Audio file

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Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

I'd like to call to order a special call meeting for the Ridgetown Board of Mayor and Alderman for November the 2nd, 2026.

00:00:10 Speaker 1

It's 5.35 P.m.

00:00:16 Speaker 1

You can leave us with an invocation.

00:00:24 Speaker 2

Blessed Lord.

00:00:26 Speaker 2

God, we look to you today.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

We look to you for guidance.

00:00:30 Speaker 2

We ask you for direction.

00:00:32 Speaker 2

We all feel the weight and the gravity of the situation and pray that you would guide our thoughts.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

Help us, dear Lord, tonight to come to the right conclusion for the city, for the employees.

00:00:47 Speaker 2

Just pray that you would be with us and grant us the help that we're needing, dear Lord.

00:00:51 Speaker 2

In Jesus' name, amen.

00:00:55 Speaker 3

I pledge witness to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic.

00:01:01 Speaker 4

For which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

00:01:14 Speaker 1

Miss Kelly, roll call.

00:01:17 Speaker 4

Mayor Shaw.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

Here.

00:01:18 Speaker 4

Alderman Seneff.

00:01:19 Speaker 2

Here.

00:01:19 Speaker 4

Alderman Gregory.

00:01:21 Speaker 4

Alderman Martin.

00:01:22 Speaker 4

Here.

00:01:22 Speaker 4

Vice Mayor Gilmore.

00:01:24 Speaker 3

Here.

00:01:24 Speaker 4

Attorney Russell Freeman.

00:01:30 Speaker 1

Okay, and tonight do we have any citizens comments?

00:01:34 Speaker 5

Yes.

00:01:36 Speaker 3

Go ahead, ma'am.

00:01:40 Speaker 5

Good evening.

00:01:41 Speaker 1

Good evening.

00:01:42 Speaker 5

This will be my number two session that I'm coming to.

00:01:47 Speaker 5

Glad to see you all.

00:01:48 Speaker 5

Good evening, Mayor and Alderman.

00:01:50 Speaker 5

I'm Lynn Foster and I'm a Richhop resident.

00:01:54 Speaker 5

I support a retirement plan option for our city employees.

00:01:58 Speaker 5

My concern is how much we commit to and how we pay for it.

00:02:05 Speaker 5

First, the upfront cost.

00:02:07 Speaker 5

The four resolutions on the October 20th agenda require a one-time payment between 245,000 to 595,000

00:02:17 Speaker 5

due within 30 days.

00:02:19 Speaker 5

The all years option is more than the city's entire employee payroll for a year.

00:02:26 Speaker 5

Second, the funding.

00:02:29 Speaker 5

This year's budget set aside nothing for it.

00:02:32 Speaker 5

The resolutions say a budget amendment was passed and attached, but I couldn't find one.

00:02:40 Speaker 5

Without a plan, this comes from our reserves, from my understanding.

00:02:46 Speaker 5

Third, the ongoing cost.

00:02:48 Speaker 5

Two weeks ago, the board saw lower cost options, plan two at about 4 to 5% of payroll, and a hybrid at about 2%.

00:02:58 Speaker 5

But all four resolutions use the most expensive design, about 7 to 7.7% every year permanently.

00:03:07 Speaker 5

So before any vote, I'm asking for four things.

00:03:11 Speaker 5

One,

00:03:12 Speaker 5

Put the funding plan in writing and pass the budget amendment in public with both readings.

00:03:19 Speaker 5

I ask that TCRS to price spreading the look back over time.

00:03:25 Speaker 5

The resolution allows up to 20 years instead of 30 days.

00:03:29 Speaker 5

Three, if you choose the higher cost plan, explain publicly why it's worth it and consider a five or 10 years of look back instead of all years.

00:03:43 Speaker 5

10 years alone saves us $214,000.

00:03:48 Speaker 5

Four, post the cost comparison and funding plan on the city website and vote at a regular meeting so residents can see the numbers first.

00:03:59 Speaker 5

The study doesn't expire until January 2nd, so there's time.

00:04:04 Speaker 5

Two seats at least, there's three on the ballot, but two seats are up for election tomorrow.

00:04:14 Speaker 5

And under the charter, those elected take office at the next regular meeting.

00:04:20 Speaker 5

A decision that commits this city for decades should be made by the board that will live with it.

00:04:28 Speaker 5

There's time to do that before the study expires.

00:04:32 Speaker 5

Ultimately, our employees deserve retirement plan options.

00:04:36 Speaker 5

I believe in that.

00:04:38 Speaker 5

Our residents deserve to know what it costs and who pays.

00:04:43 Speaker 5

We can do both, and I thank you for your time.

00:04:47 Speaker 6

Thank you.

00:04:56 Speaker 3

My name is John Eley, I live in 2021 Rebecca Drive.

00:05:00 Speaker 3

I have a couple of questions.

00:05:02 Speaker 3

TCRS happens to be the one that you all jumped on.

00:05:04 Speaker 3

Have you thought about any alternate plans, like maybe extending IRA, maybe bumping up their percentage rate every couple of years?

00:05:11 Speaker 3

Maybe starting right now with a 401 , like most businesses and corporations are going to, and the people that are on the IRA would still have that, but going forward they would have a 401 .

00:05:23 Speaker 3

Has any of that ever been looked into?

00:05:25 Speaker 3

Because I'm pretty sure if we did, it wouldn't end up costing up to almost $600,000 if we had looked at other options.

00:05:35 Speaker 3

That's my question.

00:05:36 Speaker 3

Have you ever looked at anything?

00:05:37 Speaker 1

We have not.

00:05:39 Speaker 1

The TCRS plan is the one that was basically brought to us as the plan that most cities go with.

00:05:49 Speaker 1

So that's one that we have dived into and are looking at now.

00:05:54 Speaker 3

I would submit to you that you already heard it from the young lady here that maybe you postpone this stuff and do a little bit more research and go with maybe going with the IRA for those that have been here for a while and bump up their IRA from the city a couple percentage points for every five years and start an IRA, see what it looks like and then come back here and say, look, these are three options that we have and the best way that we can serve our employees, which I'm all for, but not at $600,000.

