

**CITY OF LABELLE
BUDGET WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022**

Mayor Wilkins called the Budget Hearing/Special Meeting for fiscal year 2022-2023 to order at 5:00 p.m. A roll call was taken. Members present were Commissioner Hugo Vargas, Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, Mayor Julie Wilkins, Commissioner Jackie Ratica, and Commissioner Daniel Akin. Commissioner Vargas provided the invocation. Mayor Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Gracie Morton, City of LaBelle Finance Director, took up the first items on the agenda, the City facility rental rates and the James Singleton building.

April Aguilar of the City of LaBelle Utility Billing Department requested extending the allowed cancelation period for the Civic Center. She also requested the requirement of a deposit for the renting of facilities.

There was conversation on the benefits and costs of the City of LaBelle possibly taking over the process of renting out the James Singleton Building. There was also discussion on the amount to charge for the renting of the Singleton Building as well as what administrative costs that could be charged.

More discussion was had how to maintain and manage the James Singleton building between the Recreation Board and the City of LaBelle.

Commissioner Vargas noted that additional charges would be warranted if the City were to take over the Singleton Building due to the additional work for the administrative staff. He noted that the rental rates should be according to the accommodations provided by the facilities.

Discussion continued on how to communicate between staff for the managing and maintaining of the Singleton Building if the City were to take over the renting process, and the possible fees to be charged.

Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk, noted that any money received for the renting of the Singleton Building would go to the Recreation Board only, and suggested that the Recreation Board decide whether or not to raise the fee. She explained that the City would only receive the funds from the administrative fee that could be charged. Conversation then continued on how much to charge for the administrative fee.

Gracie Morton noted that the City paid the insurance for the Singleton building and suggested deferring making any fee decisions until more information was gathered on how often the facility was rented and what the projected costs to the City would be. Discussion continued on the administrative fee, and the option to keep the renting of the facility the responsibility of the Recreation Board.

Commissioner Spratt made a motion that the City decline taking on the responsibility of the rental process for the James Singleton Building.

Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.

The motion carried 4-1.

Commissioner Akin was opposed to the motion.

There was then discussion on renting the Civic Center to residents only, specifically the gun show events that were held regularly.

April Aguilar noted that some non-profits were not residents, but were still able to rent the facility. Conversation was had on events having a sponsor that was a resident of LaBelle.

Filling in for City Attorney Derck Rooney that could not be present at the meeting was Attorney Michael Randolph. He stated that the name on the proof of insurance needed to match the name on the lease. It was decided that all paperwork should be in a resident's or local sponsor's name.

Commissioner Ratica made a motion to accept Resolution 2022-45 amending Resolution 2022-44 setting facility rental rates.

Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Gracie Morton presented the rate increases for the property and casualty insurance provide by Public Risk Management. She noted that two proposals were provided and one included providing replacement costs for the fire trucks.

Commissioner Vargas made a motion to approve the property and casualty option to cover replacement costs of the fire vehicles.

Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Mrs. Morton then took up the bad debt write off list. There was discussion on why the debts were being written off. Mrs. Morton then explained the process and informed the Commission she was looking into the method of putting liens on the properties with the bad debt. The conversation continued on the lien process and how to implement it.

Gracie Morton asked Attorney Randolph if it were possible to lien the person, or affect the credit of the person. Mr. Randolph noted that there were notice requirements prior to issuing a lien. He then suggested selling the debt to a debt collector for a percentage.

Commissioner Ratica asked how the deposit amounts were determined to turn water on.

April Aguilar explained that the fixed demand charged was multiplied by 1.5, and described the process. She also explained the if there were three past due bills owed, then the account would be closed and the water would be shut off. There was discussion on possibly raising the deposit fees, and the options for collecting the debts.

Jessica Desormo of the finance department asked if there was a minimum dollar amount to enforce the liens. There was discussion on developing a procedure to determine the enforcement of liens based on the amount of the lien.

***Commissioner Vargas made a motion to write off the bad debt.
Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.
The motion carried 5-0.***

The conversation then turned to the proposed millage rate. Mrs. Morton noted that she had provided a budget reflecting three options for the millage rate. She went through the options and explained that the totals based on the three millage rates at 4.0, 4.25, and 4.5. She explained how funds would need to be pulled from the professional services area (used for hurricane clean-up) of the budget in order to balance the budget at millage rates of 4.0 and 4.25. Discussion continued on how and where to pull the money from in order to balance the budget at a 4.0 millage rate.

There was discussion on the professional services line item and how the funds were to be allocated and the possibility of a reserve fund.

Gracie Morton noted that some of the line items were not labeled properly. Discussion continued on how to make up the difference in funds for the different millage rates.

Commissioner Spratt suggested looking further into the 4.25 millage rate. She noted that the City needed to be able to provide the necessary services to the civilians, and she didn't believe that could be done with the 4.0 millage rate.

There was discussion on the funding for the Master Plans for infrastructure, and the grants pursued and received for the plans.

There was then discussion on building up the contingency fund.

***Commissioner Ratica made a motion to adopt a tentative 4.25 millage rate and change the designation of funds to reserve in order to balance the budget.
Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.
After brief further discussion on wage increases,
the motion carried 4-1.
Mayor Wilkins was not in favor of the motion.***

***Commissioner Vargas motioned to adopt the tentative budget of \$5,833,836.
Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.
The motion carried 4-1.
Mayor Wilkins was not in favor of the motion.***

Gracie Morton then took up discussion on the year-to-date expenses and revenue. The breakdown of the funds by department was briefly discussed. Mrs. Morton then explained how the totals for the enterprise funds were calculated by the anticipated revenue from water and sewer, as well as the grants that were received.

There was then brief discussion on how the Woodard and Curran contract costs were split between departments, and the additional costs for repairs and maintenance.

There was then discussion on the adoption process for the tentative budget.

Commissioner Ratica motioned to adopt the tentative water enterprise fund at \$4,403,056.

Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

5-0

Commissioner Akin motioned to adopt the tentative sewer enterprise fund at \$4,172,308.

Commissioner Vargas seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Discussion was had on the frequency of garbage pick-up and possibly increasing the amount of pick-ups per week.

Commissioner Ratica motioned to table the decision on the sanitation enterprise fund until September 8, 2022 at 5:30. Commissioner Vargas seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Discussion then continued on the year-to-date expenses and revenue, and how the departments stay within their budget.

There was conversation on the Heritage Museum and the funds provided in the past and possible contributions in the future.

There was then discussion on the contributions made to the Area Housing Authority.


Commissioner Ratica motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.

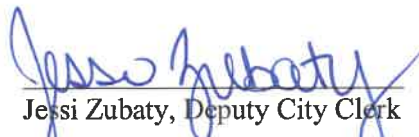
It was the consensus of the Commission that Gracie Morton did a great job with the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

APPROVED:


Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk