

TO: Justin M. Nickels, Mayor
Steve Corbeille, Finance Director

FROM: Kathleen M. McDaniel, City Attorney

RE: 2016 Budget Request for the City Attorney's Office

DATE: August 7, 2015

Thank you for accepting this memo to accompany the 2016 Budget Request for the City Attorney's Office.

Services Provided

The City Attorney's Office provides legal advice to the Mayor, the Common Council, and City departments. The office also provides legal advice to MPU under an annual contract. The City Attorney renders legal opinions, drafts and reviews contracts, ordinances and resolutions, and revises the Municipal Code. The City Attorney represents the City in administrative hearings and civil court proceedings, including foreclosures and bankruptcies, and oversees all Municipal Court prosecutions. The City Attorney serves as parliamentarian at Common Council meetings. The office administers the claims against the City and the City's insurance policies, including liability, property, and employment practices.

Number of Employees

The City Attorney's office currently has two full-time employees, the City Attorney and the Paralegal. The office staffing was reorganized in 2015 to move the Paralegal into full-time support for the Attorney and out of HR, and to eliminate the Secretary position. We are requesting an additional half-time attorney in 2016, as detailed in our separate budget request per the budget instructions. The Paralegal is spending a large percentage of time on municipal court tasks and we would like to explore sharing an administrative professional with Human Resources when the austerity measures end.

2015 Estimated Actuals

Estimated actual spend for 2015 has been entered into Springbrook. There are not any notable reductions or increases outside of insurance cost changes and dividend reductions.

2016 Budget

The City Attorney's office has strived to reach efficiencies in our budget. In 2015, we fully utilized document management software that reduces our reliance on paper and toner and increased our productivity and ability to meet deadlines. The 2016 budget has reductions in office supply and equipment lines due to these increased efficiencies.

There is a significant increase in the property insurance line. The state-run Local Government and Property Insurance fund has recommended an 85% increase for 2016. Due to this, the City is seeking alternate property coverage, but is planning for the worst.

There are no full-time staff additions requested for the office. Although it would be ideal to return to 2011 staffing levels with two full-time attorneys and two full-time assistants, the City Attorney's Office understands that the City is still operating under austerity measures. We are, however, proposing to add or adding a part-time assistant city attorney for 2016, as detailed in our supplemental document.

Summary

The City Attorney's Office has attempted to keep the budget static or reduced from 2015 and achieve efficiencies wherever possible. Please contact me if clarification is needed. I look forward to our scheduled budget meeting.

Attachments: Requested Budget Information (Word File)
 Labor Calculations for City Attorney (Excel File)
 Budget Justifications for City Attorney (Excel File)