

COUNCIL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS – STAFF RESPONSES
AS OF December 12, 2011 at 9:44 AM
FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2011 - COUNCIL AGENDA

Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7F: Consent Agenda – “Amendment to 2011 General Resurfacing Contract (City Wide)”

Question/Comment: “Is the current balance of \$465,000 going to be used in 2012 and if so, where?”

Staff Response: There are other outstanding capital projects that utilize this budget line item for FY2012.

Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7H: Consent Agenda – “Addendum to Agreement with George Gildner, Inc. for Water Main Replacement Project along Greenwood Avenue, from Main Street to Morris Avenue”

Question/Comment: “To avoid this happening again in the future, what have we learned regarding the \$89,600 change order with a 20% over bid amount?”

Staff Response: The issue of change orders on construction projects is not an issue that is taken lightly by Staff. Staff works hard to avoid change orders in the planning, design and construction of projects. But any construction project is subject to changes in the field that have not been anticipated. It should be noted that change orders are not unilateral decisions made by the contractor. Each change is discussed, deliberated over and either agreed to or denied by the City and in some cases are specifically requested by the City.

This project is not unlike many Water Department projects, particularly in older areas of the City. The Water Department records, which are the general basis for the design of the project, are not as precise as they could be and in certain cases underground issues will appear even with the best of planning. In the case of this change order, as an example, a water service was struck and damaged by the contractor and had to be repaired. The location of this private water service connected to a well was unknown to the design firm so its location was not included in the design of the project. Furthermore, the private water service, being private, was unknown to the City, so the City could not have informed the design firm that they needed to include its location in the design of the project. Lastly, on several occasions, the Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) service was called to request all utilities that are required to locate their facilities to do so with the construction zone. Unfortunately, the locating of a private water service by its owner is not required under JULIE law. Therefore, once this private water service was damaged, fault could not be assigned to the design firm, the contractor, the City or the well owner. The important issue was a customer was without water service and with the project being a City project; the city had the contractor on-site make immediate repairs. That contractor in turn, rightfully billed the City for extra work, at his bid prices that he was asked to perform. The discovery of the one private water service by striking it and another that was discovered before it was damaged led to the question of would these services be connected to the City system at some time in the future? With the answer being “possibly” and a new concrete road being built between the water main and the private water services, a decision was made to tap the water main and extend the services to the property line for use in the future. This led to additional costs as well, but will avoid damage to the road in the future if the private water service is eventually connected to the public water system.

There is always concern with underground utility construction that what has been designed, based upon the best available records and cost-effective field measurements, is always subject to differences due to most of the work being buried. Very little of what is designed can be physically viewed, inspected or measured. Thus there is a certain amount of risk on the City and the contractor’s part. That risk is minimized by due diligence in the design and bidding of projects, but it is always present. So ultimately, the lesson learned is probably more aptly described as a lesson revisited; that diligence must always be applied when designing and building projects, but change orders can be reduced but not practically eliminated.

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Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7I: Consent Agenda – “Requested withdrawal by the Lowest Bidder for Ferric Sulfate and Award to Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.

Question/Comment: “If they bid on dry ton as the paperwork stated, can we hold them to supply us dry ton at the bid price they agreed to at \$147 per ton? Also, I would like to know the dollar amount used on this chemical for an average year?”

Staff Response: The non-attorney answer would be yes; we asked them to bid in good faith using the criteria that we had specified in the bid request and they provided a bid figure. In a practical sense however, they admitted they had made a mistake before they ever shipped any material and requiring them to provide material for a year at (in their words) a loss would not be beneficial to either party. The dollar amount of ferric sulfate used in a typical year is about \$12,000-\$15,000.

Councilman: Rob Fazzini

Item 7L: Consent Agenda – “Ratification of Union Contract with the Telecommunicators for the Period of May 1, 2008 until April 30, 2011”

Question/Comment: “Were the wage increases actually paid to the employees even though the contract was not negotiated? Please explain to me how longevity works. Just for information, I am for eliminating the Sick Leave Buy Back in the next contract.”

Staff Response: Wage increases for Year 1 (May 1, 2008) were applied under the Pay for Performance Program to maintain status quo and guard against unfair labor practice charge for a newly formed union. No additional increase over performance increases which were given at that time and which averaged 4.1% was applied; Year 2 (May 1, 2009) – 0%; and Year 3 (May 1, 2010) – 2%. May 1, 2010 increases and the \$500 bonus worth approximately 1% of the average wage have not been paid. The bonus allowed the parties to close a gap in their proposals and make the deal, avoiding Arbitration.

The longevity schedule is equal to the longevity plans that apply to most other City Bargaining Units. The parties agreed to a longevity schedule as follows: 5 yrs.=5%, 10 yrs.=7%, 15 yrs.=9%, 20 yrs.=11%, 25 yrs.=13% and 30 yrs.=15%. The first longevity step is applied on the fifth of employment. The first group of employees to staff the Communication Center were hired in March of 2006; therefore no longevity is applicable at this time. At each of the longevity steps employees receive the negotiated amount on their base salary according to the longevity schedule.

Future contract modifications will be addressed during the negotiations for a successor agreement, including the elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back per the direction of the Council and consistent with other contracts.

Councilwoman: Judy Stearns

Item 7L: Consent Agenda – “Ratification of Union Contract with the Telecommunicators for the Period of May 1, 2008 until April 30, 2011”

Question/Comment: “Are we still allowing a vacation and sick time lump sum reimbursement for unused time? I believe this is still city wide including classified as well”

Staff Response: During this round of negotiations with Telecommunicators the elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back was not addressed. Future contract modifications will be addressed during the negotiations for a successor agreement, including the elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back per the direction of the Council and consistent with other contracts. The elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back applies to new hires and existing employees are grandfathered. The City is required to pay out any vacation and Personal time when an employee leaves the City’s employment. This is paid out in a lump sum at the time of separation. Elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back has been applied to 362 Support

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Staff, 362 Parking and 699 Library. HR is in the process of implementing changes to the Employee Handbook which will include the elimination of Sick Leave Buy Back for classified employees.

Councilman: David Sage

Item 7M: Consent Agenda – “Application of Bona Fide Thai Cuisine, LLC, d/b/a Bona Fide Thai Cuisine, located at 1500 E. Empire, for an RBS liquor license, which will allow the sale of beer and wine only by glass for consumption on the premises seven (7) days a week”

Question/Comment: “While I applaud and appreciate the tremendous progress made by the Downtown Task Force towards developing a strategy and plan for downtown liquor licenses, I’m still waiting to see something similar from the Liquor Commission for the rest of the city. For several years, I’ve believed the city has needed a more credible philosophy than approve everything and let the market decide. As has been my practice the past several years I won’t be supporting another new license. In the past I’ve simply voted no on individual consent agenda items, but we no longer can do this. For awareness, I intend to move this to the Regular Agenda where my motion will be to deny the license.”

Staff Response: Referred to the Liquor Commission.

Councilman: Bernie Anderson

Item 7M: Consent Agenda – “Application of Bona Fide Thai Cuisine Liquor License”

Question/Comment: “I am not wanting to hold this application up, but I too feel we have not addressed how licenses are being issued and impacts that they have on the City throughout.”

Staff Response: Referred to the Liquor Commission.

Councilwoman: Karen Schmidt

Item 7N: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of the International Mechanical Code, International Fuel Gas Code, and National Electrical Code with related fee modifications”

Question/Comment: “Same question about when fees will allow Building Safety costs to be covered”

Staff Response: While the new fees will help the current fiscal year (FY2012) the fees are expected to bring the Building Safety Division to self-sufficiency in fiscal year 2013.

Councilwoman: Karen Schmidt

Item 7O and 7P: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code with Staff Additions/Modifications”

Question/Comment: “The way I read these, 7O only addresses 3 three items (occupancy, kitchens, detention basins) and 7P specifically excludes the fire sprinkler issue – is that correct?”

Staff Response: Correct. 7O adopts the 2009 Property Maintenance Code with staff modifications. 7P Adopts the International Residential Code without the sprinkler requirement.

Councilwoman: Judy Stearns

Item 7O: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code with Staff Additions/Modifications”

Question/Comment: “I will be pulling 7O. Several citizens came to the property maintenance board meeting to discuss concerns. Several have told me their concerns have not been sufficiently addressed. Exempting properties less than 25 years is a major advantage to the newer properties and a disincentive to buy or renovate older multifamily homes. It is already more expensive and risky to manage them, but a well maintained multi family is a huge plus in an inner city neighborhood. They can certainly increase the District 87 tax base. ANY poorly maintained property will be adversely affect the base.

