



City of Lake Helen

Volusia County, Florida

MAYOR

Buddy Snowden

COMMISSIONERS

Ann Robbins

Vernon Burton

Rick Basso

Cameron Lane

Budget Workshop Lake Helen City Commission

April 28, 2014

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Buddy Snowden called to order the April 28, 2014 Budget Workshop of the Lake Helen City Commission at 9:57 a.m.

Present:

Mayor Buddy Snowden

Commissioner Vernon Burton

Commissioner Cameron Lane

Finance Manager Michael Wright

Chief of Police Michael Walker

Vice Mayor Ann Robbins

Commissioner Rick Basso

City Administrator KC Cichon

Public Works Director Richard Mullen

Fulfilling in as City Clerk Becky Witte

(Audio Time 2:01)

CALL TO ORDER: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Mayor Buddy Snowden**

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Mayor Buddy Snowden explained to the group that it is again time to look at budget concerns for the upcoming year and passed the meeting over to **City Administrator KC Cichon**.

(Audio Time 3:20)

City Administrator KC Cichon explained that this is the first budget workshop of Fiscal Year 2015 and the meeting would consist of discussing revenues and expenditures.

The first topic concerning the millage rate, **City Administrator KC Cichon** stated that staff is looking for feedback and direction for development of the budget. He explained that the Property Appraiser has not yet provided the City with figures for Fiscal Year 2015. **City Administrator KC Cichon** has been tracking property values and noted that property values have been rising and an increase, larger than last year is expected. **City Administrator KC Cichon** reminded the group of the lengthy discussions regarding the fire district during the previous budget process. In September of last year the commission made a determination to set a millage rate that would be equal to 10 mills consisting of the City of Lake Helen and the fire district millage rate. At the end of last calendar year the county indicated that the Fire District rate will remain the same but the actual figure will not be official until September at the County Council budget hearing. **City Administrator KC Cichon** reminded the Commission that they are able to make a decision this year to remain at the current millage, increase or look at other avenues.

City Administrator KC Cichon recommended discussing options with the City's Legal Counsel.

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Mayor Buddy Snowden explained that the fire district effects Lake Helen, Pierson, and Oak Hill. He questioned if the other two cities were still involved.

City Administrator KC Cichon said he had not heard that there were any changes. Lake Helen, Pierson and Oak Hill are still with the County's Fire District and he asked the Commission if they are interested in looking into other options of fire coverage or for funding for fire coverage.

City Administrator KC Cichon suggested that within the next 2 to 3 weeks the Commission should have serious discussion of options. The options would include not making any changes (remaining with the County Fire District), change the funding mechanism for the County to provide Fire Services by increasing city millage rate, or creating a fire assessment (suggested hiring a consultant to assist in this).

The group discussed various ideas on fire assessment, formulas and fire threats.

City Administrator KC Cichon explained that the commission would be able determine formulas and could work with a consultant so that there would be no legal issues when allowing exemptions. He suggested to the commission that when creating a formula to ensure it is user friendly for staff. Too many variables would make it difficult to administer for staff. He gave the example of Storm water calculations which is fairly easy to administer. He concluded that a consultant along with the city attorney would assist the development.

The group continued the discussion of exemptions, cost of a consultant and need for legal counsel direction on the millage cap.

(Audio Time 23:40)

City Administrator KC Cichon noted for the record that the discussion regarding the fire district is purely a discussion and the City is not look to take any action or change fire services. He noted this is only a good discussion for the benefit of the community and that no recommendations or decisions are being made.

(Audio Time 24:30)

City Administrator KC Cichon returned to the discussion of the other options including using the city's millage rate or fire assessment and not utilizing county fire services but instead using neighboring city. He provided the example of the City of DeBary who utilizes Orange City's fire services.

Commissioner Rick Basso said that he supports continuing the relationship with Volusia County Fire Services.



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Mayor Buddy Snowden, Commissioner Rick Basso and Vice Mayor Ann Robbins discussed the history of the County Fire Station built in Lake Helen.

(Audio Time:28:30)

City Administrator KC Cichon explained that he had received feedback that there was not enough Budget communication to the public. He asked that the group play a part in communicating to citizens about the budget. He explained the decrease of a number of general fund sources that have been decreasing including property values, fuel taxes as well as communication taxes. He suggested to staff and the commissioners while speaking to citizens, bring up the topic of budget.

