

CITY COUNCIL

February 4, 2006

ROLL CALL - PRESENT:

	Aldermen Bernstein	Alderman Tisdahl
	Alderman Holmes	Alderman Hansen
A Quorum was present.	Alderman Moran	Alderman Wollin

**NOT PRESENT AT
ROLL CALL:**

Alderman Jean-Baptiste, Rainey and Wynne

PRESIDING:

Mayor Lorraine H. Morton

A SPECIAL MEETING of the City Council was called to order by Mayor Morton on Saturday, February 4, 2006 at 9:19 a.m. in the Council Chamber for the purpose of conducting a workshop on the FY 2006-07 proposed budget.

Mayor Morton drew attention to future meeting dates; received the packet Friday evening and did not have enough time to read it.

Free Beach Days Discussion

Alderman Bernstein reported the Human Services Committee met and agreed to modify the income levels for scholarships across the board for all recreation programs; leave programs already in existence and start a pilot program to allow agencies, chosen by Health & Human Services Director Jay Terry, such as Family Focus, to have access to free beach tokens for use by clients and/or their families. Persons would be screened by the agency for their income level and offered free tokens on a first come, first served basis. Alderman Tisdahl suggested that 500 tokens be disseminated initially and if the demand is greater to revisit it.

Parks/Forestry & Recreation Director Doug Gaynor said there would be no impact on the number of lifeguards needed and the Recreation Board discussed phasing the pilot program over two years.

Mr. Terry contacted seven social service agencies to ascertain their interest in distributing tokens to low income families. Many agencies found it similar to First Night buttons and others. He proposed token distribution by these agencies and by three programs at the City that work with low income residents and to set aside a pool of 500 tokens. Agencies will request the tokens by letter that indicates their understanding of the City's income requirements and compliance and allowed to distribute tokens. All agencies he spoke with work with people who do not currently take advantage of the beaches. If that assumption is correct, current beach revenue should not be affected. He and Mr. Gaynor will report the impact of the program to Council in the fall.

Mayor Morton said a 1/3/06 memo to the Human Services Committee showed income from 55 tokens was negligible so revenue should not be affected; asked if token sales pay for lifeguards? Mr. Gaynor said that expenses are fairly constant, but variables such as weather and high bacteria counts affect revenue. Lifeguards are paid \$8.50-\$11 per hour with no benefits. The cost to operate the beaches is about \$450,000 a year and the major part is lifeguard salaries. Mayor Morton asked the cost to the City if beaches were free. Mr. Casey said they would have to find \$490,000 in revenue for one year. Mr. Gaynor, the Mayor and Alderman Holmes discussed in detail the line items under beaches, page 337 budget book.

Alderman Rainey asked when they would discuss the pros and cons of whether they want to continue to have lifeguards at the beaches, given the liability the City has with drownings when beaches are closed. Alderman Moran objected to putting lifeguards on a "to do" list.

Alderman Tisdahl suggested two changes to the proposed program that would cost nothing. She wanted Doug Gaynor and Jay Terry to be able to provide an extra 200 tokens without coming to Council if the demand for tokens is more than 500. She was not aware of how many Latinos are served by agencies. The Latino group Olé came to the Human Services Committee meeting and she wanted to ensure that Latinos needs are met. Mr. Terry said the outreach specialist in his office and other agencies would make that a priority. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said the intent was to reach out to all ethnic

and immigrant populations. The pilot program is to assist under-served persons and not to incur extra costs. Next season may be more radical and include many of the things Alderman Tisdahl wants. Alderman Hansen asked about reducing the cost of tokens to \$5 or \$10, which was not discussed. Alderman Bernstein said that had been suggested and was a topic for another discussion. Alderman Hansen asked about the discount options of 25, 50 and 75%. Mr. Gaynor said the Human Services Committee adopted a new household income level and a 50% discount only. They believed the number of scholarships could double in two years. At this time scholarships are at \$200,000 annually. Alderman Bernstein said 55 tokens were sold at various discount levels with revenues of \$385. There was concern that not everyone is served by an agency so the City would do outreach. The agency list is not exclusive. Alderman Wollin clarified they were talking about the entire family. Alderman Holmes said the pilot program was suggested because scholarships were available and have been under-used. It is a way to reach out to people to see if they want to use the beaches. This was not to ignore the work of the Recreation Board and their recommendation for new income guidelines, but to get to the crux of the problem and see some color on the beaches. Alderman Bernstein said a letter is given to certain agencies so they can take young people to the beach for free. Hopefully, the pilot program will make it possible for more families to use the beaches.

Mayor Morton found it difficult to understand some costs in the budget and asked if Health & Human Services would incur any cost with this change? Mr. Gaynor explained that one person's salary can be divided among several programs in the Recreation Division. Ms. Carroll said due to existing relationships, Health & Human Services would assist by providing tokens at no cost to agencies in the pilot program. The recommendation will be on the City Council agenda.

Alderman Rainey thought the compressed natural gas Budget Memo #32 did not answer her questions. She wanted to know if this facility costs the City and the cost to run it. She wanted a recommendation from staff. Ms. Carroll would provide a recommendation on Monday.

Food/Beverage tax discussion

Alderman Rainey referred to Budget Memo #29, noted the total sales tax has increased 20% since 1997, but drinking/eating establishments have increased 53%. She pointed out everything has been done to help restaurants. They have paid money to the convention bureau and Chamber of Commerce to promote restaurants. Some liquor license holders have had their hours increased to 3:00 a.m. The City never pulls a liquor license. The food/beverage industry is enormous here and some pay no liquor tax because they don't sell liquor. She praised Budget Memo #30, which outlined scenarios for a food/beverage tax. She noted on a sample restaurant bill there was no deduction for alcohol. Mr. Casey explained the liquor tax was not considered in the examples. Alderman Rainey said if a food/beverage tax was imposed it would be on everyone from Dunkin' Donuts to Stained Glass and suggested reducing the liquor tax by a comparable amount. She recommended a 2% food/beverage tax and a reduction of 2% in the liquor tax thus giving restaurants that sell alcohol a break. A 2% food/beverage tax would generate \$1.834 million in revenue. They could reduce the proposed amount of property tax by \$1.834 million, which results in a property tax decrease from the previous year of \$158,256. This increases the revenue stream by a healthy amount that won't vacillate much over the next five years and adds five or seven cents to a patron's bill. She guaranteed 50% of the restaurateurs would oppose this. Alderman Rainey stated that Council needed to look at reality. The Evanston community supports restaurants. People don't leave town to go out to dinner. Everything possible has been done to shore up this industry and they are at the top of Cook County. Those who patronize restaurants will pay this tax, not the restaurateurs. It will help the community across the board. Other communities have this tax.

Alderman Wynne asked to see sample restaurant bills with a food/beverage tax and liquor tax. She recalled hearing from restaurant owners in the past about any change in their prices. Mr. Casey said they have talked to the Chamber of Commerce and some restaurant owners and those who sell more liquor would favor a reduction while smaller restaurants would not. A food/beverage tax would result in revenues from the McDonald's, Subways, and Burger Kings that the City does not get now. The City estimates \$8-15,000 per year on some. Alderman Wynne thought people patronizing fast food restaurants probably don't pay attention; but there were restaurants at Main and Dempster where there is price sensitivity. She requested more information and wanted to hear from restaurant owners. Mr. Casey said if Council is serious about this proposal, they will have to put in some scenarios to show how fast it can be implemented. A month or two would be needed to gear up the forms and the tax. Alderman Wynne noticed the chart showing food/beverage tax in surrounding communities did not show Wilmette and Skokie as having "no" tax, which should be listed. Most are at 1%. Mr. Casey said if they pass a food/beverage tax, they would recommend changes to the liquor tax on the restaurant side, not on retail

liquor sales. Alderman Wynne wondered what would happen to restaurants in the middle such as Lucky Platter, Kuni's, Cross Rhodes, Blind Faith and Dixie Kitchen, which are fabulous destination restaurants.

