

A Workshop Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Apalachicola Municipal Library, 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Duncan, Commissioner Grove, City Manager Travis Wade, Finance Director Lee Mathes, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, and Chief Bobby Varnes.

Mayor Ash asked for an Amendment to the agenda to include Public Comment.

Motion to adopt the agenda and to add public comment was made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dennis Winterringer commented on the Reforestation fund, tree maintenance, and the Cemetery Maintenance contract.

Donna Ingle commented on tracking revenue generated from park rentals.

Ginger Creamer presented the Commission with a handout on first responder calls and commented on the gas allowance provided to First Responders. Ms. Creamer also requested the Board consider an increase of \$75/per responder, per month for gas.

No further public comments.

### **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Finance Director Lee Mathes provided a page-by-page breakdown and explanation of recommended reductions and/or changes per department and answers questions presented by the Commission.

Discussion held.

The Commission did not oppose the request made by ginger Creamer to increase the gas allowance from \$25 to \$75 a month per person and Finance Director noted the request for it to be included in the proposed budget meeting.

Library Director Lucy Carter commented on the proposed reductions for the Library Department and did not agree with the recommendations presented to the Commission.

Further discussion held.

Commissioner Elliott suggested that the Commission allow the Dixie Youth donation to remain in the upcoming budget.

Mayor Ash referenced the Facilities line item in the proposed budget and suggested that the Commission consider some alternative options for the Johnson Complex due to the absorbent costs to maintain the facility every year.

Commissioner Grove concurred with Mayor Ash.

Finance Director concluded the breakdown of the proposed budget with explaining how the various millage rate(s) would affect the City's projected revenue and/or deficit.

Commissioner George suggested that further analyzation is needed to determine if any additional reductions can be made, as well as to verify the accuracy of the budget. Commissioner George commented on the projected overtime line item, positions added in the Public Works Department and those funded via the Enterprise Fund, as well as the salaries of police offers which were not correctly budgeted for in last year's budget. Commissioner George asked Manager Wade for Comment. Further stating the importance of the Commission to study the Salary Schedule to ensure that the salaries calculations are congruent with the desire of the Commission.

Discussion held.

Sanitation Fee(s) were discussed. Commissioner George recommended the Commission further analyze the City's sanitation expense and suggested that the Commission find a solution to reconcile or eliminate the deficit in the proposed budget. Commissioner George recommended that Waste One take over the collection of fees(s) which would also eliminate the projected loss of \$75,000/ year if the City remains involved with the collection.

Commissioner George also recommended the Commission consider re-instating a Facilities Reserve line item in the General Fund budget to help offset overall facility expenses including but not limited to, maintenance, repairs, and/or system replacements etc. Commissioner George commented on the Enterprise Funds in reference to the SUF collections stating that, although the funds show a surplus, the \$67,000 in projected SUF collections will be used to pay off debt.

Commissioner Grove commented on well repair(s) line item and wanted clarification on projected repairs to well 5 & 6.

Manager Wade clarified that the projected expense relating to the repair of wells 5 & 6 are now listed under Capital Outlay and has been included.

Commissioner Elliott commented on cemetery and right-of way maintenance, as well as the Marinas expenses and revenues. Commissioner Elliott stated that the Kiosk installed at Battery Park Marina has

collected approximately \$45 in revenue which could be used to offset the cost of Marina maintenance, repairs etc. Commissioner Elliott also mentioned the City's Comprehensive Plan and reforming and recognizing the Port of Apalachicola and how tourist dollars and revenue collected could be used to spread revenues collected across the City and draw in additional revenue to help subsidize the budget.

Commissioner Duncan, no comment.

Commissioner George reaffirmed her commitment to keep the millage rate down and stated that she is committed to keeping the millage rate at its current rate for this year; however, would like to see the City be able to reduce the millage rate in the future.

Mayor Ash Commended Commissioner George for her continued commitment to work with Staff to work with Staff and further review the Budget. Mayor Ash recommended that manager Wade and Finance Director Mathes meet with the Department Supervisors to inform them of the changes and/or updates that were discussed at the meeting.

Chief Varnes commented on the salary discussion and explained to the Commission the origin of the department's 84-hour two-week work period.

Manager Wade commented on discontinuing the inmate crew and finding seasonal employees to assist the City with cemetery and right-of-way maintenance.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Elliott seconded b Commissioner George. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.

  
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BRENDA ASH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
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SHENEIDRA CUMMINGS, CITY CLERK

