

**CITY OF LABELLE
BUDGET WORKSHOP/SPECIAL
MEETING
JULY 13, 2022**

Vice Mayor Daniel Akin called the Budget Workshop/Special Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A roll call was taken. Members present were Commissioner Hugo Vargas, Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, Commissioner Daniel Akin and Commissioner Ratica. Mayor Julie Wilkins was absent.

HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE

Robbie Chartier, Executive Director of Public Risk Management (PRM), and Josh Hallon with World Risk Management (WRM), gave a presentation that provided an overview of PRM. They explained the City's last four-year medical renewal history, as well as the added benefits that will become effective October 1, 2022 which included a diabetes prevention program, a bariatric benefit, lung cancer screening, rectal screening, and a Florida Blue Medicare program.

Commissioner Spratt asked if the rates would be going up in the upcoming year. Mrs. Chartier noted that the rates would increase 10% due to claims from the previous year.

Gracie Morton, City of LaBelle Finance Director, directed the Commissioners to view page 13 in order to see further details.

There was further discussion on the PRM pool and how it functioned.

Discussion continued on what the projected increase would be and what the total cost would be to the City. There was conversation on the claims from the previous year that caused the increase in rates.

Michelle Jones of World Risk Management (WRM), explained that WRM handled the City's property and casualty insurance through PRM. She then gave a brief history of PRM, explained that it was a pool, and described its core principles.

Mrs. Chartier then gave an overview of the property and casualty benefits provided to the City by PRM. Josh Hallon briefly described an elective plan that would provide coverage following a natural disaster. Andy Cooper of WRM, provided an overview of the PRM Coverage Marketing and the State of the Market that involved property. He also provided a summary of the City's coverage and explained the business interruption coverage.

There was discussion on providing further insurance for the City's fire trucks.

Mr. Cooper went over the causes for the rate increases on the property and casualty side, and gave conservative estimates of what the increases would be.

Fire Chief Brent Stevens asked for clarification on the debris removal line item on the insurance coverage. It was clarified that the debris removal item on the insurance was only for debris removal from the properties covered under the insurance policy.

CARES ACT UPDATE

Gracie Morton, Financial Director for the City of LaBelle, explained that she had located additional funds from the Cares Act in the amount of \$78,000 that had been expensed, but were not submitted for

reimbursement to the County. She also explained that there was a request to the County Commission to extend the Cares Act funding availability in order to have access to an additional \$204,000. She explained that a majority of the funds would go to the Fire Department, and listed other requests and possible uses for the funds.

HENDRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (HCSO)

Sheriff Steve Whidden addressed the Commission with a proposal for additional funding from the City of LaBelle for the HCSO in order to employ more deputies. There was discussion on if the funds were available. Sheriff Whidden explained that there were three options provided in the proposal.

Commissioner Spratt noted the need for additional deputies. There was brief discussion on how to handle unsanctioned events within the City.

Mrs. Morton elaborated that the HCSO draft budget provided to the Commissioners included the existing funds provided by the City as well as the proposed third option. She explained that the money would come from funds allocated to the police fund. Discussion continued on where the funds would come from in the following year, as well as in the future.

Chief Stevens suggested a readiness study be performed. Sheriff Whidden noted that HCSO have data logs of the calls received that would provide the information a study would provide. He also noted that the City of LaBelle accounts for approximately 30% of the calls volume for the West end of the County.

Mrs. Morton stated that two patrol cars would be designated to have the City of LaBelle logo on them.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)

Mrs. Morton explained the proposed rate increase options for employees.

There was discussion on if the rate increases were mandatory for City employees, and how much the increase would benefit the employees.

There was also discussion on the required minimum wage increase to \$15.00 per hour, and how to reach that goal sooner rather than later. A gradual increase was suggested for employees that were below the minimum requirement.

There was discussion on the PRM increases in the proposed budget.

Lisa Awbrey, City of LaBelle Human Resources, explained that employees usually received a pay increase once their probationary period had been completed.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

LaBelle Fire Department Chief Brent Stevens, addressed the Commission with a request for the funding of 3 full time fire fighters, as well as a full time Fire Chief. He noted that City and County shared the funding of the fire department and provided the new percentages that each was responsible for. The County's would be 68% and the City's portion would be 32%. Chief Stevens noted that his request was for new employees as well as the purchasing of new fire trucks. He explained that the County had adopted a fire tax increase, but the City did not. Discussion was had on the revenue sources for the fire department. There was conversation on how to combat the rising fuel costs, and the selling and purchasing of fire trucks. Discussion continued on the condition of the current trucks, and the need to purchase new trucks. The possibility of raising the City's fire assessment in order to aid with the additional funding was discussed.

Conversation continued on how to fund the proposed increased budget for the fire department.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Doug Morgan, Animal Control Supervisor for the City of LaBelle noted that the requested increase in his budget request was due to inflation, as well as the population increase. He noted that funding for animal control was split fifty-fifty with the County, and how he hoped that would change to reflect the increase in the percentage of calls from County residents not within City limits.

Discussion on a new building for animal control was had. Mr. Morgan stated that grants would be researched in order to provide the funding for the new building, and that the construction could be done in phases to help combat the effect on the budget. There was discussion on how to locate grants to provide the funding.

Mr. Morgan also mentioned that the proposed budget included a new truck for animal control. There was discussion on how much a new truck would cost.

Mrs. Morton mentioned that she was in contact with a truck fleet company that the City could possibly use to lease trucks.

There was discussion on how to improve the monitoring of gas usage by City employees. The updating of the interlocal agreements with the County was then discussed.

MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Morton noted that the funding for the maintenance department was split between four departments. Shelly Varner, Supervisor of the Maintenance Department addressed the Commission. She noted that she had not been able to compose a proposed budget, and then gave examples of her requests. There was discussion on the leasing of equipment, and the available options and costs.

Commissioner Spratt asked what the total of the City's budget was. There was discussion on the figures provided and when the final total would be provided.

Gary Hull, Superintendent of Public Works discussed the different grants and funds being provided as a result of the consent order being issued by the Department of Environmental Protection. He noted that the septic to sewer conversion was underfunded, and that grants were being researched in order to aid with that funding as well. He then gave an update on the septic to sewer projects being done.

Mrs. Morton noted that the milage rate provided in the packet was calculated at four and at five.

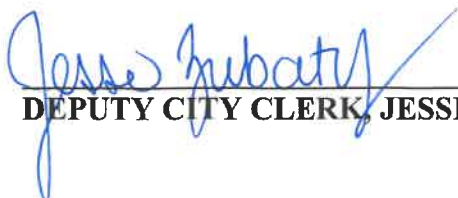
The meeting adjourned at 6:38.

APPROVED:



**COMMISSIONER DANIEL AKIN,
VICE MAYOR**

ATTEST:



DEPUTY CITY CLERK, JESSI ZUBATY