



January 28, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of the Ames City Council:

I am attaching for your review and approval my recommended budget for FY 2022/23 which totals \$280,300,058 to fund the extensive list of services that we provide to the citizens of Ames.

As you know the City's budget is a very complex document that reflects: 1) the service plan for our citizens presented in a program format rather than by department, 2) the financing strategy to accomplish these services, and 3) the performance measures that allow us to benchmark our productivity against our prior year results as well as against other cities' efforts. What follows are what I consider to be the major highlights of this proposed service plan for FY 2022/23.

**PROPERTY TAXES**  
**4.4 CENTS DECREASE IN OVERALL CITY TAX RATE**  
**FROM \$9.87 TO \$9.83**

**The FY 2022/23 budget requires an additional \$1,184,190, or a 3.65% increase in property tax revenue as compared to the previous year's adopted level to finance those programs funded by this revenue source. This additional tax revenue can be generated with an overall tax rate reduction of 4.4 cents from a \$9.87 per \$1,000 of taxable value to \$9.83 per \$1,000 of taxable value.**

Of course, what our citizens want to know is how much more this budget will cost them in terms of property taxes. **While it is not possible to project this additional cost for each property owner, when analyzing each tax classification, on average, in FY 2022/23 residential property tax bills will decrease 1.22% or \$6.81 less per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, commercial property tax bills will increase by 5.81% or \$51.63 more per \$100,000 of assessed value, and industrial property tax bills will increase 3.09% or \$27.47 more per \$100,000 of assessed valuation as compared to the previous year.**

As is the case every year, we were confronted with a number of challenges that impacted the development of the budget, especially in the General Fund which is dependent on property tax revenues. These challenges included:

- The promised financial backfill from the State Legislature to compensate cities for rolling back the taxable values on commercial and industrial properties is being eliminated over the next five years resulting in a \$168,322 loss in State Replacement Tax revenue in FY 2022/23 alone. Approximately, \$99,000 of this total will be lost to the General Fund.
- The State mandated rollback on residential properties was reduced from 56.41% to 54.13%, resulting in \$83,902,749 less assessed valuation being subject to taxation which impacts all four levies that comprise our overall City tax rate.
- Along with our traditional annual amount of General Obligation Bond issuance for street, traffic, storm water, public safety, and park improvements; the FY 2022/23 budget reflects for the first time the issuance of \$6,192,512 in General Obligation bonds for the new Indoor Aquatics Center, with an additional \$13,971,664 of bonds planned for sale in FY 2023/24. As a result, over half of the \$1,184,190 in additional property tax funding being requested for FY 2022/23 is earmarked to cover the Debt Service Levy increase.

Fortunately, we received some good news that will positively impact the budget and help generate the additional revenue needed to fund the budget.

- We have been informed that the City's obligation for the State administered Police and Fire Retirement System will be approximately \$169,000 less in FY 2022/23 than the prior year.
- Throughout the pandemic, our residents appear to have continued to shop in person and through the internet resulting in a projected increase of approximately \$2,300,000 more in Local Option Sales Tax revenue than budgeted in FY 2021/22. An additional \$892,036 is projected for FY 2022/23 as compared to the FY 2021/22 adopted budget. It should be noted that for both these fiscal years, 60% of these totals will be used to reduce property taxes.
- In addition to the unexpected increase in Local Option Sales Tax revenues, an unusually high number of vacant positions were experienced in our General Fund supported departments which resulted in substantial savings. Some of the vacancies were the result of retirements, some were influenced by police officers deciding to leave the profession, and others were caused by our conservative approach not to fill the vacancies immediately in the face of the uncertainty as to whether or not the negative effects of the pandemic on our revenues would cause us to have to cut expenditures later in the fiscal year. These vacancies have resulted in approximately \$800,000 in savings in personnel costs in both FY 2020/21 and FY 2021/22.

**In total, we are projecting \$3,504,556 in one-time net savings in the General Fund from FY 2020/21 and FY 2021/22. I would strongly advise the City Council to use these one-time savings for one-time expenditures. To apply these**

**savings to reduce ongoing operational expenditures will create a large increase in property taxes the following year when the balance has been depleted.**

**In response to this surplus, I have developed a list of uses that have been incorporated into the budget for one-time expenditures totaling \$877,624 for Fire Safety, Parks and Recreation, the Library, the Cemetery, Information Technology, and Facilities. Since these expenditures would likely show up in future budget requests, using a portion of the savings for these purposes will help reduce future costs. In addition, I have directed the additional one-time savings be earmarked as follows: \$200,000 for an initial pool for sustainability projects, \$500,000 to restore the Parking Reserve Fund balance, \$900,000 for the Debt Service Fund balance to mitigate the tax impact on the issuance of \$21,000,000 for the Indoor Aquatics Center, and \$1,000,000 to the City Council's Priority Fund for yet to be determined capital projects.**

The General Fund ending balance in FY 2022/23 is projected to be \$10,282,146. This balance meets City Council's goal for a 25% unobligated reserve and leaves an additional \$991,061 to further respond to unplanned events.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Two important initiatives will be accomplished in FY 2021/22. First, the results of the Police Department's first Traffic Stop study conducted by a third-party consultant will be shared with the City Council and the public. This study, which was initiated at the request of the Police Department, will stimulate ongoing dialogue among our officers about this important topic and help assure that everyone who deals with our officers during discretionary stops is treated fairly.

Second, in accordance with the internal report entitled "Policing In Ames, A Path Forward", the new Ames Resident Police Advisory Committee will be initiated to: 1) incorporate a citizen perspective into the evaluation of citizen complaints against the Ames Police Department, 2) provide thoughtful recommendations regarding the policies and practices of the department, 3) report concerns regarding complaint investigation outcomes, and 4) increase public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the department.

Calls for mental health assistance have continued to increase substantially, from 963 in 2014 to 2,300 by the end of 2021. In response to this service demand, the budget includes two initiatives. First, our highly successful Mental Health Advocate position will increase from a three-quarter position to a full-time employee (FTE) in FY 2022/23, at an additional cost of \$27,843. This change will allow more time and flexibility for increasing the outreach and education for our citizens along with reacting to situations that currently dominate the Advocate's time. In addition, along with our current partnership with the Story County Mental Health Task Force and the Mobile Crisis Response Team, the department hopes to collaborate in a new project called Third Way. This group endeavors to send non-police personnel in response to mental health calls for service.

Protecting the chain of evidence is crucial to the successful prosecution of our cases. The department currently utilizes two part-time employees to handle evidence. In addition, these employees are responsible for criminal case research and determining which property can be returned to owners or destroyed in order to make room for additional evidence. The workload has increased to the point where one full-time Evidence Technician is warranted. With the addition of Body Worn Cameras, substantially more records than ever are being maintained by the part-time technicians. Therefore, one full-time Evidence Technician has been added to the department, with a net additional cost of \$63,501.

The Ames Community School District has decided to discontinue the School Resource Officer program along with the shared financial responsibility for the two officers. Rather than eliminating two of the current vacant officer positions, my budget recommendation calls for retaining one of the two positions. This will allow us to add an extra officer to our busiest shift, 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., to increase our service response with a net savings of \$9,986.

Two operational changes have resulted in service improvements and reduction in costs. First, through a partnership with Iowa State University, Story County, and the City of Ames, we created our own radio system, StoryComm, that has resulted in improved quality of service and lower costs than our previously contracted system. Second, the introduction of hybrid police cars has realized a 58% reduction in metric tons of CO2 per year per car, as well as recouping the higher initial purchase price for a hybrid through lower operational costs in less than a year. We hope to have all hybrid patrol vehicles by the end of FY 2022/23.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

In January 2022, the Fire Department moved from an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) level to an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level of emergency medical service. This new service level will allow our firefighters to perform more advanced lifesaving skills while on the scene prior to the arrival of an ambulance. This improvement was made possible because of the longstanding partnership we have with Mary Greeley Medical Center. As the entity responsible for the ambulance service, they are aware how our transition to an EMT status will help them and, therefore, have agreed to pay for the additional certification, training, and supply costs associated with the upgrade.

The Fire Department has taken the lead in preparing the City's Incident Command Center (ICC) Team to respond to disasters. Our Disaster Planning Manual is being updated and individuals from throughout the City organization are being educated as to their roles and responsibilities on the ICC Team.

The department hopes to switch from the larger apparatus used for medical assist calls to smaller, less costly pickup-style response vehicles. Savings realized from the transition will be used to purchase our first all-in-one technical rescue response vehicle which will house hazmat, confined space, and trench rescue equipment.

I have once again included an additional Firefighter position in the budget in keeping with my strategy to gradually increase the number of firefighter positions. These smaller incremental increases in personnel costs will cause less stress on the budget than having to appropriate one large amount for new fire fighters along with the building construction and apparatus costs when a fourth fire station is opened.

**BUILDING SAFETY – 3% Increase in Rental Housing Permit Fees  
No Increase in Building Permit Fee**

We have not increased our Rental Housing fees since FY 2017/18. While our operating costs associated with the delivery of the rental inspection service continued to grow, so did our revenue. There was no need for a fee increase since the number of new apartments grew as well to generate the necessary revenue. Now the growth in new apartment units has plateaued. **Therefore, in order to adhere to our policy to cover the cost of our rental inspection service with revenue from fees, the rental permits costs are increased by 3% in the FY 2022/23 budget.**

In terms of building permits, we are projecting a resurgence of construction activity in FY 2022/23, so once again no increase in building permit fees has been included in the budget for this fiscal year.

In an effort to improve customer service, the Inspection staff will be exploring moving away from desktop computers to remote workstations. This change will allow our inspectors to have access to relevant data while in the field, providing our customers with more timely responses.

**ELECTRIC UTILITY – NO RATE INCREASE**

**You will note that we continue to work to hold our electric rates as low as possible with an operating budget in FY 2022/23 that reflects only a 0.8% increase in expenditures. Included in these expenditures are improvements to our production and distribution systems in order to better assure service reliability to our customers. Future rate increases will be dependent on the magnitude of the projects that are pursued in our quest to meet the City Council’s sustainability goal.**

In the short-term, we continue to emphasize the utility’s role in reducing our carbon footprint. Towards this end, four initiatives stand out in the FY 2021/22 and FY 2022/23 budgets. First, additional funding has been included in the Demand-Side Management program. Since the use of this incentive pool has diminished over time, the staff is working with the Electric Utility Review And Operations Board to introduce new incentives/rebates to help us hold down our system peak. Second, we are excited by our financial participation in the construction of geothermal systems in the Baker Subdivision. Through this pilot program, we will learn how to bring lower cost heating and cooling to affordable housing developments. Third, a consultant has been hired to recommend sites on land and rooftops throughout the community to expand our wind and solar energy portfolio. Fourth, an additional study will

recommend how we continue our commitment to converting our solid waste to electric energy and, at the same time, allow the Electric Utility to take advantage of attractive energy prices available on the open market.

### **WATER UTILITY – NO RATE INCREASE**

**The FY 2022/23 budget does not require a rate increase to our customers. However, assuming five-year projections remain true, we will need water rate increases in FY 2023/24 and FY 2025/26 during the life of our current five-year CIP.**

A new Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) Technician position has been added in FY 2022/23 to serve both the Water and Water Pollution Control Utilities. Because the degree of automation and sophistication of the control systems at both facilities have increased significantly over time, the need for an individual with unique expertise to devote to managing these systems is warranted. In addition, with the ever-increasing threat of cyber-attacks, this position will provide on-site capabilities to monitor our systems and respond in the event of an intrusion.