00:06:20 Speaker 3

So if you go with the IRA, which has already been funded up until this point and start a 401k funded by both the city and the employee from this point forward, all the current employees would have the IRA plus the 401k when they come to retire.

00:06:35 Speaker 3

So unless you can present something like that and say, hey, these are the three options we look at, all you're doing is forcing TCRS to us and saying, here's the four options from 200.

00:06:45 Speaker 3

45,000 to almost $600,000 because that's somebody brought it to us how about if we do our due diligence and start researching and coming back to here and say look the best thing that we can afford right now would be one of these three options with this being the cheapest this being the next and this being so forth thank you thank you.

00:07:08 Speaker 6

I think uh we need to um acknowledge that they also have Social Security it's not like just they have the.

00:07:17 Speaker 1

And we have.

00:07:17 Speaker 6

Okay, yeah.

00:07:18 Speaker 6

Well, I just don't know how many people have been here before to hear that.

00:07:26 Speaker 6

They also will have social security when they retire.

00:07:29 Speaker 6

They're paying into it now like we all have.

00:07:35 Speaker 7

My name is Brent Martin.

00:07:36 Speaker 7

I live at 521 Strudwick here in Richtop.

00:07:41 Speaker 7

Alderman Center, I noticed you prayed for God's wisdom for the board.

00:07:44 Speaker 7

And for a blessing, but you've failed to mention the citizens of Ridgetown.

00:07:48 Speaker 7

And that's what we should always remember needs God's blessings too.

00:07:52 Speaker 7

And that wasn't included in your prayer.

00:07:55 Speaker 7

On the 6-0, on the 595, do we have a letter from the comptroller that that magnitude would not have any impact on our financials?

00:08:03 Speaker 7

And would you share that letter, please?

00:08:05 Speaker 1

We do not.

00:08:07 Speaker 7

So we have no feedback from the comptroller about the impact, short term or long term, on the financial stability of the city.

00:08:13 Speaker 7

We have nothing.

00:08:15 Speaker 1

Correct.

00:08:16 Speaker 7

Okay, the final question is, I have asked, others have asked how much of the $5.95 that you started pushing so hard was going to which individual employee?

00:08:28 Speaker 7

How much is she going to get?

00:08:30 Speaker 7

400?

00:08:33 Speaker 7

That's a question.

00:08:35 Speaker 1

We have done the study, and yes, the majority, not the majority, but the biggest portion of this would be coming.

00:08:43 Speaker 7

Is that over 400,000 of the 595?

00:08:45 Speaker 7

Is it 500,000?

00:08:47 Speaker 7

I need a number.

00:08:49 Speaker 8

Until we come up with a plan, we can't really give you a number.

00:08:52 Speaker 7

Yeah, you can.

00:08:53 Speaker 7

The actuary had a 595 number.

00:08:55 Speaker 7

Can we agree about that?

00:08:56 Speaker 7

That didn't come from nowhere.

00:08:59 Speaker 7

There had to be each individual participant was a coordinated number by an actuarial science and then added up to 595.

00:09:05 Speaker 7

Somebody knows the number?

00:09:08 Speaker 6

For each of them.

00:09:09 Speaker 7

For each employee, individual.

00:09:11 Speaker 7

And if she's getting 495 or 595, you need to share that with the audience because it is a handoff to her.

00:09:18 Speaker 7

That's what it is.

00:09:23 Speaker 1

Anyone else?

00:09:27 Speaker 1

Okay.

00:09:29 Speaker 1

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to discuss the various options that we have currently at our disposal.

00:09:36 Speaker 1

There's a multitude of

00:09:39 Speaker 1

plans.

00:09:41 Speaker 1

I think we have come to the conclusion that the 25 year plan is probably not the best route for us to take at this time.

00:09:52 Speaker 6

When you say we haven't all discussed that with each other.

00:09:57 Speaker 1

Well, it's been discussed and we've gotten the opinions from our citizens that the 25 year is probably not

00:10:08 Speaker 1

the route that we need to take.

00:10:10 Speaker 1

But we do have several other options that we can look at, all of which would be good options not only for our current employees, but down the road employees.

00:10:28 Speaker 1

We have done our due diligence in looking at all of these plans.

00:10:35 Speaker 1

And we have come up with plans that range anywhere from 15 down to 0.

00:10:46 Speaker 1

12, 15 years ago, it's my understanding that the previous or one previous mayor got this plan in place for our employees.

00:11:00 Speaker 1

And at that time,

00:11:02 Speaker 1

This was the only thing that the city could afford.

00:11:06 Speaker 6

That's what in place, I'm confused.

00:11:08 Speaker 1

I'm sorry.

00:11:09 Speaker 6

What did they get in place?

00:11:11 Speaker 1

The simple IRA.

00:11:12 Speaker 6

Oh, okay.

00:11:13 Speaker 6

All right, I thought you were saying the TCRS one.

00:11:16 Speaker 1

No.

00:11:16 Speaker 6

Okay, the simple IRA, yep.

00:11:18 Speaker 1

At that time, unfortunately, that's all the city could look at, could do.

00:11:31 Speaker 1

You know, we're looking at picking up those pieces and trying to get a plan in place that makes sense for everyone.

00:11:42 Speaker 1

Not only current employees, but future.

00:11:49 Speaker 1

Realistically, majority of the cities around the state, as Mr.

00:11:58 Speaker 1

Armistead had mentioned,

00:12:00 Speaker 1

are on this plan.

00:12:02 Speaker 1

It's a very good plan.

00:12:06 Speaker 1

And it's something that I think we need to look at as a city, like I said, not only for now, but for down the road.

00:12:16 Speaker 1

So that's the main purpose of what we're trying to accomplish with these plans.

00:12:25 Speaker 1

So again, we have plans

00:12:30 Speaker 1

numerous plans that go anywhere from 15 years down to zero we've got them with goal without goal we've got basic uh not basic but 401k plans that they offer through the state through the state and you know I I my opinion

00:12:58 Speaker 1

not speaking for the rest of the board, but I think we gotta do something.

00:13:04 Speaker 1

Great.

00:13:06 Speaker 5

The thing that I don't know, and I know I'm past my time, but I just wanted to ask, did you do any research on the people that are in the same size community as ours and what plans?

00:13:22 Speaker 5

Because when I did some research, I did find cities that went into it

00:13:27 Speaker 5

and then came out of it, but have a long-term cost to it.

00:13:33 Speaker 5

So I just don't know if you guys did any of that research or not, but it is a cost to factor in.

00:13:42 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:13:44 Speaker 1

Yeah, we have looked at, through the TCRS plan, we've looked at a lot of different options, in, out, and we haven't

00:13:58 Speaker 1

looked at simple IRAs or 401Ks outside of this.

00:14:06 Speaker 5

Do you realize 401Ks you can do a look back for seniorities?

00:14:16 Speaker 1

And I know that everybody keeps pinging on the fact that Ms.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

Kelly is our biggest cost.

00:14:25 Speaker 1

Yes she is.

00:14:28 Speaker 1

But to me, that's not a factor.

00:14:33 Speaker 1

She's been here 25 years, devoted 25 years to this city, saving us funds.

00:14:43 Speaker 1

You can smile and laugh all you want, Brent.

00:14:46 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:14:47 Speaker 1

Good.

00:14:48 Speaker 1

But this lady has served this community well, through thick and thin, through accusations,

00:14:58 Speaker 1

through everything under the sun and still has saved this money, this city at home money.

00:15:07 Speaker 5

Amen.

00:15:10 Speaker 1

And you know, that only goes to Kelly but the rest of our staff.

00:15:16 Speaker 1

They diligently day in and day out look after your money.

00:15:23 Speaker 5

And I guess I would say I'm not against that at all.

00:15:27 Speaker 5

I'm just trying to make sure that we factored in everything in the decision making, that's all.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

I know the term due diligence, MTAS is heavily involved in everything that we do.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

MTAS is, when I first came on the board some years back, educated us.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

Nobody who comes and sits on a board governing a city knows what they're doing.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

and we need outside assistance.

00:15:56 Speaker 2

And so we take classes.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

MTAS takes us to task and makes sure that we're schooled.

00:16:02 Speaker 2

And TCRS is one of those that they vetted and they recommend.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

So it's not just we're pulling this out of somewhere.

00:16:11 Speaker 2

We are following well-redained channels that they've developed.

00:16:17 Speaker 1

Brought this information to us.

00:16:19 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:16:21 Speaker 7

For the record, I asked Mr.

00:16:22 Speaker 7

Arnstead if he ever knew of any city TCRIs represented in the state of Tennessee, our size, that bought back 25 years of past time.

00:16:32 Speaker 7

He said no.

00:16:33 Speaker 7

You know, he said...

00:16:36 Speaker 1

At this time, citizen's comments are over.

00:16:39 Speaker 7

You don't want to hear about what he told me.

00:16:42 Speaker 1

And I understand what you're saying, but as I stated earlier in this, we're not looking at a 25-year buyback.

00:16:49 Speaker 6

He said they did not buy any back, is what he said.

00:16:54 Speaker 1

Well, that's not the information that he gave me.

00:16:59 Speaker 1

Cities have bought back.

00:17:01 Speaker 7

Put it in writing.

00:17:03 Speaker 6

Not the ones our size, he said.

00:17:05 Speaker 1

Well, cities have.

00:17:07 Speaker 1

And that's the information I got from him.

00:17:10 Speaker 6

I asked him which ones.

00:17:11 Speaker 6

He couldn't come up with them, but he said none of them.

00:17:14 Speaker 1

Okay, well let's continue on with our discussion on these plans.

00:17:19 Speaker 1

Just so everybody's aware what we're looking at.

00:17:22 Speaker 8

On this sheet here, we've got our 15, 10, 5, where is the 0 by that?

00:17:30 Speaker 1

Zero, zero.

00:17:32 Speaker 1

There's no cost.

00:17:33 Speaker 8

No cost.

00:17:34 Speaker 8

We just start out.

00:17:35 Speaker 8

Correct.

00:17:37 Speaker 8

And what would be annual up front?

00:17:41 Speaker 8

On all of these, they want either 8,000, 7,000, 5,000.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

I thought it was a monthly, if I recall correctly.

00:17:53 Speaker 2

It wasn't, you started it, it's a monthly thing.

00:17:58 Speaker 2

It's not a lump sum, correct?

00:18:00 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:18:01 Speaker 1

Correct.

00:18:04 Speaker 8

Okay.

00:18:04 Speaker 8

And I'll throw out there to start with, why do we have to go backwards at all?

00:18:13 Speaker 8

You know, we're talking 140, 215, 249.

00:18:18 Speaker 8

347,000 going backwards.

00:18:24 Speaker 8

And again, city reserve fund is not our piggy bank.

00:18:34 Speaker 8

We need to go in and write checks out of that.

00:18:38 Speaker 8

If a tornado comes through here or natural disaster of some kind and we don't have any money left in the general fund,

00:18:48 Speaker 8

How do we rebuild City Hall?

00:18:50 Speaker 8

How do we rebuild the fire hall if we spend it all ahead of time?

00:18:58 Speaker 1

One well taken.

00:19:00 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's why we need to discuss and see what our best option is.

00:19:06 Speaker 1

Currently, as we've stated in the past, our general fund has grown considerably over the last five,

00:19:17 Speaker 1

years the city is sound and that's that's why we're looking now at the prospect of you know a good package our reserve fund just to give you a reference correct me Kelly if I'm wrong here but

00:19:47 Speaker 1

has risen over the last six years from, I think it was 1.7 to a little over 3 currently.

00:19:57 Speaker 1

We do have the funds available.

00:20:01 Speaker 1

Do we have $595,000 as everybody likes to keep looking at?

00:20:09 Speaker 1

But we do have the funds in our account right now to do something adequate.

00:20:17 Speaker 2

Let me ask the question, why 15, 18 years ago when retirement plans were being discussed, why wasn't something done then?

00:20:27 Speaker 2

I think there was a, I was sick the one meeting several months back when someone stood up and goes, well this is your responsibility to handle this.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

Citizen said this.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

And my response would have been back to them, because they were actually a board member at that time, 15, 18 years ago.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

My response would have been, well, no, it was yours 15, 18 years ago to do this.

00:20:51 Speaker 2

Why wasn't this done?

00:20:53 Speaker 2

You have some information on why we didn't, why this city did not do, yes.

00:21:00 Speaker 1

Due to a major lawsuit that the city was involved in, to the tune of $600,000.

00:21:11 Speaker 1

that curtailed our ability to do anything.

00:21:15 Speaker 2

So the city paid out $600,000 to settle a lawsuit.

00:21:20 Speaker 1

Correct.

00:21:22 Speaker 1

Correct.

00:21:24 Speaker 1

So that's why the decision was made at that time to do the simple IRA.

00:21:31 Speaker 1

And this simple IRA, just so everybody fully understands, yeah, it's a retirement package for the employees.

00:21:41 Speaker 1

But based on the numbers that I've looked at, you know, they might get $200 a month.

00:21:51 Speaker 1

Is that adequate?

00:21:53 Speaker 1

Well, with their Social Security.

00:21:55 Speaker 1

If they have Social Security.

00:21:56 Speaker 6

Why wouldn't they have Social Security?

00:21:58 Speaker 1

They have to pay in.

00:22:00 Speaker 6

Well, that's all I have.

00:22:02 Speaker 1

Well, that's all I got, but, you know, I'm looking for something better.

00:22:09 Speaker 1

Again, I can't state it enough.

00:22:12 Speaker 1

I'm looking for something better for not only current, but future.

00:22:21 Speaker 1

You know, you've got all of our cities surrounding us that are on these type plans or this plan.

00:22:29 Speaker 1

How are we going to recruit?

00:22:33 Speaker 6

Well, if they came to us, wouldn't they be going forward anyway?

00:22:39 Speaker 1

If we have a plan in place.

00:22:42 Speaker 6

So we have one that goes forward.

00:22:46 Speaker 1

Well, I'm looking to take care of past discrepancies as well.

00:22:53 Speaker 1

There's been a lot of things over the past six years that this board has had to deal with that couldn't be dealt with in the past.

00:23:03 Speaker 2

Or weren't.

00:23:04 Speaker 1

Or weren't because of the financial situation of the city.

00:23:10 Speaker 6

Specifically, what are you referring to, Tim?

00:23:13 Speaker 1

Police.

00:23:14 Speaker 1

We had a police department that absorbed the majority of our budget.

00:23:18 Speaker 1

Roads couldn't be paved.

00:23:20 Speaker 1

Parks couldn't be maintained.

00:23:22 Speaker 1

Bridge couldn't be rebuilt because we didn't have the funds.

00:23:27 Speaker 6

The police department pretty much supported themselves.

00:23:30 Speaker 1

No.

00:23:31 Speaker 7

They sold less over $300,000.

00:23:33 Speaker 6

Yeah.

00:23:35 Speaker 2

The number that I saw back to 2019, the last year was that was that operating?

00:23:40 Speaker 2

Was it 19 or 20?

00:23:42 Speaker 2

Do you remember?

00:23:43 Speaker 2

MTAS gave us 19.

00:23:45 Speaker 2

MTAS gave us all the information.

00:23:48 Speaker 2

76% of the police department was not being funded by the city.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

It was being funded by ticket writing.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

That was the issue that was going on.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

Tickets.

00:24:00 Speaker 2

And more and more tickets being written.

00:24:04 Speaker 2

That's not revenue.

00:24:05 Speaker 2

Tickets, it's not revenue to help pay for police department.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

The city didn't have the funds to do it, but it was paying for it with ticket revenue.

00:24:18 Speaker 1

And not only that, the additional expenses were coming out of our budget that didn't allow us to properly maintain the city.

00:24:28 Speaker 2

I know two years ago we had to, we found out about two or three years back

00:24:34 Speaker 2

that the gas infrastructure in the city, the large gas valves that maintain where the gas gets dispersed throughout the community.

00:24:46 Speaker 2

It turns out the main valves were all, was a cast iron and obsolete dating back almost 10 years.

00:24:53 Speaker 2

And they should have been looked at, examined, and replaced

00:24:58 Speaker 2

year after year and put in ones that were relevant for today.

00:25:02 Speaker 2

Instead, we were faced with all of these gas valves that were obsolete and failing.

00:25:08 Speaker 2

And if you notice, I don't have the numbers here, but when you look at the budget, the sewer department has exactly $350,000 more in its fund than the gas department because we made the decision two, two, two and a half years ago to replace every gas valve.

00:25:24 Speaker 2

to ensure the safety of the city.

00:25:26 Speaker 2

But that was a massive expense, a massive capital outlay, $350,000.

00:25:31 Speaker 2

We did that because it was the right thing to do.

00:25:34 Speaker 2

Sheddon Road, which should have been done 15 years ago, would have cost about 150,000.

00:25:41 Speaker 2

We got it done and it was a cost of 500.

00:25:44 Speaker 2

So we have been going through and correcting things throughout the city.

00:25:48 Speaker 2

It's costing more money today than it did 10, 15, 20 years ago.

00:25:54 Speaker 2

Now I know that the employees were promised, when I say promised, I wasn't here, I didn't hear any of the discussions.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

But I know that there was a plan to get them on some type of retirement, but the city couldn't because of that lawsuit.

00:26:11 Speaker 2

The city wrote a check for over $600,000 to settle.

00:26:15 Speaker 2

Insurance didn't cover all that.

00:26:17 Speaker 2

The city paid $600,000.

00:26:19 Speaker 2

to cover that lawsuit.

00:26:20 Speaker 2

So the funds weren't there to set up the retirement plan then.

00:26:25 Speaker 2

But we're trying to correct that now.

00:26:29 Speaker 6

So are you saying everything that's ever happened in the city, the citizens are required or are supposed to make up for?

00:26:38 Speaker 2

Not necessarily, but the Shedden Road Bridge had to be done, had to be fixed.

00:26:43 Speaker 6

Yeah.

00:26:44 Speaker 2

It was a

00:26:45 Speaker 2

It was a disaster waiting to happen when the floods came and EMS couldn't get because the bridge was being flooded over.

00:26:51 Speaker 8

But that's another good reason not to deplete our general funding.

00:26:58 Speaker 2

Not disagreeing with you.

00:26:59 Speaker 6

Thank you.

00:27:00 Speaker 2

No one here is saying we're going to do 25 years.

00:27:03 Speaker 2

Tim's already said that's off the table.

00:27:06 Speaker 2

Can we look at some of these other options that are available?

00:27:10 Speaker 7

Did you see the letter on Mayor Reasoner?

00:27:14 Speaker 7

When he wrote, everybody said the city is in excellent financial condition.

00:27:19 Speaker 7

I have a copy of the letter if you don't recall it.

00:27:21 Speaker 7

We are doing so good.

00:27:23 Speaker 7

We have no debt.

00:27:24 Speaker 7

It was a well-written letter.

00:27:25 Speaker 7

I still have a copy when he left office about how great a shape he told the citizens we were in.

00:27:31 Speaker 7

Would you like a copy of the letter?

00:27:33 Speaker 8

Not necessary, but on some of these plans, back to our retirement plans,

00:27:41 Speaker 8

I don't see any line item in here for employee contribution.

00:27:46 Speaker 8

Everything is the city pays, employer pays, but I'm not seeing anything where the employee has any contribution in any of these retirement plans.

00:27:58 Speaker 1

In these retirement plans, the employees are required to contribute 5%.

00:28:06 Speaker 8

It's not showing it in here.

00:28:11 Speaker 6

On a going forward basis, correct.

00:28:13 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:28:14 Speaker 6

Yes, OK.

00:28:15 Speaker 5

That's what they said when they were here.

00:28:17 Speaker 6

Yeah.

00:28:17 Speaker 2

Yeah, employees are required to contribute 5% of their monthly salary unless employee contribution is assumed by the city of Ridgetop.

00:28:25 Speaker 2

And that's not what we're advocating.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

They will be putting in that 5%.

00:28:29 Speaker 6

OK, yep.

00:28:32 Speaker 1

So again, we have numerous plans that we need to consider, should consider.

00:28:41 Speaker 1

and correct, rectify, however you want to put this, past inability to do such is the best way I can put this.

00:28:59 Speaker 1

I'll go on record as saying, should we purchase back years?

00:29:04 Speaker 1

I think so, yes.

00:29:07 Speaker 1

I think they deserve it.

00:29:13 Speaker 1

Now how many years we want to take back and look at, my personal stance is 15.

00:29:25 Speaker 1

And I think it's a realistic number.

00:29:30 Speaker 1

As stated in the previous meeting,

00:29:35 Speaker 1

There's $100,000 that's coming back to the city through government that can be applied toward whatever plan we decide upon.

00:29:52 Speaker 1

So that lowers the hit that the city actually is going to take, and I don't look at it as a hit.

00:30:00 Speaker 1

I look at it as an investment.

00:30:02 Speaker 4

Is that match money, the 100,000?

00:30:04 Speaker 1

Match money.

00:30:05 Speaker 4

Yeah, well, the city pays 100 and the government gives you 100 match?

00:30:08 Speaker 4

No.

00:30:09 Speaker 2

That's state or federal, do you know?

00:30:11 Speaker 1

Federal, state, state.

00:30:14 Speaker 4

It doesn't have anything to do with the two series plan.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

No, no, I'm saying it was during COVID and essential employees and they were giving the city 100,000.

00:30:24 Speaker 2

Was that coming from a state or the federal level?

00:30:26 Speaker 2

I'm curious.

00:30:27 Speaker 2

Federal.

00:30:28 Speaker 1

Okay.

00:30:30 Speaker 1

So that's another consideration that we need to look at.

00:30:38 Speaker 4

But that money was had nothing to do with this.

00:30:41 Speaker 4

That was just essential for essential employees during that time.

00:30:48 Speaker 8

15 years, we're looking right at $250,000.

00:30:51 Speaker 8

Yes.

00:30:51 Speaker 8

That's an awful big check to write out of somebody else's checkbook.

00:31:02 Speaker 1

It is.

00:31:03 Speaker 6

Yeah.

00:31:05 Speaker 1

I agree.

00:31:05 Speaker 6

Same with tax, 214,000, five years, 139,470.

00:31:11 Speaker 6

It's a lot of money.

00:31:15 Speaker 1

Again, these are our options that we need to look at.

00:31:20 Speaker 1

You know, us as a board have to look at, you know, tough decision.

00:31:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, this is a tough decision, but again,

00:31:32 Speaker 1

I've voiced my opinion as to what I think our employees deserve.

00:31:41 Speaker 8

Yeah, well, again, if we got two corners up here at the red light that are vacant at the time being, if somebody would go in there and build some commerce, there's properties out next to the love properties, somebody would go in there and build an industrial complex, our revenues could double overnight.

00:32:03 Speaker 8

But these lots have set empty for years.

00:32:07 Speaker 8

At the moment, nothing, we had something lined up for the far corner, the north side, it fell through.

00:32:17 Speaker 8

Again, if we go, say with the minimum, and then we get a windfall, some of these areas do develop.

00:32:26 Speaker 8

Then we got some revenue.

00:32:28 Speaker 8

We got $200,000 a year going to the county,

00:32:32 Speaker 8

so they can come up here and write tickets in our town, which we see no revenue back from it.

00:32:39 Speaker 8

That $200,000 would just about pay for that plan.

00:32:45 Speaker 8

But without the revenue, where are we going to get this other, even with the 15 year, that's $7,000 a year that we've got to pay for it.

00:32:59 Speaker 2

On the hybrid plan that you're looking at?

00:33:00 Speaker 8

Yeah, the hybrid plan.

