

**From:** [Ryan Heiar](#)  
**To:** [Ryan Heiar](#)  
**Cc:** [NL Department Heads](#); [Josiah D. Bilskemper](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 01.22.24 Council Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 4:17:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

---

Good afternoon, folks.

I'm sorry to hit you with one more email before our meeting tonight, but we received some information this afternoon from the state that will be important for our budget discussion. As I noted at our budget session (Jan 16), we were waiting to get firm numbers from the state regarding the backfill and business tax credit. They were delayed in getting this information out because there were several counties that had not filed their valuations. Believe it or not, there are still two counties that have not filed. Nonetheless, the state felt comfortable enough with the valuations they have in hand to send out more concrete revenue numbers for the backfill and BTC.

The good news here is we estimated those numbers conservatively. These credits will provide the general fund \$52k that was not accounted for in the most recent draft of the budget model. This will bring the current surplus up to \$87k. What I will propose at our meeting this evening is that I work with department heads to restore some of the line items that were originally cut. While we won't have those numbers prepared tonight, we can certainly have them ready for our Feb 13 meeting.

See you soon.

Thanks,

Ryan Heiar  
City Administrator  
City of North Liberty

319.626.5700 (P)  
319.626.3288 (F)  
[www.northlibertyiowa.org](http://www.northlibertyiowa.org)

Messages to and from this account may become public record.

---

**From:** Ryan Heiar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:59 AM  
**To:** Ryan Heiar <[rheiar@northlibertyiowa.org](mailto:rheiar@northlibertyiowa.org)>  
**Cc:** NL Department Heads <[NLDepartmentHeads@northlibertyiowa.org](mailto:NLDepartmentHeads@northlibertyiowa.org)>  
**Subject:** 01.22.24 Council Meeting

Hello all. A reminder that **tonight's meeting starts at 6pm.**

Below are questions and responses for tonight's meeting:

Q: I'm curious how long and involved the Liberty Centre Pond project is expected to be. Will there be disruptions to use of the pond or the trail around it?

**R: Yes, there will be some disruptions; however, not the entire area at the same time. The work will be sectioned off so the disruptions will be localized to the working area in progress. This project could take 30-45 days to complete depending on weather.**

Q: Liberty Centre Part 1D - Is there an easement somewhere that allows access to Lot 1?

**R: We are requiring cross access easements to be recorded with the plat. Drafts have already been submitted for staff review.**

Q: Same question regarding Lot 1 in Solomons Entertainment District.

**R: Same response as above.**

Q: Leaf Truck—Currently how many in fleet? 2 I thought? How many hours did we log in 2023 in the leaf trucks? Will we be adding 1 to the routes or replacing a truck? If we are adding to, how many man hours can we expect to gain back with 3 in use?

**R: We have two leaf units in operation: a 1998 trailer unit needing a crew of 3 to operate and a 2013 trailer/hopper unit needing 2 staff to operate. We logged 186 hours in 2023 (spring and fall months). The idea is to replace the 1998 unit. The new unit will only take two people to operate (versus currently using 3) so it will be that much more efficient. It's difficult to put a number of hours gained simply because of the variables of leaf pickup. Clearly though, it will be more efficient and, equally as important, more reliable, than our 1998 machine.**

Q: Community Center Parking Design—an we look at ways to combine/merge the lot with the Ranshaw house to the North? —If we do any work to the islands, I would like to see us get rid of the grass on the islands (hard to mow) and install turf (see Tin Roost Parking lot for example)

**R: It's our team's opinion that the two lots need to continue to be separate. They are two different venues. Regarding the turf idea, Guy is not excited about that, but it is something we could explore.**

Q: Muddy Creek under bridge clean out—Does that area need rip-rap or some sort of additional concrete work? Why are we just digging it out? Are we doing that work in house? Will we need permitting from the DNR for this work?

**R: This type of cleanout work is an expected recurring maintenance item as debris and sediment builds up slowly over time, and it will be issued for local contractors to submit bids for the work. Sediment and debris will be cleaned out from within the bridge or culvert structures along Muddy Creek down to the floor of each structure. Once cleaned out, everything can be inspected, and checked to see if any concrete damage needs attention. Some locations already have rip-rap, and that material will be kept as much as possible. Typically, there is a need to add some additional rip-rap at the structures to**

**return what was there back to its original condition. The regional DNR field engineer has indicated that maintenance activities such as this do not typically require permitting, but the work will need to be submitted through the DNR online system to receive written confirmation.**

Q: Comment—I would like to see a public campaign put out highlighting the fact of 0% water rate increases the past 3 years. This is always a hot topic, and we need to educate citizens of this fact as well as highlight Greg's leadership and his entire teams dedication to this effort.

**R: With the change to our utility billing coming in February, we have a natural opportunity to talk about water and other utility rates at a time when folks might pay attention.**

Q: Is the stone outcropping of Liberty Centre Pond not able to be done in house, because of the equipment required or scope of the project?

**R: This has developed into a project much greater than what we have time or equipment for. The scope of the work will be equipment and labor intense. There will be specialized equipment used that will help minimize the impact and damage to the surrounding area; however, there will be considerable amount of turf grass repair that will need completed. The current plan is to take care of the turf grass repair in-house since we have the equipment and know-how for this type of work within the Parks Department. This is a good reason why it would be beneficial to do the entire project at the same time. We don't think phasing this and having the area in a state of repair year after year would be desirable to the public.**

Q: With the CC parking lot project, why is rerouting the 6' walk in the SE corner necessary?