Meanwhile, many troubled properties that have had issues or even been condemned have been newer properties; examples have been on Clearwater Drive, Tracy Drive. One of the recent large scale fires was

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in a very new property, Brickyard. Normal does not differentiate among properties, understanding they have different conditions.

If the goal is to limit the number of inspections, why not choose properties with obvious external violations, missing windows, broken windows, faulty construction, and neighborhood or tenant complaints to select candidates for inspections?

I think we are sending out the wrong message by suggesting that newer properties are less in need of inspection.

Is there a legal need to be fair among rental properties across the spectrum of ages?
Why is the grading system being eliminated?

Please publish this with the questions, I request that only Barb or David respond to me to avoid an on line discussion. Thank you. Judy Stearns

Staff Response: This Council Agenda item is only related to the adoption of the 2009 Property Maintenance Code. Per the request of the Property Maintenance Review Board, the proposed changes to the Rental Inspection Program are currently open to public review (City Website). The staff's changes will be taken up again by the Property Maintenance Review Board during their meeting in January to be followed by the Board's and Staff's recommendation to the City Council in February.

Councilman: Rob Fazzini

Item 7P: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of the International Building Code/2009 (IBC), International Residential Code/2009 (IRC), International Fire Protection Code/2009 (IFC), International Existing Building Code/2009, (IEBC), International Energy Conservation Code/2009 (IECC) and modifications to related building permit fee schedules”

Question/Comment: “What is the estimated time frame (what year?) for the proposed fee increases to make PACE self-sufficient financially?”

Staff Response: 7P adopts the International Residential Code without the sprinkler requirement.

Councilman: David Sage

Item 7P: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of International Building Code, International Residential Code, International Fire Protection Code, International Existing Building Code, International Energy Conservation and modifications to related building permit fee”

Question/Comment: “I assumed when I saw previous updates for future meeting and saw that we'd be adopting the updated code without the residential sprinkler requirement that meant striking out that requirement. Now after reviewing the staff back-up report I want to make sure what this agenda item contains:

1. Does the code we're adopting include the residential sprinkler mandate, and we'll consider removing it in January or
2. Does the code not include this mandate, and we'll consider putting this residential sprinkler mandate back into the code in January?”

Staff Response: A continued hearing before the Construction Board of Appeals will be held on December 13, 2011 with anticipated Council consideration on January 9, 2012.

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Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7P: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of Codes”

Question/Comment: “When will the fire sprinkler requirement be brought back to the Council for a vote?”

Staff Response: A continued hearing before the Construction Board of Appeals will be held on December 13, 2011 with anticipated Council consideration on January 9, 2012.

Councilman: Bernie Anderson

Item 7P: Consent Agenda – “Adoption of Codes”

Question/Comment: “I would like to pull this from the Consent Agenda moving it to the Regular Agenda making the recommendation to add that sprinkler systems be a mandated offer by the Builder. This has been expressed by Builders, potential home buyers, and realtors and would be viewed favorable.”

Staff Response: While the Council has the ability to take this action, it may be premature at this time. This would short circuit the public input procedure and Construction Board recommendations. Additionally, there would have to be work done to determine the form of such a new program, not available for Council consideration at this time.

Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7Q: Consent Agenda – “Lake Lease”

Question/Comment: “Why are they undoing this? Are they not going to build a bigger house now?”

Staff Response: The owners have apparently, in the current economic times, decided against demolishing the two cabins and building a bigger house on two lots under a common lease. By separating the leases again, the individual cabins can be sold under the same terms that they were purchased.

Councilman: Steven Purcell

Item 7S: Consent Agenda – “Eastlake, LLC approval of Preliminary Plan of the Grove”

Question/Comment: “How will the City Services be lower and to what extent? Please explain?”

Staff Response: The statement in Staff’s back up report is rather broad in the sense that no direct numbers can be attributed at this time. It simply correlates the idea of fewer homes sites which results in fewer city services needed. Examples: fewer calls for police service, fewer garbage pick-up points, etc.

