CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Meeting
Monday, August 14, 2023

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, August 14, 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(absent)

Also Present: David Birchim, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager
Todd Grant, Director, Public Works
Stephen Slaughter, Director, Utilities
Corey Sakryd, General Services Director
Mark Simpson, Finance Director
Jessica Beach, Chief Resiliency Officer
Anthony Cuthbert, Assistant Police Chief
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

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2. General Public Comments

The Commissioners heard from the following members of the public:

Arthur Colbert
Tim Robinson
Greg Smith
Mattie Harms
Susan Creek
Lauren Thomas
Kristin Thomas
Scott Robinson

3. Review of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). (T. Grant and S. Slaughter, Directors, Public Works and Utilities)

Stephen Slaughter, Utilities Director reviewed the five-year Capital Improvement Plan regarding utilities.

Commissioner Horvath asked if there was a reason why the structure under the bridge was being finished before the completion of the bridge.

Mr. Slaughter said the new water main had to be replaced to continue to supply water to the City before the existing bridge was demoed.

Mayor Sikes- Kline requested that future documents identify the locations of the lift station.

At the request of Commissioner Garris regarding the Pearl Street Gravity Sewer and Water Main Project he advised:

- New gravity sewer would be installed
- Would connect to the existing lift station and extend out as far as possible
- A possible forty-two residential homes would be converted to City sewer collection

Commissioner Blonder questioned if the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) would protect against power outages.

Mr. Slaughter noted in the event of a power outage it could assist with the response times.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked if there was a specific time for ARPA monies to be used, and questioned how the project would be affected.

Commissioner Blonder questioned if the repairs would meet the same standards as the construction. She asked if there was a strategy to assist with the environmental impacts.

Mr. Slaughter advised further discussions regarding ARPA funding would need to take place or other CIP projects could be reorganized to help fund the cost needed for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Effluent Outfall Repair. He noted the construction would be a complete replacement, but the repairs were similar to ones in the past.

Mayor Sikes-Kline commented that the building that housed the Water Treatment Plant High Service Pump Motor Control Center and Emergency Generator was historic. She said the metal shutters covered the wooden windows and she noted an assessment of the building was needed in order to rehabilitate it.

Mr. Franklin noted the shutters were installed because of hurricane season and if able to be removed would do so afterwards.

Commissioner Blonder asked if the Homles Boulevard affordable housing development was incorporated in the West Augustine Master Plan.

Mr. Slaughter advised it was two separate projects; he said the West Augustine was from State Road 207 to the south, from the river to the east, including State Road 16 to the north and as far west as our service area.

Todd Grant, Public Works Director, reviewed the five-year CIP regarding the Public Works department.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked for an update regarding the improvements in the CIP for the Tolomato Lot for freight movement.

Mr. Franklin advised it was in the project listed at phase 2b; however, would be separate and completed in a future year.

Commissioner Blonder noted the Inlet Drive Shoreline Stabilization and asked the cost difference between the riprap and bulkhead; she noted she did not like the idea of a bulkhead when there were alternatives.

Mr. Grant said this project was around 400 feet and an engineered wall was more costly; however, would have longevity and more aesthetic appeal than riprap.

Mayor Sikes-Kline was concerned about delaying solutions as that was where the water breached.

Commissioner Horvath questioned if dredging of Lake Maria Sanchez would be required if more water was being added.

Mr. Franklin commented that stormwater that was currently filtering to the lake was within the drainage basin and running toward the lake. He said the northern portion would be dredged for the new outfall that would be installed; however, no more water was being added.

Mayor Sikes-Kline, in reference to the Paving Management Program questioned if there was a gap in the Model Land Tract. She asked why Saragossa Street was not included and why other streets in the Model Land Tract were not incorporated.

Mr. Franklin noted an assessment of the roadways had been conducted, which was available on the City website. He said over the next seven years the worst roads would be addressed and after, another assessment would be done. He said a list would be provided for the Commissions review.

Mr. Grant advised maps would be provided for the upcoming years and those would be accessible online.

At the request of Commissioner Horvath, Jessica Beach, Chief Resiliency Officer, advised the Stormwater Tide Check Value map colors identified the owner, whether City Owned, Department of Transportation (DOT) or other.

Mayor Sikes-Kline encouraged staff to include the area of Hibiscus Street near Fort Mose Historic State Park.

Mr. Franklin noted he received an email regarding the issues and would speak with the correct departments.

At the request of Mayor Sikes-Kline, Mr. Birchim reported no funds had been spent on the Fire Station since the last state meeting. He said the City and Department of Environmental Protection had been in communication regarding a land swap with some private property; however, the offered property was not large enough. He said they inquired about a donation of land in exchange for a lease on the property and it was being considered; however, there had been no reply. He said an England Thims and Miller (ETM), an engineering firm was the consultant and could provide a more detailed site plan if an agreement was made with the DEP, and the State would ask for a redesignation of their property. He said this expense would not take place without the agreement of the land donation and a lease.

Commissioner Blonder requested the neighbors be informed if the State communicated.

4. Status Update on FY2024 Budget (M. Simpson, Director, Finance)

- **Utility Rates**
- **Fire Assessment Fee**
- **Parking Fees**
- **Items Needing Attention**
- **Review of Reserves**

Mark Simpson, Finance Director reviewed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget highlights as follows:

- General fund millage was unchanged at 7.5 mills – revenue increase of $3M up to $20.8M
- Fire Assessment Fee Increase to cover 50% of Fire Department Budget
- Requested New Positions being analyzed/prioritized based on strategic plan
- Street paving program of $800,000
- West Augustine Sidewalk design, $300,000. Construction planned for FY 25.
- Utility Rate Analysis and Increases based on CPI of 4.4% - surcharge for outside reduced to 18%
- Public art study for the May Street intersection
- Pena Peck House windows and copper roof
- Continued window replacement at City Hall / Lightner Building
- Increased rental income revenue from City owned properties with 4.4% CPI increases
- Changes to the parking rates and hours of enforcement
- Increase in the garage to $20 until 5pm then reduced rate from 5-9pm to incentivize garage use vs on street

parking. Analysis on-going regarding projected economic impact

- Expanding parking enforcement hours from 5pm to 9pm and adding Sunday's 1pm – 9pm
- Visitor Information Center window and floor replacement – preparation for exhibits
- Phase I of the Homeless Drop-In Center; Fence, restrooms, and security
- Francis Field Design
- Madeira Park Master Plan
- Finding of necessity for West City CRA

Mayor Sikes- Kline suggested having funds available for professional services on evaluations or appeals for the Planning and Zoning and Historic Architectural Review Board.

Commissioner Blonder supported the mayor's request.

Mr. Simpson proposed adding money to the budget for Conservation Land acquisition. He said the monies that could be used for this purpose was from reserves. He provided an update on the Reserve status and noted the following:

- General Fund had approximately $7.5 million unrestricted funds left over as of September 30, 2022
- $1.6 million had been appropriated to advance the Lake Maria Sanchez project and to purchase an armored personnel vehicle for the Police department
- Estimated unrestricted reserve funds potentially to use was $6 million
- A portion of those funds could be used in this years budget for land acquisition
- Proposed having formal policy or discussion regarding land acquisition

Commissioner Blonder advised this was a high priority for the City. She read a letter from the Matanzas River Keeper, an expert on these issues. She said a precedent had been established and should be formalized as there was around five percent of buildable land within City limits that was undeveloped and funds for land acquisition could be set aside yearly. She stated while staff was developing criteria for acquisition projects, an objective should be formulated, and the establishment of ranking criteria should be created. She asked the Commission for consensus moving forward to fund land acquisition within City limits for the purposes of conservation resilience and/or recreation.

Commissioner Garris acknowledged the importance of obtaining land and proposed $1 million dollars could be secured for the City Manager to facilitate and be proactive.

Commissioner Horvath agreed with the need for land; however, thought $500,000.00 would be enough to have monies left over for the following year. She inquired about the property south of May Street before Comanche Cove. She asked if there was an overall scope that would assist with the resiliency or recreation need.

Mr. Birchim advised inventory was being developed by a program already established with a consultant from WSP USA Environment & Infrastructure Inc., who was assisting with the resilient shoreline project, and a phase was to identify a land set that could be considered for acquisition in a conservation land trust or similar program. He noted several properties had been identified and hoped the consultant could provide a ranking for the Commissions consideration.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed with using the reserves for the seed money. She reached out to the Matanzas River Keeper inquiring about how the program should be built and the response was an Ordinance from the County. She noted she wanted to discuss this in the future the creation of an Ordinance specifically for the City.

Mr. Birchim noted Commissioner Blonder requested a workshop to begin the program which was to take place in August; however, the Night Life Ordinance

workshop had to be addressed. He explained they wanted to move the policy workshop to September.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked if the workshop would include how the program was to be funded on an annual basis if that was the request.

Mr. Birchim replied in the affirmative.

Mayor Sikes-Kline thought $1 million would be reasonable considering the high cost of land.

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to support the $1 million dollars coming from general reserves contingent upon the workshop. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder.

VOTE ON MOTION:
AYES: Sikes-Kline, Blonder, Garris, Horvath
NAYES: None
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Commissioner Blonder requested a budget line of $50,000 to be added which was a small amount that could be revised annually to assist with consultant fees.

Mr. Simpson agreed and felt this could help his predecessors in the future and would serve as a reminder to add funds and reexamine the prior year's surplus.

MOTION

Commissioner Blonder MOVED to appropriate $50,000.00 as a separate line in the budget to be approved at the final budget meeting for Land Acquisition for Conservation Rezoning and/or Recreation. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Horvath.

VOTE ON MOTION:
AYES: Blonder, Horvath, Garris, Sikes-Kline
NAYES: None
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Commissioner Blonder thanked the rest of the commissioners for their support.

Mr. Birchim advised there would be a Sister City Celebration for the 100th Anniversary relationship. He advised funds were needed for the celebration.

Commissioner Horvath asked if that included the Visitors Information Center display.

Mr. Birchim replied that $800,000.00 had been requested from the State of Florida. He said improvements may not happen until the following budget year.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked if a placeholder could be added until Commissioner Springfield was available as he was the liaison for Sister Cities.

Mr. Simpson commented he believed that was in Melissa Wissel, Communication Directors budget but would have to confirm. He advised the final budget hearing would be in September, although there was more work to be done in August to review the operating budget.

Mayor Sikes-Kline encouraged the Commissioners to consider all items that should be incorporated in the budget to help avoid outside budget cycle requests throughout the year.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 P.M.[1]

Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR

Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK

[1] Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann