



Reggie Harris
Councilmember

April 17, 2023

MOTION

Council Budget Policy Direction to City Administration for Recommended FY2024 General Fund Operating Budget

WE MOVE that the City Administration prepare a Fiscal Year 2024 Recommended General Fund Budget which respects the following policy guidelines and priorities:

Fiscal Responsibility

Due to the ongoing fiscal impacts of State cuts to the Local Government Fund and revenue losses stemming from the pandemic, there is a large projected gap between General Fund revenues and expenditures. With limited one-time federal funding projected to run out in 2025, it is critical that we maintain a financial safety net for the FY24 budget.

1. The Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Operating Budget must be balanced. In alignment with motion #202200865 passed last April, federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds should be used to appropriately offset the projected budget deficit based on the eligible use of those funds.
2. The City remains committed to building and maintaining a reserve balance of 16.7% of the prior year General Fund operating revenues.
3. The City should continue to work strategically to address our growing pension needs. This should be done in coordination with the Pension Board's recommendations.

Core Services

The primary function of government that impacts every Cincinnati is our ability to deliver essential services like public safety and sanitation in a timely and efficient manner.

4. Staffing core services, Police, Fire, and Sanitation must be prioritized.

- a. Police and Fire should be funded consistent with bargaining agreements and based on the departments' plans to reach their approved budgeted full-strength compliment of 1,059 police officers and 851 firefighters. The budget should support efforts for Police recruit onboarding by removing barriers for police cadets during training while also strengthening the Alternative Response to Crisis (ARC) program.
- b. The budget should prioritize human resources staff and improve administrative processes to help fill critical vacancies in the Fire department.
- c. Public Services crews should be funded consistent with bargaining agreements, with every effort made to fill vacancies and make necessary technological improvements to improve service delivery and reduce the burden on staff.

Administrative Support

As we grow into the sustainable, equitable Cincinnati that we know we can be, we must support our administrative counterparts that do the work to help us achieve our goals.

5. Budget justified increased staffing for Buildings and Inspections, Community Economic Development, and Planning and Engagement (additional Urban Conservator) so we can proactively address the changing needs of our communities.
6. Additional FTE for the Office of Performance and Data Analytics to assist in cross-departmental data collection and analysis, performance management, SIET, and CSR work.
7. The budget should provide significant investment in the City's IT infrastructure.
8. The budget should maintain funding for the annual citywide Hack-a-thon that focuses on innovating for a cleaner city and more capable communities. The annual Hack-a-thon brings together our community, startup ecosystem, corporate stakeholders, and civic leaders to develop innovative solutions to address complex problems in the City of Cincinnati
9. As we continue to grapple with the costs of climate change, the budget should work to fully fund the work of the Office of Environmental Sustainability. This should emphasize our Urban Forestry program and the implementation of the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan.

Leveraged Programming

We rely on our partners in the community to provide a spectrum of support services that assist Cincinnatians who need it most. This Council has worked hard to reform our leveraged support funding to make it as targeted and effective as possible towards the city's most pressing issues.

10. The budget should be prepared consistent with the ordinance passed June 21, 2017, which directs the City Council to maintain appropriations to human services at 1.5% of the General Fund Budget. Specifically, the FY2024 appropriations should surpass 1.5% of the General Fund revenue estimate established as part of the Tentative Tax Budget (TTB) for the upcoming fiscal year, with the additional increases above 1.5% going towards the “Impact Award” that council established in October 2022 to address eviction prevention & housing stabilization.
11. The budget should maintain funding for the “Boots on the Ground Fund” to support smaller non-profit organizations that are often doing grassroots work in communities but are unable to successfully compete for funding as a part of the existing processes.
12. The budget should continue to prioritize leveraged funding programs that address critical workforce development needs and gun violence prevention. These should complement the ongoing work of our Career Pathways program housed in the Department of Human Resources.

Housing and Neighborhood Support

Housing is one of the top priorities of this Council and Mayor, and we should continue to take intentional steps towards combatting the housing shortage we and many other cities face. This housing work should be complimented by programs and policies that make our communities healthy, vibrant and provide Cincinnatians with access to the amenities and services they need.

13. The budget should prioritize efforts to help folks find and keep safe, stable housing through increasing funding for programs that include:
 - a. Home repair grants and low-interest loans for low-moderate income & elderly homeowners (HARBOR, CARE, HELP)
 - b. Keeping Cincinnatians in their homes (Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program)
 - c. Mitigating the effects of evictions (Access to Counsel & Rental Assistance)
 - d. Creating and preserving subsidized housing (CDF “Fund of Funds”)
 - e. Assisting first-time homeowners (ADDI)
 - f. Ease the energy cost burden on the most vulnerable (Warm Up Cincy)
14. The budget should maintain support for neighborhoods, including Neighborhood Community Councils, and the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program. It should also maintain resources needed by the Administration to continue the ongoing work of developing a comprehensive community engagement strategy.

15. Community Development Corporations should continue to be a funding priority with an emphasis on currently unrepresented neighborhoods being supported. Through external partners like Homebase, communities should have the resources to develop plans and understand how development happens and how they can play a role in it.
16. The budget should continue the successes of our new competitive grant programs, specifically the Safe and Clean Fund and Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Program. These have proven successful at supporting neighborhood investment and helping to reduce blight and violence.

Equitable Access to Capital

Social mobility and financial disparities are unavoidably correlated to access to capital. The city should be bold in employing programs that break down barriers to capital without placing a burden on those who stand to benefit from those programs.

17. Increasing capacity for WBE/MBE participation so that the benefits of Cincinnati's growth are seen equitably, and we can exceed our inclusion goals, especially for large construction projects such as the Convention Center, Western Hills Viaduct, and Brent Spence Bridge. The city should explore multiple avenues, including strengthening their ability to use bonding as a tool to access projects and grow.
18. Supporting the Cities for Financial Empowerment initiatives which will promote financial freedom and social mobility for those who need it most in our community.

Infrastructure

The built environment of our city reflects the values that we hold as citizens. Our infrastructure should not only serve the needs of our residents but be ambitious in defining the type of city we want to be decades from now. Efforts should be made towards equitable investment in the communities which have historically been left out of investment in alignment with the "Justice 40" motion #202202260 passed by council in December of 2022.

19. The budget should address deferred maintenance by setting aside funds for critical failing infrastructure, especially the top ten critical infrastructure needs outlined in administrative report #202300833. It should also prioritize bringing facilities into ADA compliance where possible.

20. Continuing to fund and seek grants for pedestrian safety initiatives which include traffic calming, Complete Streets initiatives, and well-connected active transportation networks.

Reggie Harris

Budget Chair Reggie Harris

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