



Rochester Hills

Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

1000 Rochester Hills Dr
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
(248) 656-4600
Home Page:
www.rochesterhills.org

David J. Blair, Jason Carlock, Ryan Deel, Carol Morlan, Theresa Mungoli, Marvie Neubauer and David Walker

Vision Statement: *The Community of Choice for Families and Business*

Mission Statement: *"Our mission is to sustain the City of Rochester Hills as the premier community of choice to live, work and raise a family by enhancing our vibrant residential character complemented by an attractive business community."*

Monday, August 19, 2024

5:30 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

In accordance with the provisions of Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, notice was given that a Special Rochester Hills City Council Meeting would commence at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 19, 2024, to discuss the proposed 2025 budget.

CALL TO ORDER

President Deel called the Special Rochester Hills City Council Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - David Blair, Jason Carlock, Ryan Deel, Carol Morlan, David Walker, Theresa Mungoli and Marvie Neubauer

Others Present:

*Dennis Andrews, Parks Manager
Tracey Balint, Public Utilities Engineering Manager
Bryan Barnett, Mayor
Sheila Brown, Deputy City Clerk
Esther Chirodea, Building Tech - Permits
Bill Cooke, Deputy Fire Chief
Lieutenant Jason Dalbec, Oakland County Sheriff's Office
Darrin Dobbs, Grounds Maintenance Manager
Matt Einheuser, Natural Resources Manager
Ken Elwert, Parks & Natural Resources Director
Matt Exley, Manager of Facilities
Jeff Fox, Roads & Pathways Operations Manager
Bill Fritz, Public Services Director
Larry Gambotto, Captain/Training Officer
Todd Gary, Fire Chief/Emergency Services Director
Doreen Groth, GIS Manager
Lori Hamilton, Administrative Services Supervisor
Debby Hoyle, Senior Financial Analyst
Tim Hollis, Deputy Director*

*Mario Iafrate, Sexton
Brooke Insana, Human Resources Director
Leon Luedeman, Water & Sewer Operations Manager
Rochelle Lyon, Information Systems Director
Celeste Mansour, Human Resources Coordinator
Tim Matz, Captain/EMS Coordinator
Pat McKay, Museum Manager
Chris McLeod, Planning Manager
Sue Rehse, Human Resources Associate
Sara Roediger, Planning & Economic Development Director
Jeff Schultz, Manager of Inspection Services
Leanne Scott, City Clerk
Lieutenant Dennis Service, Oakland County Sheriff's Office
Chris Shepard, Field Services Manager
Shannon Smith, Administrative Specialist - Human Resources
Karen Somerville, Deputy Assessing Director
Joe Snyder, Chief Financial Officer
Laurie Taylor, Assessing Director
Leslie Turnbull, Human Resources Manager
Pam Valentik, Economic Development Manager
Leslie VanGieson, Human Resources Coordinator
Kelly Varner, Admin Services Supervisor
Mike Viazanko, Building/Ordinance/Facilities Director
Jodi Welch, Manager of Ordinance Services
Captain Russ Yeiser, Oakland County Sheriff's Office*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Carlock, seconded by Morlan, that the Agenda be Approved as Presented. The motion CARRIED by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Blair, Carlock, Deel, Morlan, Walker, Mungioli and Neubauer

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

LEGISLATIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2024-0371 Request for Approval of the Rochester Avon Recreation Authority (RARA) FY 2025 Budget

Attachments: [081924 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[FY 2025 RARA Budget.pdf](#)
[081224 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[081224 Resolution.pdf](#)
[Resolution \(Draft\).pdf](#)

Joe Snyder, Chief Financial Officer, introduced **Dave Word**, Executive Recreation Director for Rochester Avon Recreation Authority (RARA), and **Samuel Lunt**, RARA.

Mr. Word stated that the focus at RARA is to strengthen community through play. He shared the following services provided to the community which they consider to be essential:

Community Engagement - Events and Fairs for All

- Continue to add new ways to engage residents and support community wide events.

- Recent additions include:

- eight cornhole boards and bag sets
- nerf barriers and equipment
- two new commercial bounce houses
- outdoor volleyball nets
- inflatable movie screen, projector and sound system
- hammock park located along the Clinton River Trail

Movie Nights - Summer Fun

- Beginning in 2025, we will begin a summer movie in the park series looking to utilize pocket parks, schools, and other walkable venues to engage families in their neighborhoods.

Fitness & Wellness- Health & Happiness

- Offer yoga, zumba, cardio dance, and other fitness classes for all ages and special populations at the 500 E. Second St. Community Center.

Arts & Crafting - Paint, Draw, Spark Creativity

- Each year we continue to find more talented local artists who want to teach and share. We offer everything from glitter and slime to canvas and wood working.

Service Projects - Events that make you warm and fuzzy

- Did you know that we have event planners on staff?

- In 2025 we are looking to add more events that support our community fundraising initiative.

- We will help plan, organize, and even provide space for charity events that matter to our residents.

Intergenerational Activities - Bridge the Gap

- Next year, a major capital improvement at RARA will be the addition of a computer lab to support the heavily requested tech classes for adults.

- Cooking classes continue to grow in popularity, with more scheduled for 2025.

- Expect to see a mentorship program involving seniors, students, and young adults in the spring.

- Other upcoming activities include game nights, digital storytelling, family fun days, and more holiday-themed events for everyone.

Pop Up Play Zones - Fun when you need it most!

- Over the last few years we have stepped up our "game" by adding equipment and services to support a broader amount of local engagement.
- We support Rochester, Rochester Hills, Rochester Hills Public Library, Rochester and Avondale Schools, and other non-profits by providing services at events.
- In 2025, we will provide services at HOA's for events as well!

Culture - Diversity and Inclusion

- Over the next three years, our goal is to expand cultural exchange events that celebrate, share, and explore the rich diversity of backgrounds and traditions that make our community unique.
- We plan to offer a variety of activities, including crafting traditions, cultural performances, art displays, fashion shows, and much more.
- These events will be guided by focus groups, allowing community members to actively shape and influence our programming. Through these efforts, we aim to foster greater understanding, appreciation, and connection within our community.

Technology Enhanced Activities - The "smart" way to play!

- The addition of the computer lab will allow us to launch an E-Sports program at RARA and expand our ability to offer software tools for instructors to teach programming, languages, media arts, computer skills, and more.
- Looking ahead, we're planning to incorporate gamification into our programs with fitness challenges, digital scavenger hunts, and app-based challenges.

Sporting - Camaraderie, friendships, and skill building.

- We will continue to be the foundation for our school sports programs and always provide a place for sports enthusiasts of all skills and abilities.
- As community needs evolve, our focus is shifting towards offering more skill clinics and camps led by certified instructors to help develop our young athletes.
- Our professional staff will also continue to offer leagues and events that cater to both competitive and recreational participants.

Camps - Fostering a safe, fun environment for childcare.

- Camps are the heart and soul of our programs, led by an elite staff that takes fun to new heights.
- From treetop adventures and stadium tours to waterparks, our weeks are packed with excitement.
- Whether you're diving into food exploration, getting creative with art projects, or leveling up your skills in sports camps, we've got it all!

Adaptive Services - Creating activities for special populations.

- Alongside our signature special needs summer camp, we're expanding our services to better support our special populations.
- From sports, arts, and social activities to life skills and cognitive development, RARA's Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist collaborates with families to

create new programs that keep our friends engaged all year long!

By the numbers - How We Serve

- 1048 Activities in 2023 and 10,044 Participants on track for higher participation in 2024!
- 135 Parties hosted at the Rec Center
- 272 Registered for Sports Events
- 504 Registered for Activities
- 1138 Registered for Adaptive Services
- 1438 Registered for Sports Camps and Clinics
- 1897 Registered for Leagues
- 2134 Registered in Day Camps
- 3021 Attendees at Events
- And we still have fall and winter to go.....

Projections - Future Impacts

- Our projections over the next three years show an increase in participation, getting closer to the 15,000 mark.

Revenue & Fund Balance - Fiscal Responsibility

- We are currently at a 38% fund balance..
- We continue to use the fund balance for capital improvements, and it does continue to exceed our revenues coming in.
- By 2027 we will be adding and contributing back to our fund balance to stay over 20%.

Local Experts - Contractors & Partners

- 42 Contractors and Partners offering over 380 programs to our community.
- Serving over 6000 participants annually!

Our Sponsors - Community Support

- 36 Businesses with 71 sponsorships.
- Helping reduce the cost of services to our residents!

Our Staff - Part-time & Seasonal

- 92 Part-time and Seasonal Staff who are from the Greater Rochester Area.
- High School, College, and Professionals who support our Mission!

Mr. Word thanked City Council for the opportunity to showcase RARA's staff and services they have provided. He reported that program participation continues to increase and is looking forward to the future.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli stated RARA has undergone significant changes and growth over the past few years, including staff development through competitive salaries and program evaluation processes. She mentioned that the dance program has been restructured to utilize contractors for individual classes. She recognized Mr. Word for developing a strategic vision for the organization's future growth. She also commended the RARA Board members for providing expertise and accountability. She concluded by stating she is looking forward to the hammock park.

A motion was made by Mungioli, seconded by Neubauer, that this matter be Adopted by Resolution. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Blair, Carlock, Deel, Morlan, Walker, Mungioli and Neubauer

Enactment No: RES0239-2024

Whereas, at its August 12, 2024 meeting the Rochester Hills City Council acknowledged receipt of the Fiscal Year 2025 Rochester-Avon Recreation Authority (RARA) Budget Plan; and

Whereas, at its August 19, 2024 meeting RARA staff presented the FY 2025 RARA Budget Plan before the Rochester Hills City Council.

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills City Council hereby approves the FY 2025 RARA Budget in the amount of \$3,394,038.00.

PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0371 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: R.A.R.A. Millage Fund.

2024-0404 Discussion - Component Units (800's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0371 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: R.A.R.A. Operating Fund.

2024-0372 Request For Acknowledgement of Receipt of FY 2025 Proposed Budget and FY 2026-27 Projected Budget, and establishment of a Budget Public Hearing Date

Attachments: [092324 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[090924 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[081924 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)
[SUPPL 2025-2027 = CC Budget Questions + Admin Responses.pdf](#)
[SUPPL Strategic-Master Plan Status 073124 PNR.pdf](#)
[SUPPL Museum 2020-2025 Division Plan.pdf](#)
[081224 Agenda Summary.pdf](#)
[081224 Resolution.pdf](#)
[Resolution \(Draft\).pdf](#)

Mayor Barnett thanked City Council for their support and highlighted the strong, trusting relationship between the council and administration, emphasizing the collaborative process. He acknowledged the City team's extensive work aligning with Council goals and objectives. He commended City staff for the excellent service they provide for the residents. He extended special thanks to Joe Snyder, Chief Financial Officer, Debby Hoyle, Senior Financial Analyst, and Denise McDoniel, Financial Analyst, for their vital behind-the-scenes work and sound financial management.

Joe Snyder, Chief Financial Officer, and **Debby Hoyle**, Senior Financial Analyst, were present.

Mr. Snyder shared the components in developing the City of Rochester Hills 2025-2027 Proposed Budget. He stated that the components include the following:

- The City of Rochester Hills three-year adopted Budget Plan includes Fiscal Years 2024-2026
- The City of Rochester Hills Capital Improvement Plan for 2025-2030
- The City of Rochester Hills Seven-Year Financial Forecast for 2025-2031
- The Rochester Hills City Council Strategic Planning Technical Review Committee
- Fiscal Year 2025 Goals and Objectives
- Governmental Fund Balance Reserve Policy

- The Rochester Hills City Council Strategic Planning Technical Review Committee
- Fiscal Year 2025 Goals and Objectives
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He stated that this is the 15th consecutive year that the City has presented a three-year budget plan and noted the overview of the Proposed 2025-2027 Budget included the following:

- Continuing to present a three-year budget
- Budgets presented based on best estimates and projections for the future
- Conservative estimates of both revenues and expenditures
- Ensures that the service levels proposed in the budget can be delivered-

He spoke about the 2025 Budget/Proposed Expenditures and noted the following:

- A total budget of \$185,526,620 in expenditures, which represents a reduction of 24 percent as compared to the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget, comprised largely of:

- *Public Service at 29 percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Public Safety at 15 percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Economic Development at two percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Parks & Natural Resources at five percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Capital Outlay at 16 percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Debt Service at one percent of the budget expenditures*
- *Transfers-Out at 16 percent of the budget expenditures*
- *General Government at 16 percent of the budget expenditures*

- *A Capital Outlay Proposed Project for 2025 total \$30,637,480, and are largely made up of the following:*
 - *Major Roads and Local Streets consist of 35 percent, including the following:*
 - *Brewster Road Rehabilitation from Walton to Dutton*
 - *Traffic Signal upgrade at Technology Drive and at Auburn*
 - *Reconstruction of Eddington Road between Farmborough and Windrift*
 - *Local Street Rehabilitation Program*
 - *Preliminary Engineering for two SAD segments; one at Childress and one at Dunning, east of Eastwood*

 - *Water & Sewer consists of 36 percent*
 - *Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Program*
 - *Brewster Road Watermain Replacement*
 - *PRV Replacement at Dequindre and Avon*
 - *DPS Garage - three high-speed overhead doors*
 - *University Hills Watermain Replacement*

 - *Facilities consists of 14 percent*
 - *VanHoosen Jones Cemetery - installation of a new irrigation system*
 - *Spencer Park - dock and deck upgrades, and some concrete outdoor games*
 - *Nowicki Park - Preliminary Engineering for the Development of Nowicki Park*
 - *Pedestrian Bridge and Structure Repair Program*
 - *Oakland County Sheriff's Office - installation and replacement of carports*
 - *Fire Station # 1- exterior improvements*
 - *City Hall - restroom automatic door opening system*
 - *Museum - historic building structural repairs, and lift replacement at the schoolhouse*

 - *MIS consists of two percent*
 - *Fleet consists of two percent*

 - *Pathways consists of two percent*
 - *Pathway Rehabilitation Program*
 - *Pedestrian Bridge and Structure Repair Program*

 - *Fire Capital consists of seven percent*

- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) replacement
 - Heart monitors and chest compression device replacements
 - Patient Transport Unit
 - Gator
 - Community Risk Reduction Vehicle Replacement
-
- Water Resources consists of two percent
 - Stream bank stabilization project at Eagles Landing
 - Stream bank stabilization project at Innovation Hills

He stated the City Budget is proposing \$164,646,330 in revenue with major sources of proposed revenue consisting of the following:

- Service Charges bringing in 36 percent; these charges consist of Water and Sewer charges, Building Department fees, etc.
- City Taxes bringing in 26 percent; there is no change to the overall City millage rate being proposed for next year
- Fund Balance bringing in 11 percent; proposing \$30,000,000 in Capital Outlay with \$20,000,000 required of reserves, which equates to a \$10,000,000 operating surplus for 2025
- Transfers-In bringing in 14 percent; this represents the flip side of the Transfer-Out expenditures
- Intergovernmental Fund bringing in 11 percent; includes the State-Shared revenue and Act 51 Gas Tax
- Investment & Other Earnings bringing in two percent

He stated that the General Fund Budget is proposed at \$35 million, which includes the addition of one new full-time position, Deputy Parks Director. He explained that the City's Fund Balance Policy states any balance above 80 percent of annual operating expenditures is transferred out to the Capital Improvement Fund to maintain the General Fund fund balance level. He noted that per the updated Fund Balance Policy, beginning in 2025, any balance above 35 percent of annual operating expenditures in the General Fund will be transferred out to the Capital Improvement Fund to maintain that level. He shared the plan to move from the 80 percent to 35 percent target balance will take place over the course of the next three years.

He noted that the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) is proposed at \$3.8 million and the significant projects primarily include the projects previously mentioned under the Facilities portion of the Capital Outlay discussion. He added that approximately \$4.1 million is proposed to be added to the CIF next year to fund these projects. He explained that Capital Improvement Projects projected for 2025 and beyond will continue to be reviewed and reassessed.

