



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

DAWN M. JONES, CITY CLERK

PERSONNEL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

AUGUST 23, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Sheila Niezgodski, Eli Wax, Troy Warner*, Rachel Tomas Morgan*, Canneth Lee

Others Present: Dawn Jones*, Victoria Trujillo*, Bob Palmer, Lori Hamann, Karen White, Henry Davis Jr.

Otto Schlatter*, Shayla Kimbrough*, Dan Skibins

Presenters: Carl Buchanon, Scott Ruskowski, Tim Lancaster, Ken Goecki, Dan Skibins, Aaron Nepper

Agenda: 2024 Police Department Budget Presentation
Council Questions and Feedback on Proposed 2024 Police Department Budget

Public Input on Proposed 2024 Police Department Budget

2024 Fire Department Budget Presentation

Council Questions and Feedback on Proposed 2024 Fire Department Budget

Public Input on Proposed 2024 Fire Department Budget

Adjournment

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are present digitally

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=369522>

Committee Chair Sheila Niezgodski called to order the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m.

2024 Police Department Budget Presentation

Scott Ruskowski, Police Chief at 701 W Sample Street, South Bend, IN 46601, presented an overview of the 2024 South Bend Police Department (SBPD) budget.

Ken Glowacki, Director of Finance, 701 W Sample Street, South Bend, IN 46601, reported that the expected revenue for the SBPD in 2024 totals \$9,121,310. A significant portion of this revenue, amounting to \$5,895,000, primarily consists of intergovernmental and shared revenue. This

revenue primarily represents reimbursement from the state for the pension plan. The current officers' pension plan expenses are included in their salary and benefits, while the pension plan expenses for retired officers are initially covered by SBPD and later reimbursed by the state.

Ken Glowacki reported that the proposed expense budget totals \$57.6 million, with the majority of the increase allocated to operations expenses, which have increased to \$51.7 million compared to the previous year. The remaining items include reimbursement for the 1925 Police Pension Fund from the state, and PSAP funding which has reduced due to a transition from county funding to a tax offset arrangement since 2022.

Ken Glowacki reviewed the police operations breakdown, which excludes the 1925 Police Pension Fund and grant funds. Salary and benefits account for \$36.5 million, representing 74% of total expenses and reflecting an 11.3% increase compared to the previous year.

Scott Ruskowski presented an overview of the budgeted versus the actual number of sworn officers. For the year 2024, there is a budgeted count of 252 officers, showing an increase from 238 officers in 2023. The current number of officers for 2023 is 244, which exceeds the budgeted amount. Scott Ruskowski explained that it is common for officer numbers to decline in the first half of the year due to retirements, followed by an increase later in the year when new recruits are brought in. Currently, there are 46 officers with 20 or more years of service, marking a significant decrease compared to the 80 officers recorded in 2018. Scott Ruskowski clarified that officers in this category are eligible for a pension but cannot access it until they reach the age of 52. On average, officers have a tenure of 11 years.

Ken Glowacki reported a notable increase in salary and benefits, totaling \$36.5 million, which represents a \$3.7 million increase compared to 2023. Officer salaries have been raised by 4.5%. The number of non-bargaining staff has increased to 45, with a budgeted 3% salary increase. The increase in benefits to \$1.6 billion is primarily driven by the rise in police pension expenses, influenced by the increase in first-class officers leading to higher salary and pension expenditures.

The SBPD submitted the following personnel change requests:

- A proposal for a 22.87% increase to the salary ordinance of the Director of Police Communications to reflect the increased responsibilities of the position.
- A proposal for the addition of two crime intelligence analyst positions at a salary of \$49,440 each. These analysts will be assigned to the real-time crime center.

Ken Glowacki reported capital and debt service costs totaling \$4,243,234. This amount would cover the purchase of two undercover cars and 34 police cars, which the department acquires annually. The vehicles will be equipped with advanced equipment.

Expenditure for supplies is projected to reach a total of \$1.4 million, with gas accounting for 50% of that cost. This estimate is based on the anticipated increase in officers and the corresponding rise in workload.

The total expenditure for services is projected to be \$2,856,857, with repairs and maintenance of the vehicle fleet accounting for over \$1 million. This figure also encompasses the labor cost

associated with equipping new vehicles with updated equipment. Additionally, \$185,000 has been allocated to the continuing education fund.

Council Questions and Feedback on Proposed 2024 Police Department Budget

Councilmember Wax inquired about the prioritization of dangerous and aggressive driving patrols as the top item in the enforcement strategy, and whether these patrols would effectively capture drivers who violate stop signs and red lights.

Scott Ruskowski explained that each shift would have two designated traffic officers, with additional officers assigned to weekend and midnight shifts. He reported that the recent survey conducted among both officers and the community highlighted the importance of addressing both violence and traffic-related issues. Scott Ruskowski confirmed that the patrols would include targeting drivers who disregard stop signs and red lights but emphasized that the enforcement strategy encompasses a broader scope of violations.

Councilmember Lee inquired about the measures being taken to promote diversity and attract individuals from different backgrounds to the police department.

Scott Ruskowski responded that the department has used traditional social media analytics to effectively reach a broad audience. He reported a notable increase in the representation of minority and female officers, surpassing the proportions seen in other departments in the city and the state more broadly. While acknowledging the need for continued progress, Scott Ruskowski highlighted the significant strides made to reflect the diversity of the community.

Councilmember Lee inquired about the advantages of having a fully staffed police department.

Scott Ruskowski explained that a fully staffed police department enables the department to effectively pursue its visions and goals. For instance, having dedicated individuals in positions such as community and school resource officers allows for focused attention on these specific roles. Currently, approximately 60% of patrol time is spent responding to calls, leaving little time for officers to decompress and transition smoothly to the next call. Having a fully staffed department would help address this issue and enable officers to better manage their workload.

Councilmember Hamann asked whether the tracing of guns being brought in is being conducted, and if it is possible to identify the main retailers responsible for the bulk of gun sales. She also inquired about potential measures to curtail such activities.

Scott Ruskowski responded that the tracing process is carried out through the eTrace system of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). He reported that the SBPD holds the second position nationwide in terms of turnaround time for ballistics, with results typically available within 12 to 24 hours. Regarding the identification of the main retailers, Scott Ruskowski noted that prosecution in this matter is a level above the police's jurisdiction. However, the primary issue lies with firearms that are either stolen, left in vehicles, obtained through house break-ins, or sold on the streets via straw purchases. Addressing these sources presents a real challenge.



Councilmember White inquired about the strategies being implemented to address the recent surge in drug houses and shootings. She also expressed appreciation for the officer dedicated to handling nuisance and problem properties.

Scott Ruskowski reported that steps have been initiated to hire community resource officers to support the existing officer, as a single individual cannot handle the entire workload. The aim is to assign officers to neighborhood meetings throughout the city and establish direct correspondence for engagement with the officers. This direct interaction aims to facilitate the effective handling of nuisance properties related to drugs, aligning with the work conducted by the strategic focus and drug investigative units.

Councilmember White asked if the agreement with the South Bend Community School Corporation (SBCSC) for school resource officers is still in effect.

Scott Ruskowski reported that the department is currently working on renewing the contract and an upcoming meeting is scheduled with the SBCSC to review its terms. The process involves incorporating several addendums and addressing changes in Indiana law that need to be reflected in the agreement.

Councilmember Davis inquired about the frequency of the fire department's involvement in accompanying the SBPD to calls related to mental health on an annual basis.

Scott Ruskowski reported that these statistics are not available but estimated it to be around 50%. He explained that the involvement of medics from the fire department is determined on a case-by-case basis, particularly when dealing with combative individuals in emotional or mental distress who require restraint. In such instances, medics are called upon as needed to ensure appropriate care and support.

Vice-President Niezgodski inquired about the current staffing level of the 24-hour, real-time crime center.

Scott Ruskowski reported that there are currently only two staff on duty at a time; however, there are three additional analysts, two of whom are expert analysts. The aim is to add two more personnel to the team.

President McBride asked about the impact of residency pay on hiring and its appeal to potential candidates.

Scott Ruskowski reported that hiring is at the same percentage.

President McBride inquired about the increase in Ring doorbell partners with neighbors in the community.

Scott Ruskowski reported that there has been a significant increase in these partnerships over the past month and a half.

President McBride asked about the mental health partnership with Oaklawn.

Scott Ruskowski reported that the partnership is still a work in progress. He expressed that the responses to mental health situations are not occurring as quickly as desired and emphasized that police should be a last resort.

Public Input on Proposed 2024 Police Department Budget

Sharon Banicki, 3822 Ford Street, inquired about plans to increase the unmarked police cars standing in neighborhoods, noting the false sense of security that they provide. She also expressed both satisfaction and disappointment at the increase in officers to 252, considering it a low number and emphasizing the need for more.

Dan Skibins responded that two focused deterrence cars were added to the fleet in July 2023, bringing the total to four. There are plans to add two additional cars as well as 360-degree cameras.

Sue Kesim, 422 Kennedy Drive, expressed appreciation for the Citizen’s Police Academy program. She suggested that the following items be considered and included in the budget:

- The provision of free parenting and relationship classes offered as a way to address the increasing number of domestic calls.
- The use of predictive policing programs.
- Equipment funding for items such as magnetic rollers to pick up drug needles, additional cameras, massage chairs for officers to decompress, and drug monitoring in sewers.
- The inclusion of a per-call cost analysis in the budget.
- An increase to the Police Chief’s salary based on the difficulty and stress of the job.
- Access to online counselling services for first responders.

Scott Ruskowski noted that the SBPD has avoided predictive policing programs due to their controversy based on several studies. He noted that few departments and agencies are still using these programs.

Dawn Jones, 602 Cushing Street, inquired about the date of the last gun buyback and whether there are plans for future buybacks. Additionally, she suggested the implementation of substations in different neighborhoods as a more effective deterrent than police squad cars.

Scott Ruskowski reported that substations have not proven effective in the past, not serving a different purpose than officers in patrol cars because both have access to the same equipment. The department is currently assessing the outcome of the substation at Eddy Street Commons. Regarding gun buybacks, Scott Ruskowski stated that the last one occurred approximately a decade ago, resulting in nine guns being collected from the entire community.

2024 Fire Department Budget Presentation

Carl Buchanan, Fire Chief, 1222 S Michigan Street, South Bend, IN 46601, presented the 2024 fire department budget.

The 2024 department goals and strategic initiatives focus on recruitment, retention, and community. The application process has been streamlined, with the first step now taking less than five minutes to complete. A lateral hiring process has been implemented to expedite the



onboarding of qualified firefighters. The department continues to maintain a strong presence at recruiting events and job fairs. The CTE program is being leveraged in the internship program to retain young talent in the community and to generate early interest among students.

Community risk reduction activities have been implemented to educate the community on fire safety measures and offer the free installation of smoke and fire detectors. The Community Paramedicine program has proven to be invaluable to citizens and the department alike, with positive feedback from the community. The Indiana River Rescue School and International Association of Water Rescue Professionals (IAWRP) conference have established South Bend as a preferred training destination for fire departments across the country seeking to provide their firefighters with training in fast-moving water and swift water rescue techniques.

Carl Buchanon reported that the fire department’s projected revenue for 2024 totals \$14.5 million. Cash inflow remained relatively unchanged from 2021, at \$10.8 million. Accounting revenue amounts to \$3.8 million, while charges for services amount to \$6.3 million. Training expenses decreased to \$146,000 compared to 2023, representing a multitude of training opportunities.

Carl Buchanon reported that the expense budget totals \$46.5 million, with salary and benefits accounting for 64% of this amount. Other items include reimbursement for the 1977 Fund from the state, IT allocations, and capital and debt service expenses. Carl Buchanon clarified that capital and debt service expenses pertain to the acquisition cost of equipment and fire stations for the department’s existing 11 stations, rather than the construction of new stations.

Carl Buchanon presented an overview of salary and fringe benefits. The department is currently in the final year of the last negotiated collective bargaining agreement (CBA), which includes a 2.25% wage increase for 256 firefighters and a 3% increase for non-bargaining staff, with no change in staffing levels. Fringe benefits were impacted by higher fire pension expenses due to an increased pension base and INPRS rate set by the state. Health insurance costs also increased from \$12,300 to \$13,600 per person.

Carl Buchanon reported that the capital costs amount to \$2.9 million. The production cycle for apparatus is set at 36 months. Three 20-year-old trucks will remain in service for three more years. The radios are approaching the end of their 10-year lifespan. The next replacement for heavy-duty rescue apparatus is scheduled for 2023.