Councilman: Jim Fruin

Item 8A: Regular Agenda – “Approval of 2011 Library Tax Levy”

Question/Comment: “During the November 14th Council Meeting, The Council chose to reduce the Library’s requested Property Tax levy by \$140K and keep it flat to the prior year’s Levy of \$4,513,519. Since that meeting the Pantagraph reported that the Library may have increased Insurance liability costs. Has the Library Board made any adjustments to their original request of \$4,654,295? Or, are they assuming that they will need to accept the Council’s adjusted amount of \$4,513,519? Not knowing the Library’s current stance, I would like to know which of these two amounts they are currently requesting?”

The Library has provided us with a wealth of information over the last several months regarding increased circulation numbers, increased use of Computers, the success of the Summer Reading program, the increased count of Cardholders, the increased door counts, etc. and the existing inside and outside space is being utilized to full capacity. It is gratifying to see that we are serving residents of all ages and all walks of life with such a wide reaching demographic user group. In many ways we are in the same situation we were in 10 years ago when the Library Board was first advocating a branch facility. At the time, some felt it was discouraged by some who only wanted to retain a single Downtown Library location.

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It seems as though we adequately understand the pressing needs and interests of our Library patrons. I feel that allowing the Library Board to proceed with some limited financial savings plan is well justified. It is clear that continued demands on our Library’s resources are well documented, and that should be validated by an outside Needs Assessment analysis requested by the Council subcommittee. I believe a vote for the original request of \$4,654,295 would demonstrate our support for the due diligence done by the management team as well as the oversight provided by our highly respected Library Board. This is yet another example of how we can work together cooperatively with another trusted governmental entity. (Of late, we have been receiving some unfavorable reviews by some of our other Boards and Commissions for taking contrary positions to their recommendations).”

Staff Response: The Library’s request is for the \$4,513,519, which represents a flat levy equal to last year’s amount. The workman’s compensation claim responsible for the increase in insurance costs occurred two years ago. We had anticipated a large increase and planned for it. Thank you for your support and understanding of the Library’s situation.

Councilman: Rob Fazzini

Item 8C: Regular Agenda – “Purchase of Fire/Rescue Training Tower to be located behind Fire Station #2, 1911 Hamilton Road”

Question/Comment: “Am I correct that the total cost of this project to the City will be \$342,220 after consideration of the \$405,000 DCEO grant and the \$150,000 Foreign Fire Insurance Board pledge?”

Staff Response: See below worksheet. The cost estimates were put together with much assistance from Architectural firms, the manufacturer and local contractors. The costs cannot be guaranteed 100% and are the best we can provide at this time.

Cost		Funding	
Tower Materials	\$258,367.00	Illinois DCEO Grant	\$405,000.00
Anticipated Construction Costs	\$638,853.00	Foreign Fire Insurance Board	\$150,000.00
Total Estimated Costs	\$897,220.00	Total Commitments	\$555,000.00
		Unfunded Project Cost	\$342,220.00

Councilman: David Sage

Item 8C: Regular Agenda – “Purchase of Fire/Rescue Training Tower to be located behind Fire Station #2, 1911 Hamilton Road”

Question/Comment: “My recollection of the last work session on this was we didn’t take any action indicating support to go ahead with this project. What I recall was the request to gather more information and come back for more discussion. That’s why I was surprised to see apparently we’ve jumped past further discussion, and simply moved to asking the Council to approve spending money on this project. Again I’ll ask where does this fit into our overall priorities?”

Staff Response: During the Work Session direction was given that the project was worthwhile and that we should continue to move forward. Specific direction was given on searching for additional funding sources. Staff also indicated a substantial price increase in steel that would result in an escalation of the cost of the project by \$60,000+ after the first of the year. Staff worked diligently to seek out additional funding sources during this period of time and made applications into any available funding sources. The Foreign Fire Insurance Board allocated \$150,000 to the project over a designated period time to assist. As the deadline for purchasing is almost here, the City Manager was consulted on how best to proceed. The recommendation was to bring the issue to Council. (see attached minutes)

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Councilwoman: Karen Schmidt

Item 8C: Regular Agenda – “Purchase of Fire/Rescue Training Tower to be located behind Fire Station #2, 1911 Hamilton Road”

Question/Comment: “Same questions other have posed about the fire tower”

Staff Response: Responses posted under Councilmen Fazzini, Fruin, Sage, and Stearns.

Councilman: Jim Fruin

Item 8C: Regular Agenda – “Purchase of Fire/Rescue Training Tower to be located behind Fire Station #2, 1911 Hamilton Road”

Question/Comment: “Was the selection of the Vendor done exclusively by the Fire Department or in collaboration with Finance/Purchasing personnel?”

Staff Response: The manufacture of Fire Training Facilities is a specialized field. Staff did research into which facilities were appropriate for our needs, yet were reasonable in cost. Towers can be concrete (such as the Fire Service Institute in Champaign), which allows for burning in any room, but is extremely expensive to construct and to maintain, Land-Sea containers can be welded together but are poorly constructed for the purpose of fire training and do not hold up well. Staff looked for manufacturers who provided a facility specifically designed for the purpose of fire training that had a lower cost to build and maintain than traditional concrete facilities. The approval of the vendor in terms of being a sole source provider based on their product was done in consult with Finance and Purchasing.

Question/Comment: Have we secured any definitive agreements with area Fire Departments to utilize this “Regional” facility to help defray the expected 900K costs?

Staff Response: The Town of Normal has expressed an interest in training at this facility but has no funds to allocate except for materials that would be used during training. As was discussed during the work session, Staff has a need to conduct fire training for Bloomington Fire Personnel. Hands on training to keep our personnel proficient is not happening presently. The only way to ensure this occurs is either to build a facility here that would allow on duty training within an area that still allows for response to the community, or to send each of our personnel out to some type of annual hands on skill course. For us to send each of our 99 personnel out to one (1) forty hour (40) hands on class at an appropriate training facility such as the Fire Service Institute (IFSI) in Champaign would cost the following:

- Course cost (typical hands on course cost at IFSI-average between \$575-950 per person); \$600 (Engine Company Operations Class)
- Overtime cost to cover the shift of each person (based on 10 yr. FF salary); \$1,728
- Travel Expenses; meals (breakfast and lunch) \$23.00 x five; \$115
- Mileage; 55 miles each way x 5 days at \$0.50 per mile; \$275

This totals \$2,718 per person x 99 equals about \$270,000 each year just to maintain a basic skill level in firefighting for our personnel if we go to an appropriate facility. This is the reason for developing the facility. Staff is also collaborating with Normal Fire on multi-company evolutions to increase our ability to work together. These drills were done at facilities that were up for demolition such as the ISU dormitories. The continued availability of structures such as these every year is questionable as are their suitability for all types of evolutions. Staff is hoping to build more collaboration with other neighboring departments if this facility is built.

Question/Comment: It was previously asked if other COB departments and employees could utilize this facility to help them be successful in their job responsibilities and safety. Has this been explored? The answers to both of these questions could help to justify the 900K expense.

Staff Response: Both Fire and Police Chiefs have spoken and feel there are training functions that they would be able to accomplish in a facility such as this. I am not sure of other Department needs that would involve use of this facility, but since we all work together, I do not see any reason why another City

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department would not be able to use this facility if they had a need. Staff has also partnered with the Bloomington Area Career Center, located at Bloomington High School to develop a fire training program for Junior and Senior High School students to introduce local youth to opportunities in Fire and EMS. This program would also benefit from having this facility and tradeoff for the City is local youth aspiring to careers in our community.

Question/Comment: Regarding the planned 150K pledge from the Foreign Fire Insurance Board, why is this extended out for six years? With a fund balance of 100K, why would it not be better to contribute 75K on completion, and the other 75K within two years of completion? Can the Council be given a copy of the Income/Expense accounting records for 2010 and 2011? Some might not fully understand this funding source.

