

# Before there is the Christmas season, there is . . .

The Bethlehem Gadfly Budget, Serious Issues November 2, 2019

 1st in a series of posts on the 2020 Budget 

. . . the Budget season.

At 6PM next Wednesday (not Tuesday, which is Election Day), that is, before the regular Council meeting, City Council meets as a Committee of the Whole to discuss the 2020-2024 Capital Program.

*A committee of the whole is a meeting of a deliberative assembly according to modified procedural rules based on those of a committee. The committee includes all members of the assembly, except that some officers may be replaced. As with other committees, the activities of a committee of the whole are limited to considering and making recommendations on matters that the assembly has referred to it; it cannot take up other matters or vote directly on the assembly's business. The purpose of a committee of the whole is to relax the usual limits on debate, allowing a more open exchange of views without the urgency of a final vote. After debating, the committee submits its conclusions to the assembly (that is, to itself) and business continues according to the normal rules.*

The 7-member City Council has several sub-committees (such as the Community Development committee that considered the CDBG funding with the Co-Op issue that we are covering now) usually made up of 3 members. Those sub-committees consider proposed legislation and, if approved, pass it on to the full City Council for final determination.

As a Committee of the Whole, all 7 members participate, and then their action is again considered by the same 7 members acting as the City Council.

Budgets represent the will of the City.

Establishing and approving the City budget is perhaps the highest responsibility of City Council.

Let the budget season begin.

The schedule for 2020 budget hearings will be announced at Council Wednesday.

Join with Gadfly looking at his very first Capital Program.

### **2020-2024 Capital Plan**

Find here 15 pages of dollar figures followed by 13 pages of project descriptions attached to those dollar figures.

First, allow yourself to be a bit awed at the minute detail and micro-thinking behind such a report.

For instance: “There are currently 218 light poles along Route 378.”

Then Gadfly suggests scanning the description section of the plan seeing what jumps out at you.

Here are some Gadfly highlights:

- Look for proposed work on streets dear to you, e.g., New St. between 3rd and 4th (p. 3)
- Two-way conversion plans for Center and Linden Sts. — much discussed lately (p. 4)
- An extension to the Greenway (p. 10)
- Rose Garden improvements (p. 11)

- Wayfinding signage (p. 12)

What interests you?

Gadfly assumes Council on Wednesday will dig in to the weeds of this report to some degree.

What questions would you be asking?

Should be interesting. Sure to be important.

Don't go snowblind on Gadfly.

Budget season can be as gift-giving as Christmas season.