \$8 billion in unpaid bills. He cited internet services/retail sales tax collection as additional revenue.

Representative Sommers, addressed the Council. He acknowledged FOIA challenges. He believed Gov. Rauner's proposed budget plan gained statewide attention. There was a will to change the state finances. He requested recommendations from Municipalities. He encouraged ongoing communication.

Alderman Sage questioned unfunded mandates. He believed same was controlled by the Executive Branch. Senator Brady requested identifying those that require administrative/statutory relief and the importance of same. He noted that prevailing wage was established by County government. Alderman Sage believed the administrative mandates could be fast tracked. Senator Brady requested identification of same.

Alderman Stearns questioned final budget knowledge. Senator Brady believed possibly by July 2015.

Alderman Black requested future legislative meeting be held in the Council Chambers. He believed same should be live streamed. He cited concern for the reduction in social services and childcare. He questioned attracting businesses statewide. He questioned unintended consequences. He believed local governments were the front line for constituent concerns.

Jay Tetzloff, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Director, addressed the Council. He questioned the Public Museum Capital Grant. He stated the DeBrazza Plaza project started and had to stop due to funding. Senator Brady believed as the budget came together some grants would be released. He requested staff informing them of projects funded from grants that were at risk of losing money.

Motion by Alderman Hauman, seconded by Alderman Mwilambwe to adjourn. Time: 6:55 p.m.

Motion carried, (viva voce).

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Gooderham
Interim City Clerk