

MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN • CITY OF BUFFALO

2017-2018 RECOMMENDED BUDGET



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2017

Contact: Lorey Schultz

(716) 851-5545

MAYOR BROWN PRESENTS ON-TIME AND BALANCED FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018 PROPOSED BUDGET

Buffalo – For the twelfth consecutive year, Mayor Byron W. Brown presented an on-time and responsible budget for the City of Buffalo, Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

Mayor Brown stated, “As the City of Buffalo continues to experience unprecedented growth and economic development, my Administration has once again recommended a fiscally responsible budget and long-term financial plan that maintains affordability, efficient delivery of services, and quality of life. For the twelfth consecutive year, I am proposing an on-time and responsible budget for the City of Buffalo, Fiscal Year 2017-2018. This spending plan reflects my Administration’s continued commitment to making government more efficient and reliable, while providing tax certainty to residents and businesses who own property in the City of Buffalo.”

Mayor Brown’s recommended budget for 2017-2018 totals nearly \$500 million. This represents a slight increase of \$5.7 million – or 1.1%. Mayor Brown recognized the work and contribution of Donna Estrich, Commissioner of Administration, Finance, Policy and Urban Affairs, and members of his Fiscal Sub-Cabinet, who provided valuable input to help shape the city’s budget.

“We’ve made progress and are providing opportunity for our residents,” Mayor Brown continued. “I am proud that we have built a safer, smarter, stronger Buffalo, encouraged investment, maintained our infrastructure while efficiently delivering services, and continued to invest in our world-class cultural and community organizations.”

Over the last decade, Buffalo’s economic outlook and skyline has seen a remarkable transformation, with significant and visible progress occurring citywide. Currently, there is more than \$6 billion in economic development underway across the City of Buffalo, with new jobs being created.

Mayor Brown reaffirmed his key priority areas of focus, and stated that his 2017-2018 Budget continues to provide resources for each of these areas: economic development and job growth, quality of life improvements, and the efficiency of City Services.

This spending plan builds on the strong economic foundation that the Brown Administration has built since he was sworn in as Mayor in 2006, while continuing to re-imagine how Buffalo grows as a City. It also continues to improve the level of service that the City of Buffalo provides for its residents and businesses, while implementing new and creative initiatives designed to create efficiencies, achieve savings and ensure that all people share in the opportunities that are growing in the City of Buffalo.

Mayor Brown concluded, “I’m confident this budget and long-term financial plan are blueprints for an even stronger and more prosperous future for the City of Buffalo.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF MAYOR BROWN’S BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF BUFFALO, FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018 INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- For the twelfth consecutive year, Mayor Byron Brown recommended an on-time, balanced and responsible budget for the City of Buffalo. This spending plan for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 totals \$499,657,476. This represents a slight increase of \$5.7 million, approximately 1.1%
- Taps into the City of Buffalo fund balance, leaving an unassigned fund balance of nearly \$30 million
- Buffalo’s ‘Rainy Day’ Fund holds additional reserves of \$36 million
- It’s anticipated the City will close its books on Fiscal Year 2016-17 with a \$1 million dollar budget surplus

PROPERTY TAX CERTAINTY

This balanced budget holds the line on spending, creates efficiencies – and for the twelfth, consecutive year – holds the line on residential property tax rates and further reduces the commercial property tax rates.

- After applying the State Tax Formula and staying below the cap, Mayor Brown continues to provide tax certainty for residents and businesses, as the city’s property tax and PILOT revenue will remain consistent with last year at \$142.6 million
- To continue to attract new residents and investment to Buffalo, Mayor Brown’s recommended budget holds the line on residential property tax rates, and reduces commercial property tax rates by almost 1%. Since 2006, commercial property tax rates have been cut by almost 32% and residential property tax rates by nearly 16%

SUPPORTS SAFE AND LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

With the overall crime rate down 35% since 2005, this proposed budget continues Mayor Brown’s investment in safe and livable neighborhoods.

- Mayor Brown has proposed allocating \$500,000 for a new Police Substation at the Broadway Market. At least 30 police personnel will work out of the Substation by January 2018
- Funding for a new Quality of Life Initiative that will be implemented by Citizen Services/311, the Public Works Department and the Buffalo Police Department
- Continued funding for the Peacemakers Gang Intervention Program and the Buffalo Police Athletic League
- Implementation of an enhanced version of Mayor Brown’s effective “Clean Sweep” model, which has impacted the lives of residents on 241 City blocks over the last eleven years
- Builds on Mayor Brown’s nearly \$52 million capital investment in parks Citywide by continuing to support our parks, playgrounds, ballfields, pools, splash pads and recreation centers
- Under this plan, Mayor Brown’s Administration will sell City-owned capital assets

- Plans are underway to sell the Osinski parking ramp at Gates Circle and the Downtown police headquarters building on Franklin Street as police prepare to move into the new City of Buffalo Police and Fire Headquarters at the City-owned Michael J. Dillon Courthouse Building

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR CITY YOUTH AND EDUCATION

In an effort to further support youth and education, as well as further strengthen the quality of life for all residents, this budget:

- Provides an additional \$500,000 to the Buffalo Public Schools – a permanent annual increase, which will yield an additional \$2.5 million to our City schools over the next five years. This is in addition to the support they continue to receive from the City of Buffalo, which includes 51% of the City’s annual property tax levy and other major education allocations by the Brown Administration
- Provides another investment of \$500,000 to Buffalo Say Yes to Education, bringing Mayor Brown’s total investment in this program since 2011 to over \$1.6 million
- Continues to fund existing programs and initiatives that have become some of Mayor Brown’s most successful events, including Reading Rules!, his annual Summer BBQ for City Seniors, and funding for Buffalo’s Arts, Cultural and Community organizations

ACHIEVES COST SAVINGS AND IMPROVES THE DELIVERY OF CITY SERVICES

Mayor Brown’s recommended budget continues to develop creative strategies to cut expenses, drive revenues and continue to further improve the delivery of City services.

- The Brown administration expects to generate a new revenue stream by enabling utility companies to install small cell technology on poles, in the City rights-of-way, to improve the volume of cellular service. For each pole, there will be annual recurring revenue of \$2,000 per pole, as well as application and processing fees in the upcoming fiscal year, charged to the utilities that will install and maintain the technology
- Capital outlay expenses include a major upgrade for back-up and storage capability by the Department of Management Information Systems (MIS), continuing Mayor Brown’s commitment to further improve City Hall’s digital infrastructure. In this budget, MIS will begin Phase I of the Data Center Efficiency Project. This project will enable the City to increase data center protection and improve energy efficiencies, thus lowering energy costs
- A new Time & Attendance solution will also be implemented that will improve daily operations, and minimize payroll-related errors.
- Savings in police over-time are expected in the second quarter as a result of newly hired police officers hitting City streets. Funding was included in last year’s budget to hire and train the next generation of police officers
- The successful Buffalo Police Department ‘Injured on Duty’ (IOD) program will be implemented in the Fire Department. Buffalo Police reduced the number of IODs by expediting an application and evaluation process. By reducing IOD and related overtime expenses in the Buffalo Fire Department, the City expects to save approximately \$3 million
- This balanced budget also continues Mayor Brown’s commitment to open data and transparency by allocating funds for the technology and personnel necessary to effectively manage the City’s data as an asset

“Like every large city, we have plenty of challenges before us but we also have great opportunities,” said Mayor Brown. “I’m pleased to report that our city remains financially healthy. We turned 185 years on April 20th, and our City is better than it’s been in decades.”

The Buffalo Common Council must return the Budget to the Mayor by May 22, 2017. The Mayor may then only veto any additions made by the Council. By Charter, the Budget becomes official on June 8th.

###