The group discussed ideas of press releases regarding budget workshops, topics, and the website.

(Audio Time 31:40)

City Administrator KC Cichon informed the group of the much improved website created by staff member Becky Witte.

The group discussed the idea of a City Newsletter to send a clear, accurate message to citizens and the distribution of a hard copy and electronic version available on the website.

Vice Mayor Ann Robbins brought up the history of zone meetings for community members.

The logistics of sending the newsletter with the water bill was discussed and the concern of citizens missing the postcard bill.

City Administrator KC Cichon told the group that he is a big proponent of having our taxpayers play a part in the budget meetings. He suggested compiling a list of services that the city provides and to allow citizen input to determine the services to maintain and those to scale back on.

The group discussed citizen input with the budget process.

(Audio Time 38:17)

Commissioner Vernon Burton described some history on property values, foreclosures and the budget development history. He said that we do not have enough revenue sources and there are not enough businesses. He said we have to start thinking outside the box to generate revenue. We cannot keep asking residents for more and more taxes without having another source.

City Administrator KC Cichon continued to discuss lack of revenue and the level of services needed to run the City. He said that since Lake Helen does not have a large business community the burden rests with the home owners. The Volusia County Economic Development office is working on getting more businesses he said and that Lake Helen residents fit the bill since there is small amount of businesses.



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Commissioner Vernon Burton said since 2008 a reduction of revenue has caused staff to cover other jobs without a pay increase.

The group discussed the staffing shortfalls, workforce needs and audit issues of checks and balances. Alternatives, unfunded mandates and the city workforce were also discussed by the group.

Commissioner Vernon Burton asked **Public Works Director Ricky Mullen** about city needs and shortcomings.

(Audio Time 53:19)

Public Works Director Ricky Mullen explained that city infrastructure is falling apart. He said that his staff is slowly changing out street signs to the high intensity ones. He discussed needs for playgroup equipment at various city parks. He also informed the group of cost saving measures he takes to save valuable resources and allow for purchase of other items.

The group discussed equipment needs, deterioration of equipment concerns, manpower and costs. They also discussed the issues of spending time to repair items and keeping them alive long past their existence. He explained there are many things that are deteriorating and there is a shortage of manpower. Sometimes emergency money is needed. The group discussed tackling these issues now or spending more money on them later.

Commissioner Vernon Burton noted that the Café had taken a lot of City Commission time and it is time to look at other City issues and get more information.

The group discussed the city assets and the need to maintain those assets.

(Audio Time 61:20)

Police Chief Mike Walker addressed personnel costs, the history of the police car purchase and the savings recognized from that purchase. He also discussed renovation of the police department and staffing issues. He brought forth the option of a cops grant with group input. **Police Chief Mike Walker** also added that he is requesting a renovation of the pole barn behind the police department.

Commissioner Vernon Burton said we should document these as in kind services including what the expenses would have been and how much staff is saving the City.

Mayor Buddy Snowden commented that the City has quality personnel.

Public Works Director Richard Mullen expressed how he feels this commission has been the best in working with staff. He described his view on projects and that he attempts to only spend money when absolutely necessary and pre plan as much as he can



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The group discussed facilities and park equipment. They discussed approaching Ivy Hawn Charter School to assist with project funding since they utilize Blake Park playground equipment. They also discussed other funding options of funding the projects.

(Audio Time 74:16)

Commission Vernon Burton discussed the Cell tower and the option of a flag with the group.

City Administrator KC Cichon again questioned the millage rate for building the FY 15 budget.

Commissioner Rick Basso said he would like staff to use the current millage rate when preparing the budget.

The group discussed the millage rate.

(Audio Time 78:50)

City Administrator KC Cichon informed the group that the city is severely over budget this year. He explained that staff will bring the projects, equipment, and other needs for the commission to decide which items to fund.

The group discussed revenue, unfunded mandates, general fund expenditures and cuts needed for the FY 15 budget.

City Administrator KC Cichon explained that he is anticipating that there will not be enough general fund revenue to fund and provided an explanation of the decrease of revenue. He also discussed bringing forth a comparison of budget figures to the commission by the end of May.

Mayor Buddy Snowden explained that the budget workshop was designed to allow an opportunity to get input and direction.

The group discussed the reason for the workshop as well as the millage rate. The group then discussed the fire assessment and fire services. The group returned to the topic of the millage rate and reserves followed by discussion on the reserves and FY 14 budget as well as the Café expenses.

(Audio Time 115:41)

Finance Michael Wright questioned the 10% millage cap, which began a group discussion regarding the millage rate, fire district and fire services.

(Audio Time 129:26)

City Administrator KC Cichon asked for a discussion regarding a water utility increased based on the CPI. He explained that it would not generate revenue but assist with costs. Approximately \$5,000 increase for last fiscal year CPI increase and it was a small impact to citizens he explained.

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The group discussed the increase. **Commissioner Rick Basso, Commissioner Cameron Lane and Vice Mayor Ann Robbins** agreed to a minimal increase each year over a larger increase later.

City Administrator KC Cichon commented that the commission direction and comments are very valuable to staff.

(Audio Time 132:53)

City Administrator KC Cichon introduced the group to the rate increase request by Waste Pro. He distributed a waste collection survey prepared by staff. He instructed the group that this is solely information and that it will be coming forth at the May 8, 2014 Regular Commission Meeting.

The group discussed the proposed Waste Pro increase and services.

(Audio Time 137:53)

The group then discussed rental of portale toilets.

(Audio Time 139:27)

City Administrator KC Cichon moved onto expenditures, including staff salaries.

The group discussed salaries, merit increases, cost of living increases and the need for a salary survey/comparison.

(Audio Time 159:47)

City Administrator KC Cichon distributed a handout regarding Capital Projects and moved the discussion to Capital Projects.

The group discussed the capital projects in the handout including financial software, right of way, sidewalk projects, playgroup equipment, parks and facilities, and equipment needs.

(Audio Time 170:47)

Commissioner Vernon Burton addressed his concerns regarding Melissa Park.

(Audio Time 197:32)

The group discussed the purchase of the mower for public works and upgrade of water lines needed. They also talked about grant opportunities and loans. Public Works Director Ricky Mullen said he would prefer to pay off the loan and then perform the upgrades.

The group discussed Pleasant Street and **City Administrator KC Cichon** reminded the group that this would be discussed at the CDBG Public Meeting at 6:30pm that evening.

(Audio Time 212:20)

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The group also discussed Volusia TPO funds.

(Audio Time 215:21)

City Administrator KC Cichon discussed the Police request of changing the need for radios to enclosing the pole barn behind the police station.

The group discussed the pole barn behind the police station as well as the need to secure the CERT trailer.

Mayor Buddy Snowden raised the concern of the ECHO grant requirements relating to the use of the Pole Barn located behind the Police Department.

(Audio Time 219:10)

City Administrator KC Cichon discussed updating the comprehensive plan which will be placed on the agenda for the May 6, 2014 Commission Workshop.

The group discussed options of financing the comprehensive plan as well as the procedures for the update. The group then discussed the Creative Arts Café including the funding and expenses. They discussed the septic upgrade needed for the site.

City Administrator KC Cichon asked for direction or comments with regard to service reductions or eliminations, this can include staff, events coordination, or any other items to add to the budget.

(Audio Time 234:20)

Commissioner Rick Basso recommended custodial services.

The group discussed custodial services and the events coordinator responsibilities, volunteering as well as staffing. They also discussed City facilities.

City Administrator KC Cichon said he would bring forth a list of items, projects, etc that are needed but unfunded so that the commission can choose to fund or postpone.

(Audio Time 241:01)

City Administrator KC Cichon said that although this does not impact this budget discussion he wanted to ask about moving Cissy Burgess from Full Time to temporary. He informed the group that she has provided assistance at no charge but staff may need for her to come in and assist. He noted that her hourly rate was \$24.52 and they have discussed a contracted rate of \$27.00. He said that this is much less than our consultants that we previously paid.

(Audio Time 245:58)



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City Administrator KC Cichon reminded the group of the 6:30pm CDBG public meeting as well as the 7:00pm Economic Development Presentation for that evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Buddy Snowden adjourned the April 28, 2014 Budget Workshop of the Lake Helen City Commission at 2:00 p.m.

The end.