

1 MINUTES
2 CITY COMMISSION MEETING
3 July 26, 2021

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

6 Mayor : Hubert B. Smith
7 Commissioners : Christine Wasdin
8 : Edward Crosby
9 : Kay Hamilton
10 : Jay Denney
11 City Clerk : Tammy Johnson
12 Police Chief : Joe Hart
13 Fire Chief : Tommy Mayville
14 Library Director : Hope Willis
15 VBCS General Mgr : James Butler
16 Public Works Director: Nathan Kelley (camera)

17
18 Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at approximately 6PM. He said this will be our first budget
19 workshop and asked Mrs. Johnson to take the lead.

20 **1. BUDGET WORKSHOP**

21 a. Capital and New Items

22 Mrs. Johnson said everyone should have a copy of the budget worksheet.

23 **ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT**

24 Mrs. Johnson said to start with she is requesting a pay adjustment for her employees of \$13,000
25 also requesting \$1,000 for office furniture for the administrator's office and \$3,500 for a Network
26 Switch, Mr. Butler will speak more on that, it is in all the budgets. The total capital and new items for
27 administration total \$17,5000.

28 **NON-DEPARTMENT**

29 Mrs. Johnson said for this department she would like to request \$15,000 for a new double sided
30 full color LED digital programmable sign board 4' X 8', \$50,000 remodel of city hall and a network
31 switch for \$3,400 for the Commission Chambers. Mrs. Johnson also asked for a roof replacement for
32 the senior center, \$18,500. Total for non-departmental capital and new items \$86,900.

33 **LIBRARY DEPARTMENT**

34 Mrs. Willis requested a bathroom remodel for \$3,800, a network switch \$3,500, carpet
35 replaced to the type of carpet in the Commission Chambers total \$9,310, a handicap door opener, we
36 have an excellent ramp at the library but no way to get in, cost \$2,935, also would like to request a
37 water filling station. Mrs. Willis said some drains need to be moved around which according to Elliott
38 Plumbing would be about \$600, and she has a patron that has said he will redo the sheetrock. Mrs.
39 Willis said we have a water fountain in the library, and it has been turned off due to Covid and not sure
40 it will work once it is turned back on. Cost for water filling station \$1,700. Mrs. Willis would also

1 like a covered sitting/reading area with a table that is accessible to handicap patrons. She said it would
2 be placed outside the back door of the library cost would be \$15,400, she said that covers demolishing
3 the sidewalk, have it replaced to make it handicap accessible. Mrs. Willis said she believes this would
4 be good for patrons and city employees who would like a break and maybe go outside and have their
5 lunch. Mayor Smith said with the filling station he wondered if the library did get one wouldn't it have
6 to be covered up because of the CDC limits with Covid. Mrs. Willis said we can buy just the top part,
7 but they recommend both parts. It is placed in the wall, and it is a touchless system. Comm. Denney
8 said they are using the watering station in most schools. Mrs. Willis said most all public schools are
9 using them and most libraries have these now instead of water fountains. Library total for capital and
10 new items \$36,645.

11 **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

12 Chief Hart said \$3,500 is his part of the network switch, Mr. Butler has said that police and
13 administration could get a larger switch to work for both, since of the proximity. Chief Hart said he
14 would like to request a new recorder. He said this is something he has asked for in previous budgets,
15 the system he has now is 13 years old and he has been told once it goes out, it is just out because they
16 are not repairing those models any longer. Chief Hart said the model he is requesting would put a
17 whole incident report together from start to finish, cost \$14,495. For \$10,500 requesting 15 fact duty
18 gun cameras and lights with holster, \$700 each. He said if the officer has to pull weapon from holster
19 the camera starts recording automatically. Chief Hart said with all the new technology, everyone has a
20 body cam but when the weapon is drawn all you see is the officer's two hands. He said they had one
21 shipped to the department and we have tested it for three weeks and so far, they like what they see.
22 Chief Hart said hopefully no one will ever have to use but if you do there is no question of what the
23 officer was seeing when he discharged the weapon. Chief Hart answered no you need more than one
24 camera to show a complete picture. to Comm. Denney's question if this would take the place of body
25 cams? He said he feels the more information we have better job we can do. Total \$700 each total
26 \$10,500. Chief Hart would like to redo carpet in three offices and the hallway, the carpet squares that
27 are in the Commission Chambers. He said he spoke with Mr. Scott who thought he should look at tile
28 or some new type flooring but if there was to be a tussle on a slick floor someone is going to get hurt,
29 would prefer to keep carpet. Cost \$5,000. Chief Hart said his biggest item instead of asking for a new
30 officer position, which he will dearly need not this budget cycle but next, he said instead he is asking
31 for salary adjustments for all his officers and dispatchers. Chief Hart said he is way behind the power
32 curve, he has a salary review that he has completed in regard to this area based off what other
33 departments are paying now. Chief Hart said \$5,200 per officer for a total \$62,400, that would put us

