

## CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

### City Commission Special Meeting Monday, July 10, 2023

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, July 10, 2023, at 3:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, and the following were present:

**1. Roll Call:** Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor/City Commissioner  
Roxanne Horvath, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner  
Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner  
Cynthia Garris, City Commissioner  
Jim Springfield, City Commissioner

Also Present: David Regan, City Manager  
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney  
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk  
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager  
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager  
Mark Simpson, Director, Finance  
Melissa Wissel, Director, Communications  
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief  
Carlos Aviles, Fire Chief  
Colleen Kuhn, Recording Secretary

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### **2. General Public Comments**

Public comment was opened; however, there was no response.

### **3. Discussion of the 2024 Budget Assumptions with Focus on Revenues**

#### **3.A. Revenue Manual**

Mark Simpson, Finance Director, lead a discussion of assumptions on the budget process with a special emphasis on ad valorem tax, short-term rentals fees, parking, and fire assessment Fees.

Mr. Simpson said that ad valorem tax was the City's largest source of revenue. He noted the potential for a 16% increase and recommended leaving the ad valorem tax at 7.5 mils.

Commissioner Blonder added that if a resident was within the City limits, they would also pay County milage.

Mr. Simpson said he would present a proposed milage rate to the Regular City Commission meeting. He noted the milage could be reduced during the budget process but could not be raised.

Mr. Simpson reviewed the following:

#### **Parking -**

- Increase the cost of parking at the Visitor Information Center (VIC) from \$15.00 to \$20.00
- Charge a \$5.00 fee for parking between 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. to help free up on street parking
- Incentivize the use of the City's Circulator

- Charge for on-street parking on Sundays
- Increase the hours of enforcement for on-street parking
- Increase fees for the Park Now card from \$.50 to \$1.00 per

Commission Blonder requested an assessment of the parking volume during next year's budget process.

Commissioner Springfield commented that parking enforcement revenue was barely covering the City's costs. He said he was not in favor of raising the Park Now hourly rate unless there was an incentive for City residents.

Commissioner Garris did not agree with charging for parking on Sundays since this was considered a family and church day.

Mayor Sikes-Kline explained the proposed Sunday parking fee would only occur in the afternoon and not in the morning.

#### Short-Term Vacation Rentals –

- Increase fees to help cover the City's costs

The Commission and staff discussed fees for owner occupied rentals, how rates were initially developed, the City's cost to administer, and the criteria and regulations regarding short-term rental fees.

#### Fire Assessment Fees –

- Everyone in the City is charged regardless of their tax status
- Goal to pay for approximately 50% of operations of the Fire Department
- Currently projected to raise \$1,800,000 which does not cover 50% of costs
- Proposed rate increase will be presented at a future meeting
- Rates had not been increased since 2020

The Commissioners and staff discussed raising the fee higher than staff was considering and the process for doing so. They agreed that staff should provide additional fee increase proposals.

#### Other Recurring Revenue –

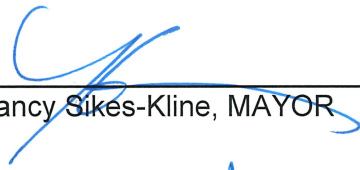
- Florida Power and Light (FPL) and site seeing vehicles were major payors of franchise fees
- Special events revenue
- Utility rate increases; proposed 4.4% increase across the board
- Communication service tax
- State revenue sharing
- Building permits
- Rents from City property

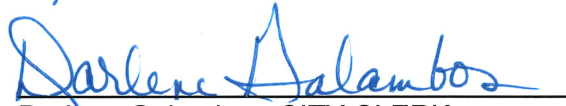
The Commissioners and staff discussed evaluating and possibly increasing revenue from other sources where possible.

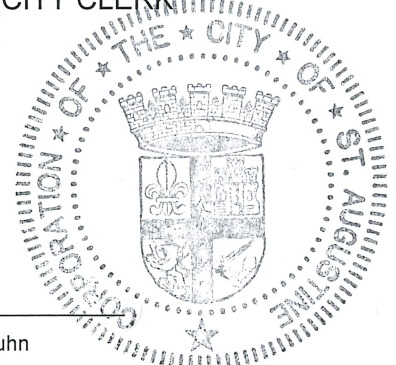
The Commission and staff discussed outside City limits utility surcharges and reductions and conducting a rate study.

#### 4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:58 P.M.<sup>1</sup>

  
Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR

  
Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Colleen Kuhn