

**TOWN OF PALMER LAKE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES - AGENDA MEMO**

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| <b>DATE:</b> November 9, 2023                     | <b>ITEM NO.</b> | <b>SUBJECT:</b> Direction on Proposed 2024 Budget |
| <b>Presented by:</b><br>Town Administrator /Clerk |                 |                                                   |

Following is a general recap of 2023 –

The Town rounded out the year with new hires: one Equipment Operator, one Accounting Clerk, one F/T Firefighter/EMT.

The following highlights projects accomplished in 2023, among others – Buena Vista water line replacement; water treatment telemetry upgrades; mill and overlay of Spring, Greeley, Mystic, Vale, Sailing, Circle, regrade, pave and drainage landscaping at the village green visitor parking, new trail and bridge connectivity; and completed landscaping at the east abutment of the pedestrian bridge.

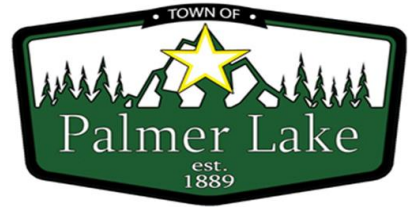
Planning in 2023 has prepared the following projects to be considered in 2024 – design and start of construction for the PLES Upper Glenway road and drainage improvement and water line replacement; design of Spruce Mtn roadway improvement; design of a pedestrian walkway at Hwy 105 downtown corridor; additional trail and bridge activity onto elephant rock property; land use code critical issues update; and the start of the water line replacement at Shady. Possible additional projects include roadway improvement at Circle, drainage improvement at Aurelia, and a rate study for a potential stormwater enterprise fund. Other projects positively impacting the town include a lease agreement to begin development plans for an EcoSpa at elephant rock property; pickleball courts and a restroom at Palmer Lake Rec area funded by Awake Palmer Lake. Grant fund opportunities continue to be sought for the development of Centennial Park, an improved ADA entrance for Town Hall, feasibility for a public safety facility at elephant rock property, A/V improvements for town hall meeting needs.

Additionally, the Police Department held its first citizens academy with about 12 participants. The Fire dept has one brush truck and two Firefighters certified for deployment, returning revenue to the department.

At the 10/13 workshop, the Board directed staff to prioritize infrastructure – roadway, drainage, water capital improvement projects. The revised draft of the 2024 budget provides options for the Board to consider.

- The first column is revised to exclude all new hires, provide slim wage increase, no change to departments. The bottom line is an approximate deficit of \$113k to consider GF savings to cover.
- The PD revised their department budget, cutting operating expenses to increase staff wages.
- A third option cuts PD staff to 5 FT positions (note that all town departments have working managers). This version adds the following new hires - PW equipment operator, which is needed with the amount of infrastructure projects (and in the budget since 2022), a Deputy Town Clerk, which is needed for increased administrative work. This option also adjusts wages to be slightly more competitive (3-5% increase) and increases capital funds for the grant funded and potential improvement projects. In summary, capital funds are allocated to the PW department for awarded roadway improvement projects as well as funds for other roadway improvement and possible drainage projects. With the addition of pickleball courts to the Lake area, funding these projects without addressing the needed PW staff will burden the existing department staff. Additionally, managing the administration of these projects without addressing needed administrative staff will further burden the current overloaded office staff. This option provides for the capital needs and immediate staff necessary to accommodate the desired projects.

As directed by the Board on 10/13, staff has reached out to El Paso County to research County law enforcement coverage. More information will be forthcoming to the Board.



One additional proposal made to staff is to also consider contracting a local grant writer on a PT basis to assist with research, writing and managing grant project activity. I believe we can consider this for \$30,000 in 2024 and evaluate the success of the contract in Q3 of 2024, if desired. There is an abundance of funds available if the town can appropriately plan and capitalize on the opportunity to utilize available funds.

Staff remains open to suggestions, ideas and direction from the Board. If necessary, staff requests that the date of Wednesday, December 6, 2023 be held for continued budget discussion prior to finalizing the proposed 2024 budget document for consideration on Thursday, December 14.