

City of Apopka Minutes

Minutes of the City Council Budget Workshop Meeting held on July 27, 2022 at 5:00 PM, in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.

Present:

- Mayor Bryan Nelson
- Commissioner Doug Bankson
- Commissioner Nick Nesta
- Commissioner Alexander Smith
- Commissioner Diane Velazquez
- City Administrator Edward Bass

Absent:

City Attorney Michael Rodriguez

Press Present

John Peery, The Apopka Chief

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

Commissioner Smith provided the Invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayors Budget

Edward Bass, City Administrator, said the first budget we'll go over is the Mayor's Budget. He said the Mayor's budget has the Commissioners as well as the Mayor, his Assistant and the Receptionist. He said there's a slight increase in personnel and said, as you know, your salaries as Commissioner's are set by Ordinance and said that it goes by population. He said there is an increase in population so you'll see an increase in your salaries. He said operating costs show a 20% increase and said this year, we elected to put additional \$7,000 in each of your discretionary fund accounts so you'll each have \$10,000 of discretionary funds for FY23.

Commissioner Velazquez said we truly appreciate that as we have a lot of non-profits that call upon us for help and she said we support them as best we can. Edward stated that was one of the areas that as staff, we determined was a good use of funds so you can help more.

Administrative Services Budget

Edward Bass, City Administrator, said this is his budget and there's not much to report as operating expenses have gone down 8%. He said we had training in his budget last year and this year, we've moved that money to HR's budget.

Legal Budget

Michael Rodriguez, City Attorney said the budget for the legal department has not significantly changed. He said the anticipated increase is related to the increase of premiums for the liability & casualty insurance. He said as some of you may be aware, the Risk Management Department is folded into the City Attorney's office. Therefore, the legal department carries both the operational expenses of running the in house legal department as well as the Risk Management aspect of the

City. He said this represents a 7% total increase with most of it falling within the liability and casualty insurance. He said the cost of printing was due to the equipment lease and said the legal department was splitting those costs with the HR department but said he believes the HR department may own this now so those costs will drop. He said in addition, our personnel costs have dropped by 2%.

Commissioner Nesta asked about the active litigation and asked if this is budgeted in with that time and asked if we're getting outside counsel.

Mr. Rodriguez said the only case where we do have outside counsel brought in was with a claim that was placed with our carrier. He said the insurance company has counsel representing us and those fall under our liability insurance. He said these costs include workers compensation; personal injury and other types of claims.

City Clerk Budget

Susan Bone, City Clerk, presented the City Clerk's budget. She said it's pretty straight forward and we don't really have any major changes. She said the budget is down 8% overall. She said as this is not an election year, "per se", and said line 3400 went down \$32,000. She said there were a few minor increases including legal advertising and training costs for a total of \$6300. She said we have a new girl starting, named Gail Jackson, who we're hoping to start on August 8, 2022.

Finance Budget

Gladymir Ortega, Finance Director, said she'll be presenting both the Finance and Utility Billing budgets. She said for the Finance Department budget, shows an overall increase of 52% and said this is for salaries and operations. She said under the salary line, we have an overbudget of 41% over last year. She explained that a portion of this increase was \$112,500 and said it was necessary in order to retain staff and revamp the department. She said this included keeping up with the market; promotions as well as hiring of additional staff. She said they've done a wonderful job with these budgets. She said that money came from her fellow peers and said the Police Chief lent one of his positions during the year and the Fire Chief lent her \$25,000 and said those were for positions they both had that are still vacant. She said we hired a new Financial Analyst, who works in Procurement now to support our system. She said the second portion is a new request for FY23 and is in the amount of \$143,000, and said that is to hire an accountant I and a Clerk. She said last year, we deleted a position for a clerk and said that those duties were moved to some of our current staff, which are accountants. She said as the year went by, we noticed that our accountants, which are higher paid, were doing clerical work. She said under operations, under the 3400 line, other contractual services, it's over \$16,000 due to an increase from merchant services in the amount of \$10,000 for credit cards, as people are paying more on line. She said we also have to increase Apopka Youth Works as the contract went from \$35,000 to \$40,000. She said under line 4000, we have additional training costs for the procurement association to cover the additional staff, in the amount of \$5,100. Under the 4600 line, we reduced this by \$60,800, attributed to the budget software, that has now been implemented. She said we also had an 87% increase in our \$250,000 line we have earmarked for matching grant funds. She said we've increased operating supplies in the

amount of \$21,600 and said with more staff, we need more space and said we don't have enough space so we have a design plan of having "L" shaped desks. She said we got some quotes and said to do this for all 6 offices, will be approximately, \$15,000. She said this shows a reduction in the 5400 line of \$5,000 as this amount has been moved to another line. She said lastly, we had an additional training amount of \$1,600 under line 5500 for grant training and procurement training.