**R: We have a long-time drainage issue there that needs to be addressed and it makes most sense to do it during this project.**

Q: Is the Opinion of Project costs [community center parking lot] to show how much this will cost due to inflation if we wait to do this?

**R: No. That's more of an internal note so we have the correct budget number for the CIP. When Shive gives us estimates for future projects, they will offer an inflation schedule based on the anticipated construction date.**

Q: With \$35,000 in surplus, what are staffs recommendations for its use, aside from Social Services?

**R: Our recommendation is to leave it as a surplus for now. The thought being that, if needed later in the year, these funds could be designated at that time. It's a conservative recommendation, but I remain concerned moving forward about the impacts to our general fund.**

Q: Insurance levy—not previously used—Would like some details on this levy. Does Council have to agree to and vote on this separately? Was surprised we had not had previous action on this before seeing it as a revenue generating tool.

**R:** This levy can only be used to pay for property and casualty insurance for general fund departments. It hasn't been used previously because the \$8.10 levy was able to cover it. Plus, if it would have been used it would have increased the tax levy overall. It's proposed to be used now because the 8.10 levy dropped to \$7.86 as a result of the new law. It does not require a separate vote of the Council; rather, its part of the budget approval resolution.

**Q:** We have 1 more budget cycle to use the ARPA funding correct? If we agree to use the \$132k for Liberty Center and \$142 for a leaf truck, our balance of \$316k should be reserved for what uses per staff recommendations? Splash Pad at Centennial?

**R:** Assuming the FY25 projects are funded, there would be \$561k ARPA funds remaining (circled in blue).

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Allocation					AWARDED	REMAINING
Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds					\$ 2,906,110	\$ 836,110
Projects Funded	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	TOTAL	POTENTIAL
1. Domestic Violence Intervention Program	\$ 25,000				\$ 25,000	
2. North Liberty Community Pantry	\$ 100,000				\$ 100,000	
3. City Social Services Grants		\$ 150,000	\$ 155,000		\$ 305,000	
4. Storm Water GIS		\$ 200,000			\$ 200,000	
5. Centennial Park			\$ 1,000,000		\$ 1,000,000	
6. Ranshaw House Furnishings			\$ 40,000		\$ 40,000	
7. Affordable Housing Program			\$ 400,000		\$ 400,000	
8. Workforce Housing Program					\$ -	\$ -
9. Social Service Support					\$ -	\$ 245,000
10. Liberty Centre Pond Repairs					\$ -	\$ 132,000
11. Leaf Vac Trailer					\$ -	\$ 142,500
12. Other					\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 125,000</b>	<b>\$ 350,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,595,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 2,070,000</b>	<b>\$ 519,500</b>
<b>Budgeted General Fund Transfer</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 275,000</b>	<b>\$ 155,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 316,610</b>
						<b>BALANCE</b>

By "remaining," I mean they have not been allocated to a project just yet. Eventually, we'll need to allocate the remaining balance and it will need to be spent by end of 2026. As we start to develop plans for phase 2 of Centennial, which includes the splashpad, looking to these funds would be a good idea. If there are different ideas for using these funds, we should be talking about that as well. Probably a discussion for another day though.

**Q:** On the future CIP, I still see the second fire station on FY 26. Should that be pushed down the line and replaced with modifications to the current station?

**R:** I did not change this because we have not had a discussion as a group about the potential of modifications to the existing station before a new station. We intend to have that discussion with Council in February or March at which time we can adjust the CIP if necessary.

**Q:** I'm confused about the \$0 "semi-final" pay application for Ranshaw Way. What's the reason for having us approve this?

**R:** The short answer here is that the DOT is requiring this action. The longer explanation can be found in the attached email from Josiah.

**Q:** Is the proposal to replace the sidewalk in front of the houses btw Jones and UI Healthcare with a wider trail? Is the proposal to replace the sidewalk in front of the houses btw Jones and UI Healthcare with a wider trail?

**R: Yes. With this project complete there would be an 8ft trail from Ranshaw to Covered Bridge Road, setting us up to finish the trail to the interstate in the near future.**

Q: At the Jan 16 budget session there was a question about how the FY24 GF budget was looking in terms of revenues and expenses for the year. My response was not very informative.

**R: The technically correct response is that at the 50% mark of the year, we have expended 50% of our budget and received 40% of our revenues. This information should be taken with a grain of salt though, as a big portion of general fund revenues (property taxes) come in twice a year, with the second installment coming in April. Further, expenses vary throughout the year in that we may pay a big bill (i.e. insurance) earlier in the year. The bottom line is that, at this point in the budget cycle, we are not seeing anything out of line or unexpected for FY24.**

Q: I received a question after the Jan 16 session asking what our tax levy could be if we maximized the levies.

**R: The Insurance levy could generate an additional \$17k, which would increase the levy by one cent (see below). We are looking into the option of being able to use the EMA levy for our hazard mitigation team expenses. If that is feasible, an additional 10k could be generated, resulting in a levy increase of less than one cent.**

There is a lot to digest here. Feel free to contact me if you need further information.

Thank you for your questions.

Ryan Heiar  
City Administrator  
City of North Liberty

319.626.5700 (P)

319.626.3288 (F)

[www.northlibertyiowa.org](http://www.northlibertyiowa.org)

Messages to and from this account may become public record.