Staff Response: The Foreign Fire Insurance Board records are accessible at <http://www.cityblm.org/agendas.asp?id=13018>. It is important to understand that since the cost saving measures introduced during the fiscal crisis that began in 2009, the Foreign Fire Insurance Board has taken on the role of providing many operational items that Staff could no longer provide through the regular budget. Since 2008, equipment and amounts are as follows:

- Safety and Personal protective equipment (gloves, helmets, gear, etc.) =\$73,469
- Training equipment (fir-sim software, smoke machines, hazmat tank prop, etc.) =\$14,980
- Fire and EMS response equipment (EMS Cots, Thermal Imaging Cameras, etc.) =\$95,794
- Station and Fitness equipment (beds, chairs, workout equipment) =\$86,595
- Public Education (Station handouts, fire extinguisher trainer, sparky costume, etc.) =\$51,840

This totals \$322,678 in operational equipment that Staff would not be able to provide to accomplish what the Firefighters/EMS does each day. This breaks down to over \$80,000 per year that the FFIB allocates to operations. The rationale the Board used when they were approached to support the Tower is that they agree it is necessary, but were concerned that operation issues could not be addressed if their funds were depleted based on the existing Fire Department budget. The reimbursement was designed as a mechanism to allow for the Board to continue to support the Fire Department operations and fund this project. This is the same agreement that was authorized when the tower was originally proposed in 2006.

Question/Comment: With regard to ongoing operating costs, do we have an estimated revenue projection that should be received on an annual basis? Also, why would be it necessary to have additional Fire Department personnel onsite, beyond the normal staff on duty on Hamilton Road at the time? Would the scheduling and onsite coordination not be overseen by the Fire Department Training Officer?

Staff Response: Workload demand on Administrative staff has increased dramatically and exceeding ability to complete work. The Department is operating with the same administrative staffing level that existed 20 years ago (7 staff; -2 clerical, 1 Public education, 1 Maintenance and 3 Fire Officers). At that time, the Department's call volume was about 4000 call per year and the suppression staff was at 51. Calls per year at around 10,000 and have an authorized staffing of 102.

Question/Comment: I have always been concerned with the duplication to the relatively new Heyworth Fire Training Tower, and the lack of "Central Illinois" oversight that allowed this to happen. It is simply not a good use of taxpayer dollars. If the Council feels it is time to move forward with construction, and not risk a further extension of the available Grant funding, then I will join a unified vote."

Staff Response: The Department that worked to put in the Heyworth Training Tower never asked for our input into design, location or needs (nor did they have to). The ability to conduct multi-company drills with types of occupancies common to the City of Bloomington does not exist in this facility. This was designed to meet the needs of small rural departments. Some examples of needs are Aerial ladder use, standpipes/sprinklers, moveable walls to change configurations, forcible entry doors, roof work areas, multiple burn rooms.

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Councilwoman: Judy Stearns

Item 8C: Regular Agenda – “Purchase of Fire/Rescue Training Tower to be located behind Fire Station #2, 1911 Hamilton Road”

Question/Comment: “Please clarify where the funding will come from? Is it a draw down on the unreserved fund balance? What about other needs to draw down this fund?”

Staff Response: Yes as stated in the Council Memo.

Additional Questions/Comments from City Council

Councilman: Rob Fazzini

Comment: “Could we please have the pages numbered to make referencing easier, especially during the meeting”

Councilwoman: Judy Stearns

Question/Comment: “Pertaining to the levy and our pension contributions. What will our statutory requirement be for this year for the Police and Fire Pensions? What was it last year? Last year, exactly how much extra did we designate for pensions? How much extra are we designating this year over and above our statutory requirement? Please add this to published questions for tonight, as it influences my thoughts on the levy. I pre that this not copy everyone as I believe that can spark an on line discussion.”

Staff Response: Note: The actuarial information the City uses for its tax levy is always one year behind. The actuarial studies just completed on the Police and Firefighters Pension Funds as of May 1, 2011 calculates the employer contributions needed for the fiscal year beginning May, 1, 2011 and ending April 30, 2012. However, the City is using that calculation to set the 2011 tax levy, which will fund the employer contributions for the year ending April 30, 2013.

POLICE PENSION FUND:

FY 2011 Statutorily Required: \$4,057,957

FY 2011 Actual: \$3,867,939

FY Excess/(Deficiency): (190,018)

FY 2012 Statutorily Required: \$3,056,933

FY 2012 Actual: \$4,057,967

FY Excess/(Deficiency): \$1,001,034

FY 2013 Recommended Levy: \$3,306,933

FIREFIGHTERS PENSION FUND:

FY 2011 Statutorily Required: \$3,407,498

FY 2011 Actual: \$3,140,710

FY 2011 Excess/(Deficiency) \$266,788

FY 2012 Statutorily Required: \$2,861,552

FY 2012 Actual: \$3,407,498

FY 2012 Excess/ (Deficiency) \$545,946

FY 2013 Recommended Levy: \$3,111,552

Prepared by:
Barbara J. Adkins
Deputy City Manager

WORK SESSION
Fire Training Tower
September 12, 2011

Council Present: Aldermen Judy Stearns, Bernard Anderson, Steven Purcell, Karen Schmidt, Jim Fruin, Rob Fazzini, Mboka Mwilambwe Jennifer McDade, and Mayor Stephen F. Stockton.

Staff Present: David Hales, City Manager, Mike Kimmerling, Fire Chief, and Tracey Covert, City Clerk.

The Work Session was called to order at 6:25 p.m. Mayor Stockton cited the first topic – Fire Training Tower.

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. Tonight, the Council would be given an updated status regarding this project. He noted the financing gap. This facility would address training needs within the fire service. Before the Council addressed the cost, City staff would present information to address 1.) why this facility; 2.) the need for same; and 3.) benefits of same. The final topics would include financing and other issues.

Mike Kimmerling, Fire Chief, addressed the Council. He intended to keep his comments brief. He noted that firefighting was an active skill. Hands on training was important. There was limited opportunity for same. Currently, training is offered at the fire station. It has been provided via PowerPoint and DVD based. This type of training was not optimal. He noted the safety of the citizens and the fire suppression staff. A training facility was necessary. It would be available for use by other fire departments. The City would enter into intergovernmental agreements to accomplish same.

Mr. Hales presented a brief history regarding this facility which dated back to 2007. He noted the limitations placed on this project.

Chief Kimmerling stressed that hands on training would be available for the City's 100 uniformed fire personnel. He noted that there was a wonderful training facility located in Champaign, IL. He estimated the cost of using same at \$3,500 per employee per class. Based upon cost and distance, this facility provided limited opportunity to practice firefighting skills. City staff had been creative in its attempts to provide the necessary training. He restated that the City did not have a dedicated facility. The Town of Normal has utilized a seed container which in his opinion was not safe. The City rarely used this facility. He cited that the City of Macomb had a similar experience. He noted the coalition of rural townships which have a two (2) room residential training facility. This facility can be used to perform live training.

The proposed facility would be multistoried with multiple burn rooms. It would be movable maze. Chief Kimmerling stressed that this was the type of facility needed.

Mr. Hales noted the 2007 estimated cost was \$400,000. The City had received a grant with the assistance of State Representative Dan Brady. He noted today's cost. City staff had investigated a financing grant due to the cost difference.

Chief Kimmerling noted that the cost of this facility was researched in 2006 – 2007. The conversation regarding state grant dollars occurred in 2009. The Farnsworth Group performed the preliminary work in 2007 and the project was put on hold. The City was later contacted by Representative Brady with an offer of state grant dollars. City staff provided Representative Brady with the cost estimated of \$405,000. Two (2) years have passed. Today, the City has a good cost estimate for this facility. The City approach the Economic Development Council (EDC) regarding the One Voice project.

Chief Kimmerling stated that within the Fire Department there was no one with construction expertise. The Fire Department requested the assistance of the Farnsworth Group after the state grant of \$400,000 was awarded. Upon further conversations, City staff discovered that the funding shortfall was \$492,000.

The City must pay prevailing wages for this project. Chief Kimmerling noted the increase cost to the price of steel. City staff performed site visits to determine the power needs of this facility. He also noted the cost increase to copper. In addition, there was the rate of inflation.

Mr. Hales addressed the memorandum. The state grant was for \$405,000. The City had requested a one (1) year extension. The state approved an extension until September 30, 2012. There may be the potential for an additional one (1) year extension. The Council needed to address the financing gap. There were two (2) options: 1.) seek additional funding sources, such as the Foreign Fire Insurance Board, (FFIB); and/or 2.) look to the City to finance this project over two (2) fiscal years. The Council may want to consider combining options 1 and 2. In addition, there may be other funding sources beyond the FFIB. A worst case scenario would be to return the grant.

Mr. Hales described this facility as a significant need in the area of firefighter training. He noted the cost for overtime and training and cost to utilize Champaign's facility. He restated that there was a significant financing gap.

Mayor Stockton stated that it was not possible to build this facility in stages. Chief Kimmerling informed the Council that the City would purchase the structure and hire a contractor to erect same. The facility will require power. He acknowledged that the facility could be scaled down. He cited the cost of construction as significant.

Mayor Stockton noted the potential for limited use. He also acknowledged that construction costs were constantly increasing. Chief Kimmerling informed the Council that the cost of steel was expected to increase by twenty percent (20%) in January 2012.

Alderman Anderson informed the Council that he had seen the two (2) facilities, (Heyworth and Champaign). The City's facility would be somewhere in between these two (2) facilities. He questioned cost savings and revenue generating potential.

Chief Kimmerling did not believe that there would be any training cost savings. He readdressed the need for hands on training for skill development and teamwork. He added that training costs were not budgeted. He restated training cost of \$3,000 - \$5,000 per uniformed firefighter plus overtime costs. The facility would address cost recovery not revenue generation. He questioned if the City wanted to actively market and provide instructors for various classes.

Alderman Anderson noted that the Heyworth facility could not meet all of the City's needs. Chief Kimmerling added that to use this facility the City needed to hire instructors.

Alderman Fazzini noted that the grant covered approximately fifty percent (50%) of the cost. This grant was similar to OSLAD, (Open Space Land Acquisition & Development), grants which were awarded for parks development. He believed that the facility was needed. The City's current practices were not the best. In addition, the City did not want to loose this grant. The City needed to move forward in a positive direction.

Alderman Purcell noted that training costs had been estimated at \$350,000. He cited the risk exposure for firefighters. He hoped the cost could be spread over two (2) years.

Alderman McDade questioned the annual operational cost. Chief Kimmerling estimated the cost at \$1,200 0 \$1,500 per year. Operational costs included straw, pallets and electricity. Alderman McDade expressed her belief that the maintenance cost would be minimal. She noted the construction cost.

Mayor Stockton questioned the percentage of time used. Chief Kimmerling stated that the facility would be used for training purposes on average three (3) days per week for at least six (6) months a year. The Fire Department currently scheduled 7,000 hours per year for fire training and 3,000 – 5,000 hours for hazmat (hazardous materials) and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) training per year. The Fire Department attempted to provide multiple hazard approach to its training.

Mayor Stockton questioned the percentage of usage for the City versus other departments. Chief Kimmerling did not have an answer. The Town of Normal was interested. He was attempting to build bridges with other fire departments within McLean County. Most volunteer fire departments offer training one (1) night per month.

Alderman Fruin noted an underlying theme – Council commitment to supply the resources needed to perform the job. He questioned how the City compared to the City of Champaign. All uniformed fire personnel needed to be trained. All must be ready to perform and respond to the needs of an incident. The cost of training was justified. He noted past conversations regarding a regional tower which would serve a number of

departments. He believed that the facility would generate rental revenue. He questioned who would be willing to participate and share in the financial costs.

Mr. Hales hoped that the Council was interested in keeping this project alive. City staff would reach out to other fire departments/districts and request their participation. City staff would research other funding sources. He restated the significant funding gap. City staff was looking for Council support.

Alderman Mwilambwe questioned intergovernmental agreements.

Alderman Anderson cited mutual aid. This facility would be of benefit to the City. He hoped that the City would be able to generate enough revenue to cover the facility's operational cost. He urged the Council to support this critical need.

Alderman Fazzini expressed his support. The City needed to find the way, the money and move forward.

Alderman McDade hoped the City would find the funding. The City needed to provide fire training and keep its uniformed fire personnel up to date.

Mayor Stockton noted that City staff would perform further exploration in the areas of cost sharing and funding partners. A key issue was the City's ability to fund this project. Mr. Hales stated that City staff would report back to Council on ways to finance the funding gap. A time line would be dependent upon outreach. He expressed his hope that this project would go for bid in the winter 2011 and construction would begin in the spring 2012.

Chief Kimmerling informed the Council that the tower could be built during the winter. He added his hope that this project would commence as soon as possible due to the potential cost savings.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Covert
City Clerk