



Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
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MEMORANDUM

TO: David Whitaker, Director, Legislative Policy Division
FROM: Willie C. Donwell, Director, Property Assessment Board of Review
DATE: March 23, 2023
RE: Responses to 2023-2024 Budget Questions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. Donwell", written over the "FROM:" line of the memorandum.

I respectfully submit the following responses to your questions sent on March 22, 2023, regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget for the Property Assessment Board of Review.

- 1. Please briefly explain the Board of Review's new expense initiatives, new capital funding requests, and operational reform and savings proposals to be implemented in FY 2024.**

The Board of Review while appointed and functions as a division of City Council, in accordance with Section 44-4-5(e), staffing, equipment and costs associated with the Board of Review is provide through the Office of the Assessor. Constant communication and planning is done to ensure the needs of the Board of Review is met.

The following reflects certain new initiatives and savings proposals currently being implemented:

In FY 2024, the Board of Review should be in the second phase of using the Matterhorn software that will reduce or even eliminate the use of paper that will be touched by the Board of Review. While we will still require some paper applications to service some of our most fragile community members, once received applications would be scanned and submitted to the board electronically. The process will reduce cost and add efficiency.

Remote access, getting back to servicing the community during resources days where actual applications can be submitted. Board members being present will allow for the initial review of applications. This will aid in the number of completed applications reducing the stress of additional work that will be required due to deficient applications being submitted.

Discussions with community partners and non-profit funding sources combining resources to become more efficient in servicing the community.



Property Assessment
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- 2. On page B52-8, the Mayor recommends a budget of \$674,522 for Board of Review operations in FY 2024. This proposed budget for FY 2024 is in increase of \$16,888 (2.6%) over the current FY 2023 budget of \$657,634. Please briefly explain the reason for the increase.**

While I respectfully acknowledge the increase offered by the Mayor's recommendation, the Board of Review per diem should be more in-line with the required duties. The Board of Review has one purpose for its existence under the law and that is to hear appeals relating to real and personal property. However, the level of the work has increased to a full-time position and should be reasonably considered.

If you are looking to draw and keep qualified candidates with a certain skillset for what is full-time position with no benefits, the per diem rate needs to be increased. To provide a comparable position beyond the required duties, it would be similar to an Assistant Ombudsman III with a range between \$57,400 to \$77,900.

Terms of compensation is also a question as to whether it should remain as a per diem. While it has its drawbacks, the per diem right now seems to be the most "in-line" form of compensation because it gives the City of Detroit the most reasonable amount of control over time used along with daily accountability for that time used. Because of the compensation structure and classification, City Council can set reasonable expectations through best practices through its new hire letter.

- 3. Does the Board of Review have any vacant board member positions? If not, what is the projected date of filling any vacant positions?**

The Board of Review currently has 1 vacant position due to the recent signation of Board of Review Member and I am working with the Council Member to find a candidate for the last position as quickly as possible.