

Utica Public Library Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Present: Diana Koury, F.X. Matt III, Gabriel Hage, Carol Steele, Chris Sagaas, Sara Billman,

Chris reviewed the Draft 2024-2025 Operating Budget with the committee. Some items of note are as follows:

Income:

- The overall budget represents a 7.8% increase from last year.
- The Library Tax Levy with Utica City School District passed last May so those funds are guaranteed.
- The Library has a signed contract with Oneida County for increased funding and is awaiting the first payment.
- New York State funding has been figured at the same level as last year, but this amount may increase based on the current Executive and one-house budgets. MTPT has funded the 2024 Summer Reading Program and an additional \$10,000 in grants have been received already, so grant funding is also expected to increase throughout the year.
- A distribution from The Library's investment portfolio is included per the Investment Policy. Additional funds are approved per the spending policy. The use of this tactic and reliance on the Investment Portfolio will continue to be monitored going forward.
- Additional interest earnings are included based on the performance of holdings in local financial institutions.

Expenses:

- Salaries are budgeted to increase 7%. The Library is continuing to try to stay ahead of legally mandated minimum wage increases and maintain a competitive posture for professional librarian positions.
- The Library's pension payment to the City is estimated to increase by \$33,000.
- Health Insurance is also budgeted to increase as The Library is planning to hire a full-time Youth Services Librarian who will be eligible for coverage.
- Utilities spending is down \$15,000 from last year's budget as Chris anticipated much higher costs for the current fiscal year.

The Library's spending policy does not address the funds held in our Vanguard account. The money in this account has more than doubled over the last 7 years. Chris is interested in discussing the use of these funds with the Finance Committee going forward.

Chris has been back in discussion with the prospective buyer for the parking lot next to the church. After consultation with a local realtor and individual Trustees, Chris is proposing The Library accept the offer of \$18,000 with overflow parking rights included and the Finance Committee approves. Chris talked about starting a seed fund for infrastructure needs with these funds. Carol Steele recommended using it as a 'bonus pool' for the employees. There was further discussion on where to place the funds to ensure growth, but no recommendation has been finalized. Gabe Hage has agreed to handle the legal proceedings for the sale on a pro bono basis.

Capital Improvements:

The Library is still waiting to be reimbursed \$83,000 for the DRI project. Chris is expecting to receive these funds sometime in April.

Chris showed the committee drawings for the rear moat wall repair and rear entrance parking lot redesign. This work can be coupled or split apart and Chris will be requesting NY State Construction Aid to cover some of the costs. An estimated cost is included in the 2024-25 Budget document.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Sara Billman.