

A budget workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on August 5, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber at the Municipal Administration Building. Mayor Eugene Fultz called the meeting to order.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Terrye Howell, Betty Wojcik, Jonathan Thornhill, Christopher Lutton, Eugene Fultz, Mayor

Commissioner Howell arrived at the meeting approximately 5:06 p.m. following Roll Call.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Kenneth Fields, City Manager; Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk; Jennifer Nanek, Deputy City Clerk; Albert C. Galloway, Jr., City Attorney

[Full staff memos are incorporated into the minutes. Meetings are recorded, but not transcribed verbatim.]

Agenda Item 2. Budget workshop discussion of the Draft 5-Year CIP for FY 2014'15

[Begin Agenda Item]

SYNOPSIS

This is a Budget workshop discussion of the Draft 5-Year CIP for FY 2014'15.

BACKGROUND

The proposed FY14'15 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has been presented to the City Commission for discussion purposes. As presented the draft document contains:

Capital expenditures for FY 14'15 budgeted are budgeted as follows:

General Fund	\$88,215
Special Revenue Funds	136,119
Capital Projects Fund	675,000
Utility System Fund	4,020,000
Airport Fund	1,946,361
TOTAL	\$6,865,695

5-Year Cost Distribution by Function/Department (Schedule A) is projected as follows:

Community Redevelopment	\$1,089,800
Fire Department	827,400
Information Technology	236,000
Library	352,119
Police	938,000
Airport	8,290,653

Cemetery	710,215
Facility Maintenance	730,814
Parks & Recreation	6,198,874
Streets	1,811,000
Utility System	28,623,000
TOTAL	\$49,807,875

5-Year Cost Distribution by Asset Type (Schedule C) is projected as follows:

Land	\$625,000
Buildings	2,816,275
Improvements Other Than Buildings	36,659,685
Equipment	3,515,643
Other	6,191,272
TOTAL	\$49,807,875

[End Agenda Item]

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, reviewed the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan, which has a short list including the Airport Improvements. On the Utility side, they will be bringing forth a rate sufficiency study to review revenues to be sure they are enough to fund future projects. So far, it appears we have sufficient revenues to cover costs and capital projects so that rates will not have to be increased. Many projects are deferred until next year. Another project is the gym floor. We will have to look at the best approach next year to fix the floor. We are waiting to see what our insurance costs will be and maybe some things can be put back in the budget.

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked if there were any details regarding the three projects listed in Parks and Recreation. Kathy Bangle, Assistant Planning and Development Director, explained that one project is for the parking at Crystal Lake Park, some of which has been done; and the other two are the Pram Fleet and the parking at Lake Wailes. The Parks and Community Appearance Board identified these projects but not all the details have been worked out yet. Commissioner Wojcik noted that these three projects are listed for this next year. Mr. Fields said these would be deferred.

Deputy Mayor Lutton said we need a plan in place for the parks. Mr. Fields said that some of the recent improvements have not made it into the CIP.

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked if we have a location for the Burns Avenue water tank and Utilities Director Tom Moran said no. Mr. Fields said it is a placeholder and that it will end up in that area somewhere. Deputy Mayor Lutton asked if there was another way to compensate for the volume capacity needed. Mr. Fields said no, that is a nice high spot that makes sense due to the pressure due to the elevation. Commissioner Lutton confirmed that the water plants are all cross-connected but not equally. Mr. Fields confirmed this and said there are some forthcoming projects that will improve that.

Commissioner Wojcik said the Lake Weaver beautification and fountain items have been done. Mr. Fields confirmed and said what is left is improving the parking, as it is getting more use.

Commissioner Thornhill asked for a time frame on the Airport Improvements. Mr. Fields explained we are awaiting a contract from FAA. Teresa Allen, Public Services Administrator, confirmed that we went out to bid again after receiving only one bid the first time. This time we got four bids and they have the needed information so we are waiting on them. Commissioner Thornhill said this project is essentially for next year. Ms. Allen confirmed that we would have better numbers on this project soon.

Commissioner Howell asked about the projects under Information Technology, if the audiovisual upgrades for the Commission Chambers include improved recording, and writing of minutes and streaming of commission meetings. James Slaton, Information Services Director, explained that the audio/video upgrades for the Chamber would be close to \$50,000. The hardware for recording the meetings is a onetime \$7,000 and an annual cost of \$4,000 to store the recorded meetings. The third item with writing the minutes is a separate thing that will be part of the website redesign. The program will not write the minutes, but instead, make an audio. Ms. Howell expressed a desire to be able to watch the meetings tomorrow. Mr. Fields said the year after next we will try setting up live streaming of the meetings so they can be watched at anytime. Mr. Slaton said he has not seen technology for recording and creating minutes.

Commissioner Wojcik asked about the items for audio/visual equipment for the James P. Austin Community Center and website redesign. Mr. Fields said these have been deferred as well.

Deputy Mayor Lutton said that \$4000 a year for live streaming might not be worth it for the few people that would watch it. Mr. Fields said the service also includes storing the recordings of the meetings. Commissioner Wojcik asked if they are stored now. Mr. Slaton said they are being stored on PGTV 2-3 days later. With the new technology, a person can go to a particular segment, which will be linked to the agenda. Mr. Fields says there are requests from citizens who cannot make it or do not have Comcast to be able to watch the meetings.

Commissioner Howell asked about the \$150,000 for lighting at the soccer complex. Mr. Fields explained that we are looking into a FRDAP grant to help with this cost. Commissioner Wojcik said we should apply for grants where possible to help with these projects. Commissioner Howell asked if the Lake Wales Little League was paying toward the cost of lighting on the fields they use and was told no.

Commissioner Howell asked about sidewalk construction if there is a list. Teresa Allen, Public Services Administrator, explained that a priority list is being developed and will bring the list back to the Commission for input before it is finalized. Commissioner Howell asked about grants for sidewalks near schools. Ms. Allen said that these are our responsibility but that grant funding is possible for sidewalks near schools. Mr. Fields said they have communicated with FDOT about increasing funding for sidewalks near schools and will apply when available.

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked about lighting in safety zones. Ms. Allen explained that these areas are inspected each year before school starts and any upgrades or repairs that are needed we have to take care of it immediately. We put that in each year in case something changes.

Commissioner Howell asked about the item in Facilities Maintenance regarding the parking lot at the Administration Building. Mr. Fields explained that the slope in front of the building is not ADA compliant. The issue needs to be addressed, not immediately, but at some point. Deputy Mayor Lutton asked if the side areas are acceptable. Tom Moran, Utilities Director, suggested reworking the sidewalk, adding ramps over there and moving handicap spaces there. Cliff Smith, Building Official, said handicap spaces need to be as close to the front as possible especially as the public cannot access the side doors.

Deputy Mayor Lutton suggested contracting out stump grinding. James Slaton, Public Services Director, said that he agreed and that they do.

Mr. Fields said that the Capital Projects are a work in progress; he will review it in more detail and bring back an updated document for the commission.

Agenda Item 3. City Funding for the Historic Lake Wales Society, Inc.

[Begin Agenda Item]

SYNOPSIS

The Historic Lake Wales Society has requested that the City of Lake Wales provide ongoing financial support in order to keep the Depot Museum open.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City not provide ongoing support to the Historical Society or sell any assets to provide short term funding to maintain operations of the Depot Museum Complex.

BACKGROUND

The Historic Lake Wales Society is a private, non-profit entity that currently operates the City's Depot Museum Complex and organizes the annual Pioneer Days festival. Its Director is Mimi Reid Hardman. Over the years, the Society and Ms. Hardman have made significant contributions to the City by acquiring and preserving historic structures and objects related to the City's history. In the past few years, as the Society's financial situation has deteriorated, it transferred ownership of its historic structures and some of its objects to the city, who assumed responsibility for major maintenance items and matters such as property insurance and security. Operation of the Depot Museum Complex, which houses the Society's historic objects, has remained a Society responsibility and it collects and retains any revenue the Museum generates.

At this time, the Society has indicated that it no longer has the financial or staff resources to continue operation of the Museum or the ability to be the organizer of the Pioneer Days festival and has requested the City either provide direct financial support of the Society or alternatively, allow certain assets that were transferred to the City, specifically the 1944 Whitcomb Engine and the 1916 Pullman Car, be sold and the net proceeds provided to the Society to allow it to continue. The Society has indicated it has no other prospects for long-term financial viability.

Over the course of my career as a local manager, budget director, and consultant to a major federal agency, I have often been required to evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of providing funds to local non-profit organizations that provide services in a specific geographic area. It is my experience that the organizations which are most successful in this regard share certain characteristics: a broad and deep donor base who can provide financial resources over a long period of time; a large group of dedicated volunteers who can and do assist in regular operations; an involved and experienced board who provide expertise in management and a commitment to fund raising; and, finally, a clear shared vision of the organization's purpose and vision among all of the above. By its own admission, the Historic Lake Wales Society currently falls short in most of the above characteristics.

In addition to its lack of funds and staff, I do not believe the current Depot Museum meets the current standards of what a historic museum should be or do. There is a wonderful story to tell about this area's history, its unique geography and ecology, and the culture that developed in this area from its agricultural roots in cattle and citrus to today's tourism and quality of life environment. Old age alone does not make an object or building historic, and not every item that is historic is significant enough to preserve in a museum. The current Depot Museum contains many old objects but does not tell the Lake Wales story in manner that today's visitors expect. One only has to visit the Visitor Center at nearby Bok Tower or the County Historic Museum in Bartow to see how visitors can be told a historical tale by the use of only a few objects and informative displays. To be successful, the Depot Museum must be modernized, the collection of objects professionally curated so as to be relevant to the Museum's purpose of telling the area's history, and the displays updated to meet current expectations.

To this end, I would recommend that the museum be closed for at least one year while the City forms a Task Force to develop a long-term strategic plan on what should be the Museum's focus, how the Museum should operate, and how to provide ongoing financial support for the Museum's operations. The Task Force would consist of individuals from the community knowledgeable in this area but not currently involved in the Museum's operation. It should seek technical assistance from the Polk County Historical Center and the State of Florida Historical Commission on how best to redesign the Depot Museum Complex and enhance it as a visitor attraction. With a clear concept of what the Museum should be, and a long term road map in hand for how it could operate, the possibility of obtaining funding to implement the plan from private and other government sources would be greatly enhanced. At that point, the City can determine if it wishes to operate it itself, or ask a reconstituted historic group to take responsibility. It is expected that the current Executive Director of the Historic Lake Wales Society would be involved in this effort.

Providing short term funding at this time will not solve the Historic Lake Wales Society's long-term problems; and selling assets to fund current operations is rarely a good approach to solving financial problems for any organization, public or private.

The City itself can take responsibility for organizing the annual Pioneer Days Festival as it already provides a significant level of in-kind services and only needs to make provisions for the acceptance and disbursement of sponsorship funds to support the event. This would not require any significant additional City resources beyond a modest increase in staff time already allocated to the event. Ms. Hardman would continue to play a significant role in this presentation.

The Historic Lake Wales Society's contributions are many and greatly appreciated by the City of Lake Wales and its citizens but it is time for a new approach to preserving and telling the City's story.

OTHER OPTIONS

Provide operating funds to the Historic Lake Wales Society from the City's General Fund budget or sell existing assets and use the resulting proceeds to provide funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

Including funding from the City's General Fund budget will require a reduction in some other area. Selling a City asset will not provide funding over more than a one-time basis.

[End Agenda Item]

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, reviewed the item.

OPENED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicholas Smith, 1001 Tower Blvd., said that it was illegal and said this does not govern the Historic Lake Wales Society. He described the artifacts in the museum and said those items need to be returned. Mr. Smith distributed a page to the commission members from the Historic Lake Wales Society bylaws that discussed what to do with the assets if the organization is dissolved. He said that if there is a task force, there would be no items left in the museum. He also commented that if the Society had gotten the \$30,000 promised by Ray Brown in the agreement concerning the hotel, there would be no need for additional funding. He requested that the City sell the train cars back to the Historic Lake Wales Society so that the Society can sell them and keep the doors open.

Mimi Reid Hardman, 300 S. Lake Shore Blvd., reviewed the history of the museum and explained that she shares the history of Lake Wales with visitors to the museum. She said that she arranged the donation of the train cars but they have no historical relevance to Lake Wales. She introduced Secretary/Treasurer Linda Truitt to read some of the positive comments from visitors to the Depot Museum.

Linda Truitt reviewed her involvement with the Historic Lake Wales Society and shared visitors input regarding the Depot Museum. She gave a copy of the comments to the mayor.

CLOSED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Thornhill said he would not like to see the Depot Museum closed and questioned whether to sell the train cars but would leave that up to the Historic Lake Wales Society for he was in favor of giving them the train cars. He suggested using the additional funds allocated to the Chamber to keep the Depot Museum open.

Mayor Fultz commended Mimi Hardman for her efforts and would like to develop a long-term solution for the museum to keep it going.

Deputy Mayor Lutton said everyone thinks the Depot Museum is wonderful and appreciates Mrs. Hardman's efforts. He said he was affronted that the Historic Lake Wales Society would sell the assets if the museum closed. The City would not actually close the doors, the City just will not grant funding. The Society would make the decision to close the doors. He encouraged the Society to work with the City to determine long-term solutions.

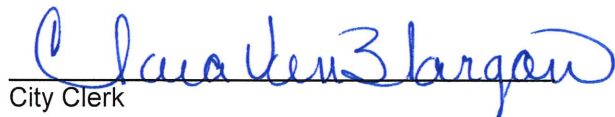
Commissioner Wojcik said that the City is not trying to take control of everything and that if the Historic Lake Wales Society has an interest in preserving the history of Lake Wales then they should be willing to work with the City as well as the community. The artifacts of the Society are the history of Lake Wales and belong to the people of Lake Wales and should not be gotten rid of out of spite.

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, said that the Depot Museum is a great asset to Lake Wales. The goal is to establish broad support from the community similar to how other non-profits are run. We would like to find a long-term solution. He emphasized that Pioneer Days will continue with Ms. Hardman still involved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.


Mayor/Deputy Mayor

ATTEST:


City Clerk