



**CITY COUNCIL FY27 BUDGET WORKSESSION
MONDAY, February 9, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
110 N. POPLAR STREET, WEST BRANCH, IOWA**

<https://zoom.us/j/5814699699>

or dial in phone number 1-312-626-6799 with Meeting ID 581 469 9699.

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. FY27 Budget Discussion: (including, but not limited to the following)
 - a. Tort Liability
 - b. Trust and Agency
 - c. LOST – Local Option Sales Tax
 - d. TIF
 - e. Debt Services
 - f. Capital Projects
 - g. Road Use Tax
 - h. Water
 - i. Sewer
 - j. Storm Water
4. Comments from Mayor and Council Members
5. Motion to adjourn.

Mayor: Roger Laughlin • **Council Members:** Colton Miller, Jodee Stoolman, Tom Dean, Jerry Sexton, Mike Horihan
City Administrator Adam Kofoed • **City Clerk** Leslie Brick • **Finance Officer** Heidi Van Auken • **Police Chief** Greg Hall •
Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman • **Public Works Director** Matt Goodale • **Library Director** Jessica Schafer
Parks & Recreation Director Erin Laughlin



City of West Branch

FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027
BUDGET PRESENTATION

Budget Overview

Assumptions

- 4.0% increase in full time permanent wages.
- 2.9% inflation
- 7.8% increase in health insurance
- 16% increase in liability insurance
- Does not take into account any property tax reform.

Highlights

- W. Main Street Resurfacing
- Grant Writing
- Park Improvements
- Fire Chief
- Savings for Water Filter Replacements
- Solid Waste Bill Freeze
- Hotel Motel Decreases.
- LOST Decreases.
- Assuming the same Franchise Fee numbers.

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General Fund Basics

GF is used primarily for:

