

The Making of Your City Budget

The following is a budget update from Auburn Mayor Pete Lewis:



be drawn down to \$4.3 million by the end of 2014.

Since 2006 the number of employees at the City of Auburn has dropped from 488 to 395 today. At the same time, the City's residential population increased from 48,955 to 71,240. The Police Department has the highest number of employees, with 115 or 38% of the total General Fund Budget dollars.

But police officers are not the only employees delivering public safety. There are 35 employees in the Water Division, 23 in the Sanitary Sewer Division and 27 employees in the Storm Water Division. They are in separate enterprise funds paid by ratepayers. The Street Division adds another 13 employees in that critical area of Quality of Life/Public Safety for a total of 213 or 55% of your city employees.

Over the last six years we've asked your city employees to do more with less, including taking mandatory 40 hour furloughs without pay in 2011 and 2012. They are a dedicated, talented group of public servants and I am proud of the work they do for this city. The service provided by city employees is more

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than police service, more than water, sewer, trash and flood. It is about having someone on the other end of the phone when you are in need. It is about children laughing in a park and a place for the seniors to gather to share a meal or a memory. A city is a place of arts and entertainment and attracting new business and tourists, while being responsible to you to make sure a street, a home, a building is built correctly in your neighborhood.

Approximately 80% of General Fund revenues are derived from taxes, includ-

ing property taxes, sales taxes, utility taxes, and other taxes such as admissions and gaming taxes. We monitor these revenue streams on a monthly basis throughout the year to make sure we are living within our means.

The Total Operating Budget of the City of Auburn, including the ratepayer Enterprise Funds of Water, Sewer, Storm, Airport, Cemetery, Golf Course and the Capital Projects will be \$226 million in 2013 and \$213 million in 2014. The General Fund is only 24% of the Total Operating Budget that includes all of those funds plus grant funded projects of the city. The reason for the decrease in the Total Funds Budget from 2013 to 2014 is because grants have not yet been secured for projects that need to be completed by your city. And as you probably know, there's more to grants than filling out challenging application forms. City councilmembers work hard promoting and explaining our projects to officials at the regional, state and federal level. Their work brings value back to our community.

We usually have more than 30 major capital projects in planning or under construction in any given year. Because capital projects are so expensive, we must prioritize and meticulously plan for them. It may take many years between planning and completion. The M Street grade separation project is a good example. The planning for the project took nearly 10 years before we actually started building it in 2011. You'll be happy to know we are on track to complete the project by the summer of 2013.

Funding infrastructure maintenance is always a challenge. Major arterials that serve commerce and commuters, are particularly costly to preserve, while the price tag to rebuild them is anywhere from three to seven times more. Ironically, there are competitive grants available that help to rebuild arterials once they have failed completely, but there are no federal or state funds to maintain them. Cities all over the country struggle to fund maintenance of local streets and arterials. With dwindling revenues and more demand for services, we do what we can to prioritize and maintain our streets.

Together as a city we are responsible to each other to ensure that we continue in our conservative approach to budgeting. Your City Councilmembers have worked on this two year budget all year long. They conducted five budget review sessions and hearings on the budget, all of which were open to the public. They put out the word about all the meetings in the newspapers, on the website, in handouts and flyers during the year. Please do thank your Councilmembers and your city employees for their efforts and back them in their desire to keep a fiscally sound budget into the future.

The City's 2013-14 Operating Budget is posted online at www.auburnwa.gov/fiscal_reports.htm.

Meet Animal Control Officer George Winner



George Winner knew he wanted to become an animal control officer even as he "scooped poop" part time at an Ellensburg animal shelter while attending Central Washington University. After graduation with a degree in biology, Winner worked as an Animal Control Officer for the City of Indianapolis. He began his new job here at the City of Auburn on January 1. One of the first things he plans to do is help Auburn citizens understand why pet licensing is important. Under City ordinance, pet owners must license their cat or dog every year. The revenue from pet licenses will go directly to support animal services at the Auburn Valley Humane Society Shelter.

"Owners do a lot to try to find their pets when they are missing. They post flyers, ask neighbors and they'll check the local shelters," Winner said. "The city's license program is a system that can do that for you. A pet tag links that animal specifically to an individual, an address and a phone number and helps us notify the owner when we find the dog or cat."

Winner will be stationed at the Auburn Justice Center and will be dispatched when citizens call 9-1-1 for help with problem animals.

"I'm here. I'm in Auburn. I'm local," he said. "It's going to be a much quicker response time than what's happened in the past."

The public is invited to meet Officer Winner at an opening event at the Auburn Valley Humane Society Shelter, 4910 A St. SE, on January 19th from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Nancy Backus



It has been my honor to be your Deputy Mayor for the past year, and I look forward to an exciting year ahead. A position on the Auburn City Council is considered to be a "part-time" position, but I can assure you that it is so much more. I have the opportunity to work with six fellow councilmembers whom I admire greatly, and I think we make a great team. I would like to share with you my impressions of my teammates:

Rich Wagner is an Engineer by profession, and I rely on his wisdom for all things Public Works related. He will read over every spec and will question anything he thinks to be inaccurate or not in the City's best interests. I have to admit, I was a bit intimidated by him when I first joined the Council, but he has proven to be a trusted friend and advisor for me. He also has a strong interest in the arts and an undying passion for building our Community Center.

Bill Pelozza is a hardworking and dedicated man. He has embraced his position and takes his work very seriously. He has become our expert on all things Solid Waste, and while we sometimes joke about it, his work truly benefits Auburn in tremendous ways, and I admire his dedication.

