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Town of Ponce Inlet

Town Council Special Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2019

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to proper notice, Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at 4300 South Atlantic Avenue, Ponce Inlet, Florida.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Town Council:

Mayor Smith, Seat #1

Councilmember Milano, Seat #2

Vice-Mayor Hoss, Seat #3

Councilmember Perrone, Seat #4

Councilmember Paritsky, Seat #5

Staff Members Present:

Ms. Cherbano, Deputy Clerk

Mr. Disher, Assistant Director; Planning & Development

Chief Fabrizio, Police Chief

Mr. Gunter, General Manager of Public Works

Mr. Hooker, Code Compliance Manager

Ms. Hunt, Recording Secretary

Mr. Irwin, IT Manager

Mr. Joulani, Director, Planning & Development

Ms. McColl, Finance Manager

Chief Scales, Fire Chief

Ms. Witt, Town Manager

Ms. Zengotita, Cultural Services Manager

4. **Additions, Corrections or Deletions to the Agenda** – There were none.

Councilmember Paritsky moved the adopt the agenda as presented; seconded by Mayor Smith. The motion PASSED 5-0, consensus.

5. **Amended budget for fiscal year 18/19 and Proposed budget for fiscal year 19/20:**

Town Manager's presentation – Ms. Witt reviewed the memorandum dated July 3rd, 2019 (attached) outlining fiscal years 17/18, the amended FY 18/19, the Proposed FY 19/20, and the Forecast for FY 20/21. She explained that the current budget was approved with a millage rate of 5.9. Ms. Witt noted that FY 18/19 has been a very good year for the Town financially, with the most significant change being a reduction in the legal expenditures due to the settlement of the Pacetta lawsuit. She noted that there has been an increase in various revenue sources totaling approximately \$145,000, adding that there will be no need to carry forward funds for the Incode

46 10 software upgrade. She suggested the following purchases be made within this current budget
47 year due to the increased revenue: replace an unmarked police car, replace a utility tractor (split
48 with water fund/public works), upgrade the town hall kitchen (on-site EOC), and install a historic
49 marker at the lighthouse tramway. She noted that with the purchase of these items, there will still
50 be approximately \$220,000 available to transfer to the reserve fund - bringing the Town's general
51 fund reserve close to \$2.6 million. She noted that grant monies will help offset the cost of a
52 replacement CPR device.

53
54 Ms. Witt reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 19/20 with a proposed millage rate of 5.9,
55 estimated at 95% to produce \$5,131,368 in ad valorem revenue. She noted that the current millage
56 rate is 5.9 and the rolled-back rate (RBR) is 5.5568; the proposed millage rate is 6.18% above the
57 rolled-back rate. Ms. Witt then reviewed each Fund and Department, noting increases and
58 decreases in expenses as proposed. Ms. Witt stated the first hearing on the budget is proposed to
59 be September 12th and the final hearing date is proposed to be September 18th.

60
61 Ms. Witt brought attention to the Community Center, noting that PICCI is seeking funds to
62 construct a storage addition on the south end of the building. She suggested a possible 50/50 split,
63 with the PICCI running a fund-raising campaign. Ms. Witt noted that Robert Edwards Builders,
64 Inc. has been asked to provide a quote and the Town's Building Official estimated it to be around
65 \$30,000 to \$35,000 (two years ago).

66
67 Jim Hinson, PICCI member, explained the need for additional storage at the Community Center
68 and requested funds be placed in the budget for an addition on the south side of the facility. Mr.
69 Hinson noted the annual flea market and special events raise between \$7,000 and \$8,000 a year.
70 Ms. Witt suggested taking 50% of Mr. Edwards' quote and transfer it into the fund, and then budget
71 it for next couple of cycles. Peter Finch, PICCI member, stated that the Center is fully-staffed by
72 volunteers 365 days a year and expressed his concerns for safety as there is not much room to
73 navigate the small storage area. He stated he has requested the quote and will forward it to Ms.
74 Witt. Councilmember Milano asked if the Town could budget the entire amount up front and then
75 get reimbursed by PICCI. Ms. Witt stated it is at Council's pleasure but noted that it may be more
76 difficult to encourage fund raising if the Town covers the entire cost up front.

77
78 Ms. Witt continued review of the budget funds and departments; she noted that it is proposed to
79 re-establish a capital fire equipment fund with a beginning balance of \$75,000.

80
81 Mayor Smith asked for public comment - Pete Finch, 106 Rains Drive, asked why the flood
82 insurance is so expensive for the museum. Ms. Witt stated it is because the property is located in
83 a significant flood zone. Mayor Smith closed public comment.

84
85 Councilmember Milano noted that Council set aside \$360,000 for contingency regarding fire
86 department staffing and asked when the organizational chart would be brought before Council for
87 consideration. Ms. Witt stated that Council does not formally approve the organizational chart but
88 she generally provides them with a copy of it annually. Councilmember Milano stated if the new
89 positions are added the fire department will have the largest budget of all departments within the
90 town. Ms. Witt stated that for now Council directed her to put the funds in the contingency, not in
91 the fire department budget, as no final decision has been made on those new positions.

92 Councilmember Perrone stated that it was his understanding that the funds were put in contingency
93 to cover the positions for ½ a year, and Council would decide where to spend those funds in or
94 before next fiscal year; he noted that an organizational chart should be created after that. Council
95 agreed. Councilmember Milano asked Ms. Witt if the retention rate has improved in the Public
96 Works department. Ms. Witt stated that she met with Mr. Gunter and Council authorized stipends
97 in the current year for employees holding certain levels of water licenses. She stated that since
98 implementation, only one Public Works employee left (but it was not due to salary). She confirmed
99 that the stipends made the salaries more competitive, and that because of the size of our
100 community, many of our employees wear “many hats” beyond those area of specialization for
101 which salaries are set for positions in larger cities, so stipends work better for them in recognizing
102 those additional areas. Vice-Mayor Hoss stated the allocation of funds for additional fire
103 department staff does not have to be spent all at once and Ms. Witt and Chief Scales will work
104 together to hire the most qualified personnel. Councilmember Paritsky stated “thank you” for the
105 great job putting together the budget. Councilmember Perrone concurred and asked if there are
106 plans to replace the aging fire department building. Ms. Witt noted that the facility underwent a
107 renovation project when the town hall facility was built but that the idea for a new facility had not
108 been suggested for consideration.

109
110 Derek George, Ponce Inlet Professional Firefighters Local 4140 President, requested that they be
111 consulted on proposed staffing and equipment changes. Council expressed that he is welcome to
112 take any ideas to Chief Scales as those in other departments do with their department heads, but
113 anything beyond that would be inappropriate for operational matters. Ms. Witt clarified that in his
114 role as a lieutenant, or the other two lieutenants, operational suggestions should be taken to their
115 Chief for discussion.

116
117 Ms. Witt announced the budget hearing dates: first hearing is scheduled on September 12th and the
118 second hearing/adoption is scheduled for September 19th. The September 12th date will be
119 advertised by the property appraiser on the notice of proposed taxes that is mailed out in August.

120
121 Council expressed support for the amended FY 18/19 and proposed FY 19/20 budgets as
122 presented.

123
124 **6. ADJOURNMENT.** Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

125
126 Respectfully submitted by:

127
128 _____

129 Jeaneen Witt, CMC, Town Manager/Town Clerk

130 Prepared by: Peg Hunt, Town Board Secretary