

March 2, 2026

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Harold E. Getty Council Chambers
4:00 p.m.

Pre-Meeting Items

Roll Call.

Members present: Mayor Dave Boesen in the Chair. Roll Call: Mr. Schmitt, Ms. Creighton-Smith, Ms. Berry, Mr. Salamanca, Mr. Martin and Mr. Simon.

Agenda, as proposed or amended.

Simon/Schmitt
that the agenda as proposed be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Six. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of the February 16, 2026 Work Session, as proposed or amended.

Simon/Schmitt
that the minutes of the February 16, 2026, Council Work Session, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Six. Motion carried.

Work Session Items

Presentation from MET Transit.

David Sturtch, MET Transit Authority, provided an overview of the operational services the entity provides to the Cedar Valley.

Mr. Schmitt questioned if the fares compared to Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Des Moines and other communities.

David Sturtch shared that the fares are in line with other communities and shared the fares currently charged in the community.

Mr. Simon clarified the cost of the 26 passenger bus.

David Sturtch confirmed that the new buses will cost \$690,000.00. He added that they utilize the state procurement for the best pricing.

Mayor Boesen questioned who qualifies for reduced and free fares.

David Sturtch explained that individuals 60 years and older, Medicare/Medicaid cardholders and those with valid student IDs.

Mayor Boesen questioned if there would be a possibility to offer free or reduced ride services to

veterans.

David Sturtch commented that it is certainly a possibility.

Mayor Boesen shared that there have been discussions about Microtransit to help meet the needs of students that take late classes.

Discussion of the FY 2027 budget.

Bridgett Wood, Finance Director, gave a presentation on the proposed levy rates and explained the reason why the rates are always higher than what would be certified. She further provided the various timelines that need to be met.

Mr. Simon clarified that this is set higher than where we are expecting it to be and asked how confident we are that we will be able to reduce it, so we show a decrease from last year.

Bridgett Wood explained that the council would need to share with her how much of a cash reserve they are comfortable using and the extent to which the council wants to fund the Grout Museum.

Mr. Schmitt questioned why the other entities are less than ours.

Bridgett Wood explained that last year the schools increased by twenty percent, so they did not decrease this year. She shared that the reason why the total tax bill is decreasing is due to the rollback, adding that the rollback would make them less money, so that would equate to why it looks like we would be getting more.

Mr. Schmitt commented that the initial proposal is higher. However, if we come in at that, we would still have to take money from the rainy day fund to make that rate.

Bridgett Wood explained that we would if we funded the Grout Museum in full.

Mr. Schmitt questioned whether the city is getting more money from the state than what we are actually giving to the Grout.

Bridgett Wood commented that she did not know off-hand but could do the calculations if that is what council wants.

Ms. Creighton-Smith asked for clarification regarding taxes on a home worth one hundred thousand dollars.

Bridgett Wood explained.

Mr. Simon questioned if the city is capped at certain reserves and if the state sets the mandate.

Bridgett Wood commented that there is currently no state law in force, but there is discussion about state legislation capping it at ten percent of certified expenses. If that passes by FY28, we would have to have a lot of those dollars spent.

Mayor Boesen questioned where our cash reserves are as of the audit.

Bridgett Wood said that we are at approximately forty-five percent.

Mayor Boesen commented that it is about thirty-one million, and we would need to reduce that to about eight million.

Bridgett Wood confirmed.

Mayor Boesen commented that he attended a Zoom meeting with the Iowa State Extension where they discussed everything that is going on in the state legislation. He shared that everything is an unknown right now. He commented on the various proposals and changes that could affect us. With that, and said that much depends on the funding level the council wants to see given to the Grout Museum. He commented that he would like to see a zero percent tax increase for our citizens, but that depends on whether this council decides to fully fund the Grout. He shared that his recommendation would be to fund the Grout at half this year and reduce that amount moving forward. He further shared that his goal is not to reduce people, but if we do not begin to make sacrifices, we will not be in a good position.

Ms. Creighton-Smith expressed her concern about not fully funding the Grout because the citizens voted for this.

Bridgett Wood explained that it is no longer a separate levy.

Mayor Boesen commented that he is only making a recommendation, and that is the council's decision.

Mr. Schmitt asked if Bridgett Wood could repeat what she had said following Ms. Creighton-Smith's comment.

Bridgett Wood clarified that state legislation took that voter's right out, and it is now the council's decision.

Ms. Berry commented that she also does not want to see anyone lose their job, but the Grout is very important to this community.

Mayor Boesen commented that there are a number of options on the table the city can take.

Bridgett Wood explained that the budget is seventy-three percent personnel and that there is no way around people losing their jobs.

Mr. Schmitt clarified that the current levy rate is 21.79 and we are proposing to go to 24.

ADJOURNMENT

Schmitt/Martin

that the council adjourn at 4:43 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Six. Motion carried.

Kelley Felchle
City Clerk