

**Observer:** Diane Goldring

**Meeting began:** 5:30 pm

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:00 pm

**Aldermen present:** all except Braithwaite

Suspend rules to allow remote meeting passed 7-0 (Fleming arrived late)

The mayor thanked everyone who is running for municipal elections and gave a covid update.

Deputy Clerk Gomez announced that the last day to file for the April municipal elections is Monday Nov. 23 at 5:00 pm.

Public comment

Mike Vasilko said that budget discussion does not end tonight. He advocated for a staff reduction. Jamie Collier thanked city staff and council members for time and attention to budget, and thanked council for addressing unfunded pensions. She wanted to consider lowering the pension contribution this year by \$600K due to investment returns. Ray Freeman asked how much money has been saved by closing city hall and when it will be opening. He wondered why city is hiring 13 employees. He said that we need to start budget discussions in June, not October.

Budget discussion

The city's actuary gave a detailed presentation on police and fire pensions. The upshot is that both fire and police plans are 50% funded. Over the next 20 years the city is trying to eliminate the \$240 million unfunded liability. Evanston's contributions exceed the amount required by state statute but we still are funding only 90% of the unfunded liability. State consolidation means that by June 2022 there will be one statewide police and one statewide fire pension fund. Additionally, investment restrictions will be lifted. However, tier 2 benefits increased slightly which adds about \$200K contribution to each plan. In sum, the actuary recommended increasing the city's contribution to 100%. The amortization payment for the two funds totals \$16.8 million in 2021.

City Manager Storlie proposed holding vacant one additional police officer and one records input operator to fund the alternative response pilot program. This would reduce increase to human services from \$500K to \$250K. She also proposed eliminating the additional \$50K for senior services. These changes would bring the total property tax increase to 4.5%.

There was discussion about the property tax increase being a burden to residents. Cost cutting measures proposed included reducing the pension contribution (Fleming), police training (Fleming), staffing (Rue Simmons) and eliminating "extras" for staff (Fleming). Also again discussed selling city assets.

Proposed revenue measures included invoicing NU for the unreimbursed city fire service provided which totaled \$658,986 (Rainey). Suffredin again proposed video gaming.

Storlie said that she is trying to be transparent in what they are budgeting for and hasn't accounted for any hiring lag.

On an informal voice vote, aldermen agreed to postpone the \$50k increase for senior services.

Rue Simmons asked the mayor what we are we doing with NU's good neighbor fund and requested that he press NU to increase the fund by \$2 million next year. She believes that is not an unusual collaboration in university cities. The mayor did not have specifics on the good neighbor fund other than it needs to be used for equity. There was discussion about using it for the tax payment and the mayor said he would find out.

Call of the wards

Wynne requested preservation commission update rules to move more of their work to staff for review. Also requested staff information about gasoline leaf blower impacts.

Suffredin announced a joint budget meeting with second, fifth and sixth wards on 11/18/2020.

Revelle said that the environmental board has been discussing leaf blowers

Fleming offered condolences to a family that lost a loved one to Covid and announced a shared safety visioning meeting on Saturday.

Adjourned 8:00 pm