Fire

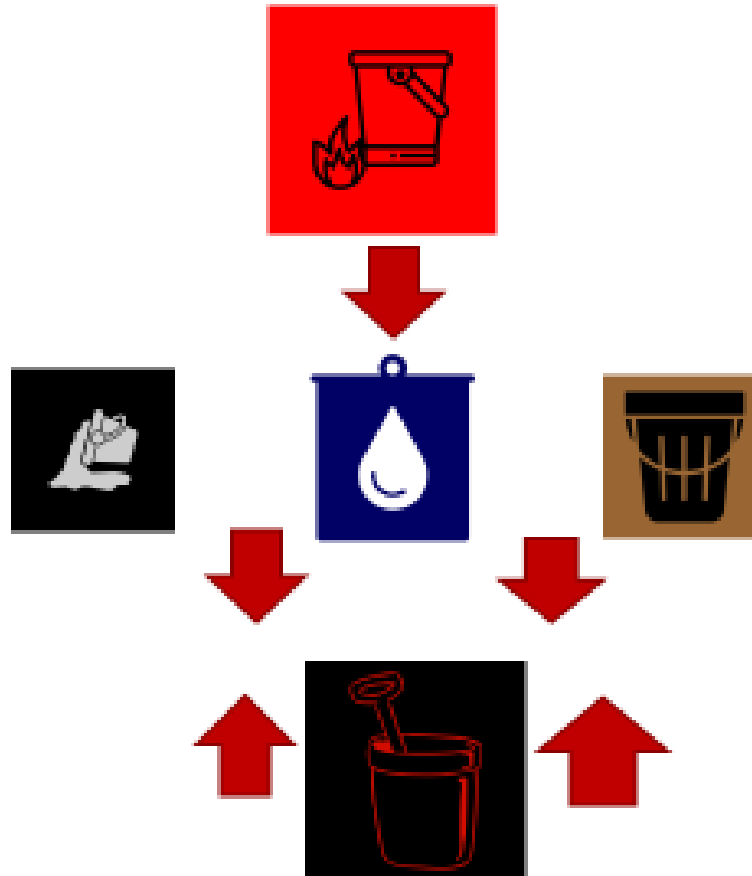
Police

Library

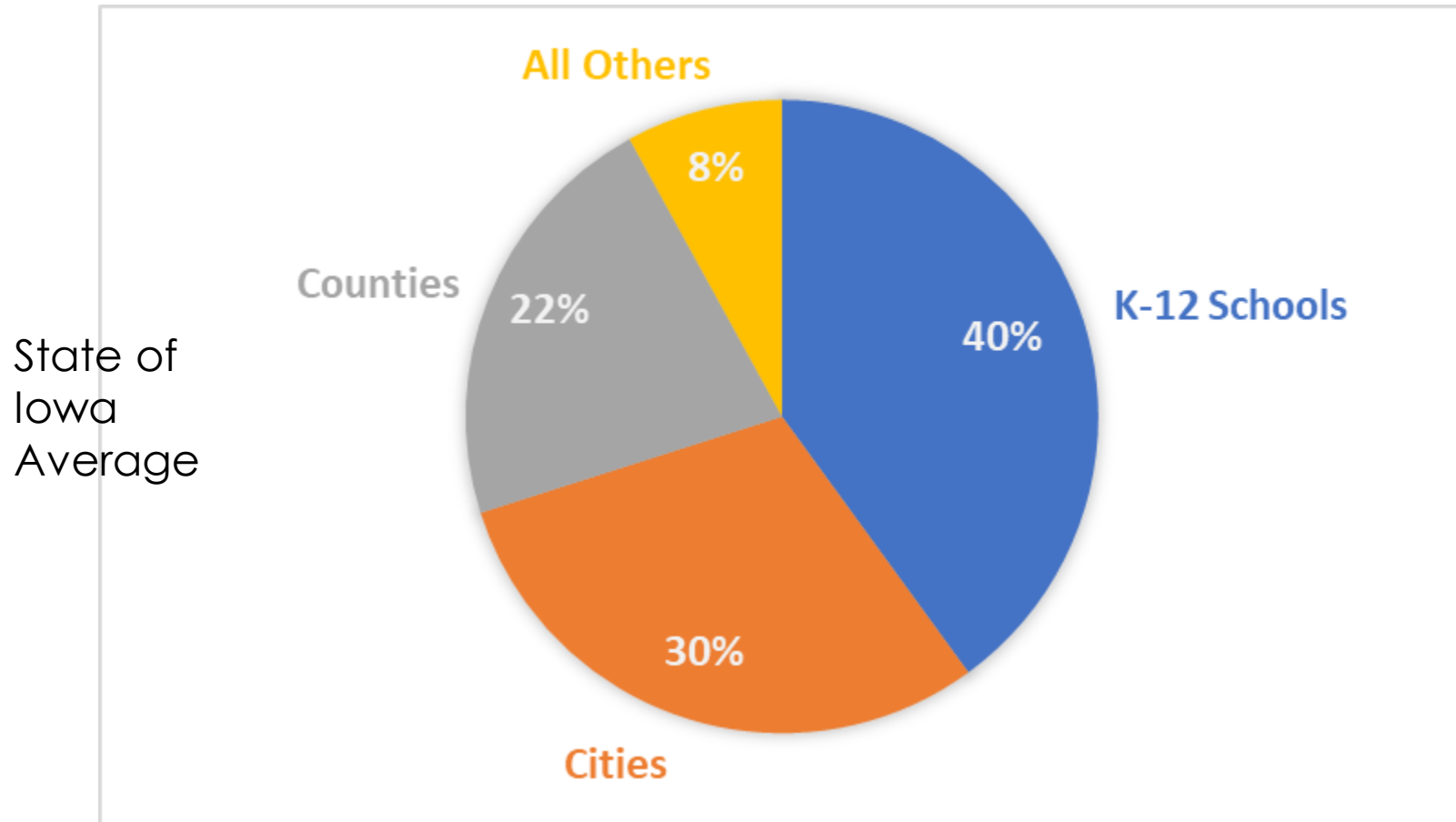
City Office

Parks and Rec

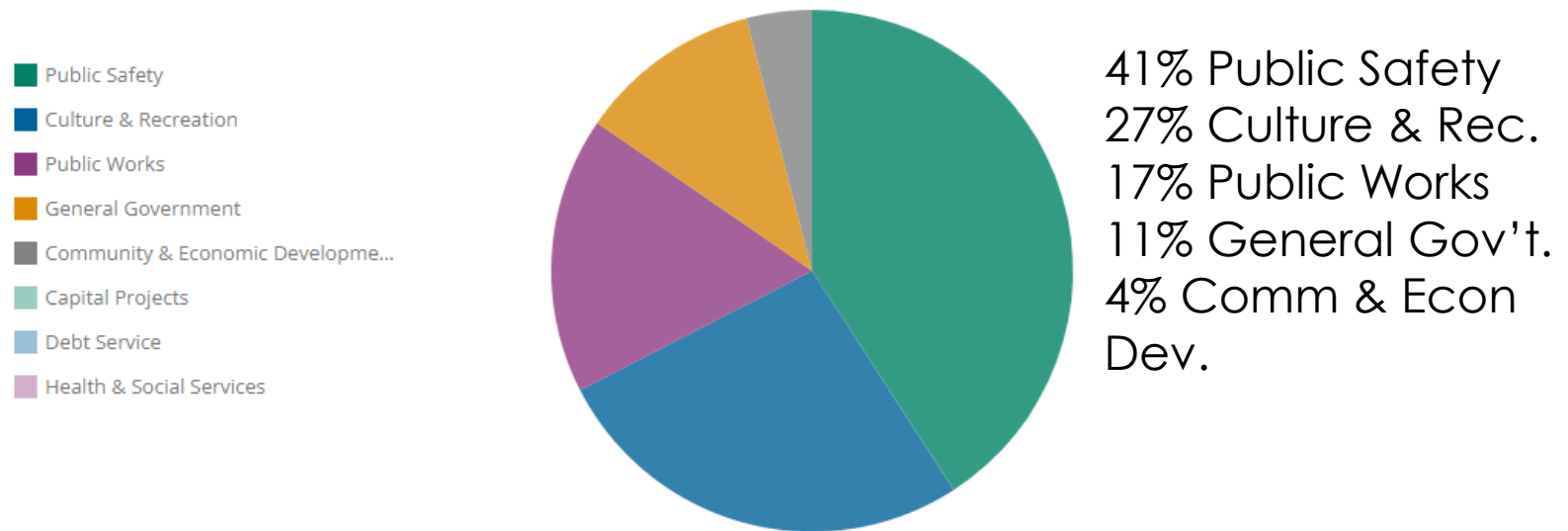
Culture



Where does my taxes go?



How are my property taxes spent?



How are my property taxes spent?

Use the drop-down menu to the right to select a city.

2026 WEST BRANCH



* Calculated values are rounded to the nearest cent which may add up to a total slightly more or less than \$1.00

Data Source: Iowa Department of Management

Budget Category

- Public Safety
- Culture & Recreation
- Public Works
- General Government
- Transfers

- Community & Economic Development
- Health & Social Services
- Debt Service
- Capital Projects



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach
Community and Economic Development

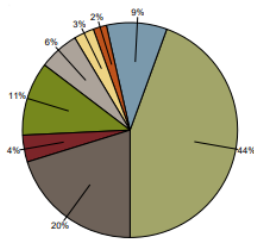
Contact erinm1@iastate.edu with questions

How do we compare (revenue)?

City General Fund Revenues

The charts below show a breakdown of city general fund revenues in aggregate, by population ranges, and by individual city.

Graph B

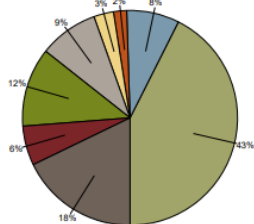


Graph B shows the statewide average of budgeted city general fund revenues for fiscal year 2024, for all cities in Iowa. On average, the largest subcategory of general fund revenues is property taxes, which accounts for approximately 44% of the total general fund revenues. Cities rely on property tax as a more stable source of revenues.

Economic conditions as well as legislation, among other factors, can impact city general fund revenues.

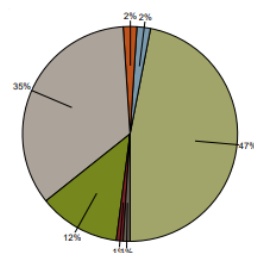
Generally, the size of the community, by population and taxable valuation is relative to the level of resources available. Graph C features a breakdown of general fund revenues for the population range in which the selected city falls, so that the user can begin to look at how these revenues compare with cities of similar populations.

Graph C



Each city has its own breakdown of general fund revenues. Graph D features the breakdown of general fund revenues specific to the selected city. Note that there are many factors and local characteristics that impact a city's breakdown. It is important to understand these local factors; comparisons cannot always be made purely based upon population or other factors.

Graph D - West Branch, Iowa

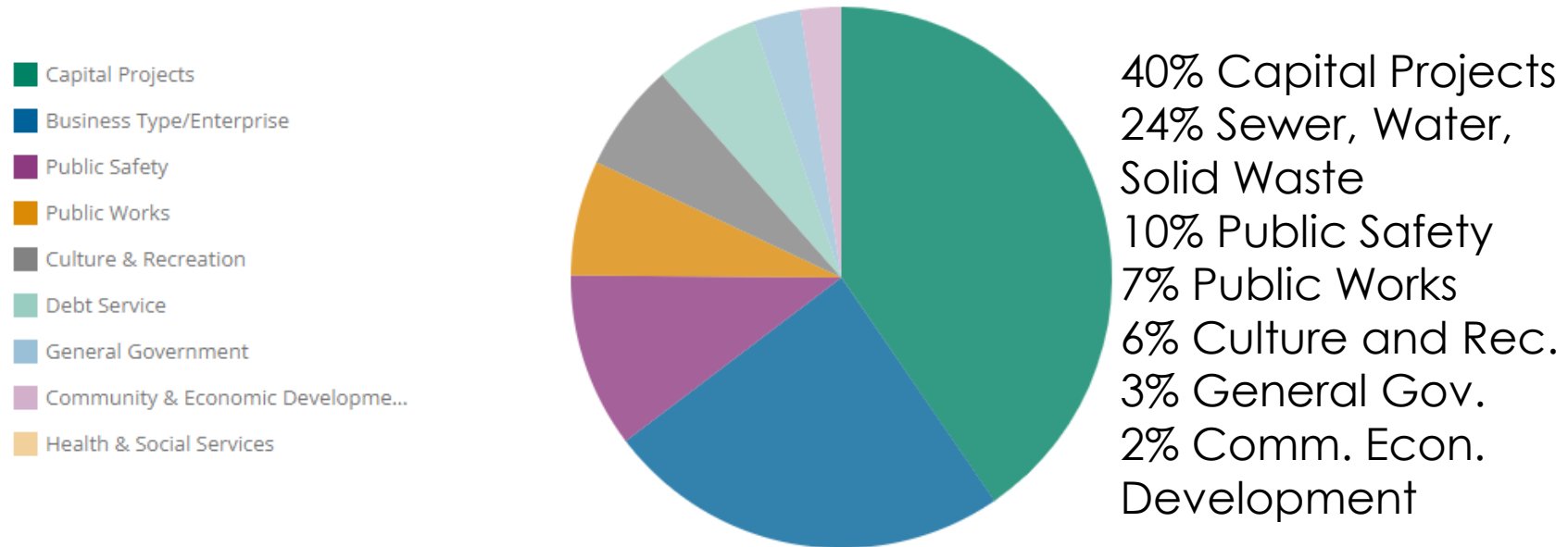


More detail on general fund categories and subcategories is included in the appendices.



