From: District 5 <jray@margaretal.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 12:28 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@margaretal.gov>; Matthew Tortorice <mayor@margaretal.gov>; James Chapman <argoair@yahoo.com>; Anthony Irwin <anthony@irwinlawyers.com>; Paul Irwin <paul@irwinlawyers.com>
Subject: Upcoming budget

Is there a proposed budget that is ready for council review for the upcoming year?

Jonathan Ray
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret
jray@margaretal.gov
205-577-2135 or 205-228-9139

From: Matthew Tortorice <mayor@margaretal.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, 05 August 2026 09:17:08
To: District 5 <jray@margaretal.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@margaretal.gov>; James Chapman <argoair@yahoo.com>; Anthony Irwin <anthony@irwinlawyers.com>; Paul Irwin <paul@irwinlawyers.com>
Subject: Re: Upcoming budget

Thank you for reaching out.

I am beginning the budget preparation process with the department heads for the upcoming fiscal year. Each department head will be expected to provide detailed requests, supporting information, operational reasoning and justification for any proposed increase or change. I believe council recommendations should be held to the same standard.

Please send me any specific changes you recommend to the current fiscal year budget. For each recommendation, please identify:

- The department and line item involved
- The specific amount of the proposed increase or reduction
- The reason for the change
- The information supporting the recommendation
- The expected effect on staffing, services and department operations
- Any alternative you believe would accomplish the same objective

This is particularly important for any proposed reduction affecting personnel, police, fire, public works, utilities or other essential services. A reduction cannot be evaluated responsibly without understanding which positions, services or projects would be affected.

Likewise, if you believe staffing or departmental funding should be increased, please identify the additional positions or services you believe are needed and explain the public benefit and recurring financial impact.

I am asking the department heads to justify their recommendations in enough detail that the council and the public can understand what is being requested and why. I expect the same level of detail from council members proposing changes.

Because this will be a more structured budget-development process than the city has historically used, every proposed change will need to be documented and explained rather than presented as a general request to raise or lower a department's budget.

Once the departmental review and initial draft are complete, the proposed budget will be provided to the council through the new normal review process.

I look forward to receiving recommendations that reflect the seriousness, preparation and understanding this responsibility requires.

Regards,

Matt Tortorice

Mayor, City of Margaret

AMERICA 250 ALABAMA

From: District 5 <jray@margaretal.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 11:49 AM
To: Matthew Tortorice <mayor@margaretal.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@margaretal.gov>; James Chapman <argoair@yahoo.com>; Anthony Irwin <anthony@irwinlawyers.com>; Paul Irwin <paul@irwinlawyers.com>
Subject: Re: Upcoming budget

I think once the council receives the preliminary budget for review, then we will be able to make suggestions and share thoughts on everything moving forward. I know for the budget to be in place by October 1st we would have to receive it in the next week or so to review and share thoughts as a council in order for the two meeting process that it takes to get it in place by October 1st.

Jonathan Ray
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret
jray@margaretal.gov
205-577-2135 or 205-228-9139

From: Matthew Tortorice
To: District 5; City Council; James Chapman; Anthony Irwin; Paul Irwin; Chief King; Fire Chief; Todd Schaffner; Gene Barker; David Vinson
Subject: Re: Upcoming budget
Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 12:10:45 PM
Attachments: image.png
image.png

Your response appears to assume that council's role begins after I prepare and distribute a preliminary budget. That is not what I asked.

I have already begun working with the department heads to develop their requests and supporting documentation. I'm asking each council member to do the same work on any changes they believe should be considered so those recommendations can be evaluated while the preliminary budget is being developed, not after the work has already been completed.

You have raised the need for council involvement and sufficient review time. I agree. I am therefore assigning you the responsibility of preparing your budget recommendations for consideration in the initial draft.

Please review the current fiscal year budget and submit your proposed changes to me by noon on Friday, August 14th. For each proposed change, provide:

- The department and line item
- The current appropriation
- The amount you propose
- The dollar increase or reduction
- The reason and supporting information
- The effect on personnel, services, projects or operations
- The revenue source or corresponding reduction needed to fund an increase
- Any reasonable alternative you considered

A general statement that council will provide thoughts after receiving the preliminary budget does not provide the information needed to build that budget. If you believe the current budget should remain unchanged, please state that plainly. If you believe changes are needed, the responsibility is now yours to identify, calculate and support them.

Once your recommendations and the department submissions have been received, they can be evaluated and incorporated into the preliminary budget where appropriate. Council will still receive the preliminary budget for formal review, discussion and amendment. This process simply ensures that your requested participation occurs

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before the initial draft is completed rather than after.

The ball is in your court. I will look for your completed recommendations by the deadline above.

Matt Tortorice
Mayor, City of Margaret

AMERICA 250 ALABAMA