

**SPECIAL CALL CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 5:10 P.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A) Roll Call

Mayor Robbie Brackett, present; Vice Mayor Rey Neville, present; Councilmember Honey Minuse, present; Councilmember Bob McCabe, present and Councilmember Dick Winger, present **Also Present:** Monte Falls, City Manager; John Turner, City Attorney; and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A) An Ordinance of the City of Vero Beach, Florida, Providing the Levy of Ad Valorem Taxes for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 at a Millage Rate of 2.5000 which equates to \$2.5000 per \$1,000 of Assessed Property Value.

The City Clerk read the Ordinance by title only.

Ms. Cindy Lawson, Finance Director, reported that this is the first of two (2) budget public hearings being heard with the final public budget hearing scheduled for September 21, 2021. The proposed budget is funded at a millage rate of 2.5000 and it is greater than the rollback rate and the increase tax revenue has been used primarily to offset a decrease in the amount of residual cash from the electrical sale proceeds and also to fund increases in personnel cost, such as salary increases and health insurance. She said that the requirements of this hearing are a little bit more strict than a regular workshop.

Mayor Brackett opened the public hearing at 5:12 p.m.

Mr. Brian Heady commented that they are borrowing money all over again. He recalled at one (1) of their meetings he asked the Finance Director why they needed to borrow more money and when he asked about it the Finance Director said it really wasn't borrowing money it was a lease. He commented how this City Council can twist the English language to meet whatever they want. He said not one (1) of the Councilmembers ran on the platform of spending money or going bankrupt because running for City Council at election time that would not be fiscally responsible. He said there is also nothing fiscally responsible about agreeing to a budget that spends more than \$2 million. If he was on Council, he would raise Council's pay because they need to be paid at least minimum wage. He said if they took the proposed minimum wage of \$15.00 and applied it to Council's salary now they would be paid double what they are currently being paid. He said this would be an adjustment to the budget to double their salary and act like it is a real job. He doesn't understand where all these tax dollars come from. If he was on City Council he would direct City staff to work within affordable budgets and then have the backbone to raise taxes if they needed to. Instead of just running and hiding and borrowing more money there are areas where they can cut. He said they could cut a ton of money looking at the end of the dais. Look at how much is being spent on lawsuits. Mayor Brackett asked Mr. Heady to wrap his speech up because he has talked for six (6) minutes. Mr. Heady said the Mayor could have the police haul him out of the Council Chambers and it would not be the first time.

It just shows what monsters they are. He reiterated not to spend more money than what they have. If they can't cut expenditures then they need to raise taxes.

Mayor Brackett closed the public hearing at 5:19 p.m., with no one else wishing to be heard.

Mr. McCabe made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Mrs. Minuse seconded the motion.

The City Clerk read Section I and Section II of the Ordinance into the record.

The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Winger voting yes, Mr. McCabe yes, Mrs. Minuse yes, Vice Mayor Neville yes, and Mayor Brackett yes.

B) An Ordinance of the City of Vero Beach, Florida, Adopting the Annual Budget of the City for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2021 and Ending September 30, 2022; Appropriating funds for the Operating Expenses, Supplies, and Personnel, and otherwise appropriating funds for the Efficient and Effective Operation of the Government of the City of Vero Beach and its Departments; Such appropriations being from anticipated revenue; providing a means to amend the Annual Budget to carry forward the funding of Purchase Orders, Work Orders, and Grants outstanding as of September 30, 2021; Providing a means to amend the Annual Budget to reflect Grants received after September 30, 2021; and authorizing the Transfer of Funds Appropriated so long as the total combined appropriations shall not be increased thereby; Providing an Effective Date.

The City Clerk read the Ordinance by title only.

Ms. Lawson provided Council with a memo that explained on Monday, August 30, 2021, after the budget for the first public hearing was released, the Florida Municipal Trust (FMIT) provided the City with a formal renewal quote for FY 21-22 for the City's general insurance lines (property, auto, liability and workers compensation). This quote was substantially higher than the original estimates used to formulate the proposed budget, resulting in an increase of \$91,649 to General Fund Expenses and a \$61,458 increase in all other funds combined. She came up with (Attachment A) a rebalance of the budget to offset the impact of the FMIT renewal quote for the first public hearing for the proposed budget. She said that the budget does include a 2% salary increase for employees, the street sweeper, and body cams for the Police Department. Attachment A will be the changes that she needs to make to the version of the budget that they have in front of them tonight to keep everything that they talked about in the budget remaining in tack. She said the changes are very small. They are either increases in revenue based on more actuals through last month or they are changes that have happened in the last week. If Council would like to adopt the budget that they have they could do so with the amendment of Attachment A that would put them back in the same place they were last Monday and she will hope that the budget will not change again until next year.

Vice Mayor Neville asked Ms. Lawson to explain the revenue resources.

Ms. Lawson explained that the revenue resources that she looked at are revenue generated by Florida Power and Light (FPL). She also noted that the software for Demand Star is in the budget.

Mayor Brackett opened the public hearing at 5:27 p.m.

Mr. Brian Heady commented that when he served on City Council one (1) of the things that he made sure happen was that the public was allowed to speak as long as they needed to. He brought up the Three Corners plan that was better referred to as the "Standing Ovation Plan." Then COVID hit and the hired consultant came up with another plan because he said the first plan would not work. Then the City Attorney brings them a proposal for \$45,000 to write a new Ordinance for the City to protect panhandlers so they have proper places to panhandle. He said that was a stupid idea and waste of \$50,000. He brought up only being allowed to speak for three (3) minutes. If he was on the dais and a City Councilmember, he would give the public the time that they need to speak because this is their City. He also said don't spend more money then what you have to spend. The principle is very simple. This might mean raising taxes to pay for their expenditures. He said to stop borrowing money or cut their expenses.

Mr. Ken Daige thanked the men and women serving their Country, as well as the Sherriff's Department and the City Police Department. He agreed with keeping the street sweeper and body cams for the Police Department in the budget. He asked if there were any decrease in services to pull in this additional money.

Ms. Lawson answered no. She said that the decreases came in the non-departmental section of the budget.

Mr. Winger thanked the City Manager and the Finance Director for including the items that Council wanted to see in the budget this year. They are the 2% salary increase for employees, the street sweeper, which will help the Lagoon, and the body cams, which will help the public and protect the Police Department.

Mayor Brackett closed the public hearing at 5:35 p.m., with no one else wishing to be heard.

Mr. Winger made a motion to approve the Ordinance with the amendment of Attachment A, which is included in the minutes and dated September 7, 2021. Mrs. Minuse seconded the motion and it passed 5-0 with Mr. Winger voting yes, Mr. McCabe yes, Mrs. Minuse yes, Vice Mayor Neville yes, and Mayor Brackett yes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

4. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

/tb