CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Workshop Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, September 27, 2021 at 3:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Vice Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Tracy Upchurch, Mayor/City Commissioner *(arrived at 3:24 PM)*
Nancy Sikes-Kline, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner
Roxanne Horvath, City Commissioner
John Valdes, City Commissioner
Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner

John Regan, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
Todd Grant, Director, Utilities
Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services
Melissa Wissel, Communications Director
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief
Laura Morse, Recording Secretary

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2. General Public Comments

Public comment was opened, and the Commission heard from the following member of the public:

- B.J. Kalaidi

Public comment was closed.

3. Agenda

3.A. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Solid Waste Services (Todd Grant, P.G., Utilities Director)

Todd Grant, Director, Utilities, acknowledged Rick Stevens, Solid Waste Manager, who was instrumental with innovation, maintaining extremely high customer service levels, and keeping solid waste rates stable. He announced Mr. Stevens' retirement effective November 12th, cited his tremendous contribution to the City, and stated without him, the presentation would have been impossible.

Mr. Grant delivered the presentation which was categorized into four topics: Operations History, Rate Increase History and Comparison, Solid Waste Volume and Customer Growth, and Division Challenges and Solutions.[1] He highlighted the following:

- Moved from contracted recycling to City owned after pilot studies done because of resident complaints
- Hired Olivia Smith, Recycling Coordinator, in 2015
- Instituted once weekly recycling, trash, and yard debris collection
- Raised rates $4.10 over past 19 years
- Rate increase to $17.44 was approved at the September 23rd Budget meeting

[1] Included with original Commission packet

- City rates were low compared to neighboring municipalities
- Disposal locations had changed over years due to dramatic rate increases from inability to sort and mechanical issues
- Staff worked 10 to 11 hours on garbage days and 8 hours on recycling days
- City currently paid high rate of $120 for recycling and $56.14 for solid waste disposal fees
- Solid waste and recycling volume had decreased due to pandemic, residential and commercial decreases, and use of less glass products or less recycling
- Glass was separated from recycling at disposal stations and placed with solid waste, which posed a hazard with broken shards
- 600 new customers seen in past seven years, next year anticipated more than 7,000

Mr. Grant asked for the Commission's permission to conduct a public media outreach for residents to dispose glass in their regular trash, or reduce usage, and to also advise that recycling was still being collected.

There was Commission consensus for Mr. Grant's request.

The Commission and Mr. Grant discussed:

- Repurpose glass containers
- Recyclables consisted of 35% glass
- Education campaign was in the works regarding recycling, re-use of paper, cardboard, tin and aluminum cans, and plastic, by means of rebranding stickers, fliers, hang tags, and social media
- Should emphasize reduction, which was the most important component of reduce, recycle, re-use motto
- City had no outlet for re-purposed glass, it was costly to dispose and transport; but would collect glass for a re-purposed commodity if the opportunity arose
- Could use aggregate in concrete or asphalt, but area did not have contractors who did this
- Looked at local company which utilized aggregate in landscaping, but company was currently overwhelmed at looking into production costs and enhancements
- Recycling program saved the City money in overall solid waste disposal

Mr. Grant discussed short-term rental (STR) challenges with solid waste collection:

- City had 411 STR customers
- There were 10 to 15 monthly complaints with STR requests to pick up trash on non-scheduled days
- Each unit received one trash can and one recycle bin, with a charge for additional cans
- Residential fees did not cover costs with a slight deficit in revenues
- Offer higher rates for twice weekly pickup, larger bins, or call-in service from residents, STR owner, maintenance company, or Code Enforcement, which would review STR database
- Proposed $60.53 rate for STRs which was the same as the commercial rate
- Annual $212,000 revenue increase would not go into reserves, but would pay for 96-gallon bins, labor, equipment, and extra disposal and pick up trips; City would not make money but cover costs for the extra service
- Multi-family style dwellings were charged a multi-family fee
- Monthly $5 revenue increase would assist with gaining a reserve balance to cover new equipment
- Needed to cycle out older equipment with the revenue increases and assistance of the American Rescue Plan

Mr. Grant requested permission from the Commission to place two dumpsters in front of City of St. Augustine Beach City Hall for recycling use, which would be monitored and picked up by the City of St. Augustine

(City). He stated this program returned the favor to the City of St. Augustine Beach for the numerous times they lent the City a trash truck at no charge, it should cost no more than $1,000 through January (since glass was not included), and the bins would be single streamed. He advised that Bill Tredik, Public Works Director, Mayor England, and Max Royle, City Manager, from City of St. Augustine Beach had all agreed to this program.

There was Commission consensus in support of Mr. Grant's request.

Mr. Grant requested permission from the Commission to spend $10,000 on 100 compost bins out of the Construction and Demolition Franchise Fee account, which currently had approximately $40,000. He stated the bins would be offered to interested residents at no charge through a survey sign-up basis, and he predicted with the elimination of heavier organic material from the trash, the return on investment would be approximately five years.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline noted the program would benefit teaching residents how to compost; however, she was uneasy about the bins being free of charge.

MOTION

Mayor Upchurch MOVED to approve both the cooperative agreement City of St. Augustine Beach and the composting program as outlined by Mr. Grant. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

Commissioner Horvath inquired about the numerous bins on the sidewalk along the Bayfront and the option to recess the fence at the Spanish Quarter to hide those bins.

John Regan, City Manager, advised the City owned the property in question, it was a work in progress with the University, something needed to be done with the unsightliness, and he suggested a compactor.

Mr. Grant assured Commissioner Valdes the STR rate for currently zoned commercial locations would remain the same, one room STRs could obtain a City audit to review usage, individual boats in a marina would not be charged since they were part of a dumpster rate, and safety complaints would flag problem STRs.

Commissioner Blonder reminded the Commission that action was required on Mr. Grant's request to increase STR garbage collection fees to the commercial cart rate.

Mr. Grant confirmed and restated the request to the Commission.

MOTION

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to approve a rate increase for STRs to $60.53 per month, to include a 96-gallon bin, and an additional once a week call-in service for pickup. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Sikes-Kline and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

4. Items by Mayor and Commissioners

Commissioner Sikes-Kline inquired about future workshop topics and schedules.

Commissioner Blonder stated the topics of resiliency and sustainability projects, and a climate action plan for carbon footprint reduction should be prioritized during hurricane season, so the Commission would have a better comprehension of the many ongoing and future projects in these areas.

Mr. Regan indicated during the meeting to follow, the plan was to discuss resiliency project prioritization during an October workshop. He advised the Commission required a decision on workshop frequency, whether once or twice a month before regular Commission meetings, and City staff

would be able to accommodate their decision.

Mayor Upchurch was not amiable to twice monthly workshops, but once monthly, and preferred the next workshop take place on October 25th.

There was Commission consensus to hold the next workshop on October 25th.

After a brief discussion, it was determined that workshops with controversial topics would begin at 3:00 P.M., and workshops with less controversial topics would begin at 3:30 P.M.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline noted the year was unique, millions of dollars were at stake with the American Rescue Plan (ARP) which was not thoroughly discussed, the $7.74 million was more than initially presented, and a philosophy to approach how the money would be spent should be developed.

Mr. Regan concluded the next workshop would include prioritization of resiliency with the anticipation more citizens would attend; therefore, he suggested the October 25th workshop begin at 3:00 P.M.

5. Additional Time for Public Comment

- Charles Pappas
- B.J. Kalaidi

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 P.M.[2]

T.D. Upchurch
Tracy Upchurch, MAYOR

Darlene Galambos
Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK

THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE CORPORATION

[2] Transcribed by Laura Morse