

## May 16, 2023 Budget Work Session

A budget work session of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia, was held on May 16, 2023, in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 6:00PM with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Vice Mayor Rawls, Council Member Lawson, Council Member Pearson and Council Member Mitchell. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Finance Director Mandy McGhee, and Assistant Finance Director Crystal Ferguson.

Mayor Jones opened the meeting.

Greg Preston, Piedmont Community Services Director summarized the packet provided to Council Members and the breakdown of Council's 10% match. Council Member Mitchell and Council Member Pearson asked about the buildings, homes and land owned by PCS and the utilities provided by the City. Rawls stated that he would like to sit down with Preston to get a better understanding of his position. Preston explained the repercussions for PCS if Council is unable to approve the 10% match for PCS.

City Manager Towarnicki welcomed Sandra Haley of the Public Defender's office who briefly spoke briefly, stating that 39% of their caseload comes from Martinsville and requested \$18,000 towards their budget. Haley detailed the services provided by the Public Defender's office including the Drug Court.

City Manager Towarnicki suggested that Council go through the remainder of the budget book one page at a time, sharing that representatives from most departments were in attendance to answer any questions. Towarnicki confirmed that the law clerk position requested by Judge Greer was temporary, approved by Council in 2022 on the consent agenda and could potentially be funded with ARPA funds. Council discussed the Sheriff's Department budget; Laura Hopkins was present to answer questions about transportation, laundry, housing, reopening of the Annex, inmate labor hours, etc.

Police Chief Rob Fincher thanked the City Manager for allowing him to speak to Council on the Police Department budget. He feels that the proposed budget in regards to the Police Department would be detrimental to the City. The majority of the equipment purchased is paid for through grants and asset forfeiture funds so the budget basically covers staff and with the current proposal, would require cutting three police officer positions including two positions that were currently frozen. Fincher said those three positions should be restored, not cut and are required to maintain the level of service needed in the City. Over the years, the Martinsville Police Department has been cut 25% in personnel. Originally the department employed 56 officers, 7 civilians, and 5 part-time employees. Currently the Police Department employees 42 officers, 4 civilians and no part-time employees but have the same amount of responsibilities with fewer people. Officers have been working hard to keep the crime rate down but have been working for so long to maintain minimum operations, they are getting burned out from working mandatory overtime. Proactive practices are not being handled

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because there are no part-time employees to manage those. If they reduce the number of police, it's possible that the City will return to a high crime area. Council shared opinions about the proposed cut which would be across the board over all departments then discussed individual budget line items.

Towarnicki and Council discussed proposed budgets for street maintenance and construction, building maintenance, lot leasing, the Incubator, the Armory, and other City budgets. Durwin Joyce, Utilities Director elaborated on potential grant money for the Electric Department budget. Towarnicki detailed the City's electric costs and the fund balance. Council Member Mitchell asked about the cost of underground power lines. Joyce explained most anything proactive to prevent power outages can be very expensive.

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

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Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

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LC Jones, Mayor