West Branch relies more on property taxes and interfund transfers.

Where does all my money go?



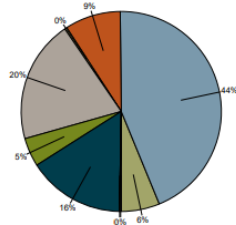
FY 2026, Iowa Dept. Management

Where do we compare (expenses)?

City General Fund Expenditures

The charts below show a breakdown of city general fund expenditures in aggregate, by population ranges, and by individual city.

Graph E



On average, the largest subcategory of general fund expenditures is for public safety services, accounting for approximately 44%. Particularly for expenditures, cities vary a fair amount on these breakdowns depending upon services they offer. Often times, relative population impacts the general fund expenditure trends, with larger cities offering more types of services overall. Similar to many service industries, cities typically have significant portions of their general fund expenditures allocated to employee wages and benefits. These are also subject to inflation and insurance premium increases. Cities' budgets are also impacted by mandates, incurred obligations such as pension costs, and legislation.

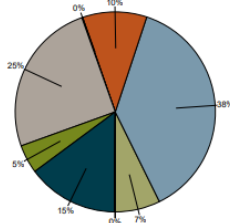
Graph E shows the statewide average of budgeted city general fund expenditures for fiscal year 2024, for all cities in Iowa. As a reminder, the general fund does not include activities such as utilities which are a major expense included in the overall operation of a city.

The size of the community (population) may also impact differences in service levels that are provided. Graph F features a breakdown of general fund expenditures for the population range in which the selected city falls, so that the user can begin to look at how these expenditures compare with cities of similar populations.

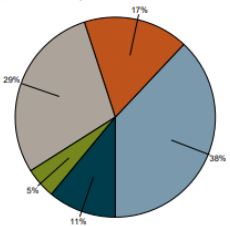
Each city has its own breakdown of general fund expenditures. Graph G features the breakdown of these expenditures specific to the selected city. Note that there are many factors and local characteristics that impact a city's breakdown. It is important to understand these local factors; comparisons cannot always be made purely based upon population or other factors.

More detail on general fund categories and subcategories is included in the appendices.

Graph F



Graph G - West Branch, Iowa



West Branch spends more on Public Works in the general fund than peer cities and spends less in General Government than peer cities.

Tort & Liability

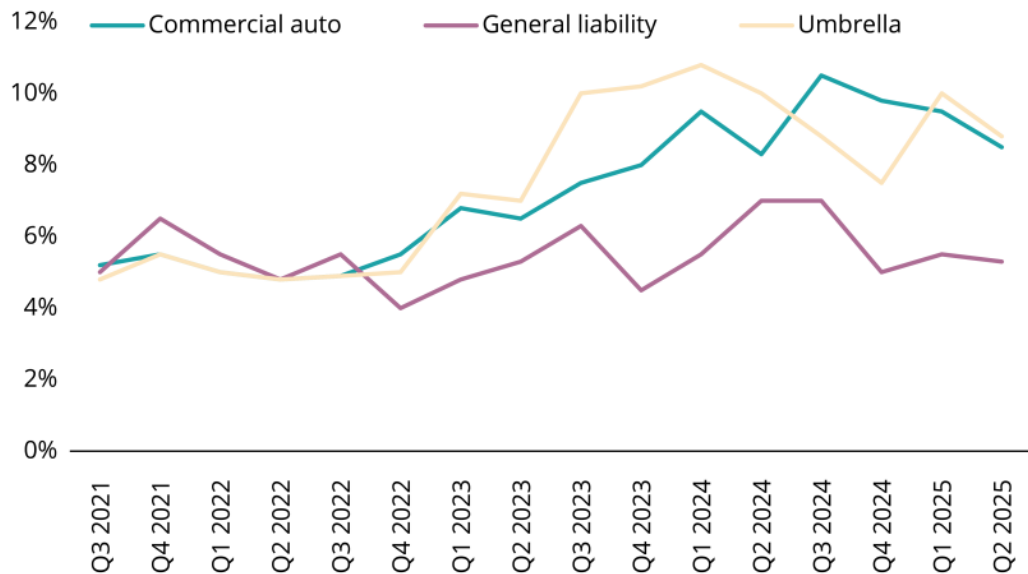
Revenue: \$140,000 (16% increase)

Expenses: \$117,000 (8% increase)

Highlights:

- 16% increase in liability insurance
- Currently **-\$19,000** in fund.

