

[REDACTED]

From: Risa Buck [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 1:22 PM
To: Natalie Thomason
Subject: Re: follow up Engage

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi Natalie

Your response was not the one I was hoping to hear. Particularly at this time when transparency of government and the increasing challenges for the public to provide input in decisions that affect us, a process like this one, should in my opinion hold a higher priority. Giving lip service to our voices by creating a process that is inconvenient and time consuming for the public and paid staff makes no sense to me.

I want to participate in our democratic process and I trust that your department will expedite improvements to serve the public good.

Thank you,

Risa

On 4/13/2021 9:55 AM, Natalie Thomason wrote:

Hello again Risa,

Thank you for reaching back out to us, we again appreciate the input because we have heard now from a couple of other people expressing similar concerns. We are definitely considering all input for our future processes.

Thank you again and as always please feel free to reach out to us if you have any comments or questions,

Natalie Thomason

Administrative Assistant

Risk Management Claims Intake

City of Ashland Finance

20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520

541-552-2012 Direct Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

From: Risa Buck [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 4:44 PM
To: Natalie Thomason <natalie.thomason@ashland.or.us>
Cc: Elizabeth Taylor <elizabeth.taylor@ashland.or.us>; Finance <finance@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Re: follow up Engage

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi Natalie

From my perspective, asking the public to weigh in once and getting success is PLENTY. Feeding questions 2 at a time is an "interesting" approach. I can't speak for everyone but committing once to answer questions is something I am able to do. The piece meal approach seems inefficient for the public as well as what it costs to tabulate the info one time vs 4 times. My vote is to send me the entirety one time and I'm done and on to the next long list of things I need to do. If I can get the whole survey I will happily do it. I find this process a disincentive to participate in a critically important process.

Thanks

Risa

On 4/12/2021 3:34 PM, Natalie Thomason wrote:

Hello Risa,

Thank you for reaching out to us regarding the survey, we really appreciate the feedback. In regards to your question on the nature of input we are seeking for this week we decided to get some service quality feedback as part of the series of questions. They all provide the Budget Committee and City Council with points of information regarding the success or need for improvement in all service areas. Below is a full list of the questions that have been or will be presented for public input, we opened our survey questions on March 10th. In addition to the question we are asking this week and have been asked prior, all other questions will be asked two at a time every week until April 27th. If you would like to answer any of the questions that have already been asked or provide other input we welcome and encourage you to email finance@ashland.or.us with this information and it will be forward to the Citizens' Budget Committee prior to their next meeting. All public comment is attached to the meeting minutes as part of the public record.

2021-23 BN Survey Questions

1. How closely do you follow the news about Ashland City government and the City's finances including the budget:
 1. very closely,
 2. somewhat closely,
 3. not too closely, or
 4. not at all?

2. What do you feel are the three biggest concerns currently facing the City of Ashland? Please choose your top three responses:
 1. Homeless Services
 2. Affordable Housing
 3. Streets or other Infrastructure
 4. Public safety (Fire and Police Response)

5. City finances
 6. Government and city council oversight
 7. Parks commission oversight
 8. Fire prevention/ Emergency management
 9. Climate Change/ Environmental Sustainability
 10. Diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for the community
 11. Local economy/ Business opportunities
 12. Other
3. Overall, would you say you approve or disapprove of the job being done by the City of Ashland?
4. How satisfied are you with the services listed? (Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)

Service	Very satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Providing police protection and crime prevention in your neighborhood				
Supporting the development of housing affordable to working families				
Preparing for natural disasters				
Using technology for communication and to improve access to information and City services				
Maintaining public areas like street medians				
Maintaining public parks and related facilities				
Maintaining streets and roads				

5. Would you say you approve or disapprove of the job being done by the City of Ashland in managing local tax dollars?
6. How satisfied are you with the services listed? (Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)

Service	Very satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Providing building code enforcement				
Enforcing traffic laws to protect the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers				
Promoting environmental sustainability; pursuing climate sustainability				
Providing diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for the community				
Providing adequate fire services in your neighborhood				

Providing adequate medical response services in your neighborhood				
Communicating with residents on upcoming changes in the City				

7. In your personal opinion, do you think there is a great need, some need, little need, or no real need for additional funds to provide the level of City services that Ashland residents need and want?

8. How important is it to you personally that the City allocate funding to this service (extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important)?

Service	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important
Providing police protection and crime prevention in your neighborhood				
Supporting the development of housing affordable to working families				
Maintaining/ improving streets and roads				
Providing building and other code enforcement				
Enforcing traffic laws to protect the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers				
Preparing for natural disasters				
Maintaining public parks				
Expanding public parks facilities				
Promoting environmental sustainability				
Diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for the community				
Providing adequate fire services in your neighborhood				
Providing adequate medical response services in your neighborhood				
Communicating with residents on upcoming changes in the City				
Using technology for communication and to improve access to information and City services				
Maintaining public areas like street medians and downtown Plaza				

9. Over the last two years, have you had contact with a City department or agency?

10. With which City department did you have contact?
 1. City Administration
 2. Finance Department

3. Police Department
4. Fire Department
5. Public Works (Water, Sewer, Engineering, Stormwater)
6. Electric
7. Planning, Building, and Community Development
8. Ashland Fiber Network (AFN)
9. City Council/ City Recorder

11. Would you say that overall, you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the service you received from the City of Ashland?

12. How do you rate the following issues? (Extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem)

Issue	Extremely serious problem	Very serious problem	Somewhat serious problem	Not too serious a problem
Crime in general				
Amount paid in taxes				
Amount paid for utilities including water, sewer, stormwater, electric, and internet				
Cost of housing				
Condition of local parks and recreation facilities				
Waste and inefficiency in City government				
Insufficient homeless services and/or facilities				
Condition of City streets				
Other				

13. Over the past three years, do you think the following have increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the City of Ashland?

Circumstance	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
Crime, in general			
Homeless activity			
Homeless services			
Property crimes			
Person crimes			
Structure fires			
Medical emergency responses			

Planning/building activities			
Communications from the City			
Value of City services for taxes/fees/charges paid			
Environmental protection activities			
Diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for the community			

14. In your opinion, what is the most important thing the City of Ashland can do to improve City services for the people who live here? (pick top three)

1. Expand City services
 1. Street maintenance
 2. Homeless shelters and services
 3. Law enforcement and crime prevention
 4. Fire prevention and response
 5. Emergency medical response
 6. Parks facilities and maintenance
2. Support the development of affordable housing
3. Local economy/ business opportunities/ business support
4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for the community
5. City government transparency and communication
6. Environmental impact/ climate change
7. Reduce services and related taxes/charges/fees

15. Which areas of service do you think the City of Ashland should explore as part of a regional approach? Mark as many as apply.

1. Parks & Recreation
2. Fire Protection
3. Medical Response (Ambulance)
4. Emergency Management
5. Law Enforcement
6. Court
7. Water and/or Wastewater
8. None of these
9. Other

Once again we really appreciate your feedback and welcome any other questions and comments that you may have, please feel free to reach out to us again.

Thank you,

Natalie Thomason
 Administrative Assistant
 Risk Management Claims Intake

City of Ashland Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-552-2012 Direct Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

From: Elizabeth Taylor <elizabeth.taylor@ashland.or.us>
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:51 PM
To: Risa Buck [REDACTED]
Cc: Natalie Thomason <natalie.thomason@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Re: follow up Engage

Hi Risa,

I'm cc'ing Natalie Thomason who is the assistant for Finance here. She will be able to answer your question better than I can.

Elizabeth Taylor, Executive Assistant
City of Ashland, Administration
20 East Main Street, Ashland, Oregon 97520
(541) 552-2100, TTY: (800) 735-2900
FAX: (541) 488-5311

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 552-2100. Thank you.

From: Risa Buck [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2021 1:47 PM
To: Elizabeth Taylor <elizabeth.taylor@ashland.or.us>
Subject: follow up Engage

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi E

Is it possible that the budget committee feedback involves only 3 questions that don't get into spending at all.

I cannot access an actual survey that gets into details about budget, HOW money ought be allocated ect...

What am I doing wrong or what is wrong with the website?

I'd like to give my input but am finding it impossible.

Thanks

Risa

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Verify your email address

Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2021 20:05:33 +0000

From: OpenGov <support@opengov.com>

To: [REDACTED]

Please click the button below to confirm your email address and show your response publicly on Engage Ashland.

[Confirm my email address](#)

This email was sent to verify the information provided on the [Engage Ashland](#) web site. By clicking this link you are agreeing to the OpenGov [terms of service](#)

This email was sent [REDACTED] [unsubscribe from this list](#)

Subject:

City Council Contact Form Submitted

From: City of Ashland, Oregon <administration@ashland.or.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:54 AM

To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>

Subject: City Council Contact Form Submitted

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

*** FORM FIELD DATA***

Full Name: **Leda Shapiro**

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Subject: **THE BUDGET**

Message: I have over 40 years of experience in Fiscal Management, both for profit and non profit organizations. My last ten years were for Upward Bound House, (in Santa Monica, CA) where I was the Finance Director and my last job before retiring was with as Finance Director for AFSCME Council 36 (Los Angeles County Union). Budgets were a primary responsibility. Here are some of my thoughts about your city budget, which it appears now has been taken off line! 1. The city has now not only taken off their website information about staff and how to contact them, but now also taken down salaries and benefit information. This is public information and the public needs to be able to see it. They gave ?security? as the reason they took down email information. This frankly is a lot of BS. Other cities have that information online and there are all sorts of ways to obfuscate email addresses, It is really an easy thing to add on/implement. 2. The budget simply needs to be balanced with current revenues, not based on increased taxes and fees. election, some of this is obviously in the I am not one that thinks personnel must be cut, but if benefit expenses are not cut, furloughs and salary cuts should happen. In order to keep all personnel, the very least should be that they all either take a pay cut of 10% or contribute their obligatory 6% to their pensions. That 6% that the city pays for them is worth more like 10% since they do not pay taxes on it. This is pretty standard solution taken in cities when they are in hard economic times, as we certainly are. (Perhaps lower salaried and hourly staff might get a slight increase in pay to compensate for reductions). 3. Parks and other planned projects is the other part that needs drastic cuts. The goal of a park within a 1/4 mile of all residents needs to be reviewed! Parks should not be able to get any more land, annexed or otherwise, which is desperately needed for housing? affordable housing. If Ashland really believes the progressive policies we espouse now is the time to make any land available for affordable housing projects. The other part of limiting the acquisition of park land now is that Ashland needs a larger tax base, and more parks means more non taxable land, as well as increased expenses maintaining it. This is not being fiscally responsible. The city budget simply cannot assume new fees and increased taxes to cover expenses that are not absolutely necessary. In these economic times we must be cautious. Understand that planning for 20 years needs to take into account the future, but this is a wish list, not to be in this current budget. When is the Council going to get serious about cutting expenses - and yes, personnel PERS should be at the top of the list. I am not going to argue that our city has too many employees, or that they are paid too well in comparison to other cities?BUT their benefit package is more generous than any I have seen in at least 10 years, and HR was one of my responsibilities (and we dealt with Union contracts!) 4. The City expenses with regard to the pensions needs to be reduced and that can easily be done without staff reductions or reductions in salaries. Employees would just have to pay the required share of their pensions. This would result in over a \$2M reductions (at least since I am going by the 19-21 budget in calculating). This % is required by the state of Oregon and the City has generously picked up this tab. In a time of decreasing revenue, this is no longer viable! I understand that health benefits are totally picked up by the City - another benefit unheard of in most cities in the country - I think that the employees should pay a percentage of their

premiums (or dependent coverage, or some other option) In addition, the Administration of the health package needs to be reviewed. The premiums do seem exceptionally high. I would like a confirmation that this email has been received since I got no response to the last one I sent over a month ago. If possible I would like it in the record at the next Council Meeting.

*** USER INFORMATION ***

SubscriberID: -1

SubscriberUserName:

SubscriberEmail:

[REDACTED]

RemoteUser:

From: Jim Bachman [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:59 AM
To: Melanie Purcell; Budget Committee
Subject: Re: Budget Committee public comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Good morning, Melanie. Thank you for this! And also for your comprehensive response to my clarifying question about council vs. cbc roles. I particularly like the model motions which provide a great operational definition of what the cbc ought and ought not to do. jb

On Tue, Apr 13, 2021 at 10:45 AM Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us> wrote:

Good morning,

Attached are the public comments we received as of noon on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Thank you,

Melanie

Melanie D. Purcell, CPFO, SHRM-SCP

Finance Director

City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300.

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 11:34 AM
To: City Council; Budget Committee
Subject: more missing data on OpenGov

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

As of this morning, the budget data has also gone missing from OpenGov.

I assume it has been pulled because major errors have been discovered. If not, then the presumption is that it's being hidden, although I would find that hard to believe.

It is up to you guys to find out just what the heck is going on.

PLEASE ask the questions. And don't accept evasive answers! Get the facts!

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

From: Stephen Jensen
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 2:27 PM
To: Melanie Purcell; Budget Committee
Cc: Department_Heads
Subject: RE: Response to unfortunate assertions

Thank you, Melanie, for taking your valuable time to respond to the irresponsible and patently false allegations that have been flung at you and City staff by several community members. Such destructive chatter does nothing to advance the vital budget discussions now underway. Please carry on with the professional excellence and personal grace that you have heretofore demonstrated and try to ignore this unfortunate noise.

Thank you,
Stephen Jensen
City Councilor

From: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 2:00 PM
To: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>
Cc: Department_Heads <Department_Heads@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Response to unfortunate assertions

Good afternoon,

Several recent statements made directly to Councilmembers and the Budget Committee and in public forums regarding the City of Ashland's and its Finance Department's intent, responsiveness, and competence have been grievously misleading. Normally, staff would not take valuable time to respond to specious attacks on their professionalism and integrity. Unfortunately, these particularly spurious allegations seem to be circulating in the community, causing unwarranted distrust and animosity. The attached statement is to refute such claims and clarify facts.

Thank you,
Melanie

Melanie D. Purcell, CPFO, SHRM-SCP
Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300.

From: Jim Bachman <jimbachman.ashlandcbc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 3:08 PM
To: Melanie Purcell
Cc: Budget Committee; Department_Heads
Subject: Re: Response to unfortunate assertions

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Melanie, thank you so much for your memo standing against the ridiculous conspiracy theories circulating in the community regarding staff work related to the budget process. In my opinion, the allegations made by certain individuals have gone well beyond any standard of constructive engagement and civil discourse.

I thoroughly appreciate your professionalism in the face of such outlandish allegations.

Jim Bachman
Ashland CBC Vice Chair

On Tue, Apr 13, 2021 at 2:00 PM Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Several recent statements made directly to Councilmembers and the Budget Committee and in public forums regarding the City of Ashland's and its Finance Department's intent, responsiveness, and competence have been grievously misleading. Normally, staff would not take valuable time to respond to specious attacks on their professionalism and integrity. Unfortunately, these particularly spurious allegations seem to be circulating in the community, causing unwarranted distrust and animosity. The attached statement is to refute such claims and clarify facts.

Thank you,

Melanie

Melanie D. Purcell, CPFO, SHRM-SCP

Finance Director

City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300.

Memo

TO: Budget Committee Members
FROM: Melanie Purcell, Finance Director
DATE: April 13, 2021
RE: **Recent Public Statements regarding City Financial Information**

Several recent statements made directly to Councilmembers and the Budget Committee and in public forums regarding the City of Ashland's and its Finance Department's intent, responsiveness, and competence have been grievously misleading. Normally, staff would not take valuable time to respond to specious attacks on their professionalism and integrity. Unfortunately, these particularly spurious allegations seem to be circulating in the community, causing unwarranted distrust and animosity. The following is to refute such claims and clarify facts.

The City has significantly increased financial transparency in recent years, in part through the use of the OpenGov tool. OpenGov, however, is just a communications portal, not an accounting system; it is conspicuously not the City's financial system of record. The City's OpenGov software does not purport to be an accounting system and was deliberately designed for lay communication of financial information, as opposed to standard rigorous accounting verification. The City's OpenGov portal can be useful for displaying specified financial data but does not- and does not have the requisite capacity to- replace or replicate all of the information provided through other methods, including the City's annual audit, biennial budget, and financial reports.

