

**SPECIAL CALL CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009 9:30 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Sabin Abell, Mayor; Tom White, Vice Mayor; Debra Fromang, Councilmember; Bill Fish, Councilmember and Kevin Sawnick, Councilmember **Also Present:** James Gabbard, City Manager; Charles Vitunac, City Attorney and Tammy Vock, City Clerk

1) Budget Overview – Fiscal Year 2008-2009

Mr. Jim Gabbard, City Manager, commented that this is the second quarterly meeting they have held to go over the budget. He has compiled a lot of information together over the last three months. What he has given Council today is the work sheets showing where Department Directors have decreased their budget by either five or ten percent. He felt that Council would need to go through and take a look at this information and then they could talk about it over the next couple of months. He said by the next quarterly meeting they will have a better idea of where they are going to be. They will also begin budget preparations, which will be presented to Council in July. He said that today they would follow the same format as in their last quarterly meeting. He thanked all the Department Directors and Union Representatives for being so helpful in revising their budgets.

A) Employee Status – Robert Anderson

Mr. Robert Anderson, Human Resource Director, handed out a spread sheet that shows which departments currently have vacancies (on file with the original minutes). In the General Fund if the vacancies are not filled then there would be a cost savings of \$532,400.40. He explained that right now the City is operating under a hiring freeze with the exception of two (2) positions in the Police Department and openings in the Recreation Department.

B) Employee Clinic – Robert Anderson

Mr. Anderson reported that a Request for Information (RFI) went out over a year ago and there has been eleven responses. He has talked to the County who is interested in jointly having an Employee Clinic. He has started getting cost information. The clinic will be located where the current Recreation Administration building is. They will be preparing a contract for Council approval, which will be before them in the near future.

Mr. White asked how much in a year will this save the City.

Mr. Anderson explained that for the first year it will save them \$275,000 and then over three years they will be looking at saving over one million dollars.

It was noted that Mr. Don Loftus (he appeared at the last quarterly meeting when this matter was discussed) has been notified of this decision and he has no objections.

- 2) **General Fund**
 - A) **Revenue**
 - B) **Expenditure**

- 3) **Enterprise Funds Overview**
 - A) **Airport**
 - B) **Electric Utility**
 - C) **Solid Waste**
 - D) **Recreation**
 - E) **Water & Sewer**
 - F) **Marina**

- 4) **Projections for Fiscal Year 2009-2010**
- 5) **Discussion of Budget Process for Fiscal Year 2009-2010**
- 6) **City Council Goals & Priorities for 2009**

Mr. Steve Maillet, Finance Director, noted that when taking a look at the current years budget, up to February, they are pretty much on track for this time of the year. He then went through the FY09 General Fund, February Update and said that they are pretty much within the budget in the General Fund. He said that with the Electric Fund they haven't borrowed any money this year because they were holding off to see what funding is going to be provided through the stimulus package. Right now there is a negative in the Electric Fund, which is because of major capital projects. He said the same situation occurs with the Water and Sewer Fund. They are proposing to borrow \$11,000,000 for the deep injection well, but will wait to start the process until they see if there is going to be any stimulus money provided to help fund the project. Both the Marina and the Airport were in good shape and the Solid Waste showed a negative.

Mr. Maillet again reiterated that the City was pretty much on track for where they are expected to be. He explained that with the hiring freeze, when employees leave the City they are trying not to replace those positions.

Mr. Gabbard agreed that things would continue to get a little tougher. We will be close to being one million or million and a half dollars short. He said that they cannot go to their reserves again. They will need to find the money in the budget. He said that there are some capitol projects that could be deferred. He said most of the savings will come from personnel. The employees understand what we have to do and will be on board with us.

Mrs. Fromang added that the private sector is suffering just as much. She expressed that all governments need to work together.

Mr. White said that if there is something in the works, then Council needs to know what staff is planning.

Mr. Gabbard reiterated that most of the savings will come from personnel and how they pay the employees. In the next couple of weeks he will be working on putting together the formal budget. He said that budget when brought to Council will be the “bare bones.” He hoped things would be a little better in July. There will be another quarterly meeting scheduled for three months from now and they will have a better idea of where they are going to be.

Mayor Abell asked when will they receive the ad valorem figures.

Mr. Maillet said that they probably would receive the first letter in June just in time for the next quarterly meeting.

Mr. Gabbard told Council if there are any goals or priorities that Council wants staff to be looking at or working on to let him know.

Mr. White hoped that they could retain all the employees that the City has now and that they come through this economic downfall.

