

**BUDGET TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

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September 11, 2023

**Honorable Members of the City Council**  
**18 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street**  
**Kearney, NE 68847**

***RE: 2023-2024 City of Kearney Budget***

Dear Honorable Members of the Kearney City Council:

Pursuant to the Nebraska Budget Act, Administration is pleased to transmit to you the 2023-2024 Annual Operating Budget and Program of Services for the City of Kearney.

The purpose of the Annual Operating Budget and Program of Services document is to present to the public and the City Council a comprehensive picture of proposed operations for the budget year expressed in both verbal and statistical terms for services to meet the human and physical needs of the citizens of Kearney. The budget is intended to accomplish two things: (1) to provide Administration with the opportunity to present its recommendations for the levels of services and methods of financing of services in the coming year; (2) to provide the most effective control possible by the City Council over the expenditure of public funds. It also provides Administration with the opportunity to point out various needs within the City's services. The City Council has the opportunity to judge the adequacy of the recommended programs and to set the level of City services. The City Council must also weigh the desirability of the services proposed against the burden of taxes required to finance the programs.

The budget document is the single most important report presented to the City Council during the year. Although it is primarily intended for City Council policy determination, it also serves as an aid to the citizens in providing a better understanding of the City's operating fiscal programs. The budget has been built on conservative financial principles that reflect staff commitment to maintaining necessary services, improving the quality of the operation of the City, and keeping expenditures and taxpayer load to a minimum.

The 2023-2024 fiscal year promises to be a year of challenge as the City of Kearney continually strives to improve service delivery. Therefore, this Annual Operating Budget and Program of Services document is once again the result of a careful and objective evaluation of every facet of the City of Kearney organization. The supreme effort to enhance service delivery in the most efficient manner has been the passion of each person involved in the budget process. This budget seeks to continue an emphasis on fulfilling the goals of the Council and the citizens of Kearney, while striving to keep property taxes as reasonable as possible.

### **Property Taxes**

**General Fund Property Tax** - The General Fund property tax requirement for the 2023-2024 proposed budget is \$4,679,087 and the proposed property tax levy for 2023 is \$.14022 per \$100.00 of valuation. The General Fund property tax requirement for the 2022-2023 adopted budget was \$4,251,328 and the actual tax levy was \$.13688. Therefore, the General Fund property tax requirement for 2023-2024 is \$427,758 more than the 2022-2023 General Fund property tax requirement and the General Fund tax levy for 2023-2024 is \$.00335 more than the 2022-2023 General Fund tax levy. The General Purpose Property Tax is deposited in the General Fund for the purpose of paying operational expenses of the City.

**Special Property Tax** - The special property tax requirement for the 2023-2024 proposed budget is \$288,529 and the proposed special property tax levy for 2023 is \$.00865 per \$100.00 of valuation. The special property tax requirement for the 2022-2023 adopted budget was \$372,467 and the actual tax levy was \$.01199. Therefore, the special property tax requirement for 2023-2024 is \$83,938 less than the 2022-2023 special property tax requirement and the special property tax levy for 2023-2024 is \$.00335 less than the 2022-2023 special property tax levy. The special property tax is deposited in the Public Safety Tax Anticipation Bond Fund for the purpose of paying principal and interest on bonds issued for public safety resources.

Therefore, the proposed combined property tax levy for fiscal year 2024 is .14887 per \$100.00 of valuation. It appears that Kearney will continue to enjoy having one of the lowest property tax levies among all first-class cities in the State of Nebraska again next year.

### **Capital Improvements/Equipment**

The 2023-2024 proposed budget includes \$77,055,701 of capital improvements/equipment in the following funds:

General Fund	\$1,736,888
Special Revenue Funds	\$2,984,500
Capital Projects Funds	\$42,279,558
Enterprise Funds	\$30,023,755
Internal Service Funds	\$31,000

A detail of the specific projects included in the above funds can be found on pages 65 through 70 of the budget documents.

### **Compensation, Benefits and Staffing**

The 2023-2024 budget includes a net increase of two full-time positions as follows:

#### Water

- Added a Maintenance Worker

#### Police

- Communication Specialist

September 11, 2023

Funds have been included to allow for a 3.0% adjustment to employee's salaries to keep their compensation comparable with similar positions and help offset increases in the cost of living.

**Fiscal Summary**

The 2023-2024 proposed budget is \$159,358,003 and the 2022-2023 adopted budget was \$167,530,547. Therefore, the 2023-2024 proposed budget is \$8,172,544 less than the 2022-2023 adopted budget. The following is a summary listing of the budget for each of the fund groups contained in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 budgets:

	<b><u>2022-2023</u></b>	<b><u>2023-2024</u></b>
General Fund	\$33,449,456	\$35,778,305
Special Revenue Funds	\$6,806,899	\$10,826,670
Capital Project Funds	\$44,131,550	\$47,644,032
Debt Service Funds	\$4,575,407	\$1,222,548
Enterprise Funds	\$68,782,768	\$53,458,260
Internal Service Funds	\$9,072,078	\$9,799,417
Fiduciary Funds	\$712,389	\$711,930
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$167,530,547</b>	<b>\$159,441,162</b>

**Acknowledgments**

Special thanks and appreciation are extended to the Department Heads and Division Heads for their conservative and pragmatic approach to their budgets.

Additionally, I would like to thank and commend the Council for their policy direction and support throughout the budget process. We look forward to working together for another successful year for the citizens of Kearney.

Sincerely yours,

**CITY OF KEARNEY**



Michael W. Morgan  
City Manager