

Important Information from the Westfir City Recorder

April 1, 2026

Dear Citizens of Westfir,

It is my unfortunate task to talk to you about the budget deficit the City is facing going into fiscal year 2026–2027 and beyond. For fiscal year 2026–2027 (July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027), the City is facing a shortfall of around \$36,000. Although this amount is only around 6% of total annual expenditures, the City must still find a way to pass a completely balanced budget by June 30.

The largest amount of the budget shortfall is due to the rising costs of providing police and fire services, for which we contract with the City of Oakridge. Since I started working at the City in 2019, the cost of police services has nearly doubled (+95%) and the cost of fire services has more than doubled (+166%). Property tax revenues are not keeping pace.

These increased costs are due partly to ordinary inflation. More significantly, though, they are due to the need of the City of Oakridge to be fairly compensated for their expenses in providing these services to the City of Westfir. Westfir residents have for many years paid less for these services compared to Oakridge residents, and even now, the City of Westfir pays less per capita for police and fire services than does the City of Oakridge.

Among Oregon cities, Westfir is not alone in facing a budget shortfall. Many Oregon cities have implemented public safety or other fees in order to bridge their budget shortfalls. Likewise, for the City of Westfir, a fee to fund services also has to be on the table—unless we drop our law enforcement contract with the City of Oakridge, which would be a scary prospect.

In order to help you visualize how the General Fund is currently used by the City, I have provided charts immediately following this letter that show, for fiscal year 2024–2025 (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025), the distribution of General Fund expenditures and the distribution of General Fund income sources, respectively.

A partial solution to the budget shortfall would be to decrease General Fund support for the Sewer Fund, which would free up some of the General Fund for other purposes. However, doing so would result in higher sewer rates for those who have sewer service. We are also

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investigating whether some of the City's pool of highway funds can be converted to use for law enforcement services. Even if this fund conversion is possible, it would be only a temporary solution, and we would be back to budget shortfalls within a couple of years.

The Water Fund and Sewer Fund also have deficits in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026–2027. These deficits are due in part to insufficient carryover of cash on hand as funding has become more tightly budgeted in the General Fund over the past few years. Another reason for the water and sewer deficits is the increase in labor expense for this highly specialized work. To get a sense of the complexity of managing the wastewater treatment system, for example, please see the recently completed Wastewater Facilities Plan on the City's website. (The Plan was funded through a DEQ grant.)

[https://www.ci.westfir.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ ↩
Westfir-Wastewater-Facilities-Plan.pdf](https://www.ci.westfir.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Westfir-Wastewater-Facilities-Plan.pdf)

Clearly, we as a city have some difficult decisions to make. Our first Budget Committee meeting will be held on April 23 at 6 PM. A copy of the budget document will be available one week prior to the meeting, at City Hall and on the website. I encourage you to review the budget and attend the meeting with your questions and comments. You may also submit your comments to City Hall prior to the meeting.

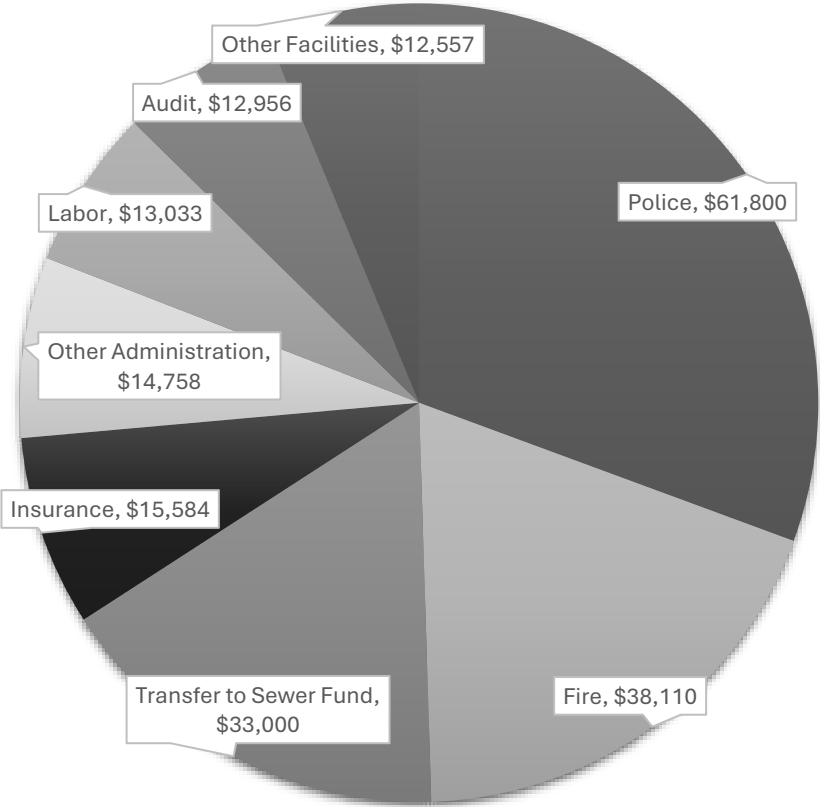
Sincerely,

Nicole Tritten
City Recorder

City of Westfir
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Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 AM–2 PM

General Fund Expenditures: FY 2024–2025



General Fund Income Sources: FY 2024–2025