Commissioner Nesta asked about the merchant charges and asked why we don't pass these along to the customer.

Gladymir said the fee is relatively low however, we can pass them along but we'll need to bring this back as a separate item.

Mayor Nelson said the credit cards make it so much easier on Finance and said we would need to consider if this would be worth the 3% we're paying on this.

Commissioner Smith said would the person you released last year was still available and would she be able to come back.

Gladymir said anyone who is let go and wants to come back can do so however they need to go through the process. She then thanked the Council, the Mayor and her team for the software and said as you can see it's making us all make wise decisions and allows us to move through the process easier.

Utility Billing Budget

Gladymir Ortega said Utility Billing is overbudget by 29% and said we've been short staffed in this department and said they're requesting 1 additional cashier. She said we just hired a part-time person and if approved, we'd like to move this to a full time position, which would equate to \$46,000. She said another increase is from the Water Company of America, which is a 3 year contract. She said this is the company that we hired to recover unbilled water and sewer and is approximately a \$264,000 annual contract. She said they finished checking all of the residential and commercial recovery list in December of 2021 and said we made the first payment in January and recently made a second payment as we're billed quarterly. She said they're paid 60% of the revenue they find. She said we're also looking to improve our lockbox as currently, one of our accountants opens all of the mail and processes them and said we're getting quotes of approximately \$6,000 to automate this process. She said we're requesting \$60,000 for a new tower for our customers and said in 2007, we had 19,800 customers for water meters and said that was supported by two towers. She said in 2022, we're expecting those numbers to be close to 35,000 water meter customers so we're asking for an additional water tower. She said we reduced the equipment line as last year we spent \$45,000 on the new utility truck so that reduction will go toward the \$60,000 tower request.

Commissioner Smith asked whether the \$46,000 for the personnel request includes benefits to which Gladymir stated this is salaries and benefits but said we're reviewing the minimum wages and this will increase to \$15 per hour.

Human Resources Budget

Joe Patton, HR Director, said today is his one year anniversary and said this year has been very challenging. He said, as you know, there was no one in the HR Department for a while and thank Chuck Vavrek and Tami Hobbick for helping out while he and his team transitioned. He said during the year, we've had to learn the various software systems and we've overcome most of this but still have some big obstacles to overcome and some big projects to do. He said one of which is digitizing all of our personnel records and said as you know, that takes a lot of time and a lot of effort and said meanwhile, the daily work continues. During the year, while training everyone and getting everyone up to speed, we're at the point now where we have a lot of foot traffic in and out as well as numerous incoming phone calls. He said we're also doing a lot of events and also doing some recruiting efforts through job fairs and networking. He said when he came here, the budget didn't account for all we needed so there are a lot of increases in the budget to balance this out. He said he's added some items that were left out of previous budgets, such as supplies so that we can buy things like tablecloths and promotional items so that when we go to a job fair, we can represent the City. He said one of the things we want to do this year, is increase in annual longevity by \$2. He said this is calculated by \$2 for every month you've worked with the City and comes in December and said it's a boost to moral for individuals as well as a retention tool. He said Edward will go over this in his summary at the end. He said that increased our personnel costs. He said another request is for an additional position for an HR Specialist I and said he looked across the scope of different Cities and said when compared to Cities the same size, we're definitely 2-3 personnel short. He said staff is stressed right now as they can't get everything done they need to during the day. He said he also added some overtime in there as we did run into overtime as when an issue arises, we have to stop, do that project, then go back and continue to work as there are a lot of timelines associated with his office. He said we also increased professional services, which is training and said Edward eluded to the fact that some of those dollars were transferred into his budget as he'll be handling the leadership training and other training for staff throughout the year. He said we use Power DMS at the Police Department and in HR to disseminate information out to orientations where people can look at personnel regulations and sign electronically and said this software will be moving to our office. He said we're initiated applicant tracking software, which we didn't have before and helps out a great deal and saves many man hours. He said he's included training and conferences for his office including the Association of Public Human Resource Professionals and SHRM. He said we're also asking for a high-speed scanner and said we're currently using the copier scanner, which is shared by legal and risk management.

Commissioner Velazquez asked about the increase and longevity of \$2 per month.

Mayor Nelson said this is a one year deal and the thought was to provide the extra bonus for everyone to help offset some of the inflation costs.

Commissioner Velazquez asked what we're offering the Seasonal Employees.

Mr. Patton said the Seasonal Employees are part time and are not provided benefits however, he said they understood the terms when they applied for those positions. He said we are reviewing salaries to possibly increase the salary levels to \$15 per hour.

Commissioner Velazquez asked about the leadership training and asked where else we do the leadership training.

Mr. Patton said currently, it's with the leadership so we want to get those individuals fully trained and said we're looking into other types of training. He said he'd like to start a mentorship program for those who want to move up in to management. He said the cost for something like this won't cost much so he didn't put it in the budget and said we can do this internally and very effectively. He said other trainings that the individual departments have for certifications that need to be met or for future certifications.

Commissioner Velazquez asked what the Power DMS was.

Mr. Patton explained that it's a program that Police, Fire and HR use to track their certifications and said it's required. He said they use it for all of their policies, where individuals can go in and look at the policy or the manager can send them out to individuals that need training. He said those individuals can take the trainings online and sign for them so this is a good tool to track all of this. He said in HR, we use it for onboarding and said individuals that are onboarded, we use this program to send them the personnel rules and regulations and other documents.

Commissioner Bankson inquired about the HR Specialist position and said you're requesting \$5,000 for overtime and asked if that was enough.

Parks and Recreation Budgets

Radley Williams, Parks and Rec Director, said to follow up on the seasonal workers, he said at Jason Dwelley and our Splash Park and rental facilities, we currently carry 11 part time, seasonal staff members. He said this does not include our Camp Wewa staff or Summer Camp. He said this is a part time position and the hours are variable, not every day of the week, normally shorter shifts but said we don't have much turn over with this as they know what they're signing up for. He said we need to adjust the pay by 2025 to \$15 per hour and are monitoring this. He said we also have 4 part time seasonal Park Rangers, that we're looking at adjusting them to \$15 per hour now as they work year round.

Commissioner Nesta said he wants to echo Commissioner Velazquez and said he felt that with if we only have a few, we should give them some type of annual bonus. He said it doesn't have to be a lump sum or based on longevity but just something to say we appreciate them.

Radley Williams, Parks and Rec Director, said tonight he'll be presenting the tentative Parks and Rec Budget for the 22-23 Fiscal Year. He said this department is comprised of 4 divisions which are responsible for the grounds, maintenance and upkeep of our City Parks; Athletic Fields and Properties for the youth, adult and family programming athletics throughout the City; Operation, execution of City Events and Operations at the Apopka Amphitheater; Operations and programming at Camp Wewa and for the Maintenance and Operations of the Edgewood/Greenwood Cemetery. He said overall, our parks and rec budget for the 22-23 fiscal year came in at 15% higher than the current budget and said this is primarily due to increased requests in operating expenses, capital outlay and personnel.

Parks Division

Mr. Williams presented the Parks Division budget and said this shows an overall increase of 20% and said personnel costs show an increase due to the request for the additional park's worker

position. He said this position is being requested to address the need and improve levels of service for the beautification and trash pick-up throughout the City. He said this role will complete routine trash pick up and general landscape maintenance on a weekly basis throughout a list of areas throughout the City. He said our operating expenses show an increase to line 3400 and said this is due to additional funds for mowing and landscape maintenance contractor, to help to improve our standards and level of service for beautification throughout City properties, facilities, parks and other parcels. The park tree bank expenditures have increased as this has been much higher over the last 4 years than we've budgeted for and we continue to experience this.