Q2 2025 pricing increases ticked down for some casualty lines



Source: The Baldwin Group

FICA and Employee Benefits

- 11% decrease in FICA
- 100% decrease in Group Insurance
- The fund is sitting at a 150% balance which needs to be brought down.
- This will lead to an overall tax decrease for WB residents.
 - The goal is for it to last 3-5 years.



FICA and Employee Benefits

7.73% tax cut or -\$47 dollars in taxes
per \$110,000 assessed taxable
valued property.

Tax Rate Comparison-Current VS. Proposed			
Residential property with an Actual/Assessed Valuation of \$100,000/\$110,000	Current Year Certified 2025/2026	Budget Year Proposed 2026/2027	Percent Change
City Regular Residential	608	561	-7.73
Commercial property with an Actual/Assessed Valuation of \$300,000/\$330,000	Current Year Certified 2025/2026	Budget Year Proposed 2026/2027	Percent Change
City Regular Commercial	2,644	2,619	-0.95

Note: Actual/Assessed Valuation is multiplied by a Rollback Percentage to get to the Taxable Valuation to calculate Property Taxes. Residential and commercial properties have the same rollback percentage through \$150,000 of actual/assessed valuation.

How Does WB Compare?

City	Rate	City	Rate
Durant	16.24	North Liberty	11.69
Tipton	15.55	Solon	11.01
West Branch	11.46	Tiffin	11.80
Coralville	14.53	Anamosa	16.56
Iowa City	15.63	Monticello	15.22
Wilton	13.94	West Liberty	15.88

West Branch moved from #536 out of 934 Cities to 370th.

Source: Iowa Department of Management
2026

LOST

Revenues: \$265,000 (-12%)

Expenditures: \$203,943 (751% increase)

Highlights:

- \$23,943 for Park Bond
- \$100,000 for 2025 Bond
- \$80,000 for Fire Chief

**Iowa Department of
Revenue Statewide
Estimate:**

FY 2026 = -2.1% decrease

TIF

Revenues: \$476,178(-21%)

Expenditures: \$177,500 (4% increase)

Transfers: \$295,678 (.1% increase)

Highlights:

- 177,500 for rebates.
- Highest two are
 - Heritage Hill and
 - Casey's



Debt Service

Revenues: \$316,000 (-.1%)

Expenditures: \$926,333 (17% increase)

Transfers: \$567,164 (18% increase)

Highlights:

- 2025 Debt
- 2016 B paid off
- 2005 Water is paid off

Capital Improvement

Revenues: \$146,000

Expenditures: \$0

(does not include projects.)

Highlights:

- Reserve of \$536,000 at the end of 2027 is projected



W. Main Street Restoration



Road Use Tax

Revenues: \$351,260

Expenditures: \$339,393 (-3% increase)

Highlights:

- \$30,000 for tree trimming.
- \$18,750 for vehicle set aside.