John Partridge is in his first term and devoted to the creation of the Auburn Valley Humane Society (AVHS). He was our Council liaison to AVHS as it was getting established and has spent numerous hours at meetings and events to promote the humane society. Our community has really come together to support our pets, and John has played a key role in that. I appreciate his work.

Largo Wales has just completed her first year, and what a year it has been! I don't think I have ever seen anyone more enthusiastic about their role than Largo. She has immersed herself in local, regional and national committees and issues. She's an accomplished educator and picks up on issues so quickly. She keeps me on my toes and challenges all of us to do and be our best.

Wayne Osborne has also completed his first year, but was attending Council and Committee meetings for well over a year before he was elected. Wayne is also my neighbor and would read the Council packets - sometimes before I could - and then he'd come over to the house to discuss items on the agenda. Always prepared, Wayne is willing to dig into issues and ask the pertinent questions. His interests are varied and I enjoy our friendly "debates."

John Holman, also in his first year, has a background in Public Safety, and has so much great information to share. I am constantly amazed by his ideas and vision. John is a dedicated advocate for Auburn on local, regional and national committees. I am proud to serve with him.

Hopefully, you agree that our varied backgrounds bring diversity to the Council and a voice to your concerns. I enjoy serving on a team with so much heart and dedication.

Happy New Year Auburn

You're invited

Kick off of Auburn's New Animal Services Program and Auburn Valley Humane Society Animal Shelter Dedication & Open House

Saturday, January 19, 2013
11:30 AM - 4:00 PM
AVHS Animal Shelter | 4910 A St. SE
Refreshments • Prizes

AUBURN
MORE THAN YOU IMAGINED

www.auburnwa.gov/petlicense | 253-876-1997

Animal services program comes back home to Auburn

Animal licensing and animal control are being managed by the City of Auburn as of Jan. 1, 2013. A new animal shelter is being managed by the City's partner, Auburn Valley Humane Society (AVHS). The transition from the King County program to City of Auburn's new animal services program has been in the works for several years, according to Mayor Pete Lewis.

"At the end of 2010 King County's animal services fees increased from \$100,000 to \$600,000 while the area coverage of the County's animal control officer went from 30 square miles to 300 square miles," said Lewis. "We knew that our contract with King County was expiring at the end of 2012 so we began to look at a more economical model that would be more responsive to our community needs."

Under a contract with AVHS that was finalized in September 2011, the City agreed to lease its building at 4910 A St. SE to AVHS for a minimal fee to be used as an animal shelter. AVHS has been working to raise funds to remodel the interior. Animal licensing fees will pay for the shelter's operation. The City also provided \$417,000 for tenant improvements and maintains ownership of the building.

"We're very excited about bringing our Animal Services program back home to Auburn," said Lewis. "It was a true community effort that took a lot of hard work to come to fruition. Now we're calling on all pet owners in the city to license their cats and dogs and to help sustain the program."

Pet licenses can be purchased online at www.petdata.com or in person Monday-Friday at Auburn City Hall; at the City's Customer Care Counter on the 2nd Floor of the City Annex at One Main Street; at the Parks, Arts & Recreation Administration Building located at 910 Ninth St. SE; or at Auburn Valley Humane Society at 4910 A St. SE. Any pets licensed through King County will be honored by the City of Auburn through the license expiration date. Dogs and cats within the city limits (both King and Pierce County) must be licensed by their owner each year, according to city ordinances.

Support of the arts could mean much more than you imagine

In 2012-13 the City's Parks, Arts and Recreation Department programmed over 70 events through the BRAVO Performing Arts Series, featuring music, dance, comedy, film, theater and kids programming. Most of the events were held at the Auburn Avenue Theatre, an historic building, renovated and operated by the City of Auburn.

"Despite the economic downturn, participation in Auburn arts programs has increased dramatically," said Maija McKnight, City Arts Coordinator. "This increase is partly due to additional programming choices and individuals choosing to stay closer to home for quality entertainment rather than traveling to Seattle or Tacoma."

The Auburn Performing Arts Center (APAC), owned and operated by the Auburn School District, had an attendance of 43,120 for its 52 events held last year which included the Auburn Symphony, Lyric Opera Northwest and Evergreen City Ballet.

"Throughout the United States, arts activity creates thousands of direct and indirect jobs and generates billions in government and business revenues," said Mayor Pete Lewis. "This is true in Auburn when symphony patrons go to dinner in local restaurants, when a portion of ticket sales generate sales tax, when local galleries sell goods made by local artists. This helps to make Auburn a vibrant, livable city."

Council Highlights

Below are highlights of City Council action taken from Oct-Dec. 2012:

- Accepted a grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation for safety improvements for traffic signals citywide
- Approved an interlocal agreement with Valley Special Weapons and Tactics to provide VSWAT services on an as needed basis
- Authorized the city to enter into an agreement with PetData, preparing for the transfer of animal services from King County to the City of Auburn on Jan. 1, 2013
- Held a public hearing on the 2013-14 Preliminary Budget
- Amended Title 6 of the Auburn City Code to reflect the City of Auburn taking over Animal Services from King County
- Set the City of Auburn gaming tax to 4% without a sunset clause
- Passed a resolution detailing how the City of Auburn and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe interacts with each other during development of new residential properties on the Reservation
- Adopted the 2013-14 Biennial Budget
- Authorized the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Auburn and King County for pre-design services of a Regional Training Facility
- Accepted a grant from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board for the Auburn Way South and M Street - 17th St. SE intersection improvements
- Authorized a services contract with the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health for reimbursement of funds related to 2013 Local Hazardous Waste Management Program activities

For more information about City Council meetings, minutes and agendas, visit www.auburnwa.gov.

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