

*(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection on the City of West Branch Website at [www.westbranchiowa.org/government/council-videos](http://www.westbranchiowa.org/government/council-videos). The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)*

**West Branch, Iowa  
Council Chambers**

**City Council Work Session**

**January 17, 2017  
immediately following  
City Council meeting**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the City Council Work Session to order at 8:16 p.m. Roll call: Mayor Roger Laughlin was present. Council members: Colton Miller, Mary Beth Stevenson, Tim Shields, Brian Pierce and Jordan Ellyson were present. Laughlin welcomed the audience and the following City staff: City Administrator Matt Muckler, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Gordon Edgar, Police Chief Mike Horihan, Library Director Nick Shimmin and Public Works Director Matt Goodale.

#### FY 2017 Budget Session

##### City Administrator Matt Muckler - Updated general fund revenue estimate

Muckler said that there is a slight update from the previous worksheet presented and the non-salary General Fund expenditures are less than we would like to see. He said he was not asking for approval of these figures tonight. Council person Stevenson inquired about the impact of reduction in the amount of property tax backfill expected to be received from the state. Muckler said the Iowa League of Cities is working to protect that and it was too early to say what would actually happen. If there is a 25% reduction in backfill, that could have a significant impact on the city.

##### Finance Director Gordon Edgar - Health and dental insurance renewal rate change

Edgar distributed a handout showing the Wellmark premiums for premiums years 2015, 2016 and 2017. The handout showed that there had been a 6.6% reduction in premiums from 2015 to 2016 and then a 22% increase from 2016 to 2017. The increase in premium from 2015 to 2017 was 14%. He explained that the current policy held by the city had been “grandfathered in” when the ACA was enacted and some the features of this policy were not available under ACA. If the city were to switch to a new carrier with an ACA compliant policy and similar benefits, the city and employees would pay significantly higher premiums and the employees would be subject to higher deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums.

##### Parks and Recreation Director Melissa Russell – Parks and Recreation Department Budget Proposal

Russell reported that her budget increase was approximately \$16,000 and was made up mostly of compensation increases for salary and additional part time hours and the related taxes and insurance.

##### Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman – Fire Budget Proposals

Chief Stoolman presented the FY17-18 Fire Department Budget. The total budget expense increase will be \$5,900 with the city’s portion being \$618. The largest increase is in the equipment line which was increased \$10,000 in anticipation of the purchase of a new fire truck in FY19. The revenue request also increased by \$5,900.

##### Dave Schechinger – First Street Improvements Project and Main Street Sidewalk – Phase 4

City Engineer Schechinger discussed options in completing the road surface on First Street. Because so much of the street will be torn up, he wanted to know if the city wants to have the entire street resurfaced or just the portion that will be torn up due to the subsurface work required. It was decided to hold the vote on January 31 or February 6. Schechinger distributed cost estimates for the Main Street Sidewalk project to the council.

##### City Administrator Matt Muckler – Revised Employee Handbook

Muckler reported he had received a rough draft of the handbook from Lynch, Dallas and they are working on the details of combining the existing plans for vacation and sick time into a new, single Paid Time Off plan. New maternity benefits were also discussed.

City Administrator Matt Muckler – Employee Salary Plan

Muckler reported the new compensation sheet he distributed reflects the new health insurance premiums and premium payouts and he also had submitted a worksheet showing the percent of salary for each employee that is charged to each fund. The council expressed support for the salary plan.

Council Member Input - Questions and Comments for Staff

Council member Miller asked that the process be reviewed so that new insurance costs are included in the initial salary recommendations received by the council in the future.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the work session by Shields, second by Ellyson. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council Work session adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

---

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon R. Edgar, Deputy City Clerk