

CITY OF APOPKA

Minutes of the City Council budget workshop meeting held on July 21, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor Bryan Nelson
Commissioner Doug Bankson
Commissioner Kyle Becker
Commissioner Alexander Smith
Commissioner Diane Velazquez
City Administrator Edward Bass

PRESS PRESENT: Teresa Sargeant - The Apopka Chief

INVOCATION / PLEDGE – Mayor Nelson called on Commissioner Smith to provide the invocation and lead in the pledge of allegiance.

BUDGET WS – RECREATION; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; & ADMINISTRATION

Edward Bass, City Administrator, said this is Day 3 of our Budget Workshops. He said today, we need to stay on track as much as possible, as you know, we have a Council meeting scheduled at 7:00 p.m. He said the staff here today is the Administrative staff, Recreation staff and the Community Development staff. He said we'll start with Recreation as that has the largest budget. He said we'll do Community Development next and move through the Administrative budgets.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Brian Forman, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided highlights of his budget and said the first part excludes Camp Wewa and the second portion of his presentation is with Camp Wewa. He provided a summary of the cost of operating capital without staff and said Cemetery is \$56,420 dollars in operating and \$23,000 dollars in capital; The Parks portion of Parks and Recreation includes Northwest; Kit Land Nelson; Edwards Field; City Hall grounds is \$1,200,000 million dollars in operating and \$250,000 dollars in capital. He said the \$950,000 dollars is Duke money and is separate. He said the Recreation part is a little over \$1,000,000 million dollars in operating and \$500,000 dollars in capital. He said the total operating costs are \$2,371,000 dollars with a total Capital of \$829,000 dollars, excluding the Duke Energy money. He said \$40,000 dollars came over from Public Services for Palm Tree care and tree trimming and some infrastructure for concrete repairs, pressure washing and painting the Amphitheater. He said on our Events including our Concert Series; Orchestra at Christmas; Tribute Bands; and our Community Events including Halloween; Winter Wonderland; Easter; July 4th; Parades and other events. He said we're looking toward CAPRA Accreditation and said it's a two-year process and the cost is \$5,500 dollars. He said there are 154 standards total and we have to meet 142 of those standards to be initially certified and then 148 after to continue our accreditation but said this is really a Citywide project.

He reviewed the Capital and said in the Cemetery, we need a utility vehicle and a pull behind blower; for Parks, we need bush hog attachment; a tractor that we can keep down here when we build our new building; and replacement vehicles Ford Ranger and Ford Escape. He said we have a FRDAP Grant that's ongoing at Northwest and said this is to supplement that grant that will cover the new playground near the restroom on the North side of the Amphitheater and adding a digital sign near the flag pole where the Little League entrance is; there's a GPS paint machine listed and said that anyone can paint a field perfectly in under 20 minutes, whereas currently, it takes 2 people 2 hours to do that. He said we've requested some new picnic tables and some new field lights, which was one of the areas that the public was very interested in when we did our survey. He said the Duke funds, have already been ticketed for a steel storage building, which will go behind the Fran Carlton Center; 2 new restrooms, one of which will be near the Amphitheater and a the other at the birding park.

He said on our wish list, we'd like to add a storage building at Northwest; additional field lights; tennis and pickle ball courts; and the ADA Playground which we hope to get some additional grant funding for. He said we're also looking to create 8 positions over the next 2 years including 6 park workers and 2 recreation leaders and said we're doing that by reallocating funds. He said the inmate work-squads were taken from us due to their staffing shortages in April and said we've done a great job keeping up with everything. He said we've had a slight reduction in contract mowing and reduction of part-time staff and said we've also had a number of retirements so we'll be able to reclassify positions and have savings there.

He said our highlights include utilizing our park plans to create more fields; more tennis, basketball and volleyball courts; additional parking; dog park and playground. He said we also want to add a field house; community pool; improvements to interior roadways at the cemetery; Fran Carlton Center; and said we've talked about a \$20,000,000 dollar for these projects but we should have a better number when the parks plan is complete in a few months.

He summarized their fleet replacement plan and provided a list of road vehicles and when we can schedule out to replace them. He said a quick summary of their 22 roadworthy vehicles and said fleet recommends a life expectancy of 10 years and said half our fleet is over the 10 years so he said if we replace 2 vehicles per year, we'll be in good shape on the fleet.

He said our revenue, in comparison to FY19 when our total revenue was \$750,000 dollars, last year, our total revenue was \$480,000 dollars and this year through June 30th was \$500,000 dollars which is great and said we did have some reductions in our capacity where we normally would have 800 kids in soccer, we capped it at 500 kids and were still able to reach this number. He said we're projecting \$850,000 dollars for next year and our scholarship balance is at \$30,000 dollars.

Commissioner Becker said if we look at our CAFR, we only covered 13.6% of our expenses in 2018; 2019 was 14%; and 2020 was 8%. He said what is the mindset there as this is all coming from General Fund and every dollar we lose in Parks and Rec is another dollar that we're taking away from other Departments in the City. He asked how we propose to close the gap.

Brian said when you're looking at recreation funds, that comparison is not apples to apples and said the revenues from 2019; 2020 & 2021 and going forward. He said remember, we took a large part of Public Services over so where the budget was \$3,000,000 dollars, 3 years ago, it balloons as we take on more and maintain other aspects.

Commissioner Bankson said in the long term, if the cost of doing business keeps increasing incrementally, our tax rate is the last place that it shows up. He said he understands what Commissioner Becker is saying and said 4% is 4% and unfortunately, it always passes along to the consumer. He said this is either usage based, or it's going to come out of everyone's pocket and said it's worthwhile to oversee and govern so that we can explain to the public.

Commissioner Velazquez asked whether the people who use our fields are mostly residents or are they outside teams and asked if there's a different fee schedule charged for residents versus non-residents.

Brian said during the week, it's mostly residents that have practices and on the weekends it's our tournaments and said some of those teams have Apopka residents and some of them are non-residents. He said we do have a different fee schedule for residents.

Edward said we can have Brian break down all of the revenues from all of the different sources so you can see how that number is made up and also give a comparison to our neighboring jurisdictions so you can see where our rates are.

CAMP WEWA

Brian said provided the numbers for Camp Wewa and said the top number, the operating plus staff, which includes full time staff, was estimated at \$200,000 dollars total and capital using the three numbers that the YMCA gave us as far as their total expenses for the last 3 years that they were in operation. He said we're looking at a model of running overnight camping and day-camp simultaneously and said is we reach these goals, we would break even on the \$1,000,000 dollars. He said we're requesting 3 full time staff, which would include an overnight camp director and caretaker of the facility; a specialist, who would be environmental education and coordinate rentals and a parks worker as well as seasonal staff for day camp and lifeguards. He said some of the expenses will be camp meals, marketing dollars and general maintenance. He said contract services would include pest control; cleaning, etc. Utilities would be based on a portion of what we have through the rest of our budget. Rentals and leases would include copiers, generators, office supplies. He said operating supplies which includes camp shirts and camp equipment, trips, janitorial supplies, and landscaping,

He said for capital, we've included \$60,000 for playground and signage. He said highlights will be to add a camp pool, update rest rooms and changing rooms and add pavilions. He said ADA updates will include some of the parking and walk-ways and we can do this internally. He said basketball replacements and said perhaps we can get some contributions on that end. He said the water and sewer will be coordinated through Public Services and said the pool, we'll push back a year.

Commissioner Becker said that none of this was in the packet provided last Friday and asked to walk through the slides to review in order to reconcile where he comes to break even on this.

Brian went through the lines and provided a summary of how he came to the break-even figure.

Commissioner Bankson asked if we've approached the former customer base of the YMCA and said that their best year before Covid was \$972,000 and asked if we know if some will continue or are we starting from scratch or is it 50% maybe or what do we expect.

Brian said we've already gotten some inquiries as far as facility uses so we have that and we also know that Orange County Schools will be taking the pool on for swim teams this Fall.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bobby Howell, Planning Manager, said there aren't many changes to the Community Development budget and said this year we're not requesting any major increases or changes. He said we have a request for \$150,000 for a re-write of the Comprehensive Plan. He said we're working with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council on this and anticipate the re-write will be completed in July of 2022. He said we're also requesting \$100,000 for scanning the hard copies of all of our development plans in order to store them in a digital format. He said we have over 50 boxes of old plans that need to be scanned and we don't have the capability in house to do that so we're going to outsource that. He said we were requesting \$40,000 for Dude Solutions, which is a permitting review software and said we're no longer pursuing that contract, as we're already have a contract with Edmonds so we can remove that from that line item. He said we're not requesting any new positions however we are requesting re-classifications to higher positions to allow high performing employees to be promoted.

Commissioner Velazquez asked if we're currently using any software program to which Bobby said no, we're using our ftp server, which is basically a drop-box. He said right now, we're not using an electronic platform to review plans, such as other locations do but said we're transitioning to Edmonds, which will help us do that.

