

**MINUTES OF THE FY 2017 – 2018 BUDGET WORKSHOP FOR THE BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF PORT ST. JOE FLORIDA, HELD AT 305 Cecil G. Costin, Sr., Blvd., August 24, 2017, 12 O'clock Noon**

The following were present: Mayor Patterson, Commissioners Ashbrook, Buzzett, and Lowry. City Manager Jim Anderson, City Clerk Charlotte Pierce, Financial Analysts Mike Lacour, Public Works Director John Grantland, and Surface Water Treatment Plant Director Larry McClamma, were also present. Commissioner Thursbay joined the meeting at 12:07 P.M.

The purpose of the Workshop was to provide an overview of the FY 2017 – 2018 Budget.

Mike Lacour distributed updated copies of the preliminary 2017 – 2018 Fiscal Year Budget.

City Manager Jim Anderson stated he had received a text from Commissioner Thursbay and he was on his way.

Mr. Anderson shared that the Workshop today was to review the Water Fund, noted the three primary areas that would be covered and discuss the General Fund. The Water Line Replacement in North Port St. Joe, funded through the CDBG Grant, will be addressing issues on Avenues D, E, F, and G and possibly Avenue A and North Park Avenue. \$80,000 has been provided from the Northwest Florida Water Management District to assist with water line replacement as well. Water Line Replacement on Long Avenue will be through Road Bond Money and hopefully, state funds. A Water Meter Replacement Program would provide for new meters which should be accomplished in a three year plan. The General Fund is within striking distance. The Filter Replacement Program at the Surfacewater Treatment Plant will be in year two of four. He also shared that the First Public Hearing on the Budget will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2017, at 5:01 P.M. and the Final Budget Hearing will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, also at 5:01 P.M. Both meetings will be held at the Ward Ridge Building.

Johnny and Jai Bryant questioned the work scheduled for the CDBG Grant and offered their thoughts on ways for the work to be done.

*Commissioner Thursbay joined the meeting at 12:07 P.M.*

Financial Analyst Mike Lacour noted the Water Fund would be balanced with the proposed changes. Insurance has been capped at \$705 per employee and the difference for the monthly premium will be due from the employee. There has been a reduction in the Liability and Worker Comp cost with the new insurance company, and he suggested that an Escrow Fund be established for the Water Meter replacement.

Commissioners Lowry and Ashbrook shared what they had seen and heard while at the Florida League of Cities Conference and encouraged Staff to look at options for new water meters.

Commissioner Ashbrook questioned if Wastewater Treatment Plant Funds could be used for water meters.

Mr. Lacour shared that we are within the budget frame work and continue to try to push rates down while being mindful of our debt obligations and providing good fiscal management. The City is scheduled for another rate study in 2019.

Benny Roberts shared that he had run the Water Plant for 18 years and cautioned the Commission about Technology as it will help up front but can kill you.

Mr. Lacour recapped all of the funds and noted that moving forward, we are to continue with Option I of the water meter replacement. There is no change in the Solid Waste or Waste Water Funds but there is \$12,256 shortfall in the General Fund.

Commissioner Ashbrook shared that he had learned at the Florida League of Cities Conference that CRA Funds could be used for infrastructure and suggested that \$10,000 from the PSJRA be used for the Washington Gym and the purchase of Christmas lights to free up funds in the proposed 2017 – 2018 Budget. He also noted that the City is undercutting ourselves on Building Permit Revenue and suggested that an increase there could also be used to balance the Budget. He anticipates there could be at least \$2,000 generated from an increase in the fees.

Commissioner Buzzett suggested that revisiting the proposed raises for Commissioners could be a way to balance the Budget.

Benny Roberts reminded the Commission of an agreement with the County where the City paid \$320,000 for the McLemore Building at Honeyville that was to be used at a Hurricane evacuation location for residents from Port St. Joe in exchange for \$600,000 from the County for a recreational facility in Port St. Joe. He asked where those funds were and if they had not been received to pursue them to balance the Budget.

