Elected Officials Present:
Larry Bustle, Mayor
Tamra Varnadore, Vice Mayor (entered at 5:25 pm)
Eric Ball, Commissioner
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner
Mary Lancaster, Commissioner
Brian Williams, Commissioner

Staff and Others Present:
James R. Freeman, City Clerk
Chief Garry Lowe
Chris Lukowiak, Public Works Director
Tanya Lukowiak, CRA Executive Director
Bob Schmitt, Planning Supervisor/Zoning Administrator
Karen Simpson, Deputy Clerk-Finance
Diane Ponder, Deputy Clerk-Administration

Mayor Bustle called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm. A moment of silence for overseas military personnel was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Mrs. Lancaster moved, Ms. Cornwell seconded and motion carried 4-0 to adopt the August 28, 2008 agenda.

2. DISCUSSION: FY 2009 BUDGET

Mr. Ball began the discussion by confirming with staff that the justifications for the allocations had been provided to Commission.

Mayor Bustle commented on the time constraint for approving the tentative millage and budget, stating the budget should be finalized during this meeting.

Mr. Williams questioned the accuracy of the allocation calculated for the Building Department, specifically citing the transfer to Public Works. Mr. Freeman explained the allocation is based on the number of employees in Public Works and is one component of the $92,000 allocation. Mrs. Simpson explained the purpose of an allocation is to allocate all the services provided by one department to another department. In summary, Mr. Williams stated he does not like taking $400,000 out of the Building Department reserve to fund the Building Department; there are too many people in the department.

Ms. Varnadore commented on the certification completion and the $5,000. Mr. Freeman stated a policy regarding compensation for certifications has been completed in draft form. The draft contains provisions for an employee to continue employment with the City for a minimum of two years; any costs associated with tests that have to be retaken will be borne by the employee; no automatic step/grade increase at completion of the certification, however, that can be taken into account during the annual review process. The $5,000 was removed.

Mr. Freeman confirmed the step increase for the IT Manager has been removed. Mr. Freeman asked Commission's consensus on the step increase. Ms. Varnadore stated she felt there was consensus since the steps were not being granted; the employee could take the certification if employment with the City was terminated. There were no comments from the other
commissioners concerning the IT Manager's step increase. Mr. Freeman also explained how he arrived at the two year term for employment after certification.

Ms. Varnadore suggested freezing all positions contained in the budget; if a position is vacated it will not be filled until the position comes back to the Commission. Ms. Cornwell conurred. Mayor Bustled opined it is the responsibility of the Mayor and Department Heads to control the budget after adopted; Commission should not be involved in operational matters that is within the purview of the Mayor. Mr. Williams opined that Commission wants to control the budget as it pertains to filling vacant positions. Mr. Ball disagreed with Mr. Williams, stating the budgetary function is separate from the personnel function; he would not be in favor of review every vacancy but would favor a regular formal review of the budget. Mrs. Lancaster stated she did not want to drop the City's level of service; if the positions were in the budget they must be needed. She stated she is not in favor of vacant position coming to Commission for approval before being filled.

Discussion ensued on the Building Department personnel. Mr. Lukowiak explained how he is attempting to incorporate some of that department's personnel into the day-to-day operations of the Public Work Department. Mrs. Lancaster suggested also using the inspectors in the code enforcement arena. Mr. Freeman stated he will look at distributing the appropriate salaries between the cost centers using the Building Department personnel. Mr. Williams declared he will not vote for this budget containing the $400,000 withdrawal from the Building Department reserve. Mr. Lukowiak confirmed he will report to Commission on how he intends to utilize the Building Department personnel.

Ms. Varnadore again expressed her desire to freeze vacant positions. Ms. Cornwell also discussed a possible policy to freeze all positions effective as of a certain date before the budget process begins. Ms. Varnadore requested a courtesy email from Department Heads concerning a vacant position they intend to fill. Mayor Bustle stated it would be acceptable for the Department Heads to advise him and the Commission of the intent to fill vacant positions.

Ms. Varnadore stated she has a list of items that were previously discussed by Commission that she would still like to see reduced. Mayor Bustle commented on the fact that the budget is currently balanced and any further reductions will be moved over to fund reserve, which already exists. Ms. Varnadore opined there needed to be a larger cushion in the budget; there is no opportunity to cut the budget once PO's are issued. Mayor Bustle again reiterated the fact a revenue shortfall should be addressed once the shortfall is identified, not in anticipation of when a possible shortfall may occur. Discussion ensued on how funds are moved within a cost center; budget resolutions are required when monies are transferred between cost centers and funds.

Staff confirmed the health insurance changes that will become effective October 1, 2008 have been reviewed with their employees; the insurance committee will be implemented. Mr. Freeman commented on his memo to Commission concerning the cell phone usage and his desire to revisit the cell phone policy. He opined the burden of administering the policy could be more costly than determining what rate should be charged for personal calls. Mr. Lukowiak interjected that some type of consideration must be given to on-call employees making personal calls while on duty. Ms. Cornwell and Mr. Williams opined the current policy should be enforced and any recommended changes to the policy should be brought to Commission for consideration.

Ms. Cornwell commented on take-home vehicles. She stated she wants take-home vehicles leaving the City stopped, citing the savings of fuel as a budget savings, and stated she wants that made into a policy. Mrs. Lancaster also mentioned a previous statement she made concerning a plan where officers are out of their patrol cars for 15 minutes of each hour. Chief Lowe discussed his reasons for allowing the detectives to retain cars. Ms. Cornwell stated she had asked for a
report early in the budget process and has yet to receive the information. Mr. Williams agreed that justification for take-home vehicles should be provided to Commission.

Ms. Cornwell asked that a workshop agenda contain discussion on unbudgeted expenditures. Mr. Williams commented on the use of credit cards for items other than the original intended storm related use. Discussion ensued on the number of cards.

Mr. Williams inquired if the joint meeting with the CRA Board would be held. Mrs. Lukowiak informed Commission the next CRA Board meeting is next Tuesday and she can plan the meeting as a joint meeting if the Commission desired. Commission did not respond with direction to set a joint meeting.

Commission scheduled an additional budget meeting for September 3, 2008 at 5:00 pm. Mrs. Lancaster stated she would be unable to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Minutes approved: September 22, 2008

James R. Freeman
City Clerk