Edward said the documents we're required to keep are in paper format so we're trying to get those put into electronic format and as you know that takes a lot of time and work and everyone has to check and recheck before you can discard any paper. He said currently, we collect a fee through the building department which is called a storage retention fee and that fee can be used for digitally copying documents and storage of documents. He said that is a revenue source that is earmarked specifically for this purpose and this \$100,000 can be funded with those dollars. He said the building department; planning & zoning department; fire department; public works will all have access to this system. He said this will be the automated system where the developer can put all of their documents in. He said all of our inspections will be scheduled electronically and as a citizen, you'll be able to go in and see those inspections, including who's doing them; who's signing off; when they're completed. He said we'll be able to pull reports including how many inspections; building permits we're receiving each

day and said this will provide the data we need and make everything electronic. He said the Finance Departments works very close with them too as it also accepts payments so there's a reconciliation between permits paid for a permits-collected.

Commissioner Bankson said this is not something we're mandated to do rather, it's something that makes sense and will help us.

Edward said once they get this up and running, and they're comfortable, he's asked them to come back and do a presentation for you to show you how this works; how the developer goes in; how the building permits are handled; how the inspections are scheduled; and all of the modules work together.

Mayor Nelson said Edmonds has been great with making tweaks to our software as we're unique in one way or another and they'll retrofit it to get you the report you want. He said they've been great to work with and we've been pleased with their ability to come in and create a software that best suites Apopka.

Commissioner Smith said when he was going through the numbers he found a couple of discrepancies. He asked Bobby to check line 4700, item #2; line item 5400, item #11, to which Bobby thanked him and said we'll make those corrections.

Commissioner Becker asked Bobby about his mention of leveraging the inspector role and said it came up under Fire's presentation as well and he asked if this would be out of his department to which Bobby stated that would be under Building's presentation. He brought up the issue of funding the Economic Development position and said he's asked for this position for 6 years and said we always like to benchmark ourselves against other Cities. He said that when we look at other Cities such as the City of Winter Garden; the City of Sanford; the City of Mt. Dora and the City of Tavares, one of the things they all have in common is that they're getting the things the residents are demanding and said he's just curious as to why we don't have this position budgeted and staffed in our City.

Edward said that if the Council wishes to fund that position, we will take your direction. He said keep in mind, we have our program with the Chamber and we have our website up and running and we still have our agreement on that but said if the Council wishes to add that position, we can add it and will figure out what we need to move or adjust.

Commissioner Becker said this is a question for his colleagues. He said he didn't think that Jim serves that role as this is a different skillset and said he's outlined this in a job description he furnished this Council for the past 2 budget years. He said we have to help our local businesses build critical mass which bring in the type of establishments that residents are demanding.

Mayor Nelson said that's something that he's been working on and he's met with numerous industrial property owners out by the Airport to that aspect in.

Commissioner Smith said he thought Jim Hitt was handling the Economic Development to which Edward said he's the Community Development Director but that is a small piece of his job. He said his primary role is overseeing Planning and Development.

Commissioner Velazquez said that this is a frustration as you go on Social Media and that's all you hear. He said when is our downtown going to be a reality. He said the Taurus property has gone stagnant and said they had promised to bring in all these new small businesses and if we hire an Economic Development Director, they would go out and aggressively look for business opportunities. She said our residents want the City Center Downtown.

Edward said we have an agreement with Taurus and said we've worked very hard with them and they're supposed to preform and have a timeline to do so.

Mayor Nelson said the original Taurus Agreement gave them a 10-year workout and said by the end of the third quarter, we should have some announcements to make from Taurus. He said what they've said they have coming, everyone will be pleased however we haven't seen a document as of yet. He said he's out there hustling every day and said the folks he's met with, that want to come to Apopka are overly impressed that he took time from his busy schedule to talk to them about how we can bring them to Apopka. He said we're looking at creating jobs here in Apopka and this will bring the retail and bring the restaurants.

Discussion ensued as to the topic of Economic Development.

Commissioner Bankson said do we really need to do this or can we do this in the aggregate with what we already have. He said he's not against the Economic Development position if this doesn't produce in the aggregate. He said to the Mayor's point, the fact that he has long standing and deep relationships from the State level down are a great benefit. He said the things that he knows by the Airport and the industry we have there is going to bring jobs that is the base for our restaurants and our entertainment. He said given another year, it will show that.

