



MINUTES

FINAL BUDGET HEARING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Bonifay City Hall Council Meeting Room – 301 J Harvey Etheridge St.

I. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Cook
Council Member James Sellers
Council Member Shelley Carroll
Council Member Rick Crews
Council Member Eddie Dixon

Also present: Finance Director Tracy Walker; Executive Assistant Sierra Smith; Fire Chief Travis Cook; Police Chief Johnny Whitaker

A. Invocation

Led by James Sellers

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by James Sellers

II. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Crews, Seconded by Council Member Carroll.

Voting Yea: Mayor Cook, Council Member Sellers, Council Member Carroll, Council Member Crews, Council Member Dixon

III. VISITORS – PUBLIC ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL

NON- AGENDA AUDIENCE

Effective October 1, 2013, Florida Statute 286.0114 mandates that “members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a Board or Commission.” Each individual shall have three (3) minutes to speak on the proposition before the Board. **THIS IS NOT A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION.** It is NOT a political forum, nor is it a time for personal

accusations and derogatory remarks to/or about City personnel. Those who wish to speak are reminded to observe proper decorum, and to avoid the use of profane or vulgar language. If you would like to address the City Council please come to the podium, state your name and address for the record.

Richard Willsey of Happy Hollow, a non-resident, asked whether the 8% budget reduction for each department applied to the current fiscal year or the upcoming fiscal year. Mayor Cook advised Mr. Willsey that this portion of the meeting was designated for comments on non-agenda matters and that an opportunity to ask questions would be provided during the budget hearing. Mr. Willsey expressed concern that he might not be given another opportunity to ask questions.

Angela Willsey of Happy Hollow, a non-resident, spoke from the audience, stating that they knew how the board operated and believed they would not be allowed to ask questions. Mayor Cook reiterated that an opportunity to ask questions would be provided at the appropriate time during the budget hearing.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. FY 2027 Final Budget

Mayor Cook asked whether there were any questions or comments regarding the budget. No one approached the podium to speak.

B. Resolution 2026-12 Millage Rate

Finance Director Tracy Walker read Resolution 2026-12 concerning the millage rate. Mayor Cook asked whether there were any questions.

Richard Willsey of Happy Hollow, a non-resident, asked why the millage rate had been increased for Fiscal Year 2027. Finance Director Walker explained that the rate had not been increased and would remain at 3.5 mills. Mr. Willsey stated that the City's website listed the current rate as 3 mills and that the Council had voted to set the upcoming year's rate at 3.5 mills.

Mayor Cook clarified that the current millage rate was 3.5 mills and would remain unchanged for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Willsey maintained that this differed from the information posted on the City's website. Council Member Crews stated that the millage rate was also 3.5 mills the previous year. Mayor Cook expressed regret that Mr. Willsey had received incorrect information and reiterated that the millage rate would remain at 3.5 mills.

Motion made by Council Member Crews, Seconded by Council Member Carroll.
Voting Yea: Mayor Cook, Council Member Sellers, Council Member Carroll, Council Member Crews, Council Member Dixon

C. Resolution 2026-13 Budget

Finance Director Tracy Walker read Resolution 2026-13 concerning the Fiscal Year 2027 budget. Mayor Cook asked whether there were any questions.

Richard Willsey of Happy Hollow, a non-resident, stated that an 8% budget reduction had been reported for each department and asked whether the reduction applied to the current or upcoming fiscal year. Finance Director Walker explained that the budget had been reduced by 8% overall.

Mr. Willsey asked whether the reduction was based on a baseline budget, and Ms. Walker confirmed that it was. When Mr. Willsey asked her to define “baseline,” Mayor Cook stated that this was not a budget question and directed him to proceed to his next question.

Angela Willsey of Happy Hollow, a non-resident, spoke from the audience, asking a board member to speak up if they had something to say. Mayor Cook used the gavel and instructed her not to interrupt. Ms. Willsey then addressed Council Member Sellers, stating that he appeared to be mouthing something and should speak up. Mayor Cook reiterated that Mr. Willsey had the floor and directed her not to interrupt him. As Ms. Willsey continued speaking from the audience, Mayor Cook again used the gavel and advised her that it was not her time to speak.

Mr. Willsey stated that the Council had indicated each department’s budget had been reduced by 8%. Finance Director Walker clarified that the 8% reduction applied to the overall budget. Mr. Willsey disputed that a reduction had occurred. Ms. Willsey interrupted, referring to the board as “dictators.” Mayor Cook again used the gavel and instructed her not to interrupt.

Mr. Willsey continued, stating that he saw overspending rather than a budget reduction. Ms. Willsey asked whether the Council was trying to bankrupt the City and continued making remarks from the audience while Mr. Willsey spoke. Some of her remarks were unclear. Mayor Cook offered Ms. Willsey an opportunity to speak at the podium, which she declined.

With no further questions, Mayor Cook closed the public hearing.

Motion made by Council Member Crews, Seconded by Council Member Dixon.

Voting Yea: Mayor Cook, Council Member Sellers, Council Member Carroll, Council Member Crews, Council Member Dixon

V. ADJOURN

at 5:13 p. m.

Motion made by Council member Crews

Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact City Hall at (850) 547-4238, at least five days prior to the proceedings.