



City of Columbia Heights 2027 Proposed Budget

Administration Department

Aaron Chirpich, City Manager | October 5, 2026

Administration Departments

Department	Department #	Increase (Decrease)
Assessing	1550	(\$7,800) or -7%
Legal Services	1610	\$49,900 or 23%
Mayor/Council	1110	\$28,000 or 14%
City Manager	1320	\$55,700 or 8%
Comm. & Events	1360	\$52,700 or 13%
City Clerk	1410	(\$55,100) or -30%
Cable TV	9844	\$21,200 or 14%

Mayor/Council

- The proposed Mayor-Council budget for 2026 increased by \$28,000 or 14%
- Outside of the IT reclassification (\$5,100), the primary driver to increases in this department is in Personnel Services which increased by \$15,000 driven by rising insurance costs. Additionally, the Expert and Professional Services budget is increasing by \$7,000 to better reflect historical trends.

City Manager

- The proposed budget for this department increases by \$55,700 or 8%
- Personnel Services increased by \$26,200 driven by salary increases and COLA adjustments.
- Other Services and Charges increased by \$37,600. Outside of the IT reclassification (\$8,100), the primary driver to increases in this category is the creation of Management Fellowship program which adds \$10,000 to this department for 2027.

Communications and Events

- The proposed budget for this department increases by \$52,700 or 13%
- Personnel Services increased by 12.8% driven by salary increases and COLA adjustments and to account for an increase in hours for the multicultural liaison position.
- The civic events portion of the budget increased by \$14,000 or 50% This increase is to better categorize the Jamboree fireworks from Recreation, Truck or Treat candy from Police, and provides a slight increase in funding for City events throughout the year.
- The IT reclassification for this department is \$6,100.

City Clerk

- The proposed City Clerk budget shows a decrease of \$55,100 or 30% There are no elections scheduled for *2027 driving the decrease.
- The IT reclassification for this department is \$3,000.
- *Per guidance from the Secretary of State, if Amy Klobuchar is elected governor, the state will hold both a special primary and special general election in 2027 to fill the vacant senate seat. The Secretary of State's office will advocate for a special appropriation by the legislature to cover these costs. However, if this funding does not materialize, the City will have to run and fund this off-year election.

Cable TV

- The proposed Cable TV budget shows an increase of \$21,000 or 14%
- The IT reclassification for this department is \$18,200.
- Other increases are driven by general inflation in the cost of TV production for Council and Planning Commission meetings.

Legal Services

- The proposed budget for this department has an increase of \$49,900 or 23%
- In July of 2026, Barna, Guzy, and Steffen, Ltd informed the City that their firm will discontinue its municipal public sector practice areas, including the firm's representation of the City on Civil, prosecution and all other matters.
- At the time of the production of the City Manager's proposed 2027 budget, the City had not received proposals for legal services in 2027 and therefore increased the budget by 23% based on projected increases for contract renewals . Since the 2027 proposed budget was released, the City has received cost estimates from several firms and staff estimate that legal service fees in 2027 will increase by at least 30%
- Fund balance will be used to cover the projected shortfall in 2027.

Assessing

- The proposed budget for this department shows a decrease of \$7,800 or 7%
- Personnel Services have decreased due to the shift from assessing for street infrastructure projects to levying for this work. Staff previously assigned to assessing work have had their time re-allocated to other duties.

Questions?