

# Finance Committee

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May 9, 2019

Mayor and City Council  
City of Creve Coeur Missouri  
Creve Coeur MO 63141

**Re: FY 2020 Operating Budget Review**

Honorable Mayor and City Council:

The Finance Committee has studied the proposed operating budget at meetings in April and May 2019. Members participated in a Council work session and attended the Strategic Planning, Parks Master Planning and Planning and Zoning meetings. Our evaluation focused on reducing the trend of ongoing cost increases for employee and purchased services, combined with flat revenue projections, trends that are expected to continue. The Finance Task Force met with most city departments to identify potential cost reduction opportunities. Although staff helped achieve cost reductions, holding the line on a budget that is mostly for personnel cost is difficult. It became apparent that staffing adjustments have limitations. We find that the City is fiscally sound, assuming there are no major events that materially increase operating costs. Subject to the following comments, we recommend the budget to Council for finalization.

**Historic Structures.** Two historic cabins in Conway Park and the Lake School building were studied by a building conservation expert and are in the Capital Plan and Operating Budget for repairs to preserve them. Nancy Litzinger, representing the Parks and Historic Preservation Committee, joined our meeting to inform discussion, after which several members personally viewed the buildings. The Finance Committee recommends that City defer any spending on the three historic structures at this time until and unless a program of regular activities by and for City residents, such as use as an environmental education center, can be determined by the Parks Department and agreed by Council. We expect utilization of Lake School will be costly due to needed site grading and concrete to improve accessibility and safety, without which it cannot be designated a program facility. If no such regular program is identified by next budget year, the Finance Committee recommends removal of any remaining underutilized buildings.

**Municipal Consolidation.** Even though the consolidation effort known as “Better Together” is not presently proceeding, the Finance Committee remains interested in St Louis County reducing county and municipal costs through scale economies of consolidation. Since sales taxes that are generated within Creve Coeur are spent by St Louis County, reducing county spending should benefit the City. To that end we urge Council to continue their involvement with whatever path future consolidation efforts may take.

In closing, we want to complement City staff for diligent effort in producing a first-rate budget to guide future Council action and inform residents of our City.

Sincerely,

*Adam Shulenburg*

Adam Shulenburg, Chair