Mrs. Fromang brought up the furlough proposal. She hoped that they would look at just asking employees to take a ½ day off instead of the whole day. She thought that services might suffer if employees were required to be off for a whole day. She agreed that everyone has to work together.

Mr. Gabbard explained that the furlough proposal is just one option that they are looking at and they will know more in July. He said that if they did a one-day furlough it would generate approximately \$88,000 back to the City.

Mrs. Fromang suggested looking at taking two hours off instead of a whole day.

Mr. Maillet explained that it would be one unpaid workday per month for each employee. He expressed that not every employee would be off at the same time and services would still be provided. He said that there would not be any offices closed because the public still needs to be served. He said that right now they are just discussing this in order to make the budget work for next year. He said that the monthly savings would be approximately \$101,000 or (1.2 million dollars per year).

Mr. Gabbard expressed that he doesn't want to see any City employee lose their job.

Mr. Sawnick agreed that they needed to keep everything on the table and keep looking at all options. With the furlough concept, if that is an option then they need to make sure that services are kept up. He wanted to keep as many people working as possible.

Mr. Fish commented that one of his real sensitivities is maintenance. There are some expensive facilities here and maintenance is an important issue. The postal annex on 17th Street right now is just empty land. He was told that the Water and Sewer Department was using the back four acres of the property for pipes. This area was the fenced in area and in return for using the property the Water and Sewer Department has been maintaining it.

Mr. Gabbard said that he has had a couple of inquiries about the postal annex property. He said that the City might want to advertise it for lease.

Mr. White asked about the piece of property next to the radio station. He said that there might be people interested in leasing that piece of property.

Mr. Gabbard said that he would look into advertising the postal annex property.

Mr. Fish brought up that Troy Moody Park is being heavily used. He also mentioned that he has a plan sketched out for the old Dodger Pines Golf Course. He felt that as far as the golf course goes they need to have a good plan and then put it into place. He felt that this would make the public happy.

Mrs. Fromang suggested giving six months to come up with some plan for the golf course.

Mr. Gabbard stated that he will report back to Council on the golf course at their next quarterly meeting.

Mr. White felt that the best time to set their next quarterly meeting would be after they receive the figures from the Property Appraiser (around June 15th).

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, was aware of the high demand of people using Troy Moody Park. He also reported the increase of people using their beaches. He explained that with the economy the way it is people tend to go to the “free” things. They are working on a CDBG grant to improve Piece of Pie and Jacoby Park. This will move some people from Troy Moody Park over to those Parks. He feels they are headed in the right direction.

Mr. White added that with Troy Moody Park there is a parking problem. He thinks one of the reasons that they visit that Park instead of going to Pocahontas Park is because they don't feel comfortable there. There seems to be a lot of transients that hang out at Pocahontas Park. People go to Troy Moody Park because they feel it is safer.

Mr. Slezak said that there are still a lot of people using Pocahontas Park, but he understands that there are some issues.

Mr. Gabbard reported that the reason there are so many transients in that area is because of the bus terminal. He said that Senior Resources is receptive to moving the location of the bus stop.

Mr. Sawnick said that he has asked the City Manager to provide a list of what projects have been done that they have spent money on and what parts of the City were they done at. He wanted to make sure that they prioritize taking care of the entire City.

Mr. Gabbard explained that he went back over the last two years. He will be providing this information to Council tomorrow.

Mrs. Fromang gave an update on the tourist tax money. She attended a meeting that included City and County staff where this topic was discussed. She made sure that Council had received a copy of the Resolution passed by both the City and the County concerning tourist tax dollars. She discovered that Resolution had a lot to do with the Pep Reef. She said that Jonathan Gorham was at the meeting and he informed them that they were on the list for beach renourishment in 2012. She said that the City Manager received a copy of a letter where the County is looking at hiring a lobbyist. They need to make sure that the lobbyist pushes for the City sector.

Mr. White reported that according to Jonathan Gorham there has been no maintenance on the Pep Reef and it wasn't doing what it was intended to do. However, monitoring of the Pep Reef is still occurring.

Mrs. Fromang suggested to Mr. White that he attend the Tourist Tax Committee meeting as well as the Beach and Shore Committee meeting to hear all of the discussion that is taking place. She expressed that if there is a problem with their beaches then it needs to be known because tourist tax dollars are being spent on the beaches.

Mr. Fish thought that it might make it easier if they could have a map showing where the different sectors are.

Mr. White said that he would get him a copy. He said that sector 5 covers the City beaches.

7) Adjournment

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

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