

MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING

July 30, 2012

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

Mayor	:	John B. Arnold, Jr.
Commissioners	:	Heyward H. Strong, Jr.
	:	Kay Hamilton
	:	Joe Morgan
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
General Manager VBCS	:	Burt B. Bennett
Director Public Works	:	James Valandingham
Fire Chief	:	Mark Norris
Library Director	:	David Weatherford
City Attorney	:	Heyward Dykes
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in attendance: James Butler (cameraman), Mike Griffith (Bay Beacon), Tony Shipley, Don Caverly

1. **Legal Update**

Mayor Arnold introduced Mr. Heyward Dykes for an update on pending litigation. Mr. Dykes said he has requested an executive session for this Thursday August 9<sup>th</sup> at 5pm to brief the Commission on the order that was sent down in the City vs. Anthony Bradley, how we wish to proceed forward, litigation expenditures and appeals if any. This has to be requested in an open meeting which is the obligation he is fulfilling tonight. Mr. Dykes said that he had been informed by Mr. Fred Auscher that his law firm will be withdrawing from representing the City of Valparaiso with a motion that will be filed tomorrow. He said we could stipulate or not stipulate, if we do not stipulate there will be a hearing that will set forth why they feel there is a "conflict of interest", part of that being the way the order was drafted by Judge Remington, that there might be some blame on their law firm on filing the FOIA action. Mr. Dykes stated that he will be asking the commission to consider having him put in a notice of appearance to represent City moving forward until there is determination on how we want to proceed.

Legal  
Update

Also to be discussed in an open session would be contract issues concerning Mr. Doug Wyckoff, because the court's order implicating Mr. Wyckoff in having some possible cause in the ruling against the city, he feels it is something that the Commission needs to readdress. Mr. Dykes said Mr. Wyckoff has contacted him via email and Mr. Wyckoff has said he wants to resolve the contract dispute this week and if not he was going to look to file suit against the City. Mr. Dykes believes this situation is something else the Commission needs to review, he had previously attained permission to settle the matter with Mr. Wyckoff, since we have received the order from Judge Remington Mr. Dykes believes it is prudent to look at this matter again with a plan of action. He feels both legal issues need to be resolved in the "Sunshine" with an open meeting. Mr. Dykes said the reason to act quickly is due to the statutory time frames regarding a motion for rehearing if the Commission decides to do, we are only allowed 10 days to file after the judgment is entered which would be next Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup> by the end of the business day.

2. **City Website Presentation**

Tony Shipley, Assistant Library Director, gave a detailed overview of the City's website. He said he would like to acknowledge all of the input he has received from Comm. Kelley, April Bransome and her students with Niceville High School, Department Heads, Commission and the Mayor. Mr. Shipley said one of the objectives is to make the website more user friendly and easier to navigate. Mr. Shipley said that pictures can be added and removed, at this time there are about twenty on the site, several lengthy menus. Mr. Shipley said City Clerk, City Administrator, Commissioners and the Mayor all have their own page with a picture and listing of responsibilities. Mr. Shipley said that the Mayor and Comm. Morgan had requested more information and more detail on "Home of Eglin AFB" and he is working on getting more information. Several menus that take you into each department and a listing of all departments, most verbiage came from the department heads. He said Mr. Scott stated that he wanted all permit information and the maps to be on the new web site so he will be working with him to obtain to those documents. There are quick links to all departments that are located on the right hand side of the page on every page. Mr. Shipley said that all parks are on the website along with their location on a map. There is a link to report any noise problems on the website. Mr. Shipley said the plan is to do a "soft launch" tomorrow evening when there is a low amount of internet traffic, upload entire site to the server, giving Mr. Shipley time to make sure all things are working correctly before the morning. Mr. Shipley said if anyone finds mistakes or wants to change anything to email or phone him and he would take care of. Mayor said he appreciated all of the work and thanked Mr. Shipley for the presentation.

