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**CITY OF WHEELING**  
**BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
**PROPOSED BUDGET**

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**FY 2022-2023**



# CITY OF WHEELING



CITY COUNTY BUILDING  
1500 CHAPLINE STREET  
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

**BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
Phone (304) 234-3601 | [WheelingWV.gov](http://WheelingWV.gov)

January 26, 2022

Mr. Robert Herron  
City Manager  
Wheeling, WV 26003

Mr. Herron,

Enclosed please find the proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Building & Planning Department Budget. In addition to the proposed budget, I have also included an overview of the department's accomplishments, challenges, and future goals and objectives. Thank you for considering the attached information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. J. Connelly".

Thomas J. Connelly, AICP  
Director

The Building and Planning Department oversees the development and maintenance of property in the city to ensure the purpose and intent of all applicable building and land use codes is achieved. This is accomplished through several phases of interaction with the customer including approving plans, issuing permits, inspecting work, enforcing codes (building, property maintenance, zoning, flood plain, vacant building, subdivision), resolving issues, and allowing for occupancy. All activities are conducted with the overall goal of ensuring development is consistent with the comprehensive plan, the guiding document for physical development in the city.

The goal of the department is to perform these duties in a consistent and professional manner to ensure development throughout the city meets current building and development standards. To achieve that goal, the department is staffed by seven full time and one part time employees, nearly all of whom are regularly trained and certified in their respective disciplines. Each staff member plays a specific role in the department and includes a building code official, a building inspector, an electrical code official, a permit specialist, a code enforcement officer to administer the vacant building program, a code enforcement officer to administer the property maintenance code, a part time code enforcement officer and the director of the department. In addition, the department carries out the functions of the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Building Code Board of Appeals. Each staff member is tasked with responsibilities that keep their daily schedule consistently full.

There are many development projects being planned, under construction, or recently completed in Wheeling. For example, a few of the larger projects that have been approved by the Planning Commission and building staff include the new Fire Department Headquarters, the new parking garage, a new multi-family housing building by the Woda Group at 39<sup>th</sup> Street in South Wheeling, a new restaurant in Fulton, and the Doris on Main Apartments. Projects currently under construction include the Wheeling Pitt Lofts, LaBelle Greene IV, and the Hope VI Community Center. Recently completed projects or those soon to be concluding include the Ohio Valley Credit Union, a medical office on Washington Avenue, a law firm on National Road, the relocated Social Security offices in Warwood, and the Warwood Commons shopping plaza expansion. In total during calendar year 2021, the department processed 275 commercial building permits valued at \$37 million dollars and 905 residential building permits valued at \$8.25 million dollars. There were 202 floodplain permits processed in 2021.

In addition to overseeing new development in the city, an equally important function of the department is ensuring current buildings and properties are maintained in conformance with building and property standards. The main challenge facing the department is eliminating neighborhood blight, which has a profound impact on the community, creates safety hazards and decreases property values. Unfortunately, the number of dilapidated buildings and unmaintained properties in Wheeling continues to be an issue. When a dilapidated building is finally removed from the city's landscape via demolition, the burden on code enforcement resources shifts from the "raze or repair of a structure" category to the "high grass and weed" category – which, seasonally requires and occupies more time by staff conducting inspections, issuing citations, preparing for court, communicating with City Operations grass crew, etc.

As such, the department changed the approach to the city's demolition program, which involved creating a new assessment system and photo inventory that is continually updated throughout the year. Staff also began administering the ordinance requiring demolition in the historic districts to go through a Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council review process. The biggest change to the department came when City Council approved contracting with GovPilot and ProChamps to improve code enforcement activities.

The department strives to provide professional services to the community in a reliable manner by being able to consistently accommodate a customer's request for an inspection on a specific date and time and provide resources and information to assist in the customers projects. There are two full time code enforcement officers and one part time officer was added in the fall. They are charged with overseeing the efforts to bring properties into compliance with city code. One code enforcement officer focuses on the vacant building program and the other on property maintenance. The vacant building registry currently list 325 properties with another 29 properties pending registration. In 2021, 67 properties were newly registered or re-registered to a new owner, 17 properties were removed due to occupancy and 61 were removed due to demolition. The code enforcement officer responded to 36 -311 tickets. There were \$92,150 fees collected in calendar year 2021. Municipal court proceedings continue to be a large part of the code enforcement process. Last year there were 46 cases that complied or were otherwise dismissed, 34 no shows resulting in 12 capias warrants being issued, 3 of which were served by the police. There are currently 17 cases in court. The courts levied \$2300.00 in fines.

Also, during 2021, the code enforcement officer responsible for property maintenance issued 240 citations, condemned 62 properties, filed 97 complaints in municipal court, and responded to 227 311 tickets. That is in addition to phone calls, emails, and other referrals that were submitted

As discussed last year, if revenue generation is needed to cover the cost associated with the annual contract with GovPilot, updating fees in the department could be considered, such as charging a fee for commercial building plan review, which is common in other communities. In addition, the cost of a building permit could be reviewed as it is lower than the fee in other cities in West Virginia. Similarly, costs associated with Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals functions have remained minimal and unchanged for nearly twenty years (e.g., zone change \$100, variance and all other public hearings \$50, which often only covers advertising and processing costs). In addition to adding revenue, higher fees pertaining to zone change and variance requests also serve as a deterrent for such requests and are an incentive for owners to develop in accord with existing codes. The fees that are in place have remained constant despite the increase in costs associated with carrying out the goals of the department, including staff time to review complex blueprints for commercial construction, notification costs for public hearings, increased technological needs, increased certification and training requirements, and other costs.

### **Goals & Objectives**

Many of the goals outlined below from the previous year were met or are in-process of being met. The primary goal of 2022-2023 is to successfully role out the new GovPilot program and improve our departments efforts. The second goal of the department is to have the three employees hired

in 2021 start their certification process. The third goal is to begin preparations to conduct a review of the Comprehensive Plan within the next two years.

**2021-2022 Goals & Objectives**

- ✓ *Improve code enforcement activities.*
- ✓ *Improve non-emergency citizen complaint service system (311)*
- ✓ *Implement GIS solutions in the department.*
- *Assist in the successful adoption and implementation of a rental inspection program.*
- ✓ *Assist in the successful creation of a repeat offenders program for code violations.*
- *Resume Planning Commission working groups on a consistent basis, including the group tasked with reviewing the zoning ordinance for updates.*
- ✓ *Organize records room.*
- *Successfully transition to new office on the first floor.*
- ✓ *Continue training and certification of staff.*
- ✓ *Continue current level of professional services offered to the community.*

**Request needs / increases**

To accomplish the goals outlined above, I am respectfully requesting increases or continued levels of funding in the following line items:

- **“Building Official”** – to reflect the salary increase of \$1500 per certification.
- **“Longevity”** – due to the current make-up of the department, this item needs adjusted.
- **“Membership Dues”** online access to three organizations to assist with plan review.
- **“Office Equipment Maintenance”** if the department moves to the first floor, a new copier with maintenance subscription will be necessary.
- **“Tech Ref & Services”** the GovPilot program has a \$20,000 annual license. Also, I would like the ability to use SafeBuilt for commercial plan review until the Building Code Official becomes certified in Plan Review,
- **“Telephone-LD Charges”** – I-pad data costs for GovPilot
- **“Uniforms”** this line item was just recently added to the Department and I respectfully request it be funded each year in order to provide staff with professional apparel so that they may be properly identified when in the field interacting with the public, entering homes and businesses, and representing the city in a professional manner.
- **“Capital Outlays”** if the department moves to the first floor, I’m requesting the ability to provide new desks, filing cabinets, chairs and plan review table in order to maximize the use of the space. Attempting to reuse existing furniture, which is at least 20 years old, or furniture from other spaces, such as the former OVMC, will not allow for the best use of the space.

Thank you for your consideration of the above,



Thomas Connelly, AICP  
Director

**Budget Increase Worksheet**

4437.10.1905 Longevity 54+54+30+30+20+6= 124 x 26      \$    **5,044.00**

4437.20.2138 Membership & Dues

ASHRAE (Heating, Refridge, A/C Eng.) \$    230.00

ASME (Amer. Soc. Mechanical Eng.) \$    200.00

ASTM (Amer. Soc. Testing & Materials) \$    200.00

\$    **630.00**

4437.20.2145 Office Equipment

Copier Lease \$    145.00

Maintenance \$    50.00

per month \$    195.00

annual \$    **2,340.00**

4437.20.2149 Tech Reference

GovPilot \$ 20,000.00

SafeBuilt \$ 5,000.00

ICC Online Access \$ 865.00

\$    **25,865.00**

4437.20.2173 Phone

6 tablet data @ \$40/ month x 12      \$    **3,360.00**

4437.40.4151 Capitol Outlays

Chairs, Desks, filing, plan review \$    **22,200.00**

**CITY OF WHEELING**  
**DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REQUEST**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 23**

<b>DEPARTMENT/DIVISION: BUILDING &amp; PLANNING</b>			<b>DEPARTMENT/DIVISION HEAD: TOM CONNELLY</b>			
<b>LINE ITEM (NUMBER &amp; TITLE)</b>	<b>BUDGET CURRENT YEAR</b>	<b>PROPOSED BASE</b>	<b>NEW PROJECTS AND CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>	<b>BUDGET REQUEST</b>	<b>INCREASES (DECREASES)</b>	<b>APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER</b>
001.4437.10.1217 Building Inspector	\$43,891	\$43,891		\$43,891	-	
001.4437.10.1225 Building & Planning Director	\$71,042	\$71,042		\$71,042	-	
001.4437.10.1316 Permit Specialist	\$40,081	\$40,081		\$40,081	-	
001.4437.10.1321 Building Official	\$50,000	\$51,500		\$51,500	+\$1,500	
001.4437.10.SWI Code Enforcement Officer / SI	\$17,680	\$17,680		\$17,680	-	
001.4437.10.1322 Code Enforcement Officer I	\$41,830	\$41,830		\$40,830	-	
001.4437.10.1323 Code Enforcement Officer II	\$46,365	\$46,365		\$45,364	-	
001.4437.10.1326 Electric Inspector	\$43,233	\$43,233		\$43,233	-	
001.4437.10.1523 Bonus/Attnd. Bonus	\$2,275	\$2,275		\$2,275	-	
001.4437.10.1902 Social Security	\$1,174					



001.4437.10.1905	Temporary Salaries	\$18,928	\$0	\$0	\$0	-\$18,928
001.4437.10.1905	Longevity	\$3,068	\$5,044	\$5,044	\$5,044	+\$1,996
001.4437.10.1920	Eye-Dental-Life Ins.	\$6,866				-
001.4437.10.1921	Hospitalization	\$95,397				-
001.4437.10.1924	Medicare Contributions	\$4,978				-
001.4437.20.2134	Insurance	\$8,728				-
001.4437.20.2138	Membership Dues	\$1,272	\$1,902	\$1,902	\$1,902	+\$630
001.4437.20.2144	Pub-Advertising Exp	\$507	\$507	\$507	\$507	-
001.4437.20.2145	Office Equip. Maintenance	\$4,427	\$6,767	\$6,767	\$6,767	+\$2,340
001.4437.20.2149	Tech Ref. & Services	\$15,758	\$41,623	\$41,623	\$41,623	+\$25,865
001.4437.20.2153	Travel Exp.	\$1,491	\$1,491	\$1,491	\$1,491	-
001.4437.20.2162	Spec. Schools-Training	\$4,922	\$4,922	\$4,922	\$4,922	-
001.4437.20.2171	Workers Compensation	\$9,179				-
001.4437.20.2173	Telephone-LD CHGS	\$4,366	\$7,726	\$7,726	\$7,726	+\$3,360
001.4437.20.3146	Postage	\$2,552	\$2,552	\$2,552	\$2,552	-
001.4437.20.3188	Mileage	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	-
001.4437.30.2165	Uniforms	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	-
001.4437.30.3135	Office Sup.	\$1,043	\$1,043	\$1,043	\$1,043	-
001.4437.40.4151	Capital Outl	\$2,079	\$24,200	\$24,200	\$2,079	+\$22,121



CITY OF WHEELING  
 DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REQUEST  
 FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 23

PROGRAM/PROJECT	COST	PRIORITY*	JUSTIFICATION/EXPLANATION
1	2	3	4
Code Enforcement Software	\$20,000	1	Annual GovPilot Subscription Cost
SafeBuilt	\$5,000	2	Professional Services Until Code Official Becomes Certified
ICC Online Code Access	\$865	3	Allows convenient access to all ICC codes online.

\* Number the priorities starting with 1 being the first priority, 2 the second priority and so on. There should only be one item per priority.

**CITY OF WHEELING  
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT OUTLAY SCHEDULE  
FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 23**

**DEPARTMENT: BUILDING & PLANNING  
DIVISION:  
FUND:**

DESCRIPTION	NO. OF UNITS	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST	TRADE IN VALUE	NET COST	PRIORITY*	JUSTIFICATION/EXPLANATION
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Office Chairs	8	\$300	\$2,400	\$0	\$2,400	1	Maximize space if moving to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor
Office Desks	8	\$1,800	\$14,400	\$0	\$14,400	2	Maximize space if moving to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor
Filing Cabinets	8	\$300	\$2,400	\$0	\$2,400		Maximize space if moving to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor
Plan Review Table & Plan Racks	2	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$0	\$3,000	3	Maximize space if moving to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor
Computer	1	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	4	Purchase a new computer every year so that no computer is more than 5 years old.
<b>TOTAL</b>					\$24,200		

\* Number the priorities starting with 1 being the first priority, 2 the second priority and so on. There should only be one item per priority.