CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES  
June 15, 2021

The City Council met this date in a regular session, which was available to the public via teleconference, at 8:02 pm.

Present at Roll Call: Mayor Gerry Welch  
Councilmember Laura Arnold  
Councilmember Pam Bliss  
Councilmember David Franklin  
Councilmember Emerson Smith  
Councilmember Karen D. Alexander  
Councilmember Sarah Richardson

A quorum was present.

Also present: Dr. Marie Peoples, City Manager  
Mr. Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney (Via Zoom)  
Ms. Katie Nakazono, City Clerk

RECOGNITIONS  

Mayor Welch and Council presented a proclamation in celebration of Pride month.

PUBLIC HEARINGS  
Annual Library Budget Report – Fiscal Year 2022  
Mayor Welch opened the public hearing, and Tom Cooper, Library Director, reviewed budget highlights [Exhibit A - Copy in City Clerk’s office]. He stated that they are returning to full services, and will start accepting passport applications again by appointment on July 1. This year’s 4th of July display is Famous Webster Groves Women. He stated that they are receiving state aid in the budget. Ebooks have kind of plateaued while requests for audiobooks are up. Insurance costs are up a bit.

The following documents will be included in the public record:
1. Copy of the Budget

Mayor Welch closed the public hearing.

Patterson Performing Arts (45 W. Lockwood Avenue): An Application by Patterson Performing Arts for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts Use, in an Existing Structure Located on a 1.67-Acre Lot at 45 W. Lockwood Avenue in the “D” Commercial District  
Mayor Welch opened the public hearing. Mara Perry, Director of Planning and Development, gave a brief presentation (Exhibit B, available in the City Clerk’s office). She reviewed the
zoning, surrounding uses, existing conditions, and site history (See Exhibit B, pages 1-3). We always identify and look at the Comprehensive Plan (See Exhibit B, page 3) and the five factors (See Exhibit B, page 4). She reviewed uses and stated that the requested use was “Educational Facility, School for the Arts” use (See Exhibit C, page 4). She explained parking requirements for the use and business hours (See Exhibit B, page 5).

Ms. Perry reviewed the staff recommendations (See Exhibit B, page 6).

Councilmember Franklin asked why this is before us. Ms. Perry stated that when a facility leases space for another use that is not an accessory to the primary use, it is not an accessory use. When it comes to schools, we do need to verify that they do not have large amounts of parking issues. In order to operate and have their business license we need to go through this process.

Councilmember Arnold stated that she is a member of the Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, but my understanding is, because I do not hold a leadership position, I do not have to recuse myself from this vote.

Councilmember Franklin stated that this is a wonderful collaborative approach between the church and school.

Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney, entered the following into the public record:
1. Plan Commission staff report by Danny Jendusa, Planner for meeting date June 7, 2021
2. Written statement from Patterson Performing Arts
3. Preliminary floor plans
4. Director of Planning and Development’s Powerpoint before the City Council June 15, 2021
5. Zoning Code of the City of Webster Groves

Mayor Welch closed the public hearing.

BILL #9153 – FIRST & SECOND READING
Councilmember Richardson introduced BILL #9153 – FIRST & SECOND READING – AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO PATTISON PERFORMING ARTS TO ALLOW AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY, SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS USE, ON AN APPROXIMATELY 1.67-ACRE TRACT OF LAND IN AN EXISTING STRUCTURE AT 45 W. LOCKWOOD AVENUE IN THE “D” COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO, and at the Councilmember’s request, the Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

REMARKS OF VISITORS
The Deputy City Clerk read submitted Remarks of Visitor comments received by 4 p.m. on June 15, 2021, into the record (Exhibit C).
- Scott Guerrero
- Michael Chekoudjian
- Dave Buck
June 15, 2021

- Mary Garavaglia
- Daniel Bruzzini

Clark Hotaling spoke in favor of advancing housing options in Webster Groves and hopes voters will vote “No” on Proposition 1.

NEW BUSINESS – MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, CITY ATTORNEY, CITY MANAGER

No New Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
BILL #9150 THIRD READING
On motion of Councilmember Smith, seconded by Councilmember Bliss, BILL #9150 – ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO THE WILLOW IN WEBSTER TO ALLOW BANQUET FACILITY AND DANCING ACADEMY USES ON AN APPROXIMATELY 0.45-ACRE TRACT OF LAND IN AN EXISTING STRUCTURE AT 60 N. GORE AVENUE IN THE “D” COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO, having been introduced and read twice on June 1, 2021, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9150.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9150.

MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH
NOES: NONE

Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9150 was approved.

BILL #9151 THIRD READING
On motion of Councilmember Bliss, seconded by Councilmember Arnold, BILL #9151 – ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE DEFINING THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES, FIXING THE COMPENSATION FOR EMPLOYEES IN SAID CLASSIFICATIONS, AND REPEALING ORDINANCE #9123, having been introduced and read twice on June 1, 2021, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9151.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9151.

MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD
NOES: NONE

Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9151 was approved.

BILL #9152 THIRD READING
On motion of Councilmember Arnold, seconded by Councilmember Bliss, BILL #9152 – ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE COMPENSATION OF PERSONS IN THE UNCLASSIFIED SERVICE OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES, AND REPEALING ORDINANCE #9124, having been introduced and read twice on June 1, 2021, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9152.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9152.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9152 was approved.

NEW BUSINESS
RESOLUTION #2021-28 – ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022
A motion was made by Councilmember Franklin, seconded by Councilmember Arnold, to approve RESOLUTION #2021-28 – ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022.

Councilmember Arnold stated that we have a lot of work to do. This is really challenging, and we have a lot of work.

Mayor Welch read the following statement:
“During the 2009/2010 budget year, the City enacted a Fund Balance Policy. I was one of those who voted to enact this.

The policy advocates for a fund balance that is a minimum of 50% of operating expenditures to cover funding for 6 months and to provide liquidity in the City’s cash flow.

We have maintained a reserve fund larger than 50% that has been to our advantage. For one, the City’s healthy bond rating has affected the interest payments on debt and saved us money – like debt for the new firehouse and street improvements. For another, we have been able to weather the storm during this pandemic.

The coming year for which this budget has been proposed should be a healthy year for revenues. And, yet, the budget proposes a deficit of over $2 million. This, added to the previous two years with the pandemic issues, has brought our reserves from close to $12 million to now about $8.5 million.

The fund balance policy would set the needed reserve fund at close to $9.6 million. With this budget we are approximately $1.2 million short of the 50% policy.

I know this is tough with the demands that are placed on the City for funding. But the stingy, economist side of me says that we need to pull in some of these expenditures – plan for them over the next two years. The proposed budget and this spending are not sustainable. The previous administration may have gone a little overboard with saving money at the expense of some needs in the City – like technology – but budgets were balanced and the City earned a reputation for fiscal stability that we now enjoy. I can’t approve of this budget that violates a policy I voted to pass.”

Councilmember Franklin stated that we are fortunate because of the federal relief that we are not in dire straits. We are not begging for money right now, and that is in great part due to the federal relief money coming.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on Resolution #2021-28
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN
NOES: WELCH
Mayor Welch stated that Resolution #2021-28 was approved.

CONSENT AGENDA
A motion was made by Councilmember Richardson, seconded by Councilmember Franklin, to approve the Consent Agenda.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on the Consent Agenda.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that the Consent Agenda was approved.

The following consent agenda was approved:
- **Approval of Minutes** – June 1, 2021
- **Resolution #2021-29** – Authorizing the City Manager to Enter into a Contract for Traffic Signalization Upgrades at Elm and Glendale, and Newport and Brentwood
- **Liquor License Renewals** – Renewal of the 2021-2022 Liquor Licenses
- **Resolution #2021-30** – Authorizing the City Manager to Amend and Extend the Contract with Development Strategies for Services Related to the Old Webster Redevelopment Project

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
No appointments to Boards and Commissions.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION
Councilmember Arnold made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Franklin, to go into Executive Closed Session per Personnel [MO Statute 610.021 (3)].
Mayor Welch called for the vote to go into Executive (Closed) Session.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that the Council would go into Executive (Closed) Session.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m. on motion of the Mayor, duly seconded.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 6th day of July 2021.

[Signature]
MAYOR

[Signature]
CITY CLERK
WEBSTER GROVES PUBLIC LIBRARY
2021-2022 OPERATING BUDGET
EXPENDITURES

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<tr>
<th>BUDGET ITEM</th>
<th>2021-2022 PROPOSED</th>
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### REVENUES

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Bill #9153
First & Second Reading
An Ordinance Granting a Conditional Use Permit to Patterson Performing Arts to Allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts Use, on an Approximately 1.67-Acre Tract of Land in an Existing Structure at 45 W. Lockwood Avenue in the “D” Commercial District and Matters Related Thereto

Zoning “D” Commercial District

21-PC-05 Patterson Performing Arts (45 W Lockwood Ave)
Bill #9153  
First & Second Reading  

An Ordinance Granting a Conditional Use Permit to Patterson Performing Arts to Allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts Use, on an Approximately 1.67-Acre Tract of Land in an Existing Structure at 45 W. Lockwood Avenue in the “D” Commercial District and Matters Related Thereto
21-PC-05 Patterson Performing Arts (45 W Lockwood Ave)

History
- 1867 - Webster Groves Presbyterian Church
- 1923 - Zoned "E" Industrial District and "D" Commercial District
- 1956 - Zoned "D" Commercial District
- 1959 & 1961, Special Use Permits to reconstruct and expand facilities
- Since 1962, the church has operated daycare and early childhood care facilities at the subject property.

Comprehensive Plan Analysis
The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment recommends Religious Institutional use at the subject property.

Staff has determined that a Conditional Use Permit to allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts use at the subject property would be appropriate within the subject property’s designation in the city’s Comprehensive Plan.
21-PC-05 Patterson Performing Arts
(45 W Lockwood Ave)

Conditional Use Permit

Per Sec. 53.173(c), the Council shall determine whether the proposed use will not:

1. Substantially increase traffic hazards or congestion.
2. Substantially increase fire hazards.
3. Adversely affect the character of the neighborhood.
4. Adversely affect the general welfare of the community.
5. Overtax public utilities.

Bill #9153
First & Second Reading
An Ordinance Granting a Conditional Use Permit to Patterson Performing Arts to Allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts Use, on an Approximately 1.67-Acre Tract of Land in an Existing Structure at 45 W. Lockwood Avenue in the “D” Commercial District and Matters Related Thereto

Uses

“Educational Facility, School for the Arts” use.

The applicant intends to hold small-group and one-on-one musical lessons for children and adults, serving a maximum of fifteen (15) students at a time. The applicant intends to hold these activities within the third floor of the existing classroom facilities at the subject property, utilizing approximately 3,600 square feet in area.
Parking

The zoning code requires a minimum of one (1) off-street parking space for every one thousand (1,000) square feet of teaching facilities.

At 3,600 square feet in existing facilities, the zoning code would require a minimum of four (4) parking spaces.

The subject property currently includes ninety-two (92) off-street parking spaces.

21-PC-05 Patterson Performing Arts (45 W Lockwood Ave)

Bill #9153 First & Second Reading

An Ordinance Granting a Conditional Use Permit to Patterson Performing Arts to Allow an Educational Facility, School for the Arts Use, on an Approximately 1.67-Acre Tract of Land in an Existing Structure at 45 W. Lockwood Avenue in the “D” Commercial District and Matters Related Thereto

Hours of Operation

School year:
Mondays-Thursdays 2pm-7p
Sundays 1pm-8pm

Summer:
Monday-Wednesday 10am-7pm
Sundays 1pm-7pm
Staff Recommendations

Should the City Council recommend approval, Staff would recommend the following conditions:

1. All provisions of the City Code shall apply except as expressly modified in this Ordinance #9153.
2. All activities of the Educational Facility, School for the Arts use shall be located within the existing structure of the subject property.
3. Hours of operation shall be limited to Mondays-Thursdays 2pm-7p and Sundays 1pm-8pm during the school year and Monday-Wednesday 10am-7pm and Sundays 1pm-7pm during summer months.
4. This conditional use permit is personal to the owner and shall not run with the land.
City Council of Webster Groves
4 East Lockwood Ave.
Webster Groves, Missouri 63119

Remarks of Visitors

Reference: Webster Groves Duplexes

Expanding the opportunity for duplex housing in Webster Groves would be a good thing.