Finance Director Bill Stafford, in response to Alderman Rainey's comments, pointed out they have more restaurants that have come in which has boosted numbers, it is not just more sales. His concern was when a food/beverage tax is put on, to consider that Evanston's 6% liquor tax is three times the closest one in the state. If they put a 3% tax on poured liquor they would get about \$100,000 less and also have the argument to restaurants that instead of paying 14.75% on a liquor bill it would be 13.75%. He urged that be considered from an economic standpoint. Alderman Rainey responded that if the poured liquor tax was reduced by 3%, there would be no change in the bill. This is paid by the customer. She would not go to Niles to a restaurant because their tax is 1% and Evanston's is 2%. She was told the daytime population here is about 200,000 and more than 45% of the people who come here in evenings are not residents. Someone who pays \$4 for a cup of coffee could afford to pay this tax. Mr. Stafford reiterated that the growth in tax was due to more restaurants, not necessarily more sales. Because the City has more sales, they cannot continue to swap prices with no effect. Mayor Morton asked the number of new restaurants? A response will be prepared. Mr. Casey said the General Fund levy would be reduced by 3% and there would be a property tax increase of 1.22%. That would be a \$19 increase for an \$8,000 tax bill. Alderman Wynne asked for information on same-store sales. Mr. Stafford said that information would be addressed.

Youth Initiative Discussion

Alderman Jean-Baptiste said Council has discussed how to approach giving more attention to youth affairs. Since the murder at The Keg, people have gotten together to discuss how the community deals with youth and address those who fall through the cracks. The group made many suggestions. One area of concern is job training/placement, "teaching youth how to fish." He has discussed this with Ms. Carroll. The objective would be to designate a department to coordinate all youth affairs but would not take over every aspect of youth work. He said a unit of government needs to be made responsible for "deliverables." Those could be to monitor whether there is a reduction of crime in the community, youth training/placement in internships and enrollment in vocational training programs. This unit would interface with the high school, hospitals and other agencies, such as Oakton Community College, to assist in ongoing training. This initiative asks Council to support the concept and allow staff to put it into practice. Little funding has been requested because there is no specific proposal. This initiative anticipates cross-department involvement, which means staff may already be engaged in youth activity and may need accountability so that what they do is linked to objectives and reported to Council. Ms. Carroll has put in \$25,000 seed money. He noted \$34,000 was allocated to hire a consultant to examine youth service delivery. That person has not been hired and he anticipated those funds would be collapsed into this initiative to allow staff to develop a more comprehensive proposal that takes into account resources the City has already.

Ms. Carroll stated if Council agrees with the concept, staff would come back with a formal program. Before doing that, it was important to get consensus from Council on this topic. Much of what was reflected was proposed in the Strategic Plan. Alderman Rainey said that Alderman Jean-Baptiste was on to something. The budget shows youth services are fragmented. They have no idea what services are provided to youth. Under Health & Human Services there are youth outreach programs at Family Focus; funds for family planning, the Summer Youth Employment Program, Recreation and Y.O.U. She thought they would be surprised at how much is spent. Because youth services are so fragmented, they may be unable to evaluate how they are doing.

Alderman Tisdahl supported this effort and was confused about what is provided, so youth must be confused, too. She hoped they would communicate to youth what is available and listen to them. In other cities, listening has yielded excellent results. Alderman Wollin noted that many communities have used youth advisory councils. She recalled when they tried to put some things together, there was duplication of services to families and coordination would help eliminate that. There is a history of trying to do this and need to pull it together. Does this mean they won't hire a consultant? Yes. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said there are many stakeholders in the youth services area. This is an attempt to try to provide some deliverables as to what they are doing, understand and monitor, so youth can maximize benefits. The intent is not to eliminate anything. Mayor Morton asked if he was interested in activities paid for by the City, then whoever coordinated the work would interface with other agencies.