Building and Permitting Division

Scott Adams, Building Official, said currently, we're showing a 28% growth in permits and inspections and provided a handout to show the growth. He said it's not that he doesn't want the City to grow, he just wants us to grow safely. He said the problem is that we're trying to hire people in a market that's tough. He said with the permit software we have now, we can probably go live within the next 30 days. He said people are using it now but it's not being broadcast as "available". He said there may be one future program we'd like to tie to the current software as Edmunds doesn't offer it.

Commissioner Becker asked what the staffing ask was.

Scott said he has 2 people retiring and said currently we have John Hanson and himself and 2 inspectors but said in order for us to be efficient, we need at least 2 more inspectors and a plan

reviewer. He said we have one inspector that's getting ready to retire in March and said replacing them in a tight market is difficult. He said we have one guy that we're looking at hiring in October.

Edward said currently, we have vacancies that are funded in the budget and we also have funding in the budget to recruit but we're struggling trying to find inspectors right now. He said we'll be adding a position for an inspector and for a permit clerk. He said both of those positions are funded in the current budget.

John Hanson, Deputy Building Official, said we had a position up on BOA (Building Officials Association of Florida). He said we had 910 views as of today but only 4 people apply. He said of those 4 people, 1 was a lawn guy and others had no experience. He said we have a guy coming in from Denver who has 20 years of construction superintendent experience and with that, we can work with that but they'll have to go through classes to get their licenses.

FINANCE

Gladymir Ortega, Finance Director said she provided a copy of their updated budget and said there are not many changes. She provided an overview since she's been here 7.5 months and said she'll go over some of their accomplishments that the finance department and herself have been able to do. She said one of them is to complete the fiscal year audits for 2020. She said this was done in April and was presented to the Council at approximately 7 months after the fiscal year ended. She said we were able to eliminate any new audit findings while working in previous years and found improvements. She said we've been able to accelerate receivable processes and posting to ensure all revenues were accounted for in a timely manner. She said the documents were in our office when she took over but due to other duties that need to be completed, they were behind a few months. She said as of today, with the exception of the revenues that we don't get from the State, they're all caught up and posted. She said we were able to produce the earnings summary reports before closing the annual audit for the two consecutive years. She said we've been providing the Commissioners with summary of revenue and expenditure reports and said we did a quarter and today we'll have another and said that going forward you'll receive this monthly. She said we improved the relationships with some of the accounting teams and said we increased our response speed to emails and messages required by other departments.

She said our Procurement Department is overseeing our new software called Procure Now which will increase efficiency in handling purchasing, contracts, deeds in a centralized database. She said one of the goals is to reduce the Finance Department paperwork by converting all accounting documents to electronic form using Power DMS. She said our interns we have currently, have cleaned up the office and are scanning everything and said all of the revenues, journal entries, accounts payable paperwork, etc. to avoid the storage of records. She said we're working with IT to implement the Business Tax; Permitting and Zoning and moving to online payments using Edmonds. She said we have a meeting scheduled with the auditor to organize and schedule and prepare a fiscal year 2021 with a list in order to start this year's audit in November of 2021. She said we have to complete the fixed asset process via Edmonds and said we have some things to clean up so we're currently working on that and our deadline is 9/30/21. She said she'd like to implement a collections process and policy in Utility

Billing. She said she'd like to have internal policies and procedures inside the finance department. She said the finance department is in charge of revenues including all of the departments for the City, disbursements, accounts payable, wires, pensions, accounting and financial reports. She said the Procurement Department, Utility Billing and Grants are all functions of the Finance Department.

She said there are Grants available and provided a summary of some of the grants we've either processed, awarded or apply for in FY22. She said one major one is the COPS Hiring Grant, in which we're seeking to be funded to hire 10 police officers. She said those aren't the only ones.

Mayor Nelson said he'll email a list of all of the grants we have going on for Police, Fire and general grants that we've applied for.

