

GENERAL INFORMATION

Important Numbers

Abandoned Cars (Streets)	(815) 966-2900
Abandoned Cars (Property)	(779) 348-7160
Graffiti	(779) 348-7261
Police Non-Emergency	(815) 966-2900
Potholes	(779) 348-7260
Snow Hotline	(779) 348-7260
Special Events	(779) 348-7660
Trash Collection	(815) 965-2489
Traffic Signals	(779) 348-7179
Traffic Signs	(779) 348-7178
Unsafe Buildings	(779) 348-7159
Water Issues	(779) 348-7152
Weeds	(779) 348-7161

Report an Issue/Service Request

Do you need to report a pothole, graffiti, weeds violation, or a traffic signal outage? Our Service Request portal allows you to submit that information online. You can either create an account or log in as a guest. Visit our website at www.rockfordil.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of government is the City of Rockford?

The City of Rockford is a Mayor – City Council led form of government, where the Mayor is elected independent of City Council. Elections for the Mayor and Alderman takes place once every four years. Collectively, the Mayor and City Council are the policy making and legislative body of the City. Rockford is a non-home rule municipality.

What are the responsibilities of the Mayor?

The Mayor is the chief executive of the City responsible for policy development, long range financial planning and capital budgeting. The Mayor appoints, with the advice and consent of City Council, all officers of the City and is responsible for supervising their activities. The exception being the Police Chief and Fire Chief who are appointed by the Fire and Police Commission.

What are the roles of City Council?

City Council is the legislative body of the City responsible for approving the annual budget, appropriating funds and legislative items such as resolutions, ordinances, intergovernmental agreements, annexation agreements and development agreements. City Council has approved rules of procedure to guide how and when they meet.

What roles do citizens have in Rockford Government?

The City has a number of opportunities for citizen participation, including participation on citizen-led boards, commissions and committees. Citizen participation provides important guidance to the Mayor and City Council in governing the City of Rockford. This includes the Library Board, Fire and Police Commission, Community Relations Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Liquor and Tobacco Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Commission and Community Action Agency. The City also appoints a portion of the Airport Authority Board, Rockford Area Venues Authority, Rockford Area Arts Council, Rockford Area Economic Development Council, Winnebago County Health Council and Winnebago County Health Department.

BUDGET

Frequently Asked Questions

How big is the City's 2021 budget?

The approved 2021 budget authorizes \$295 million in spending for the year, a 0.5% increase over 2020. The general fund, where core City services are budgeted, is \$168.5 million.

What is included in the general fund budget?

The most expensive piece of the general fund is public safety, Police and Fire are \$122 million of the total budget (or 80%). Additionally, in Public Works we have street maintenance, snow removal, traffic signs, traffic lights and street lights. In Community and Economic Development, we have planning and economic development, code enforcement, and garbage collection. All of the City's internal support services (Legal, Finance, and Human Resources) are also included.

How do we pay for all of those services?

The general fund includes a wide variety of revenues, which helps create stability for the City's core services. This includes property taxes, sales taxes, the City's share of income taxes, utility taxes, service fees, permit fees, business licenses and fines.

What are the biggest changes in the 2021 budget?

The 2021 budget is what we would generally call a "status quo" budget, so the goal is to maintain current services. However, we did incorporate a couple of changes this year, including a \$1.5 million contribution to Rockford Promise (from future casino revenues) and approximately \$720,000 in equipment, storage and staff costs to implement body worn cameras in the Police Department.

Why can't special revenues be used for basic City services?

Generally, special revenues are designated for a specific purpose by federal, state or local law, or by the organization granting the money. For example, the City's share of motor fuel taxes can only be used to pay for specific things defined in state law, like road maintenance, lighting and construction. These funds are audited regularly, and if the City spends the money incorrectly, we have to pay the state back. Nearly all of the revenues outside the general fund are special or restricted in some way and can't legally be used to pay for core services.

What impact do public safety pensions have on the City's finances?

Pensions are benefits guaranteed under the Illinois constitution and earned by police and fire personnel, who help fund those benefits. Benefit levels are set by state legislators, who then leave it to local governments to figure out how to pay for them. While state law allows for the levying of property taxes to fund pensions, they are just one piece of the overall property tax levy. And, property taxes in Rockford are capped, or limited, in how much they can grow each year (regardless of the increase in our pension payment). This means that, while pension payments have grown 5% annually on average over the last 10 years, property taxes have remained relatively flat. The City has had to make decisions to raise additional revenue or reduce services to continue to meet our pension obligations.

What is the City doing about property taxes in Rockford?

The average taxpayer in Rockford pays property taxes to 10 different taxing bodies. Of the total bill, the City is only 22% of the whole. However, City Council has recognized the burden that property taxes have become in Rockford. The 2020 levy, which is paid by property owners in 2021, is the eighth consecutive year the City has either reduced or held flat the levy.