

Special City Commission Meeting (Monday, January 9, 2023)

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A. MEETING OPENER

Procedural: 1. Call To Order - Roll Call

- Meeting was called to order by Mayor Redman at 6:00 PM.
- Present: Commissioner Sirmones, Commissioner Hendrix, Vice Mayor Stegall, Mayor Redman, Attorney Maines, and City Manager Walker.

Procedural: 2. Opening Prayer

- Opening prayer led by Mayor Redman.

Procedural: 3. Pledge of Allegiance

- Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Redman.

Action: 4. Approval of The Agenda Format

- **Motion made to approve agenda format by Vice Mayor Stegall and seconded by Commissioner Hendrix.**
- **Unanimous Approval**

B. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER

Discussion: 1. 2021-2022 Annual Budget

- Commissioner Hendrix discussed the financial statements for the 2021-2022 fiscal year with an emphasis on items listed as over budget. She expressed concerns regarding Public Works projects, personnel salaries and benefits, credit card purchases, City Hall inventory and operations costs, and expenses and benefits for the City Manager.
 - Public Works: Concern was raised over the cost of cemetery fencing and Lake Butler Lake weed control. She was also concerned with local store accounts and purchases and costs for the construction of the new Public Works facility. Commissioner Hendrix discussed the procurement policy and the possible need to add a procurement position added to City staff.
 - City Hall Inventory and Operations: The Commissioner discussed inventory for City Hall equipment and purchases for operating supplies. She discussed concerns with the City Manager's handling of City operations and spending with reference to the previous audit showing the City close to the 25% minimum goal and the internal loans that funded the purchase of the Public Works property.
 - Credit Cards: Commissioner Hendrix discussed the City's six credit cards and their limits. There are two cards for the City Manager, and one each for the Finance Director, Public Works Director, Assistant Director of Utilities, and Accounts Payable. She expressed concern over purchases of Buckle brand jeans and food from fast food restaurants on the Public Works card. She also questioned the Account's Payable purchases of books, snacks, and coffee for City Hall as well as Florida Association of City Clerks dues, classes, and conferences and the documentation associated with those transactions. The Commissioner also requested to review the information for the Setel invoices.

- Personnel Salaries and Benefits: The Commissioner referenced employee salaries being over budget and that a specific employee is at the cap for their salary range. Commissioner Hendrix also discussed the \$8,000 hospitalization and \$600 primary care benefits for employees and concern with the proposed personnel policy which will increase salaries and hospitalization benefit the following fiscal year. Vice Mayor Stegall reminded the Commission of the state-mandated minimum wage increase. Commissioner Hendrix suggested that raises for the 2023-2024 fiscal year be frozen until further review and discussion take place. She also discusses concerns over the shoe allowance policy given to all employees. The commissioner also raised concerns regarding the voluntary Mission Square Retirement 457 program and if employees started contributing before or after Mr. Walker joined the City. Attorney Maines confirmed that he believes two previous City Managers also had ICMA-RC which has changed its name to Mission Square. Finance Director, John Sapp said that he would look into when contributions began.
- City Manager: Commissioner Hendrix discussed that the City pays for housing for the City Manager and questions if he should be receiving a 1099 for it. She discussed that the City Manager's vehicle, including fuel and maintenance, is also paid for by the City and questioned whether that benefit requires a 1099 as well. She is concerned by the OnStar service for the vehicle on the City Manager's credit card and whether this is a needed service.
- Commissioner Hendrix suggested that all purchases, checks, and processes need to be reviewed.
- Commissioner Hendrix requested a copy of all current City policies.
- Attorney Maines informed the Commission that a motion to freeze credit card purchases and salaries is an option. He also indicated that bringing back a procurement position is also an option.

Discussion: 2. 2022-2023 Annual Budget

- Commissioner Hendrix raised concern regarding the increase in cost for insurance and questioned if other companies had been researched. Mr. Walker explained that Florida Municipal Insurance Trust was the primary source of car and property insurance for local governments. Attorney Maines confirmed that this was correct. He explained that the City had Farmer's Insurance more than 10 years previous and that Florida Municipal Insurance Trust was the go-to for municipalities.
- The Commission discussed the concern of being over budget and what options are available to remedy the issue. Mr. Maines restated that a motion to freeze credit card purchases, place a moratorium on raises, and create a procurement position for the city are options.
- Commissioner Hendrix also stated that all employees have cell phones on the City's cell phone plan. Mr. Sapp clarified that employees who purchased phones did pay the full price of the phone back to the City.
- **Motion to collect all credit cards to be stored in the City Manager's office and cease use was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Sirmones.**
 - **Unanimous Approval**
- **Motion to freeze raises and place a moratorium on raises until the Commission has time to review them was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Sirmones.**
 - **Unanimous Approval**

- Commissioner Hendrix asked if more detailed financial statements could be included on the Agenda in the future, possibly with full transaction history, check registers, bank statements, and Wright Express statements on a monthly basis.
- **Motion to delegate Commissioner Hendrix to contact the auditors regarding city credit card purchase history was made by Commissioner Sirmones and seconded by Vice Mayor Stegall.**
 - **Unanimous Approval**
 - Commissioner Hendrix will follow up with information regarding her conversation with the auditors at the upcoming Regular Commission Meeting.

Citizen Input:

- Rondoll Huggins, 640 SE 4th Street, Lake Butler, Florida
 - Mr. Huggins states his respect for the board and that he does not intend to tear down any Commissioners or City staff but is trying to be a voice for the community. He explained that he has reached out to friends who are Commissioners in other cities and counties to ask for their processes. Mr. Huggins asked if there is accountability for employees who misuse an expenditure. He suggested the Commission cease the use of credit cards and fuel card purchasing to avoid misuse, and suggested that a more secure procurement process be implemented.
- Patrick Maxwell, Pastor of Victory Christian Center, Lake Butler, Florida
 - Mr. Maxwell expressed concern regarding the new Public Works building and the sign for Welch's shop. He requested details about the purchase and land swap between the City and Welch's questioning why the move was made in the first place.
 - Mr. Walker explained that the land swap was done as part of a plan to move Welch's off of Main Street, possibly pursue a Brownsfield grant for clean up, and resell the property to bring a new business into the City.
- Dan Williams, SW 92nd Way, Lake Butler, Florida
 - Mr. Williams is a previous resident of the City.
 - He is concerned that the City is on the same path as the City of Hampton recently where they were at risk of having their charter dissolved by the state. He warned the Commission that the issues they are facing should have been discussed before the budget was put in place for the year.

C. COMMENTS OR REMARKS BY COMMISSION

- Mayor Redman comments that the Commission is working to do the best for the citizens and the City. She confirmed that the land swap with Welch's was done with the best intentions for the City.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Action: 1. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Stegall.**
 - **Unanimous Approval**
 - Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

