



Mayor William Finn

Office: (360) 225-8281
230 Davidson Ave
P.O Box 9
Woodland, WA 98674

Date: October 2, 2024
To: Citizens of Woodland and the Woodland City Council
From: Mayor Will Finn
Re: 2024 Preliminary Budget

Introduction

It is my pleasure to present the balanced 2024 Preliminary Budget for the City of Woodland. This budget has been developed in keeping with City Council’s strategic plans for the City of Woodland.

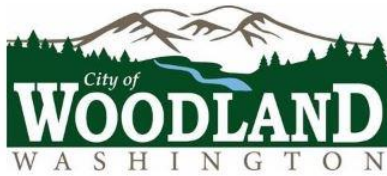
Some of the highlights for 2024 preliminary budget include:

- Completion of the exit 21 signalized intersection design. Cowlitz County has provided \$2.6 million to make the exit 21 project shovel ready. The City will continue to search for construction dollars to complete the fix.
- Implementation of the collective bargaining agreement with the Woodland Police Officers Association. The agreement allows City’s body camera program to commence and makes strides to establish wages and benefits to attract and retain police officers to our department.
- Civic Center construction (approved by city council in August of 2023) is starting in October 2023 with completion expected next year and is included in the 2024 budget. The facility will be located near the corner of Lakeshore Drive and Goerig Street.
- Acquisition of a new financial software system.

The City is contractually committed to 3.25% cost of living increases (COLA) for the clerical and public works Teamsters. Woodland Police Association employees will be receiving 8%. The 8% adjustment is being implemented in order to stabilize the turnover in the Police Department. The 2024 budget also includes a 3.25% COLA for exempt employees.

The budget includes projected revenues and expenditures for 2024 in the amount of 33,426,361. Revenues and expenditures have been estimated with a conservative philosophy. Revenue forecasts are based on current state and local economic trends and, when appropriate, historical receipts.

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Expenditures have been appropriated to ensure the Police Department is fully funded. Thanks in part to the 2021 levy lid lift the police department is staffed with 14 sworn officers including the Chief and Lieutenant positions. The Police Department budget comprises 34% of General Fund expenditures.

Major Funds Overview

General Fund (001)

The 2024 beginning fund balance for the General Fund is estimated to be \$1,850,118. New revenues total resources of \$10,049,916 are available. Total anticipated expenditures and ending fund balance are also \$10,049,916.

Park Fund (101)

The Park Fund continues on into 2024 with tight expenditure appropriations. The Park Fund has been formatted to show a separation of expenditures between park facilities, the community center and the proposed civic center. The General Fund will transfer \$261,032 into the Park Fund as property and sales tax funds are receipted into the General Fund and then distributed to other funds.

Street Fund (104)

Major revenues for the Street Fund come from property tax, sales tax and gas tax. These resources have not been sufficient to keep up with the road maintenance needs in the City. In 2016 City Council formed a Transportation Benefit District. In 2023 City Council authorized a one tenth of one percent sales tax for road maintenance. The new revenue source is estimated to provide an additional \$90,000 for road maintenance in 2024. The level of expenditure appropriations fluctuates based on the size and types of maintenance and capital projects that are completed by the Public Works Department. Fiscal year 2024 expenditures are estimated at \$1,862,698. The city will continue to maintain streets to the best of its ability with the level of funding available.

General Reserve Fund (301)

The General Reserve Fund ending fund balance is estimated at \$296,488 for 2024. This fund provides resources for, debt service for emergency services bonds and general government services. The major source of funding is real estate excise tax. A transfer to the Street Fund (104) in the amount of \$162,455 and \$139,000 to W. Scott/Guild Reclamation Fund (328) was required to balance.

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Water Fund (401)

The Water Fund is an enterprise fund, meaning it must generate enough revenue through rates it charges users to be self-sufficient. The budget includes rate increases as outlined in the rate study completed by FCS. As of 2024 utility funds including the Water Fund are now providing monthly bills to customers. The water rate increase for 2024 is expected to be much lower than last year at 5.5%. City Council will soon consider large capital expenses necessary to ensure the system is operational and providing safe drinking water. Staff has been able to acquire low interest loans to construct a new water reservoir and refurbish two water filters in the water treatment plant.

Sewer Fund (402)

The Sewer Fund is also an enterprise fund as described in the water section. The Sewer Fund rates proposed by the FCS rate study are also included in this fund. For fiscal year 2024 expenses are estimated at \$6,183,337. The sewer rate increase for 2024 is expected to be 2.6%.

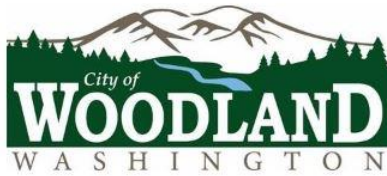
Summary

The budget was developed through many hours of analysis and discussion with executive staff and my office. The result of which is a budget that is balanced and incorporates changes in staffing levels and implementation of capital project plans that are needed to maintain infrastructure and attract industrial development.

The City will need to continue to discuss and find new ways to provide important services to the community. City Council has been proactive in searching for sustainable funding for City services. Woodland has been very successful in obtaining grants for public works projects but is now running low on funds that provide required matches to the grants. Major public works projects are still on the horizon including the exit 21 redesign to be completed in 2024 and eventual construction once funding is obtained. The City has applied for grants to help complete the exit 21 improvements. Many thanks to Cowlitz County for providing \$2.6 million to complete the exit 21 design.

I hope City Council will favorably consider the 2024 preliminary budget. With the ever-changing economic trends, we must continue to manage the taxpayer's dollars with the utmost care and concern.

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With this in mind, I have limited expenditures where necessary. I consider this budget practical and believe it continues to move the city forward in providing quality service to the citizens of Woodland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William A. Finn".

William A. Finn
Mayor

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