

(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection at westbranchiowa.org. The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)

**West Branch, Iowa
Council Chambers**

**City Council
Budget Work Session**

**January 8, 2024
5:00 p.m.**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council regular meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Roll call: Council members present: Mike Horihan arrived at 5:08pm, Jerry Sexton, Tom Dean, Jodee Stoolman, and Nick Goodweiler. City Staff present: City Administrator Adam Kofoed, Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken, Sergeant Cathy Steen, Public Works Director Matt Goodale, Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman, and Interim Library Director Jessie Schafer.

FY 2025 Budget Work Session Discussion Topics

Kofoed presented his FY25 budget assumption highlights as follows: six percent full-time employee wage increase, four percent inflation, four percent in health insurance increase, ten percent increase in fuel, utilities, travel and equipment costs, an estimated twenty-thousand-dollar tax revenue cut due to changes in the state's rollback, and adjusted water/sewer revenue as the rates and number of buildings has increased. Kofoed reiterated that these are just 'assumptions' as the budget is still a work in progress. Kofoed went on to show the City's current reserve requirements (as recommended by the state). He also highlighted some of the progress the City has made with prior Council goals. Kofoed said highlights for 2023 were; water tower painting, small cuts to parks and rec programs not breaking even, east side water main phase I completion, more sustainable approach to Hoover's Hometown Days, Cedar Johnson roundabout completion, Town Hall fee increases for sustainability, continuing work with flood mitigation, planning for upgrades to the east side water main phase II, improving fund reserves during times of financial uncertainty to prepare for emergency spending, if it arises.

Kofoed asked the Council to consider several items:

Expenses

- Increase Police Department to allow for five full time officers and ILEA training, equipment, and uniforms for four new officers.
- Minor increases to clerk and treasurer to add training and wages for Deputy Clerk position.

Cuts

- Cut full time Parks and Rec Director position and creating a Deputy Clerk/Recreation Coordinator position.
- Reducing West Branch Public Library support.
- Eliminating home rebate program.

Laughlin asked about how property tax levy will be affected with the new valuations. Sexton asked about Road Use Tax revenue, Kofoed explained the state sets the formula to cities and it's only increasing by \$1 per resident a year. Goodweiler suggested that is less than 1%. Sexton mentioned considering a city run trash and recycling program, planning for the City Clerk retirement, and Greenview Water loop. Stoolman asked about Public Works equipment, how utility rates are impacting revenue and residents, and asked if road use tax would be able to pay for large street projects. Goodale explained that larger street projects would have to be funded through bonds and the road use tax run is only enough to fund operations. Horihan asked about fire training and Chief Stoolman said that yes and it is in their requested budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Dean, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Adam Kofoed, City Administrator