My wife grew up in Webster Groves and graduated from Webster Groves High School. I did not. We met at college. We got married. We wanted to move to Webster Groves, but could not afford to buy a house in Webster without help. The help we found was a renter. We bought a duplex and rented one of the units which covered the mortgage. Renters wanted their children to benefit from the excellent schools in Webster. Our first child was born when we lived in that duplex. We later moved to a single-family residence in Webster and sold the duplex.

There are many benefits of living in Webster Groves. Webster Groves offers people from different social and economic backgrounds an opportunity to live together in a safe and secure environment. We share experiences together – the recreation complex, libraries, an eclectic choice of restaurants, beautifully maintained parks, public and private schools, diverse church congregations, et al. Our youth sport’s teams, whether public or parochial, don’t have family income thresholds to join. Duplex housing helps to keep the cost of living in Webster affordable.

Opponents to duplex housing have suggested that if permitted, developers would not build duplexes because they would not get an adequate return on investment. So what? If the economics don’t justify building then they won’t. But what if the return is adequate? Why close the door if construction meets strict building codes? More valuable residences and more families means more tax revenue for the city.

We have now lived together in Webster for over forty years and are grateful that the duplex experience facilitated a wonderful life for our family in Webster Groves.

Scott Guerrero
Webster Groves Resident

9 June 2021
I am very concerned about any proposed the upcoming old Webster Redevelopment plan, my specific questions are this:
1. I asked for on previous email and never got a answer; is there a tragic study being done for Lockwood blvd?
2. Does the carbon footprint of the project meet national and international guidelines.

Further, for the record, I am totally against any subsidies, and unless a 1/3 of the project is dedicated to the arts I will be totally against it. My family has lived at 138 west cedar since 1985.

Michael Vartan Chekoudjian
Chekoudjian Real Estate Advisors
St. Louis, MO | New York, NY
314-517-5798
THE PREMIER NATIONAL OFF MARKET SPECIALISTS
I would like to add a question after my review of the traffic study.

Why doesn’t the City of Webster Groves have its own impact study of traffic guidelines that designate impact benchmarks that are approved by the residence of a city, rather than using the ones this study used for St Louis County, which are used by many municipalities that are not compatible in community make up, I.E. population, types of buildings, lot sizes, percentages of commercial, office, warehouse and service buildings to residential or in the demographics of Webster Groves. Knowing that, we should stop right there set our own benchmarks as a city rather than benchmarks of other cities or Unincorporated cities in St. Louis county.

Please let me know the procedures necessary to make this happen.

Michael Vartan Chekoudjian
Chekoudjian Real Estate Advisors
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THE PREMIER NATIONAL OFF MARKET SPECIALISTS

On Jun 14, 2021, at 9:32 AM, Katie Nakazono <nakazonok@webstergroves.org> wrote:

Thank you, Michael. Your email will be forwarded to the Council, and read during the Remarks of Visitor comment section on June 15. Also, I assume in question #1 you are looking for the Traffic Study. Please see page 32 in the link below for the Traffic Study. With regard to question #2 about the carbon footprint, I will have to check on this for you. I'll be in touch.


Thank you.
Katie
Dear Mayor, City Council & City Staff,

I do not know the current status of the City's important diversity, equity and inclusion efforts regarding training and community conversations.

However, I am grateful for your recognition of Pride Month tonight as it reflects a personal belief I share below:

Racism against Blacks is America's original sin but I think it is one part of a much bigger and deeper national problem, which is the rejection of diversity.

For throughout American history, ANYONE who has been DIFFERENT that the White, Straight, Protestant Man in Power has been discriminated against, alienated, oppressed and even killed and massacred, including Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans & Indigenous People, Japanese & Asians, Women, Jews, Muslims, the LGBTQ Community, Migrants & Immigrants, the Poor & Houseless, the Handicapped & Mentally ill, the Overweight & Obese and the list goes on. It is not a great track record.

Now deceased, the famed black social activist, Audre Lorde, simply and profoundly defined the diversity challenge this way: "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and CELEBRATE our differences."

Now there's a concept! Instead of arguing and fighting over our differences, let's look for the good in them and celebrate our differences. Just maybe it will help break down a few barriers between us and help us come together as one community, one nation and one world and celebrate diversity as meaning:

- Different
- Individuals
- Valuing
- Everyone's
- Heritage
- Skin Color
- Beliefs
- Custom
and Lifestyle

So, what do you say Webster Groves??? What do you say we start celebrating diversity in our community today, tomorrow and forever???

PEACE.

Dave
I agree with building equity through home ownership. Kita Quinn (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFwNqZxdrZI) expressed it best when she talked about relationship and community building with homes, neighborhoods and help by the Community Land Trust.

I see the SG collaborative as the antithesis of that goal. The apartments are reminiscent of Cabrini Green/ Chicago and Pruitt Igoe/ St. Louis. Even the better thought out Laclede Town proved doomed. Build neighborhoods, not apartment complexes.

SEE ATTACHED LETTER FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

Mary L. Garavaglia
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for texting if you please
June 14, 2021  

Housing Variance and Residential Buildings

Is this the wrong project being pushed for the right reasons?

Developing housing for a diversified group is a right and lofty goal. Your reasons are good.

Developing inexpensive (built for obsolescence) block houses for underemployed residents are doomed to failure. Glaring examples of failed major expenditures in construction to that end are below: Laclede Town, Cabrini Green and Pruitt-Igoe. All demolished in failed attempts to provide low cost housing.

Your project is doomed unless residents have employment or are employable and have access to transportation. Subsidies to build are needed in the beginning and will achieve short term goals: housing. Long term planning has got to have subsidizing initiatives for upkeep and operations. The projects below are the reasons to be wary of short term gains ignoring long term perils.

Please learn from these housing project histories below otherwise we will share in the repeat of the failures and catastrophic loss of investments of land, resources and money.


Initially, the creators of LaClede Town, and the city at large, achieved their goals. New residents quickly moved into the cleared Mill Creek Valley area. Only days after the completion of its last building, LaClede Town’s occupancy was 100%. Additionally, the new tenants were diverse. At the height of occupancy between 60-70% of tenants were white, 20-30% were black, and 10% were other minorities, including many immigrants to the U.S. In fact, a 1965 story published in newspapers across the country breathlessly reported that “children of no less than six races play together” (Brinkman). ...

For better or worse, LaClede Town’s legacy is one of hope and optimism, as well as of neglect and, ultimately, defeat. It offers significant lessons about housing, race, and public policy, and should serve as inspiration – and a cautionary tale – for anyone who might venture to create their own version of an urban utopia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabrini%27Green_Homes

At its peak, Cabrini-Green was home to 15,000 people,[3] mostly living in mid- and high-rise apartment buildings. Crime and neglect created hostile living conditions for many residents, and "Cabrini-Green" became a metonym for problems associated with public housing in the United States. In 1995, CHA began tearing down dilapidated mid- and high-rise buildings, with the last demolished in 2011.[4] Today, only the original, two-story rowhouses remain.

Unlike many of the city's other public housing projects such as Rockwell Gardens or Robert Taylor Homes, Cabrini-Green was situated in an affluent part of the city. The poverty-stricken projects were actually constructed at the meeting point of Chicago's two wealthiest neighborhoods, Lincoln Park and the Gold Coast. Less than a mile to the east sat Michigan Avenue with its high-end shopping and
expensive housing. Specific gangs "controlled" individual buildings, and residents felt pressure to ally with those gangs in order to protect themselves from escalating violence.

During the worst years of Cabrini-Green's problems, vandalism increased substantially. Gang members and miscreants covered interior walls with graffiti and damaged doors, windows, and elevators. Rat and cockroach infestations were commonplace, rotting garbage stacked up in clogged trash chutes (it once piled up to the 15th floor), and basic utilities (water, electricity, etc.) often malfunctioned and were left in disrepair. On the exterior, boarded-up windows, burned-out areas of the façade, and pavement instead of green space—all in the name of economizing on maintenance—created an atmosphere of decay and government neglect. The balconies were fenced in to prevent residents from emptying garbage cans into the yard, and from falling or being thrown to their deaths. This created the appearance of a large prison tier, or of animal cages, which further enraged community leaders of the residents.[17]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pruitt%E2%80%93Igoe

The Wendell O. Pruitt Homes and William Igoe Apartments, known together as Pruitt–Igoe (/pruɪt ˈaɪɡɔɪ/), were joint urban housing projects first occupied in 1954[1] in the US city of St. Louis, Missouri. Living conditions in Pruitt–Igoe began to decline soon after completion in 1956.[2] By the late 1960s, the complex had become internationally infamous for its poverty, crime and racial segregation. The 11-story high rises within the complex almost exclusively accommodated African-Americans.[3] All 33 buildings were demolished with explosives in the mid-1970s,[4] and the project has come to represent some of the failures of urban renewal, public-policy planning and public housing.

https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdredge featd article 110314.html

Although federal funding supported Pruitt–Igoe's construction, the project's maintenance and operations were unsubsidized. Because Pruitt–Igoe's upkeep depended entirely on rent from the project's low-income tenants, excessive vacancies would imperil its financial and physical condition.

Mary Garavaglia

314-962-1750

Webster Groves, MO
Katie Nakazono - Remarks of Visitors

From: Daniel Bruzzini <dbruzzini@gmail.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>, Katie Nakazono <nakazonok@webstergroves.org>
Date: 6/15/2021 6:52 AM
Subject: Remarks of Visitors

The first rule of finding oneself in a hole is ... Stop Digging! Our Webster Groves City Council finds itself in a sizeable budgetary hole. Our city now faces:

- A budget deficit of $5.3 million dollars;
- Costs to repair city hall and the service center in excess of $1.6 million dollars;
- Tax collections increasing at a paltry 2.4%, while city council expenditures, mostly salaries and pensions, are increasing at an unsustainable 14%;
- Between fiscal year 2018 and 2022, personnel costs are up by an unsustainable $1.9 million with tax collections growing by only $547,000 during that same time period, and
- Continued, consecutive million-dollar deficit-spending for fiscal years 2019, 2020, 2021, and now the highest deficit of all projected for 2022.

Uninterrupted budget-deficits of this magnitude would cause reasonable municipal governments to choose fiscal responsibility for the homeowners and taxpayers who support the community. It does not mean finding a better excuse, it does not mean disparaging voters who opposed the council’s recent failed tax increase as “uninformed,” or conducting a “better” PR campaign for even higher taxes for Webster residents such as the voter rejected 13th Use tax on internet sales.

The city council can’t continue to deficit-spend. In July 2019, the projected General Fund Reserve Balance for the end of the current fiscal year was nearly $12 million dollars. Now the city can only expect to have roughly $8.5 million in reserved general revenues. And the reserve fund is now below the recommended level of 50% of expenditures. The reserve fund took decades to accumulate, but WG is now on its way to spend it down to zero in just a few years. Property values, essential services, infrastructure, and public safety will decrease. Over-spending to create a crisis in order to squeeze the residents to vote for higher taxes is so plainly wrong.

The Webster-Kirkwood Times wrote recently lamented the poor condition of our skate park. Maybe, instead of pouring a beautiful concrete pad for the Earth Rabbit’s pedestal outside the rec center, Webster could have poured that concrete into Skate Park for our children to enjoy. Why is the city council not listening to the expert financial advice from the financial professionals in city hall? They recommended:

1. to not give a 2% COLA pay increase (saves 1/2 million dollars)
2. to not give a 1.5% performance pay increase
3. to not give part-time employees sick leave, vacation time, and pay increases

With a $5.3 million dollar deficit, you don’t need to wait for a $30,000 dollar Pay and Compensation study to stop digging a larger fiscal deficit! Listen to your own experts! You have a fiduciary responsibility to the residents who are at the top of the city’s organizational chart. Does the city council prefer to wait until their "credit cards" get maxed out to create the crisis needed to exploit the residents of Webster Groves for even more taxes?
Dan

Daniel B. Bruzzini
Webster Groves Resident