In accordance with the updated Emergency Response Plan for the utility, Water Utility staff has been working with the Information Technology (IT) staff to isolate and protect the Plant control systems from the remainder of the City's IT infrastructure.

While the warranty periods for the major systems at the new Water Plant have expired, the staff has decided to enter into maintenance contracts for the following specialized systems: standby generator, fire sprinkler, elevator, and HVAC.

The WP&C and the Electric Utility staffs are working with Iowa State University to consider utilizing the new Wi-Fi network they are developing as a result of receiving a large federal grant. This system will offer the ability to read the meters in near real-time. The use of this network will allow staff to perform a demonstration project to determine the benefits of this new tool for our utilities.

An updated water leak detection assessment of the water distribution system is scheduled to be completed in FY 2021/22 to identify leaks that are not interrupting service to our customers but are resulting in lost water and revenue to the utility.

### **WATER POLLUTION CONTROL UTILITY – 5% INCREASE IN RATES**

**A 5% increase in sanitary sewer rates has been incorporated into the FY 2022/23 budget. Our current long-range financial analysis anticipates the need for additional rate increases in this utility in FY 2024/25 and FY 2026/27.**

As described above, this utility will benefit from sharing the service provided by the new SCADA Technician.

In addition to the significant modifications that will be made to the Water Pollution Control Plant to meet the State's nutrient reduction goals, partnerships have been formed to

accomplish best practices in the watersheds surrounding Ames to accomplish nutrient reduction. One partnership involves Story County Conservation, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Story County Soil and Water District to treat 25 field tile outlets with bioreactor systems to reduce nitrates by up to 50%. Another successful partnership includes the Iowa Soybean Association and the Soil and Water Outcomes Fund to provide financial incentives to farmers who implement conservation practices in the surrounding watersheds.

A neighboring business, Verbio, entered into a cooperative agreement with the utility to haul the anaerobically digested sludge from our Plant to their facility to serve as “biological seeds” to jump start their digesters. This agreement benefitted the company and saved the utility the cost of paying a contractor to land-apply the sludge.

**STORMWATER UTILITY - \$0.25 INCREASE IN MONTHLY ERU FEE  
FROM \$4.95 TO \$5.20**

**The budget before you includes a \$0.25 monthly Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) increase from \$4.95 to \$5.20 to help cover the costs to maintain the existing stormwater system as well as the capital improvement projects to replace deteriorating infrastructure over the next five years. This fee was last increased in FY 2017/18.**

The FY 2022/23 budget includes funds for the development of a master plan for the loway Creek watershed as required by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The plan will analyze existing conditions and identify future maintenance projects and capital improvements for this watershed.

An emphasis in this utility continues to be public education and outreach about best practices, watershed issues, and native plantings that support pollinator populations. Eco Chats will be held monthly in the Library featuring keynote presentations from local and national stormwater experts.

**RESOURCE RECOVERY UTILITY  
NO INCREASE IN THE PER CAPITA SUBSIDY  
\$3.75 INCREASE FOR THE PER TON TIPPING FEE  
FROM \$58.75 TO \$62.50 PER TON**

The Resource Recovery operation is financed primarily from the per ton tipping fees charged to the private haulers who dispose of their solid waste at our Plant, revenues collected from our Electric Utility that purchase our Resource Derived Fuel as an alternative fuel source, and a per capita fee charged to all governmental entities in Story County who have partnered with us in this venture. **In FY 2022/23, the Per Capita subsidy for this utility is estimated to be \$912,450. The City’s portion of this obligation is \$592,484, or 65%, and is paid from property tax revenues generated by the General Levy.**

**Our five-year projections indicate a need for additional revenue to cover our operating and capital improvement needs over this time period. Therefore, the budget includes**

**a \$3.75 increase in the per ton tipping fee at the Resource Recovery Plant from \$58.75 to \$62.50.** This increase will no doubt be passed on to our residents. However, rather than increasing our per capita subsidy for this utility, increasing the tipping fee will send a pricing signal to our residents that, hopefully, will influence their behavior to reduce the amount of material that they deposit into the waste stream.

