

Palmetto City Commission
January 5, 2009 5:00 p.m.

Elected Officials Present:

Shirley Bryant, Mayor
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner
Mary Lancaster, Commissioner
Brian Williams, Commissioner
Alan Zirkelbach, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Mark Barnebey, Special Counsel
James R. Freeman, City Clerk
Tanya Lukowiak, CRA Director
Garry Lowe, Chief of Police
Tom McCollum, Interim Planner, ZNS
Karen Simpson, Deputy Clerk-Finance
Allen Tusing, Interim Public Works Director
Diane Ponder, Deputy Clerk-Administration

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Commissioner Varnadore moved, Commissioner Zirkelbach seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve the January 5, 2009 5:00 pm agenda.

Mayor Bryant introduced Tom McCollum of ZNS, who will be serving the City in the Planner's capacity.

2. DISCUSSION: BUDGET

Mr. Freeman presented a synopsis of projected revenue reductions and possible budget cuts. The projected approximate revenue reductions amount to \$183,635 in the General Fund and \$35,816 in Road and Bridge, for a total of \$219,452; total CRA TIF revenue changes increased by \$417,004.

Mr. Freeman reviewed the unreserved fund balances. Both General Fund and Road and Bridge are in compliance with the Fund Balance Policy adopted in 2008.

Mr. Freeman reviewed the proposed budget cuts to the General Fund:

1. DROP participants within this fiscal year amounting to \$39,030
2. Attrition within this fiscal year amounting to \$46,885
3. Other Accounts amounting to \$97,721

Discussion ensued on the proposed Road and Bridge Fund budget cut of one Service Worker II position. This would amount to a savings of \$40,378 if the position remains vacant for the remainder of the year. Mr. Tusing informed Commission that the position is the position that performs litter control pursuant to the pending FDOT grant funding contract. He informed Commission he will be filling the position from within, but it will become an introductory position, thus a savings will be realized. Mr. Freeman spoke of the reserve balance for the Road and Bridge Fund, which could fund the position or look at other options.

Commissioner Varnadore questioned the engineering consultant fees and how long a term the \$20,000 will fund. Mayor Bryant inquired Mr. Schmitt's level. Mr. Tusing commented on the City contract with ZNS, which contains an hourly rate for a Planner. Commissioner Varnadore requested a copy of the contract. Discussion ensued on the appropriateness of checking with all the engineers under contract with the City; ZNS already attends the DRC meetings and is familiar with the existing projects. Mayor

Bryant stated she would like to discuss the topic with the department heads and the attorney and come back to Commission with a recommendation.

Commission Williams suggested it may be advantageous to contact some municipalities that have experienced catastrophic losses to determine how realistic our reserves may be. Mr. Freeman informed Commission the Trailer Park Trust was excluded from the reserves equation. Staff was directed to again look at the Trailer Park Trust to determine exactly how the Trust may be used and send that report to the Mayor and Commission.

Discussion ensued on the TIF payments the City makes to CRA, which is generally returned to the City in a cost sharing allocation. Commissioner Zirkelbach commented on the fact the county TIF payment is used by the CRA for grants and projects, not personnel or on-going cost expenses.

Mrs. Lukowiak confirmed she has spoken with David Caldwell, the Florida Redevelopment Association's (FRA) attorney, concerning the CRA sunset date. CRA's should be able to complete their plans within the most recent Plan Amendment which, in the City's case, was done in 1996. She confirmed the TIF given by the City to the CRA covers personnel, allocations, and General Fund off sets; should the CRA cease all personnel funded by the CRA, employees would retain their jobs, allocations to different departments would continue and the City would have an additional \$1.2 million to allocate to projects. She further stated the current personnel allocations are permitted. Mrs. Lukowiak was directed to ask for Mr. Caldwell's opinion in writing.

Mr. Freeman stated instruction to reduce the revenue and expenditures can be given to staff at the quarterly budget meeting.

Commissioner Cornwell requested that staff determine if it is permissible to poll employees to determine if there are any planned retirements this fiscal year.

3. DISCUSSION: ACCEPTANCE OF COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY

Mrs. Lukowiak commented on a letter in September 2007 wherein the CRA inquired if the county would consider giving the City the property; response was received Monday, stating the topic would be on the next County Commission agenda. She inquired how Commission wished to proceed.

Attorney Barnebey stated there may be limited ability to decline the property if offered. Many of his initial concerns have been addressed. The ongoing liens and encumbrances will be extinguished. He suggested that title insurance should be obtained by the City, and because the City would be obtaining the property involuntarily, the City would not be responsible should there be any environmental concerns. He stated he no longer has any "big" concerns if the property is turned over to the City.


Commission discussed doing both a title search and environmental Phase I in the event of transfer in the future. Attorney Barnebey stated a Phase I would be only an indication of any additional testing that may be necessary.

4. DISCUSSION: LOCAL PREFERENCE INITIATIVE

Mayor Bryant stated that the proposed initiative is a starting point for support of local businesses to more easily be included in the City's bid process. Commissioner Zirkelbach stated there is an educational process necessary for local business owners and opined the proposed initiative is a viable program. Attorney Barnebey cautioned that if the City desires to award bids based on local preference, standards will have to be established by ordinance.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Minutes approved:


James R. Freeman, City Clerk