

A Workshop of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Holy Family Center located at 203 Dr. Frederick Humphries Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Donna Duncan, City Manager Travis Wade, City Attorney Dan Hartman, Deputy Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, Planner Bree Robinson

Meeting called to order by Mayor Ash.

### **AGENDA ADOPTION**

Motion to adopt agenda made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 5 to 0.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laraela Coxwell wanted to make sure meetings are consistently recorded, expressed concern regarding water and sewer rates and repayment of DEP loan, Leslie Street repairs, and homeless issue.

### **WORKSHOP – ARPA PROJECTS**

City Manager Wade stated the goal for this workshop is to select and prioritize the ARPA projects so he can proceed to get updated quotes for the projects.

Commissioner George reviewed ARPA funds received and how much has already been spent, feels the list presented by Manager Wade are previous discussed suggestions and not priorities, reviewed ARPA project allocations outlined in the FY 23-24 budget and provided corrections. Commissioner George stated her first priority is to use the remaining ARPA funds, approximately \$687,000, to pay down the DEP loan; second option is to find one once in a lifetime project that is only made possible because of ARPA funds.

Commissioner Grove stated her priorities are water well repairs and HVAC on several City owned buildings. Commissioner Grove stated she understood that ARPA funds cannot be used to pay down debt.

Commissioner George explained that ARPA funds cannot be used to pay debt, but she recommends shifting some budgeted expense line items to ARPA approved expenses to free up funds within the operating budget. This allows the freed-up funds within the operating budget to be used to pay on the DEP loan.

Commissioner Elliott stated her priorities are Battery Park Marina seawall, Scipio Creek Marina repairs/improvements, and covering excess expenditures for Leslie Street. Commissioner Elliott recommends sticking to projects that will generate the biggest return and will have an extended benefit

to the taxpayers. Commissioner Elliott stated all options should be explored before dedicating all ARPA funds towards paying down the DEP loan.

Commissioner Duncan stated her priorities are drinking water, and various infrastructure needs throughout the City. Commissioner Duncan stated her position on the DEP loan is that the City is no longer in default, the loan is non-interest bearing, but doesn't see how shifting expenses still doesn't violate the rule that says ARPA monies can't be used to pay debt.

Commissioner Grove stated creating a project list has to become a priority because there is a deadline in which funds must be obligated.

Discussion held regarding project priorities and costs.

Mayor Ash stated the Commission needs to direct staff on how to move forward.

Commissioner Grove stated her priority is water well repairs.

Commissioner George recommends shifting funds to pay down DEP loan.

Commissioner Elliott recommends Leslie Street project overage, Battery Park Marina sea wall, and Scipio Creek repairs/improvements.

Commissioner Duncan recommends doing repairs to City owned buildings, particularly repairing/replacing the HVAC at Holy Family.

City Manager Wade will obtain quotes on the above-mentioned projects and hopefully have them back in time for the March meeting.

Mayor Ash stated once quotes have been received, then the Commission can prioritize the projects or hold additional workshops if needed.

Mayor Ash directed Staff to post an update on the Leslie Street project to the websites so citizens can be kept informed.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 5 to 0.

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Brenda Ash, Mayor

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Lee Mathes, City Clerk