Recently, several outdated reports were removed from OpenGov page of the City's website because they were not current and were not automatically maintained as part of the City's financial systems. These particular reports were initially created to respond to discrete matters arising at a specific point in time. These are not retained as ongoing special reports. Attempting to reconstruct and update such analyses would be time-consuming with little or no benefit to the scrutiny of the proposed BN2021-2023 budget. The reports that remain are those that are automatically updated from the City's accounting system, MUNIS, and are prepared so as to provide consistent presentation of the information. These reports contain much of the data of prior reports with the most current data added.

As noted in the Finance Department section of the workplan discussed with City Council in February, an update of the pertinent OpenGov reports has been planned for this summer. In my response to a recent inquiry, I stated that the some of the past OpenGov report display had errors and/or data that could not



Memo

be corroborated; this was in reference to the Positions report that was created in 2019 that would require manual export and research to verify, recreate, and then update. Not retaining or reconstructing the Positions report is an example of judicious management of only that financial data which can be useful-not, as has been alleged, a sign of misleading financial data management.

The City of Ashland maintains its financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the State of Oregon regulations and statutes, and the federal government requirements including those governing grants, debt issues, loans, and personnel. The City also prepares its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and biennial budget in accordance with the Government Finance Officers Association presentation awards criteria. The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (audit) is reviewed by an external audit firm, Moss Adams, LLP, selected by the City's Municipal Audit Commission. The financial report is subjected to strenuous testing per national and state standards, procedures and policies are vetted and verified, and staff has been commended for the accuracy and detail of the records maintained by the City.

Staff has also had some repeated requests for personal information about City employees with frustration shown when that information is not immediately provided. Many public agencies have recognized that their agency cyber security is at greater risk when individual names are made readily available, particularly those in non-leadership positions. City staff are committed to protecting the public's assets and information by not exposing the systems to direct access to the degree possible. In addition, as noted below public agencies and their employees are personally at greater risk than ever before. The City of Ashland is exploring ways to create greater access for web users without compromising the system.

Federal law specifically prohibits the release of information that can be used to identify medical or health information about individuals. Therefore, healthcare coverage information is not provided either by cost or other detail on an individual or easily identifiable basis. In the current heightened environment, public agencies must be cautious in releasing information that can be extrapolated to potentially cause harm to its employees.

Further, while City employees must expect to have their positions and salary ranges made public pursuant to Public Records requirements, as an employer, the City has an obligation to ensure that its employees' privacy is compromised only to the degree required by law. The unfortunate reality of the current political environment across the United States includes online harassment and even physical



Memo

assaults on public employees and public workspaces. Where discussion of public policy is furthered by the release of information, such as the recent release of average salaries and benefits by employee group, City staff makes every effort to provide relevant information promptly. However, where discussion of public policy is not obviously furthered by release of personal information, the City provides personal information only to the degree required by law. Hence the use of the Public Records request process is the appropriate means for determining what personal information about staff is disclosable.

Finally, some of the erroneous allegations discussed in this memo cast aspersions on the professionalism and integrity of my staff and me. Those allegations warrant a moment of refutation. Through many years of public service, I have adhered to the Codes of Ethics proudly espoused by the International City/County Management Association and the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. Both organizations demand steadfast, demonstrable commitment to the best interests of the community and the organization I serve. In the time I have served as Ashland's Finance Director, the Finance Department staff to a person has proven to be responsive and professional in their actions and product. When mistakes are made, we own them and correct them. We do not ever hide information, mislead, or undermine the public or governing body. Reckless or intentional misstatements about the City staff's motives or competence cause disruption and distrust, undermining the capacity of the community to address its real issues and make reasoned preparations for upcoming challenges.



From: Rick Sparks [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 7:21 PM
To: Finance
Subject: 4/27/21 Budget Committee Testimony

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Citizens Budget Committee.... Thank you for accepting my input.

I am appreciative that everyone in the Committee has this in their minutes.
My hope is only that this will prompt thought.

Thank you for taking the time to work on this Committee
..... and thanks for reading so far.

It is hard for anyone to say No.

City Council for years has had a City environment of high-end tourism with prosperity for many.
We could afford many things.... and.
... many in Ashland are very opinionated and vocal about how we should do more for someone.

City Council always said Yes to any new initiative.... because they could afford to.
... and, besides, if you say No to anyone, they will be vocal, strident, and all over social media with criticism.

That is not now. Times are different. Tourism is dead. Fires were devastating.

As a result, this leaves the City in its current state:
" ... a growing "structural deficit" has been identified with expenditures exceeding revenues for years to come."

So... from what I understand, the current plan is that deficit will be met by raising utility fees ?

If so, maybe that's the right answer?... is it ??
... but if so, let people know.... and give them an estimate of future increasing costs to live here.
It may just have to cost more to live in Ashland.

Another alternative is to cut costs. Say No to some things that we said Yes to before.
Even City headcount, if it's the right thing to do.

Seems like one plan worth considering would be:
Come up with a list of 20 prioritized programs to consider ending to save money.

I suggest full programs (eg: sell or close Golf Course / stop local Climate Change initiatives)
.... because a percentage cut to a department will always be done in the most painful way for the public
... in the hopes that funds will be restored.

The end result would be a list for City Council with the directive:
Here's 20.....end 2.
Which two will you say No to ?

Thank you for reading.
I make no claim to know what I'm talking about.
Any feedback appreciated.
I care about our City and want it to work.

Respectfully,
Rick Sparks, 

[REDACTED]

From: John_Engelhardt [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 3:16 PM
To: Finance
Subject: Budget Thoughts

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I am writing as an individual citizen, but my comments are framed by my work with St. Vincent de Paul serving the poor and vulnerable here in Ashland and Talent.

By way of background, in the fall of 2019 I presented data to the Housing and Human Services Commission showing that our (St. Vincent de Paul) client numbers for city of Ashland utility assistance increased from 13 in fiscal 2018 to 180 in fiscal 2019, and our financial assistance increased from \$2,000 to \$33,000 over that time period. This resulted in an ad-hoc group formed of H&HS committee chair Rich Rohde, city council liaison Dennis Slattery, previous city manager Kelly Madding, OHRA board member Ken Gudger and myself developing a list of recommendations for the city council to consider to reduce utility burdens on our low-income and vulnerable citizens. We were all prepared to go before the city council when COVID-19 hit and plans went awry. Sigh.

The point I want to bring before the budget committee is that, knowing the city is in financial straights with structural deficits, please do what you can to prioritize services the city offers its residents, with the knowledge that a significant proportion of our population cannot sustain an increase in utility fees, particularly additions to the base fee. The current base fee for the city of Ashland utility bill totals \$99.25 for a single-family residence before a light switch or a faucet is turned on. This is a burden particularly on low-income seniors living alone. From what I've seen of proposed increases to these fees over the coming years, the hit on our vulnerable population will be too much. In recommendations to the council, please keep that in mind if we want to have a diverse community going forward.

Regards,

John

--
John Engelhardt
President, SVdP-OLM Conference
[REDACTED]

Natalie Thomason

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 6:21 PM
To: City Council; Budget Committee
Subject: A Suggestion for Solving the Parks Budget Problem

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

It's clear that APR is major problem in the budget. It was gratifying to see so many of the CBC recognizing the importance of controlling expenditures for APR since it is clearly one of the least essential services provided by the City. It is also the least accountable department, being beyond the control of the Council.

Here's my suggestion for addressing the problem:

- Budget less money than is required to ensure continuation of operation of current properties and activities. Capital improvements and acquisitions will not be funded by the City until further notice. This will not preclude APR from requesting bond approval from the electorate for any purpose, e.g., a pool.
- Update the F&B ordinance to distribute 0% of the proceeds to the Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission.
- Instruct APR that the goal of a park within 1/4 mi of every resident is heretofore abandoned.
- Inform APR that it is authorized to sell any surplus properties that it currently controls for additional revenue which will remain in the Parks Fund to utilize as the APRC sees fit, and make up the "shortfall" in its budget.

The advantages are:

- Reduces the contributions of the General Fund to the Parks Fund.
- Gives exclusive control of APR's supplementary funding to APR. That provides symmetry with its exclusive control of its budget expenditures.
- Forces APR to dispose of excess property. This will lessen the operating demands on its budget while increasing available land for affordable housing and increasing the City's tax base.

This is an effective way of making APRC respect the goals of the rest of the City and its taxpayers. It is necessary because APRC clearly does NOT do so.

Since the funding sources for the city are uncertain from year to year there's no reason that it should not be the same for APR. APR needs to adjust to changing conditions just as the rest of the city funds must.

Keep it simple.

How do we determine how much to budget APR? Have the Parks Director make a presentation to the CBC. We were told at the last meeting that there will be no presentations from division heads during the CBC deliberations. All information will come from the Finance Director and the City Manager Pro Tem. That's not acceptable, but they make the rules. This way, Parks makes their pitch to the CBC, or they just wind up with whatever the CC decides to put in the budget. I'll think they'll show up.

One more thing to examine is whether APR really requires 33.75 FTE at an average of over \$99K/yr. Is it necessary to have a Golf Course Manager AND a Superintendent, a Recreation Manager AND a Superintendent, and a Senior Superintendent since there is a Senior Center Specialist?

This is just my back of the napkin idea, so let's hear what others have to think about it.

In the proposed budget, for the number crunchers:

APR operating transfer from the General Fund	\$5,553,439
APR contingency transfer from the General Fund	\$1,119,253
subtotal	\$6,672,692

Suggestion: budget \$4,000,000 maximum

Thanks for your careful consideration.

Dean Silver



[REDACTED]

From: Karen Horn [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 4:53 PM
To: Finance
Subject: budget questionnaire comment

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I think the biggest problem facing Ashland today is mitigation we need to do today to lessen the effects of the next wildfire. I am shocked that this is not even listed as a potential source of expenditures in the new budget.

People, if the town burns down, all the other things you are worried about will be rendered irrelevant. It's not if, it's when. The forecasts about what we are facing from wildfire are extremely dire.

We need to have a community reckoning about this topic. And the city needs to be more transparent about what actually happened last September — what were the failures and what did we do right...

Karen Horn

Subject:

FW: City Council Contact Form Submitted

From: City of Ashland, Oregon <administration@ashland.or.us>

Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 12:55 PM

To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>

Subject: City Council Contact Form Submitted

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

*** FORM FIELD DATA***

Full Name: **Gwen Davies**

Phone:

Email: [REDACTED]

Subject: **unanswered budget questions**

Message: **In the most recent CBC meeting, several questions came up with differing numbers on what our deficit will be and why many departments are requesting big increases in their budgets. Those questions were not answered. The questions Mr Runkel had about the departmental increases were referred to email. Every taxpayer wants to hear about those increases and what they are all about. Please, either direct us to the emails or publish the answers to Mr. Runkel's questions so all of us can hear the explanation immediately. This is not the time for any increase unless it is to the Fire Department. I was disappointed that the presentation and Adam Hanks' comments dominated the meeting and seemed to crowd out real discussion, questions, conversation. What seems like much more substantive active progress got sidelined.....or at least put out of the meeting that the public can listen to. There were excellent questions and comments. Those were what I would have liked to hear about. I particularly appreciated Shaun Moran's questions, Dave Runkel's, and Mr Amery. I absolutely support Gina Duquenne's suggestion that top management not covered by union contracts take pay cuts now....perhaps for 2 years...to assist in getting us out of the red. Paula Hyatt had some very important comments about APRC ...I do not support turning over F&B to APRC at all. I support controlling the APRC budget much more than now, not cutting them loose. Do not give them the F&B; limit the money they get this biennium that has a chance of ensuring they face the crisis we face. Otherwise they will continue their current style. I love the parks, but big revisions are called for now. The discussion should include changing the Charter to clarify their position..and change it. The parks are beloved and important to us, but we do not need more parks at this point and could sell some of the newer ones...decisions about the parks should be brought much more under the control of the CC and the PUBLIC. I especially recommend looking at the land the Golf Course is on. It always should have been a private venture. However I think the best use of that land should be thoroughly discussed and new decisions made...and not by a small group of elected officials and ambitious staff. That land should be used in a new way for the benefit of the residents of Ashland and our future....not for recreation for a very few. I was very disappointed that the CBC was told, quite rudely I thought, that they were not allowed to speak to department heads. I had hoped for zero budget balancing this budget cycle. I would like to know who made that decision. I support the CBC to have that opportunity to talk directly to department heads immediately. Now is the time for transparency and full disclosure to the public...not the opposite. In 2017 to 2019 the budget had huge inaccuracies never fully acknowledged by the then Mayor or CC. The public never received a true apology. In 2019 to 2021 everyone said they "did not have the time" to fully look at needed changes and they had better pass the budget quickly because there was a legal deadline. Theoretically much effort was to have been put into really addressing huge crises. Those processes and changes never happened the way they needed to. The proof is the disaster we now face. The proof that Ashlanders are done with the insatiable spending spree is in the Charter change, the defeat of the Bond Measure, and the anger at the machinations of our former mayor and his small working group approach that sidestepped the public meeting laws and going through proper channels. I believe Ashlanders will continue to stand**

up for widespread public involvement in addressing our future. If you cannot act now, then just make big cuts in every department, except the fire department, and hash it out later. That of course should have huge consequences....but if you cannot hammer out selective, intelligent cuts now....make the blanket cuts and do it in the coming months. Do not kick the cuts down the road again. I would like to hear from each person on the CBC what their top five cuts would be in the next week or two...and get it into the public records. I will be emailing the CBC so community members can hear my request and participate. I know many of them are eager to do their jobs.

*** USER INFORMATION ***

SubscriberID: -1

SubscriberUserName:

SubscriberEmail:



RemoteUser:

Natalie Thomason

From: Ellen Alphonso [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 2:27 PM
To: Melanie Purcell; Budget Committee; City Council; Adam Hanks
Subject: Re: Budget Committee Meeting #2 materials

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello budget committee and council,

I had what may be a point of order question in advance of our next meeting, which may be borne out of my own newness to the process. While we have been getting really great information on budget as such, I am concerned that our current format is not providing enough time to thoughtfully discuss and make meaningful recommendations in the process. I agree that getting too granular is a hold up for the entire group, but in talking so broadly about the budget, I'm concerned that we are struggling as a group to strategize and prioritize.

It's not my intention to demand that we change formatting every meeting, I am just very mindful that our time is limited and our task is considerable.

Best regards,
Ellen Alphonso

On Fri, Apr 9, 2021 at 4:18 PM Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Attached are the agenda and presentation slides for Tuesday's meeting. Also included are the community budget survey results and the draft minutes from the first meeting. The financial update presented to City Council in February covering through December 31, 2021 is included. Materials will be loaded to the website this weekend or early Monday. I have received some questions and will continue to work on those and others that come in for next week. We will send out any public comments received by noon on Monday and any additional materials including additional information on the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) before the meeting.

Please let me know if you have questions or there are any issues with the materials coming through.

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend,
Melanie

Melanie D. Purcell, CPFO, SHRM-SCP

Finance Director

City of Ashland | Finance

20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520

541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300.

Subject:

FW: BUDGET and BUDGET PROCESS

From: Leda Shapiro [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 11:16 AM

To: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>

Cc: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>; Julie Akins [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: BUDGET and BUDGET PROCESS

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi Melanie

Thank you for sending my comments to the budget committee.

I think I understand some of why we are having a communication problem. You are right-OpenGov is not an accounting system. The OpenGov reports information with graphs and pie charts and narrative which may make the finances more clear for some folks but in order to get down to an informed budget review detailed financial reporting from the Accounting System is what is being asked for, with the budget compared to last actual and explanations as to differentials. This may see "old fashioned" but really what is being requested by some members of the Council and the Budget committee.

OpenGov really raises more questions than it answers. Actual numbers with detail is what is needed and being requested.

The best example would be of course personnel expenses because it is such a huge portion of the budget.

Line item totals of wages, pension, Health insurance, auto allowances, work comp, payroll taxes etc should be available by department along with FTE numbers.