1 back in the ballpark. He said with this budget cycle if other departments do sizable raises, then he will
2 behind the curve again. Chief Hart said he understands that Commission voted to do salary and benefit
3 study and he said from his understanding they could do before or after October 1st which would
4 capture everyone's new raises and give a better idea of what we are looking at. Chief Hart said he is
5 putting this out for the Commission's consideration, if Commission wants to wait to do anything he
6 understands, but it is something that needs to be done. Chief Hart said he lost an officer recently to
7 Eglin Air Force Base, because they are hiring for the range patrol and he can not compete with Uncle
8 Sam, regarding salary or benefits, much less shift differential giving them more money in their
9 pockets. Chief Hart said he hated to say it, but this generation is a lot more about the jingle in the
10 pocket than older traditional things we've stood on. Mayor Smith said he looks at copy from different
11 agencies and was surprised the salary between us and Niceville is only \$1,000 for new patrol. Chief
12 Hart said that is correct. Mayor Smith said he didn't think that was bad overall. Chief Hart said no but
13 what Dave is doing is the same thing he has been doing. Chief Hart said he has yet to hire someone in
14 at the base salary rate. He said when he hires someone in, he looks at experience and training and hires
15 them in at higher rate if possible. Mayor Smith asked if Niceville is losing officers like we are? Chief
16 Hart said from what he understands Chief Poppel has four spots open that he has not been able to fill.
17 Chief Hart said at the training center usually a class has anywhere from 20 to 50 people, the last
18 training session they had 10. Chief Hart said all 10 of those have already signed on with Okaloosa
19 Sheriff's department where they offer sign on bonus, and they start at \$47,000 or \$48,000 a year.
20 Mayor Smith said bad thing is, as small as we are we are always going to be a training ground. Chief
21 Hart said he knows that. Comm. Hamilton asked about benefits? Chief Hart said our benefits are
22 good, not arguing those points, he said they expect more money. Chief Hart said with Niceville, he
23 didn't know if they had started budget talks yet, but he knew Chief Poppel was asking for a pretty
24 sporty increase. Mayor Smith said wondering if offer this kind of increase in salary can we maintain
25 our benefits, we are way up on benefits packages and not as much on salary, maybe something to look
26 at. Chief Hart said that's why he agrees in looking at salary and benefits. Brief discussion followed.
27 Comm. Wasdin asked if another officer could wait until 2023, or something might have to happen in
28 2022. Chief Hart said a new officer would be about the cost of salary adjustments, once you add in
29 salary, benefits and outfitting the officer with uniform and gear. Comm. Wasdin said a new position
30 wouldn't help if you already have four open. Chief Hart agreed. Total for capital and new items
31 \$121,895.

