ST. PETE BEACH CITY COMMISSION
BUDGET WORKSHOP
MINUTES

Friday, August 8, 2008
6:30 p.m.

THOSE PRESENT:

Mayor Finnerty
Commissioner Halpern
Commissioner Chaney
Commissioner Leonard
Commissioner Metz
City Clerk Theresa McMaster

ALSO PRESENT:

City Manager Mike Bonfield
Finance Director Elaine Trehy

Audience Comments

Dale Hughes, 8301 Boca Ciega Drive, stated that he is against the funding for a lobbyist and any tax increase to fund it.

Rosemary Manning, 200 1st Avenue North, expressed support for the lobbyist and a tax increase, if needed.

Barbara Mooney, 86th Avenue, stated that she was against any cuts in the library's services and supported a tax increase, if needed.

Judy Nifong, 9342 W. Vina Del Mar, suggested that the parking meter fees be increased and the taxes be raised, in lieu of cutting staff and services.

Ed Brooms, Local 2266 Firefighters Union, pointed out that if the proposed revenue is $50,000 per year with only one inspector and the City had three inspectors the revenue would increase.

Mimi Gewanter, 265 Tessier Drive, felt that the pool was not necessary and that the lifeguards are too expensive. She supported the library and suggested a Task Force be formed.

Fire Chief Fred Golliner, 7301 Gulf Boulevard, stated that the inspection fee program went into effect the first month that the inspector was out on sick leave and that all the fees have not been received for the inspections that have been conducted.

Mayor Finnerty closed the audience comments.

Finance Director Elaine Trehy gave an overview of the proposed adjustments recommended by the Commission which resulted in $205,913 needed to balance the budget.

City Manager Bonfield pointed out that 1/10 of a mill increase would generate approximately $245,000.

Mayor Finnerty stated that he supported a 1/10 of a mill increase, in lieu of cutting staff and services. He stated that he wanted to make sure the residents are safe. He asked if any one would like to make a motion. There was no motion made.

Mayor Finnerty pointed out that the City of St. Pete Beach has cut more jobs than any other city in Pinellas County.

Commissioner Chaney stated that she appreciated the residents input and she was concerned about reducing expenses without sacrificing services and public safety. She suggested that areas such as the recreation, parks divisions and library be considered for reductions but not the police and fire budgets.

There was a general discussion regarding the resident fees for the Community Center and the revenue generated by the library and the library hours of operation being reduced, as well as staffing.

Public Works Director Steve Hallock pointed out that swim teams from out of state pay approximately $1,000 to use the pool during the winter months.

There was a general discussion regarding the number of customers using the Community Center and the cost of its operation including the pool, heating the pool and having an Certified Pool Operator to maintain the pool, if it is open or not.

Commissioner Chaney stated that she was not in favor of a tax increase and that the money should be found somewhere else within the budget. She stated that she did not want to see the cuts made to the Police and Fire Budgets and would like to see the Fire Inspector remain in the budget.

Commissioner Leonard inquired if the Fire Inspector position could be contracted out to another agency. There was a general discussion regarding the inspections, the revenue and a part-time inspector.

Fire Chief Golliner stated that he would give up his personal pay increase if he could keep the full time Fire Inspector position, so that he could increase the revenue by the inspection fees.

Commissioner Metz stated that he felt that is was important to do yearly fire inspections and was concerned with the staff level for this activity.

Commissioner Leonard stated that he did not want to see the impact on emergency calls with the reduction of fire staff.

Commissioner Metz stated that he would like to see the Fire Inspector Position funded and the lobbyist funding eliminated, a Recreation Leader II position eliminated, reduce the police fuel costs by $5,000 and eliminate the K-9 officer and the proposed splash pad for the Community Center.

Commissioner Leonard was concerned with the cost for extra legal expenses and suggested that the City be cautious of what is assigned to the City Attorney and try to work more efficiently. He suggested that the parties involved in the litigation work together to find a solution, in order to reduce legal fees. He stated that he did not want to see the City spend $250,000 for legal fees. He suggested that the $50,000 be reduced from legal fees. He stated that he was unsure about the lobbyist funding.

Mayor Finnerty pointed out that the Appropriations Bill is for $50 million dollars, it has been delayed until after the presidential election and that he would be willing to compromise and fund the lobbyist for 6 months in the amount of $30,000.

There was a general discussion regarding the lobbyist and the funding and the amount of grant money that will be available.

Commissioner Chaney outlined her budget recommendations for the City Commission's expenses.

Commissioner Chaney outlined her suggested budget cuts.

There was a general discussion regarding reducing the City's cost associated with The Beach Goes Pop Concert and seeking more sponsors to make up the difference.

Commissioner Leonard expressed his desire to have EMT's and eliminate the Inspector position.

Commissioner Halpern stated that he felt that the biggest problem with the budget is not putting any money in the reserve fund for the future. He felt that the millage should be increased.

There was a general discussion regarding increasing the reserve fund.

Mayor Finnerty asked if the Commission was in favor of raising the millage rate. Commissioner Metz, Commissioner Leonard and Commissioner Chaney stated that they would not support a millage increase. Mayor Finnerty and Commissioner Halpern were in support of a millage increase.

Mayor Finnerty asked the City Manager to review the recommendations and advise the City Commission what else will need to be done regarding the budget.

There was a general discussion regarding having an ombudsman and/or the Special Magistrate to handle some of the litigation issues in order to help reduce legal fees.

There was a general discussion regarding the Capital Improvement Projects being reviewed and some projects delayed until there is more money available.

City Manager Bonfield stated that he would look at the recommendations and bring back a recommendation at the next meeting.

The next budget meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 12, 2008, at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

____________________________ ____________________________

Theresa B. McMaster, City Clerk Mike Finnerty, Mayor

Minutes approved on

____