This needs to be available to the public and before OpenGov these reports were available online. And the budget committee should certainly be able to request and get whatever information they need for a proper, timely review of the budget. I do not see how they can do their job without this.

I know it must have been a big job to install and use OpenGov and it may be what the general public wants to see but I think that the actual numbers and previous way of reporting is more applicable for a budget review.

That is certainly what I would be looking for, and what was able to find easily a year ago.

I hope you will see my observations as just that and not some staff bashing. I have the utmost respect for you and your staff as professionals and hope that there can be open and trusting communication between staff, the Council, the Budget Committee and concerned citizens.

Thank you

Leda Shapiro

Leda

On Apr 15, 2021, at 11:37 AM, Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Shapiro,

Thank you for your comments and feedback. We will include your comments in the Citizen Budget Committee packet.

Melanie

Melanie Purcell
Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300

From: Leda Shapiro [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:57 AM
To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>; Julie Akins [REDACTED]
Cc: Leda Shapiro [REDACTED]
Subject: BUDGET and BUDGET PROCESS

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

YOUR SURVEY AS A VEHICLE FOR INPUT IS SADLY LACKING.
So here are some my thoughts

I have written this into the form online, and sending this as well...because I never got a response to my last email.

I have over 40 years of experience in Fiscal Management, both for profit and non profit organizations. My last ten years were for Upward Bound House, (in Santa Monica, CA) where I was the Finance Director and my last job before retiring was with as Finance Director for AFSCME Council 36 (Los Angeles County Union). Budgets were a primary responsibility.

Here are some of my thoughts about your city budget, which it appears now has been taken off line!

1. The city has now not only taken off their website information about staff and how to contact them, but now also taken down salaries and benefit information. This is public information and the public needs to be able to see it. They gave "security" as the reason they took down email information. This frankly is a lot of BS. Other cities have that information online and there are all sorts of ways to obfuscate email addresses, It is really an easy thing to add on/implement.

2. The budget simply needs to be balanced with current revenues, not based on increased taxes and fees. election, some of this is obviously in the I am not one that thinks personnel must be cut, but if benefit expenses are not cut, furloughs and salary cuts should happen. In order to keep all personnel, the very least should be that they all either take a pay cut of 10% or contribute their

obligatory 6% to their pensions. That 6% that the city pays for them is worth more like 10% since they do not pay taxes on it. This is pretty standard solution taken in cities when they are in hard economic times, as we certainly are. (Perhaps lower salaried and hourly staff might get a slight increase in pay to compensate for reductions).

3. Parks and other planned projects is the other part that needs drastic cuts. The goal of a park within a 1/4 mile of all residents needs to be reviewed! Parks should not be able to get any more land, annexed or otherwise, which is desperately needed for housing... affordable housing. If Ashland really believes the progressive policies we espouse now is the time to make any land available for affordable housing projects.

The other part of limiting the acquisition of park land now is that Ashland needs a larger tax base, and more parks means more non taxable land, as well as increased expenses maintaining it. This is not being fiscally responsible.

The city budget simply cannot assume new dees and increased taxes to cover expenses that are not absolutely necessary. In these economic times we must be cautious. Understand that planning for 20 years needs to take into account the future, but this is a wish list, not to be in this current budget.

When is the Council going to get serious about cutting expenses - and yes, personnel PERS should be at the top of the list. I am not going to argue that our city has toto many employees, or that they are paid too well in comparison to other cities...BUT their benefit package is more generous than any I have seen in at least 10 years, and HR was one of my responsibilities (and we dealt with Union contracts!)

4. The City expenses with regard to the pensions needs to be reduced and that can easily be done without staff reductions or reductions in salaries. Employees would just have to pay the required share of their pensions. This would result in over a \$2M reductions (at least since I am going by the 19-21 budget in calculating). This % is required by the state of Oregon and the City has generously picked up this tab. In a time of decreasing revenue, this is no longer viable!

I understand that health benefits are totally picked up by the City - another benefit unheard of in most cities in the country - I think that the employees should pay a percentage of their premiums (or dependent coverage, or some other option) In addition, the Administration of the health package needs to be reviewed. The premiums do seem exceptionally high.

I would like a confirmation that this email has been received since I got no response to the last one I sent over a month ago. If possible I would like it in the record at the next Council Meeting.

Thank you

Leda Shapiro

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2021 7:13 PM
To: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: a little research for you
Attachments: CBC-comparative per capita.pdf

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

FYI. Some data you won't get from staff.

Thanks for reading.

Dean Silver

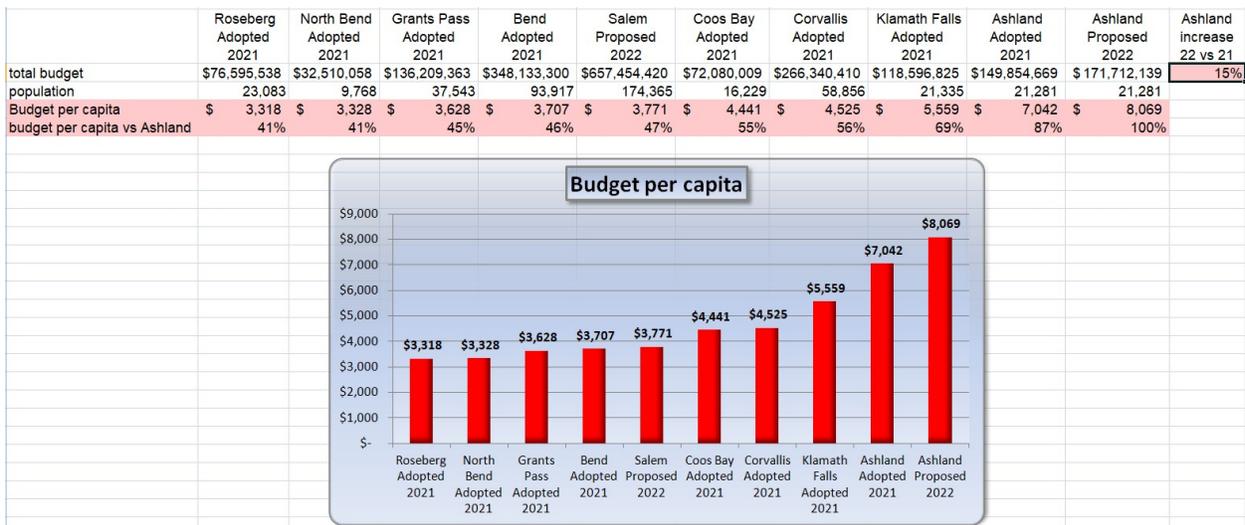
[REDACTED]

I thought it would be interesting and informative to compare Ashland's spending per capita compared to other Oregon cities. Not every city has posted their 2022 proposed budgets, so I used 2021 approved budgets for them. Every municipality does it differently. It's not all directly and precisely comparable, but the overall comparison is undeniable.

Also note that Ashland's 2022 proposed budget is about 15% higher than the 2021 approved budget. I don't think Finance has emphasized that enough. And I know they haven't explained it adequately.

All of the data collected here is available on the web for verification at the municipalities' websites.

If you do visit those websites, please note how much more complete the data is on most of them as compared to Ashland.



Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2021 7:37 PM
To: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: a little research for you - REVISED
Attachments: CBC-comparative per capita-REV.pdf

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

With apologies. I omitted Medford in the original. Please refer to this instead.

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

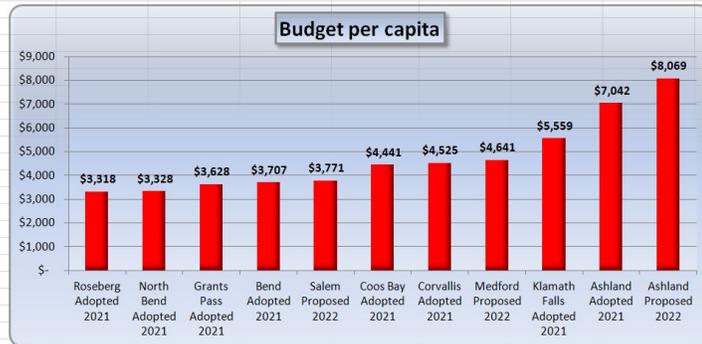
I thought it would be interesting and informative to compare Ashland's spending per capita compared to other Oregon cities. Not every city has posted their 2022 proposed budgets, so I used 2021 approved budgets for them. Every municipality does it differently. It's not all directly and precisely comparable, but the overall comparison is undeniable.