The staff currently is working with a consultant to explore options for the next generation of our waste-to-energy system. The frequency and magnitude of future property tax and tipping fee increases will be impacted by which option the City Council selects for our path forward.

Staff at this utility is exploring the possibility of utilizing the anaerobic digestors at the WPC Plant to process the food waste diversion collections from the Resource Recovery Plant to produce electricity for the WPC Plant. If this is successful, both utilities will benefit from this partnership.

The Rummage Rampage will continue in FY 2022/23. This has been a highly successful program diverting approximately 100,000 pounds of household goods from the landfill.

Staff also will be engaging in a study to consider a closed solid waste collection system to eliminate redundant trips by multiple garbage haulers throughout our residential neighborhoods.

Our contract with the Boone County Landfill for reject disposal expires in June 2022. Boone officials have expressed their concern about the amount of Story County waste being deposited at their facility. Because of this concern, staff is exploring other existing landfills in surrounding counties that could serve our needs should the contract not be renewed or modified. We also are evaluating an option to recycle mattresses, which are very difficult to landfill.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **STREETS/TRAFFIC**

A major source of revenue to cover our operational expenditures for street and traffic related activities are Road Use Tax proceeds collected by the State and distributed to the City on a per capita basis. Our projections indicate that this revenue source will remain strong since more fuels are being consumed with more people driving than traveling by plane. The recent census count established an increase in the City's population, which also has improved our revenue stream from this tax.

The use of the following new technology platforms will be utilized to help us improve our street and traffic systems.

- The Benchmark and Monumentation Modernization project will provide an updated system of survey points across the community that coordinate with the new federal geospatial network. This network will be required for our Geographic Information System (GIS) and will be used on our federal projects and flood maps.



- There will be updated street condition data collected and analyzed for use in the City's Pavement Management System. This data is essential for prioritizing street maintenance and capital improvement projects.
- A new software will be purchased that provides aggregated traffic counts and origin/destination data relevant for traffic studies and facility planning without having to devote the staff time to perform our own traffic counts. This multi-modal data will include bike, vehicle, and pedestrian information.

You will note that, for the first time, we have broken out our GIS group as a separate activity in order to highlight the exciting initiatives that are being accomplished. We can take pride in knowing that our GIS capabilities were developed in-house rather than through a very expensive outside consulting contract. Our GIS team creates geospatial information systems that integrate City data, external data, and real-time sensors that provide advanced visualization and analysis capabilities to our departments. Equally exciting is the fact that the GIS output also can be offered externally to help our residents better understand our services. For example, we recently released a real-time Snowplow Operations Dashboard which allows our residents to view the location of our plows during snow and ice events. In addition, our existing data and maps website will be upgraded to allow the public easier access to this important information.

## CYRIDE

CyRide ridership declined in response to the impact of the pandemic when students were taking virtual classes and not required to travel to and from the ISU campus. An influx of one-time federal funding provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) totaling \$14,490,000 was applied over a two-year period and helped us get through FY 2021/22 with no additional financial support from the three funders and FY2022/23 with a slight increase to the City of Ames and ISU administration. While ridership has gradually improved, we are not expecting ridership to return to pre-COVID levels in FY 2022/23. Staff will need to continue to evaluate what the new normal will be in a post-COVID environment and recommend the appropriate "right-sizing" of the service into the future.

