

Palmetto City Commission
November 13, 2006 5:00 p.m.

Elected Officials Present:

Larry Bustle, Mayor
Eric Ball, Commissioner (left the meeting at 7:02 p.m.)
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner
Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner
Brian Williams, Commissioner

Elected Officials Absent:

Mary Lancaster, Vice Mayor

Staff and Others Present:

Chris Lukowiak, Public Works Director
Chief Garry Lowe
Bill Strollo, Code Enforcement Director
Deanna Roberts, Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent:

James R. Freeman, City Clerk

Mayor Bustle called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A moment of silence was observed for our military personnel serving overseas, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF WORKSHOP AGENDA

MOTION: Mr. Williams moved, Mr. Ball seconded and motion passed unanimously to approve the November 13, 2006, Workshop agenda with the change to add the continuation of the discussion of stormwater fees between items 2 and 3.

2. PRESENTATION: TRAKIT PERMIT TRACKING (C. LUKOWIAK)

Mr. Lukowiak introduced Linda Donnelly of CRW Associates who gave a PowerPoint presentation which walked through a simulation of the application of Trakit, a permit tracking system. The PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes and made a part of the permanent record.

Ms. Donnelly said the company was founded in 1992 and provides cities and counties with community develop systems. The company has a 100% implementation and retention rate with the system.

The system is used for Planning and Zoning, Building Permits and Engineering, Code Enforcement, Maintenance Departments, Citizen Call Centers, Contractors, Architects and Engineers and the Public. It has an internet based module and can be used by contractors to apply for permits online. The public can go online and search information. The City can control the information that is made available online.

Ms. Donnelly said the system is easy to maintain and can be maintained by the user. She cited the example of the City of Okeechobee which has no IT Department and maintains its own system.

The system provides the ability to track or see all activities for a single parcel e.g. code enforcement issues, permitting, inspections etc. GIS data can be incorporated into the system, and with that, radius notification of rezoning is possible. The system can pick up the names and addresses within a certain radius and merge them into a letter. It can also create mailing labels. The system can calculate fees and do contractor verification. Other key software features are listed in the attached PowerPoint.

Inspectors in the field can do mobile computing, thereby inputting inspection information at the site using wireless, or the information can be synched to the computer at the end of the day or the next morning.

CRW will do the data conversion and provide end-user and system admin training. It offers toll free technical support, and as long as you are on maintenance, software updates and enhancements to the system are free.

Chris Lukowiak said CRW will do the data conversion, but the City will have to input hard paper files and can go back as far in time as we wish to store that information.

The system requires user licenses and user rights, and the City would have to decide on the assignment of those rights.

Commissioner Williams asked if this is a web based program. Mrs. Donnelly said it is client-server, but there will be a new version, a dot net version (the Microsoft new programming language) of the system in the first quarter of 2007. Any client who has ten user licenses and is on maintenance will receive any new versions free of charge.

Observer licenses are available. This just gives the user the ability to see the information and print reports, but not to manipulate data.

Commissioner Williams asked where the money is coming from and Mr. Lukowiak said from the Building Department in the first year. Other departments would be added later as the benefits of the system become apparent and as they are able to make funding available. The initial costs of \$145,000 will be paid through the Building Department.

Mr. Lukowiak said this will be added to the CIP for the presentation at the November 20, 2006, Workshop.

To clarify her earlier statement, Mrs. Donnelly said that any upgrades are free as long as the City is on maintenance. The ten user licenses requirement is for the new dot net version only. Maintenance includes new upgrades and new capabilities. In answer to Commissioner Ball's question, she said that CRW has every intention of maintaining the Visual Basic version for quite some time as many will want to stay with that version, and they will make sure that both versions have the same features and function capabilities.

The Mayor asked if there was general agreement to include this on the CIP and look at it again when Mr. Lukowiak brings the CIP forward. The Commissioners agreed.

3. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF STORMWATER FEES

Andy Burnham of Mike Burton and Associates appeared before Commission to give some follow up information from a prior presentation relative to stormwater analysis as requested by the City Commission. The proposed three-year plan shows a 100% increase in 2007; 33% in '08 and 25% in '09.

Commissioners Ball and Varnadore said they were surprised that Sweetbay and Albertson's were not included on the list of commercial accounts to be capped at the \$100.00 per month maximum monthly increase. Mr. Burnham said it was based on information supplied by the IT Department and that apparently their monthly bills were not above \$100.00.

Mrs. Varnadore asked if mitigation is still being considered. Mr. Lukowiak said the City will have to adopt a mitigation strategy, and he is looking at some options. She expressed concern at looking at the fees before knowing how mitigation will affect the rates shown. Mr. Lukowiak said the mitigation methodology could take another six months and the City needs to get up and running with the fee increases. Mr. Lukowiak said the City has to look at mitigation to make sure it is legally justifiable before a mitigation strategy can be adopted. In answer to Mrs. Varnadore's question about someone like Wal Mart who will have a \$100.00 cap plus mitigation, he said it is possible for some newer businesses to mitigate out of fees. She said there may be other businesses in that scenario, so how can the figures shown be accurate? Mr. Burnham interjected that there will be other factors such as the update of the square footage information for commercial properties and the cost allocation analysis that will affect the fees. These will be considered in developing stormwater fees in fiscal year 2008, but the City needs to get something now to help the fund cover the costs for this year.

Mr. Lukowiak stated that the City is in a crisis situation and needs to start collecting revenue and also identify some cuts.

Mr. Burnham presented the six-year plan and Mr. Lukowiak said at the end of five years, under this scenario, the rate increase will be down to 5% and the City will have effectively cleaned up the current situation. The six-year plan is actually a five-year plan, leaving 2007 as a stand alone year to get some revenue in and have a real number to work with instead of guesstimates. Prior to the 2008 budget he will come back with a true five-year plan and a mitigation strategy. It should be possible at that time to show real numbers for field audits and other missing data. The plan moves toward a true Enterprise Fund that is self supporting.

The three-year and six-year plans, as presented by Mr. Burnham, are attached to these minutes and made a part of the permanent record.

In answer to Mayor Bustle's question about mitigation strategy, Mr. Lukowiak said it will be possible for residential units to mitigate as well as commercial businesses. It will be up the customer and his/her engineer to come in and submit a request for mitigation.

After much discussion, Mayor Bustle said the real question at this meeting is what should be the first year's rate; 353% had been discussed and no one liked that and this evening 100% is being considered. We have to start someplace to make Stormwater a self-supporting fund.

Mr. Burnham said the question also is how you get through Fiscal Year 2007, because the other factors such as billing rates, commercial properties square footage updates, mitigation, cost allocation between residential and commercial, and billing audits will reshape the rates within the Stormwater Enterprise Fund substantially. They will change the rate structure for Fiscal Year 2008.

Mr. Lukowiak said the rates have not been dealt with since 1999. At the present time, with the ratio of revenue to debt service, the City is definitely in the red. By 2008, he will come up with a three - five year plan to make Stormwater is self supporting.

While Commissioners Williams and Varnadore were concerned about raising rates and then having some businesses mitigate out of the rates and the City having to raise rates again, Commissioner Ball said the vast majority will not mitigate out and Commission knows it has to raise the rates.

Commissioner Williams stated that Commission should have seen the CIP prior to the budget discussions.

Mr. Lukowiak pointed out that the plan not only incorporates severe cuts in the stormwater department, but also keeps operating costs going down over the next three years.

Commissioner Varnadore asked about increases on commercial properties and the cap. Mr. Lukowiak explained that in 2007 for any business whose 100% increase resulted in an excess of \$100.00, the increase would be capped at \$100.00. There are no caps factored in for subsequent years. He will come back to Commission with that discussion in 2008. The cap will result in approximately \$30,000 in lost revenue in 2007.

Mr. Lukowiak said he would like consensus from the Commission to move forward with this at the 7:00 p.m. meeting on Nov. 20, 2006. He is looking for authorization to notice customers.

Commissioner Varnadore said she had a problem with the 100% increase and pointed out that Commissioner Lancaster is absent from the meeting and discussion.

Commissioner Cornwell asked about starting with a 75% increase. Mr. Lukowiak said that would result in a need for about \$50,000 - \$60,000 in extra cuts and subsequent year increases would have to go up from the current proposed rate. Mr. Lukowiak said if 75% is the increase Commission is looking for, he will come back with those figures. Mrs. Cornwell said she is just looking for consensus among Commissioners. She opined that this is difficult because the City just raised taxes and now we have to raise fees. It's tough to do as an elected official and it's hard on our citizens.

Commissioner Varnadore suggested getting the figures for the 75% increase, bringing it to the Workshop on November 20, 2006, and then moving it forward to the 7:00 p.m. meeting if Commission agrees.

The meeting paused briefly for Andy Burnham to run the figures at 75%.

When the meeting resumed, Mr. Lukowiak introduced Laura Logue the new Projects Manager.

Mr. Burnham presented the rate increases based on an increase of 75% in the first year. After the presentation, Mr. Lukowiak said he would get the new figures to Commission the next day. Mr. Lukowiak said the change would save the customer approximately .75 but would result in a \$46,000 decrease in the level of service. Commissioner Williams suggested that the difference between the 100% and 75% increase is not worth it. Commissioner Varnadore agreed. She asked if the City still wanted to do the cap.

Mr. Lukowiak will bring back figures of 100%, 75% and 50% to the November 20, 2006, Workshop, with and without the cap, and it will be carried forward to the 7:00 p.m. meeting if Commission reaches a consensus.

3. DISCUSSION: CITYWIDE SECURITY (C.LUKOWIAK)

Mr. Lukowiak gave a PowerPoint presentation on a survey done by Sgt. Scott Tyler and Ron Koper, Risk Manager. The security survey report was done for city facilities: City Hall, the CRA, the Waste Water Treatment Plant, Public Works, including the Building Department and Planning Department, Parks and Recreation and the Police Department. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes and made a part of the permanent record.

The survey addressed employee/customer safety at the facilities. Suggested priorities were listed on the survey.

A full bathroom was recommended for the Customer Service area at City Hall. Commission was concerned about the cost. Mr. Lukowiak said this is a CIP item and will come to Commission for approval as part of the CIP. The Mayor commented that the expense for a bathroom might not be justified at this time as the City may move City Hall to a different location.

Mr. Lukowiak said the majority of the recommendations promote organized security practices and call for the City to provide awareness training. Sgt. Tyler is a certified instructor and will provide the awareness training.

Mayor Bustle asked for a rationale behind the recommendations. Mr. Lukowiak said he will get that information to Mayor and Commission. He will also provide a complete copy of the PowerPoint as some pages were missing.

The total cost to implement the recommendations for the City would be \$75,000. He will remove the proposed bathroom at City Hall from the project. Commissioner Varnadore asked for more information on the double hung windows.

Mrs. Varnadore suggested that two Workshops might be needed to address the CIP. She said the Workshops have been loaded and don't allow enough time to finish the items on the agenda.

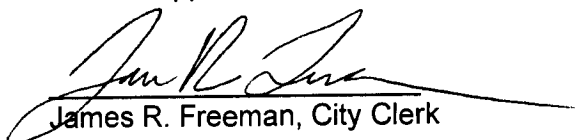
Mr. Williams again expressed concern over not seeing the CIP during the budget process. Mr. Lukowiak commented that it is a five-year plan and most items would have been carried forward from last year. Mr. Williams said any new additions should be presented during the budget process.

Commissioner Cornwell asked about another Workshop in December if the November 20, 2006, Workshop does not provide sufficient time to finish the CIP. The Mayor asked Commission to hold December 11, 2006, from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. open.

Mayor Bustle informed Commission that he will be at the Florida League of Cities Legislative Conference November 15-17, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes approved:


James R. Freeman, City Clerk