

A Special Meeting and Workshop of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 4PM at the Apalachicola Community Center, #1 Bay Avenue, Apalachicola, FL.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Anita Grove, City Manager Travis Wade, Finance Director Mark Gerspacher, Code Enforcement Officer PJ Erwin, Planner Bree Robinson

Special meeting opened by Mayor Ash.

SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA ADOPTION

Motion to adopt agenda made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

TENTATIVELY ADOPT FY 2023-2024 MILLAGE RATE

Mayor Ash read Resolution 2023-03 in its entirety.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-03 to tentatively set FY 2023-2024 millage rate at 10 mills and set the first budget public hearing on September 6, 2023 made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 4 to 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

WORKSHOP

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Finance Director outlined department capital outlay requests.

City Manager Travis Wade outlined specific department requests.

Discussion held regarding contracting water and sewer tap installation, water and sewer entry level pay increase, and increased travel budget.

Commissioner Elliott addressed vehicle condition and maintenance.

Commissioner George addressed capital improvement projects and requested separating the existing projects and new requested projects, new rates for insurances and retirement, and cost of living increases.

Commission agreed to work with the current millage rate and rolled back millage rate for the draft budget and to also include a 5% cost of living increase for employees.

Finance Director Mark Gerspacher stated the draft budget will include all the increases for insurances, retirement, cost of living increases, department specific requests, capital projects, and any carry forward amounts from the previous fiscal year.

Discussion held regarding grapple truck purchase.

City Manager Wade stated that Code Enforcement Officer PJ Erwin is actually working on a flyer that addresses yard waste, and once that is finalized it will be posted on the City Facebook page, posted in the paper, and also sent with utility bills.

Commission set budget workshops for August 16th at 4PM and August 30th at 5PM.

Commissioner Grove asked if the Evergreen Study was going to be part of the draft budget and individual pay increases, or merit raises.

Finance Director Mark Gerspacher stated he can put a column in the budget that includes the salary study so Commission can see how it will affect the budget.

MURALS DISCUSSION

Code Enforcement Officer PJ Erwin outlined murals section of the proposed sign ordinance.

Discussion held concerning mural approval process.

John Helms expressed concern that the proposed mural ordinance will restrict the freedom of speech, especially if the City restricts the content of the mural.

Discussion held concerning including murals in the proposed sign ordinance, whether content should be considered in the approval process, and if regulating murals restricts someone's freedom of speech.

Commission agreed to include murals in the sign ordinance and proceed with first reading.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Brenda Ash, Mayor

Lee Mathes, City Clerk