The Transit Student Government Trust Fund is used to stabilize contributions from the ISU Student Government (SG) to CyRide's operating budget. The fund balance fluctuates based on ISU enrollment, SG approved fees, and service levels. Three straight years of significant enrollment declines prior to the pandemic, an activity fee suspension, and a zero percent increase in activity fees for the 2020/2021 academic year have combined to impact the SG Trust Fund balance significantly. The fund was originally projected by Transit to end FY 2021/22 with a budget shortfall of \$165,544. Operational savings from virtual classes and a timely reallocation of funds allowed the SG Trust Fund balance to remain positive. After a transfer to the Transit Operations fund, the SG Trust Fund is projected to be \$321,540, which

is lower than the \$500,000 goal for the fund but represents a significant first step toward rebuilding the balance.

**The FY 2022/23 budget requests no additional funding from ISU student fees in order to help restore the SG Trust Fund balance to a sustainable level.** In addition to this action, the Transit Board will work with the Student Government to identify the best option to achieve the long-term viability of this fund.

**The budget does satisfy the Transit Board's request for property tax support for the CyRide operation from the City in the amount of \$2,034,090, which is a 2.62% increase over last year's commitment.**

## PUBLIC PARKING

Our Parking Fund has taken the greatest hit from the impacts of the pandemic. As a result, we previously recommended an increase in parking fines/fees in order to assure that sufficient revenue would be available to pay for the costs required to operate and maintain our public parking system and create a reserve fund to pay for the future reconstruction of the lots. In lieu of a substantial fee increase, a decision was made to inject \$600,542 from FY 2020/21 General Fund savings to help get us through another year.

Despite the efforts of the staff to reduce the expenditures by 0.2% in the Parking Fund for FY 2022/23 and the previous General Fund transfer, the Parking Fund continues to struggle barely generating enough funds to pay for the operating costs of the system. You will note that the balance in the fund has been drawn down by approximately \$200,000 in each of the last two years. We will need to transfer \$20,709 back from the Parking Capital Reserve fund in FY 2022/23 so that we can end the fiscal year meeting our 10% available fund balance goal. I have also included a transfer to the Parking Reserve fund of \$500,000 from projected savings in the General Fund in the FY 2022/23 budget. This will allow us to continue to build up a modest parking capital improvement reserve, which is projected to have a \$684,338 balance at the end of FY 2022/23.

It should be emphasized that the infusion of General Fund savings is not a long-term solution to achieving the economic viability of the fund. With a return to normalcy in FY 2022/23 Staff will be developing a long-range financial plan for the Parking Fund that outlines operational and capital improvement needs for the Parking System and an associated financial plan to produce the needed revenue.

## AIRPORT

The Fixed Base Operator (FBO) at the airport performs a number of important services for our customers including flight training, airplane repair, charter, and fueling as well as mowing and snow removal at the airport grounds. The contract with our Fixed Based Operator (FBO) expires in June 30, 2022. Staff has been very happy with the services provided by the current FBO and hopes to negotiate a longer-term contract with this incumbent.

We were fortunate to receive a \$143,229 grant from the federal CARES Act in FY 2021/22. This unanticipated pandemic relief funding will be used for building repairs and other deferred maintenance items at the airport.

## PARKS & RECREATION

For years the City has been known for the quality of our extensive park system. However, it is no secret that our facilities have been lacking as over the years we have inherited many outdated facilities to operate. Therefore, recently we have placed a greater emphasis on making improvements in this area. Towards this end, we are working to construct a new indoor aquatics center, community splash pad, downtown plaza, kayak launch, soccer pitch, and agility course. **Because of the expansion of our parks and facilities, it is time to expand our full-time workforce in the Parks and Recreation Department. Therefore, the FY 2022/23 budget includes an additional Maintenance Worker position, with an additional FTE planned in FY 2023/24.**

Most of our recreation programs have been staffed with part-time or temporary employees. Like other entities who are relying on the same labor pool, we are finding it difficult to maintain our staffing levels. Therefore, we will be focusing our efforts on building partnerships with other groups to help alleviate staffing as well as facility shortages.

Every year we challenge ourselves to introduce new recreational programs. Examples of new programs that will be introduced include an initiative that will bring children and their adults together in a neighborhood to participate in planned activities and a new program offering fly-fishing instructions. The FY 2022/23 budget calls for recreation program fee increases between 3% to 7%.

