

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD
AUGUST 14, 2024**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD MET IN A SPECIAL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2024, AT 2:00 P.M. IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, FRIENDSWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY, LOCATED AT 416 S. FRIENDSWOOD DRIVE, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS, WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM:

John Ellisor	Councilmember
Sally Branson	Councilmember
Trish Hanks	Councilmember
Robert J. Griffon	Councilmember
Joe Matranga	Mayor Pro Tem
Brent Erenwert	Councilmember
Mike Foreman	Mayor
Morad Kabiri	City Manager
Karen Horner	City Attorney
Leticia Brysch	City Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Foreman called the meeting to order with a quorum present at 2:02 P.M.; all members were present.

2. INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Councilmember John Ellisor

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - United States and State of Texas

Mayor Foreman led the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States and the Pledge to the State of Texas.

4. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Mayor Foreman opened the item by first thanking the City's Finance Team for doing an amazing job on the budget. Councilmember Branson similarly thanked Staff and expressed her appreciation to be able to talk in a less formal environment to make sure that they understand this budget. Councilmember Ellisor stated he appreciated having a written copy and further expressed that he enjoyed going through it.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Foreman announced no member of the public had signed up to speak for a public comment.

6. WORK SESSION TOPICS

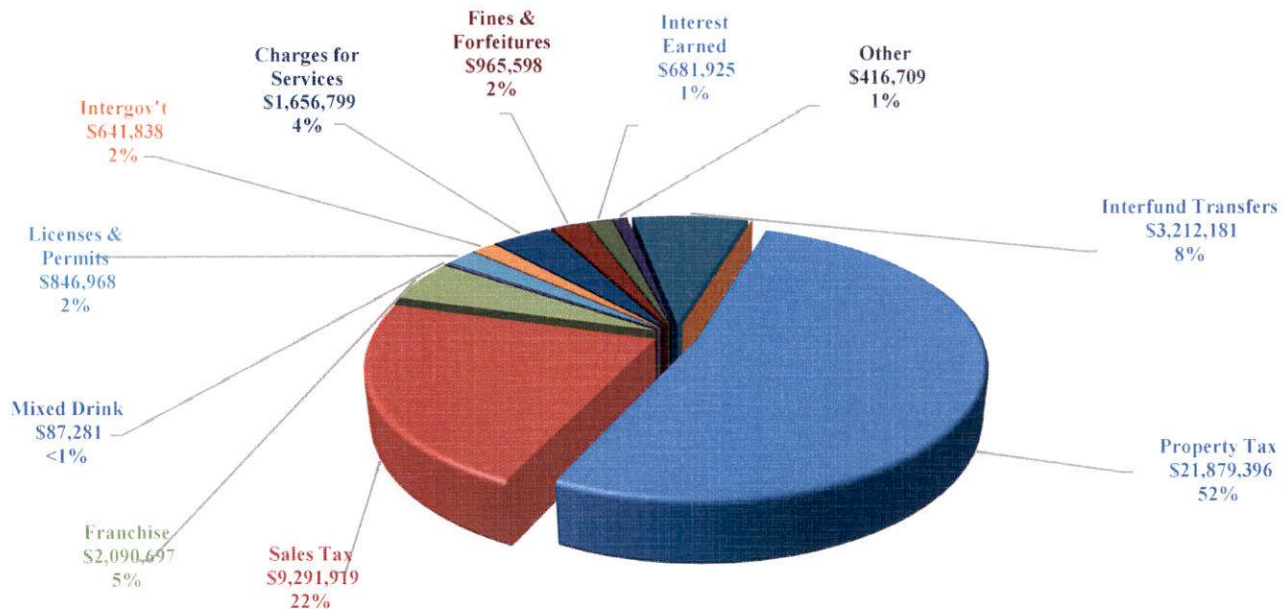
A. Receive and discuss a presentation regarding the City of Friendswood Proposed FY2024-25 Municipal Budget.

City Manager Morad Kabiri opened the item by thanking the Council for investing the time to sit down and discuss the budget in a workshop format. He relayed that the intent of the meeting was to present the budget information in a way that would allow the Council the opportunity and comfort to engage Staff and ask questions. With that, Finance Director Rhonda Boskas presented the City of Friendswood's Proposed FY2024-25 Municipal Budget.

Ms. Boskas prefaced the presentation by stating that the total budget for the City of Friendswood, including projected revenues and expenditures, is about \$108.2 million. Staff would be presenting a balanced budget and would focus on the General Fund and the Water and Sewer Fund.

GENERAL FUND

The City's primary operating fund was announced to have a proposed revenue of \$41.8 million. The breakdown of the City's revenues were noted below, with the majority of the revenues coming taxes, including property taxes, sales taxes and franchise taxes.



Ms. Boskas outlined the main financial trends for each of the revenue sources as noted below:

Property Tax
\$21.9M
>\$2.8M over PY Actual
>Includes P&I for PY

Sales Tax
\$9.3M
>Up \$142K

Franchise Tax
\$2.1M
>Down \$12K

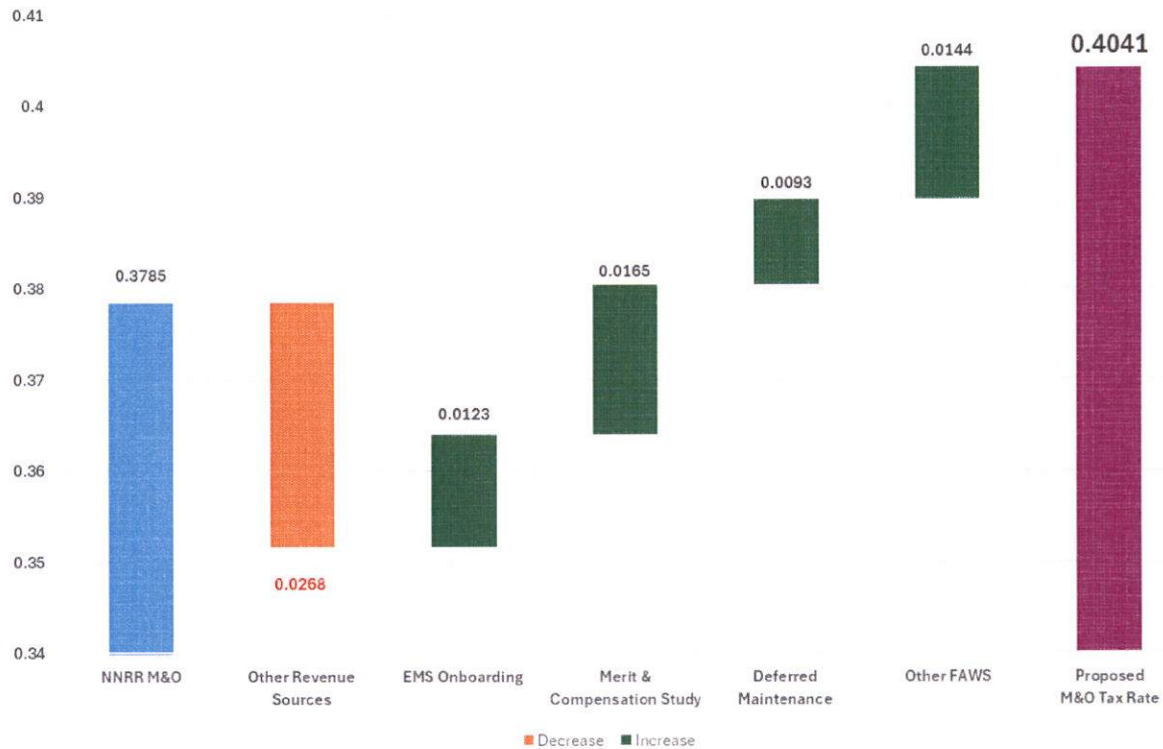
Fines \$966K >Up \$45K	Interfund Transfers \$3.2M >Up \$514K	Licenses & Permits \$847K >Up \$93K
Intergovernmental \$642K >Down \$230K	Charges For Services <i>(Includes EMS Billing)</i> \$1.7M >Up \$848K	Miscellaneous Interest Cell Tower Agreements \$1.1M >Up \$120K
Use Of Fund Balance \$0 >Down \$333K		

With regard to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) billing item, Councilmember Matranga questioned if that increase in revenue was due to a new service being provided or if it was related to any fee increases. Mr. Kabiri responded that the item in question is a reclassification of the revenues. While previously the collected revenues for fees associated with ambulance rides were used to pay down the City's obligation to the Friendswood Volunteer Fire Department (FVFD) contract, now that EMS is a department within the City, that revenue becomes that of the City and not FVFD. Councilmember Matranga further inquired if staff was looking at changing any of the fees, year over year. Mr. Kabiri stated that staff looks at the fees from time to time to make sure that they are competitive and in line with the trends. Emergency Services Director Brian Mansfield noted that the EMS fees were increased two years ago and are usually reviewed in a 3-year window, as such any recommendations for fee changes would likely wait until next year.

Ms. Boskas proceeded to report that there has been no change to the proposed tax rate of 51.42¢ from the August 5th Council meeting. She further noted that the City's estimated taxable values are \$5.9 billion, including new construction, exemptions, and 65-free ceilings. There is \$82 million projected new construction value, \$372 million property value under protest, and \$5.9 million in tax debt service obligation. Ms. Boskas provided the following table to illustrate their current and proposed tax bill comparison.