City  
Website

Mayor said he had received a letter from the Economic Development Council (EDC) in Ft. Walton saying if the City wants to attract business and join the “world of today” that the City needed to look at its moniker. He said some places have Valparaiso “Vale of Paradise” in other places we say “Home of Eglin AFB” the EDC suggested picking one moniker. He said they suggested the “Home of Eglin AFB” because the “Vale of Paradise” is does not generate a lot of interest in the economic community. Mayor said he has that as an agenda item for the regular August meeting and wanted to mention it to give everyone time to think about it. If we do adopt a new slogan we would have to have a new logo and seal, Mayor says he feels we need to get into the world of today on a personal basis.

**3. Resolution No. VCA 01-07-30-12 Rate Change Basic Cable And Pole Attachment**

Mayor said he would like to delay until Thursday or the regular August meeting because this was scheduled to be a budget meeting. Comm. Strong suggested the regular meeting, the resolution was moved.

**4. BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Mrs. Johnson said the big change since last week’s budget workshop is the in health insurance we received notice from the League of Cities that it will be increased 1% instead of the 10% increase that was budgeted so there are decreases in life & health insurance line items. I increased wages for 2% COLA for all of the funds. Comm. Hamilton asked if that was 2% for everyone and Mrs. Johnson said yes it would be for everyone. Mrs. Johnson said under capital non operating in administration removed the part time to full time employee wage, removed raises, in library removed the part time to full time, police department removed full time police officer and in parks removed the expenses for the DOC work squad, total decrease of \$141,640, increased expense \$31,800. Comm. Hamilton asked what part time to full time employee had been removed; Mrs. Johnson said we would retain the part time employee. Mrs. Johnson said she had been through this year’s budget for revenues and expenses and spoke with the other department heads and she feels comfortable that if the Commission desired we could carry forward \$35,000 from this budget to next years budget. Mayor stated at present millage we are still at a deficit of \$102,014 including COLA. Mayor said we needed to discuss the general fund because that is where we seem to be running into problems. Comm. Hamilton asked if we were contracted to do a COLA raise every year, Mayor said no we are not contracted for anything. Comm. Hamilton said so this is a decision we have to make. Mrs. Johnson said she has listed in the budget the history of the COLA and merit increase since 2008. Comm. Hamilton said she had wanted more details regarding each worker in the City, that everyone should be paying attention to that, there is a big disparity, she called other cities and compared, we are high in some areas and low in other areas, in a time like this for us with a decreasing tax base we should look more careful at giving raises and should not give an across the board raise, in good times a COLA raise of course but not now, she does not know if we have that luxury. Comm. Hamilton said if we are going to do something of that order we might need to look at more closely at what each position is being paid. Comm. Hamilton asked Comm. Morgan if he looked into any of that and he said no he had not and asked if she could give some generalizations right now. Comm. Hamilton said no, she feels everyone should study, and doesn’t want to talk about it in a public meeting even though payroll is public record, but we need to look at how much we are paying some and how little we are paying others. Comm. Hamilton feels that before we look into raises, automatic across the board, she thinks something’s we should have had a cap on, we are overpaying in a lot of areas, and Comm. Hamilton feels particularly in administration, we are pretty high. She said she is just looking at it from a business perspective in a cold hard non emotional way. Comm. Morgan asked if there was a table that she could share, Comm. Hamilton said that Mrs. Johnson could send him the same email she had sent her, and from there she made some calls and did the comparisons herself. Mayor said usually on an annual basis the League of Cities provides a recap of salaries of certain positions, but it is very generalized and with us being as small as we are sometimes you have one person doing several jobs. Mayor said most of our raises were based on recommendations from supervisors so that we can keep employees. He said Mr. Valandingham has a heck of a time keeping sanitation employees, Comm. Hamilton said that is actually a department that she would recommend raises, Mayor said there is a high turn over rate. Comm. Morgan said without a table he can’t really compare, that if one person is doing several jobs then that should be compensated but without a table he is just making assumptions by looking at numbers. Comm. Hamilton said she could do a table, Mayor said he suggested 2% to help our working people. Comm. Morgan said for planning purposes that is a good way to tack it but if this is an issue, by putting a comparison together for the Commissioners that would be helpful, he said the simple solution would be a COLA across the board. He believes it is worth examing, Comm. Hamilton feels that when he looks at it he will know what she is talking about. Mayor said he thinks the people in water and sewer are lower than most everyone else, Comm. Hamilton said right, she is looking at where we are in line and out of line, we have so many people that are costing us in excess of \$70,000 a year that is one extreme and the other extreme are the lower paying positions, there is just such a disparity here in looking at the City as a business. Comm. Hamilton said as far as the health, she knew she wasn’t going to be real popular for this, but she asked other cities if they had considered the opt out of health insurance, she said one city actually laughed, none of the other cities are paying its employees to not have the insurance. Mayor said that is due to a gripe other people the jealousy. Comm. Hamilton said we just don’t have the luxury of past years, Mayor said he was just trying

Res. No.  
VCA  
01-07-30-  
12

Budget  
Workshop

to explain how we go there. Mayor said he agreed that some employees were over paid but some supervisors had “pet people” and the Commission didn’t watch over so the salaries are disproportion, it took a while to get there. Comm. Hamilton said she understood that but hopefully we could take action to fix. Mrs. Johnson said approximately 4 years ago we had a wage compensation comparison and they found maybe one position that was off at that time, and some years before that in some positions our pay was lower but our benefits were higher. Comm. Hamilton said that times have changed and it had become a competitive market because of the economy, she said she just looks at it in terms if we can avoid going up too much on our millage rate by taking an aggressive look at some of our costs, some may seem small but the nickels and dimes add up. Mayor told Mrs. Johnson to proceed, Mrs. Johnson said this budget includes a 1% rate increase for employee health care, 3.5% increase for workers’ comp, 2% COLA, and in the cable department and increase in standby pay from \$50 to \$75. Mrs. Johnson said that an additional .2547 mills would give everything that is in the O & M, if you want everything in O & M, capital and the COLA it would have to go up .5972. Comm. Strong said for a total millage of 4.6965. Comm. Morgan stated he would need money for street repairs that \$40,000 to \$50,000 is our lowest estimate, he has to have that for the streets department to work. Mr. Valandingham said when he got here it was a \$20,000 budget and it was constantly going over that amount so that is why it has been increased for pot hole repair and other maintenance stuff. Comm. Morgan said he had to have \$40,000 to \$50,000 to avoid coming back to the Commission asking for money from the reserves. Comm. Morgan said it would be about 13%, \$22,000. Mrs. Johnson reminded the Commission that any rate above 4.8001 would require 2/3 vote of the Commission to pass. Mayor said we need to change the street repair line item to \$50,000 that brings the millage up to 4.8233. Mayor said he would recommend that we provide to the county for our tentative millage because we can go down but not up. Comm. Morgan said he would like to see some numbers to show the public what it costs to maintain our operation to explain the increase. Comm. Hamilton asked when it was determined what our citizens will be charged; Mayor said that would be after our last public hearing in September.

**a. Set tentative Millage**

COMM. MORGAN MADE THE MOTION THAT WE SET THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE TO 4.8233, COMM. STRONG SECONDED MOTION, MOTION WAS PASSED BY AN UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Set  
Tentative  
Millage

**b. Schedule Budget Hearing**

After a discussion of the dates for the 2 hearings to be accomplished it was set that the 1<sup>st</sup> hearing be on September 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading September 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> for the final meeting. Mrs. Johnson said she would confirm the 2<sup>nd</sup> date and get back with the Commission.

Budget  
Hearing

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting is adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Adjourn

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John B. Arnold, Jr.  
Mayor

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Heyward H. Strong, Jr.  
Chair, VCA

ATTEST:

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Tammy Johnson, CMC  
City Clerk

July 30, 2012

\*\*\*\*The DVD labeled July 30, 2012 contains the audio and video of this meeting and will be kept as a permanent part of these minutes. \*\*\*\*