

*(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 Meeting  
Work Session**

**February 6, 2018  
6:00 p.m.**

Mayor Pro Tem Colton Miller called the West Branch City Council meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Roll call: Mayor Laughlin was absent. Council members: Colton Miller, Nick Goodweiler and Jodee Stoolman were present. Brian Pierce arrived at 6:58 p.m. Jordan Ellyson was absent. Miller welcomed the audience and the following City staff: City Administrator Redmond Jones, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Gordon Edgar, Library Director Nick Shimmin, Park & Recreation Director Melissa Russell, Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman and Police Sgt. John Hanna.

## **GUEST SPEAKER, PRESENTATIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS**

### Budget & Finance Overview

Jones presented an overview for the new council members on city finance on where revenues come from to help with understanding how the budget process works. Jones explained that the City's Fund Balance is derived from revenues from taxes, financing and business activities. That fund balance is used to create the budget which funds programs, capital projects and operating expenses. The City's fund balance is comprised of 43 funds. Of those funds, some are restricted in some way, meaning the funds can only be used for certain purposes. Jones further explained that currently the City does not have an adequate Fund Balance Reserve intended as a savings account for unplanned emergencies or expenses. Jones reminded the Council that creating a reserve fund balance was a top priority in the goal setting session and the intention is to work toward building that fund. Jones said that with current debt obligations outstanding and the lack of a fund balance, the next few budget years will be challenging.

### Revenue Workshop / Form 16-142

Edgar reported that he had been working on the budget and reviewing area that adjustments could be made but feels that a tax increase is imminent. Edgar stated that a couple of projects done in 2017 were not funded and dollars were borrowed from other funds to pay for them. This past practice of borrowing from other funds has left the city with limited resources to meet some of its future obligations. Edgar said that there are additional permissible levies that the city may levy for such as Operation and Maintenance of the City Civic Center (Town Hall), Planning a Sanitary Disposal Project and a Special Revenue Levy for Emergencies. The latter can only be used if the city is already at the general levy fund limit. Edgar proposed a fifty cent tax increase, taking the current tax rate from \$12.59 per one thousand dollars of valuation to \$13.09 per one thousand dollars. Edgar provided some samples of what the increase could look like using three examples of different property values. The increase averaged between approximately \$30 to \$80 dollars annually.

Council members were not happy with the information of a tax increase and were not willing to support it without some indication of what the tax increase would provide. Edgar responded that additional budget cuts would be needed in order to avoid a tax increase and cited items such as fireworks and capital equipment.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jerry Sexton, 19 Greenview Drive asked for a more detailed explanation of TIF and felt that that city should offer new business owners an incentive of some kind to want to bring their businesses to West Branch. Sexton said more jobs means more money for the community.

**COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

No additional comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn regular meeting by Stoolman, second by Goodweiler. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

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Colton Miller, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk