

**BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES  
DES PERES BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
COMPENSATION ISSUES  
DRAFT 2023 OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW  
NOVEMBER 1, 2022**

A Work Session of the Des Peres Board of Aldermen of the City of Des Peres, Missouri was held at the Des Peres Government Center, 12325 Manchester Road commencing at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, November 1, 2022.

The following Board members were present: Alderman Pound, Alderman Concagh, Alderman Fitzpatrick, Alderman Barrett and Alderman Kleinschmidt. Aldermen Osherow attended the meeting virtually. Mayor Becker was also present and presided over the work session. Staff members present included the City Administrator, Assistant City Administrator, Director of Finance, Director of Public Safety and Director of Public Works.

The City Administrator advised that the purpose of the work session was to address any unresolved issues relating to the proposed 2023 fiscal year budget with a primary focus on employee compensation and staffing requests.

**PLANNER POSITION**

Director of Public Works, Steve Meyer, offered a brief presentation justifying the benefits of having a designated planner on staff given the current workload which has intensified in recent years due to the complexity of our zoning ordinances – most notably planned development districts which demand greater staff involvement both in terms of preliminary review but also future compliance.

Aldermen Pound voiced reservations about funding this new position on the belief that Des Peres is substantially built out which, in theory, should limit the potential for future development. Aldermen Pound further advised against overacting to the unprecedented wave of development (citing Magnolia Ridge) which he believes will subside and not merit additional staffing beyond the near future.

Assistant City Administrator, Scott Schaefer, emphasized that while development in Des Peres does fluctuate, the community has high expectations for quality development which demands considerable time and energy at the staff level for projects that often span several months before reaching the Board of Aldermen for approval. City Administrator Harms echoed those comments by reiterating the unusual size of our Planning & Zoning Commission which places additional burdens on staff to educate and respond to a much larger group – currently at 15 members which is the most allowed under State statute.

After a brief discussion, the Mayor entertained an informal voice vote from the Board on whether to approve funding for a planner position which was met with unanimous approval.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES POSITION**

Director of Finance, Tracy Hansen, circulated a cheat sheet to the Board summarizing the various human resource functions which are currently being handled using a combination of finance and administrative staff. Under this decentralized approach, the City has lacked uniformity in addressing critical HR functions such as hiring, onboarding, disciplinary actions, performance evaluations, and other complicated personnel matters which often exceed our ability to manage without trained personnel.

City Administrator Harms advised that the size and complexity of city operations have grown to the point where a designated HR employee is fully warranted – roughly 100 full-time employees in addition to 200 part-time employees focused primarily at The Lodge.

Mayor Becker sought direction from the Board on the request to provide additional funding for a full-time HR employee. That request was approved unanimously by the Board.

### **COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT**

The Mayor and Board deliberated on what, if any, cost-of-living adjustment should be applied to the pay plans for purposes of keeping pace with inflation – currently projected at 8.55% based on the following metrics which have historically been relied upon for reference:

DOL CPI for Midwest Region	8.2%	CPI for 12 months ending 9/30/22
Social Security Adjustment	8.7%	SS Benefit Adjustment 1/1/23
	<b>8.55%</b>	<b>Average of Both Metrics</b>

The Board raised concerns about the financial impact of converting to LAGERS and whether the City could afford a more aggressive adjustment in anticipation of that pending discussion. City Administrator Harms advised that converting to LAGERS is expected to substantially increase operating costs based on a preliminary staff analysis of payroll. Staff is awaiting an actuarial study from LAGERS to get a better understanding of those costs.

The Mayor and Board ultimately settled on a 5.0% adjustment to payroll effective January 1, 2023.

### **DIGITAL MONUMENT SIGNAGE**

City Administrator Harms advised that staff has prepared a memo summarizing the financial and logistical considerations for installing a digital monument sign at Des Peres Park and potentially other city properties as desired by the Board. This research was conducted at the request of the Board as part of a broader discussion about improving citizen engagement and

transparency using digital signage to promote city affairs such as public meetings, programming offerings, and other pressing matters. In short, the city should anticipate a \$60,000 financial commitment for each digital sign based upon preliminary budget figures provided by PDS – the landscape architectural firm that facilitated the design and construction of our current monument signage.

Following a brief exchange, the Mayor and Board unanimously declined to fund this effort given the magnitude of the costs and the logistical challenges of retrofitting existing signage (built in 2015) to include digital messaging.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no additional business to come before the Work Session of the Board of Aldermen, the Mayor called for the meeting to adjourn at 7:06pm.

Minutes prepared by:  
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