

City Council Minutes
July 6, 2023
9:00 a.m.
Library Conference Room
1445 Commerce Drive

1. Call to Order

The Budget Retreat Workshop of the Crestview City Council was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Mayor JB Whitten. Board members present: Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Rencich, Council members: Doug Capps, Cynthia Brown, Joe Blocker, and Ryan Bullard. Also present: City Manager Tim Bolduc, City Clerk Maryanne Schrader, City Attorney Jonathan Holloway, and various staff members.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor JB Whitten.

3. Open Workshop

Mayor JB Whitten opened the workshop.

4. Approve Agenda

Mayor JB Whitten called for action.

Motion by Councilmember Doug Capps and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Rencich to approve the agenda, as presented.

Roll Call: Joe Blocker, Cynthia Brown, Andrew Rencich, Douglas Capps, Ryan Bullard. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0. All ayes. Motion carried.

5. Action Items

5.1. Budget Discussion

City Manager T. Bolduc went over the procedures of the workshop. He announced that the survey process was completed. He said the budget is balanced but is dependent on several decisions the Council will need to make on bringing employees up to the \$15 minimum wage, the growth of the city, and the water and sewer utility.

City Manager T. Bolduc provided an overview of the pooled cash (including preliminary funding), the challenges the city will face with growth, the survey results and setting goals. We will address how we are going to regulate commercial growth and infrastructure, as our city has grown 10%.

In the survey, a police station was mentioned. He mentioned the need for three law enforcement positions stating our population has grown to almost 28,000, but our staff has not changed.

Councilmember C. Brown commended Chief McCosker for the job he is doing with the limited staff. She is also in favor for adding the equipment for the additional officers.

City Manager T. Bolduc also mentioned the need to add additional firefighters.

Councilmember D. Capps asked whether we are projecting the amount of police and firefighters needed with the growth, and City Manager T. Bolduc said the fee schedule proposal will address these priorities, as well as a plan for a strategy. He added the city will continue to utilize volunteers and part-time staff.

City Manager T. Bolduc went over \$5.3 million in reserves mentioning some of the pooled cash is in a restricted status. He went over specific funds, and the unreserved balance adding the city has about \$19 million in pooled cash with \$2.4 million in restricted reserve to pay our debts. He also went over the projected revenues and expenditures in the General Fund.

City Manager T. Bolduc went over the proposed updates to the business tax process that will expedite and streamline the processing.

The City Council took a five-minute break at 10:00 a.m. and commenced at 10:16 a.m.

City Manager T. Bolduc recapped the Strategic Plan and provided an update on the accomplishments. He mentioned the employee turnover rate is 9.7% compared to 20% in the surrounding communities.

He went over the focus areas of financial sustainability; organizational capacity, efficiency, effectiveness, and efficiency; infrastructure; and communication asking the City Council if they want to continue the four foundational areas.

Discussion ensued on improving communication methods to get information out to the citizens and partnering with organizations to add marketing to their publications. The City Council agreed to continue with the focus areas.

City Manager T. Bolduc went over the quality-of-life focus areas: Community Character, Safety, Mobility, Opportunity, Play and Culture.

Discussion ensued on the four focus areas, and how they interrelate. Keeping the small town feeling while embracing growth and maintaining safety regarding ISO ratings and accreditation. The City Council was in favor of the direction for the four focus areas.

Discussion ensued on managing growth by ensuring there is a traffic plan in place, as the traffic and road development are critical. He added we are prepared to do the studies paced on our need-based growth.

Discussion ensued on smart growth, the concerns of the citizens on the growth, being able to control the growth if the property is annexed into the city, and the county controlling the zoning.

City Manager T. Bolduc stated we need to recruit businesses, work on control of growth and charge for the provided services. With land use planning, we can promote

certain types of developments such as attracting higher-end houses, as well as affordable housing. He also explained the challenges in offsetting expenses, response times affecting staffing needs, infrastructure, maintenance, the expansion of services and pacing growth. He proposed hiring two police officers, two firefighters, one utility worker, a laborer, an administration position in Recreation and an enhanced incentive pay.

Discussion ensued on the staffing needs and providing a growth-paced plan.

City Manager T. Bolduc stated we are placing focus on the building facilities components and currently there is no growth or hierarchy, so we are quantifying the process, as we need a reorganizational structure to focus on specific areas. The recreation positions are for youth and senior activities. Our challenge is that we have to ensure our facilities are maintained. He added we currently do not have any senior programs.

Discussion ensued on incentive pay, cost of living increases and performance-based increases.

City Manager T. Bolduc proposed a performance-based program that will be based on individuals completing a task for certification to obtain a pay increase, as an employee becomes a better employee when they take advantage of investing in themselves. The Council concurred with the structure.

City Manager T. Bolduc proposed a staggered cost of living increase by bringing the majority of the employees above the \$15 minimum wage before the 2026 deadline. He mentioned the employees are paid lower than surrounding communities across the board. He added we have some money to provide a one-time COLA increase and suggested a one-time inflation stipend check for \$600 for full-time employees and \$300 part-time employees.

Discussion ensued on the need to increase everyone up to \$15 per hour to assist employees who are struggling. City Manager T. Bolduc went over the inflation challenges with material and contract costs, and cost of living. He proposed options for the inflation-stipend to the employees utilizing funds from the employee health insurance rebate. He will provide the City Council with quantifiable numbers for review. There was a consensus of the City Council.

City Manager T. Bolduc went over the infrastructure demands such as the bypass and system expansion, increased demand on services, aging facilities, traffic, and utility programs, as well as the infrastructure demands in growth.

City Manager T. Bolduc called for a break at 11:45 a.m. and the meeting commenced at noon.

City Manager T. Bolduc started the discussion on priorities the Council provided as

threats: such as managing growth, infrastructure, housing and childcare, traffic, blight, and crime concerns.

Discussion ensued on how traffic is driven by the growth. City Manager T. Bolduc replied that we can influence the County investment because we are putting money into the traffic study as well.

The City Council discussed the improvements that have been made for handling blight and crime. They also discussed the cost for the city to provide water service currently and in the future. They went over housing; labor market; partnering with the military for childcare options; and fire and police services.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Rencich suggested combining fire and police under safety. Councilmember Ryan Bullard added fire and police need a pay increase. Councilmember Doug Capps said we need to be competitive by ensuring our employees are certified. After discussion, the Council concurred that building a combined fire and police building should have emphasis, as that was rated higher than building a City Hall.

Discussion ensued and the Council agreed that they will not add any more money to the Environmental Park. However, the Twin Hills Gym should be added to the list for consideration in improving recreational facilities, building a bigger gym, and converting the present gym to a multi-use facility. The Council also discussed future park needs and locations. There was a consensus from the Council to identify a location and design process for the Fire, Police, and Dispatch Facility and then for recreational facilities. The Council added the need for a Public Works building.

City Manager T. Bolduc said the priority is to have a plan for Public Safety (police, fire, dispatch) and then a Public Services building. He plans to run both studies concurrently and add an indoor multi-use complex. He mentioned we also need a plan for use of Old Spanish Trail.

City Manager T. Bolduc called for a break at 12:50 p.m. and commenced at 12:55 p.m.

City Manager T. Bolduc mentioned the recreation priorities were youth sports, senior programs, and passive recreation opportunities.

Discussion ensued on the importance of youth sports including Sports Tourism with the TDC. Councilmember D. Capps stressed the importance of a park at the north end of town. He would like to utilize the TDC for sports tourism. Discussion ensued on use of a Sports Complex, and funding from the TDC. City Manager T. Bolduc said if we ask the TDC for funding, it would be a joint effort with the County. He added the city does not have the staffing needed. For regional sports, we would need a person to market it to be competitive. He said a hybrid model would be for both citizen and team use. He added a deputy director for recreation would prepare a plan

on how we can fit into the market. Council agreed on researching the hybrid approach.

City Manager T. Bolduc went over the community priorities: external image, staffing, recreational programs, affordable housing, and the fentanyl overdose issue.

City Manager T. Bolduc stated the goals for 2028 are to continue to maintain fully funded reserves, increase community partnerships and volunteerism, and identify additional revenue sources to include a new grant or alternative funding source. There was a consensus from the Council to continue with the goals.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the following goals based on the feedback to improve the process for new development. For FY24, implement a new simplified fee structure for business tax receipts and complete a “Lunch and Learn” with building industry professionals. For FY25, partner with the SBDC and Chamber of Commerce for a small business summit, launch a business navigator website, and maintain a partnership with the Small Business Development Center and the Chamber of Commerce. There was a consensus from the Council to move forward. Mayor Pro-Tem A. Rencich asked that “One Okaloosa” be included.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the next set of goals: To obtain and maintain competent staff; for FY24 market the referral program; continue the PD cadet program; launch the FD cadet program; develop a career progression program and continue to fund training opportunities; develop and implement incentive pay plan for all departments; and continue to prioritize the culture and “One City One Mission” through employee events and awards. There was a consensus from the Council.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the next set of goals to prioritize the findings of the facility assessment. Conduct a Council Workshop to identify the disposition of the Police Department; identify the disposition of the Public Services and determine the necessity/location of FD Station 4. There was consensus from the City Council.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the next set of goals for 2028. Develop and implement the infrastructure expansion of Hwy 85, the wastewater system, water and stormwater, transportation overlay district development plan, and completion of the utility expansion.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the next set of goals: By FY25: Engage, inform, and educate staff; increase employee satisfaction internally; increase citizen satisfaction with public communication; produce a monthly City Manager report; and produce Civic View podcast. By FY28, conduct an opioid-related overdose awareness campaign; continue to conduct public safety community events four times yearly for citizen relations; and implement a public safety recreational program. There was a consensus from the Council.

City Manager T. Bolduc called for a break at 1:38 p.m. and commenced at 1:44 p.m.

City Manager T. Bolduc mentioned the goals for the Council will be discussed at the next budget meeting and suggested holding the line on the current millage rate at 6.8466. The City Council agreed.

City Manager T. Bolduc outlined the proposed changes to the fee schedule, explaining each of the proposed fees. In response to Mayor Pro-Tem A. Rencich regarding whether a business could pay multi-year, City Attorney J. Holloway replied he will research and follow up.

City Manager T. Bolduc announced the consensus is to offset expenses by raising fees.

City Manager T. Bolduc brought up the water rate adjustment rate comparison for the surrounding communities and stated the proposed rate is \$87.87, which includes a 15% increase. This increase keeps the city competitive and allows us to do maintenance.

Discussion ensued on the rate increase. Councilmember R. Bullard voiced concern and suggested a graduated increase, noting the recent trash increase. The Council agreed 4 to 1 with Councilmember R. Bullard opposed.

City Manager T. Bolduc stated it would be \$400,000 more to increase salaries mentioning he can make the adjustments with the holding of the millage rate and adding the water increase. Discussion ensued on investing in the staff. There was a consensus to come back with numbers. Councilmember R. Bullard said the water increase is not realistic for the citizens adding he would like to see a lower franchise fee for garbage.

6. Comments from the Audience

Mayor JB Whitten called for comment from the public.

7. Comments from the Mayor and Council

Mayor JB Whitten called for comment from the Council.

8. Adjournment

Mayor JB Whitten adjourned the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Minutes approved this 14th day of August 2023.


JB Whitten, Mayor




Maryanne Schrader

City Clerk

Proper Notice having been duly given