

**TOWN OF ASTATULA
MAYOR AND TOWN
SUMMARY MINUTES**



**BUDGET WORKSHOP
THURSDAY JULY 15, 2019
TOWN HALL**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Robert Natale called the Budget Workshop meeting to order at 6.03pm. The invocation given by Councilman Mack who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Robert Natale, Mayor
Mitchell Mack, Vice-Mayor
Kimberley Kobera
Stephen Cross
Gayle Sikkema

Also Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Jane Whaley, Deputy Clerk

Roll Call was performed, and it was determined that a quorum was present. Clerk Wells announced that Councilwoman Kobera was delayed and would be here in five minutes. Councilman Cross was absent from the meeting.

Mayor Natale welcomed guests, thanked them for their attendance and input into the meeting. He also thanked Clerk Wells for an excellent first draft and asked him to proceed with a summary. Mr. Wells stated that the line items in the budget document mirrored those in the monthly financial report although there were some lines that had no spend or budget which had been taken out. In the current budget there is a carry forward figure in the General Fund of \$35,000 and a corresponding amount in the Financial expenses which was for the remaining payment from the Infrastructure loan. He believed that this would be repaid before the end of the financial year and does not appear in the proposed budget. Councilwoman Kobera arrived at 6:08 pm.

The budget is prepared on a line by line basis and many of the revenues are static, as in we get what we get from the state. Last year a three percent increase was forecast for these amounts however this year there will be no projected increase. Without the \$35,00 the proposed revenues are \$11,439 less than what is anticipated for this year but is \$61,330 more than what was budgeted. One of the reasons is that we only budget for ninety-five percent of Ad valorem taxes and solid waste which is collected on the tax roll. There is a corresponding amount in expenses under 534 and also the two percent that the tax collector charges for collecting the tax.

On the expenditure side, we have budgeted to spend \$64,998 more than this current year and \$59,094 more than what was budgeted for this current year. The budget proposals for the Legislative (511), Executive (512), Financial (513), Legal Counsel (514) and Planning (515) Departments were put together by Mr. Wells; Law enforcement (521) with the Police Chief and Public Works (519), Fire Control (522), Cemetery (539) and Parks & Recreation (572) with Councilman Mack.

Mr. Wells stated that the budget is prepared on a line by line basis and the surplus or deficit falls as it may without any manipulation. This is a first draft and there will be many amendments before the final budget is approved in September.

The proposed millage rate was set on the TRIM notice at 8.500 mills as approved by Council, however the actual millage rate used in this budget is 7.500 mills. The final figures for the budget will be presented at the preliminary hearing on September 12 and if approved will be advertised in the Orlando Sentinel ahead of the final budget hearing on September 26. There will be no amendments between these two dates.

Mr. Wells went over the breakdown of the \$61,330 increase in budgeted revenues against last year. Mayor Natale asked for confirmation that the increase in revenues was around six percent. Clerk Wells responded that the increase in Ad Valorem Taxes over last year is 4.7 percent, the rest of the increase is spread over the remaining line items. Mayor Natale challenged the Council Members to think of other ways in the future to increase revenues without increasing taxes. He felt that annexing homes and businesses on the outskirts of town was one way, particularly as they benefit from the services provided by the police.

The expenditures were summarized on the top of page two by department totaling \$1,128,905. The individual department budgets were then discussed. The Legislative (511) budget has a proposal to increase the pay for Mayor and Council totaling \$3,900 and the other current charges were discussed. The Executive (512) covers all the costs of running the administration and town hall. Clerk Wells said that he had budgeted a five percent pay increase for the staff and the police officers.

He went over Councilman Cross's proposal of a three percent increase excluding the Chief and the Clerk and also other recommendations affecting the Police department. As neither Mr. Cross or Chief Hoagland were present at the meeting it was unlikely that his department would be discussed until the next workshop. The 512 budget was discussed line by line. Overall the amount is \$3,322 less than last year. A big change was for Municode which would be completed in this current year. Code Red was discussed which was budgeted in this year but not implemented; the Mayor wanted it along with the subscription to the Tavares Chamber of Commerce put back in the budget.

Discussion took place on the insurance premium and whether the cost should be split over the departments that it covered and not all be in 512. No decision was taken. Mr. Wells said that he had received a competitive quote from PGIT which would be discussed at the next workshop when a response will have been received from our current insurers FMIT. The savings were around \$6,000.

Under Financial and Administrative (513), the costs associated with the accountant were discussed and there was to be a \$500 increase in the audit fee per the contract with James Moore. The line item for Reserves was discussed at length. The Legal Counsel (514) budget was increased by \$2,300 over last year's budget as the new attorney firm will likely be more expensive. Gray Robinson are a huge law firm with an excellent reputation and will provide enhanced services to the Town if engaged.

The Special Magistrates position was discussed in respect of the issues that the town has experienced this year. Choices to replace the current firm or not was also discussed and it was determined that an increase in the budget was necessary to ensure that the town could be more proactive with code enforcement. It was agreed to increase the budget to \$5,000.

The Clerk explained the difference between the Planning & Zoning Review Fees which is paid to the planner for planning applications such as lot splits and where there is a corresponding revenue for fees. Town Planning Services are instigated by and are paid for by the town. Operating Expenditure is for legal notices and advertising.

Public Works (519) was discussed by Councilman Mack who wanted to increase the part time hours from thirty-two to thirty-six hours a week before benefits must be paid. Currently the policy manual is a thirty-two. The budget is based on thirty-six hours along with the five percent increase. A change to the policy would need to be made before the change can be implemented. What the PW employee can do with the extra hours was discussed. Running costs for the new community building were also discussed but would be covered under Parks and Recreation (572).

This concluded all discussion on the budget; the remaining departments will be discussed at the July 29 workshop. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert C. Natale, Mayor

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk

