

Wed, Nov 09, 2022 6:00PM

**Item 22-1464: Reduce General Administration Property Tax Levy (\$188,726) Add General Administration Wage Reserve \$5,000 Reduce the across-the-board merit-based salary increase for non-represented employees from 5% to 4% (\$193,726)**

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Wed, Nov 09, 2022 6:00PM

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 36:01**

Moving on to the next item 22-1464 Reduce General Administration property tax levy by \$188,726. Add General Administration wage reserve for \$5,000. Reduced the across-the-board merit base salary increase for non-represented employees from 5% to 4% in an amount totaling \$193,726. Have a motion? Looking for a motion and a second. All right, we do have a motion and a second. Okay, you will have to, you might have to flail a little bit to get my attention. So don't be settled please.

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 36:57**

Okay, well, okay, then the floor is yours, Alder Fenton.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 37:02**

Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Um, so I serve as the chair of the Human Resources and Information Technology Committee, and we Council have just voted on a databased compensation plan, that we were proud to say that every employee participated in in an interview basis. So, we clearly care about the well, the well-being of our employees, and we care about keeping them here.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 37:38**

On page two of our budget document, we have our mission statement, and of the nine statements there, we talk about things to do with our employees, which is one of which having a government that provides quality, efficient, responsive service to our customers, having a government workforce that is highly competent and productive. And having a government that has a high level of respect for its employees, and provides an attractive, challenging and rewarding work environment. That's a third of our mission statements that have to do with work provided by our employees. Through the budget process, every department worked to cut the rest of their budget in ways that provided this 5% raise to our non-represented employees. So as of this month, inflation was 8.2%. So, 5% raise merit raise to our employees still keeps them not keeping pace with inflation. And with thanks to Director Ratchman, he gave me some average hourly figures for our employees. So that's every employee from directors on down to the rest of them, and including the directors, the hourly rate averages \$30.33 an hour, which comes out to an annual salary annual pay of \$63,086.40. And he also gave me figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for private sector, non-farm payrolls. So that rate average rate was \$32.58. Average. So that comes out to \$67,766.40. So, our employees are already \$4,000 behind the average payroll in the private sector.

So, I think, given all of these, the mission statements that we rely so much on our employees to provide the services that, you know, our overall mission statement, we're dedicated to meeting the needs of our community, enhancing the quality of life. And so much of those needs and quality of life are provided by our employees. And saying it's 1% may seem insignificant, but it's just saying, hey, employees, we're going to come to you, and take away this raise, and now put you 4% under inflation in order to save, depending on the county that you're in, on your tax bill per \$100,000 \$3.36, \$3.35, or \$3.26. So um, the calculation we always use for \$200,000, home \$6.72 \$6.70 or \$6.52, off someone's tax bill, in order to do a general slap in the face to our 640 employees. Thank you.

Wed, Nov 09, 2022 6:00PM

**Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 41:02**

Alder Hartzheim.

**Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:06**

Thank you chair. It's not ever easy to do an unpopular thing. So, I had to think about that very, very much before I presented this. And I'm still struggling with it. The message I want to get to is that this is not a "take away" of anything. The promise wasn't really given, hasn't been given yet. There's a proposed budget on the table. And we're in the uncomfortable position of saying, now we feel like we're slapping in the face these employees. And that's not at all what this is meant to do. In fact, while, it seems unfortunate as a reduction, it's not really a reduction. It's a 4% raise.

Again, and this was very difficult for me. Because I see the value of our employees. I see the value of how we are we as a city are outperforming other municipalities around us already, without offering a 5 or a 4% raise to our employees—our non-union employees. Outagamie County received a presentation of Tom Nelson's 1%. That's a slap in the face. I don't feel like 4% is a slap in the face. I feel like it's an unfortunate situation that were put in.

But my colleague here states that the 1% was passed by the county, but the county raise came out to somewhere between 4 and 8%. Based on how long an employee has been in the county or something of that sort. There are other initiatives that they've added to that. Calumet County increased all of their non-union employees by 4%, as well. So, 4% is on par.

I don't have a better argument for it. Except that I do believe that we should reduce the tax levy on our employees, on our, on our taxpayers. We have to balance taxpayers benefits versus employee benefits. And I think this is a good balance. And the numbers that were presented by Alderson Fenton in regards to whether we as a city or the employees of the city are matching the private sector didn't at all taken into account benefits as well. So, there is that and it'd be a long calculation that I wouldn't ask Director Ratchman to make for us. So that's where I stand. I would love to tell you, I have the greatest argument in the world, and gosh, you should all vote for this. But I had to search for whether I even should present it. But I do feel like it is important that we think about the taxpayers of the city as well. Thank you.

**Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 44:25**

Thank you. I just, you did make mention of the tax levy, and I did want to pull one point out of that this is this would lower the levy and this would be a decision that would affect the levy for years to come. This is a forward rolling situation if you reduce the levy for this decision. So, I just want to highlight that. Thank you. Next person in the queue is Alder Meltzer.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 44:49**

Thank you. I think that we are not in an unfortunate situation. And we're only putting ourselves in this unfortunate situation, if we support this amendment. I encourage all of my colleagues to deny this amendment. I think that the mayor and all the department heads have done some really incredible work, centering the employees and really taking head on the issue of employee recruitment and retention.

You have to keep in mind how many people we anticipate are going to be retiring. We're doing very well right now compared to some other places around us. That doesn't mean that what has happened elsewhere couldn't happen to us. We have seen how long it takes to fill positions. We have critical positions that still remain unfilled at this time. So, the effort was made to craft a budget proposal that could accommodate, that could facilitate this 5% raise. This was also in conjunction with a compensation study that was done and an immense amount of work that was done to really figure out how do we hit that sweet spot, while spending as little money as

Wed, Nov 09, 2022 6:00PM

possible in order to be as responsible as we can with our financial stewardship. I think that this is a really important thing that the 2023 budget proposal is doing. And please do not undermine it by supporting this amendment. Thank you.

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 46:29**

Next is Alder Fenton. Sorry, I saw the blank space in there, so. Okay. All right. Thing's haunted. [He said that in response to issues he was having with the control panel for the microphones.] It's okay. All right. Next then is Alder Van Zeeland.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 46:45**

Thank you, Chair. I'll be brief. Just what we know right now is that this is an employee market, not an employer market and the county before a 1% raise, was losing one employee a day. So again, while this amendment gives the appearance of savings, what it's actually doing is it's cutting services because we will lose employees. That's not helping our taxpayer. Thank you.

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 47:15**

Alder Schultz.

**Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 47:16**

Call the question.

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 47:17**

You are the last one the queue. So, we have a motion. Do we have a second? We have a second. All right. We'll do this on voice vote. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passes. So, we will vote on the amendment

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 47:57**

All right, that mo—that amendment fails on a vote of one to 12 with Alder Hartzheim voting yes. The next amendment. Ope sorry. Okay, sorry.

**Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 48:23**

Alright, so just let the record reflect that Alder Doran voted nay.