

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY OBSERVER REPORT

By Ann Williams

Tacoma City Council Study Session-October 6,2020

Members Present-Woodards, Beale, Ushka, Walker, McCarthy, Hunter, Blocker, Thoms, Hines

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli presented a high-level view on the proposed 2021-22 budget. Before final adoption, hoped for on 11-24-2020, it will be further aired at an October 21 town hall (with a Spanish language event) and public hearings on October 27 and November 10.

The guiding principles of the budget are financial sustainability, maintenance of essential services, support for both COVID recovery and the anti-racist transformation.

The total budget is \$3.67 billion, 55% of which goes to utilities and enterprise services, 24% to the retirement trust, and 14% to the general fund. It is the general fund that supports police (34%), fire (26%), and library (6%) and other services.

Due to the pandemic the anticipated shortfall for the 2021-22 budget was \$40 million. This gap was mainly closed with \$27.3 million in reductions (including \$5.2 million from police) and savings from previous 2020 reductions, which allowed for enhancement in some services by \$11.2 million, these targeted at the anti-racist transformation, as discussed below.

Mayor Woodards updated the council on the progress of Heal the Heart of Tacoma, the community led anti-racist plan, which is intended to be transformational, and neither simple reform nor incremental. It envisions equity in health, access, safety, livable wage jobs, affordable housing and belief and trust, as prioritized by the city council. The initial focus will be on police. Outside consultants (21CP Solutions) have been hired to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the police department and provide recommendations for transformational change. Additionally, the city has many in-house activities to assess the impact of racism and implement changes.

Notes:

1. Enterprise services are those that are self-supporting, such as facilities and parking.
2. Slides for presentations can be accessed at this website.
<https://cityoftacoma.legistar.com/DepartmentDetail.aspx?ID=22635&GUID=58DDFCD5-5FA2-4415-8921-5B6F51A0A80B&R=38569913-8d77-48f3-90a3-c257653bbee1>
3. Community members can provide feedback to 21CP Solutions at voicesoftacoma@21cpsolutions.com