

October 21, 2025 Ward 3 meeting

Question 1: There was a \$4 million debt added from 2023 to 2024, what was this debt?

Response: During the audit process, the City's auditor records an adjustment to reduce the City's outstanding liability, reflecting principal payments made on existing loans. In 2023, staff budgeted \$10,857,589 for total debt service payments. After account for the reduction in principal liabilities, the actual amount for 2023 was \$7,181,326.

Question 1 (revised): Why was over \$3 million budgeted for debt? What is the debt the city is carrying?

Response: Please refer to the Long-Term Debt Requirements pages from the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. These page outline when each bond or loan was issued, the original issuance amount, the applicable interest rate, and the remaining payment schedule. The bonds were issued to fund various capital improvement projects, including the new Police Station, street improvements, wastewater projects, City Hall building improvements and the Watchtower project. The loans primarily support water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Question 2: Why was there an increase of \$7 million in personnel services? Please provide details.

Response: The number of full-time equivalent employees has increased from 435.65 in 2023 to a budgeted 446.60 in 2025. In addition to higher salary costs associated with increased staffing, Police and Fire pension contributions rose to \$1,886,824 from 2023 to 2024. The City also experienced a 12% increase in health insurance premiums, and minimum wage increased from \$13.00 to \$14.00 per hour.

Question 2 (revised): What 11 positions were added between 2023-2025?

Response: The City added a Community Engagement Manager, a City Attorney (prior to 2023 this was an outsourced service), Economic Development Director, 3 West End Coordinators and a Budget/Grants Manager for the MLK Center, HR increased a part-time position to full-time, the Fire Department increased a part-time position to full-time and the Parks Department and Library increased part-time hours.

Question 3: When was the last County assessment done to determine property taxes? How can be obtain a copy of the report?

Response from Rock Island County Assessments Office: Property assessments are determined by each township assessor, please see Assessors List. Residents can receive copies of their property record cards from their assessor. In June, when the assessors turn in their yearly value changes to us, we review those changes, and also apply township equalization factors to each township based on their last three years of sales compared to the values they have set for those properties. We like to say this is inflation or the cost of living increase. As the market gets higher, so do

assessments. We are governed by the Illinois Property Tax Code, and the State audits our records to ensure we are applying the correct factors. We then publish those changed values, and also the equalization factors, in the newspaper and send notices to each taxpayer that was changed (not by just the equalization factor). Every taxpayer then has the opportunity to file an appeal regarding the value of their property. This generally occurs in late September and there is a thirty-day time frame for this process (this is set by statutes and cannot be amended). A taxpayer wishing to appeal after today has to wait until the same process next September.

If any taxpayer would like more information or have further questions, they can email our staff at assessor@rockislandcountyil.gov.

Question 4: Why was there an increase in the Services category from 2022 to 2023. Please provide details.

Response: The City expended funds for large projects in 2023 such as the Downtown reconstruction; purchase of new financial software; City Hall and RIFAC remodel; repairs to the SW Treatment Plant Pumping Station, Denkmann, Douglas and Mel McKay Parks; road repairs to Rock Island Parkway and 37th Avenue and the 11th Street water main.

Question 5: What is the projected increase for Personnel Services in 2026? Why?

Response: The proposed 4% increase from 2025 to 2026 is primarily due to the additional of employees to support the Rock Island Arsenal contract, higher pension costs and contracted salary increases for both union and non-union employees.

Question 6: Are the Librarian salaries paid out of the same fund as the Public Library? If no, why not?

Response: All Library personnel expenses are paid out of the Public Library Fund.

Question 7: What is the county's process for assessing properties?

Response: Please see the response for Question 3 from the Rock Island County Assessment Office.

Question 8: What street projects are included in the proposed 2026 budget? How are street projects determined?

Response: Street projects are determined based on several factors, including pavement condition ratings, traffic volume, maintenance history and maintenance requests, utility needs, and available funding. The Public Works Department evaluates city streets using a pavement condition index (PCI) and this helps identify those in most need of repair or reconstruction. It's important to point out that the PCI data is only a starting point. Water, sewer, and other infrastructure improvements are also considered when evaluating street improvements. In addition, citizen and alderman input along with safety concerns help prioritize projects.

Question 9: Is there a consolidated listing for Grants? If not, can the City post one?

Response: There is not currently a consolidated list for all grants the City has obtained. Staff can work on consolidating a list and will post it to the City's website upon completion.