**2022 BUDGET ADDRESS – NOVEMBER 16, 2022**

I would like to present to you, the 2022 Budget for the City of De Pere. This budget is balanced and provides for the City’s service needs in a cost-efficient manner.

As part of the 2022 Budget Proposal, all City departments were asked to:

1. Submit minimal increases in expenditures, excluding capital projects and equipment.
2. To identify opportunities to utilize technology to reduce expenditures wherever practical.
3. Focus on opportunities to promote sustainable practices and…
4. Promote intergovernmental and private cooperation and to consider options to enhance diversity and inclusiveness in City operations and within the community.

…As usual, management staff did an outstanding job of meeting, and sometimes exceeding, these requirements.

Every year, the State continues to impose restrictions on all municipalities to raise revenue by maintaining levy limits and it still continues to do so. We also continue to receive State unfunded mandates, which require us to reduce City services, increase service fees, or create alternative revenue services – in order to balance the budget.

Though we are challenged by State imposed restrictions and unfunded mandates the City continues to find creative ways to make it easier to meet our budget needs, and still offer our current level of services. We will continue to work with the State restraints that we have, and do the best we can, to at least maintain the status quo. We realize in these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with inflationary pressures and an unstable workforce that difficult decisions will have to be made both at the State and City level. We will continue to do whatever is needed to meet our future needs.

The budget has some initiatives to enhance the efficiency of municipal service. Some highlights include:

\*Funding to support the ongoing efforts of the beautification committee the enhance the appearance of our community;

\*Funding to conduct property tax collection at City Hall to offset Brown County’s elimination of that service which was previously provided by the Brown County Treasurer’s Office;

\*Includes funding for ongoing sustainability initiatives to enhance municipal services and facilities;

\*Funding for financial incentives to promote additional economic opportunities throughout the community;

\*Includes funding for ongoing improvements to various parks and recreational facilities;

\*Funding to support the ongoing efforts of the Health Department to manage the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response;

\*Includes funding to replace numerous pieces of equipment and vehicles to support municipal services throughout the community;

…these are just a few of the initiatives as identified in the budget. We believe the 2022 Executive Budget accomplishes these goals. Please go to the City website to see a full list of the initiatives identified the 2022 Executive Budget.

Last year, we qualified for the Expenditure Restraint Program to the tune of $239,735. This year we qualify again with $208,037 – a decrease of $31,698 due to more communities qualifying for the program.

The 2022 Executive Budget includes an overall 3.9% increase in General Fund operating expenditures when compared to 2021.

The 2022 Budget includes a 2.09% increase in the property tax levy and a 4.73% decrease in the property tax mill rate. And this is the number that everyone needs to know…the proposed mill rate for 2022 is $6.27 per $1,000. This is $0.32 lower that the adopted 2021 mill rate of $6.59 per $1,000.

We approach the budget, as we do with any type of change within the organization, as an opportunity to get better. By doing this, we can compare our service levels with the community needs, and the ability to pay for them.

I would like to thank everyone involved in putting this budget together. The administrative staff, various committees and the department heads…I would especially like to recognize outgoing and long-time Police Chief Derek Beiderwieden…this is Derek’s last Budget presentation (I’m sure he is happy about that!)…I would like to thank Derek for all he has done for this organization, the residents of De Pere and the Police Department…how about a big hand for Derek! I would also like to thank Payroll Specialist Jeni Dupont, Finance Director Joe Zegers and City Administrator Larry Delo, for helping to make tough decisions and coordinating the paperwork and all the presentations. This budget is truly a team effort, and I appreciate everyone’s hard work, input, and help. I’d also like to commend the professionalism in handling some of the decisions that may not have been advantageous to a department. So once again, thank you all very much.

It has always been my goal as an Alderperson, and now as Mayor, to maintain De Pere as an exceptional community, and to enhance what we have here. It is amazing to look around this community, and observe all of the changes that have occurred over the years. It’s unbelievable to me that we have been able to do so much with so little. And we are far from finished.

Next year we will face many challenges and opportunities as a City. Over the next 2-5 years, there should be a number of projects that will change the landscape in the downtown, the business parks, the parks system, and the City as a whole. We will continue to work hard and keep our eye on the ever changing landscape. It is our pledge to the citizens of De Pere, and the great employees of the City of De Pere, that we will accept the challenges as they arise and work for the common good of De Pere. So with all of us – the City Council, the City employees, the businesses, and our residents – making a concerted effort, we will continue to make the City of De Pere a great place to live, work, play and stay.

Thank you.