

City Commission Workshop Meeting

August 5, 2020

5:30 pm

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order. Some Elected Officials and Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor

Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

Jonathan Davis, Commissioner-at-Large 1

Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney

Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Deputy Director

Scott Tyler, Chief of Police

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Jeff Burton, CRA Director

Jim Freeman, City Clerk

Amber LaRowe, Assistant City Clerk

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. FISCAL YEAR 2021 VERSION 1 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Freeman discussed the attached Version 1 FY 2021 Budget. No significant changes have been made at this time. Road and Bridge fund will have a few changes made to it for Version 2; however, the budget is still balanced.

He discussed options that staff has put together regarding the discussion of the budget from July 27th; specifically as it relates to the salary for the City's officers. A copy of the talking points that were prepared are attached to the minutes. The proposal includes an additional 3 percent salary increase on top of what has already been negotiated with the Police Union [2.5 percent for officers and 2 percent for corporals and sergeants].

Chief Tyler discussed the issues that the Department has been going through in regards to retention of employees and the recruiting of new ones. Recruiting is a state wide problem so many agencies are looking to hire making the selection much slimmer than in years past. Also, this means that current employees can go to other agencies, even locally, and make quite a bit more money as well as have good benefits. He respectfully requested that the Commission consider the proposal as presented tonight.

Commissioner Varnadore is in support of the proposal; however, is really in favor of more of an increase and recommended that staff work towards increasing starting salary to \$43,500 along with the pay increases to the current officers. She encouraged staff to work towards this for the FY 2021 budget.

Commissioner Smith believes that the salary does need to be more than what is being proposed tonight.

Mr. Freeman reminded the Commission of other benefits the City offers like no cost to the employee for health insurance, subsidized dependent care for insurance, and contributing of 5 percent to pension. City of Bradenton officers contribute 9 percent of salary to pension and pay a small amount each pay period towards health insurance. Discussion continued amongst staff and Commission regarding the gross salaries of other agencies and deductions.

Commissioner Williams would like to see a document prepared that shows the balance, or actual take home pay, of Palmetto versus other agencies.

Commissioner Cornwell agreed with Commissioner Williams and needs to see these dollar amounts on paper to understand what is comparable for agencies and officers. She encouraged staff to think about tuition funds for academy recruiting, car allowance, uniforms, etc.

Commissioner Varnadore made a proposal of giving the officers an additional 9 percent increase on top of what is already budgeted. Commissioner Smith agreed that more than 3 percent needs to be done and he proposed 10 percent. Commissioner Smith opined this is imperative so the City can stop losing officers. Mayor Bryant requested staff prepare a document showing funding options.

Mr. Freeman displayed a police department comparison spreadsheet showing gross salary of City of Palmetto and City of Bradenton as well as the deductions to show net pay. A copy of this spreadsheet is attached to the minutes.

Sergeant Ryan LaRowe, Police Department, thanked the Commission for recognizing the officers and complimenting the work that they all do. He appreciates the considerations being made regarding pay for officers and the starting salary issues.

Sergeant Micah Matthews, Police Department, echoed Sgt. LaRowe's remarks and thanked the Commission for tonight's discussion.

Commissioners Smith and Varnadore are in favor of no less than 10 percent increase.

Commissioners Cornwell, Davis and Williams requested staff prepare information on 7, 9, and 10 percent options.

Mr. Freeman reminded the Commission of the following upcoming schedule of meetings for August and September:

- ✓ August 12 5:30 p.m. Budget Workshop
- ✓ August 19 5:30 p.m. Budget Workshop
- ✓ Week of August 17th Police Department Discussion
- ✓ August 24 regular 4:30 p.m. Workshop and 7:00 p.m. Commission Meeting
- ✓ September 14 regular 4:30 p.m. Workshop and 7:00 p.m. Commission Meeting
- ✓ September 15 special 5:30 p.m. Tentative Millage and Budget Hearing
- ✓ September 28 regular 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Commission Meeting

Mr. Freeman intends to have a discussion by August 19th for budget to include the CRA budget.

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Commissioner Varnadore requested budget meetings be changed from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Attorney Barnebey stated that it can be done because there is enough time. Mrs. LaRowe will send out a change to the calendar.

Mayor Bryant reminded the Commission and staff of tomorrow's 6:00 p.m. meeting to continue the CRA Board meeting from August 3rd.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: AUGUST 24, 2020

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK