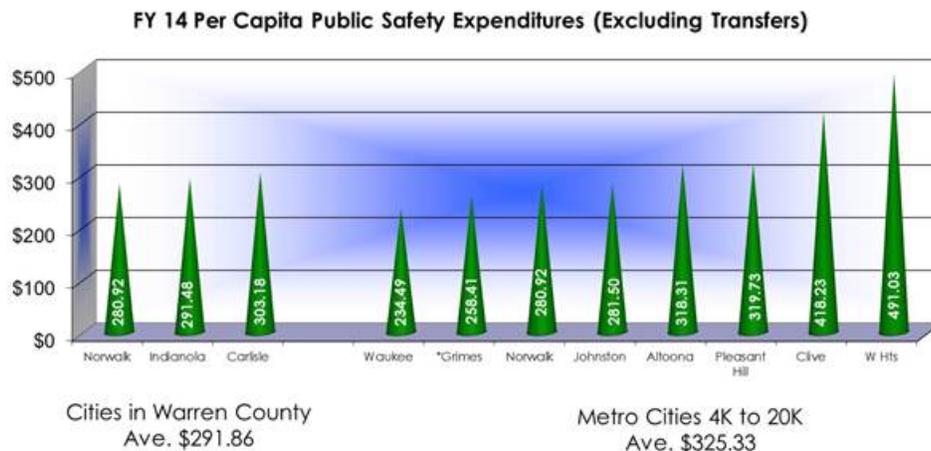


Understanding the City Budget

November 11, 2013 - For the average person, reading a city's budget can be a bit daunting if not thoroughly confusing. The goal with this series of articles is to break down the City's budget into smaller and easier to understand sections. We have also compared the City of Norwalk's spending and budget with area communities and communities of comparable size and budgets.

The first article in this series will break down Public Safety Expenditures. The following graph not only compares Norwalk to other Warren County cities, but it also compares Norwalk to metro area cities with populations ranging from 4,000 to 20,000 people.

Norwalk currently spends \$280.02 per capita for Public Safety. The most comparable community to Norwalk is Pleasant Hill, because of their population, location and valuation. Pleasant Hill spends \$319.73 per capita and is currently moving towards providing their residents with a similar level of service as Norwalk. Compared to other Warren County cities, Norwalk spends the least amount per capita for public safety. It appears from these comparisons that Norwalk meets its goal of providing residents with Fire and Police protection for a low cost. Staff members are always looking for ways to reduce costs, particularly those that are recurring. For example, this year the City reduced health insurance costs by approximately \$115,000. Not all of this is in the Public Safety category but a significant portion is. This helps reduce the bottom line and achieve the overall goal of minimizing the taxes residents are asked to pay.



Definitions

Per Capita – this is the dollar amount spent per resident based on the 2010 Census.

Valuation – this can mean the total assessed value or the taxable value of all of the properties in the community.

Public Safety Expenditures - expenses include police, fire, ambulance, building inspections, animal control and other public safety.

***Grimes** – this denotes that this community does not have a full time Police Department. The City of Grimes contracts with the Polk County Sheriff's Department for services.