Athletics and Events

Mr. Williams said this budget shows an overall increase of 8% from the current fiscal year. He said there were no adjustments in personnel costs and we're not requesting any additional positions. He said operating expenses show a 9% increase and said this is primarily due to an increase in other contractual services and said we're experiencing an increase in referee service expenses through our athletic programs. He said we're also looking to do an exterior and interior painting of the Fran Carlton to freshen this up. He said there was a 14% increase in capital outlay and said we're looking to do a couple of projects including replacement of the gazebo at Kit Land Nelson Park and adding new LED lights to a field at NW Recreation Complex and to provide matching funds for an ADA Playground at Northwest. He said we're looking for a FRDAP grant, which provides matching funds for amenities like playgrounds and parks.

Commissioner Nesta said the ADA Playground is an awesome addition and asked about the timeline.

Mr. Williams said we'll be coming back in August with a resolution to help with the grant application. He said once we submit, we should know something by next Spring.

Commissioner Velazquez asked if the new playground will be shaded.

Mr. Williams stated that we haven't discussed that as it's fairly shaded in that area but that would be a discussion we can have at a later time when we begin development.

Commissioner Bankson asked if we're replacing the gazebo because it's in need of repairs or are we doing a different design.

Mr. Williams said we're trying to get a larger gazebo in that park as many of the events we have in that park are too large for the size of that gazebo and said it's also getting up there in age.

Commissioner Smith has a concern regarding the scoreboards and said they're not being used when the games are being played but would like to use them.

Mr. Williams said regarding the Little League program, he'll follow up with staff on this to find out why we're not firing them up.

Camp Wewa

Mr. Williams said this budget is under line 3614 and said this budget is showing a 5% decrease from the current fiscal year. He said these cost savings were found in operating expenses and capital outlay. He said there are areas we can tighten up on and these are reflected in the budget request. He said we've placed some funding in capital outlay to continue completing ADA upgrades needed at the camp to make sure we meet our grant requirements.

Commissioner Velazquez said she received an email from a constituent regarding concerns that there is no alarm at Camp Wewa to notify the public that a storm is coming.

Mr. Williams confirmed that there is no lighting monitoring horn like we have at Northwest and said we're looking at that and said we're hopeful that we can get that installed with cost savings from this year.

Commissioner Smith asked if Jason Dwelley is the only place we have that alarm.

Mr. Williams said we also have one at Fran Carlton; the Apopka Athletic Complex and said we can also look at putting one at Alonzo Williams.

Commissioner Nesta said he knows at Camp Wewa, we've done a lot of work bringing this up and it looks great but asked if we have any additional items that need to be addressed in reference to fire safety or any other upgrades including fire sprinklers in the cabins.

Mr. Williams said there's no need for the current configuration to have sprinkler systems but said we do currently have smoke detectors and will be upgrading those to the strobe light type to make them ADA compliant. He said we're still working through a few items on the punch list to make sure we're up to the top of the standard.

Commissioner Bankson asked if the generated revenue is on par with the expectations to which Mr. Williams stated he'll put together a 1 year report and provide to you but said the camp program did very well this year.

Edward Bass said once we get a year behind us, we'll bring back a report to show you that.

Cemetery Division

Mr. Williams said the Cemetery budget showing an increase of 47% and said this is largely due to capital improvement items that we're requesting. He said we're requesting \$50,000 for additional aluminum fencing around the new portion of the cemetery to match the existing fence. He said we're asking for \$30,000 for a new columbarium to be placed in the cemetery as well as a utility cart and a pick up truck that have reached the end of service life so we're asking for those items to be funded.

Commissioner Velazquez asked about the road improvements we need in the cemetery.

Edward stated that we'll bring that item back at another meeting as we have a plan to use some Coronavirus Grant money to fund those improvements.

Commissioner Velazquez said lastly, the Amphitheater itself is looking faded and asked if we're going to repaint this. She also asked about the dome itself and said she was told it's looking moldy and dirty.

Edward stated this is in the facilities budget for painting and cleaning and will be done next year.

Commissioner Smith asked if we could investigate adding some fans underneath the amphitheater.

Mr. Williams said yes, he'll take a look at that and see what we can do.

