

**BUDGET MESSAGE
FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023
CITY OF STAFFORD
BY Mayor Cecil Willis
17 AUGUST 2022**

President Ronald Wilson Reagan once stated, “We don't have inflation because the people are living too well. We have inflation because the Government is living too well”.

President William Jefferson Clinton later stated, “It’s the economy stupid”.

Yes, we are experiencing both and trying to make sense of it all. Thomas Paine stated, “These are times that try men’s souls”. What an interesting and intriguing time we are living in with multiple opportunities for success and “we will prevail”.

As stated last year in my message, “the proof is in the pudding”. We have stayed grounded in our sound budget principles:

- Balanced budget**
- No diminished services**
- Enhanced and streamlined operations**

- **Rebuilt fund balance**

These concepts continue to serve us well as we move the City forward together.

Stafford is a complete City where we can live, work, play, and have a great educational opportunity. More opportunities are developing in all areas. We have the advantage of being located in one of the fastest growing counties in America. We are also a very diverse community in a diverse county. In my opinion, each of these elements supports the other. I am proud to state for the 2nd year, my administration has met and exceeded these principles and goals.

The guiding principles I've mentioned continue to serve us well. Again, I want to recognize all of those that have preceded us and served the City. Each one helped to get us where we are today.

This budget continues to lead us to achieve our stated principles. This administration continues to stay focused on the state of the economy, which is our "life's blood". I'm proud to state that we continue to rank between #64 and #69 in sales tax receipts in the entire State of Texas each month. Development and redevelopment, along with improved mobility projects, continue to strengthen our infrastructure.

For the 28th consecutive year, this budget is based on a ZERO CITY PROPERTY TAX. This budget would not have been possible without the strong professional staff this administration has assembled. I want to recognize all of them for their contribution. Once again, the lead member is Ms. Alka Shah. Her over 27 years of government finance has been invaluable. Our new Assistant City Secretary, Ms. Shandra Phillips was invaluable in transcribing my notes to produce this document. Again, let me say “thank all of you” for your contribution.

This budget will be very transparent with an improved coding system as we continue following commonly accepted and approved best accounting practices. The staff, as they did last year, built their budgets from the bottom up to make sure we met our daily needs for operating. From that point we looked at how to improve in efficiency as well as adding additional services. In that light, we have been able to add the following personnel this year in new or modified positions:

- Staff accountant finance department.**
- Contract part time grant assistant.**
- Part time human resources assistant.**
- Code compliance officer (rental).**

- **Project manager for development services.**
- **Modified contract part time GIS position.**
- **Economic development position.**

This administration will continue to evaluate and monitor each opportunity we have to improve our procedures and operation. The total budget for the General Fund is \$31,679,584.00 with a total personnel cost of \$19,417,630.00, which is 71% of the budget. We currently have 175 full time, 6 full time in contingency, and 85 part time positions proposed in this budget.

The City continues to maintain its A+ rating from Standard and Poor's. The police department recently received the award of "Accredited Law Enforcement Agency" from the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Accreditation Program for the 2nd time. Our peers are noticing that Stafford is leading the way.

Our Fire Department continues to excel at the many opportunities we face, not only performing in an outstanding manner within our City but also assisting our neighboring entities in our county and statewide. Elements of our other departments are also able to assist our neighboring entities.

This budget will also provide for salary adjustments in several categories and positions for our great staff. As

I have previously mentioned, I will be extremely vigilant of our fund balances. These are our savings account and will allow us to meet the many opportunities that have and will confront us.

When I took office December 14, 2020 and inherited a budget, our projected fund balance for the General Fund was \$1,213,392.00. This budget projects an \$8,554,126.00 Fund balance, which is a 705% increase in just 2 years. The new financial policies that have been implemented have served us well. Just to refresh everyone's memory, we have a new fund balance policy and purchasing policy. We tweaked the purchase order policy and the agenda request and payment clearance forms. These simple efforts have paid dividends. This coming year we will add, an improved time clock payroll preparation process.

Now that we have covered the finance and personnel side, what's new in the capital side:

- Police- 5 vehicles.**
- Fire- 1 vehicle (grassfires), 3 new SUVs, and 20 replacement vests.**
- IT- Server Room HVAC system, Two Firewalls and Security Appliances, Colocation Facilities**

rental, Two Cisco Management switches, APC Symetra UPS purchase and installation.

- Permits- GIS equipment.
- Parks and Grounds- 6 new mowers.
- Street- 1 million (maintenance), 4 mowers, and tractors.
- Code Compliance- New computer, iPad, and software program.
- Recreation- Pool furniture, lifeguard chairs, and restroom partition doors.
- Stafford Centre- New chillers, lighting, and furniture.

Total cost of \$3,487,712.00

Another area addressed in this budget is continuing to address a component entity of the City, The Stafford Municipal School District. Our commitment to The Stafford Municipal School District has continued in all areas and we have expanded in some areas. This budget continues to fund the activities we have pursued throughout the years. Some examples of these are joint use of facilities, continued funding of SAT/ACT Testing for Stafford residents, security, maintenance facilities, and co-hosting events. This is how the term, "We Are

One” originated. Looking forward, I feel we will have many more opportunities.

CONCLUSION

What observations might we have after the implementation of this budget.

#1 We have to stay constantly vigilant in this most unforeseen time we are living in.

#2 We must stay focused on the economic climate of not only Stafford but statewide, nationally, and globally. The only thing we can control to some extent is our expenditures. These are the same factors that each individual and organization faces.

We must continue to build our fund balance to anticipate any unforeseen situations. We have already faced several in the past 2+ years, “it’s no longer whether but when”.

But it’s not all gloom and doom despite what the naysayers and distractors are saying. Stafford and its citizens working together have persevered and accomplished many special and extraordinary things and will continue to do so.

We have prided ourselves in our diversity and it is truly something to be proud of. I urge everyone to

continue to embrace this important fabric of our community, but constantly be vigilant of those few elements that try to divide us and drive a wedge in our community.

Now, I gladly submit this budget and all its elements to City Council for their consideration. This budget meets the elements of what we know are important, protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our great City and its citizens.

Respectfully submitted by:



Cecil Willis

Mayor, City of Stafford

Submitted by the Mayor to the City Secretary on August 17, 2022 at 2:28 AM / PM.

Roxanne Benitez, City Secretary

By: Roxanne Benitez