Gladymir said when she first took over, she had a budget for the FY21 and said her staffing level was at 16.5 employees and she said for FY22, her forecast is actually for 15. She said the Finance Department is one of the most important departments in the City and said that after evaluating her staffing, she was able to eliminate 1.5 positions. She said she took some measures with the direction of other staff and we did a wheel chart and said it was a group effort. She said when the Chief Accountant resigned, she hired for an Accountant II position, versus a Chief Accountant. She said another employee was an Accountant II and was promoted to an Accountant III when he came back but he has since resigned. She said she's listed that position as an Accountant I. She said where it says "new hires", those were positions that were there before. She said she had an independent contractor, which was originally working part time, then went to a full-time position. She said most recently, our Utility Billing Accountant III resigned and those duties will be reallocated to an Accountant I / Billing position, which we posted yesterday. She said she's eliminating the Accounting Revenue position as that position was a split position and the duties for that position are being split by two positions. She said the CAFR report is being provided by our auditors and she doesn't need an assistant for that. She said there aren't many changes to the Utility Billing and said that the other contractual services are up \$20,000 dollars due to credit card fees. She said the machine charges are up \$1,100 dollars for the lease. She said we have a contract on repair and maintenance which is check processing and license and said this goes up 3% each year so that's \$2,185. She said we also want to purchase a vehicle for the department so she's reduced vehicle maintenance. Printing costs show an increase of \$4,500 as we're printing more bills. She said we have an old truck in Utility Billing which is a 2004 Ford Ranger with 174,968 miles on it so we're requesting \$25,000 under Capital Improvements to get a new truck. She said we're currently testing an IBR system which is a recording system that goes to their computer or leaves a message to make that more efficient.

Edward said that the IBR system that Gladymir is looking at will also have an option so we can take phone payments where someone can call in and pay over the phone.

LEGAL

Michael Rodriguez, City Attorney said that this budget is self-explanatory and said the areas where you may see an increase is under "other charges" and said that is for Court filing fees and said the bulk of that cost comes in preparation for Code Enforcement Foreclosures. He said that unfortunately, he

confirmed with the Clerk's office that we have to pay the full filing fees that banks pay for foreclosures, which is \$900 dollars per case. He said there are also extra fees for each Summons. He said we've budgeted those filing fees into the legal departments budget as they're costs that can be re-cooperated if we prevail in the litigation. He said that's the one significant increase. He said the other is on rental and leases, we contribute to HR's cost for copier services. He said there's been discussion on whether we continue to lease or outright purchase the copier, which will affect that line item. He said as far as the rest, most lines are about the same but said that the overall budget is about a 5% increase from last years budget.

Commissioner Velazquez asked about outside attorneys and asked if this is in there to which Michael said it is included under line item 3100, Professional Services.

HR

Joe Patton, HR Director said most of the line items have remained flat for this coming year and said he wanted to go over a few of the highlights. He said line item 3100 has remained flat however, in the description, you'll see "support to ensure appropriate policies; affect and compliance" and said we're planning to investigate the possibility of becoming self-funded for medical and said possible life insurance for FY23. He said we kept those funds in there to help with those un-estimated costs as far as determining solvency for moving to a self-funded plan. He said unexpected costs for moving to a different type of benefit that may be possible with that. He said under 3400, "other contractual services", that has had some savings, mainly because of our new benefits system called "Everything Benefits", which we've run our open enrollment on and have been very successful. He said this software helps us track our Cobra, which we were using another program for. He said we also have Power DMS which we use for training. He said under other current charges, one of which is unemployment compensation has increased dramatically, which included false claims that we had to go in and challenge, and said we also have Covid claims that are driving that cost higher. He said under 5200 operating supplies is up but said that line was for holiday luncheon moving from the Mayor's budget to HR. He said the last item is the copier and Michael already touched on this. He said we're trying to save money on leasing and looking at purchasing. He said last is a part time position for a records clerk and said she's helping clean up the record room and has been scanning personnel records.

CITY CLERK

Susan Bone, City Clerk said our budget is pretty much the same and said there are a couple of changes. She said the biggest one is an increase in line item 3400 due to this being an election year. She said our projected costs of \$25,000 dollars for the election itself and if we have to have a run-off, it's an additional \$12,000 dollars so this line is up \$43,000 dollars. She said on line item 4700, we have printing services and said this is for the codification of the Ordinances. She said we decided that since they're already listed on the website, we only need to print copies for the books once a year so we've cut that down by \$7,500 dollars. She said we had a part-time records clerk, who has recently retired so we need to fill that position that's already funded but we're requesting this position to move to a full-time position as our department needs have changed and the work load warrants this.

ADMINISTRATION

Mayor's Office

Mayor Nelson said his budget is flat with no changes.

City Administrators Office

Edward Bass said there are no changes to his budget. He said the only thing he wants to point out on his budget is for Leadership Training for our Managers and department heads and said there is \$10,000 in my budget for this now but we've transferred that \$10,000 to HR for future training for our managers and department heads.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Bryan Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST;

Susan M. Bone, Deputy City Clerk