

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



**COUNCIL WORKSHOP
THURSDAY JULY 18, 2022
2022-2023 BUDGET**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mitchell Mack called the workshop to order at 6.12 pm. Mayor Mack gave the invocation and led The Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Gayle Sikkema
Orita Issartel
Zane Teeters

Absent:

Stephen Cross

Also Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief

Roll call was taken and there was one residents present.

The council members present had previously been sent the proposed budget prior to the meeting and the Mayor proceeded to go over the first draft. The clerk stated that the version they were looking at mirrored the finance reports that they were used to seeing and explained the different columns.

He reminded Council that Ad Valorem taxes and the Solid Waste revenues are based on 95% of the projected tax revenue from the property appraiser and the number of homes multiplied by the rate per home to cover the cost from GFL Environmental. The budget is based on the current millage rate of 7.5000 mills.

The Clerk also gave an update on the amount of Communication Services Tax that should be expected and the rationale for the number of new homes that we expect to have built this year which gives the best estimate for impact fee and permitting revenues. Franchise fees for electricity has a large increase due to the two increases that SECO had imposed, and the rate increase approved from council from 4% to 6%.

Taking all of the Revenues on page 1 minus all of the proposed expenses on page 2, the forecast was a \$74,571 surplus. This was good considering that last year required a prior year carry forward amount of \$39,772 to balance the budget. This budget was based on all foreseeable expenditures except for any salary increases. It was felt that the council, knowing the amount that was at hand, could debate and decide what the level of increases could be.

Once this was done, the totals would be added to the budget along with the corresponding FICA and Retirement. If a shortfall occurred, then the expenses would need to be cut or an amount brought forward from the prior year. If there was an excess, then the amount would be carried forward to future years (reserves). Either way the budget has to balance between revenues and expenditures.

The Clerk confirmed to Councilman Teeters that the budget included the open part-time police position and that \$200.00 per month had been added to cover 50% of the health insurance premium.

The Clerk brought up the Mayor and Councils stipend and asked if the council wanted to give themselves an increase in the budget. Twice they had not accepted an increase, but their pay was disproportionately low compared with other towns. Mr. Teeters said that the Mayors pay could be increased without an increase to council. It was suggested that a decision be made after the election.

On the Executive (Town Hall) Department (512), the Clerk stated that the retirement rate from FRS increased from 10.82% of salaries to 11.91%. The health insurance was increased with the new rates set in July by Blue Cross. Liability Insurance was estimated with a sizable increase waiting on the final rate from FMIT. The variation on capital expense was for the generator for town hall which would be paid in the current year.

The Financial & Administrative (513) department saw an increase of \$490.00 for the Auditor to cover the balance of the ARPA compliance. There is a decrease in the accounting fees for \$600.00 that the clerk has taken on board. The level of budget for Legal fees (514) was discussed and \$42,000 was felt to be necessary. Comprehensive Planning (515) was explained and offset against revenues for planning & zoning reviews.

Public Works (519) was discussed. The Clerk said that only 60 percent of the salary and benefits was in 519, the other 40% is in the Transportation Fund. Law Enforcement (521) was mainly fixed costs and offset by \$64,400.00 funded for the School Resource Officer by the School Board. Protective inspections (524) has \$1,200.00 added for training for Jane. There is a corresponding revenue from permit fees which covers most of the department's expenditure. The Mayor went over Janes and Jennifer's goals and what additional resources were needed. Improvements to the cemetery were discussed.

The change in Garbage/Solid waste Services (534) rates for the upcoming year were based on the new rate from GFL. The revenue budget is based on 95% as it is collected on the tax roll to account for the discounts and the tax collector's commission. The revenue includes the proposed increase that was agreed but won't be finalized until September. If the increase of \$11.45 per home is not passed on, then it would create a shortfall of approximately \$8,700.

Parks & Recreation (572) the future of the Olive Ingram Community Building was discussed. Special Events has been moved out of the parks budget and into its own Code (574). The Clerk felt that there was not enough money to cover all the events that the town was planning. It was agreed to increase the amount to \$10,000.00.

It was agreed to hold over the budgets for Transportation, Infrastructure and the Enterprise funds to the next workshop and finalize the General Fund by discussing and adding the salary increases. The Clerk said that with the changes already agreed the surplus for wages was now \$66,571.00. The council were presented with a spreadsheet that had all the staff wages and salaries, including the additional part-time police officer. The spreadsheet allowed for the increase in the FRS rate and columns totaling the cost of an 8% and 10% raise across the board.

The Mayor brought up the level of inflation of 9% and the increase in the minimum wage. The Clerk shared the thoughts of Vice-Mayor Cross as he was not present. Mr. Cross wanted the budget to reflect the cost of a public works director and given the increase in the health insurance cost, a 4% salary increase.

Councilman Teeters went over the research that he had done on police pay in all 50 states and Chief Hoagland gave examples of the level of pay and increases in the surrounding cities and towns. He added that the inflation raise should be taken into consideration and that raises had been held at bay in prior years when the town did not have the money. The town now does have the reserves and now is the time to bring the pay levels up to that of other cities.

Councilwoman Sikkema brought up the increased cost of the new healthcare plan and that they were considered part of the remuneration. Ms. Sikkema also said that an 8% raise from the numbers presented would cost \$55,169 or \$68,961 at 10%. The amount of surplus is \$66,571 so somewhere between the two percentages would likely be the figure. The wage level of the public works person was discussed as he earned more than Jane and some of the police officers.

The question was asked if he could be excluded from the increase as he was already paid so much. The Mayor went over the different reasons that differentials in raises could be justified following his conversation with the HR attorney.

Councilman Teeters continued with his research on the level of pay for the Clerk and the level of pay for a City Manager which he believed was the job that the Clerk was doing. He said that the clerk was overpaid for that position and underpaid for what he actually does. The Clerk disputed the figures but agreed with the principal of the argument Mr. Teeters was making. He added that the town needed more staff and had to make the choice whether to pay increases or add new staff members.

The Clerk responded that additional revenues would be generated in the next few years when the new developments come online and additional customers are added to the water system, but we are not there quite yet. He emphasized that the town had come a long way over the past five years and that most of the staff and PD officers had worked through those lean years and remained faithful to the town. He felt that the raises in that time had been low, particularly during COVID and that the town now had the opportunity to reward those people for the job that they had done.

The Mayor decided to leave the meeting there and it was decided to meet again on July 27 at 6:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk

The first part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the State of Florida to the Governor, dated December 12, 1955. The letter discusses the proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution and the need for a referendum on these amendments.

The second part of the document is a copy of the proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution. These amendments relate to the structure of the executive branch, the powers of the Governor, and the process of impeachment.

The third part of the document is a copy of the proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution. These amendments relate to the powers of the Governor, the process of impeachment, and the structure of the executive branch.

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The sixth part of the document is a copy of the proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution. These amendments relate to the powers of the Governor, the process of impeachment, and the structure of the executive branch.

Very truly yours,

John G. M. [Signature]

Secretary of State

