

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING

August 21, 2023

The City Commission met on this date for a special meeting in the Commission Chambers. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance.

Mayor	:	Hubert B. Smith
Commissioners	:	Christine Wasdin
	:	Edward Crosby
	:	Kay Hamilton
	:	Clark (Tom) Browning
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
City Administrator	:	Carl Scott
Police Chief	:	Joe Hart
Public Works Director:	:	Nathan Kelley (camera)
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in Attendance: (Not Inclusive) Kelly Irwin, Neal Shermer

1. Purchasing Policy Waiver

Mr. Scott said he and Mr. Dykes had talked about amending the purchase policy after the meeting last week and they believe it would be better to leave the purchasing policy as it is. Mr. Scott said instead of changing the policy, we will have a waiver on special projects, or phases of projects. To allow us to have an exemption to the rules for framing (new City Hall) as long as it is less than \$25,000 and let Comm. Hamilton make the final determination if we can get three quotes we will and if we cannot we still can move forward. **COMM. BROWNING MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASING POLICY EXEMPTION AS RECOMMENDED BY MR. SCOTT. COMM. HAMILTON SECOND THE MOTION.** Mr. Scott said once we get to the flooring, there is no way to do that for \$5,000 it will be more and will probably have to ask for a waiver at the time. **UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

Mr. Scott said he has a request that he would like for the budget. He said he would like to have someone work with him for two hours a week at minimum pay. The gentleman is also going to school and will have two years of schooling toward being a building official, essentially mentoring said gentleman to replace him once he retires. Mr. Scott said training his replacement. Mrs. Johnson said with the two hours a week, will we see this gentleman or how is that going to work? Mr. Scott said yes, he will be in school Monday through Thursday and on Friday he will work with Mr. Scott for two hours. Mr. Scott said he has to sign off on him and wants to make sure he has the field experience and education needed to be a building official. Mayor Smith said this sounds like a good idea, the Commission agreed. Mayor Smith said this gentleman would start in the new fiscal year 2023-2024.

2. FY2024 DRAFT BUDGET

Mrs. Johnson said everyone has a copy of the FY2024 draft budget in front of them. She said last week she and Chief Hart had met with our insurance person who they tasked with going out and looking for a plan similar to Florida Blue with less cost. Mrs. Johnson said he brought back three, one

1 wasn't anything like what we have so that was turned down but one with United Healthcare was
2 similar in coverage but much cheaper. She wants to make sure with the Commission that they agree to
3 go with United Healthcare so that she can let our agent know to start the process of changing over.
4 Mayor Smith and Commission Browning, both said it was a no brainer and the other members agreed.
5 Mrs. Johnson will contact our insurance person in the morning.

6 Mrs. Johnson said this draft budget includes 5.024 ad valorem tax rate, a reduction in health
7 insurance, increase in property and liability insurance, 2% merit and 3% COLA increase. Our first
8 budget hearing will be September 12th and then the final hearing will be September 25th at 6PM. Mrs.
9 Johnson said we have a balanced budget, taking \$280,000 from reserves whereas previously it looked
10 like \$700,000 from reserves.

11 Mrs. Johnson said something had changed. We were going to see if we could get tourist
12 development money for the pickle ball court but unfortunately that window has closed, we are too late,
13 but we could apply for in the FY2025 if we still want a restroom facility. We will use the \$50,000 in
14 Park's Reserves. Mrs. Johnson said we have \$280,315 coming from General Fund Reserves to balance
15 our budget. Mrs. Johnson said also changed the city administrator/city manager position from 12
16 months to 6 months from \$155,000 to \$71,000. Mayor Smith asked where that money was coming
17 from, Mrs. Johnson said the general fund. Mrs. Johnson said she also reduced the positions in the fire
18 department and police department from 12 months to 6 months. She said we will be moving the fire
19 department building extension and the new radios to the ARPA Fund. Comm. Wasdin asked if there
20 was any money set aside to get the new city building ready. Mrs. Johnson said we removed the
21 Commissioners office furniture and chamber furniture but the video equipment, the remodel, office
22 signage and building signage are all carry forward from this year's budget.