Commissioner Lowry suggested asking the public for input on the proposed raise for Commissioners.

Guerry Magidson stated that the Commissioners are entitled to a raise but not a 420% increase and suggested trying \$550 per month as the amount.

Greg Johnson shared that he still felt the same about raises. He offered accolades to Staff on their forward planning, encouraged reserves in the Budget for matters, and especially water lines.

Benny Roberts stated that he had served 28 years as a Commissioner and was paid \$25 per month for his service and did not mind the time he spent being a public servant. He pointed out there is no Recreation Department and thought there should be one.

Mindy Pate shared her thoughts on raises and felt that a 3% raise was in line.

Tan Smiley questioned why the old fashioned way of reading meters was not still used and noted that everything new isn't good. He stated he was not against a raise but that it should not be given all at one time. He encouraged the Commission to give themselves a raise but not to be greedy.

Mayor Patterson asked for options on raises, noted that he cared for the community and was a public servant. He feels that the Commission deserves a raise but maybe not as much as asked for. He stated that he is a working mayor, drives the road ways, takes care of issues, and sees that lots are cleaned up.

Benny Roberts reminded the Commission that they depend on the voters, suggested having a mandated referendum, and let their constituents decide if they need a raise or not.

Mayor Patterson noted it does cost money, gas, time, and advised that he was a public servant and will go to bat for you.

Commissioner Thursbay reminded everyone that he was available 24 – 7 and to call him if he was needed. He noted how he had helped citizens, and offered his thoughts on why the salary of \$25 was established.

It was determined that the next Workshop would be held on September 5, 2017, at 3:30 P.M., in the Ward Ridge Building.

Guerry Magidson cautioned the Commissioners about raises and reminded them that he serves as a public servant by being Chairman of the Scallop Festival, Chairman of the Gulf County Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Port Authority Board, and receives no compensation from any of these entities.

Greg Johnson noted the continued, uncalled for remarks about Gold or Silver Spoons for individuals. He shared that all he had ever asked for was a chance because he wanted to advance himself and that he had worked for everything he has. He shared that he was aware of a business deal of a Commissioner and he was not handed anything, it was accomplished through a mortgage. He admonished the Commissioners to change their tone.

Mayor Patterson stated that raising salaries will give ordinary people a change to run for the commission. He feels that people are not going to run for the current salary, and stated that if people don't want him as mayor, he will go sit down, he loves being mayor, but is not going to cry if he is not.

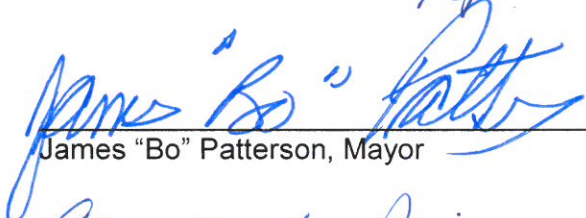
Chester Davis stated he would pray for the Commission on the way out the door and the way meetings are going. He asked for equalized representation on the Commission, encouraged the community as a whole to work with each other, noted that accusations kill the joy of being a citizen, and feels the bickering and fighting has to stop. Mr. Davis encouraged the Commissioners to attend their CDC activity on Saturday. His goal is not to have North and South Port St. Joe, but one Port St. Joe. The meeting will be held on Highway 98 at the Wellness Center.

Mindy Pate noted the remarks and actions at the last meeting, stated there is enough division in the country, the north and south side issues, and silver spoon remarks. She encouraged the Commission not to judge on achievements, said "Shame on you" for your actions and encouraged them to get along.


Commissioner Thursbay thanked Staff for all their hard work on the Budget.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Ashbrook, second by Commissioner Thursbay, to adjourn the Workshop at 1:20 P.M.

Approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of September 2017.

  
James "Bo" Patterson, Mayor

9/5/2017  
Date

  
Charlotte M. Pierce, City Clerk

9/5/17  
Date