

*(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. The full text of the minutes is available for inspection at the City Clerk's office. The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)*

**West Branch, Iowa  
Council Chambers**

**City Council Work Session**

**November 17, 2014**

Mayor Worrell opened the West Branch City Council work session at 9:00 p.m. by welcoming the audience and the following City staff: City Administrator Matt Muckler, Deputy City Clerk Dawn Brandt, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick, Police Chief Mike Horihan, Sergeant John Hanna, Library Director Nick Shimmin, Parks & Recreation Director Melissa Russell, and City Attorney Kevin Olson. Council members: Jordan Ellyson, Colton Miller, Mary Beth Stevenson, Brian Pierce and Tim Shields.

Pat Callahan, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Pat Callahan reviewed the CIP process with the City Council. Callahan reviewed the City's general obligation debt capacity with the City Council, discussed four alternative CIP options that were prepared by city staff, and the forthcoming draft of the CIP. Callahan told the Council that the City was in good shape in terms of its debt capacity and encouraged the Council to reserve 20% of the debt capacity for emergencies that may arise. The four CIP scenarios would fund five consecutive years of CIP projects at \$480,000/year (Level 1), \$650,000/year (Level 2), \$800,000/year (Level 3), and \$1,200,000/year (Level 4). Levels 1-3 provided debt capacity for another Park Phase I vote in the near future. The debt capacity that would be reached by implementing the CIP at Level 4 was projected to preclude another vote on the Park Phase I Project until 2022. Councilperson Pierce stated that Level 4 should not be considered as he felt the Park Phase I Project vote should be placed back on the ballot as soon as possible. Councilperson Ellyson agreed that Level 4 should not be considered. Miller thought that Level 4 should still be considered in the case that voters do not approve the Park Phase I Project. Mayor Worrell and Ellyson expressed support for Level 3. Callahan stated that the feedback from the Council appeared to be for Level 3 and asked if any Council member was opposed to Level 3 and no Council members expressed opposition. Callahan asked Council members if they wanted to see any changes with the rankings that were compiled by staff on the CIP Funding Scenario Worksheet. Muckler reported that aggressive debt reduction by the City Council in recent years has placed the City in a good financial position to be able to fund the CIP in coming years. The City's financial advisor estimated that the levy would need to increase by \$0.55 per thousand to implement the CIP at Level 3. Shields asked about how West Branch's tax levy compares to surrounding communities. Callahan stated that West Branch had a very low levy at \$12.04/thousand of assessed value. Muckler reported the following levies for other communities: \$12.38/thousand in Mechanicsville, \$12.54/thousand in Lowden, \$12.99 per thousand in Tipton, \$13.30 per thousand in Bennett, \$13.47 per thousand in Durant, \$13.52 per thousand in Coralville, \$13.78 per thousand in Wilton, \$13.85 per thousand in West Liberty, and \$16.80 per thousand in Iowa City. For similar sized cities around the state, West Branch compares favorably as well: \$12.24/thousand in Greenfield (1,982), \$15.40/thousand in Postville (2,227), \$17.74 in Audubon (2,176), \$16.45/thousand in Belle Plaine (2,534), \$17.59/thousand in Madrid (2,543), \$15.77/thousand in Ogden (2,044), and \$14.72/thousand in Jesup (2,520).

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Shields to adjourn the work session, second by Ellyson. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council work session adjourned at 9:43p.m.

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Mark Worrell, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Muckler, City Administrator/Clerk