

..... from the Mayor

(August 2012)

Preparing a city's budget for the upcoming year is an annual responsibility of municipal government. Department heads start as early as May to prepare their budgets for the following year. Approval of the budget is **the primary function** of the City Council. Today, I want to share information with you about the public input process of the budget hearings.

Public budget work sessions are held on regular Council meeting nights (the first and third Monday's of the month). The August 6 and 20 work sessions will start at 6:00 pm (one hour earlier than the 7:00 pm start time of regular Council meetings). On August 6, we will listen to requests from local not-for profit agencies that provide services to the City: animal control (Animal Welfare League), public transportation (Kosciusko Area Bus Service), neighborhood revitalization and rental assistance (Housing Opportunities of Warsaw and Warsaw Housing Authority), downtown development (Warsaw Community Development Corporation), and economic development (Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation).

On August 20, the Council will listen to the department heads and myself present budgets for departments and related funds. For example, the street department has its operating fund budget, the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund, and Local Road and Street Fund (both supported by the state and federal portion of the gasoline tax you pay at the pump), and the Cumulative Capital Development Fund, which is used to replace aging infrastructure. Other departments prepare multiple budgets, as well.

The first public hearing for these budgets will be held on September 17 (7:00 pm). This meeting will allow those who have questions pertaining to the 2013 budget to voice their thoughts. On October 1 (7:00 pm), the proposed budget will get its first reading, and on October 15 (7:00 pm) the budget will be considered for adoption. By state statute, November 1 is the deadline to adopt 2013 budgets.

All of the regularly scheduled City Council meetings between now and the end of the year will have budget items on the agenda. The Council agenda is published on the city website a few days in advance of the meeting. Go to www.warsaw.in.gov and click the first tab on the left for "Agendas and Minutes." There you will find details about past and upcoming meetings.

In fact, not only are the Council agendas and minutes listed, but also the Board of Public Works and Safety, Park Board, Traffic Safety Commission, and others. Spend some time exploring the site. My administrative assistant, Michelle Bormet, and Staci Young, the Parks Department Recreation Director, have done a fabulous job developing and maintaining the site!

Clerk-Treasurer Lynne Christiansen has done a great job compiling the budget to present the first draft for review. Our established and new Council members will now have the task of going through the entire budget and presenting their specific thoughts at the hearings, with the goal of appropriating funds for the 2013 budget.