23 Comm. Crosby said we have zero funds in for the little league field. Mrs. Johnson said she
24 received an email today from Mr. Chris Taulbee requesting any help the city could give. Mr. Neal
25 Shermer, 391 Glendale Ave., said he did see someone weed eating over there today but it still has a
26 way to go, but at least moving forward. Mrs. Johnson said in the email from Mr. Taulbee he said Mr.
27 Jim Baughman would be mowing the grass at least once a month, he is a City of Niceville employee,
28 she believes. Mayor Smith said yes, he is over the parks department in Niceville. Mrs. Johnson said
29 we will have a Niceville employee working in Valparaiso in a park.

30 Comm. Wasdin said in the grand scheme of things we aren't talking about very much money.
31 Comm. Hamilton said she has dealt with this for years; we do not own it so why should we keep taking
32 it on? Mayor Smith said he isn't opposed to it, keep kids out of trouble and off streets. Comm.
33 Wasdin asked what the water was used for? Mayor Smith said the toilets, water fountain, and to water
34 grass. Comm. Crosby said we could make a donation. Mr. Shermer, 391 Glendale, suggested sitting
35 aside a donation contingent on the little league having a contract with the school board.

1 Mr. Shermer suggests looking at TDC to put money in parks to put up walkways along the
2 waterfront property that the city owns. That would help protect against people coming in and claiming
3 property that is not theirs. Mayor Smith said he doesn't think more money in parks is a good idea, we
4 own the land, public records show that, doesn't feel there needs to be anything added. Mr. Shermer
5 said it is happening to a lot of cities all over the country. Comm. Hamilton said we can't keep the
6 parks mowed that we have. Comm. Wasdin said Mr. Shermer raises a valid concern, seek Mr. Dykes
7 advice on the matter. Mayor Smith said we can have Comm. Hamilton get with our City Attorney
8 since she is over parks and see what he thinks. Mr. Shermer said walkways, rocks, concrete, whatever
9 we can to save city space. Mayor Smith said in regard to the little league, we should wait on Mr.
10 Taulbee and his group to get a contract with the school board, if that happens the city can donate a
11 certain amount to them. Comm. Hamilton said she doesn't think we should continue to pay for water
12 and electricity; we've been burned by this group before, we don't own that property. Comm.
13 Browning said we pay for the museum's electricity and water where does that money come from?
14 Mrs. Johnson said general fund. Mayor Smith said he is not saying he doesn't support the little league
15 he does, but the museum is open five days a week and it brings people into our city.

16 Mrs. Johnson said the police vehicle purchase has been moved to the ARPA Fund. The half
17 cents sales tax can be used to pay down debt, so the street bond payments of a total of \$83,000 have
18 been moved to that fund. Mrs. Johnson said both stormwater and streets have a balanced budget.

19 Mrs. Johnson said all funds are balanced. She said we sent out proposed tax rate of 5.2942%,
20 unless something crazy and totally unseen pops up, we have balanced budget with tax rate 5.024%.
21 Mrs. Johnson said this will be voted on at the budget hearings.

22 Mrs. Johnson said Mr. Palmer, chairman of the community center, sent an email that she has
23 included in package regarding painting the center. She said they have had no luck getting quotes to do
24 the painting, the paint itself has been donated. Mrs. Irwin, 184 Chicago Avenue, said by Lowe's.
25 Comm. Browning added they have been looking for over a year. Comm. Hamilton said she would
26 work on the quote.

27 Comm. Hamilton said she appreciated Mr. Shermer's input and told Mrs. Johnson what a great
28 job she had done with the budget. Getting the insurance reduced and balancing with the same tax rate,
29 great job.

30 **ADJOURN**

31 With no further business before the Commission this evening, the special meeting/ budget
32 workshop adjourned at 6:50PM.

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Hubert B. Smith
Mayor

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Katherine Hamilton
Chair, VCA

Tammy Johnson, CMC
City Clerk

***A recording of the August 21, 2023, Commission meeting will be kept on the City’s secure
file server as a permanent part of these minutes.***