He shared that the Major Road Fund is proposed at \$9.4 million and some of the significant projects include: Brewster Road, traffic signal upgrades at Technology and Auburn (funded entirely by the LDFA), and Eddington Boulevard Reconstruction from Farmborough to Windrift. He noted a draw of \$643,000 from the Major Road Fund Balance is proposed to fund \$4.7 million in Major Road Capital Projects.

He explained that the Local Street fund is proposed at \$11.4 million and some of the significant projects include: the annual Local Street Rehabilitation Program, preliminary engineering for two SAD projects on Childress and Dunning, east of Eastwood. He noted that there is a reduction proposed in the Local Street Fund over the next few years to set the Local Street Fund at a 25 percent target balance level by 2026, and moving forward it will be maintained that the 25 percent target balance level.

He stated that the Fire Operating Fund is proposed at \$16.1 million, which includes the addition of one part-time to full-time administrative assistant in the Community Risk Reduction Division. He noted that the annual transfer-out from the Fire Operating Fund to the Fire Capital Fund will continue to be an amount to maintain the Fire Operating Fund Balance at its 25 percent Fund Balance level.

He shared that the Fire Capital Fund is proposed at \$2.3 million and some of the significant projects include: replacement of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), replacement of heart monitors and chest compression devices, CRR vehicle replacement, Fire Station #1 exterior improvements, and the demolition of the existing fire training structure as well as the preparation for the installation of a new fire training structure. He added that approximately \$1.3 million of the Fire Capital Fund Balance is proposed to fund \$2.3 million in Fire projects.

He stated that the Special Police Fund is proposed at \$13.1 million, which includes the addition of two additional Oakland County Sheriff Officers: one Patrol Sergeant and one Detective Sergeant. He noted the Police Millage is proposed to gradually set the Police Fund Balance at its 25 percent target balance over the next three years. He shared that moving forward the Police Millage will be set each year to maintain the fund at its target fund balance.

He shared the following 2025-2027 Budget Highlights:

- No Change in City Millage rate
- Structural Surplus is Maintained
- Fund Balance is Maintained
- Expenditures are down 24 percent from FY 2024
- \$30 million Capital Project Proposed; No Debt Proposed
- Two additional Oakland County Sheriff's Office Deputies
- Two additional City staff, including a part-time to full-time administrative assistant in the Fire Department and a Deputy Parks Director

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli referenced the City Council Questions / Administrative Responses document stating that she had inquired about the millage forecast and the fact that the City's Debt Millage rolls off at the end of next year. She shared Mr. Snyder's response that the City plans to 'roll' the small 0.0275 mill into the General Fund. She suggested that these funds be incorporated into the pathway millage renewal, which is also coming up next year. She noted that the current pathway millage is insufficient to address the increasing wear and tear on City pathways. She inquired whether this request should be included in the straw poll.

Mr. Snyder clarified that the pathway millage extends through Fiscal Year 2026, providing some time. He stated that the proposed approach for allocating funds in next year's budget involves presenting the current capabilities and limitations of the existing pathway millage to the Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee. He commented that if it were to go to the Capital Improvement Fund, those monies could be allocated to various areas like parks, pathways, and roads, or specifically earmarking funds for pathways if desired.

Ms. Mungoli stated the City needs to preserve the pathways we currently have before constructing more, and clarified that her reference to 'pathways' pertains to the city's local pathways, distinct from the Clinton River Trail or Paint Creek Trail, and noted that the residents voted for their construction and maintenance.

She referenced the cost of the Hills Herald printing, and suggested that Councilmembers could reduce their submission to a half-page to potentially reduce the book's size, thereby lowering printing and postage costs. She also referenced the ARPA nonprofit grants, and requested that the grantees give a presentation or submit written reports upon completion, ensuring accountability for the \$300,000 allocated and allowing them to share their successes.

Mr. Snyder concurred and stated that at the initial kickoff meeting, the grantees were asked to take pictures and tell stories, where appropriate, because the intent was to provide a presentation to Council at one of the December meetings.

Ms. Mungoli concluded by inquiring whether the OLSHA Senior Chore Grant was subsidizing the CDBG grant.

Mr. Snyder stated it does not subsidize, but rather goes along with the CDBG grant. He explained that many of the senior home chore programs that were previously provided within the City's CDBG allotment have been drastically restricted. He noted the OLSHA Senior Chore Grant will allow for things like snowplowing in the winter, spring and fall cleanup, and yard mowing throughout the summer.

Discussed: General Budget Overview.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: GENERAL FUND REVENUE; MAYOR'S DEPARTMENT: Mayor's Department, Accounting, Legal Services, Treasury, Media Division, Street Lighting, Community Development Block Grant, Community Events, Community Programs; GENERAL FUND TRANSFER-OUT.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: A.R.P.A. Fund.

2024-0399 Discussion - Debt Services Funds (300's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Debt Funds.

2024-0400 Discussion - Capital Funds (400's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Capital Improvement Fund.

2024-0401 Discussion - Water and Sewer Funds (500's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Solid Waste Fund.

2024-0402 Discussion - Internal Service Funds (600's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Insurance Fund.

2024-0403 Discussion - Trust and Agency Funds (700's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0372 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Retiree Healthcare Trust Fund.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Assessing Department:

Laurie Taylor, Assessing Director, and **Karen Somerville**, Deputy Assessing Director, were in attendance to review the Assessing Department.

Ms. Taylor stated their conservative approach to budgeting has paid off as they had estimated an increase in taxable value for budget year 2025 at 4.4 percent; however, what was actually experienced was an increase of 7.2 percent. She stressed this was great news in that it helps fund all the budgets that are supported by a millage. She noted that looking forward to 2026, they are estimating an increase in taxable value at 4 percent and 2.5 percent for 2027. She explained that the spread between assessed value and taxable value continues to grow, and is currently at \$1.5 billion.

Ms. Somerville shared that residential properties make up about 80 percent of the assessment roll. She added that assessments represent 50 percent of market value and that the City continues to experience a strong residential real estate market. She remarked that residential sales indicate that the City's 2025 assessed values will increase on average by 8.5 percent and that the current spread between assessed and taxable values is an average of 36 percent per household. She noted that this puts the City in a great financial position.

Council Discussion:

President Deel thanked Ms. Taylor and Ms. Somerville for their presentation.

Planning & Economic Development Department:

Sara Roediger, Planning & Economic Development Director, **Chris McLeod**, Planning Manager, and **Pam Valentik**, Economic Development Manager, were

in attendance to review the Planning & Economic Development Department.

Ms. Roediger stated that the Planning & Economic Development (PED) Department continues daily to strive to Preserve, Enhance, and Diversify the City of Rochester Hills. She mentioned that a significant undertaking for her department this year is the four-year, \$75 million Eagle Remediation and Restoration Grant. She noted that with the guidance of ASTI, they are identifying and prioritizing projects to effectively utilize these funds for cleaning up contaminated sites and maximizing investment returns. She shared that currently, three City projects are in progress, and they are collaborating with two major landowners to improve over 130 acres of contaminated land.

Mr. McLeod provided an update on the City's Master Plan, noting the completion of the 'Understand' and 'Envision' phases. He explained that these phases involved informational videos, online surveys, Facebook engagement, focus groups with various community sectors (HOAs, religious groups, businesses, etc.), and Planning Commission study sessions. He stated the project has now moved into the 'Strategize' phase, which aims to establish a strong foundation for the 2025 Master Plan by reiterating core values and solidifying the vision for the future. He shared that this phase has begun by outlining parameters for multiple alternatives through scenario planning to guide the final land use concept and recommendations. He explained that the updated plan will adopt a fully online GIS story map format and will focus discussions and recommendations on the City's five school neighborhood sections. He mentioned the Planning team will reconvene focus groups later this year to discuss the draft vision and further refine the City's direction for the next 10 to 20 years, with the Plan's completion scheduled for mid-summer 2025.

Ms. Valentik expressed gratitude for the City Council and LDFA's support in their efforts to attract businesses and talent to Rochester Hills. She stated they continue to engage with all of the assets within the City to attract both businesses and talent. She highlighted the successful retention of TA Systems, which purchased a building on Hamlin Road, and the upcoming opportunities for new small businesses in the Brooklands through their partnership with MEDC and the Redevelopment Ready Community Program. She shared recent initiatives, including a Diversity of Thought Talent Forum for HR directors and the upcoming Rise Cup, a competition designed to engage corporate workforces physically, mentally, socially, and creatively. She also noted the significant positive marketing exposure the City received through the Puppy Program featuring Ginny and Spalding DeDecker, with a Facebook post reaching over 40,000 people.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Neubauer referenced the questions submitted by Ms. Mungioli relative to the Master Plan and reassured everyone that significant effort has been dedicated to ensuring the new plan accommodates the aging population. She shared that discussions have focused on various housing options, such as single-level homes, to enable residents to remain in Rochester Hills as they age. She commended the work done in this area and thanked the presenters for their presentation.

Ms. Mungoli expressed her appreciation for consideration of the aging population while working on the Master Plan. She commended the work being done, and encouraged City Council to form a team to participate in the Rise Cup event.

Discussed: ASSESSING: Assessing, Board of Review; PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Planning Commission, Planning Department, Zoning Board of Appeals.

2024-0404 Discussion - Component Units (800's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Historic District Commission, EGLE Grant Fund, Brownfield Revolving Fund, BRA/Legacy Fund, BRA/Rochester @ Avon Fund, Local Development Finance Authority.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Clerk's Department:

Leanne Scott, City Clerk, **Sheila Brown**, Deputy City Clerk, and **Mario lafrate**, Sexton, were in attendance to review the Clerk's Department.

Clerk Scott reflected on the statement that "the biggest room in the world is a room for improvement" and compared it to the city's tagline, "innovative by nature." She emphasized the importance of innovation in process improvement and how she challenges herself and her team to look at, and do things differently. She referred to the previous year's discussion about election changes due to Proposal 2022-2, and proudly reported on their successful implementation of all the changes while maintaining the highest level of security and integrity in their processes.

Ms. Brown reported on the successful implementation of the permanent mail ballot list, allowing over 15,000 voters to automatically receive absentee ballots for each election without needing to reapply. She highlighted the safe and convenient option for voters to return their absentee ballots using secure, monitored drop boxes which are located throughout the City. She noted the implementation of nine days of early voting at the Rochester Hills Public Library, where voters can also bring in their absentee ballots to be tabulated. She also explained that pre-processing and early tabulation of absentee ballots has been implemented, significantly reducing the time spent at the absentee counting board on election day and leading to faster election results.

Clerk Scott shifted the focus to the City's cemetery, which also falls under the

Clerk's office, and acknowledged the dedicated staff who maintain it. She announced the hiring of Mario lafrate as the new Sexton and outlined several planned improvements: the installation of a new irrigation system, increasing the sales of monuments and benches as a revenue source, and developing a master plan for the cemetery.

Mr. lafrate detailed several improvements made at the cemetery, such as new color-coded maps for each section to help customers easily identify sold and available spaces and to aid the team working in the field with space identification. He noted the lot sales sheet was expanded to show the location of the purchased space relative to other loved ones, and that a bin block retaining wall was installed, adding approximately a thousand square feet to the storage yard, making it easier for materials to be delivered in bulk.

Clerk Scott expressed immense pride in her team, emphasizing that their combined efforts, creativity, and commitment have been the foundation of their innovative solutions. She stated that these ideas have guided the improvements made to their services.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli inquired whether after implementing the changes associated with Proposal 2 if potential areas for improvement have been identified that could be suggested to legislators or voters, and if such improvements might have implications for future budget requests.

Clerk Scott shared the potential for redistricting due to Proposal 2, which will allow them to increase the precinct size from 2,999 to 4,999 registered voters, potentially reducing the number of precincts from 32 to 25. She stated this change would result in cost savings for staffing, equipment, testing, and other related expenses.

Ms. Mungoli expressed concern about the potential impact of reducing the number of precincts from 32 to 25, stating that this change might increase the workload for precinct delegates, who are crucial grassroots activists and election volunteers. She emphasized the need for long-term planning regarding election costs and stressed the importance of keeping election process improvements on the city's radar. She thanked Clerk Scott and her staff for their hard work during the August election and their preparations for the upcoming November election.

Mr. Blair acknowledged the Department's excellent work and shared that he sits on the Cemetery Citizen Advisory Committee. He congratulated Mario for hitting the ground running and expressed his appreciation for the updated maps.

Discussed: CLERKS: City Council, Elections, Clerk's Department, Cemetery.

2024-0403 Discussion - Trust and Agency Funds (700's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: VHJSC Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust

2024-0402 Discussion - Internal Service Funds (600's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

MIS Department:

Rochelle Lyon, Information Systems Director, was in attendance to review the MIS Department.

Ms. Lyon emphasized the critical role of cybersecurity in protecting the City's digital infrastructure, comparing it to the essential services needed for a physical city. She introduced the MIS team, highlighting their combined 72 years of experience in ensuring the security, reliability, and efficiency of the City's IT systems. She underscored the increasing sophistication of these threats and the necessity for proactive defense. She presented data on the significant impact of data breaches on government entities, with cities being the most affected, and illustrated the constant global cyber threat landscape through a live threat map. She explained how City events, both planned and unplanned, lead to increased website traffic and heightened security risks, requiring vigilant defense. She advocated for strengthening the City's digital defenses by further leveraging artificial intelligence as a proactive security measure, noting its current use within their environment.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli expressed concern about the vulnerability of less tech-savvy senior residents to phishing scams and cyber attacks at home. She inquired about the possibility of using the City's social media platforms to disseminate informational messages warning residents about current phishing scams and offering advice on how to avoid them. She also suggested expanding community outreach efforts beyond social media to include programs at the Older Persons' Commission (OPC). She explained that seniors who might not be active on social media could benefit from in-person sessions at the OPC to learn how to protect themselves from cyber threats and avoid clicking suspicious links.

Ms. Lyon responded that the MIS team would explore various avenues to inform and protect residents from cyber threats. She highlighted social media as a particularly effective tool for outreach but also mentioned the availability of information on the City's website and other resources for those seeking help.

Mr. Blair inquired whether upgrading the wiring infrastructure at City Hall, given the building's age of approximately 25 years and the emergence of new cabling standards, was part of the City's three-year vision for technology and infrastructure improvements.

Ms. Lyon confirmed that upgrading the City Hall wiring infrastructure would be included in their strategic plan. She noted that they are not currently experiencing any negative impacts or service degradation due to the existing infrastructure.

She emphasized, however, that as they continue to plan network upgrades over the coming years, they will assess what actions are necessary to proactively maintain their technology and avoid falling behind.

Mr. Blair raised a concern regarding a past incident where City Hall's primary internet service provider (ISP) experienced an outage, impacting the entire building. He inquired about any progress made or planned projects to enhance the reliability or fault tolerance of the City Hall's external network connections. He suggested that the increasing reliance on cloud services makes the justification for improved connectivity more compelling.

Ms. Lyon explained that the MIS team reviews their internet service needs every three to five years in collaboration with the Communications Department. She characterized the previous ISP outage as an isolated incident. She acknowledged the possibility of implementing redundant internet connections for increased reliability, but she pointed out that maintaining duplicate IT services would involve a significant cost.

Ms. Neubauer raised a concern identified during the Master Plan discussions regarding emergency notifications reaching all community members, particularly during events like the June incident at the Splash Pad. She noted that some residents, including seniors and those without robust information services or cell phone alerts, may not receive timely warnings. She suggested exploring a coordinated effort between First Responders, the IT department, and the Planning Department to develop alternative notification methods. She recalled the past use of a City siren system and emphasized the current reliance on technology that not everyone possesses.

Ms. Lyon clarified that the responsibility for emergency operations and notifications primarily lies with the City's Fire Department. She stated that the MIS Department is willing to collaborate and partner with the relevant entities to work towards improving emergency communication methods.

Discussed: MIS: MIS Fund.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Human Resources Department:

Brooke Insana, Human Resources Director, and **Leslie Turnbull**, Human Resources Manager, were in attendance to review the Human Resources Department.

Ms. Insana described the Human Resources (HR) teamwork over the past year as 'artistry' in shaping a vibrant workplace, comparing their efforts to a painter's careful work. She introduced her team and highlighted their expertise in recruitment, employee development, performance management, wellness and safety, leaves and benefits, employee engagement, and HR administration. She noted that the City has had a significant number of retirements in the past year - the highest in over two decades, representing 311 years of institutional knowledge. She

commented that as a result, recruitment has been a major focus, with the department receiving 2,111 applications. She noted that only the top six percent were selected and she interpreted this as hiring the 'best of the best', indicating the strong interest in working for the City.

Ms. Turnbull stated that the HR mission is to attract, cultivate, engage, and retain talented City staff to exceed the expectations of residents, businesses, and visitors. She highlighted recent full-time hires and emphasized the HR team's strategic partnership with the City Council, which helps position the City as an employer of choice, through competitive compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities. She noted that recent hires have come from various locations across Michigan, specifically mentioning Shelby Township, Sterling Heights, Auburn Hills, Royal Oak, and Traverse City.

Ms. Insana highlighted that within the new hires, 14 individuals were promoted from within the organization. She emphasized the City's commitment to succession planning in each department, which recognizes and cultivates internal talent. She emphasized their aim to foster an inclusive and positive workplace culture which is supported through active employee engagement initiatives such as Super Bowl events, 30 days of giving, decorating contests, crossing guard appreciation breakfasts, and blood drives. She expressed her gratitude to the HR team and all City employees for their hard work and dedication.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli questioned the increase in salary costs within the general budget, noting that insurance costs were a contributing factor. She inquired about potential strategies to manage these rising insurance costs, specifically if the City was implementing any initiatives to promote employee health and wellness or if there were efforts to renegotiate insurance contracts. She also questioned whether the age demographics of the staff were influencing these increasing costs.

Ms. Insana stated that while they are always open to suggestions for wellness initiatives, the projected six percent increase is actually on the lower end of the typical range, which she understands to be 10 to 12 percent based on conversations with colleagues. She noted that while there is a mix of a younger population having children and an aging workforce, she believes these factors are currently balancing each other out. She mentioned that they consistently engage in discussions with their healthcare provider to explore negotiation possibilities and ways to embed cost-reducing measures within their plan to keep the increase below the typical trend.

Ms. Morlan expressed her appreciation for the work the HR team does. She stressed the importance of ensuring all staff members have access to any necessary mental health support, particularly given the stresses of life and recent incidents in the state.

Discussed: HUMAN RESOURCES: Human Resources Department.

Building/Ordinance/Facilities Department:

Mike Viazanko, Building/Ordinance/Facilities Director, **Tim Hollis**, Deputy Building/Ordinance/Facilities Director, **Jeff Schultz**, Manager of Inspection Services, **Jodi Welch**, Manager of Ordinance Services, and **Matt Exley**, Facilities Manager, were in attendance to review the Building/Ordinance/Facilities Department.

Mr. Viazanko stated 2024 has been a year of excellence for his team. He announced the promotion of Chitra Neelakantan to Administrative Assistant Supervisor, as well as the addition of four new teammates: Nicole Davenport, Permit Technician, Brad Adler, Facilities Technician, Matt Exley, Facilities Manager, and Michael Johnson, Ordinance Inspector.

Mr. Hollis shared that the Facilities Team has completed almost 1600 work orders to date, including daily repairs and setting up for events. He noted they have also been preparing for some larger projects as well, including the Cemetery Irrigation Project, Oakland County Sheriff's Office substation carports, Fire Station #1 improvements, the Schoolhouse lift replacement, and the DPS vehicle exhaust upgrades.

Ms. Welch shared that the Ordinance Team has completed over 3,200 inspections in the first half of 2024. She mentioned that 100 percent of complaint inspections have been completed within 24 hours, and 80 percent of all inspections are a result of their proactive patrols. She noted they also have a 94 percent enforcement closure rate. She explained that this team addresses blight and property maintenance issues every day, working together to create positive change within the community.

She stated that the permit technicians are the backbone of the Department, supporting all of the team members within the Building Department. She mentioned they set up 100 percent of the permits that come in within 24 hours. She also noted that they are very busy handling over 11,000 phone calls and serving approximately 2,500 customers at the counter.

Mr. Schultz reported that they are the only accredited Building Department in the State. He stated that their team of inspectors and plan reviewers have completed over 8,000 inspections and over 2,200 plan reviews. He mentioned that since the beginning of 2024, they have successfully closed out 2,800 permits. He noted they promote Building Safety Month by holding events throughout the community during the month of May. He announced that their Director, Mike Viazanko, was named Building Official of the Year by the Home Builders Association of Michigan.

Mr. Viazanko highlighted the following successes for his team:

- Jody Welch's recognition by the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation
- Bill Mathisen obtained his State Mechanical licenses, in addition to the Plumbing license he already holds
- Chitra Neelakantan formed the Southeast Michigan Permit Technician Association

He also announced the launch of phase one of their interactive permit guide on the City's website, and Steve Springstube's retirement after 35 years of service.

Council Discussion:

President Deel thanked them for their presentation.

Discussed: BUILDING/ORDINANCE/FACILITIES: Building Department, Ordinance Compliance, Weed Control, Facilities Fund.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Department of Public Services:

Bill Fritz, Public Services Director, **Tracey Balint**, City Engineer, and **Lori Hamilton**, Administrative Services Supervisor, were in attendance to review the Department of Public Services.

Mr. Fritz provided an update on infrastructure investments throughout the City, emphasizing their widespread nature which he illustrated on a map. He highlighted several success stories and outlined future expansion plans. He mentioned that the LDFA is funding three projects this year: the repaving of Marketplace Circle, the paving of Leach Road (including sidewalk extension), and repairs to Avon Industrial Drive. He also announced the completion of the Barclay Circle paving project with new bike lanes.

He discussed the annual asphalt rehabilitation program, which resurfaced 12 miles of local streets in the Brooklands North neighborhood, and a pathway rehabilitation along Adams Road, between Tienken and Dutton Roads. He pointed out that their concrete program is active in seven different neighborhoods.

He highlighted partnerships with outside agencies, including the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) watermain project on Dequindre Road from the Avon Road roundabout to Hamlin Road, and two Road Commission for Oakland County resurfacing projects on Dutton and Walton Roads.

Ms. Balint emphasized the DPS's priority of providing clean and uninterrupted drinking water, highlighting the City's fortunate access to a top-tier water system. She explained their constant presence around Rochester Hills, addressing aging watermain, rehabilitating the sanitary sewer system, and handling urgent repairs. She cited the recent urgent repair of a transmission main break on Adams Road near Van Hoosen Middle School, which, thanks to their urgent repair contract, caused no water service disruption or boil water advisory. She shared that they are committed to replacing aging watermain on Brewster Road and in the University Hill subdivision in the coming year. She noted they will continue to assess the sanitary sewer rehabilitation needs to maintain the high level of service our residents and businesses expect.

Ms. Hamilton emphasized that beyond infrastructure maintenance, the DPS

team actively participates in numerous City events. She shared that they enjoy showcasing their equipment at events like Tons of Trucks and sharing their expertise with potential future employees at Career Quest and high school events. She noted the team also welcomes visits to their facilities from various groups, including OPC tours and young artists who decorate the snowplows. She reported that they also provide behind-the-scenes support for events like the parades, the State of the City Address, the Festival of the Hills, and the recent community events in Brooklands.

Mr. Fritz shared the following proposed projects for 2025:

- Annual Concrete Program
- Annual Asphalt Program
- University Hills Watermain Replacement
- Brewster Road Rehabilitation
- Auburn Rd. & Technology Dr. Technology Traffic Signal Upgrade
- PRV-20 Improvements
- Eddington Blvd. Reconstruction

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli expressed her appreciation for the DPS staff at the Tons of Trucks event, noting how informative it was to hear their perspectives on equipment maintenance. She specifically thanked them for dedicating their Saturday to engage with the community, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. She also thanked the team for their responsiveness and help in addressing the needs of a resident in the South Brooklands area.