00:33:02 Speaker 8

That says initial annual cost.

00:33:07 Speaker 6

It will go up annually.

00:33:10 Speaker 8

But where does this money come from?

00:33:13 Speaker 8

Do we cut back 7, 8, 9, $10,000 out of streets?

00:33:18 Speaker 8

Do we take 5 out of streets, 5 out of parks?

00:33:23 Speaker 8

Where do we get this revenue without tapping general fund every year?

00:33:29 Speaker 8

Yeah, we're already maxed out on our budget.

00:33:34 Speaker 8

Again, $200,000 goes to the county every year.

00:33:38 Speaker 8

That was right at just about the pace of that plan.

00:33:41 Speaker 6

Well, we've had to up our costs with the sewer department, right?

00:33:48 Speaker 6

Yeah, sewer mills just went up because we didn't

00:33:52 Speaker 6

put back enough money in the budget.

00:33:54 Speaker 2

No, the cost of maintaining the infrastructure, all the everything's gone up, so it's costing more to make repairs to maintain, so we have to adjust that.

00:34:06 Speaker 6

But they have quite a bit, they've always had quite a bit of money.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

There's over $1,000,000 in each account, yes.

00:34:15 Speaker 6

And we're moaning about

00:34:19 Speaker 6

charging people, I mean, we're still charging people who don't get services for their sewer.

00:34:24 Speaker 6

I mean, they're not, they're paying for it, but they don't use it.

00:34:28 Speaker 6

Why?

00:34:28 Speaker 6

I don't understand that.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

I was advocating having it reduced myself.

00:34:35 Speaker 6

Well, yeah, reduced, but you know, when you think about how much money is in the kitty, it doesn't make sense to charge them at all.

00:34:45 Speaker 6

especially when they were supposed to get a refund at one point and have stopped making the payments to start with.

00:34:54 Speaker 6

We've all heard that story.

00:34:57 Speaker 7

Mr.

00:34:57 Speaker 7

Mayor, could I ask each of you to speak if you had any feedback with the citizens?

00:35:01 Speaker 7

In your positions, I'm sure, or I'm not sure, I'm asking if you had any phone calls, anybody strongly in favor, anybody strong, what has your experience, each one of you, been with the citizens?

00:35:15 Speaker 1

Three.

00:35:15 Speaker 7

You've had three calls?

00:35:17 Speaker 7

I'm sorry?

00:35:18 Speaker 7

Yes.

00:35:19 Speaker 7

Were they all in favor of this?

00:35:21 Speaker 1

No.

00:35:22 Speaker 7

How about you?

00:35:23 Speaker 2

I had mixed.

00:35:24 Speaker 2

It was most-- How many?

00:35:26 Speaker 2

Huh?

00:35:26 Speaker 2

How many calls?

00:35:26 Speaker 2

Four, three against, one four.

00:35:30 Speaker 8

I've talked to several different people.

00:35:33 Speaker 8

I've talked to, now I haven't talked to the office personnel, but I've talked to the majority of the employees out in the city.

00:35:42 Speaker 8

And of course, they all would like to have the best plan available.

00:35:45 Speaker 8

Sure.

00:35:46 Speaker 8

And they're all on retirement, and I don't blame them.

00:35:50 Speaker 8

But as far as the general citizenry, and again, most of them are in favor of a retirement plan.

00:35:57 Speaker 8

They're just not in favor of the buybacks.

00:36:00 Speaker 7

Alderman Martin, would you?

00:36:02 Speaker 6

I've talked to a lot of people in our neighborhood because I walk my dogs up and down the street and everyone I've spoke to, I've probably spoken to close to 20 people and they all thought any buybacks were ridiculous.

00:36:18 Speaker 1

Okay, again, we need to discuss this as a board and decide what we think is best for our city.

00:36:31 Speaker 6

Well, isn't that what we're doing here tonight?

00:36:32 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:36:33 Speaker 6

It is.

00:36:34 Speaker 1

It is.

00:36:36 Speaker 6

And-- So we've already taken the 25 off the table, is it, Deb?

00:36:41 Speaker 1

Yep, 25 has been off the table.

00:36:43 Speaker 6

Okay, well, that's the first I've heard it.

00:36:47 Speaker 1

So I think we need to look at, again, my opinion is 15.

00:36:56 Speaker 1

I think it's an adequate plan.

00:36:59 Speaker 1

It's a good start for us.

00:37:01 Speaker 1

in our current situation.

00:37:06 Speaker 1

Again, the city is sound.

00:37:11 Speaker 1

We have managed to do all these projects and still build our reserve fund.

00:37:22 Speaker 1

And again, I can't reiterate enough, we were able to do that because of the staff

00:37:31 Speaker 1

They watch your money.

00:37:34 Speaker 1

They keep us in line.

00:37:40 Speaker 1

And we've grown.

00:37:41 Speaker 1

We're still debt free.

00:37:46 Speaker 1

And have no plans of going into debt.

00:37:52 Speaker 1

And my main purpose of this is to say

00:38:00 Speaker 1

Now's the time to do it.

00:38:06 Speaker 1

We've brought this city a long way.

00:38:07 Speaker 1

I'm very comfortable in my skin, knowing that we've done things for this city that needed to be done, and we'll continue to do it.

00:38:20 Speaker 2

How many streets have been paved in the six years?

00:38:23 Speaker 1

20 to 25.

00:38:25 Speaker 2

That was 26 is what it was, 26 streets have been paved.

00:38:29 Speaker 2

Pioneer Park has been rebuilt, shed and roads have been done, gas infrastructure.

00:38:34 Speaker 2

We've taken on many projects and got them accomplished.

00:38:37 Speaker 2

And with all of those projects being accomplished, we've gone from 1.6 to 1.7 of the general fund where it was turned over to over $3 million.

00:38:47 Speaker 2

I think that's pretty good management.

00:38:51 Speaker 6

What about all these grants and all the other things that we were working on?

00:38:56 Speaker 6

And I know that as of January, there'll be another grant that we can apply for again.

00:39:03 Speaker 6

I can't remember which one it was for, we had so many up in the air.

