

OVERVIEW

This is the third in a series of articles designed specifically for you, our residents, to provide information about City of Frontenac finances. The previous two mailers are available at www.cityof-frontenac.org. Like all cities, Frontenac's services are heavily dependent on personnel. Police, fire, public works and administration personnel expenses make up 89% of this year's General Fund budget. While it is necessary to continually review efficiencies in personnel, police and fire response times and service levels have historically been important to our community's residents. Administrative staff, Board of Aldermen and Ways and Means continue

to work together to reduce personnel expenses or limit the increase in these and other costs. Some of our successes are listed on page 3. Despite these efforts to limit expense increases, city revenues have not kept pace with expenses including our current year budget. Current trend lines show future revenues and expenses depleting our reserves, potentially reducing our AAA bond rating and ultimately impacting services. To enlist your assistance, the City will be conducting a resident survey. We hope you will take the time to provide your input. ♣

PERSONNEL

While reductions have been made to personnel benefits and expenses, we have also closely monitored our benefit package for employees relative to peer cities and we remain in line on a comparative level. Personnel expenses account for \$5.25 million of a General Fund budget of \$5.93 million. Personnel expenses have increased on average 3.8% over the prior 7 years. In addition to salary, major components of benefits include health and dental insurance, pension and workers compensation insurance.

Public Safety (police, fire and emergency medical service or EMS) is by far the city's largest expense. Public safety accounts for approximately 79% of personnel expenses. A staffing chart (at right) lists the full time employees by department and information on page 2 describes our largest two departments, Police and Fire/EMS and their functions.

Number of Employees by Department / 2014-15	
Fire	20
Police	22
Building	2
Administration	3.5
Municipal Court	1.75
Public Works	3
Storm Water	1.5
Total	53.75

Frontenac residents receive all services including public safety at a lower property tax rate compared to most neighboring cities. Some neighboring cities

have a fire district tax rate that is higher than the total city rate for ALL Frontenac services. The City of Frontenac also uses a portion of sales tax revenues to fund its emergency services. In addition, Frontenac receives revenue for providing police and fire protection to nearby cities (Huntleigh, Westwood, Crystal Lake Park and Country Life Acres). This annual contractual revenue is estimated at \$356,000 in 2014-15 and helps offset the cost of these services.

continued

2014-15 PERSONNEL EXPENSE BUDGET



(Admin, Public Works, Building, Court, Stormwtr.)

Frontenac Police Department

21 Missouri State certified, commissioned police officers trained in all aspects of professional community policing to include crisis intervention, motor vehicle accident investigation, traffic safety and criminal incident investigation. The average experience level of officers is over 10 years in public safety.

Frontenac average response time for emergency calls, in minutes/seconds = 2:02. The national average emergency response time is 10 minutes according to American Police Beat.

Average response time for non-emergency calls, in minutes/seconds = 3:12. The national average emergency response time is 23 minutes according to American Police Beat.

Extra benefit to Frontenac Residents:

- Police Dispatch monitors home alarms directly. One of only two (2) departments in St. Louis County to offer this time saving service.
- Nixle Alert system access to provide instant alerts regarding public safety topics via text and/or email.
- Vacation watch of your residence by police patrol officers while you are away.
- All patrol vehicles equipped with life-saving Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Officers are certified by Frontenac Fire.
- Patrol officers arrive quickly on the scene of emergency and routine calls, and are equipped to provide security and medical care until additional public safety resources arrive.
- Two officers are certified in proper child safety seat installation, and will perform these checks and installations for residents.
- Three (3) command-level officers are graduates of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy, which is a ten-week executive development course for law enforcement officers.

Frontenac Fire Department

All 20 personnel are state certified firefighters and all fire department employees are trained EMT's or Paramedics with 16 state certified paramedics and four state certified EMT's. Each classification requires over 140 hours of recertification training every five years.

Frontenac Fire Department responds to emergencies in our city and on roadways near our city plus responds to mutual aid emergencies, which is advantageous to cities in the partnership.

A department staffed Advanced Life Support Vehicle (Ambulance) was placed in service in April of 2010, under the medical direction of Mercy Hospital.