Alderman Holmes said more than 30 years ago there was a Youth Commission. She has said that Evanston needs a Youth

Commission because no one speaks for them with one voice. This would be an opportunity for the agencies to work together to get "more bang for the buck." Mayor Morton recalled that the Levy family gave a building for youth activities and the kids did not come. She felt a good recreation director would reach out to people and it depends upon who is hired to do the job. In the Recreation Budget she saw a request for a recreation worker for Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center. The position is vacant and the City is recruiting for it.

Alderman Bernstein also remembered the Youth Commission; said they must address the programmatic needs that will attract kids. When kids are given something they want or need, they will come. He encouraged them to go forward.

Alderman Rainey said the City does not run a lot of the programs but contributes to them in some way. She did not understand the consultant part. Alderman Jean-Baptiste explained that Council approved a limited amount of money in early 2005 to hire a consultant to look at how Evanston serves youth. Now they need to figure out how to best serve youth. He did not know if they have people internally who could assess what is being done. If their goal is to offer more services to youth or make services more efficient and have deliverables to Council at year's end, more energy will be focused. Alderman Rainey suggested since the city manager has been here awhile it should be her job to look at this. Nobody has ever said to analyze and consolidate all youth services. She suggested the city manager reconsider hiring a consultant. Ms. Carroll said the reason to hire a consultant was to assess what is done through various programs and to determine service gaps and to reach out to youth and find out what they want. They can figure that out. Alderman Bernstein thought a coordinator was needed. He recalled the YMCA Board commissioned a youth study by a NU sociology professor and paid for by NU. He thought that study was still relevant. If the agencies can be coordinated, those people are seeking the same information the City needs. A consultant/coordinator would be important.

Mr. Terry reported the RFP was issued and the City received three proposals. He noted it was a testament to the difficulty of pulling youth services together, externally and internally. There are four departments within the City that have some youth responsibility and four department heads who have their sense of what youth need. The city manager's office has worked on this and hoped to have a recommendation for the February Human Services Committee meeting. They have asked the consultants for additional information and have more work to do internally. Mr. Terry stated before an agreement is made with a consultant, they would come back to the Council.

General Discussion

Alderman Rainey asked why staff believes that Administrative Adjudication works well. She noticed enormous gaps, many cases dismissed or found not liable. Mr. Casey said one of the goals of putting in an administrative adjudication process instead of a court system, was to have access to judicial proceedings in this building to cut down on travel time, staff time and overtime. The court at Skokie dismissed many tickets. Adjudication allows police officers to stay in their cars and do their jobs and inspectors to do their jobs. All parking tickets were shifted to the adjudication office which was due to how adjudication laws work. They need to have 30-day notice cycles. Prior to that, parking ticket collections and booting was not done monthly. The City has increased collections on parking tickets, which are 67% through the adjudication process. There are other areas of adjudication they need to review. There are not a lot of dollars outstanding other than parking tickets. Evanston has the most comprehensive parking collection program except for collection agencies; it can boot cars and suspend driver's licenses. The next step for the City is to look at different ways to collect through collection agencies. Due to the different kinds of violations, they have to find the right firm. They are looking at a pilot program with three agencies. Alderman Wynne thought the "not liable" percentage on parking tickets was low and often hears from people who think they were not liable. Mr. Casey said the majority of these are one to four tickets per vehicle that are below the radar, i.e. booting and license suspension. Alderman Wynne thought when people come in for stickers, the City recoups some of these fines. Alderman Bernstein recalled they put in Administrative Adjudication because eight to ten police officers would be at the courthouse, having worked all night, stepped up and the case would be dismissed, thus wasting their time. When the court assessed fines, the City got about 5% back. Mr. Casey noted the City got \$5 back on a \$50 fine. Alderman Bernstein noted on findings of liability, there has to be a perception and the reality that this is a fair process. These people get due process of law and, if the conviction rate was 100%, they would not need Administrative Adjudication. He thought they could talk to the hearings judges; was frustrated when there are findings of guilt and the responsible party's fine should have been larger. The ordinance provides for a maximum and minimum fine. When found guilty, if this is a third or fourth time offender, they should pay a maximum fine. He thought that could be imposed on the hearing officers. Mr. Casey said hearing officers are trained so they understand Evanston's

