

(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 22, 2024
5:30 p.m.**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll call: Council members present: Mike Horihan, Jerry Sexton, Tom Dean, Jodee Stoolman, and Nick Goodweiler. City Staff present: City Attorney Kevin Olson, City Administrator Adam Kofoed, Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken, Sergeant Cathy Steen, Interim Library Director Jessie Schafer. Attending on zoom was Public Works Director Matt Goodale

FY 2025 Budget Work Session Discussion Topics

Interim Library Director Schafer provided council with the library budget. The budget calls for one less full-time employee which has freed some fund for Library Board to invest in more popular items such as digital e books, increase building maintenance such as sidewalk improvements, cleaning contracts, and collections. Mayor Laughlin asked secure the new outdoor charging station would work. Shafer explained they were well protected, can be locked, and are weather proof. Horihan asked about technology spending, Shafer explained the library is purchasing three Chromebook, one was for staff and the other two were for patron use.

City Administrator Kofoed gave council a rundown on the projected total property tax levy rate. The council engaged in some discussions on the capital improvement levy such as keeping it low for taxpayers but also considering to raise it so the city pays less interest on future projects.

Kofoed is projecting a 10% increase in liability insurance and briefly explained future trends indicate rates increases will outpace inflation. Attorney Kevin Olson stated some municipalities are seeing a 20%-30% increases.

Iowa league of cities projects a 10% increase in local option sales tax as people continue to pay online. TIF rebates and debt was discussed in greater detail. Administrator Kofoed shared his solar research and how that could impact the budget.

Kofoed asked the Council to complete a strategic planning worksheet in preparation of the February 5, 2024 council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Dean, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Adam Kofoed, City Administrator