She raised concerns about pathways and the impact of tree roots causing bulges and making them challenging for residents to use. She emphasized the importance of pathway maintenance, especially with the upcoming millage renewal in 2026, as a way to demonstrate to residents that their investments are being taken care of. She inquired about how to provide more resources and effort towards pathway maintenance.

Mr. Snyder responded that the current pathway millage generates approximately \$800,000 annually. He commented that after roughly \$400,000 in annual maintenance by staff, about \$400,000 remains for rehabilitation, which allows for about one mile of pathway rehabilitation per year. He noted given the City has 100 miles of pathways, this rate is unsustainable long-term as pathways will degrade faster than they can be replaced. He suggested that a dedicated millage increase specifically for pathways might be necessary to achieve a more reasonable rehabilitation rate of four to five miles per year, which would align with the approximate 20-year lifespan of a pathway.

Ms. Mungoli reiterated her concern about the deteriorating condition of the City's pathways, stating she has pictures of two-inch gaps and root growth creating safety hazards. She stressed she will not vote for a new tax; however, she believes a potential millage in 2025 could be necessary to fund the repair of these pathways. She inquired about a PACER rating for the pathways, and requested a definition for traffic calming.

Mr. Fritz responded that they are developing a tool to rate the pathways which will be similar to how they assess the roadways. He explained that traffic calming is any device installed on a road that causes the drivers to tap their brakes or slow down, such as speed humps, road diet, and traffic circles.

Ms. Mungoli shared her concern about pedestrian safety at the crosswalk on Medina and the fact that it does not align with Bridgewood Farms. She referenced the explanation she received from Mr. Snyder in the Administrative Responses to City Council Questions document, and questioned the plans for the Medina crosswalk.

Mr. Fritz responded that studies will be undertaken to determine the best placement and what technology to utilize.

Ms. Mungoli stated she would like to explore what it would take to add a pedestrian-activated flashing light crosswalk connecting the north and south sides of Auburn Road by the Splash Pad to improve safety for residents crossing the street to access the park. She suggested a system where residents can push a button to make the lights flash, rather than a more substantial 'hawk' signal. She acknowledged funding for this is not in the budget and inquired if this could be a straw poll question.

Mr. Fritz shared that they have already received a similar request and staff has been directed to include it for future consideration.

Mr. Snyder noted that if it is a simple rapid flash beacon that does not stop traffic but just alerts, there is an allocation in the Major Road budget every year for two of those.

Ms. Mungoli reiterated her desire to improve safety near the Brooklands Splash Pad, stating she has observed traffic during Brooklands Strong events and is concerned about drivers speeding past the middle school and not adjusting quickly enough to the changing speed limits. She inquired whether this request would require a straw poll question or Council approval to allocate the funds for that specific location.

Mr. Snyder responded that if Council would like to move forward on a study on the best place is to put a couple rapid flashing beacons in the Brookland' corridor for safe crossings, Engineering could get that going this year.

President Deel stated that several weeks ago he requested this item be placed on the Advisory Traffic and Safety Committee's radar.

Mr. Blair reported that rapid flashing beacons were discussed last week at the Advisory Traffic and Safety meeting for three locations: Clear Creek, the Auburn Road Corridor, and the Hamlin Elementary crosswalk. He clarified that for school areas like Hamlin Elementary crosswalk, the City's policy requires a request from the school before taking any action.

He mentioned he was happy to see gaps being plugged on the pathways on Hamlin Road. He cited problem areas in the pathways along Adams Road, the

north side of Tienken, and Avon Road and referred to the individual properties throughout the pathway network where the City has not been able to obtain the right of way to do some repairs. He inquired if the City has a process to re-evaluate these situations, to see if the property has been sold, every five to 10 years.

Mr. Fritz responded that there is no a specific program in place and stated he will look into creating something.

Ms. Balint stated that there have been situations in the past when they have learned that a property has changed hands, they have reached out to the new owners, and made the repairs.

Mr. Carlock referred to the bike lane on Barclay Circle and inquired whether there is something in the budget, or if the City is looking to install flexible delineators along the buffered section, to make it safer for those in the bike lane.

Mr. Fritz responded that it was a conscious decision not to install anything physical that would impede with the maintenance of the road, such as snow plowing. He noted that this was the first bike lane installed in the City and they are observing, taking calls, and learning. He stated adjustments can be made if deemed necessary, in the future.

President Deel acknowledged that there is an invisible infrastructure that is maintained daily, which often goes unnoticed by the public because it functions smoothly and without issues. He expressed his sincere gratitude for their consistent efforts.

Discussed: D.P.S.: Major Road Fund, Local Street Fund, Pathway Maintenance Fund.

2024-0400 Discussion - Capital Funds (400's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Pathway Construction Fund.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Water Resources Fund.

2024-0401 Discussion - Water and Sewer Funds (500's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Sewer - Operating Division, Water - Operating Division, Water & Sewer - Capital Fund, Water & Sewer - Debt Fund.

2024-0402 Discussion - Internal Service Funds (600's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Fleet Fund.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Parks & Natural Resources Department:

Ken Elwert, Parks & Natural Resources Director, was in attendance to review the Parks & Natural Resources Department.

Mr. Elwert reflected on the past decade and expressed excitement for the future of the Parks and Natural Resources Department, highlighting record community demand for their services in 2024. He stated in order to meet the growing needs and plan for future generations, he is requesting a deputy director to increase administrative capacity, a goal identified in the 2023 strategic plan. He explained that this position will focus on developing consistent cost recovery policies, a strong philanthropy system, a department-wide volunteer engagement process, and exploring more community partnerships. He commented that they are also requesting expanded seasonal team coverage into spring and fall to manage increased usage due to changing weather patterns. He noted future needs are also being explored through studies, including the potential of a museum site with the historic big barn.

He expressed gratitude to the residents for supporting the Parks Capital Millage and to past and present City Councils for their vision in supporting park renovations, which will allow them to continue serving residents for the next 30 years. He highlighted recent renovations at Avondale and Spencer, as well as significant parking lot improvements. He reported that ongoing projects include the Innovation Hills Restrooms and Rope Bridge, the Brooklands' Plaza development, and the beekeeper property purchase. He stated looking ahead to next year, the Nowicki Park design is planned, potentially in partnership with Oakland County Parks to include more nature trails and a dog park, serving the northwest quadrant and the wider region. He continued that a major natural resources project involves erosion control on the Clinton River at the Cloverport Greenspace, for which they have obtained an EGLE Grant to explore solutions.

He shared that Forestry continues its work maintaining over 20,000 street trees, with over 500 new trees planted annually. He mentioned the addition of a seasonal interpreter has allowed for more diverse Outdoor Engagement programming, alongside core programs like Learn to Fish. He reported that the Second Annual Oak in the Hills Event saw 1500 visitors, and partnerships with Rochester Area Recreation Authority (RARA) continue to expand with camps and adaptive programs.

He stressed the Grounds Division remains crucial, handling a wide range of tasks in all weather conditions.

***Mr. Elwert** concluded by showcasing community connections made possible by past support through a series of photos of all the City's park properties. He noted Bloomer Park's recent recognition as a state historic site and encouraged everyone to enjoy the Parks and Greenspaces.*

Council Discussion:

***Vice President Walker** declared this "the year of parks," anticipating significant positive developments that residents will appreciate. He thanked Mr. Elwert for his valuable contributions to the Paint Creek Trailways Commission and acknowledged the efforts of his team in maintaining the trail. He referred to the large section of the Clinton River Trail that recently washed out in Rochester, and inquired whether the City could offer any financial assistance for its restoration and if so, what the impact would be to the budget.*

***Mr. Elwert** clarified that while the City is providing technical support and assisting with fundraising efforts behind the scenes for the washed-out section of the Clinton River Trail, because it is located in Rochester, there is no intention or request for Rochester Hills to directly fund the restoration project.*

***Ms. Mungoli** thanked Mr. Elwert for responding to her questions relative to the deputy director position within the City Council Questions/Administrative Responses document. She requested that Mr. Elwert share the reasons for needing a deputy director.*

***Mr. Elwert** emphasized that the request for a deputy director stems from a significant 70 percent increase in park and natural resources usage over the past seven years. He stated that while staffing has increased in other divisions, the administrative team has not seen similar growth, making it challenging to manage the increasing workload, including 20 projects and four land projects. He noted that communities of their size and even smaller in Michigan, typically have deputy-level support. He reiterated that the deputy director would provide crucial planning assistance and focus on key areas such as cost recovery, philanthropy, volunteer engagement, and community partnerships. He shared that a more detailed explanation was provided in their written materials.*

***Ms. Mungoli** inquired about the plans for the historic big barn, and questioned where it falls in the priorities for the Park's Master Plan.*

***Mr. Elwert** explained that the initial steps for the historic big barn project involve developing a conceptual plan, similar to a schematic, to understand how it fits into the broader museum context. He stated this plan would also include preliminary cost estimates to facilitate discussions with potential donors and to inform the Administration and City Council about whether to actively pursue the project. He mentioned the 2028 timeline mentioned is currently outside their budget range and subject to change. He emphasized the need for these baseline numbers to have an informed conversation about the project's feasibility and noted that the idea has been part of the Museum's operations plan and discussed by the members of the*

Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board for many years, making the current study a step forward in the process.

He clarified that the historic big barn project is not specifically budgeted for any particular year. He noted that while the Operations Plan might mention a 2028 target, this is highly dependent on the cost estimates derived from the requested study, discussions with the City Council and administration, and their ability to raise funds. He emphasized that pursuing this project would not necessitate pushing back any currently budgeted projects because the barn project itself has no allocated budget at this stage. He stressed the purpose of the requested study is to move beyond the conceptual phase to gain a better understanding of the potential costs and how the project would fit in before any budgeting decisions are made.

Ms. Mungiola referenced the Nowicki Park project and shared her concerns about the safety aspects of this project, particularly regarding traffic on Adams Road. She noted the absence of a left turn lane for both entering and exiting the park, which poses a safety risk for visitors and residents, especially during rush hour. She requested that the park's design include solutions to address this, such as flashing lights to help residents cross Adams Road, given that the bike path ends near the park. She referenced the high number of accidents at the Tienken Road and Adams Rd. intersection and emphasized the need for a safety-first approach.

Mr. Elwert emphasized that this will be a partnership park, involving the City's traffic experts to determine the safest solutions. He mentioned that Ms. Roediger has already initiated discussions with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) about the potential need for improvements in the area. He noted the specific solutions are yet to be determined as the project progresses and referenced how initial concept studies with two entrances are being reconsidered in favor of a potentially safer single-entry and exit design within the park.

Ms. Mungiola expressed her appreciation for the beauty of the parks and the hard work of the Parks and Natural Resources team in maintaining them. She emphasized the importance of ongoing maintenance as a crucial aspect of the community's investment in parks, not just expansion and construction. She stressed the need to maintain the newly rebuilt parking lots, drainage systems, and fields in the future to prevent them from falling into disrepair.

Mr. Carlock emphasized that the City parks are second to none in the State and probably in the Country. He stated he lives close to Wabash Park and commented that since it has been updated dozens of children utilize the park on a daily basis. He commended the entire team on a job well done.

Mr. Blair expressed his support for a deputy director to join the Parks team. He questioned what percentage of the Capital Project's pie chart was for parks.

Mr. Snyder stated that the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan does not have a large number of actual park projects. He noted that the primary focus and

largest investment, around \$2 million, will be dedicated to preparing for the Nowicki Park project, with approximately \$1 million allocated for its design. He also mentioned that there will be some visible improvements at Spencer Park.

President Deel acknowledged the significant growth in park usage, and noted that it aligns with the community's strong support for park improvements, demonstrated by the overwhelming approval of the parks millage. He highlighted the City's ongoing commitment to expanding the park system through projects like Innovation Hills and the upcoming development of Nowicki Park. He expressed his agreement with the proposed addition of a deputy director in the budget, recognizing the increasing complexity and management needs of the expanding park system. He thanked Mr. Elwert and the entire parks team for their work.

Ms. Mungoli inquired about the status of the batting cages at Borden Park.

Mr. Elwert responded that they are planning a phase two for the Borden Park batting cages, which will be a more 'passive' setup. He explained that the initial estimates for a full-blown facility were unexpectedly high and stated that the goal is to provide good service to residents while also minimizing the need for staff to manage the area seasonally. He commented that he anticipates bringing a proposal before the City Council soon.

Discussed: **PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES:** Parks Department, Grounds Maintenance Division, Natural Resources Division.

2024-0404 Discussion - Component Units (800's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Museum Division.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Parks Infrastructure Millage Fund, Tree Fund, Green Space.

2024-0403 Discussion - Trust and Agency Funds (700's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Green Space Perpetual Care Trust.

2024-0404 Discussion - Component Units (800's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0397 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: RH Museum Foundation Trust Fund.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Mayor Barnett announced the promotion of Todd Gary to Fire Chief and Bill Cooke to Deputy Fire Chief, and officially welcomed them into their new roles.

Todd Gary, Fire Chief/Emergency Services Director, **Bill Cooke**, Deputy Fire Chief, **Kelly Varner**, Administrative Services Supervisor, **Tim Matz**, Captain/EMS Coordinator, and **Larry Gambatto**, Captain/Training Officer, were in attendance to provide an overview of the Rochester Hills Fire Department (RHFD).

Chief Gary presented a video which provided the following information:

Deputy Chief Cooke stated the Community Risk Reduction Division plays a critical role in the wellbeing and safety of our community through a wide range of essential functions. He shared the Fire staff is committed to decreasing the number and severity of hazards within our City.

Ann Echols, Captain/Assistant Fire Marshal, stated that since the adoption of the inspection frequency and fee schedule in 2019, every business in our City has now received its first inspection. She reported that over the past three years, our inspectors have visited more than 2,700 businesses, covered more than 32 million square feet of floor space and corrected nearly 8,000 code violations.

Jennifer Conklin, Fire & Life Safety Educator, commented that Fire & Life Safety is an important aspect of the Fire Department. She noted they engage with young citizens to seniors, business partners, and residents in our neighborhoods. She shared that last year, our staff installed more than 1,000 smoke and over 500 carbon monoxide alarms, placing them fifth amongst all fire departments in the State of Michigan. She stated this is a testament to our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our community. She stressed they are extremely proud of this accomplishment and the impact it has on enhancing public safety in our neighborhoods.

Captain Gambotto stated the Rochester Hills Fire Department is committed to providing our members the best possible training, equipping them with the needed skills and resources to operate in a safe, effective, and efficient manner to solve

our residents problems. He mentioned they prioritize the physical and mental wellness of our team by offering access to peer fitness trainers, FPA compliant physicals, and EPA peer support, ensuring members are supported and able to maintain their wellbeing while serving the community.

Captain Matz stated the Rochester Hills Fire Department responds to a wide range of emergencies beyond fires, including medical emergencies, accidents, and wildlife rescue. He explained that approximately 85 percent of the time, our providers are engaged in delivering varying levels of patient care and transporting individuals to nearby hospitals. He noted that with the support of City Council, Mayor Barnett and our residents, they have been able to acquire state-of-the-art EMS equipment to enhance patient care. He shared that this includes the upcoming arrival of three new ambulances later this year further strengthening our emergency response capabilities. He stated that with these improvements, our providers are able to provide high quality care from arriving quickly on scene to having personnel and resources to be able to help our patients get to definitive care.

Captain Gambotto stated that the call volume continues to increase and they will respond to close to 9,000 calls this year. He commented that the 10 new firefighters approved in the 2024 budget have helped to keep up with the increasing call volume.

Captain Matz mentioned with the addition of the 10 new firefighters they are seeking approval to purchase two new cardiac monitors and two LUCAS chest compression devices. He noted this will allow them to upgrade two of the fire apparatus to the ALS non-transport units. He stated they are also looking to replace two of their existing cardiac monitors that have reached their end of life service.

Deputy Chief Cooke reported that this year the design and engineering of the mechanical system, locker rooms, public bathrooms, and training tower at our headquarters are all underway and are anticipated to be completed in 2025. He stated this year's budget proposal includes enhancements to the exterior of the headquarters to include painting and landscaping.

Nick Laking, Lieutenant/Paramedic, stated they are seeking approval to replace our self-contained breathing apparatus' as they are nearing the end of their service life and will not be in compliance with the new NFPA standards when they come out next year. He shared that there have also been some technological upgrades, such as the external amplifier which has been replaced with the Blue Tooth technology integrated into the mask making for clearer and more efficient communications with our firefighters, enhancing safety for all.

Captain Matz reported that once again, the Rochester Hills Fire Department has been recognized by the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline Program for providing exceptional care to our pre-hospital, cardiac and stroke patients. He shared for 2024 they proudly received the Gold Award.

Chief Gary concluded by thanking the City Council and City Administration for their continued support. He also thanked the members of the Rochester Hills Fire

Department for their hard work and dedication. He commented that this budget is not just numbers, it is the lifeblood of their mission to protect and serve.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Neubauer stated that as a Probate Attorney, she works with a lot of emergency situations in and out of our City. She highlighted the quick and efficient response time of Rochester Hills emergency services when dealing with the elderly, especially in repeat calls to elder care facilities. She expressed her gratitude for this. She also shared a personal anecdote, thanking the emergency responders for helping her parents last year and expressing her deep appreciation.

She continued by expressing strong support and gratitude for the First Responders, specifically mentioning their actions at the Splash Pad. She emphasized that they have 'the best team' and offered support for any needs the First Responders might have. She recognized the potential difficulties of the past year and stated that she, along with Ms. Morlan and Ms. Mungoli, have been reaching out to the community to secure free services for the First Responders.

Chief Gary extended his appreciation and shared that the Fire Staff are utilizing the City's CARE Program.

Ms. Mungoli echoed the words of Ms. Neubauer, thanking the team and offering support. She expressed her gratitude for the answers provided to her questions and stated she was pleased to see the addition of more staff and the pursuit of another grant to fund them.

Ms. Morlan emphasized that safety is a top priority in Rochester Hills and thanked the Fire Department for their work. She also expressed her appreciation for their proactive approach to educating residents and council members, noting that this education equips the community with the knowledge and tools to enhance their own safety.

President Deel acknowledged the importance of the Fire Ops program. He highlighted the educational value of these exercises, stating that they provided him with crucial understanding, such as the function and necessity of a LUCAS device. He stated this firsthand experience allows him to make more informed decisions regarding the Fire Department's needs. He extended his appreciation for what they do.

Discussed: FIRE DEPARTMENT: Fire Department Fund.

2024-0400 Discussion - Capital Funds (400's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Fire Capital Fund.

2024-0398 Discussion - Special Revenue Funds (200's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

Captain Russ Yeiser, Oakland County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) and **Lieutenant Dennis Service**, OCSO were in attendance to provide an overview of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Captain Yeiser announced that 2025 would begin with 67 Sheriff's Office personnel:

- 1 - Captain
- 2 - Lieutenants
- 6 - Patrol Sergeants
- 1 - Detective Sergeant
- 1 - School Resource Sergeant
- 8 - Detectives
- 1 - Community Resource Deputy
- 4 - School Resource Deputies
- 41 - Deputy II (no-fill)
- 2 - Administrative Assistants

He emphasized the outstanding work of the road patrol, highlighting their broad responsibilities, which include emergency response and neighborhood patrols, as well as their significant efforts in building relationships within the community.

Lieutenant Service stated that he oversees the Patrol Operations. He reported that false alarms continue to decline to under five percent for the past two years. He noted these are great results and shared that they will continue to work closely with the residents and businesses to further reduce these numbers.

Captain Yeiser reviewed the total calls for service for the past 10 years stating they have steadily increased. He explained that this is not unexpected since we are continuing to grow as a community. He reported that last year they responded to 43,000 calls for service, which is 4,000 more than 2022, and equates to 118 calls per day.

Lieutenant Service presented a graph showing Group A crimes over the past 10 years, noting that 2023's crime rate is within the normal operating range when compared to pre-COVID years. He specified that the majority of these crimes are nonviolent, with retail fraud and theft being the most frequent. He stated to address this issue of property crimes and thefts, he and Captain Yeiser will discuss a two-pronged approach in the following slides. He then highlighted the great success they have had with Flock license plate readers in identifying vehicles involved in various crimes, including home invasions, stolen vehicles, assaults, and retail fraud. He mentioned a recent case where Flock was instrumental in identifying, locating, arresting, and charging a suspect who stole over \$4,000 worth of jewelry from a local store in Rochester Hills. He commented that because of this success, they are requesting 10 additional Flock license plate readers.

Captain Yeiser stated they are committed to reducing Part A crimes and improving service to the community. He proposed the creation of a multi-jurisdictional community response team, a collaborative effort partnering with the Orion Township and Rochester City Police Departments to achieve this. He explained that Rochester Hills would contribute a sergeant and a detective, while the other two departments would each provide detectives. He stated this team aims to provide real-time intelligence to significantly improve patrol and investigations. He shared the team will also focus on criminal organizations, such as home invasion crews and theft groups. He acknowledged it has been a difficult year for the Sheriff's office in Rochester Hills due to the splash pad shooting and the loss of Deputy Reckling. He expressed his gratitude for the outstanding team he has in Rochester Hills and their commitment to providing the best law enforcement services.

Council Discussion:

Ms. Mungoli expressed her appreciation to the team for their hard work and acknowledged it has been a challenging year for them. She extended her support to the Sheriff's Department, emphasizing the importance of their mental and physical safety. She recognized the value of their crime reports for community understanding and thanked them for their responsiveness to resident concerns. She inquired about the completion date of the Substation renovations, expressing her eagerness to see the finished result.

Captain Yeiser responded that they are approximately 90 percent complete with the plans and should be starting the demolition phase in November or December of this year.

Vice President Walker expressed his appreciation for their service to the community and acknowledged that it has been a tough couple of months for the Sheriff's Department. He confirmed the City currently has 10 Flock cameras that are leased and questioned if the plan is to double that number. He inquired whether there is a saturation point.

Captain Yeiser confirmed that the plan is to have 20 Flock cameras. He stated they are working very well, and noted that they will continue to monitor their usage and report back with any additional needs. He noted they work with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure they are strategically placed.

Ms. Neubauer stated she is aware that HOA's have paid to have their own Flock camera installed and questioned how many have done so.

Captain Yeiser responded that he is only aware of one that expressed interest, but he was not sure if they have proceeded with having one installed.

Ms. Morlan expressed her appreciation for their willingness to partner with other communities and their willingness to educate City Council. She thanked them for all of their hard work and offered her support in any way needed.

***President Deel** expressed his strong support for the Flock cameras, highlighting their proven effectiveness as a valuable tool for the city and indicating that increasing their numbers is a logical step. He also commended the cross-jurisdictional plan with the City of Rochester and Orion Township, emphasizing the benefits of shared resources and economies of scale as sensible and workable solutions. He conveyed the community's appreciation for the Sheriff's Department's work in keeping residents safe and personally thanked them for their service and their presentation.*

Discussed: SPECIAL POLICE FUND: Special Police Fund.

2024-0397 Discussion - General Fund (100's) - 2025 Budget

Attachments: [2025 Budget Presentation Schedule.pdf](#)

See Legislative File 2024-0398 for Council Discussion.

Discussed: Crossing Guards.

NEXT MEETING DATE - Regular Meeting - Monday, August 26, 2024 - 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business before Council, it was moved by Mungioli and seconded by Neubauer to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

*RYAN DEEL, President
Rochester Hills City Council*

*LEANNE SCOTT, MMC, City Clerk
City of Rochester Hills*

Approved as presented at the April 28, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.