Community Development Budget

Jim Hitt, Community Development Director, said this budget incorporates 2 divisions. He said we're doing a lot of annexations and said last year we annexed in 17 properties and this year, we'll be close to 20 by the time we get to the end of September and said all of these properties will bring in either industrial warehousing, multi family or single family development. He said our inspections last year were 1,800 and said this year, we're expecting a little over 2,000 inspections. He said plans that are reviewed, we're at 19,000 for this year and said this includes plans for all of the different permits that we have going. He said we had 476 residential CO's last year and said this year, we're approximately 420. He said we have 4 permit clerks and said one is retiring this year but we already have a new hire and will bring her in for training before September when Carolyn retires. He said we have 3 positions open in the Planning Department including a Planning Manager; Planner II and a Planner I and said these positions have been advertised. He said our pay is competitive and better than most and the potential for growth is phenomenal. He said long range and strategic land use planning and site planning is all part of the Planning and Zoning Department and said our projects; plans and plat reviews that went through Development Review last year we had approximately 123 different projects that were brought to City Council and were approved. He said these are multi-family and single family units and said this equates to approximately 9,900 units over the next 3-5 years.

Commissioner Velazquez asked if these are broken down from year to year as to when they'll be completed to which Jim stated this all depends on the developer.

Commissioner Nesta asked about Economic Development and expressed concerns that once Jim is retired, who will take this over. He said there's no outreach happening and said we need a succession plan to which Jim agreed.

Mr. Hitt said getting back to the budget, the only major area that shows an increase is for specific purpose studies, is in line 3400, where we do the professional services and said traffic studies or engineering studies and those studies are part of the programmatic parameters for the capital budget. He said this includes architectural design; environmental studies and analysis; property appraisals; surveys; closing services; comp plan updates; land development code updates and said those things are outsourced. He said we had \$250,000 budgeted last year and this year we're asking for an additional \$50,000 to bring this up to \$300,000 and in addition, we're adding in the Best Foot Forward Program with a cost of \$100,000, bringing this up to \$400,000. He said the only other portion we have is under Building Services and said we're in the process of hiring another inspector based upon the numbers we have with the projects coming on line for 2023. He said this budget shows an allowance for 2 cars and said we're looking to go electric as the base version gets 150 miles per charge and said we've allocated \$75,000 for the cars.

Commissioner Bankson said so we're still outside of these 2 divisions or is this both divisions to which Jim confirmed that this covers both divisions.

Mr. Hitt briefly discussed the CRA projects and the sidewalk project and said we'll be covering this when we bring you the CRA budget.

Commissioner Smith said he understands that there's an app that has updated annexations included and asked if we can get that.

Commissioner Nesta said the Police Department uses this and recalled that this is something they use for emergency calls to if it's ours or Orange County however it's not a shared app.

Mr. Hitt stated that the issue with interactive apps is that they still need to be ADA accessible.

Commissioner Velazquez asked where we're at with the building permit software to which Jim stated that this is not online yet and said this is a two-step process so we're finalizing this.

Rogers Beckett asked comes to the workshops, would this be the time for the public to engage with the process. He said there've been a lot of things discussed and asked how we follow up to make sure they're implemented. He said with approximately 20,000 people coming into the City over the next 10 years or so and the fact that the City is understaffed, we need to review this to know how to best handle the growth that's coming our way. He said we've had a lot of studies performed over the years but nothing seems to be done. He said when you look at other Cities like Winter Garden, he said they're booming but when we come to Apopka, we seem to be stuck. He said hopefully we can get more engagement from the community to become a part of this process and said we need more outreach, workshops to foster this process. He said the streets division discussed new sidewalks and said we need to look at the areas around the schools to make sure we have safe routes for our kids to get to school safely as well as to make our City more walker friendly.

Commissioner Velazquez said many local Cities have various advisory committees who may be volunteers and are organized by the different communities. She said those discussions are shared with the Council for those areas and said this is something we should try and do.

Commissioner Bankson said we did a street prioritizing study and asked if that includes sidewalks as well.

Mayor Nelson said the 2 grants we got for sidewalks are in South Apopka and said there are a lot of streets down there that have no sidewalks so we're prioritizing where there are no sidewalks. He said we just spent \$150,000 for sidewalks down Kelly Park so kids can get to the new K-8 school safely.

Adjournment

The being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM .

Bryan Nelson, Mayor

Attest: _____

Susan M. Bone, City Clerk