Home Value - \$458,000				
No change in value from 2023 to 2024				
Homestead Taxable Value ~ \$366,400 (w/ 20% exemption)				
	Proposed	Current	NNRR	VATR
	\$0.5142	\$0.5007	\$0.4951	\$0.5523
Monthly Tax Bill	\$156.99	\$152.89	\$151.18	\$168.64
Annual Tax Bill	\$1,883.93	\$1,834.67	\$1,814.11	\$2,023.63
Monthly Difference		\$4.10	\$5.82	-\$11.65
Annual Difference		\$49.26	\$69.82	-\$139.70

The following graph was displayed to illustrate the City's maintenance and operation (M&O) tax rate.



Councilmember Matranga noted that if they wanted to go back down to the no new revenue rate (NNRR), they would then have to give up the things listed in the chart. Ms. Bloskas confirmed that his assessment was correct and then proceeded to present more information on the budget items referred to as “forces at work,” which are those items that are out of Staff’s control, such as contractual agreements previously approved by the Council and department decision packages. Those items were presented as follows:

The EMS onboarding was discussed, and it was noted that these costs were going to increase regardless of whether EMS was brought into the City or not. However, by bringing EMS in-house, the City has more control over staffing, operations, and the quality of service.

EMS ONBOARDING	
FY25 Expenses	\$2,972,772
- Personnel - Operational Costs - Facilities Maintenance - Information Tech Costs - TESRS Obligations	
Less Revenue/Savings	-\$2,305,821
Net addition	\$666,951

With regard to the merit and salary adjustment item, Ms. Boskas stated it is budgeted at 4%. The 4% aims to adjust salaries to market rates based on the ongoing salary survey. Thus, not everyone will get the full 4%—only those behind market rates. Other employees will receive merit increases based on performance. She further noted that the of the \$888,603 budgeted for merit and salary adjustments a little over 50% is for Public Safety, which includes Police, Fire and EMS.

MERIT & SALARY ADJUSTMENTS BY FUNCTION	
Function	Merit/Adjustment
General Government	\$183,868
Public Safety	\$464,798
Community Development	\$45,589
Public Works	\$54,066
Engineering	\$19,733
Library	\$45,046
Parks & Recreation	\$75,503
TOTAL	\$888,603

Ms. Boskas gave the Council an overview of what surrounding cities were offering their employees in compensation for FY2025.

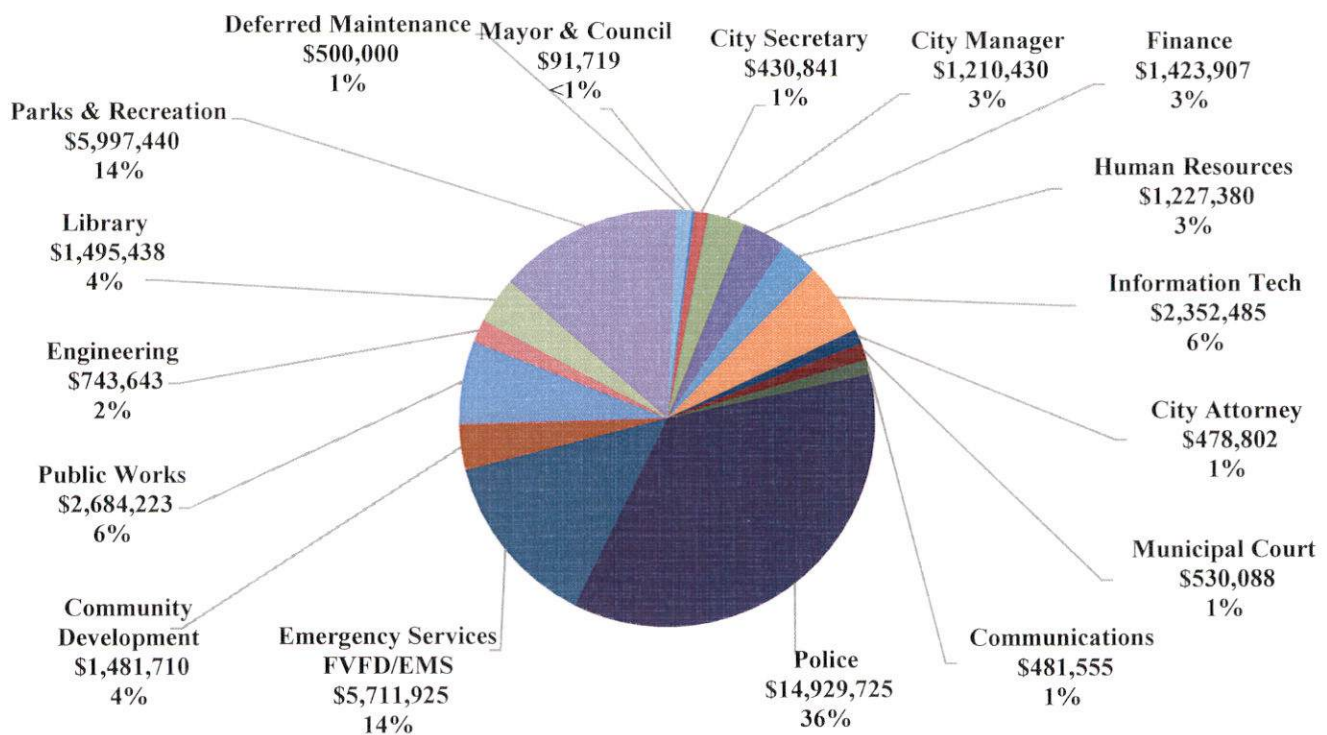
FY2025 COMPENSATION COMPARISON			
City	Merit/Step	Cola	Total
Friendswood	2.75% Merit or Salary Adjustment		2.75% Merit or Salary Adjustment
Webster		3.75%	3.75%
Alvin	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Pearland	2% Step + 3% Adjustment		5%
Baytown		4.0%	4.0%
League City	2.5%	2.0%	4.5%

Councilmember Griffon suggested that as the City could not compete with what other agencies were offering their employees in pay that the Council consider foregoing merit raises this year and instead take those monies and use them to pay for some of the unfunded decision packages. Mayor Foreman stated that he disagreed with the idea of not giving merit raises this year and also with the premise that the proposed merit would not be enough to move the needle in a positive direction for employees. He discussed how as a former salaried government employee; he was incentivized to work hard and strive for that additional pay. Mayor Foreman stated that he believed it would be a disservice to the employees to stop merit increases because the City needed to remain competitive to retain the best employees, even though some may leave regardless. Further dialogue ensued on merit and salary adjustments and its effect on the overall health of the organization and ultimately, the consensus was to keep the budgeted merit monies in place. In addition to the Mayor's and City Manager's comments, Police Chief Rogers expressed a concern with not adequately funding merit and the salary adjustments. Doing so would severely impact their ability to recruit quality talent.

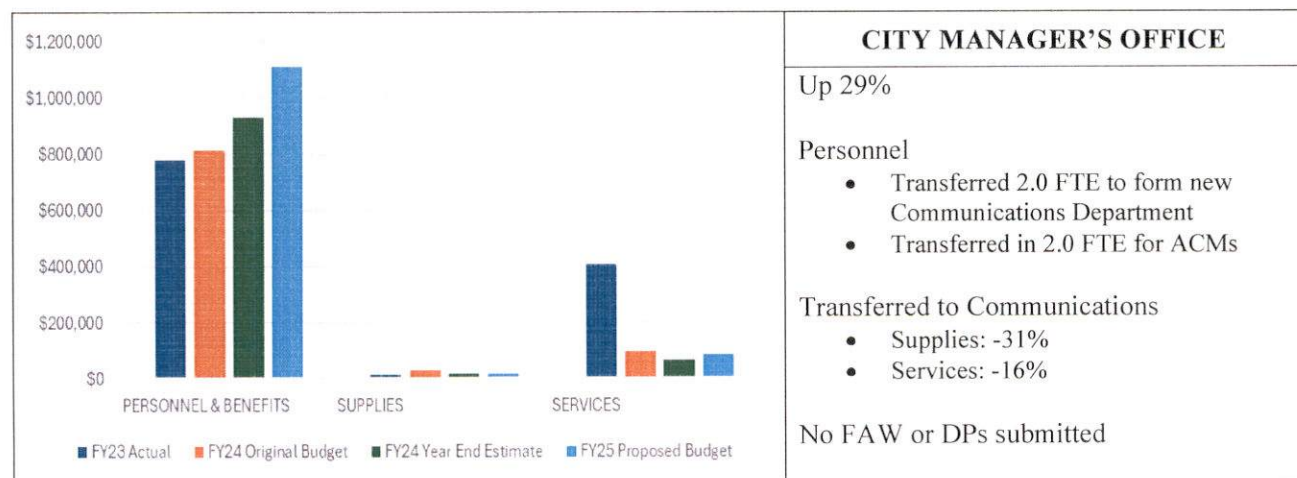
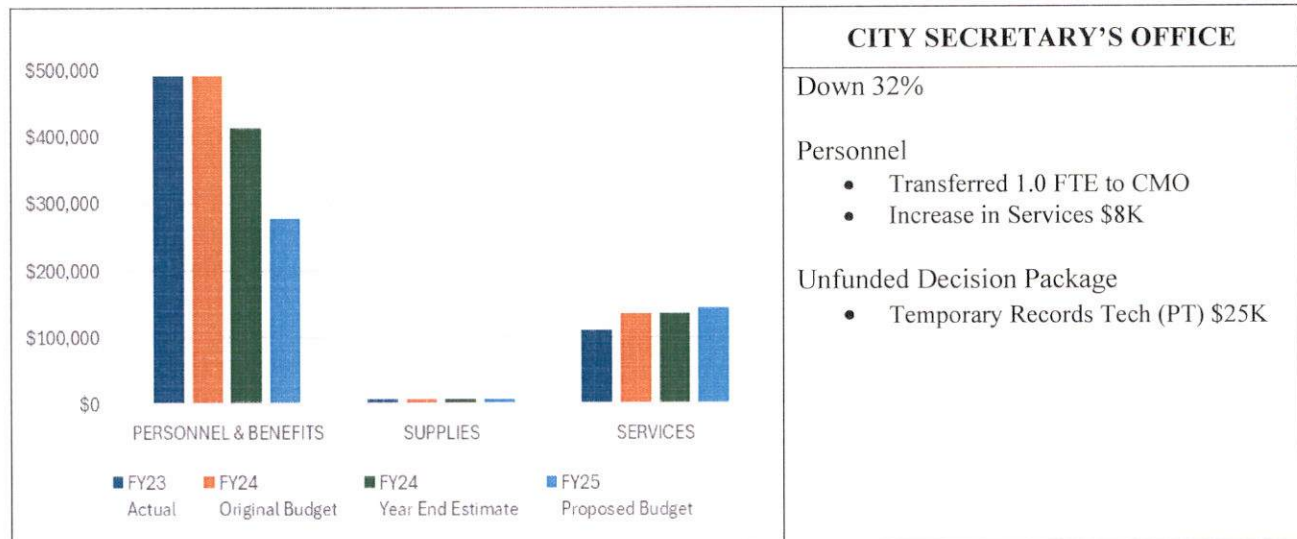
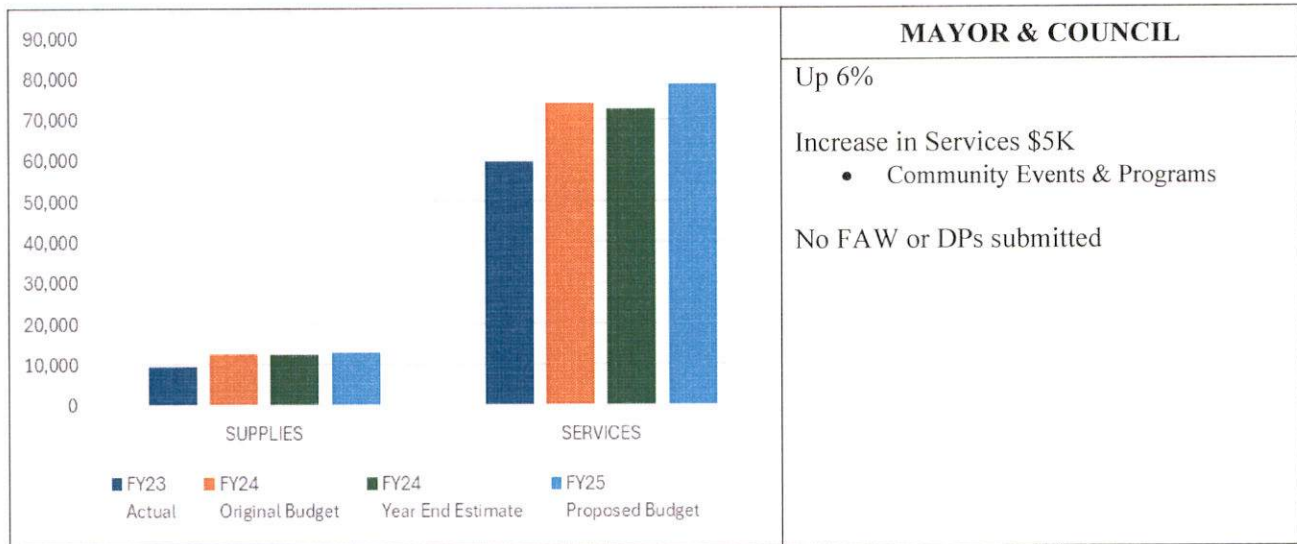
In continuation, Ms. Boskas discussed the forces at work items, and presented the recommended deferred maintenance fund.

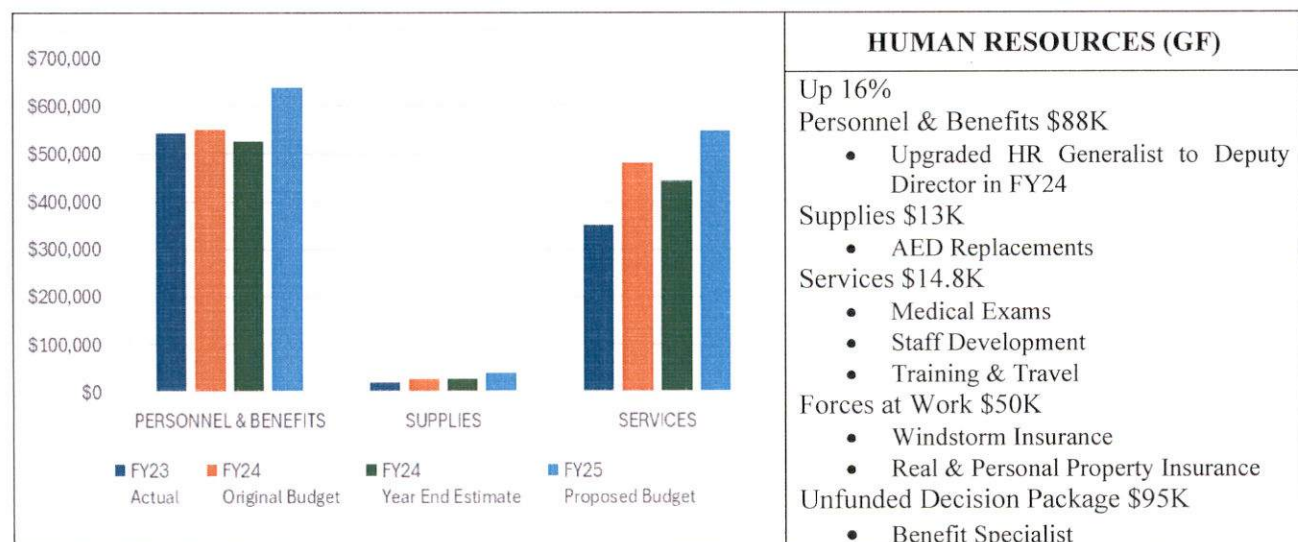
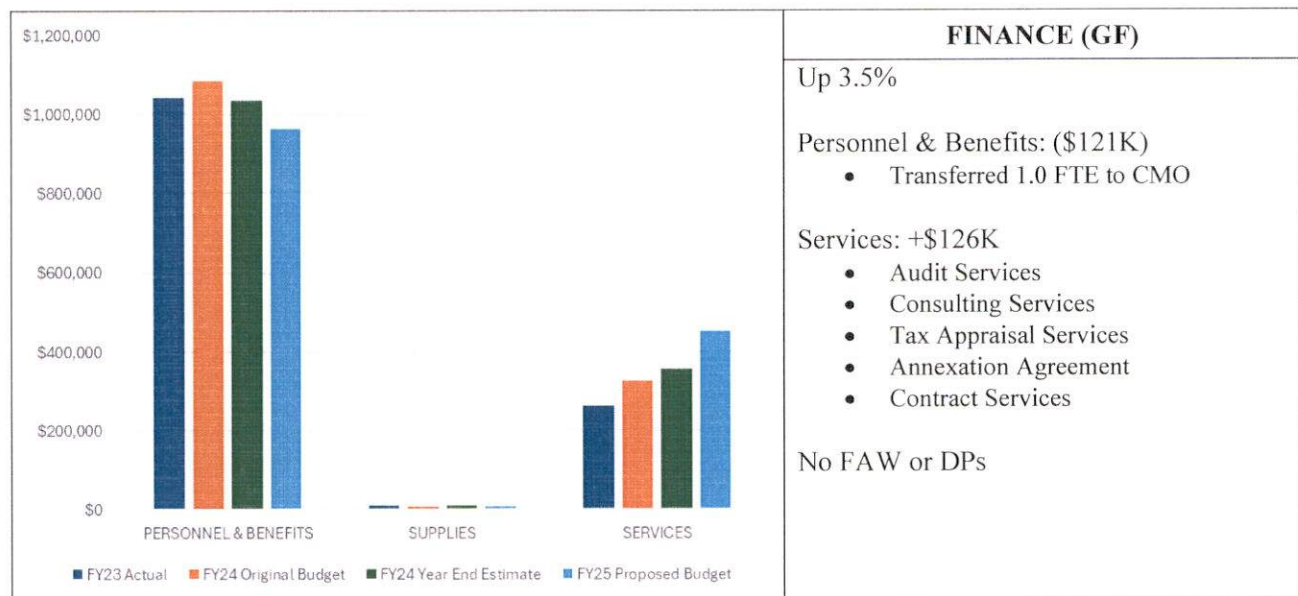
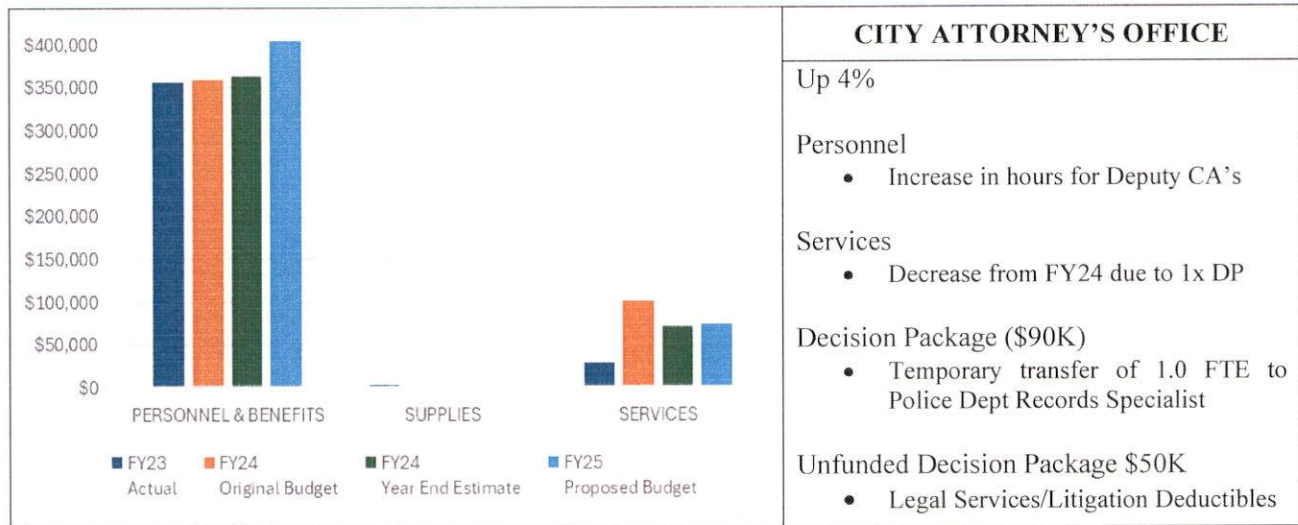
DEFERRED MAINTENANCE - \$500,000						
Year	Information Technology	Library	Parks & Recreation	Police Department	Public Works	Total
2025			\$3,683,115	\$80,000	\$195,000	\$3,958,115
2026	\$319,000		\$3,249,540	\$182,500	\$400,000	\$4,151,040
2027	\$319,000		\$3,849,000			\$4,168,000
2028			\$1,507,090			\$1,507,090
2029		\$6,011	\$75,050			\$81,061

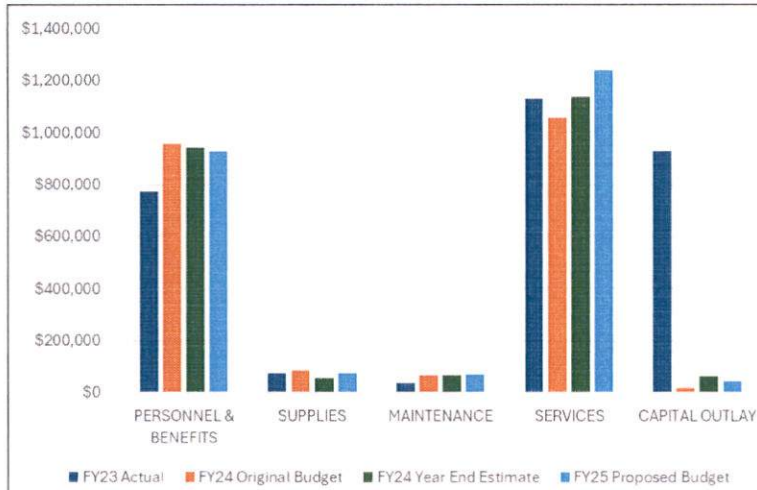
Additionally, the General Fund's proposed expenditures were announced to be \$41.8 million with a departmental breakdown outlined in the following chart:



Deputy Finance Director Jennifer Walker and Budget Manager Andree Calhoun provided a more in-depth breakdown for each department, as follows:







INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Up 8%

Services +\$184K

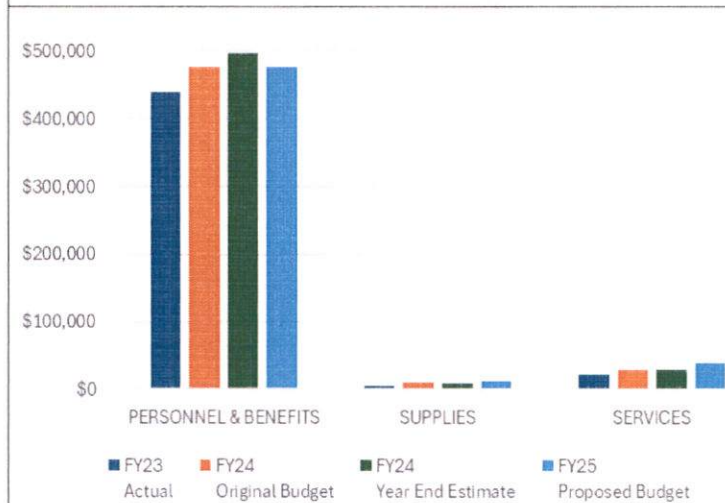
- Software Support Services
- Internet/Wireless Services
- Contract Services