Water

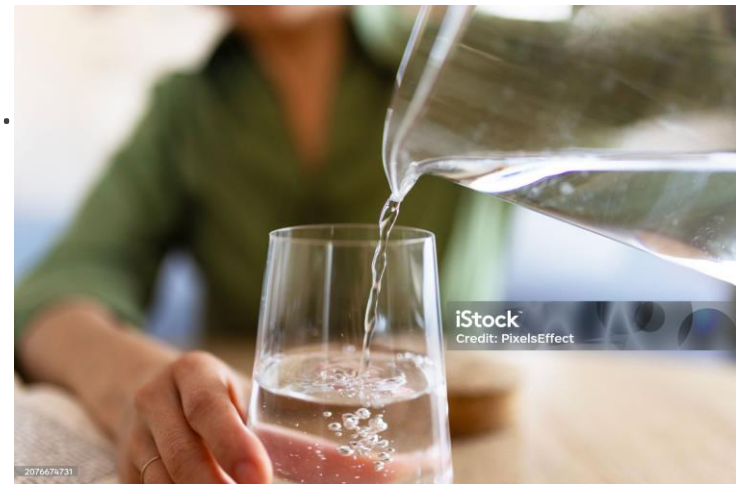
Revenue: \$930,000 (3% increase)

Expenses: Funding: \$635,000 (0% increase)

Transfers Out: 138,671

Highlights:

- \$155k surplus for future improvements.
- \$92,000 water tower improvements
 - \$38,000 for 100 water meters and
 - radio reads
 - \$75,000 in utilities.
 - 2005 debt paid off.



Sewer

Revenue: \$1,139,000 (-1%)

Expenses: \$484,406 (-6%)

Debt: \$701,791 Highlights:

- Utilities: \$83,000
- \$12,000 cut to group insurance
- \$20,000 cut to LOST (commercial only)
- Minor equipment increase of \$8,000 for a pontoon.
- Liability insurance \$10,000 or 67% increase.



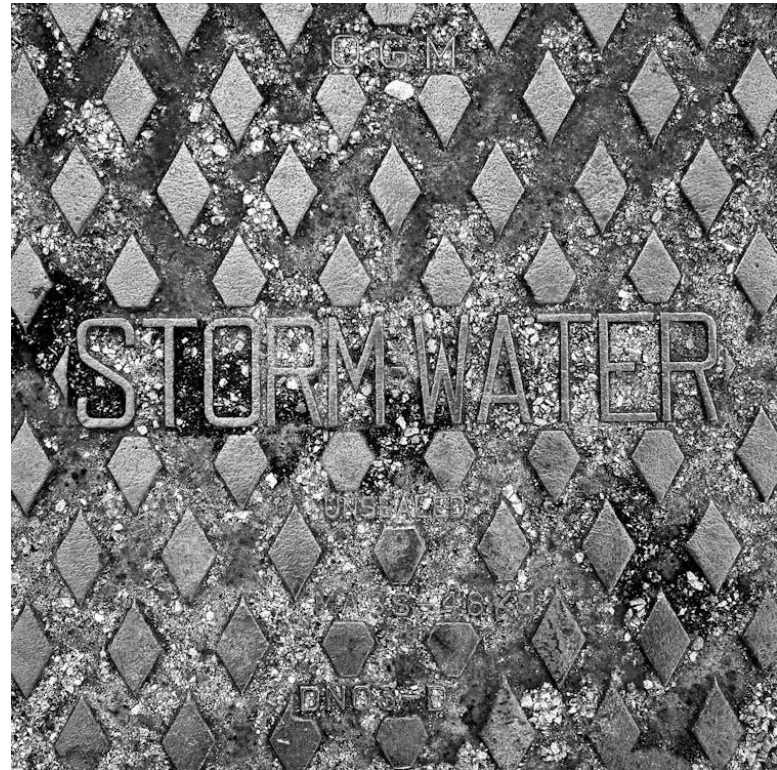
Stormsewer

Revenues: \$74,000 (3% increase)

Expenditures: \$18,000 (73% decrease)

Highlights:

- No \$100,000 transfer to Wapsi project
- One project to fix at \$20,000
- 3% in PW wages.



Conclusion

Assumptions

- 4.0% increase in full time permanent wages.
- 2.9% inflation
- 7.8% increase in health insurance
- 16% increase in liability insurance
- Does not take into account any property tax reform.
- Not exact numbers.

Highlights

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Highlights

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THE END!