00:39:06 Speaker 2

Yeah, we were looking, we were trying to get a grant to get the Greenway over on Lennon surface, but we didn't get that.

00:39:15 Speaker 2

We were looking at a grant prior to the beginning of the year

00:39:20 Speaker 2

the sidewalk from said Lim Circle all the way to 41 that got that got nixed when um D and so that was that was done away with um we were waiting on the fire engine block grant have we heard anything on the fire engine that we're looking at no so we've got quite a few grants that we've applied for things we're still waiting on we did get have we got any ground on the park yet for some of the repairs we're looking at how much was that one uh.

00:39:49 Speaker 1

No, we haven't gotten a figure on that one as of yet.

00:39:51 Speaker 1

But we've applied for $100,000.

00:39:54 Speaker 2

So we have been granted that.

00:39:57 Speaker 2

We just don't know how much yet.

00:40:00 Speaker 6

So what about the Webb property?

00:40:03 Speaker 2

No, we have not.

00:40:04 Speaker 2

That's been set aside.

00:40:06 Speaker 6

Set aside.

00:40:07 Speaker 2

Set aside.

00:40:08 Speaker 6

But I understood that we could apply for the grant after the first of the year.

00:40:12 Speaker 6

It could be, yes.

00:40:13 Speaker 6

So is that in somebody's back pocket that we're not talking about?

00:40:16 Speaker 6

No.

00:40:19 Speaker 2

No.

00:40:19 Speaker 6

Okay.

00:40:20 Speaker 2

It's not because the Webb family, the Webbs are in very poor health.

00:40:25 Speaker 2

The children, well, I'm not going to speak for them.

00:40:30 Speaker 2

I would say they're going in another direction.

00:40:32 Speaker 2

What they had offered it to the city for several years back, they would be expecting a much larger amount now.

00:40:39 Speaker 6

Of course.

00:40:41 Speaker 4

Excuse me, we're in a special call meeting and you guys are supposed to stick to serious?

00:40:46 Speaker 2

Sorry, yes.

00:40:47 Speaker 4

Yeah, sorry.

00:40:48 Speaker 1

So.

00:40:52 Speaker 8

And again, I do want to reiterate, I'm not against the employees at all, because we do have some very good employees.

00:41:01 Speaker 8

I'm just trying to come in at this at a reasonable dollar.

00:41:06 Speaker 8

And I fully want the employees to have some type of retirement.

00:41:12 Speaker 8

I just am not comfortable with buyback programs.

00:41:15 Speaker 8

It's nothing against the employees.

00:41:19 Speaker 8

I want that on record.

00:41:21 Speaker 8

I'm just looking at it for the citizens and how we can save money.

00:41:28 Speaker 6

The feedback has been unanimous as far as I can tell.

00:41:34 Speaker 6

I haven't had one person think that any part of that was a good idea.

00:41:37 Speaker 6

No years.

00:41:40 Speaker 1

Well, again, I've had three that have come to me via text.

00:41:48 Speaker 1

But I've had also a few that have come to me and are for it.

00:41:57 Speaker 6

For bifax.

00:41:58 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:41:59 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:42:00 Speaker 1

That they firmly believe that, you know, the citizens deserve it.

00:42:06 Speaker 1

So again, this is a decision that, you know, we've got to look at and see what's best.

00:42:16 Speaker 1

But I do feel that we need to move this forward and resolve it, one way or the other.

00:42:22 Speaker 8

Yeah, we can't keep kicking the can.

00:42:24 Speaker 8

Nope.

00:42:25 Speaker 8

None.

00:42:26 Speaker 8

We don't do something or whatever it is that.

00:42:29 Speaker 8

Something has to be done.

00:42:32 Speaker 1

Well, on this end, what I'd like to recommend is that we have another special call meeting.

00:42:39 Speaker 1

I think Thursday is available, 5:30.

00:42:47 Speaker 1

and see if we can just put this to rest.

00:42:52 Speaker 1

This Thursday.

00:42:52 Speaker 6

What's going to change between now and next Thursday?

00:42:56 Speaker 2

A vote.

00:42:57 Speaker 6

Oh, we'll bring it to a vote.

00:42:59 Speaker 1

Bring it to a vote.

00:43:00 Speaker 6

Okay, so you're saying that we would put all of the rest of them into a vote?

00:43:03 Speaker 6

How would we vote that?

00:43:07 Speaker 1

Then we just go down one by one and see which one we can get in.

00:43:16 Speaker 4

What's it cost to put a vote to the citizens?

00:43:19 Speaker 4

What's the cost going into that?

00:43:20 Speaker 4

It's not procedure.

00:43:24 Speaker 1

No.

00:43:27 Speaker 1

So that's my recommendation is everybody will be available unfortunately.

00:43:35 Speaker 1

We could have done it tonight, but Monty had a death in the family and was unable to make it.

00:43:44 Speaker 1

So I propose that we just meet Thursday.

00:43:49 Speaker 6

How about we take out the 15 years too then and call it down somewhat?

00:43:53 Speaker 8

I've got another meeting this coming Thursday.

00:43:57 Speaker 1

Okay.

00:44:00 Speaker 1

What other dates do we have available, Kelly?

00:44:21 Speaker 4

Your next available is probably going to be either Friday or the 16th the 6th or the 16th.

00:44:38 Speaker 2

The 6th I think you've got.

00:44:41 Speaker 4

You're right.

00:44:42 Speaker 4

You're right.

00:44:43 Speaker 4

The 16th.

00:44:44 Speaker 1

Why don't we shoot for Friday?

00:44:45 Speaker 6

This Friday.

00:44:46 Speaker 4

Pardon.

00:44:47 Speaker 4

He said that's Mayor.

00:44:48 Speaker 4

I don't know.

00:44:48 Speaker 6

I can come home and look at my calendar.

00:44:50 Speaker 2

On the sixth.

00:44:52 Speaker 6

But it seems like we're being there.

00:44:55 Speaker 6

If we could take 15 hours, that would give us a little more room.

00:44:59 Speaker 2

What time on Friday?

00:45:03 Speaker 1

Same time, 5:30.

00:45:07 Speaker 6

That makes it hard for people who work to get to the meetings.

00:45:10 Speaker 8

Yeah, too early people coming home from work.

00:45:13 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:45:14 Speaker 1

5:30?

00:45:14 Speaker 1

Sound good?

00:45:19 Speaker 2

Calendar on Friday, you know it better than I do right now, babe.

00:45:24 Speaker 6

You're open.

00:45:25 Speaker 4

I don't know if I don't know.

00:45:27 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:45:30 Speaker 4

I don't know about Monty's schedule on Friday.

00:45:33 Speaker 4

I know he's available on the 16th, but I don't know about the 6th.

00:45:36 Speaker 4

I can check with him tomorrow.

00:45:38 Speaker 3

Okay.

00:45:39 Speaker 4

So.

00:45:40 Speaker 2

Well, I'll go ahead and say something here.

00:45:42 Speaker 2

I've said it in other places.

00:45:45 Speaker 2

I view the city employees as assets.

00:45:49 Speaker 2

I know that all of these different things, the parks, the fire department,

00:45:55 Speaker 2

the museum, our office, everything that we spend money to maintain, take care of, upgrade, correct, and repair, those are all city assets.

00:46:05 Speaker 2

We're hoping to replace a fire engine over here with a grant because we can't afford the 800, $900,000 it's gonna cost.

00:46:14 Speaker 2

We're hoping to get a grant, was it five or 600 to help go towards that.

00:46:19 Speaker 2

I know we went to great expense to rebuild Pioneer Park.

00:46:23 Speaker 2

And every single office worker and city worker has been involved in a lot of the different repairs and upgrades and getting grants and helping the city maintain itself, pay for things.

00:46:37 Speaker 2

They have been invaluable.

00:46:39 Speaker 2

The assets the city has, the best ones we've got are its employees.

00:46:43 Speaker 1

They're our number one asset.

00:46:45 Speaker 2

I am open for something to help them towards that retirement.

00:46:50 Speaker 2

I don't know what it is.

00:46:52 Speaker 2

I will be voting on it, whatever we can get past.

00:46:56 Speaker 2

I just see them as human assets, just like the rest of this city that we've taken care of and done our best with it.

00:47:04 Speaker 2

So that's where I stand.

00:47:10 Speaker 1

Okay, so right now we'll shoot for or do we need to vote on this?

00:47:16 Speaker 4

I'll check to see if

00:47:19 Speaker 4

about Friday, November the 6th or Monday the 16th and let you guys know tomorrow.

00:47:25 Speaker 1

Okay.

00:47:25 Speaker 9

Did you say Monday the 16th?

00:47:29 Speaker 9

We have a park board meeting and I'm sure Miss Anna would be willing to switch it, but we had to vote to switch that.

00:47:36 Speaker 9

So I know we have a park board meeting at 6:30.

00:47:37 Speaker 3

I think it's still scheduled for the 10th because that's what's posted on the front door.

00:47:44 Speaker 9

I just talked to her the day and she said it's the 16th.

00:47:47 Speaker 3

I've seen it posted Saturday when I dropped the mail.

00:47:50 Speaker 4

She confirmed with me the 10th.

00:47:53 Speaker 9

Okay, I just, okay, because I was trying to confirm for my, the things I've got to get done, and so I just talked to her a couple days ago, so I will talk to her.

00:48:02 Speaker 4

Because I did send a message and asked her, which was the 10th still the right day, and she confirmed the 10th, unless something's changed since then, because I didn't post it.

00:48:10 Speaker 9

Let me send her a text.

00:48:12 Speaker 4

Yeah, it's on my calendar for the 10th, too.

00:48:14 Speaker 3

Yes, we did.

00:48:16 Speaker 3

You weren't here.

00:48:20 Speaker 2

They switched it to the 16th.

00:48:21 Speaker 2

I was there when they switched it to the 16th.

00:48:25 Speaker 9

Because the 10th is our normal second Tuesday.

00:48:27 Speaker 4

Right.

00:48:29 Speaker 1

All right, so you'll confirm that with...

00:48:32 Speaker 6

What were the dates again?

00:48:34 Speaker 6

11th what?

00:48:35 Speaker 4

The 6th or the 16th?

00:48:38 Speaker 6

Or the 16th, okay.

00:48:43 Speaker 6

I make a motion that we close the meeting.

00:48:45 Speaker 3

Can I ask a question before you do that, ma'am?

00:48:48 Speaker 3

Sure.

00:48:48 Speaker 3

Something was brought up today that it's the first time I've heard it.

00:48:52 Speaker 3

You were talking about the grant for the freeway extension was canceled or something?

00:48:58 Speaker 3

How come we're just not finding out about it?

00:48:59 Speaker 4

You can't.

00:49:00 Speaker 3

We.

00:49:02 Speaker 2

Can't discuss that.

00:49:03 Speaker 2

That's not what the meeting's for, gentlemen.

00:49:06 Speaker 4

Ask the question after the meeting.

00:49:07 Speaker 3

Well, you brought it up at the meeting.

00:49:09 Speaker 3

So I'm asking a question about something that was brought up at this meeting, whether it was intended or not that didn't.

00:49:14 Speaker 3

We're putting in for grants that you're canceling.

00:49:16 Speaker 3

Why don't you tell the people?

00:49:17 Speaker 3

So I don't tell people, hey, they're going to build a greenway for you so you don't have to walk in in traffic.

00:49:22 Speaker 3

So I come to a meeting and I find out that it's been canceled.

00:49:24 Speaker 3

Who knows how long?

00:49:26 Speaker 3

And we brought this up before about communication is really, really bad.

00:49:29 Speaker 3

It just outfit.

00:49:32 Speaker 3

Thank you.

00:49:33 Speaker 4

Thank you.

00:49:36 Speaker 1

I'll second it.

00:49:39 Speaker 1

Any questions?

00:49:42 Speaker 1

All in favor.

00:49:43 Speaker 4

Aye.