law. They review their conviction rates to make sure they don't have "hanging" judges or those who let everybody off. The conviction rate is 60-70% for a liable finding. Since most judges are under contract, they hired a former Circuit Court judge to help train them in courtroom demeanor and how to decide cases better.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste suggested they can understand the effectiveness through comparison over the last six years. He found adjudication effective because the City has collected more fines than ever before. He asked for numbers from prior years and would not change much. Mr. Casey said that they cannot demand that more people be found guilty. Adjudication was started in 2000 and staff will do some comparisons. He noted that as an organization they cannot overly influence a judge's decision and ensure the defendant gets a fair hearing with no pressure on the judge to make a decision that he/she does not believe evidence supports. The City is careful and does not tell judges how to decide cases.

Alderman Rainey would not have asked for the analysis if this was a new program; has observed Administrative Adjudication proceedings as an interested citizen. They do well on parking tickets but there are more than parking tickets involved. She recalled seeing 20 senior staff present at the Skokie court for hours and, in that sense, it is better. Every day housing case inspectors sit there for several hours. She thought the dismissal rate and the not liable rate were ridiculous; saw inconsistency; understood it is subjective but there are laws. She reported one judge humiliates neighbors who appear and keeps people from being involved in their community. Treatment of people in the courtroom is important. The City should have control over the judge's demeanor. Mr. Casey agreed and said one reason they changed the judges from payroll status to contract employees was to give greater flexibility in hiring and relieving the City of judges they don't need. They have instituted more training and better work rules. They recently hired a full-time manager after trying part-time management and determining the office needed full-time management. Alderman Wynne has heard from community people who question the court's integrity because they are paid by the City. Objective standards are needed to evaluate the judges. Alderman Wynne said there is a perception issue and they need to guard against any perception that the process is rigged. Judge training is very important. Mayor Morton has not heard any complaints about Administrative Adjudication. Alderman Rainey noted that circuit court judges are paid by Cook County; suggested that people don't understand how adjudication works.

Position Vacancy Discussion

Alderman Rainey wanted to discuss Budget Memo #25 staff vacancies; asked why the theater manager position at Fleetwood-Jourdain has been vacant for three to four years. Human Resources Director Judith Witt said staff was asked to provide the number of vacant positions that were not filled as of March 1, 2005; positions vacant as of March 1, 2005 that remain vacant and the reason, and positions that became vacant after March 1 to date and the status. She said it is no surprise they have had the number of police officers retire. Ms. Witt explained the City has 50-60 full-time vacancies annually. The turnover rate in the past few years is higher than it used to be with some of that due to the age of the employees. The City has a number of employees who are retirement-eligible. Turnover at the City today is typical for organizations of this size and prior turnover was actually low. Alderman Holmes asked what "retirement in progress" meant. Ms. Witt said retirement is the reason the employee left and "in process" means they are in the process of filling that position, which can take three or four months. Mayor Morton noted that last year 19 police officers resigned. Ms. Witt explained that police officers no longer stay for 30 years; some come for five to ten years and go to other police departments or careers. Some are probationary officers and resign because they decide they don't want to be police officers. All officers who have resigned have been replaced.

Ms. Carroll pointed out another factor that affects longevity is that up until several years ago, once a person was hired, that person could not go to another police department. If they left, they lost their pension benefits and had to start over. About two years ago, for firefighters and five years for police officers, the Illinois law was changed to give people the flexibility to work someplace for awhile and go to another agency and take their pension benefits with them. That is a major change. Loyalty and staying with one department has diminished.

Fleetwood-Jourdain Adult Theatre and Children's Theatre Discussion

Alderman Rainey recalled the location of the Children's Theatre and the Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre was changed a few years ago; was shocked to find that the Children's Theatre no longer functions at the Levy Center. She was further surprised to learn the adult theater is virtually out of business at Noyes Cultural Arts Center. She asked for a status report on those two groups. Mayor Morton was told a play was given in a room by the Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre. Mr. Gaynor

said that was true and that the theater at Noyes is almost completely booked by the Next Theater Company with few dates open. The issue is the theater company puts up their lighting and sets so even if they are not performing, the stage is not available. The City had great cooperation from Next Theatre for the Martin Luther King, Jr. event. Because no theater is available, a room at Noyes is used for the adult theater program at a reduced activity level. They want to recruit and hire a theater manager to oversee that program. There was conflict at the Levy Center with the Children's Theatre operating while the senior citizens were there and taking over the stage and leaving props. They will try to re-organize both the children's and adult theaters. At Levy they had program time conflicts. A new theater would be the answer.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste thought both theaters were happy at the Family Focus location. There was a desire to have theater at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Center and agreement to pursue that at some point. He asked why the Children's Theatre went to the Levy Center and why the theater manager position was not filled? Mr. Gaynor stated the theater left Family Focus because it did not meet ADA requirements. They were bombarded constantly with threats of injunctions. The lift did not accommodate newer wheelchairs. Eventually they decided to relocate the Children's Theatre to the Levy Center. They considered renovating the Fleetwood-Jourdain Center Theatre for the adult group, but that did not work as the stage is too small. From September through March, Fleetwood-Jourdain Center hums with the FAMM basketball program on the opposite wall of the theater's stage. They abandoned that idea and continued to look for a location. Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked how that was decided? Staff decided to abandon the project. He did not recall voting to do that. Mayor Morton said that Alderman Jean-Baptiste had raised a crucial issue – what is supposed to come before Council before staff takes action.

Alderman Holmes said the adult theater left after she retired because Family Focus was not in compliance. Family Focus had presented a voluntary plan to put in an elevator and almost \$300,000 was raised before she left. The theater moved in 2003. She learned from residents who participate in the theater that the Children's Theatre is operated currently out of a church. There have been efforts to present different programs by the adult theater. They did the *Children of Uganda* and perform currently in Room 107 at Noyes. She has some ideas to work this out and put the Adult Theater back in the community and, perhaps, form a relationship with Family Focus in terms of the theater to get it into compliance by finishing the elevator, because that was the only issue. She said there was no lawsuit, only the threat of a lawsuit and they did everything they could to help an individual, who requested assistance, get into the theater. Many people in wheelchairs used the theater. Mr. Gaynor was not aware of any funds raised for an elevator. A study was done but nobody told staff there was funding, because if they had, there would have been no reason to leave Family Focus. Alderman Holmes said \$300,000 was raised before she left Family Focus. This information was relayed to Mr. Crum and the Planning Division because they had looked at another kind of lift. People were aware that was on the table. Alderman Rainey recalled when they decided to move the two programs, it was voted on by Council, which supported it because staff said it could work. If she had known Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre would be relegated to a room, she would not have voted for it. She recalled the Children's Theatre was to start a 5:00 p.m. at Levy Center, which made sense. She said it is possible that after implementation, things don't always work out. The problem is Council was never told and should have been consulted. It was the intent that these two programs would operate at the highest level. Ms. Carroll stated a report would be provided on future alternatives. Mayor Morton heard "return to the community" and asked that be included.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste said the Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre program, as recommended by the City Manager in her budget proposal, sent the wrong message. The affiliation with Noyes Cultural Arts Center has always been difficult. Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre never felt welcome there and to be relegated to a room was demeaning. He suggested they take the manager's proposal off the table. If they were serious about pursuing alternatives, they cannot de-fund the program altogether. Alderman Jean-Baptiste moved they take the option to eliminate the Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre off the table. Seconded by Alderman Rainey. Ms. Carroll said in her opening remarks that she did not recommend optional cuts and recommended a property tax increase. Council could consider either a combination of increased revenues, which Alderman Rainey has proposed, or a combination of cuts. She clearly did not recommend that and put it on the table for Council to decide if they wanted to look at alternatives to raising the property tax. Motion carried. No nays.

Alderman Rainey referred to Budget Memo #28, Real Estate Transfer Tax. She asked for an analysis of the \$124,028 that the City did not receive on this tax; asked what could be done to help the City Clerk provide the correct number. Mr. Stafford said they will take the refunds and fees and give those numbers to the Clerk monthly so that the gross number can be adjusted. Mr. Stafford estimated about \$62,000 in accruals and \$60,000 in refunds and fees.

Citizen Comment:

Gerald Gordon, 1228 Lake St., commented that the 2003-04 approved budget had a chart showing full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) from 1999-2004, which showed in 2000 there were 838.59 FTEs. For 2006-07 FTEs are 885.83 so those have increased by 47.24. In addition to salary, employees receive paid vacation, holidays, pension, social security, sick leave, health insurance and compensation for unused vacation. He did not know what the fringe costs are but guessed that the average employee costs the City about \$100,000. If that is the case, the 47.24 FTEs cost the City \$4.7 million and each year that goes up. He suggested the City look at the number of FTEs and are they all justified? He heard the discussion about vacancies, which becomes a kind of smoke and mirrors thing. The budget expenditures are based upon budgeted FTEs, yet the jobs are not filled, so unspent expenditures go into the fund balance and the taxpayers are taxed on the basis of FTEs budgeted. He would have asked that the fund balance of around \$4.2 million be returned to taxpayers as a tax abatement, but noted that went into the fund to compensate unused vacations, holidays, etc. The taxpayer does not get a break. Unspent expenditures disappear into the General Fund balance. He did not know how to deal with this. He said a hiring freeze with attrition would decrease the FTEs. Council has to deal with this and raise taxes. He suggested this subject needed a lot of study. He spoke about Budget Memo #8 listing the City's currently owned vehicles. There are about 255 vehicles, an astounding number. There are 15 jeeps for parking enforcement and another 7 or 8 vehicles in parking for 23 or 24 vehicles in the Parking Fund. He wondered if the fund, when considering each vehicle has an operator, really generates the revenues they hear about. He asked for a comparison chart for vehicles similar to the 2003-04 chart on employees.

Carolyn Murray, 1933 Grey Ave., proposed a youth recreation center that would have tutoring programs, college fairs, health services, classes and outreach that interest youth. She suggested constructing a new building or using an existing one just for youth recreation; that young people choose the programs and run or facilitate the programs. She would like to see youth surveyed as to the kind of programs and services that would interest them. Programs would be for youth up to 24 years of age and the facility would be open until curfew. She suggested a website for existing youth programs and classes. Parents and professionals should be solicited for the programs and services. She is a taxpayer and divorced mother of three; grew up here and sees a lack of activities for youth.

Mayor Morton asked if any recreation facilities are open until curfew? Mr. Gaynor said most centers are open until 10:00 p.m. and the Robert Crown Ice Rink is open until 12:00 or 1:00 a.m. The Levy Center opens to general public at 5:00 p.m. Alderman Wynne asked if they could create a link to youth services on the web. Yes She was not sure that the general public, including young people, know that the Levy Center is open to them after 5:00 p.m. Mr. Gaynor said that has been advertised and many people come before 8:00 a.m. to workout. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said that Ms. Murray comments were timely and asked the city manager to think through what they need to do and support.

Alderman Rainey referred to Budget Memo #33, Sales Tax Revenue Comparison, noted that the charts have different communities on them. She wanted to have the same communities on all the charts. She asked for the chart on percentage of budget supported by the sales tax. She noted that Evanston has the second highest budget and is surpassed only by Elgin, which was significant. She asked the city manager what it is about Evanston's budget that makes it so much larger than others, granted that Evanston has a water facility. Ms. Carroll said that Alderman Rainey had asked for percentage of the City's General Fund. Mr. Stafford said the total budget of other communities does not include parks/recreation or library districts. Mr. Stafford will provide inclusive numbers. Alderman Tisdahl, too, was confused by the comparison; asked that population be included. Ms. Carroll said staff could pull out library, parks & recreation and compare Evanston to the other communities and total budgets from other communities would be provided.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Morton asked for a motion to adjourn and the Council so moved at 12:10 p.m.

Mary P. Morris,
City Clerk

A videotape recording of this meeting has been made part of the permanent record and is available in the City Clerk's office.