The Fire Department ambulance can initiate critical care within minutes, increasing the chance of survival for anyone in need of care.

The Frontenac ambulance averages 325 transports annually to local hospitals and is a rolling emergency room **with an average response time under 3.35 minutes (reduced from a 7 minute estimated average with the past contractor)**. National standards recommend response times of 8 minutes or less.

Fire response, on average, is also 3.35 minutes from time of dispatch to on scene which is below the national standard of 4 minutes.

Frontenac is in compliance with insurance guidelines under ISO standards that require four personnel responding to a fire call as a minimum in order to maintain insurability standards for residential properties in Frontenac. In 2010, paramedic/firefighters were added to meet insurance compliance guidelines. ♣

CAPITAL EXPENSES

Although capital expenses vary from year to year, public safety expenses including patrol cars, fire engines, ambulance, emergency medical service (EMS) equipment, fuel, uniforms, turn out gear, police car computers and video, radios, fire hoses, etc. constitute the city's largest on-going capital and operating expenses. The city is also in need of a replacement fire engine/pumper which now requires ongoing repair expenses to maintain its functionality. The cost to replace the fire engine/pumper is estimated at \$650,000.

In addition to these police and fire department needs and our on-going storm water projects; bridges, road resurfacing and sidewalks all represent major infrastructure capital expenses. Annual patching, crack sealing, striping, fuel, equipment purchase and maintenance, plowing and salting also fall into this category. Other major expenses include residential leaf collection at \$100,000 annually, as well as annual debt service on the new municipal building of \$385,000 (after years of study, it was determined the cost of renovating the old facilities was not cost-effective). The city's 20 year capital expense projection includes an average annual expense estimate of \$348,400 for replacement of capital items and \$174,000 annually for infrastructure projects. ♣

EXPENSE REDUCTIONS/COST CONTAINMENT

As in past years, requested budget levels were reduced or deferred by expense reductions and cost containment prior to adoption of the current year's budget. Budget reductions and expense deferrals were approximately \$47,000 for the General Fund and \$127,000 for the Capital Fund, not including the deferred purchase of a \$650,000 fire engine/pumper.

Long term savings and cost reductions over the past several years have included:

- Consolidated police and fire dispatch in 2011 with West Central Dispatch Center cities of Creve Coeur, Frontenac and Town and Country generating annual savings of \$110,000. While consolidating this service has achieved significant savings, the annual cost to provide vital communications for our first responders remains heavily personnel-driven and is still estimated to cost \$257,900 in 2014-15.
- Charter member of St. Louis Area Insurance Trust (SLAIT) which added self-insured health in 2010. Annual estimated savings of \$45,000.

- Reduced city's share of health insurance cost by instituting an employee contribution, producing \$30,000 savings annually.
- Lengthened payroll steps for new hires and froze longevity increases and time in rank for all employees resulting in estimated savings of more than \$380,000 over ten years.
- Obtained grant revenue for police and fire equipment and capital improvement projects, offsetting city expenses by almost \$800,000 over the past four years.
- Police, fire and public works have all managed capital vehicle and equipment purchases to reduce prior year costs producing saving in excess of \$15,000 annually.
- Departments have borrowed (or shared) equipment and training resources with other municipalities as well as made use of donated equipment. This practice over the last three years has resulted in estimated cost avoidance/savings totaling over \$30,000. ♣

CONCLUSION

Though we continue to strive to balance the budget, while simultaneously maintaining high level services, additional measures will be needed in order to balance future budget needs for major equipment and infrastructure, as well as the annual operating expense budgets for emergency and city services.

In order to maintain the city's fiscal health and current service levels, steps will be required to either increase revenue, decrease expenses, or both. Residents may be asked via a future ballot initiative to take action by way of a general obligation bond issue, property tax increase, utility tax increase, maintaining the out of state vehicle tax, reinstating the use tax or some combination of these measures. Limited opportunities may also exist for additional retail which generates sales taxes largely from non-residents.

Receiving input about the level of service you and your family expect will help the Board of Aldermen, Ways and Means Committee and administrative staff understand how residents value the services they receive. We hope that residents will provide much desired feedback when you receive the upcoming resident survey. ♣

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