Capital Equipment +\$24K

- Equipment Replacements

Unfunded Decision Package

- Cloud Backup Service \$17K



MUNICIPAL COURT

Up 2%

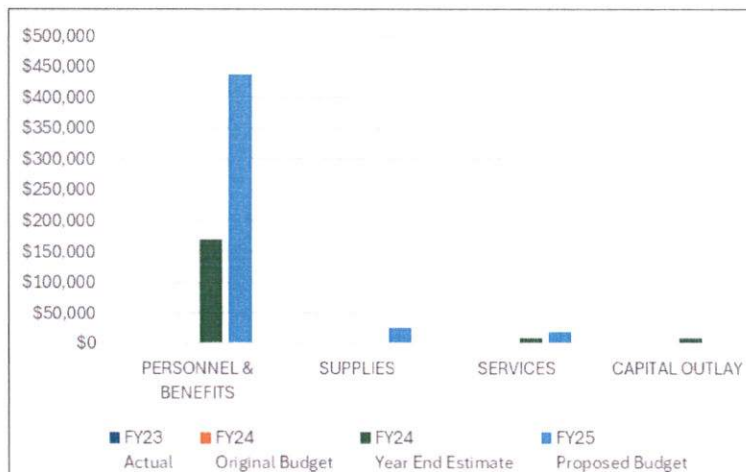
Supplies \$3K

- Operating Supplies

Services \$10K

- Contract Services

No FAW or DPs submitted



COMMUNICATIONS

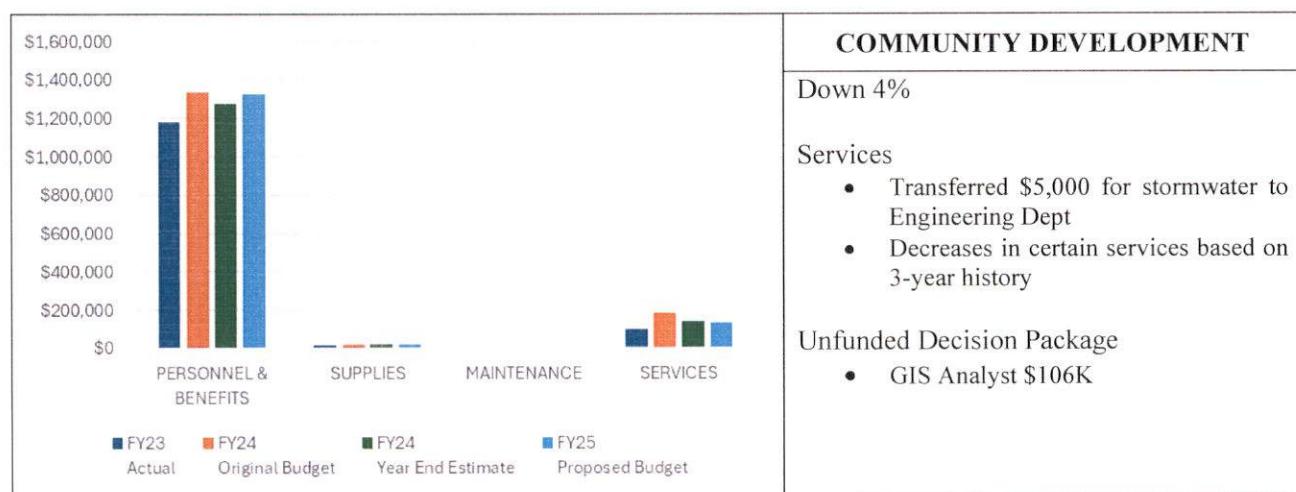
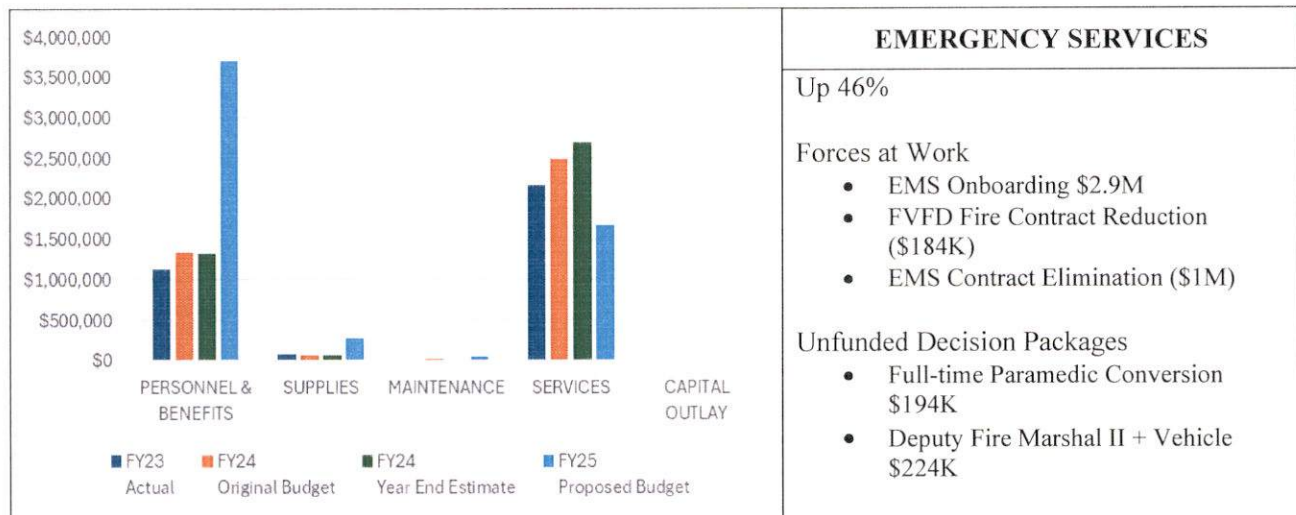
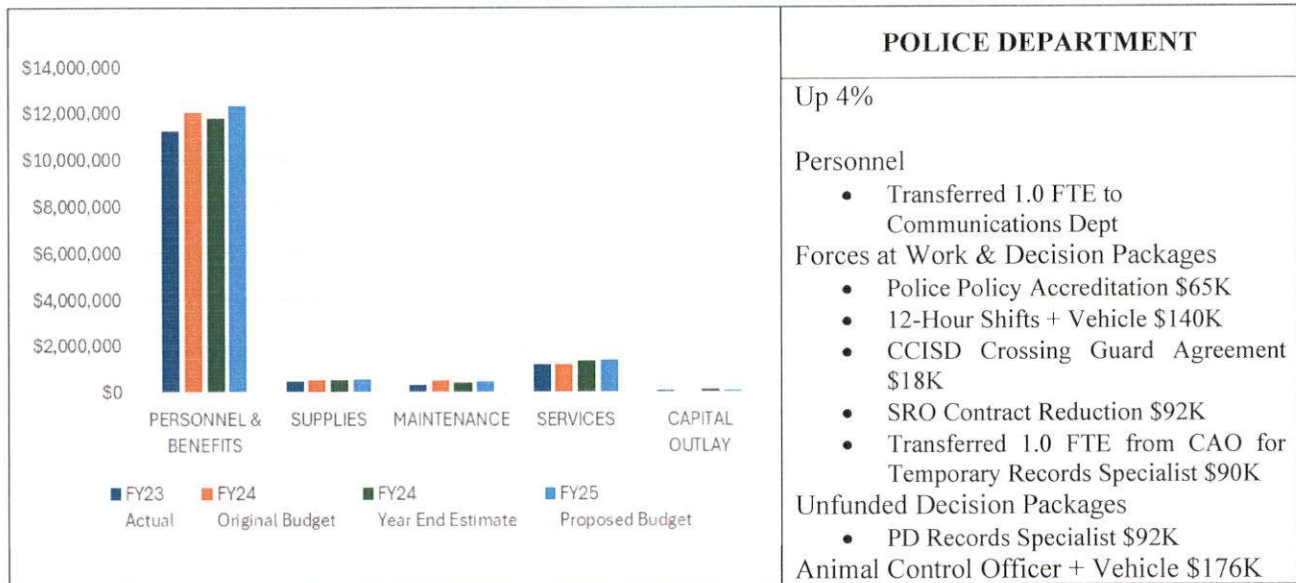
New Department

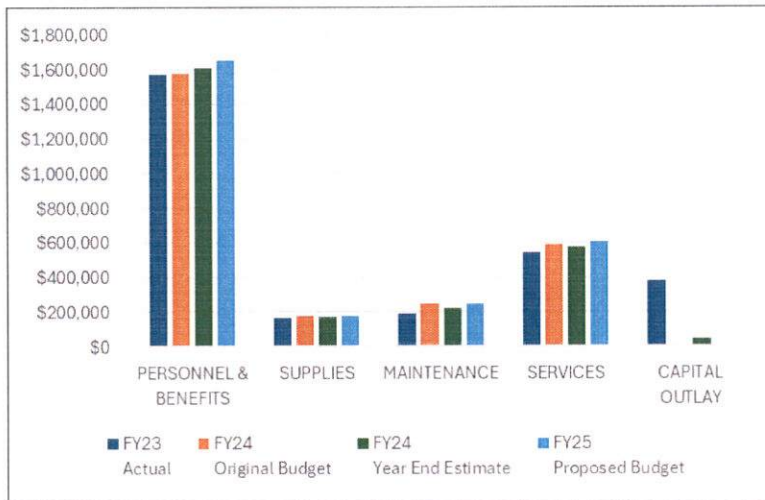
Personnel

- Transferred 2.0 FTE from CMO
- Transferred 1.0 FTE from PD-CID

Unfunded Decision Package \$10K

- Social Media Posts Services Fees





PUBLIC WORKS (GF)

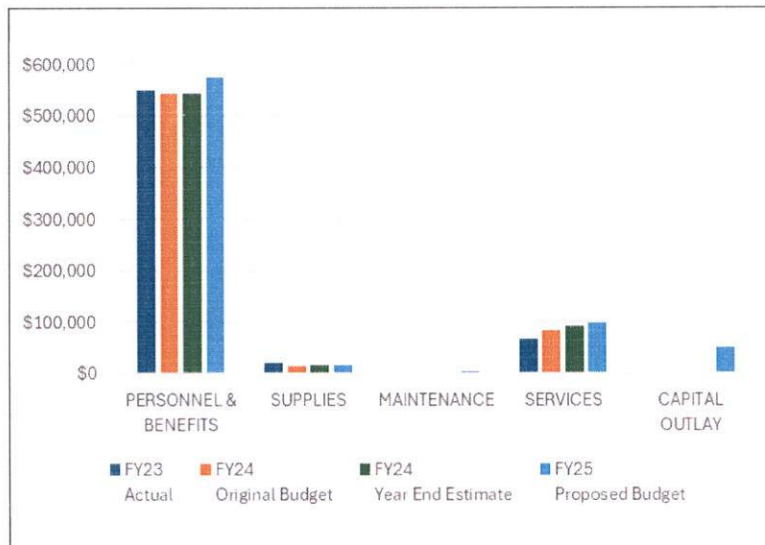
Up 4%

Forces at Work

- Electricity (Street Lights) \$11K

Unfunded Decision Packages

- Streets Equipment Operator \$87K
- Streets Maintenance Workers (2.0 FTE) \$159K
- Streets/Sign Shop Vehicle \$50K
- Streets Crew Leader + Vehicle \$178K



ENGINEERING (GF)

Up 15%

Maintenance

- Vehicle Maintenance

Services

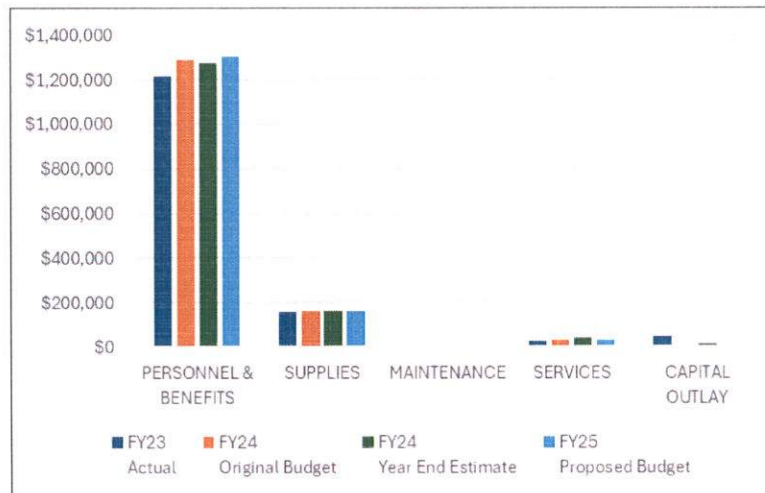
- Operating Services
- Training
- \$5,000 transfer from CDD for Stormwater

Forces at Work

- Vehicle for Stormwater \$54K

Unfunded Decision Packages

- City-Wide Traffic Study \$200K
- Sunset Drive Signal Rehab & Optimization \$2.3M



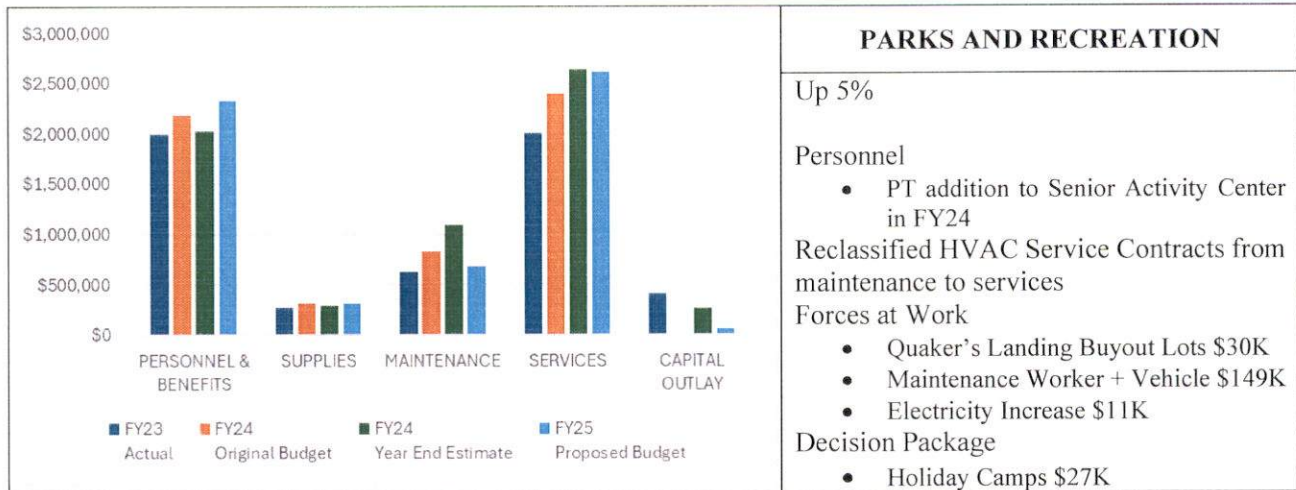
LIBRARY

Up 1%

Personnel

- Upgraded FT position in FY24

No FAW or DPs submitted



(Parks & Rec Continued)

Unfunded Decision Packages

- Weekend Laborer \$65K
- Summer Camp Staff Wage Increase \$6K
- Summer Pool Staff Wage Increase \$8K
- Citizen Awareness (City U) \$500
- Relevant Special Event Programs \$9K
- Lake Friendswood Fish Feeding & Restocking Program \$10K
- Lake Friendswood Kayak/Paddleboard Rental Kiosk \$18K

The Council engaged in a discussion on finding sponsors for some of those unfunded Park's items, similar to how the Friends of the Library supports the Friendswood Public Library. Staff noted that they would look to take advantage of as many grant and sponsorship opportunities are available. Mr. Kabiri noted that the Friendswood community is very giving, and that many of the local businesses already generously support many city events, so there is only so much that they can give. Councilmember Branson requested that the City consider increasing the amount allotted to the Friendswood Historical Society from \$17,500 to \$20,000 in order to cover their increase in their insurance premiums. A discussion ensued on this item, and staff stated that they would look at different options for this item and bring it back at a later date.

To close on the General Fund, Ms. Calhoon touched on the total forces at work and decision packages.

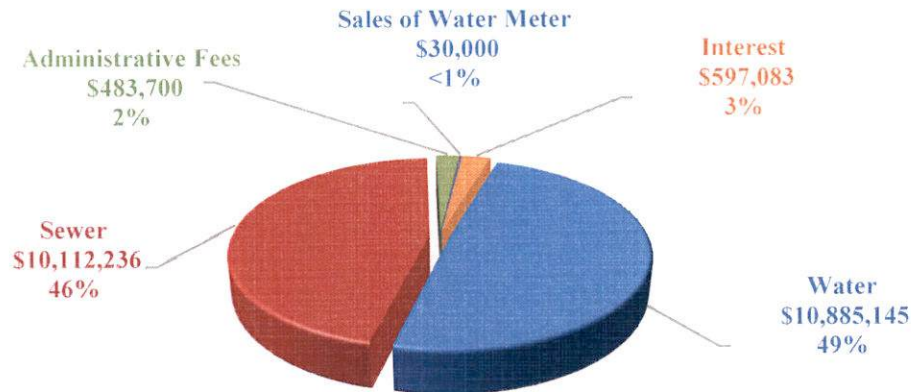
TOTAL FORCES AT WORK AND DECISION PACKAGES	
Forces at Work	\$1,497,142
Decision Packages	\$888,603
Total Funded FAW & DPs	\$2,385,745
Unfunded Decision Packages	\$4,029,351

At 3:23 P.M., Mayor Foreman recesses the meeting for a break.

At 3:36 P.M., Mayor Foreman reconvened the meeting.

WATER AND SEWER FUND

Ms. Bloskas announced the proposed revenue of the Water and Sewer Fund is \$22.1 million with the majority of those revenues coming from the collection of water and sewer rates.



Staff outlined the projected rate increases, which are the results of the water rate study completed this year. It was noted that given the volatility of the City's growth, extended economic conditions, and potential for significant changes to wholesale costs, the consultant recommended that the City's rate plan be formally reviewed after three years. However, at this time the forecasted rates were noted as follows:

RATE PROPOSAL | WATER

		Current	Forecast Jan-25	Forecast Jan-26	Forecast Jan-27
WATER					
Water Rates Residential Inside					
<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u>					
3/4"		\$ 23.55	\$ 25.20	\$ 26.95	\$ 28.85
1"		\$ 23.55	\$ 25.20	\$ 26.95	\$ 28.85
1 1/2"		\$ 92.09	\$ 98.55	\$ 105.45	\$ 112.85
2"		\$ 147.43	\$ 157.75	\$ 168.80	\$ 180.60
<u>Volume Rate Per 1,000 Gal</u>					
1	3,000	-	-	-	-
3,001	10,000	3.21	3.45	3.70	3.95
10,001	25,000	4.01	4.30	4.60	4.90
25,001	Above	6.02	6.45	6.90	7.40
Water Rates -- Commercial Inside					
<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u>					
3/4"		23.55	25.20	26.95	28.85
1"		23.55	25.20	26.95	28.85
1 1/2"		92.09	98.55	105.45	112.85
2"		147.43	157.75	168.80	180.60
3"		265.20	283.75	303.60	324.85
4"		433.43	463.75	496.20	530.95
6"		854.02	913.80	977.75	1,046.20
8"		1,358.72	1,453.85	1,555.60	1,664.50
10"		1,358.72	1,453.85	1,555.60	1,664.50
12"		1,358.72	1,453.85	1,555.60	1,664.50
<u>Volume Rate Per 1,000 Gal</u>					
1	Above	4.90	5.25	5.60	6.00

	Current	Forecast Jan-25	Forecast Jan-26	Forecast Jan-27
Water Rates - Irrigation/Sprinkler				
<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u>				
3/4"	23.55	25.20	26.95	28.85
1"	23.55	25.20	26.95	28.85
1 1/2"	92.09	98.55	105.45	112.85
2"	147.43	157.75	168.80	180.60
3"	265.20	283.75	303.60	324.85
4"	433.43	463.75	496.20	530.95
6"	854.02	913.80	977.75	1,046.20
8"	1,358.72	1,453.85	1,555.60	1,664.50
<u>Volume Rate Per 1,000 Gal</u>				
1 3,000	-	-	-	-
3,001 10,000	4.00	4.30	4.60	4.90
10,001 25,000	4.25	4.55	4.85	5.20
25,001 Above	6.02	6.45	6.90	7.40

RATE PROPOSAL | WASTEWATER

	Current	Forecast Jan-25	Forecast Jan-26	Forecast Jan-27
WASTEWATER				
Wastewater Rates - Residential Inside*				
Monthly Minimum Charge	\$ 27.96	\$ 30.20	\$ 32.60	\$ 33.90
Volume Rate/1,000 Gal	4.29	4.65	5.00	5.20
Wastewater Rates - Commercial Inside				
Monthly Minimum Charge	27.96	30.20	32.60	33.90
Volume Rate/1,000 Gal	4.29	4.40	4.50	4.60

*Winter Months Averaging Apply to Residential Volumes

Ms. Blosskas noted that the proposed water and sewer rates were impacted by the City's projected Capital Improvement Plan which was updated with the last rate study. However, she noted that the Finance staff continues to work with Engineering and Public Works to ensure that this plan remains as up to date as possible.

Ms. Blosskas identified the Projected Capital Improvement Plan (FY2024 – FY2029) included on the rate study as follows:

PROJECTED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (FY24 – FY29)

WATER PROJECTS

42" Water Main Replacement (COH Cash Call)	\$	15,355,591
Friendswood Dr to EST1 24"		9,962,000
Friendswood Trails 16" Loop		6,542,000
Beamer 12"		4,410,000
Georgetown East Loop 12"		3,280,000
Ground Storage Tank @ WP 1 and Pump Improvements (Funded with Series 2016 & Georgetown Extension 12"		3,033,849
Chigger Creek Crossing 16"		2,640,000
Surface Water System #2 Pump/Controls		2,229,000
Generator at Surface Water Station #2	✓	1,000,000
Pipe Rack Relocation Project (Grant)		1,000,000
Annalea Neighborhood Improvements - 1/3 Water, 1/3 WW, 1/3 Street Willdan estima		863,750
Blackhawk Blvd Phase II-C Utilities		858,150
		<u>316,317</u>
TOTAL WATER PROJECTS	\$	51,490,657

WASTEWATER PROJECTS

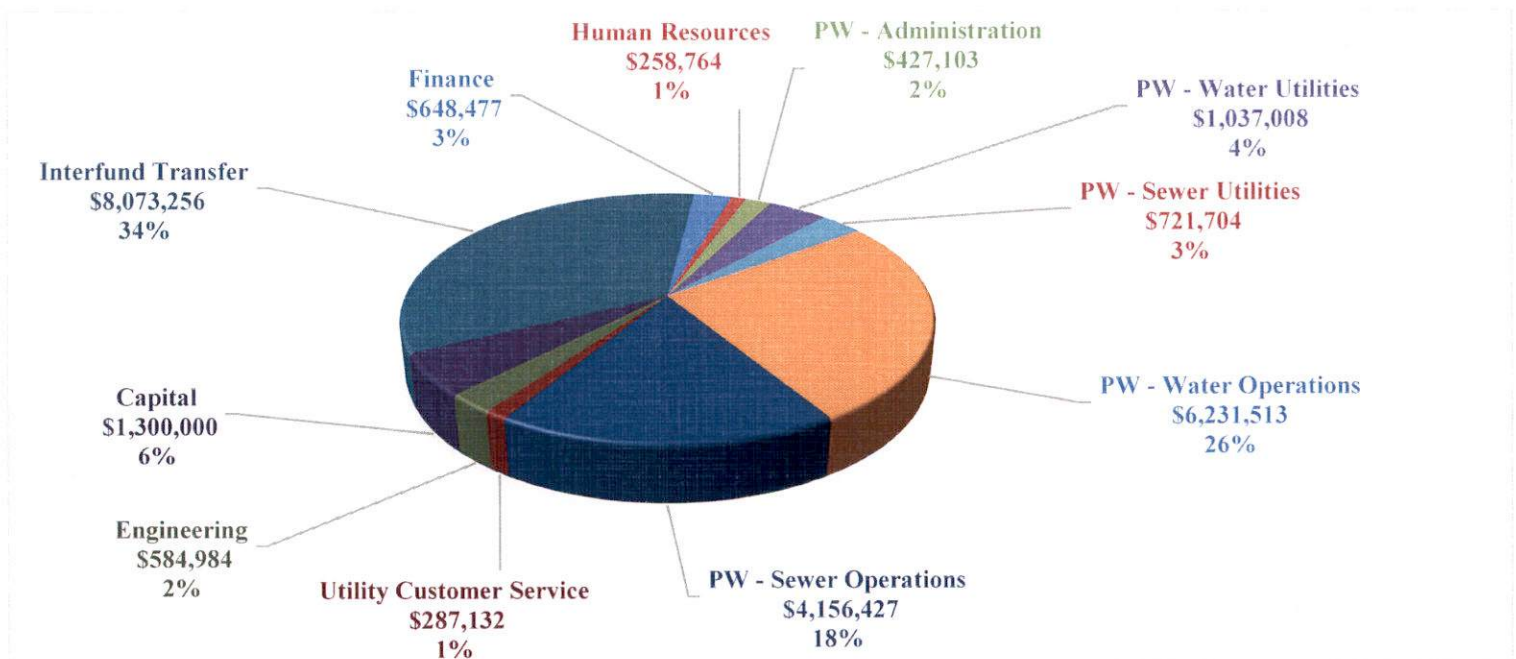
Upsizing Lift Station #2 & Force Main	\$	15,409,400
Upsize Lift Station 23 and Force Main	✓	5,382,000
I&I Removal Above 30%		5,000,000
El Dorado/Lundy Lane Sanitary Sewer		3,880,000
Windsong Lane Sanitary Sewer		3,061,000
Lift Station #2		3,000,000
Upsize Lift Station #8 and Force Main		2,569,800
Cowards Creek Sewer Upsizing		2,408,000
Lift Station Package 1		1,950,000
Upsize Lift Station #30		1,845,500
2025-2029 Sewer Line Maint & Cleaning - Funded in annual budget		1,800,000
Greenbriar at Cowards Creek Gravity Sewer Line		1,800,000
Upsize Lift Station 16		1,531,200
Upsizing 15" and 18" sewer line along Greenbriar Drive		1,531,200
Liftstation #26 Reconstruction		1,500,000
Lift Station #27 Upgrades		1,500,000
FM 528-Falcon Ridge to Windsong Sanitary Sewer	✓	1,433,100
Lift Station #22 Rehabilitation/Replacement		1,372,000
Baker Road, Falling Leaf Sanitary Sewer		1,280,000
Blackhawk WWTP Aeration Upgrades Working Cap		1,100,000
Lift Station Package 4		1,005,000
Pipe Rack Relocation Project (Grant)		863,750
Annalea Neighborhood Improvements - 1/3 Water, 1/3 WW, 1/3 Street Willdan estima		858,150
Citywide Wastewater Hydraulic Model		400,000
Blackhawk Blvd Phase II-C Utilities		316,317
Greenbriar at Cowards Creek Gravity Sewer Line		<u>275,000</u>
TOTAL WASTEWATER PROJECTS	\$	63,071,417

Ms. Boskas gave the Council an overview of the projected Capital Improvement Projects bond issuance and noted that the information below was very preliminary and subject change. She also noted that the Council will be given ample notice of any need to issues these bonds as they would have to take formal action to approve the issuance of any debt.

PROJECTED CIP BOND ISSUANCES

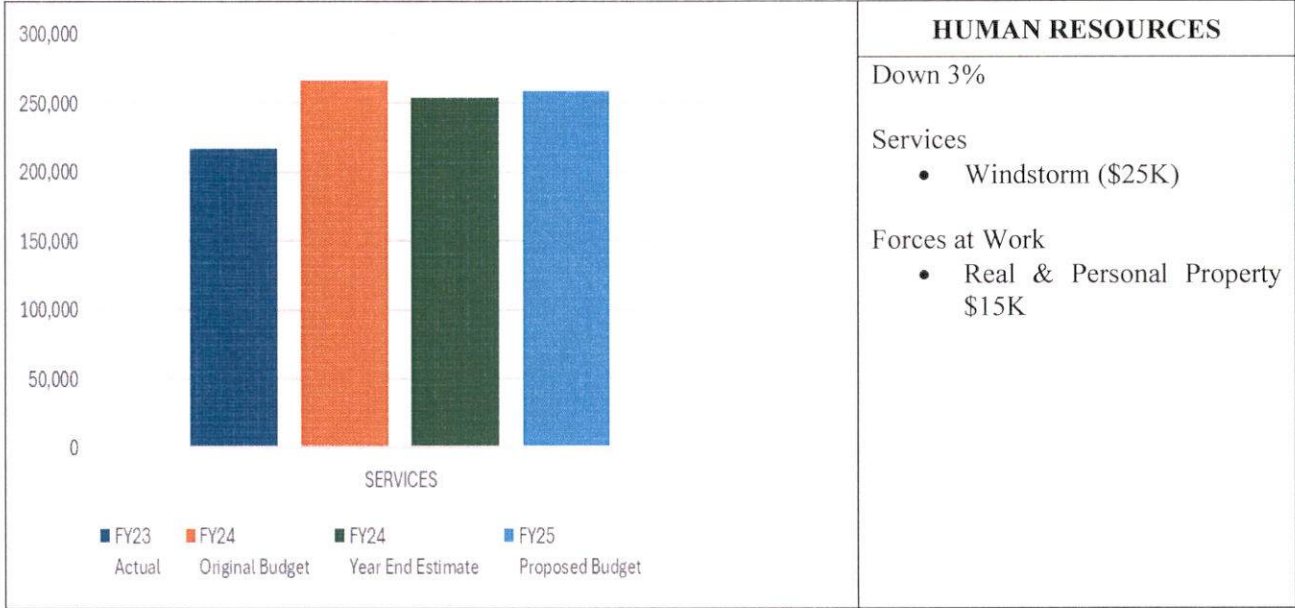
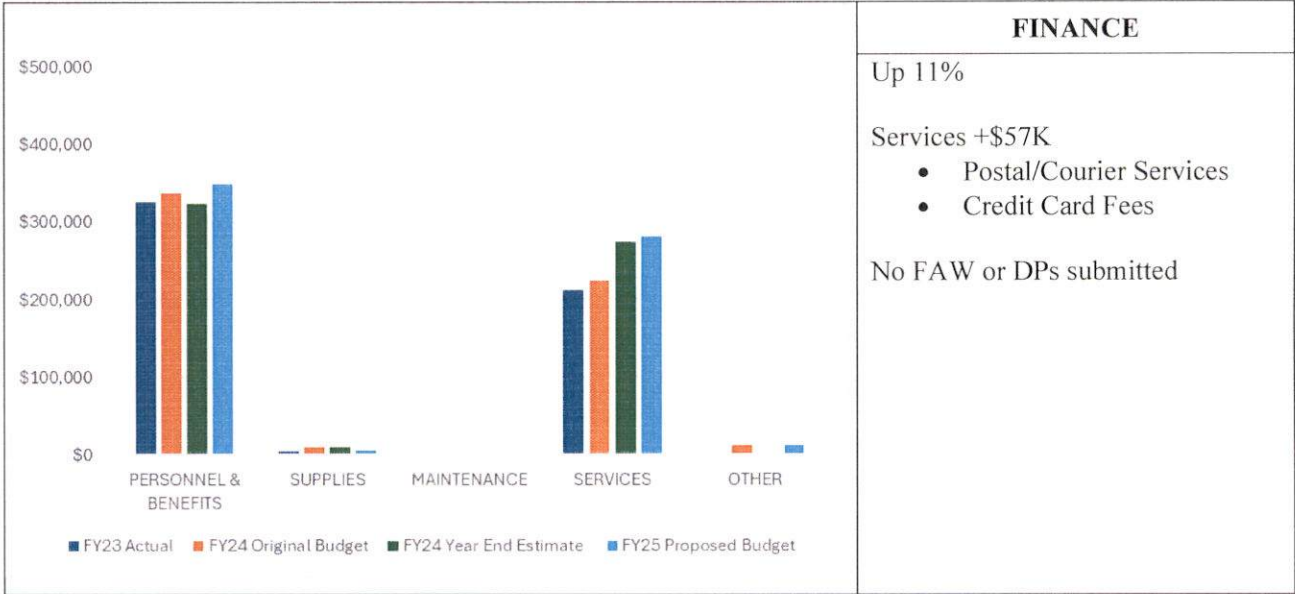


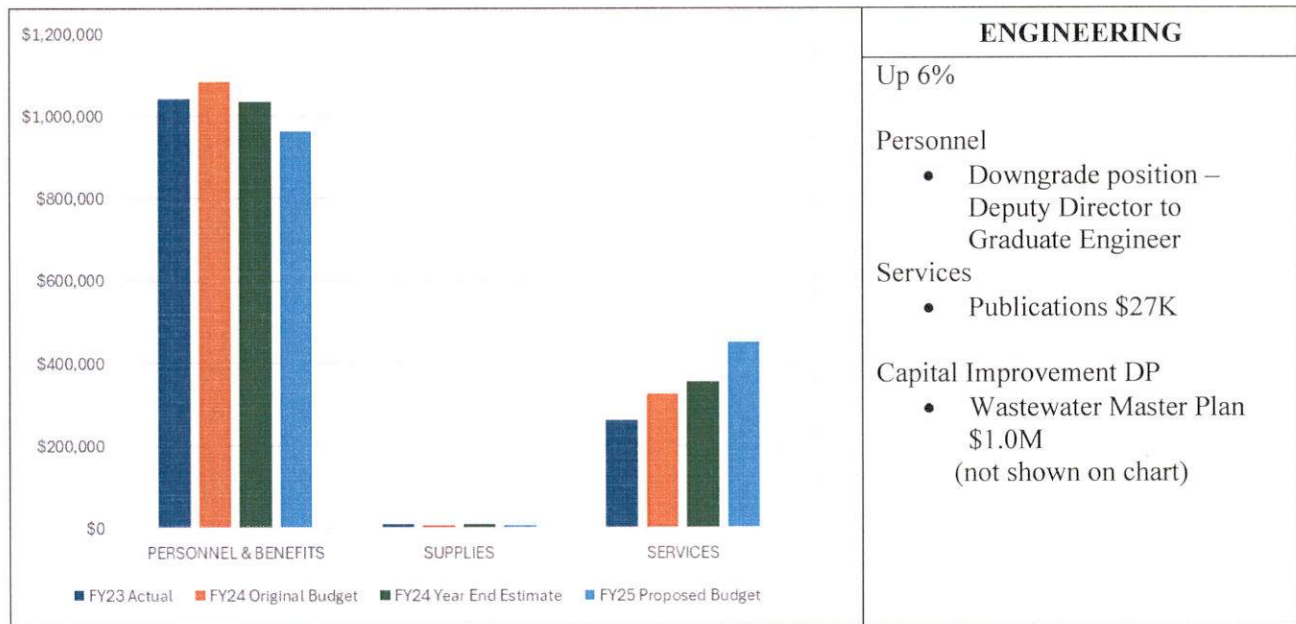
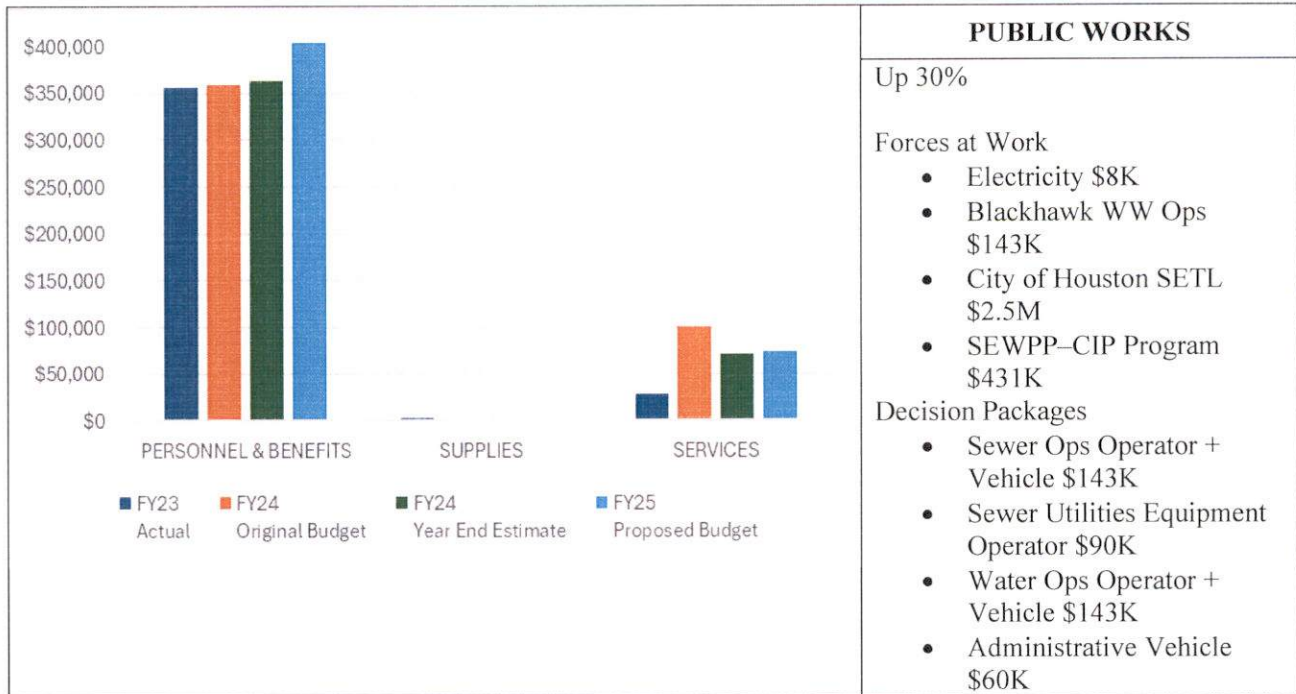
Additionally, the Water and Sewer Fund's proposed expenditures were announced to be \$23.7 million with a departmental breakdown outlined in the following chart:



Ms. Boskas noted that this fund did not include the project construction expenditures supported by Revenue Bonds.

The merit and adjustment pay noted in this Fund was the same as that noted in the General Fund of 4%. The Council again was provided with a more in-depth breakdown for each department but for the Water and Sewer Fund only.





Ms. Blossas noted that all of the forces at work and decision packages for the Water and Sewer Fund were included in the proposed budget in the following amounts:

Forces at Work	\$3,132,936
Decision Packages	\$1,544,377
Total Funded FAW & DPs	\$4,677,313

Ms. Boskas identified the following next steps for the budget approval process:

- Proposed Budget Public Hearing – 08/26/2024
- Budget Adoption – 08/26/2024 or 09/09/2024
- Anticipated Public Hearing on Tax Rate – 09/09/2024
- Tax Rate Adoption – 09/09/2024

At the conclusion of the presentation, Council thanked the staff for their work on the budget and appreciated the Workshop format allowing them to take a deep dive into the budget details.

7. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further discussion, Mayor Foreman adjourned the August 14, 2024, City Council Special Meeting at 4:07 P.M.


Mike Foreman, Mayor

Attest:


Leticia Brysch, City Secretary

