

November 12, 2020

Mayor Andrew J. Ginther:

Contained herein is the 2021 Budget totaling \$1.98 billion, of which \$964 million is for general fund operating expenses. Overall, the proposed 2021 general fund operating budget is 0.57 percent lower than the 2020 amended budget.

Due to your continuing leadership and the support of City Council, the City Auditor, and the taxpayers, I am pleased to report that the City of Columbus remains financially sound. The Mayor's 2021 Budget is balanced, maintains city services in economically challenging times, and does not rely on using rainy day or basic city services funds. As of the end of 2020, the city will have approximately \$85.2 million in the rainy day fund and \$20.9 million in the basic city services fund.

During 2020, the city will have an extra pay day that will be paid out of the 27th pay period fund. We are able to pay this because you set aside funds in each of your budgets to prepare for this infrequent expense. The 2021 budget will once again include an amount to be placed in the 27th pay period fund for the next time it is needed.

In the spring of 2020, the world faced a pandemic that has not been rivaled in modern times. The coronavirus has been a financial challenge to municipalities nationwide and to our community as a whole. In June of 2020, the City Auditor revised her general fund revenue estimate by reducing projections by \$41.5 million. Because of fiscal controls, such as freezing most new

hires and reducing travel and other expenses, Columbus was able to confront this challenge. Additionally, the city was able to utilize \$156.8 million in CARES Act funds granted from the U.S. Treasury Department to make necessary expenditures to address the COVID-19 pandemic. It was not necessary to use any reserve funds to help offset the revenue losses during 2020 or to help balance the 2021 budget.



Columbus was also able to withstand the financial effects of the coronavirus due to our large and diverse local economy. The city benefits from being the seat of state and county government, as well as having a significant number of large education and research institutions. Overall, the greater Columbus area remains service oriented with major

employers in insurance, public utilities, retail, health care, and banking.

Revenue growth is largely dependent upon income tax, which makes up approximately 78 percent of the total general fund revenues for 2021. The income tax growth rate for 2020 is projected at negative 1.5 percent while 2021 is expected to see a mild 0.5 percent increase. Fortunately, many of the other revenue sources will see significant increases in 2021, such as property tax collections, fines and penalties, license and permit fees, and charges for services. These anticipated increases help offset the losses in income tax receipts.



While the city's financials are currently relatively stable, the coronavirus has had devastating effects on individual residents and our social service partners who serve them. Additionally, this budget was also prepared in the context of nationwide calls for social change, racial justice, and police reform. A balanced approach of maintaining current city services into 2021 and addressing these aforementioned concerns was used in formulating this operating budget.

Funding for a number of new initiatives has been included in this proposal. The Health Department will receive additional funding to curb infant mortality, for an anti-violence plan, and for various other programs. Also, Health's proposed funding reflects the addition of 21 full-time social workers who will partner with Crisis Intervention Trained police officers to respond to mental health related calls for service and provide necessary post-incident follow-up. Increased general fund support of nearly \$1.4 million was included in Development for social service agencies to shore up decreased emergency human services funding.

In the Safety Department, a consolidation of all fiscal and human resources employees under the Director's Office, and a transfer of Police's 911 Call Center to the Division of Support Services, will allow for efficiencies and shared resources. New funding is also included for expansion of the ShotSpotter program, upgrades of Police's body worn cameras, and a case management software system for Police. New funding is also

included in Technology's budget for cyber security investments.

The 2021 budget reflects the priorities of your Equity Agenda and commitment to the people of Columbus for vibrant neighborhoods, police reform, affordable housing, early childhood education, decreased infant mortality, inclusive and equitable access to public health and economic prosperity, the pursuit of sustainability efforts, and economic development - all to accomplish your goal of making Columbus America's Equal Opportunity City.

I want to express a special thank you to the outstanding and dedicated Department of Finance and Management budget team, department directors, as well as departmental staff in preparing this budget.

The Department of Finance and Management will continue to monitor economic conditions and help ensure the future health of the city's finances.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph A. Lombardi
Director
Department of Finance and Management



THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

CITY OF COLUMBUS PROPOSED 2021 BUDGET

Mayor Andrew J. Ginther

Presented to Columbus City Council
November 12, 2020

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Ohio**

For the Fiscal Year Beginning

January 1, 2020

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the City of Columbus, Ohio for its annual budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2020. In order to receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan, and as a communications device.

This award is valid for a period of one year only. We believe our current budget continues to conform to program requirements, and we will submit it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another award.

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