

**CITY OF LABELLE
BUDGET WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2022**

Mayor Wilkins called the Budget Workshop/Special Meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Commissioner Hugo Vargas provided the invocation. Mayor Julie Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

There was discussion on the time, and nature of the meeting.

Mayor Wilkins recessed the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

The meeting was called to order again at 4:11 p.m. There was then discussion on when to vote on the tentative millage.

Gracie Morton, Finance Director for the City of LaBelle, presented the Commission with the increased rates on the Employee Health Benefits and explained why the increases occurred. There was discussion on what the costs of to cover spouses, and children would be for the employee. She noted that dental, vision, and life did not increase.

There was discussion on possibly bidding out the insurance after the next budget year. There was conversation on the deductible amount.

Commissioner Akin noted that Blue Cross had a wide network of doctors available in the area.

Commissioner Akin made a motion to keep the insurance coverage the same for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Commissioner Vargas seconded the motion.

Commissioner Spratt noted that in the future, additional employee participation may be needed for the insurance.

The motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion on the changing of assessment rates in the future, and how to do so.

Attorney Derek Rooney noted that to implement impact fees, a study would be required. There was conversation on assessments versus impact fees, and possible assessments within special districts.

Brent Stevens, Chief of the LaBelle Fire Department, explained how fire assessments work. He discussed how impact fees are needed due to the population growth and how a survey was needed to evaluate the fire department needs for an increase in fire rates.

Mr. Rooney recommended that the person conducting the survey meet with staff to access the growth in the area, and following that, options could be presented to the Commission. He also noted that a meeting with the County would be needed in order to figure out funding.

Mrs. Morton noted that she had provided the County with tentative budgets for animal control and fire department for review of the percentages.

Chief Stevens stated that he had met with the County, and that the County's vision was to grow to 10-12 full time employees within the next three years.

***Commissioner Ratica made a motion to accept Resolution 2022-39 establishing uniform rates for police assessments,
Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.
The motion carried 5-0.***

***Commissioner Spratt made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-40 establishing uniform rates for recreation board facilities.
Commissioner Vargas seconded the motion.
The motion carried 5-0.***

***Commissioner Ratica made a motion to accept Resolution 2022-41 establishing uniform rates for fire protection.
Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.
After further discussion on the Interlocal agreement with the County, and the proposed fire department budget,
the motion carried 5-0.***

Discussion was had on the street light needs throughout the City. Commissioner Akin noted the lack of streetlighting by Belle Arbor.

***Commissioner Spratt motioned to accept Resolution 2022-42 establishing uniform rates for streetlighting.
Commissioner Akins seconded the motion.
The motion carried 5-0.***

Gracie Morton, Finance Director for the City of LaBelle addressed the Commission to discuss the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). There was conversation on the possible rate increases, and how much other municipalities gave their employees. That conversation continued to include providing increases based on current wages. It was requested of Mrs. Morton to provide totals for \$1.00 and for 3% rate increases.

Mrs. Morton then moved on to discuss the millage rate. She recommended that the millage rate should be set at 4.5% in order to sustain the proposed budget. Commissioner Spratt asked Mitchell Wills what the County millage rate was going to be, he stated that the millage would be 7.1%. Discussion was had on the how the increases of the County millage rate in addition to the proposed City increase would affect residents financially.

***Commissioner Akin motioned to set the tentative millage at 4.5%.
Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.
After further discussion, the motion carried 5-0.***

Mrs. Morton then explained how there was additional Cares Act funding that would be used to purchase requested items for the Fire Department during the current budget year. She requested permission to execute the checks for the requested items due to it being a reimbursement process. She also noted that the items needed to be ordered prior to September 1, 2022 in order to be funded by the Cares Act. The

conversation turned to address the proposed Fire Department budget. The purchasing of five heavy duty laptops to be mounted in the fire trucks was discussed.

***Commissioner Ratica motioned to approve the purchasing of the requested items for the Fire Department to be funded by the Cares Act.
Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.
The motion carried 5-0.***

Mayor Wilkins addressed the replacement of the carpet in City Hall and how the Cares Act would fund that as well. There was discussion on the replacement options for the floor as well as replacing the seating in the Commission chambers.

Mrs. Morton mentioned that the Cares Act funds would also be used to purchase Microsoft 365 software that would include additional technical support, and cyber security. _____

Mrs. Morton moved on to discuss the utility billing department proposed budget. She explained that the department was being funded out of general fund, and how she intended to move it to water, sewer, and garbage funding source. She then explained the costs and funding of Woodard and Curran, the contractor hired to run the water treatment facility for the City of LaBelle.

April Aguilar, Supervisor of the Utility Billing Department, asked questions on how the percentage of work done by certain employees would be dispersed between accounts. There was further brief discussion on which account would be funding the Utility Billing Department.

Mrs. Morton proceeded to discuss the Building Department's proposed budget. She noted that it had been separated from the executive department, and that a new department was created in order for the Building Department to have its own. She explained that a third employee was being requested to aid in the rise of permitting due to the growth in population. She also noted that Code Enforcement asking for a third employee as well.

Zane Mungillo, Code Enforcement Officer, stated that he would become Fire Inspector when the current one retired. He explained the additional duties he would have once that happened and expressed why a third employee was being requested to help with the residential inspections. There was conversation on how the Fats Oil and Grease (FOG) program would work and how it would generate revenue.

Mrs. Morton stated that as of January 1, 2023 the City would return to processing the business licensing renewals for within the City of LaBelle. _____

Mrs. Morton continued capital improvements in the streets and maintenance department. She requested transferring \$500,000 into the streets and maintenance account in order to update facilities, and purchase new equipment and materials in order to repair the streets within the City.

Mayor Wilkins announced that County Commissioner Mitchell Wills was being hired to be Supervisor of Public Works.

Mr. Wills addressed the Commission and informed them of his qualifications for the position and discussed his plans for the department and the City. There was discussion on the position and the compensation.

Discussion continued on the redirection of the funds into the streets department, and what the funds could be used for.

Mrs. Morton explained that the first tranche from ARPA funds was designated towards updating the water lines. She then noted that there was second tranche issued that has not been designated yet. Commissioner Spratt took up the Fire Department proposed budget. There was conversation on the request to hire another full-time fire fighter and staff a full-time Chief. Discussion was had on how to fund the additional positions, and how the County would contribute funding.

LaBelle Fire Chief Brent Stevens gave an overview of the revisions to the proposed Fire Department Budget. He explained that he wanted to purchase new equipment in the upcoming fiscal years with the aid of grants that had been applied for, and that a new fire truck was going to be requested the following year. He gave an overview of the ISO evaluation of the fire department.

Mrs. Morton explained how she was calculating insurance for each department, and how discrepancies were found recently in fuel usage, and proposed purchasing something to monitor future usage of fuel.

There was then discussion on uniforms for employees.

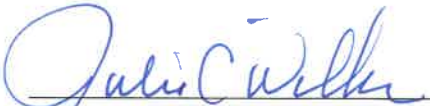
Chief Stevens to elaborated further on the equipment needs for the fire department.

Chief Stevens then explained the need for an additional full-time fire fighter and the full-time Chief position, and the requested wages.

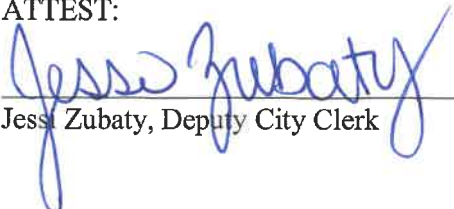
Commissioner Akin expressed the need to put a new firetruck in the proposed budget for this year. Possible funding opportunities were discussed.

***Commissioner Spratt motioned to adjourn the meeting
Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.
The meeting adjourned at 6:39.***

APPROVED:


Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk