

June 10, 2021

**CITY OF LABELLE
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING**

Mayor Lyons called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and asked Ron Zimmerly, Finance Director, to provide the Commission with an update on the 2021/2022 budget.

Ron noted it was early for the workshop since the data required to develop the budget was not available from Hendry County, and the City audit was not complete yet. He noted the draft budget would be provided at the July budget workshop.

He noted the health insurance numbers would be firmed up after the PRM conference in Naples the following week. He also noted state numbers are not available yet.

He noted ongoing coordination efforts with the County and implementation of the current fiscal year's budget.

Ron advised the Hendry County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) was requesting an increase. There was discussion on the lack of an increase in the past year and it was noted Chief Nelson was present to address the Commission.

Ron discussed the CARES Act funding and the projects covered by that grant. He noted the request was \$523,000. He noted in addition to protection equipment, the City was able to secure laptop computers to allow Staff to work remotely. He added these computers were largely set up and implemented. He provided information on technology improvements including the cloud-based server and software. He also noted HVAC improvements on several City buildings. There was discussion on technological improvements needed related to the computer used for meter reading.

There was discussion that LaBelle is a non-entitlement community and gets funding from Emergency Management rather than directly from the federal government for the American Rescue Act fund. It was noted the funding would come in tranches, or installments. It was noted the rules and criteria for the funding is still in flux, but the estimate is \$2.2M.

Ron noted the Helms Road utilities extension was funded and thanked Staff and the lobbyist that assisted in securing those funds. He noted the benefits of this infrastructure in opening the area of new development and allowing looping of the utilities. He noted escalation of construction pricing and costs due to demand. There was discussion on the generator costs totaled at \$125,000 and there needed to be supplementary funding from the American Rescue Act funds. He noted the City is in a good position overall due to the CARES Act and American Rescue Act funding.

There was discussion on replacing the server, but Ron noted the installation of the new fiber network resolved many of the server issues. Ron asked Chief Nelson from the HCSO to discuss the proposed funding increase.

Captain Nelson explained the total arrests and calls that have been increasing due to population growth in the City. He noted the HCSO was behind the recommended personnel assigned to LaBelle based on the FBI standards. He noted the cost of a deputy is \$71,000. There was discussion on staffing and the cost to the City. There was discussion on doing an assessment per household to cover the cost of the additional HCSO personnel. It was noted action did not need to be taken at this workshop and this was information for

consideration at future meetings. There was discussion on monies available in the police fund. Derek Rooney, City Attorney, noted he would not recommend a city resident assessment if Hendry County was not increasing their funding as well. There was discussion on if the personnel would be assigned solely to the City. The item was tabled until the next budget workshop.

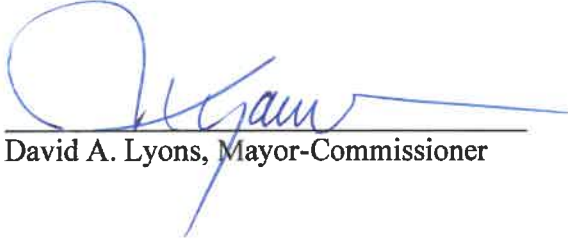
Ron Zimmerly noted that the Fire Department had requested six (6) full-time firefighters in the budget. He explained the request and funding constraints. Ron also noted a new brush truck is needed. There was discussion on improving insurance costs for residents due to increase in the ISO rating facilitated by the additional personnel. There was discussion on budget implications of full-time firefighters.

Ron noted Hendry County is considering a 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA).

Commissioner Wilkins asked about using American Rescue federal grant funding for the stormwater master plan. Commissioner Akins noted a water and sewer master plan was also needed. Derek noted the federal limitations on using the funding for infrastructure projects. He noted additional time is needed to understand qualifying projects, which will likely include water and sewer master planning.

Mayor Lyons thanked Ron for a productive meeting. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.

APPROVED:



David A. Lyons, Mayor-Commissioner

Attest:



Thomas A. Smith, Clerk-Commissioner