



MINUTES

City Commission Budget Workshop

5:30 PM – Tuesday, July 11, 2023 – City Hall

APPROVED 9/7/2023

CALL TO ORDER: 5:32 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

PRESENT: Commissioner Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Nan Cobb, Commissioner Willie Hawkins, Vice Mayor Emily Lee and Mayor Michael Holland

1. WORKSHOP ITEM WITH DISCUSSION, PUBLIC INPUT AND DIRECTION

1.1 Eustis Memorial Library

Tom Carrino, City Manager, commented on the updates to the draft budget from the previous working document. He stated that staff is still finalizing with Economic Development the job description and pay range for the Communications position. He indicated the new positions are included in the summary. He commented on discussion regarding the proposed additional staff for Development Services and explained they are trying to determine where the most need is in the department.

Mr. Carrino then stated that with the proposed changes the draft budget is now approximately \$657,000 revenue over expenses so the overall budget has increased. He requested that, once they are done with all of the workshops, they can consider what is being done for staff for salary increases and discuss whether or not a reduction in millage rate could be done.

Commissioner Cobb commented on the Development Services position and requested that the public notice requirements be returned to inhouse due to some of the issues that have occurred.

Ann Ivey, Eustis Memorial Library Director, commented on the salary for the available librarian position which requires a master's degree in relation to the Communications position and salary. She expressed concern regarding the salary ranges for her master's degree positions.

Ms. Ivey presented information from the Lake County survey which highlighted the library's cleanliness, welcoming, and friendliness. She noted public comments about interest in more books, e-books and audio books.

Ms. Ivey reviewed the proposed Library budget highlighting those line items with significant changes.

The Commission asked about the Library's air conditioning system with Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, indicating it is included in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan).

Ms. Ivey explained the County offers the Overdrive program which the City would pay for based on usage; however, the City has its own digital online book app which has increased by almost 50% every year since Covid. She commented on the Chilton online database and stated they are better than Youtube how to videos. She explained people can download the app to either listen to or read the e-books. She commented on the price of e-books.

Ms. Ivey continued the budget review highlighting the increased request for book purchases. She reported that the first two years with the Lake County system the library received \$35,000, then the next year they received \$75,000 and last year they received \$101,000. This year they will receive \$121,000. She explained that is based on the amount of books being checked out. She commented on the revenues received from processing the passport applications.

Ms. Ivey then reported on the use of E-rate. She explained they pay \$1500 for internet service and they get 90% of that back from the County through E-rate. She then reported on the Library impact fees, trusts and memorials. She cited a trust that has \$3,000 left and her intention to use that to revamp the Young Adult area to attract more teens.

The Commission asked about teen attendance at the library with Ms. Ivey responding they have increased the teen attendance through offering anime, video games and teen hang out nights. She expressed interest in establishing a teen advisory board.

The Commission asked about the passports with Ms. Ivey explaining how they are processed and the revenues the library receives for processing them. Discussion was held regarding whether or not they could offer the photography services. She commented on the need to have more people trained to do the passports.

The Commission asked Ms. Ivey what the library needs. She responded they need to expand to have a larger meeting room space. She explained she is working with the County to use some of their impact fee money to get the architectural plans drawn or a rendering. She added they also need another literacy station; however, she has a donor possibly interested in that.

Mr. Gierok reported they have \$85,000 programmed in the next fiscal year for the library air conditioner.

Mike Sheppard, Finance Director, confirmed the Commission agrees with the increase in e-books in the impact fee fund.

The Commission expressed interest in expanding the library space.

Ms. Ivey explained the County is changing how the impact fees are distributed as well as the annual allocations. She commented on how some other libraries have manipulated their figures to get additional funds.

Discussion was held regarding how the library could be expanded with the Commission suggesting that, over the next year, staff look at what could be done and how it could be funded.

1.2 Parks and Recreation Department

Craig Dolan, Parks and Recreation Director, reported the department is exceeding its revenue goals for the current year with \$123,000 collected from programs and \$84,000 from rentals. He reviewed the increase in expenses highlighting custodial supplies. He noted they purchase those supplies for the entire city. He indicated they were fully staffed at that time. He added they are considering adding another part-time custodian.

The Commission asked about salaries for their staff with Mr. Dolan indicating that all five of his staff members are working events and stated their salaries are in line with the other senior staff assistants in the City.

Mr. Dolan discussed rentals and the Community Center and requested feedback for upgrades to the Community Center such as curtains for the stage. He indicated they also need to purchase new kitchen carts due to theft. He indicated that the Community Building rental has brought in \$48,000 as of July. He reviewed other expense line items and noted the increase in costs.

The Commission asked about the merchant fees for credit card payments with Mr. Dolan explaining the City pays 2.7% for online payments.

Discussion was held regarding passing on that cost to the customers.

Mr. Sheppard noted the merchant fees surcharge is built into the rate structure for the utilities and explained how it saves the City money by making it easier for customers to pay their bills.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not the credit card fee should be passed on to the customers and the increased efficiency with credit cards versus checks. It was also noted that some of the City's fees have been adjusted to cover the cost of credit card fees including the utility rates.

Mr. Dolan explained that the program instructors are the ones that set their rates with the City receiving 30%. He indicated they are covering the fees due to the increase in revenue.

Discussion was held regarding the overall loss to the City in the operation of Parks and Recreation, the inconvenience of carrying a cash till from building to building and the possible loss in participation if they charge a convenience fee.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to increase fees to cover the credit card fees.

Mayor Holland commented on the future of the Community Center building with repairs and maintenance issues. He expressed opposition to expending large funds on the building without making a decision about its future. He asked for staff to begin making plans regarding the location and improvements to the Community Building. He requested that any big ticket items be brought to the Commission.

The Commission suggested just carpeting the building rather than re-tiling it with Mr. Dolan indicating that ten years previous it cost \$20,000 for carpet squares so it would probably be about the same.

Discussion was held regarding installation of a monument sign at the Community Building and placing a combined sign at the corner of the Clifford Taylor house. It was agreed to go ahead with the Community Building sign for the estimated \$12,500 with the sign to be placed on the Bay Street side.

Mr. Dolan reviewed the Programming budget with Mr. Dolan explaining the theater program is in partnership with Something New Studio. He commented on how much they have done for the City's programs. He confirmed the City also receives 30% of the fees for those programs.

Mr. Dolan reviewed other costs including movies in the park and family nights. He indicated they want to offer more special needs programs. He stated that the Movies in the Park cost \$300 to \$500 per license.

The Commission asked about attendance at the Movies in the Park and the Daddy/Daughter event with Mr. Dolan stating they have not had a Movie in the Park except for the one at Georgefest the previous year. He estimated attendance at that was approximately 50 children at that event. He added the Daddy/Daughter event also had approximately 50 attendees and cost to attend that is \$30 per couple. He reported that the Mother/Son Messy Mania was capped at 30 families due to space availability. Further discussion was held regarding family and children events.

Mr. Dolan commented on the tremendous success of the previous year's Touch a Truck and Blippy events. He thanked Public Works for their involvement. He noted an interest in increasing programming for therapeutic recreation programs. Discussion was held regarding the special needs events and number of attendees.

The Commission asked to partner with Lifepointe Church for the special needs events.

Mr. Dolan explained the purchase of a "gaga pit" and how the game is played.

The Commission asked about converting some of the tennis courts to pickleball at Bennett Park and Elizabeth Circle. Mr. Dolan explained they tried doing a conversion using tape and tennis players removed the tape. He suggested taking the court at Bennett Park that does not have lights and converting it to two permanent pickleball courts.

The Commission asked about how much the courts at Elizabeth Circle are used with Mr. Dolan indicating it has minimal usage. He expressed concern regarding the amount of available parking.

Further discussion was held regarding the location for a pickleball court. The Commission asked about adding some benches to Bennett Park with Mr. Dolan indicating there is funding in this year's budget which may be able to be used for that. Mr. Carrino indicated that Public Works has funding in the CIP for the next several years to address benches.

Mr. Dolan asked about adding an automatic gate to Palmetto Point Park. He explained on how it would allow people to leave but not enter after it is closed. The Commission opted to not add an automatic gate and for the expense to be removed from the draft budget.

Mr. Dolan reported that they have installed a shade structure at Corey Rolle Field; however, it can only cover one of the sets of bleachers. He noted that the one just installed at the pool cost \$21,000. Discussion was held regarding the cost to add another shade structure. The Commission agreed to leave in the cost for one shade structure.

The Commission asked about adding a shower to the City fitness center with Mr. Dolan indicating the only place it could be added is possibly in the bathrooms.

Discussion was held regarding what could be done with Mr. Gierok indicating he would look into the options and whether they could make a unisex shower. He then reported on an issue with someone breaking the locking mechanism. Discussion was held regarding the issue with the broken locks and whether or not adding a shower would cause additional problems. Discussion was held regarding installing security cameras so the culprits can be prosecuted.

Mr. Dolan reviewed making the aquatics programming year-round with the addition of the new pool heater. He commented on the splash pad maintenance needed every five to seven years. He indicated they are budgeting \$4500 per year to reseal it but they have been informed that every ten to twelve years they need to do a full replacement at an estimated cost of \$45,000. He stated that is in the CIP for the following fiscal year. He added they are researching other products to try and reduce the cost.

The Commission asked about the cost for heating the pool year round with Mr. Dolan indicating he did not have those figures. He noted they have a new high efficiency heater and indicated that it costs more to chill a pool rather than heat it. He added they do have a thermal blanket to cover the pool and they will not open the pool if the air temperature is below 40 degrees.

The Commission asked when the pool is closed with Mr. Dolan reporting they used to close the end of November due to the high school swim team's schedule. Now, they will keep it open as long as it is over 50 degrees and it is light out. He explained that the Health Department states the City does not have sufficient light on the pool for it to be open later.

Mr. Gierok commented on the lighting issues and explained they do not have underwater lighting. He stated they have had a photomatic engineer prepare a design for the City and it is not very expensive; however, staff can't get to the equipment. He indicated that they have in the CIP a piece of equipment that could be used on the decks and other places to change out the lights.

The Commission asked about the high school usage and if the pool is adequate to host swim meets with Mr. Dolan explaining it is sufficient for one-on-one meets but not for larger meets. He noted the pool is 73 years old. He stated he has \$3 million in the CIP in three to five years to redo the pool.

The Commission discussed the Splash Pad Attendant position and use of the pool for Special Olympics.

The Commission asked about the shade structure for the basketball courts with Mr. Dolan indicating it is budgeted for the current year. He stated \$397,000 was quoted for the two courts. He indicated he will be applying for a FRDAP grant August 1st; however, the max for that would be \$250,000. He commented on the delay in getting that funding.

The Commission asked about the City's use of the ninth grade center with Mr. Dolan reporting the City has used it for six weeks over the summer two nights per week for volleyball and basketball.

The Commission asked about the solar powered kayak vending machine with Mr. Dolan explaining a company would come in and maintain the kayaks and paddleboards and the City would set the price and receive a percentage of the proceeds.

RECESS: 7:06 P.M. RECONVENE: 7:15 P.M.

1.3 Fire Department

Fire Chief Mike Swanson reviewed the Fire Department budget challenges in the current year citing the engine warranties ending, Tower Truck trade-in issues, and boat motor issues. He commented on issues with bunker gear replacement when there is a

change in staff. He discussed the addition of the training captain and the overlap in incoming and retiring deputy chief.

The Commission asked about the number of personnel in the department with Chief Swanson responding there are 32 staff members and explained the administrative assistant's responsibilities. He noted there is currently a vacant inspector position.

Mr. Carrino explained the addition of the training captain will help with administrative responsibilities for the Fire Department.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the level of overtime despite hiring new firefighters.

Chief Swanson discussed hiring and overtime issues with lieutenants and captains and the difficulty in getting staff to take the required education courses to move up the ladder and lead as officers. He commented on the issues he has faced with hiring the Deputy Chief replacement.

Chief Swanson reported on the need for an additional fire station to make a positive impact on the City's ISO. He discussed the possibility of building a public safety building for both police and fire utilizing grant monies. Discussion was held regarding the best location for a new station and estimated cost.

Mr. Carrino commented on the overtime issues and the engagement of fire and police with the community.

Chief Swanson explained that when the fire department gets deployed to another area to assist, the City pays for it out of the General Fund and then gets reimbursed. He commented on promotions within the department and educational requirements and noted senior engineers may serve as acting lieutenants.

Discussion was held regarding succession planning with Chief Swanson noting the promotion of the Fire Inspector Niki Everson to Chief Fire Inspector. He commented on the difficulty in obtaining good applicants for the Fire Inspector position.

Chief Swanson discussed line items for the suppression budget, operating supplies and equipment for the new truck once it is received. He requested an additional \$10,000 to add some equipment to the fire boat. He commented on the possibility of obtaining a new CAD station utilizing impact fees due to expansion of service as well as a new software package called Wave. He explained it would allow staff to use their cell phones to go on the radio channels rather than carry a radio. He indicated they are still working on getting a good price for the software.

It was a consensus of the Commission to add the additional equipment for the fire boat under Machinery and Equipment.

1.4 Public Works - Water/Wastewater

Following discussion, it was agreed to review the Water/Wastewater budget and continue the Public Works budget to Thursday.

Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, reviewed the Water /Wastewater budget and personnel requests. He reported that as of October 1st he would have 92 positions in all of his departments. He commented on how the departments have not added new positions over the years. He cited the need for transition planning due to upcoming

retirements. He indicated that the departments currently have fifteen vacancies with the primary issue being the pay levels.

Mr. Gierok began with the Water Engineering budget. He reviewed the proposed new positions, including a buyer for procurement for water, wastewater and public works to prepare items for the Purchasing Department. He noted promotions for the GIS person to include project management and for a new Deputy Director for Engineering for Capital. He explained it is not his plan to fund that position at that time, only to create the position, and then to fund it in a few years. He commented on funding new positions for transition planning. He cited a decrease in Other Contractual and Repairs and Maintenance. He then noted the increase in office supplies for furnishings for the creation of a new building at Bates Avenue.

Discussion was held regarding furniture for the building with Mr. Carrino noting the availability of office furniture from a federal prosecutor that is moving his offices.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the following changes: 1) an increase in Operating Supplies and Fuel; 2) reduction in Machinery & Equipment by \$50,000; and 3) an increase in Environmental Protection which was created the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Gierok then reviewed Water Administrative and cited an overall decrease of \$80,000. He explained the elimination of some projects that were completed and so they were eliminated. He stated Repairs and Maintenance was reduced by \$6,000 and Operating Supplies was increased due to uniforms for new positions.

Mr. Carrino asked about the Machinery & Equipment - security cameras with Greg Dobbins, Deputy Utilities Director, explaining they have been installing security cameras at a different plant each year.

Mr. Gierok began reviewing the Water Treatment budget and explained they are getting the plant operators to obtain dual licenses. He explained how that has been beneficial for operations and reducing overtime. He reviewed the increases in communications, internet expense and energy charges. He noted a decrease in repair and maintenance charges. He then commented on the increase in cost for CDL licenses.

Mr. Gierok discussed Water Distribution increases for underground pipes, two new positions, promotions and CDL licensure and reductions in Machinery & Equipment.

Mr. Gierok discussed Grounds Maintenance new positions. He explained that when the new personnel are not busy they will be pulled into other functions as needed. He then reviewed the Eastern Treatment budget citing Other Contractual, Communications and Utilities increases. He commented on the utility increases for each of the plants. He cited the planned purchase of chlorine analyzers at a cost of \$50,000.

The Commission asked about utilizing solar power with Mr. Gierok responding it would be discussed during review of the Capital Improvement Plan. He explained it will cost the City an initial capital outlay of \$1.5 million with a payback in eleven years. He further explained it would involve floating solar arrays and that staff has discussed it with SECO along with another company. He commented on the possibility of obtaining grant monies but only if the City were actually an electric utility provider. He stated there are tax incentives of 40% which would offset the capital cost.

The Commission asked about the status of security measures and protections under Homeland Security with Mr. Gierok responding affirmatively and commenting on how restrictive they are in allowing other agencies access to their information.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the Wastewater budget. He explained \$25,000 of the \$45,000 increase is for the permit renewal. He explained the Collections and Lift Stations increase of \$135,000. He cited the addition of a new utility worker position and the promotion of a lift station attendant to a supervisory position.

The Commission questioned the large Overtime budget noting that it is not used a lot. Mr. Gierok explained the need to budget for it and that, if it is not used, it goes back into fund balance. Mr. Dobbins and Mr. Gierok cited various incidents that can result in overtime.

Mr. Gierok cited various increases and decreases within the department including an increase for odor control and again for utilities. He then reviewed the revenue from Umatilla for treating wastewater which helps offset the increased costs. He indicated they are processing approximately 160,000 gallons per day from Umatilla.

Mr. Sheppard reported that the Umatilla revenue is estimated at \$500,000.

Mr. Carrino explained that the updated rate study will analyze the increased costs to determine the true cost to the City of Eustis so the rates are set appropriately. He commented that the contract with Umatilla to process their wastewater requires that the City break out collection costs versus treatment costs. He discussed the terms of the agreement and explained it does not include a built-in rate increase.

Discussion was held regarding the wastewater treatment contract with Umatilla with Mr. Gierok indicating they can increase that rate once the rate study is done. He further discussed what will occur with that agreement in the future.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the Lab, Sludge and Lift Station budgets citing various increases and decreases. He reported on the Eastern Lift Stations noting it is up overall by \$29,000. He indicated that is primarily due to Communications upgrades.

Mr. Carrino stated there would be another budget workshop on Thursday, July 13th and they would review the Police Department and other Public Works accounts. He indicated that the next workshop after that would be in two weeks on Tuesday to review the CIP, CRA and some miscellaneous funds. He stated the July 27th workshop was going to be cancelled due to the Vice Mayor traveling and they could reschedule if it is needed.

Mayor Holland announced that the annual League of Cities conference would be August 18, 19 and 20th in Orlando. He confirmed that all of the Commissioners would be attending and indicated he would work with Elis Forman to get the reservations set.

2. ADJOURNMENT: 8:55 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*



CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk



MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Mayor/Commissioner