

City of Rome
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
October 22, 2025

PRESENT:

Committee Chairman Jim Bojo
City Commissioner Wayne Robinson
City Commissioner Elaina Beeman
City Manager Sammy Rich
Assistant City Manager Meredith Ulmer
Finance Director Toni Rhinehart
Assistant Finance Director Kraig Ingalsbe
Vicki Blair, Recording Secretary

Guests: Assistant Police Chief Rodney Bailey
Purchasing Director Becky Smyth
Kelley Ledford, Assistant to City Manager
Doug Walker, Public Relations
Mo Burge, Rome-News Tribune
Jill Fisher, Candidate for City Commission

Committee Chairman Jim Bojo called the meeting to order and the minutes from the August 27th meeting were approved by common consent. He then turned to meeting over to Assistant Police Chief Rodney Bailey who presented a request from the police department for ten new body cameras and fifteen total licenses, ten of which come with the body cameras and the other five for court and various purposes. The estimated cost is approximately \$48,500 with an additional \$27,000 annually for the remaining seven years of the ten-year contract currently in place. These funds are being requested from RedSpeed funds that are earmarked strictly for police expenses. Finance Director Toni Rhinehart stated there are sufficient funds available for this request. Committee Chairman Jim Bojo asked for a motion to present the request to the full City Commission. Commissioner Robinson made the motion and Commissioner Beeman seconded it. Ms. Rhinehart then mentioned there is a need for some virtual infrastructure for the police department that needs to be ordered immediately. This item is already budgeted for 2026 but would need to be encumbered for this year due to the urgency of ordering the server. Since this item is already budgeted, there was no need for a motion and vote to take place. Bojo then turned the meeting over to Ms. Rhinehart.

Ms. Rhinehart began reviewing the 2026 Budgets which are currently in the first draft phase. Most departments have now met to present their capital requests through committee review. She mentioned that the capital requests are included in the budgets draft and if the committee members have any questions, they are welcome to email or call with those questions at any time. She emphasized this is the first draft.

City Manager Sammy Rich started with an explanation of the budget process which begins with each department receiving an email from Finance explaining the process with the pertinent information needed for the upcoming year. Each department enters their requests into the MUNIS system which is then reviewed by Ms. Rhinehart and discussed with the City Manager. The backup to support the request is also submitted electronically for review. Examples were given that the Public Works Committee reviews the budget requests for the Public Works Departments, Water and Sewer Committee reviews the budget requests for the Water and Sewer Departments, etc. Every department falls within a committee, and all City Commissioners are invited to those committee meetings to hear the requests. Then the budgets document is created based off those requests and approval from the committees into a first draft, then second draft, before being presented to the full City Commission for a vote. There is ample opportunity for each commissioner to review the budgets if they desire. The Finance Committee is the recipient of the first draft, and all commissioners are invited to all Finance Committee meetings.

Commissioner Wayne Robinson began a discussion regarding the millage rate process. He wanted to clarify that the millage rate is set prior to receiving the budget which means the millage rate is voted on before the budgets are received for the following year. The budget is being set now for 2026 but the millage rate will be voted on until 2026.

Ms. Rhinehart reviewed the expected revenues to be received in 2026 along with the transfers-in to General Fund. She then presented each department expenditure budget and answered any questions that were presented by the committee members. All capital requests were included in the document, but the capital fund budget is not complete at this time. All capital requests are being presented and discussed in the appropriate committee meetings. There are a few that are still scheduled to meet in the next few weeks. Ms. Rhinehart touched on the Insurance Fund, which had a significant increase in projected claims resulting in higher premium costs for both the city side and employee side in 2026.

Ms. Rhinehart stated the budgets need to be approved by the end of the year, but her goal is to have another meeting with the Finance Committee to present another draft on November 12th at 8:30 a.m. before the budgets are presented to the full City Commission.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Blair