Our Learn to Swim classes will be impacted with the closing of the Municipal Pool in February 2022 to make way for the new high school. Until our new indoor aquatics center is opened, we will have to schedule more time at the Furman Aquatics Center during the summer months for these classes, thus interrupting some of our open swim hours.

Our long-term Emerald Ash Borer program to remove and replace this species continues in FY 2022/23 with \$120,260 earmarked for street trees and \$13,937 for park trees.

Our goal in operating Homewood Golf Course and the Ames/ISU Ice Arena is for user fees to cover, at least, the operating expenses of the facilities. To accomplish this goal a 5% increase in ice rental fees is incorporated into the Ice Arena budget and a 3% increase in season pass fees for Homewood Golf Course.

While the pandemic resulted in less user hours in both facilities in past years, we are seeing a gradual increase in usage. One of the primary users of the Ice Arena is Iowa State University, who rents ice time for numerous hockey club teams and intramural recreation programs. Apparently, there are some discussions underway to determine if ice time will be reduced in the future for the club teams and intramurals. Because of this uncertainty, I have included \$50,000 from our American Rescue Plan Act funding as revenue for the Ice Arena

to bolster the balance in this fund above the minimum goal in order to handle any decrease in rental revenue that might occur.

**PLANNING SERVICES**

In keeping with one of our Excellence Through People values, continuous improvement, we will be making three changes on July 1, 2022, that will involve the Planning & Housing Department in an effort to improve our customer service.

- The responsibility to serve as the Secretary for the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) will shift to the Administrative Services Division. This division provides clerical support to the Planning personnel that staff the ZBA. Currently, these duties are performed by the City Clerk’s Office. This change will integrate the ZBA application process with other planning application processes and streamline reviews by the Planning division.
- The Planning & Housing Director will become the designated Zoning Enforcement Officer for the City. Currently, this responsibility is given to the Building Official who has to consult with the Planning Director before making any decision regarding zoning issues. This change should help streamline decisions for our customers.
- The administration for the Neighborhood Grant Program will be assumed by the Neighborhood Planner who has already developed relationships with many of the applicants. Currently, this responsibility is handled by the City Clerk.

For the first time many years, the fees for some planning applications have been increased to generate an additional \$2,000, or 10%, to cover the additional cost for notification.

**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Along with our annual Community Development Block Grant funding which has been earmarked to develop our affordable housing subdivision, an influx of federal CARES and ARPA funds will provide a unique opportunity to offer even more to those who need housing assistance.** Continued rental/utility and mortgage/utility assistance will be possible as a result of the approximately \$225,000 that remains under the CDBG/CARES rounds 1 and 3. Home/ARPA monies totaling \$1,269,248 will be available for housing, services for the homeless, and other vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19. Finally, \$600,000 from IEDA/CARES funding distributed by the State will be available for yet to be determined projects.

**LIBRARY SERVICES**

The resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the use of our library. In response to the community’s evolving preference and comfort level in how they attend events, the Library has adapted by offering programming in multiple formats including virtual, in-person, outdoor, live streaming, and home activities. An emphasis is being made on initiating training, facilitated dialogues, and data analyses in the areas of Equity and

Inclusion. In addition, staff is focusing attention on youth wellness programs such the Youth Mental Health First Aid, Teen Dating Violence, and Mindful Teen.

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As always, I want to thank our Executive Leadership Team members who are dedicated to developing a budget that provides exceptional service to our residents and visitors to Ames at the best price even in the face of a continuing pandemic.

In addition, the budget review team composed of Duane Pitcher, Finance Director; Nancy Masteller, Budget Manager; Amy Crabbs, Budget Analyst; Amanda Calbert, Finance Secretary; Deb Schildroth, Assistant City Manager; and Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager, deserve special recognition for helping me compose this service plan for the City.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Schainker  
City Manager