Also note that Ashland's 2022 proposed budget is about 15% higher than the 2021 approved budget. I don't think Finance has emphasized that enough. And I know they haven't explained it adequately.

All of the data collected here is available on the web for verification at the municipalities' websites.

If you do visit those websites, please note how much more complete the data is on most of them as compared to Ashland.

	Roseberg Adopted 2021	North Bend Adopted 2021	Grants Pass Adopted 2021	Bend Adopted 2021	Salem Proposed 2022	Coos Bay Adopted 2021	Corvallis Adopted 2021	Medford Proposed 2022	Klamath Falls Adopted 2021	Ashland Adopted 2021	Ashland Proposed 2022	Ashland increase 22 vs 21
total budget	\$76,595,538	\$32,510,058	\$136,209,363	\$348,133,300	\$657,454,420	\$72,080,009	\$266,340,410	\$376,611,000	\$118,596,825	\$149,854,669	\$171,712,139	15%
population	23,083	9,768	37,543	93,917	174,365	16,229	58,856	81,145	21,335	21,281	21,281	
Budget per capita	\$ 3,318	\$ 3,328	\$ 3,628	\$ 3,707	\$ 3,771	\$ 4,441	\$ 4,525	\$ 4,641	\$ 5,559	\$ 7,042	\$ 8,069	
budget per capita vs Ashland	41%	41%	45%	46%	47%	55%	56%	58%	69%	87%	100%	



Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 11:17 AM
To: Melanie Purcell
Cc: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: RE: budget document

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Thanks for pointing that out, Melanie, I missed it. Now I see that I must search both the minutes and the agenda to find all of the material. Rather unwieldy; important to know.

Thank you for the explanation of the lack of detail, as well. My uncertainty derives from seeing that kind of detail on other municipalities' budgets, but your explanation makes sense to me. However, although it may not be used for budgetary purposes, it is useful for the taxpayers to see the previous years' data to see more precisely where their tax dollars are being spent. It's a matter of disclosure and transparency, if not in the budget, then in the quarterly reports.

Now if you can just restore all of the reports that were on OpenGov six weeks ago when I started looking at it with current data, it will go a long way to addressing the many remaining questions about our financial health. Since personnel costs are presented as one of our largest requirements, it would make sense to make the specifics of each position available, without compromising anyone's personal privacy. Please consider it, for transparency's sake.

With sincere appreciation,
Dean

From: Melanie Purcell [mailto:melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 10:18 AM
To: Dean Silver
Cc: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: RE: budget document

Here is the report attached under the Council Communications for the Feb 16, 2021
([021621 Financial Update CCFinal.pdf \(ashland.or.us\)](#))

We do not generate "lower level" reports for the budget process. While line items are useful for transaction tracking and financial reporting, we do not budget to that level as specific transactions may land in a slightly different accounting location. We look for trends and "by type" behavior patterns to determine if departments are meeting their financial management responsibilities and to assist them in analyzing operations for greater efficiencies and effectiveness. Management researches greater detail as needed based on specific service analysis. The line item detail is presented within the OpenGov reporting functionality by clicking through to each level or by selecting specific filters, [Ashland / City Manager Proposed Budget BN 21/23 \(opengov.com\)](#).

Thanks,
Melanie

Melanie Purcell

Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 9:39 AM
To: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>
Cc: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>; City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: RE: budget document

[EXTERNAL SENDER]
Thank you, Melanie.

I just want to verify that I've found it all. Was the 2/16/21 report just the powerpoint, or was there something else I missed?

The material from 11/16/20 is self-evident.

I will know how to search for any earlier reports in the future.

I look forward to your future reorganization of your documents on the website. "Challenging to find" is putting it mildly.

Lastly, I need a definitive answer regarding the budget data sheets. Do they not exist, or have they just not been made available... what is their status? I need to know how much detail of the actual expenses of each account in each department will be disclosed, beyond the summary numbers in the released budget document. Those are top level accounts. I'm looking for lower level accounts.

I appreciate you taking the time to help me find these critical reports. I wouldn't know who else to ask or how to find them.

Dean

From: Melanie Purcell [<mailto:melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 7:07 PM
To: Dean Silver
Cc: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: RE: budget document

Good evening,

The FY2020 4th Quarter and FY2021 1st Quarter reports were presented to City Council on November 16, 2020 ([Study Session - City Council - City of Ashland, Oregon](#)). The FY2021 2nd Quarter or Mid-year Report was presented to City Council on February 16, 2021 ([Council Business Meeting - City Council - City of Ashland, Oregon](#)). I recognize that these can be challenging to locate within the Minutes and Agendas; we will be working to update the organization of financial reports on the website later this summer.

Melanie

Melanie Purcell
Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 4:44 PM
To: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>
Cc: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>; City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: RE: budget document

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Thank you, Melanie. I have searched the City's website extensively, and have been unable to find those items. It should not be difficult for you to provide the links. Please do so as soon as possible. As you know, the budget data is required to be easily accessible by the public as of the date of the release of the budget. The Quarterly reports should always be available.

Thank you for adding the budget to OpenGov. Although it merely duplicates the information in the narrative budget, it is a convenient tool. I trust you will be posting more current data to OpenGov or in tabular form on the website in the very near future, in time to be useful for the budget deliberations.

As always, I appreciate your help.
-Dean

From: Melanie Purcell [<mailto:melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 4:21 PM
To: Dean Silver
Cc: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: RE: budget document

I received your message and will get you the links as soon as I can. The majority of what you have requested is on the City's website. We have also activated the Recommended Budget in the OpenGov portal so the back-up detail is more easily navigated.

Melanie Purcell
Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 3:01 PM
To: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>

Cc: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>; City Council <council@ashland.or.us>

Subject: FW: budget document

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Melanie, since I haven't heard back from you, I wanted to make sure you received my reply and request below.

These are very simple questions. The answers are important.

Kindly reply by the end of the day today.

Thank you.

-Dean

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 9:30 AM
To: 'Melanie Purcell'
Cc: 'Budget Committee'; 'City Council'
Subject: RE: budget document

Thank you for your prompt reply, Melanie. I have several more quick questions.

To be sure there is no confusion, can you verify that the document you are referring to is entitled "City_of_Ashland-City_Managers_Recommend_2021-2023_Biennium_Budget_033021.pdf"?

Also for clarification, are you telling me that there are no budget detail sheets available for viewing? Is there any place taxpayers and the CBC can see the source data from which the summary totals in the recommended budget are derived?

I have also been trying to locate the "Quarterly financial reports, prepared on the budgetary basis of accounting, are distributed to the Budget Committee, the Audit Committee, and the general public" that are referenced on p.41 of the recommended budget. Can you tell me where to find them?

I appreciate your help,
Dean

From: Melanie Purcell [<mailto:melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 7:36 AM
To: Dean Silver
Cc: Budget Committee; City Council
Subject: RE: budget document

Good morning Dean,

The budget presented to the Citizen Budget Committee is the complete budget document and meets the requirements of law with the revenues and expenditures by type under each fund. It is located on the City's website under the Finance Department page on the Budget Process tab, [City of Ashland, Oregon - Finance - Budget Process Homepage](#)

Thank you,
Melanie

Melanie Purcell
Finance Director
City of Ashland | Finance
20 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520
541-488-5300 Office | Voice, TTY 800-735-2900 | 541-552-2059 fax

This email transmission is official business of the City of Ashland, and it is subject to Oregon Public Records Law for disclosure and retention. If you have received this message in error, please contact me at (541) 488-5300

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 12:01 AM
To: Melanie Purcell <melanie.purcell@ashland.or.us>
Cc: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>; City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: budget document

[EXTERNAL SENDER]
Good morning Melanie,

I understand that the recommended budget document that was presented at the first CBC meeting was a "narrative publication".

Please tell me where I can access the complete budget document.
It must include current budget detail sheets for each fund.

This is required by law to be made available to the public, per ORS 294.426(8).