32 **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

1 Chief Mayville said Mr. Butler has him down for \$3,200 for the network switch, a utility truck,
2 \$38,000, the truck would be for us to move around equipment. Chief Mayville said we got rid of some
3 old equipment that was costing us more than worth to repair and we would like to purchase a new
4 truck. He said it would be on state contract and that price includes decals, equipment, radios
5 everything that is needed. Chief Mayville said next item is \$3,500 for a new compressor, he said we
6 have a smaller compressor in the fire house but can't pump up the truck tires, would like to retro fit
7 station to use air tools. Chief Mayville said requesting \$57,000 for a full-time firefighter with benefits.
8 Chief Mayville said what he would like to do is have one full time firefighter on every shift for
9 Valparaiso, there are three shifts. Chief Mayville said he is requesting annual physicals for each
10 firefighter. He said in order to get grants both state and federal funding, each firefighter has to have an
11 annual physical. Chief Mayville said federal guidelines says they have to have yearly physicals, if the
12 money isn't used it would go back to the General Fund. \$400 for 15 exams total \$6,000.

13 **CABLE DEPARTMENT**

14 Mr. Butler said he is requesting two power supplies. He said he replaces two of the power
15 supplies a year \$4,000 upgrading to DOCS 3, will warn him in real time if system goes down. Mr.
16 Butler said network switch for head end more expensive \$26,100 because it carries the fiber
17 connection between all switches. He said switches will all be fort net, much higher-level security with
18 them all being interconnected and he can program so will not need to go out and pay Bit Wizard for
19 that service. Mr. Butler said the SFPS for \$1,000 goes with all switches his department is paying for
20 those. Comm. Denney asked if network switch one per building. Mr. Butler said yes one per building
21 except city hall and police department close enough together to share one. Mrs. Johnson asked what is
22 the 448E-FPOE? Mr. Butler said that is another switch \$6,800 to place at the head end one handles
23 fiber the other copper. Total request new and capital items \$37,900.

24 **PARKS DEPARTMENT/SHOP DEPARTMENTS**

25 Mayor Smith said he loved parks and shop budgets they had the smallest request. Mr. Kelley
26 said parks and shop \$1,000, went to all foremen to discuss what they need. Mr. Kelley said after
27 discussion they said great to have projects, goals, ambitions, and equipment but if we don't have
28 people to put on them it is pointless. Mr. Kelley said he took a step back and it was hard to hear but
29 truth of the matter is that everything we add as a capital item has to be maintained at some point or
30 another. Mr. Kelley said if we do keep piling on, we will have to figure out what we are doing. He
31 said in losing DOC contract workers has highlighted how much manual labor is needed. So that is
32 why you don't have much on there for shop or park.

33 **CEMETERY**

1 Mr. Kelley said switch for \$1,000 and have a lawn mower out there that needs to be replaced
2 \$8,000, he said the mower we have out there now is about 10 years old.

3 **STORMWATER**

4 Mr. Kelley said that rate study amount should be \$20,000 not \$25,000, for five (5) years rate
5 structure plan. Comm. Wasdin said what are we talking about an infrastructure, pay or what? Mr.
6 Kelley said all of it. He said with enterprise funds, stormwater, sanitation, and utilities he is requesting
7 we do a rate structure to make sure we are customers' proper amount.

8 **STREETS**

9 Mr. Kelley said starting with street improvements, talked about briefly ago about changing the
10 charter to allow city to pay for it, got a little late start on it. He said unfortunately we don't have the
11 numbers yet, but it would be a lot. And \$1,000 for switch.

12 **UTILITIES FUND**

13 Mr. Kelley said this rate study will be \$25,000 because more work to do, than with stormwater
14 and sanitation. Mr. Kelley said crane truck replacement truck is either 2009 or 2010 used to pull
15 pumps at lift stations, if we don't have that we can't pull pumps. \$125,000. Mr. Kelley said \$2,000
16 for network switch. Mr. Kelley said utilities assessment model working on right now with Mrs. Brant,
17 our city engineer, could probably go in our O/M budget but wasn't sure the amount.

18 Mayor Smith said why is some of the switch \$2,000 and like the fire department \$3,200, why is
19 that? Mr. Kelley said he has eight divisions and the cost divided by seven divisions because water and
20 sewer are one.

21 **SANITATION DEPARTMENT**

22 Mr. Kelley said rate study should be \$20,000 instead of \$25,000 and \$1,000 for switch.

23 Comm Wasdin so for streets get studies or engineer plans this year and pave next year? Or try
24 to do engineer design build. Mr. Kelley said with street paving not too complex, main thing is finding
25 out where stormwater will go. He said something he is working on now; major cost is construction
26 that is unknown as of right now.

27 Comm. Hamilton asked with these rate studies who is doing these? Mr. Kelley said reached
28 out to Raftellis, a company specializes in doing rate studies. Comm. Hamilton asked who do other
29 cities use? Mr. Kelley said same company. He said there are multiple companies, he knows Ft.
30 Walton Beach has used this company, doesn't know if other cities are doing rate studies. Comm.
31 Hamilton said it seems very pricey, just didn't know if we had compared prices. Mr. Kelley said it is a
32 large sum of money. Comm. Hamilton said she wondered if we checked for competitive prices or
33 even asked for references? Mr. Kelley said generally when doing professional services, you don't go

1 off the lowest bid or anything like that strictly based on qualifications. Mr. Kelley said he reached out
2 to seven companies; all qualified this company is the most familiar with the area. Mayor Smith said
3 \$65,000 for rate studies? Mr. Kelley said correct. Mayor Smith said he sees where Comm. Hamilton
4 is coming from, who does Niceville use or who knows the area, not that has to be known tonight but
5 you reach out to who you know. Mrs. Johnson said she has been with the city a little over 21 years,
6 and we have never had a study done. Mr. Kelley said not to air dirty laundry but when he started
7 working with the city, Connie Terry would call out to public works and tell him they had a new
8 business opening in town and asked what we should charge for garbage. He said he would open the
9 resolution book to see what is there, which said large hotel or small hotel but with no definition as to
10 what that meant. Mr. Kelley said he has been able to narrow things down by paying per can. Mrs.
11 Johnson said sewer is also like that. Comm. Denney asked what are we going for? Mr. Kelley said
12 sustainability. Comm. Denney said to better define our own charges. Comm. Denny said he is a little
13 more for it now because we have to see what we've been charging to be able to recover what we have.
14 Comm. Denney said with the growth of the city more is required and need to be on top of it instead of
15 behind it. A brief discussion followed.

16 Mrs. Johnson said updating the worksheet, total General Fund capital and new items \$381,640.
17 Total Capital and new items plus unknown for streets and utility fund \$613,540.

18 Comm. Wasdin asked if we need more people in other places. She said an example of that
19 would be Mr. Scott is a one man show, and he is not 25 years old anymore and might be looking
20 toward retirement, he works for both cities, we need someone to learn what he does like an apprentice.
21 Mayor Smith said he agrees, needs an assistant or something. Mrs. Johnson said she isn't sure that Mr.
22 Scott will like that idea. Comm. Wasdin said if something horrible happens no one knows what he
23 does day to day, we might could figure it out. Comm. Hamilton said bring up at the meeting where we
24 discuss changing charter, a position with central oversight. Mayor Smith said we do have an interlocal
25 agreement with county should we need a building official or enforcer temporarily. Comm. Hamilton
26 asked Chief Mayville what he had planned? Chief Mayville said he has three deep, so he is good, but
27 he understands. Mrs. Johnson said with Chief Hart or her position no one currently employed could
28 walk in and take over our positions. Chief Hart said he does. Mrs. Johnson said didn't know he had
29 someone to replace him that lives in the city. Chief Hart said they don't live in the city. Mrs. Johnson
30 said currently it has to be someone that lives in the city to be the city Clerk or Chief of Police.

31 Mrs. Johnson asked about the pay study, their recommendation was to wait til after October 1st
32 because then they would have the latest salary data. It was the consensus of the Commission to wait

1 until October to begin. Comm. Hamilton said in this environment we all have to look at raising pay or
2 we will be out of business.

3 **ADJOURN**

4 With no further business before the Commission this evening, the budget workshop adjourned
5 at 6:55 PM.

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Hubert B. Smith
Mayor

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Katherine Hamilton
Chair, VCA

20 Tammy Johnson, CMC
21 City Clerk

22 ***A recording of the July 26, 2021, Commission meeting will be kept on the City's secure file
23 server as a permanent part of these minutes.***
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