Carl Buchanon reported that supplies for 2024 are budgeted at \$1.4 million, while services are budgeted at \$2.3 million. Repairs and maintenance represent the largest expense under services, driven by increased manufacturing costs and equipment shortages.

Council Questions and Feedback on Proposed 2024 Fire Department Budget

Councilmember Wax inquired if there were any desired changes or initiatives the department would suggest in relation to the services provided.

Carl Buchanon emphasized the need to prioritize employee health and wellness, particularly being mindful of their mental well-being. He also noted the importance of promptly informing individuals affected by cancer, enabling them to take timely action.



Councilmember Warner inquired about the necessary upgrades required for stations to become more inclusive and female-friendly, aligning with the department’s diversity recruitment efforts.

Carl Buchanon responded that there is a substantial amount of work required to address these concerns, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive facilities that cater to all individuals regardless of gender while also minimizing health risks. He noted that some older stations have asbestos in the walls, and that newly constructed facilities have systems in place to extract negative air before it enters living quarters. Addressing these concerns is crucial to minimize the risk of cancer-causing agents from entering the living quarters.

Councilmember Davis inquired about the percentage of calls for which the fire department accompanies the police department to provide mental health support or assistance.

Carl Buchanon responded that these specific statistics were not available but advised that the fire department responds to these calls as needed.

Councilmember Davis further noted that shared resources and time between both public safety departments could potentially lead to a decrease in the amount of revenue spent on these calls. He emphasized the importance of the Council considering this collaborative approach, highlighting that both departments should not allocate equal amounts of money for the same purpose if there is an opportunity to work together and optimize resources.

Councilmember White asked about the recent increase in calls for house fires and whether this was unusual, and also inquired about proactive strategies to advise the community.

Carl Buchanon acknowledged the increase in house fire calls, which is attributable to changes in residents’ lifestyles such as increased remote work, children not attending school, and individuals caring for parents at home. These changes have created more opportunities for fire incidents. To address this, the department has taken measures such as the installation of smoke and fire detectors in residences to enable early warnings, and evacuation notifications in case of fire. Carl Buchanon also reported that the department is actively working with Council members and community leaders to engage in fire safety conversations with the community, emphasizing the importance of delivering a unified message.

President McBride inquired about the previous spike in vacant house fires in the south side of the city, noting a decrease, and asked what actions had been taken. President McBride also emphasized the importance of including asbestos remediation in the budget to protect firefighters.

Carl Buchanon reported that an announcement was made in collaboration with the police department, urging the community to report any suspicious activity in vacant homes to SBPD, which may have contributed to the decrease in numbers. Carl Buchanon further highlighted the significance of neighbors keeping a watchful eye on activities in their vicinity for any suspicious behavior.

Public Input on Proposed 2024 Fire Department Budget

Sue Kesim, 422 Kennedy Drive, expressed concern about the neglected appearance of fire hydrants in the city. She suggested that the fire department could organize a community contest to paint the hydrants, which would not only improve their aesthetics but also raise awareness about the department's work. Sue Kesim also inquired about whether the department has testing equipment or a similar system to track the chemicals that firefighters are exposed to during each fire, emphasizing the importance of ensuring their safety. Additionally, she suggested the establishment of a fire laundromat where equipment could be promptly dropped off after a fire and centrally cleaned to prevent the contamination of firehouses with chemicals.

Carl Buchanon reported that the fire department has implemented a program for transporting contaminated gear and designated a safety officer for handling the gear, along with gear extractors and dryers available across the city for cleaning. The fire department also maintains compliance with NFPA standards by providing two sets of gear for each firefighter. About chemical testing, Carl Buchanon explained that the fire department's medics, being paramedics, typically possess the necessary knowledge to identify signs of exposure and generally do not require additional testing.

Sue Kesim, 422 Kennedy Drive, asked about the number of overdose-related calls received by the department.

Carl Buchanon responded that there has been a substantial number of such calls, but it is hoped that these calls will decrease as they continue to educate the public.

With no further business, Committee Chair Sheila Niezgodski adjourned the Common Council 2024 Budget Hearing at 8:35 p.m. She noted that the VPA Budget meeting is scheduled for August 30, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sheila Niezgodski, Committee Chair

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Auxiliary Aid or Other Services may be Available upon Request at No Charge.
Please give Reasonable Advance Request when Possible