

**CITY OF HAHIRA**

**AUGUST 1, 2023**

**WORK SESSION**

**6:00 P.M.**

**COURTHOUSE**

The Mayor and Council met for a Work Session on August 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Bruce Cain presiding.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Bruce Cain, Councils: Louise White, Mason Barfield, Kenneth Davis and Mayor Pro Tem TONY Rosatti. City Manager Jonathan Sumner, City Clerk Lisa Mashburn, Police Chief Terry Davis, Lt Todd Pitchford, Fire Chief Dwight Bennett, Assistant Fire Chief David Thompson, PWD Willie Jones and MSD Jennifer Price were all present.

**REVIEW/CORRECTION OF MEETING MINUTES:**

**A. JULY 11, 2023 WORK SESSION**

**B. JULY 13, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or corrections regarding the minutes. None noted.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. MILLAGE RATE (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said we have started the budget for August and part of that is section IV which is the Millage rate. We are on a set time frame and have been waiting for the assessor's office for the required advertisements. We are past that for the August Council meeting but can hold Special Called Meeting this month. Staff has recommended a roll back from 5.75 (2022) to 4.969. There was an increase in all areas due to property value increases across the board, all boards will have a net increase. We must set the Millage rate so that the tax bills can be sent out. The property tax has increased due to the value of homes and we think property tax owners need some relief. The collection amount will be about

the same as the rollback. The local option sales tax doubled last year and this is part of the relief to property owners and the tax. I have prepared the budget with this amount. We will have to have 1 advertisement and 1 public hearing. We do have legal advertisement requirements which require the ad to run a week before the meeting. We can have a Special Called Meeting on August 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. and the ad will show roll back. You can get a copy of the budget at City Hall and you all have a copy in your packets.

**B. AMENDMENT TO ALCOHOL BY TE DRINK ORDINANCE-DISTILLED BEVERAGES (SECOND READING CITY ATTORNEY)**

This item will be on Thursday night to allow us to receive public input. We are just adding distilled beverages to Ordinance that allows beer and wine by the drink now.

**REVIEW OF BILLS/BUDGET OVERAGES:**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the bills. None noted.

**DEPARTMENT REQUESTS:**

**A. POLICE DEPARTMENT LEASE-PAO PROPERTIES-1 YEAR-\$52,000 (CHIEF DAVIS)**

Chief Davis stated that 6 years ago we leased the building at 815 Tillman Street. It is now time to renew the lease. The prices have gone up drastically and this is the cheapest we can get. As you remember 5-7 years ago, we discussed a new building for the Police department and the prices were too high. Now they have more than doubled. We discussed buying the building we are leasing now but the owner is not interested. We hate to invest in property we do not own but we will have to for now. The building is 22,000 square feet and the cost is \$52,000 per month. Chief Davis stated the third building is now ready to move into. Councilmember White stated both options are not cheap. Mayor Pro Tem Rosatti stated he feels the one-year lease is the way to go, we need to decide about building a new building or continue leasing. Councilman Davis asked about the new

air conditioning we put in the building. Chief Davis stated we are responsible for that according to the lease.

**B. SCHOOL CAMERA SYSTEM (CHIEF DAVIS)**

Chief Davis stated at Retreat a few years ago this company came in and talked to us about cameras in the school zones. We have a lot of growth and traffic and citation would be civil matter through this company. The Company will send out the citations and collect. They would take their portion and then give the rest to the City which would have to go to Public Safety. This would be at no expense to the City. We would have to present it to the schools and get them to sign off on it before we can move forward. We discussed then taking this money and purchasing flock cameras for all the entrances of the City. Lt Pitchford stated this will be no charge to the taxpayers. IF the Schools sign off it would then have to come to Council for a resolution next. The speeding fines would be from \$75 for the first offense and then \$125 for the second. This is a Civil expense. The cameras will deter speeding and make it safer for all the children. The cameras would only be activated around school times and would allow 10 miles before the first warning. IF we do this then we would take the money and purchase flock cameras which cost about \$3000 each and we would need 6 of them. This will help with traffic studies at the I-75 area and we will have 45 days of video going in and out of the City. The contract would also need to be sent to the City Attorney before approval. This is just a request to approach the school board and then come back to the Council. The City of Valdosta now has this along with the City of Thomasville and City of Albany. It is zero cost to the City. Councilmember White said this gives a lot of power to the City and school system. She said it may be ok in the school areas and I-75 but not in neighborhoods. Chief Davis stated it would not be in neighborhoods and would put focus on the vehicles and not surrounding areas. If we can slow people down, we may be able to save a life. IT is all about public safety.

**C. IRRIGATION METERS (PWD JONES)**

PWD Jones said he wanted to discuss irrigation meters. They cost us \$786 and we charge \$300 due to price adjustment back in 2008 by Council. We

have a lot of construction in town and have had 103 irrigation meters since March for the new neighborhoods. This has a big impact on the budget. This is not a profit-making item but we need to improve and expand on the pricing. We are losing money and I think we should charge \$1000 per house. They are building \$300,000 houses and can afford this price.

**SET AUGUST CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. POLICE DEPARTMENT LEASE-PAO-1 YEAR-\$52,000
- B. SCHOOL CAMERA SYSTEM-AUTHORIZATION TO REQUEST LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS
- C. IRRIGATION METERS-\$1,000

**FY24 BUDGET WORKSHOP 1 (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner stated it is August and the time to work on the budget for FY2024. He reviewed the Mayors budget message. The budget shows an increase in the fuel and electricity for all departments but stated we did not figure in the 3% cost of living increase. The Special Revenue fund will support new police vehicles in 2024 and the General fund shows the increases in vehicle repairs. The Proprietary fund absorbs most of the Capital cost. The debt expenditure is 1.7 mill to 2.1 million. Most of the increases are from salaries and fuel costs. We have a balanced budget with the budget roll back in place. IF you have any questions please stop and talk to me or pick up a copy at City Hall. We have not had a roll back in 17 years, we need to give the taxpayer some relief thanks to the Councils budgeting.

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:00 P.M.**

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**MAYOR BRUCE CAIN**

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**CITY CLERK LISA MASHBURN**