If the complete budget document is not currently available, please let me know before the end of business Monday when it will be available.

Thank you,

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Kathy Kali [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 7:00 PM
To: Budget Committee
Subject: please keep marijuana tax in affordable housing fund

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Ashland Budget Committee,

I am very much in favor of the marijuana tax continuing to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

As an Ashland homeowner [REDACTED].) I am very much in favor of opportunities for workforce housing and homes for working families. Both of these have dwindled in the last 20 years due to housing price increases and job declines in the area.

Please keep the marijuana tax funding for the AHTF to make sure Ashland is a town that works for everyone!

Thank you.
Kathy Kali

Kathy Kali, Money & Business Coach

[REDACTED]

Build Wealth. Change the World.

Subject:

FW: City Council Contact Form Submitted

From: City of Ashland, Oregon <administration@ashland.or.us>

Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 8:25 PM

To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>

Subject: City Council Contact Form Submitted

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

*** FORM FIELD DATA***

Full Name: **Diane M Werich**

Subject: **Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

Message: **This is the second time in a week I am writing. I imagine the only one will answer this is Tonya Graham but I hope the rest of you are, at least, reading these emails. I was so dismayed to learn that cuts to the funding of the Trust fund funding were being considered. The amount dedicated to the trust fund from the marijuana taxes is totally inadequate as is and I was hoping to organize to encourage the Council to find additional ways to fund the trust fund. We are in the middle of a housing crisis, affordable or not, and it seems not such a good idea to contemplate any cuts to anything that encourages affordable housing. I do not think we are in a golf course crisis or an airport crisis so I think these two entities should be on the chopping block. As a matter a fact, eliminating the golf course would provide land for affordable housing too. There are many places you could cut that would have less of an impact on our stated values and stated Councilors priorities. I will not vote for any money measures put to a vote if my fees keep going up to even more ludicrous amounts. And by the way, in my 34 years here until the city hall bond, I never voted against any tax, bond, or levy. Now I will continue to vote against anything. the Council needs to get their house in order and be the progressive city we pretend to be**

*** USER INFORMATION ***

SubscriberID: -1

SubscriberUserName:

SubscriberEmail:

RemoteUser:

[REDACTED]

From: Eileen Dunn [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 5:08 PM
To: David Runkel
Cc: Budget Committee
Subject: Re: Housing Trust Fund

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

No, the NC housing trust fund was an EXAMPLE of how housing trust funds have helped people soooo let's support Ashland's housing trust fun.

Sent from my iPad

> On Apr 22, 2021, at 1:02 PM, David Runke [REDACTED] wrote:

>

> I'm confused. I'm assuming Ashland's housing trust fund did not support this family's purchase in NC and our fund does not help individual buyers. Is this correct?

>

>> On Apr 21, 2021, at 6:38 PM, Eileen Dunn [REDACTED] > wrote:

>>

>> [EXTERNAL SENDER]

>>

>> Please continue to fund the Housing Trust Fund with the Marijuana Tax. It works and the trust fund is so needed. It works around the country wherever there s compassion for housing needs.

>> Right now I am staying in my daughters house in NC purchased with the trust fund. They have a family of 5 and would have never been able to purchase a house without the help of his trust fund, for which they are very grateful. They have moved around in apartments for quite awhile and are so appreciative to have the stability of a home of their own.

>>

>> Please continue funding this fund from an ongoing tax like the marijuana tax.

>> Sincerely,

>> Eileen Dunn

>>

>> Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 11:17 AM
To: Melanie Purcell
Cc: City Council; Budget Committee
Subject: update please

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Good morning Melanie,

I notice that there are several new reports on Opengov this morning, and I thank you for them. You're making progress.

Can you give me an update regarding when you will be releasing the current fund balances and the positions report to the public?

It's been two weeks since you told me "We pulled the report because we found errors and data we had trouble corroborating. We will update it and replace it in the next week or so. I'll let you know as soon as we have it up."

The budget deadline is rapidly approaching. The public needs to see the data.

I appreciate your efforts, realizing what a busy time this is for you. I trust that the IS department has tightly integrated Muni to Opengov to minimize the manual labor involved for you and your staff.

Thank you.

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 7:51 AM
To: Finance
Subject: Public Comment Re: City Budget

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Budget and Finance Committee Members:

I encourage all public representatives and all of you to fulfill your charter in providing advice to City Government on the necessity of achieving a balanced annual operating budget.

All of us realize that we cannot, in our families, regularly spend more than our income.

1. Just so, City of Ashland must operate and spend money within its regular, available income. Examples: if the City decides to increase employee pay and benefits it may need to reduce total employee count. As tax revenues and fee income decline, there must be corresponding reductions in money spent in each and every department. For most of us living within our means necessarily means that some things we must do without. Some things we just cannot afford.
2. City of Ashland must not create new dependencies that it cannot sustain. New social programs, grants and give-aways, new committees, local adoption of progressive national programs e.g. 'Green New Deal' 'Equity' must be entertained with utmost financial caution. Ashland is a small city funded by a small number of homeowners and taxpayers. Essential public services must be prioritized and fully funded e.g. fire and police. Recently, City Officials in communities (e.g. Portland) that have not fully funded these services are learning that homeowners and business owners will leave these communities, thus reducing the tax base.
3. It appears to me, and this is an opinion, that there is a tendency at county and city levels to pay for unfunded expenditures with bond issues. These bonds then are repaid on the backs of homeowners through increases in real estate tax. Two such issues are on the May 18 ballot that if passed will increase my real estate tax by over 9%. If the community votes to provide such additional expenditures, County and City budget committees must find ways to have all residents, not just homeowners, pay for them.

Thank you for listening.

Dennis Toohey
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Gina DuQuenne
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 8:31 PM
To: Rich Rohde; Budget Committee
Subject: Re: Needed adjustment in addressing Ashland affordable housing needs in budget: Keep the marijuana tax in Ashland's very successful Housing Trust Fund.

Hello Rich,

Thank you for your continued support. I will do everything I can to make sure that the MJ taxes stay with the housing trust fund. I could not agree with you more. We will fight the good fight.

Rich, I usually get a reminder form Linda about our H&H meeting. I wanted to have 100% attendance. I have our meeting in my calendar so that I never forget again. I had my head in the budget and that is why I forgot.

See you next month if not sooner.

Stay safe!

-Gina

From: Rich Rohde [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2021 6:02 PM
To: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Needed adjustment in addressing Ashland affordable housing needs in budget: Keep the marijuana tax in Ashland's very successful Housing Trust Fund.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

City Budget Committee members:

In reviewing the proposed city managers budget that you are reviewing I saw that there is a proposal to not fund the dedicated city marijuana tax into our extremely important an successful Housing Trust Fund for the next two budget years.

This will be a tragic mistake for several reasons:

It took many years for the HTF to become operational BECAUSE it did not have in its formation a required dedicated tax assigned to it. Until the current marijuana tax was added the HTF was a lost afterthought in the budget doing nothing for our cities affordable housing needs.

In the very recent years that the tax has been dedicated it leveraged several critical housing projects for our city.

Even as proposed with substituting a couple of useless surplus land the loss of Dedicated revenue source which was very difficult to be started there will be danger of losing the great momentum for affordable housing that the HTF has now initiated.

This is the very definition of cutting into valuable infrastructure that may not be easily repaired.

I cannot overstate how much this proposal to defund the HTF is totally lacking in wisdom.

Please do not support this taking away the marijuana tax from the Housing Trust Fund

Rich Rohde



Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Natalie Thomason

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 3:47 PM
To: City Council; Budget Committee
Subject: Debunking the PERS Problem
Attachments: PERS analysis.pdf

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Councilors and CBC members:

For your consideration, an analysis you haven't seen before.

Executive Summary: PERS is responsible for approximately 5-7% of the budget.
Negotiated benefits are greater than PERS contributions.

We've heard over and over again that PERS is the largest intractable problem in the budget. It's not true. Total compensation, however, is a huge problem.

I'm attaching a spreadsheet I made adapted from one that Melanie Purcell sent me in lieu of giving me the specific position detail that I requested. Keep in mind that this data does NOT include Department Heads, i.e., the largest salaries. Fortunately, it provides enough detail to present the following conclusions:

First, understand that Personnel is about 34% of the total expenses in the budget, call it a third. Admittedly, that's a huge chunk. What my analysis shows is that the legislated PERS portion of total employee costs is 16-20%. Therefore, it is responsible for roughly 5-7% of the total budget.

That's nothing to sneeze at, but it's nothing like the huge proportion as it's always presented to us.

Notice that the ratio of benefits to salaries is 50-60%. I don't know how that compares to other municipalities or the private sector, but it seems very high to me.

The other thing to note is that NEGOTIATED benefits are 20-26% of total employee compensation. That is the part that needs to be addressed, as well as salaries. Negotiated employee benefits therefore accounts for roughly 7-8% of our total budget.

To summarize, the negotiated benefits that we pay city employees is GREATER than the TOTAL PERS contribution, including even the portion that is NOT a benefit to current employees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

City of Ashland Representative Annual Salary and Fringe Benefits

As of July 1, 2021

Union Group	Non-Represented		Parks		IBEW Clerical		IBEW Electric		Laborers		Police		Firefighter	
	1	1	40	17	41	22	30							
FTE Count	1	1	40	17	41	22	30							
Salary - Average	87,262.00	61,789.00	63,087.00	93,445.00	61,253.00	84,835.00	103,911.00							
Overtime - Last Fiscal Average	220.00	346.00	250.00	3,283.00	1,672.00	9,338.00	19,264.00							
Subtotal Salary	87,482.00	62,135.00	63,337.00	96,728.00	62,925.00	94,173.00	123,175.00							
Legislated Benefits:														
Workers Comp	812.00	645.00	381.00	1,254.00	1,492.00	1,603.00	2,464.00							
City Portion PERS/OPSRP (ave 10.07%)	8,810.00	6,257.00	6,379.00	9,741.00	6,337.00	-	-							
City Portion PF PERS/OPSRP (ave 15.33%)	-	-	-	-	-	14,343.00	18,785.00							
City Portion FICA/Medicare tax (7.65%)	6,693.00	4,754.00	4,846.00	7,400.00	4,814.00	7,205.00	9,423.00							
Subtotal Legislated Benefits	16,315.00	11,656.00	11,606.00	18,395.00	12,643.00	23,151.00	30,672.00							
Negotiated Benefits:														
Employee PERS/OPSRP (6%)	5,249.00	3,729.00	3,801.00	5,804.00	3,776.00	5,651.00	7,391.00							
Health/Dental Insurance	19,495.00	19,584.00	19,495.00	19,495.00	19,495.00	19,495.00	22,350.00							
Life Insurance & Long Term Disability	148.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	97.00	123.00	100.00							
Mercy Flights	-	-	70.00	70.00	70.00	-	70.00							
Deferred comp	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	540.00	600.00	600.00							
HRAVEBA	1,750.00	1,243.00	1,267.00	1,935.00	1,259.00	1,884.00	2,464.00							
Subtotal Negotiated Benefits	27,242.00	25,268.00	25,345.00	28,016.00	25,237.00	27,753.00	32,975.00							
Sub-Total Benefits	43,557.00	36,924.00	36,951.00	46,411.00	37,880.00	50,904.00	63,647.00							
Total Salary & Benefits	131,039.00	99,059.00	100,288.00	143,139.00	100,805.00	145,077.00	186,822.00							
% Ratio of Total Benefits/Salary	50%	59%	58%	48%	60%	54%	52%							
% Ratio of Negotiated Benefits/Total Compensation	21%	26%	25%	20%	25%	19%	18%							
% Ratio of legislated PERS/Total Compensation	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%	10%	10%							
Legislated Cost NOT a Benefit:														
City Portion UAL PERS/OPSRP (15.15%)	13,254.00	9,414.00	9,596.00	14,655.00	9,534.00	14,268.00	18,662.00							
all legislated PERS	22,064.00	15,671.00	15,975.00	24,396.00	15,871.00	28,611.00	37,447.00							
% Ratio of total legislated PERS/Total Compensation	17%	16%	16%	17%	16%	20%	20%							

[REDACTED]

From: Dean Silver [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 4:41 PM
To: City Council; Budget Committee
Subject: A humble request

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Councilors and Committee members:

You cannot do your job without data. In order to budget for the future, you need to know our current financial position, and how it compares to the current budget.

As you know, about two and a half weeks ago I asked the Finance Director why so much data has disappeared from public view. I am still awaiting a substantive reply and the release of the data requested.

Four of the major things that you need and are not being given are:

1. Current fund balances,
2. Employee compensation details,
3. Specific Departmental and Fund details, not just top level totals,
4. The ability to question department heads regarding their requirements and expenditures.

You are at the midpoint of your deliberations. You only have six hours remaining to make some momentous decisions.

At this next meeting, PLEASE find out why the finance dept/administration is withholding this data from you and from the public. PLEASE press for answers; do not accept evasions, denials, and deflections. PLEASE find out why full disclosure and transparency are not priorities in this process.

Some small subsets of the data have begun to reappear on OpenGov. I have expressed my appreciation to Melanie for those restorations. But far too much is still missing.

Apparently, I do not have sufficient standing as a taxpayer to make this happen. I would hope the budget committee would have the ability. It will only happen if you make it happen.

Thank you.

Dean Silver

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: gwen davies [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 5:39 PM
To: Budget Committee
Subject: fund the most essential only

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

We have a short window to prevent even more debt than the 2.5 million figure I hear now. We have not even heard an answer to Mr. Runkel's question about many departments asking for big increases which he read from the budget information in the last meeting. YOu may have emailed him but the public needs that information too.

Fund only the most essential spending now and pause the rest. Enact a stringent zero based budgeting processor cut every department by say 15% effective in the 2021 to 2023 budget. Cut all perks like car allowances now. Cut positions or cut working hours and let union employees know they have to start paying their fair share....their 6%...asap. Lay offs should be considered immediately. Look at top management issues and prune top management positions in Administration...not fire or police. Prioritize the essentials as well as pause the non-essentials.

I would fund fully or increase the Fire Department. If we can, provide funds to lower income residents to limb up trees, take down cedars, dead branches, and dead trees as well other highly flammable landscaping. Make it mandatory. Do not help the wealthiest with paying their way. That has happened already. You could index it for some helpbut multi millionaires should not have those who are living on modest incomes pay their way. Of course this requires action by both CBC and CC. We may burn this summer; start now.

I know there are many who see our situation accurately and have already and will come up with suggestions. I asked for each of you to suggest five spending cuts. I hope you do so and let the public know. Many feel you are accomplishing nothing to cut spending; many feel you are getting the runaround from those who spent us into this situation in the first place. We need to hear actual cuts you will be making.

Thank you for reading this.

From: Sandra Theis [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 6:56 PM
To: Budget Committee
Subject: Input on budget decisions

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Date: April 25, 2021

To: Ashland Budget Committee Members

From: Sandra Theis, Member Ashland Senior Advisory Committee and Chair, Livable Ashland: An All Age Friendly City

I write to express support for the Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission (APRC) budget as submitted by Director Michael Black. The proposed APRC budget:

- Shares in the accommodations for city-wide funding pressures with realistic cuts and future planning
- Maintains parks and services which are vital for Ashland's livability, as noted in National Citizen Survey's Ashland Livability Report, and have been a critical venue for safe recreation during the pandemic, supporting citizens' physical and mental health
- Contributes to Ashland's economic recovery as a draw for tourism and outdoor sports enthusiasts
- Maintains funding for Ashland Senior Services Division and Ashland Senior Center, which has continued providing critical information and assistance for vulnerable seniors and their families throughout the pandemic

Ashland Senior Services Division runs Ashland Senior Center and partners with other organizations to support our growing senior population. They provide recreation, social connection, education, and a wide array of support services that help seniors maintain independence and help working adults with caregiving responsibilities. The Division accomplishes much with a small staff and budget by connecting Ashland families to existing resources available in the community and extending resources through collaboration with other agencies.

All of the activities of APRC meet the goals of Livable Ashland: An All Age Friendly City. This initiative was entered into by the City of Ashland and APRC as part of the WHO/AARP Age Friendly Cities initiative. The proposed level of funding will help to support this initiative.