

**City Commission Budget Workshop
Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2020
(Approved)**

8/12/2020 - Minutes

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Terrye Howell, Curtis Gibson, Al Goldstein, Robin Gibson, Mayor Fultz

Staff Present: James Slaton, Interim City Manager; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk

Mayor Fultz called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Fultz read a statement:

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69, issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, extended by Executive Order 20-112, and further extended by Executive Orders No 20-114, 20-150, and 20-179

municipalities may conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes.

Mayor Fultz then reviewed procedures for public participation.

Mayor Fultz asked the Commissioners, "are you comfortable with all the notice provisions set forth and these uniform rules of procedures we have established for this Virtual meeting?"

The Commissioner members answered affirmatively.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

2.1. Draft Budget 2020-2021

Dorothy Abbott, Director of Finance, reported said the projected revenues came in a bit higher than anticipated. So the draft budget is balanced at the rollback millage rate. The rollback rate is 6.7947. This budget includes a higher fire assessment rate. This increase brings in about \$244,000 to the budget. The Commission can lower it and take the money from reserves. In September the Commission will set the final fire assessment rate.

Commissioner Goldstein asked how much of the budget was balanced with reserves. Ms. Abbott said the draft budget includes \$150,000 of reserves. Our reserves are at 21% of our budget which is within our policy limits. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked how much our reserves are currently. Ms. Abbott said about \$3.1 million. We won't need to dip into it too much as much of the capital has been eliminated. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked about possible increases if economy improves. Ms. Abbott described how they track revenues March and then make adjustments after discussing the status with the City Manager. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked about the delay between the State and the City. Ms Abbott said about a month. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson said we are going into the next year with comfort in hopes for an increase in revenues in the spring.

Commissioner Goldstein suggested not increasing the fire fee. Ms. Abbott said this would be up to the Commission. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson said that the reserves are a rainy day fund for difficult times and these are difficult times.

Ms. Abbott asked for an amount for the resolution. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson suggested cutting the proposed increase. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he is in favor of not increasing the fire fee at all right now. He does not want to add to taxpayer's burdens.

Mayor Fultz agreed as we will still be in good shape with our reserves. Later we can build up the fund back if there are increased revenues.

Commissioner Howell said she would like to keep the reserves up as hurricane season is still upon us and we are still addressing the current crisis. She said she preferred to keep the 5% increase. She does not want to cut back on staff. She does not want to deplete reserves.

Mayor Fultz asked what the percentage of the reserves would be if we removed the money added in by the increased fire fee. Ms. Abbott said she would get that information to the Commission. She will figure out the difference if we took that amount out. Mayor Fultz said he wanted to be sure we did not go below 15%. Mayor Fultz said he favors keeping as it is or an increase of 2.5%.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he would prefer not to raise it at all but is fine with reviewing the figures. Commissioner Goldstein agreed. He said he would prefer not to take money from constituents if we don't need to.

Dorothy Abbott said she will have information on both options to the Commission by Monday for review. They can let her know.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson commended Ms. Abbott and Mr. Slaton and staff for getting a balanced budget. He encouraged additional cuts in departments for unnecessary expenditures. He encouraged a review of contributions to the Chamber of Commerce. He wants to be sure the funds are spent according to our contract. The organization receives \$130,000 a year and the Chamber has been closed. Should our payment this last year be reduced. All funds given to outside organizations need to be reviewed. Organizations should give a presentation to the Commission and submit a budget in advance. He says he is not singling anyone out. Mayor Fultz asked Mr. Slaton to review these contracts and be sure they are adhered to.

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked about a shortfall in the Streets budget for repairing the streets. Can that 6 year project continue? Mr. Slaton said the streets budget was also a victim of the current crisis. We will still get work done. There are some monies left over from the past year. We will put together a plan to get some work done. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson said we've done a good job. Mr. Slaton said we can get a mile done. We will try to start this project next year. We have to see what the revenues will be.

Commissioner Howell asked for clarification. Are we done with streets this year? Mr. Slaton said for this fiscal year yes. Next fiscal year we will get done what we could not finish this year. We will continue the program.

2.II. Draft CRA Budget 2020-2021

James Slaton, Interim City Manager, explained that the only change in this draft from the previous workshop is the addition of a CRA Coordinator for the Northwest area.

Dorothy Abbott, Finance Director, said this is the first year we made a separate CRA budget book. The information is the same as the other book but with more details in some places.

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson commended finance staff. The book looks great. He is glad that this is separate. He expressed support for more connecting trails.

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked if we have to plan for anything in this budget for the Downtown Plan. Mr. Slaton said that within the budget there is money to complete design work.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked if some money can come from the CRA for the Chamber. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson said that the EDC and Chamber are focused on development. The CRA is for Redevelopment. He explained the difference between the two. They are two different markets. There was discussion on this distinction.

Mayor Fultz commended staff on the CRA budget and said we are going in the right direction. We will make dynamic changes to this City.

Commissioner Howell asked who the Main Street/Assistant CRA Director is. Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk, said that is Karen Thompson. Commissioner Howell asked who the CRA Coordinator is. Mr. Slaton said that is the new position for the northwest area.

2.III. Draft 5-Year CIP

Dorothy Abbott, Finance Director, said there are no changes to the document since the last meeting. There may be some clerical changes made yet but nothing major.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked if the gazebo was taken out. Mr. Slaton said that will be reviewed as part of the Recreation Master Plan. Commissioner Howell pointed out that it is still in there. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said this should be an amphitheater. Commissioner Goldstein said he would like to put more facilities at the lake so we can be a destination point.

Mayor Fultz said the current crisis will slow down our plans a bit but hopefully someday soon we can put these plans in place and become a destination.

Commissioner Howell would like tournament ready facilities. Mayor Fultz agreed that we need to upgrade our recreation facilities. He said Lake Wales needs to be unique.

Commissioner Howell said we need to be hurricane ready. Mr. Slaton said we are ready. Commissioner Howell said she would like more shelter space in Lake Wales.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned of 6:24 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk