

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
November 17, 2021

The City Commission met this evening 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	:	Catherine Hamilton
	:	Christine Wasdin
	:	Edward Crosby
	:	Jay Denney
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
City Administrator	:	Carl Scott
Police Chief	:	Joe Hart
Fire Chief	:	Tommy Mayville
VBCS General Manager	:	James Butler
Public Works Director	:	Nathan Kelley (camera)
Library Director	:	Hope Willis
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in Attendance (Not Inclusive) Bob Bachelor, Karl Helmer, Fran Huttler, Chase Huttler, Jacob T. Hill, Roni Edwards, Phil Edwards, Howard Cromer, Linda Bunting

1. CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION STUDY

Mrs. Johnson introduced Ms. Linda Bunting with Cody and Associates, the company who completed our classification and compensation study for wages and benefits.

Ms. Bunting said the Commission hired her company to look at the city's wage and benefits, they also reviewed job descriptions. Ms. Bunting said our city was compared to City of Crestview, City of Destin, City of Ft. Walton Beach, City of Gulf Breeze, City of Milton, City of Niceville, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties. Ms. Bunting said they use that data as a guide. She said our pay plan is on the lower end, our benefit package is middle of the market. Ms. Bunting said in forming a new pay plan we suggested adding training positions in sanitation and wastewater.

Comm. Hamilton asked how she compared the cable department? Ms. Bunting said they looked at the questionnaires filled out by employees, there wasn't a benchmark for every position. Comm. Hamilton said employees are talking about going to Cox Communications all the time. Ms. Bunting said they have produced an implantation plan, starting wages beginning at \$13.00. Ms. Bunting said her company produced several different pay plans, with her company recommending plan E.

Comm. Hamilton said this is indeed a great framework. Comm. Denney said he thought the bigger surprise was in the comparison of benefits, we always thought we had great benefits, only now it seems others in the area have caught up. Comm. Wasdin said by 2026 the minimum wage will be at least \$15 dollars an hour. Mrs. Johnson said a 3% COLA each year would get the city to \$15 an hour

1 by 2026. Mayor Smith asked if we had the funds to do this now? Mrs. Johnson said yes, all
2 departments have increases for wages in their budgets.

3 Mayor Smith said we had learned with the police department because we are small, we will
4 always be a training ground, we can't compete with larger entities. He said our insurance has helped to
5 keep employees.

6 Comm. Denney sees this plan as a base line within each department. He said a starting point
7 for all. Comm. Denney said since this has been in the budget since the new fiscal year started in
8 October we will need to go back and pay from then to now. Mrs. Johnson said yes, we will.

9 Comm. Denney said as we look at other cities, does this plan put us on the right track? Ms.
10 Bunting said this is a starting point, this will provide the city freedom to be open minded when hiring.
11 Comm. Denney said he sees lots of flexibility, not a rank structure but a pay scale. **COMM.**
12 **WASDIN MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT PLAN E AS RECOMMENDED BY CODY AND**
13 **ASSOCIATES AND MAKE IT RETRO ACTIVE TO OCTOBER 1, 2021. COMM. DENNEY**
14 **SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE**
15 **COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

16 **2. BUILDING LEASE AGREEMENT (SYNOVUS BUILDING)**

17 Mayor Smith said this version of the lease doesn't prevent us from renting out the extra space.
18 Comm. Hamilton said she and Mrs. Willis went and looked at the building and think the ideal space for
19 the library would be on the second floor. Mayor Smith said he and Mr. Scott had a discussion
20 yesterday, Mr. Scott said there are ADA grants that would help offset the cost of installing an elevator,
21 but we cannot apply for any of those until we have the building. Mayor Smith said he and Mr. Scott
22 also discussed moving the police department, he feels it is important that they be visible. Comm.
23 Hamilton said this building will give us many excellent options. Mayor Smith said he is tired of
24 looking backward, still looking like it did when he was eleven.

25 Mr. Bob Bachelor, 154 Grandview, asked about the lease where it makes mention of taxes. Mr.
26 Scott said we are exempt from taxes, if we sublet any space, they would pay the taxes for the sublet.

27 Comm. Crosby said he is nervous about the total cost of the building, we could possible build
28 our own for that amount we would be paying. He is also worried about the expenses. Mayor Smith
29 asked where you would put a new building, then more and more expenses for building a new place, if
30 you could find space. Mayor Smith said our tax base revenue will always keep us up on payments.
31 Comm. Crosby said he had heard it was hard getting contractors to renovate at this time, hates to think
32 we would pay for an empty building. Mayor Smith said within three months, city hall will be moved
33 there, the library will take some time.

1 Mayor Smith said it would be minimal work to move the police department there. Chief Hart said it
2 might be harder than the Mayor thinks. Mr. Scott said anything the Commission wants is doable, we
3 will make it work.

4 **COMM. WASDIN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE FOR THE PROPERTY**
5 **LOCATED AT 23 JOHN SIMS PARKWAY AS PRESENTED THIS EVENING. COMM.**
6 **HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION.** Mayor Smith said he would like to hear the opinion
7 from a fire standpoint. Chief Mayville said you can make anything work, recently an alarm was
8 tripped at the building, but everything looks good. **MOTION APPROVED 5 TO 0.**

9 **ADJOURN**

10 With no further business before the Commission this evening, meeting adjourned at 7:15PM.

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Hubert B. Smith
Mayor

Catherine Hamilton
Chair, VCA

ATTEST:

Tammy Johnson, CMC
City Clerk

***A recording of the November 17, 2021, Commission meeting will be kept on the City's
secure file server as a permanent part of these minutes.***