

MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING

August 4, 2014

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.
City Commissioners	:	Heyward H. Strong, Jr.
	:	Kay Hamilton
	:	Joe Morgan
	:	Clark (Tom) Browning, IV
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
City Administrator	:	Carl Scott
Police Chief	:	Joe Hart
Public Works Director	:	James Valandingham
General Manager VBCS	:	James Butler
Library Director	:	David Weatherford
Fire Chief	:	Mark Norris
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in attendance: Amber Elledge (camera), Richard Byrd (Bay Beacon)

Review  
Budget Items

Mayor Arnold said that Mrs. Johnson had a new draft budget for review thought we would start with General Fund and go from there. Mayor Arnold said with present millage rate we are short a little over \$14,000, once you add in the capital of \$112,685 we are short a little over \$127,000. Mayor Arnold said the numbers do not include COLAs or any increase in salary. He said we need to take a good hard look at the capital improvements.

Mrs. Johnson said with an ad valorem rate of 4.524%, she said the library has added a raise for a future employee of 14%, T J Brooks security lighting down to \$1,700, she said we eliminated bulk oil containers from shop, Mr. Valandingham believes he will be able to purchase this fiscal year, these are changes from the last budget meeting.

Comm. Strong asked if on the capital items if Chief Hart was asking for two vehicles. Chief Hart said yes he was. Comm. Strong feels we don't need to do any updates to Doolittle Park. Mayor Arnold said he thinks we should do some type of improvements but lower from \$20,000 to \$10,000. He said this is something that has been considered for the last few budget cycles, we need to do something to honor our military and the parking needs to be increased for when memorial events are held there. Mayor Arnold said once we solidify the plans of what we want to do we might be able to get either state or federal aid. Comm. Strong says it all boils down to whether we want to raise the millage rate.

Library

**LIBRARY**

Mayor Arnold said let's start from the beginning with the library requesting an additional increase of \$15,000 in wages and benefits, he asked if Mr. Weatherford didn't receive that would he fall on his sword. Mr. Weatherford said he has to have this, he said they have had over 9,000 checkouts as of late and they average 6,000 with only five employees. He said there is no way to maintain those numbers without assistance. Mr. Weatherford said that he would get rid of the copy machine, so that line item monthly would go away and he would buy a machine for \$400 that would be fine for the library, freeing up money for the new program director's raise. Comm. Strong asked if the new employee had signed on and why is \$3,000 additional necessary. Mrs. Johnson said yes she had signed on to work at \$8.77 an hour she was happy because she has benefits. Mr. Weatherford said he would like to pay \$10.00 an hour, Mrs. Johnson said she would receive a raise and she hasn't even started working here yet. Mr. Weatherford said in other libraries their program directors are paid \$15.00 an hour. Mrs. Johnson asked if she was now a director because the position had been classified as a library clerk, they have a library clerk 1 or 2. Mr. Weatherford said there clerks up to 3 and 4, depending on the individual responsibilities. Comm. Hamilton asked what is her level of education. Mr. Weatherford said she had a bachelor's degree from FSU in theater arts. Mayor Arnold asked if she had experience, Mrs. Johnson said no. Mr. Weatherford said that everyone in the library agreed on her, she will be a great addition. Comm. Hamilton said in anticipation for this the copier payment will be deleted. Mr. Weatherford said yes he would remove that item all together, lower books & publications from \$21,000 to \$16,000, programs from \$4,000 to \$2,000. Comm. Strong said he was down \$10,000 only needed \$8,000. Comm. Strong said library has a lot of activity. Mr. Weatherford said we have the lowest cost library in the county and we do the work of the fourth largest. Mr. Weatherford said hire a part time person and increase the wages for the new full time director, that is why he went back over his figures and decreased things to cover the new person. He said they will have four full time people in the library, the \$15,000 is for an additional part time person, along with part time person will give them six total in the library. Comm. Hamilton said a part time person incurs a lot less in terms of benefits. Comm. Strong said he has the additional \$8,000 to do what he needs to.

Police  
Department

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Mayor Arnold said this year the police department is asking for an additional patrol car, one is in the budget every year but this year Chief is requesting two. Chief Hart said that is because of the age of the fleet, some mileage over 150,000 been in the field for eight or nine years, it is getting more expensive to maintain the fleet. He said he would need to increase the

repair and maintenance line item to \$4,000 if only able to purchase one vehicle. Comm. Morgan asked about the computer upgrade, Chief Hart said he would have to have the computer upgrade, he has needed it for some time and we have deferred on it a couple of times he has to have. Comm. Browning agrees to the two vehicles, Comm. Hamilton does also said that Valparaiso has a safe environment thanks to our police force. Comm. Morgan asked if the vehicles would be SUV, Chief Hart said no they would be Dodge Chargers, seconded lowest on state contract. Mayor Arnold said we would leave vehicle in for now.

Fire  
Department

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Comm. Morgan said the eight of the ten hoses in reserve are no longer suitable and have to be replaced, he said possible to do half now and half in new budget \$7,450 instead of \$11,300.

### **PARKS**

Mayor Arnold asked about the \$15,000 to repair T pier. Mr. Valandingham said that is a ballpark estimate for materials, the labor will be in house. He said the structure is failing, front end damage to it, the water line needs to be redone. Mr. Valandingham said will use about \$5,000 out of this year's budget for repair. Comm. Strong said he didn't think Doolittle was as important as raises. Mayor verified that \$10,000 is a better estimate for the T pier and Mr. Valandingham agreed. Comm. Strong asked about \$1,700 for security lighting. Mr. Valandingham said there are a couple of options, he recommends the \$1,700 upfront.

Parks

### **REVENUE RESERVE & CARRY FORWARD**

Mrs. Johnson said the \$75,000 is a loan from General Fund, only carrying forward \$6,800. Comm. Morgan said right now can't assume a greater carry forward than what we have because there is still business to be done and things to be purchased out of this years budget.

Reserve &  
Carry Forward

Comm. Strong said that the library has come up with \$8,000 in savings to be able to fund their capital items.

Comm. Strong said being \$45,000 down we would need a quarter mill or a half mill if we are looking at 3% raise. Mrs. Johnson said on raises in the past we have done COLA raises, no step increases. She said in doing so someone hired in new with no step increases in the last three years that person would be making the same as someone who has been here three years. Mrs. Johnson recommends doing step increase instead of COLA. Comm. Morgan said that should be in the department head hands, to get the money to them to do the merit increases. He said we have given raises over the last few years while federal workers haven't received anything, not saying what is deserved or competitive but we should be more selective in our raises. Comm. Hamilton agrees that raises should be on merit not COLA, a raise for just breathing. Comm. Strong feels we should allocate the amount tonight. Comm. Morgan said not tonight, 2% would cause an increase in ad valorem. Comm. Strong said that is the only way to do it unless we take money from reserves in General Fund, take it from there to hold the millage down. Comm. Morgan said he believes we need to be very careful there, we need to keep the millage rate as close to current as possible. Mayor Arnold said the incentive type wages have not worked in the past, department heads would give too freely, that is why we have the pay table we do today. Mayor Arnold said other question would be what about money for raises for department heads. Mr. Valandingham said he and Mrs. Johnson had talked about increases and both feel step increase would be preferred over COLA, that way the supervisors would be able to rate the performance of the employee. He said as far as a raise for himself as a department head, he would forgo his to allow his employees to receive one. Chief Hart said he had experienced both merit and COLA raise scenarios, most of the police officers were behind the spectrum, he had two quit due to the salary situation, he lost two officers with four years experience to jobs that pay more money. Chief Hart said he has been short handed and his people have pulled together to keep things working, he feels something more should be done for some but not all. Comm. Morgan suggested that each department head take a look at their payroll and what is competitive, he said our people need to be competitive. Chief Hart said he has discussed with Mayor Arnold and we can't expect to be the same as Okaloosa or Walton County benefits, we don't have the same call volume, but we have to pay competitive, but he understands from a taxpayer perspective every time a raise is given it causes the city's debt to go up and he doesn't want to over tax the citizens.

Mrs. Johnson said a salary comparison had been done a few years ago, takes into account about benefits as well as wages and most were in line. Chief Hart said he knew benefits cost, our health insurance for one, younger folks don't look at all the benefits, who rather pay out of their own pocket for insurance and have more money in their checks. Comm. Strong said it has been looked at before dropping family coverage for employees only covering the employee. Mayor Arnold said we pay \$600,000 a year in health insurance.

Comm. Morgan asked for the next workshop that the department heads review their workers pay and see if raises are needed and for whom. Mrs. Johnson said working on a comparison from our city's pay to other cities in Okaloosa County, but that is hard to do. Mr. Valandingham said our departments are comparable to other cities because of they way we are structured. Mayor Arnold said we need to be able to motivate employees.

Mrs. Johnson said for the next workshop she will get with the department heads again to go over what the carry forward for each will be.

Mayor Arnold said our next budget workshop will be August 18, 2014 at 6 PM. We do have a regular meeting next Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM.

Adjourn

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

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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

August 4, 2014

\*\*\*The DVD labeled August 4, 2014 contains the audio and video of this meeting and will be kept as a permanent part of these minutes.\*\*\*