

CITY OF PALM BAY, FLORIDA

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 2023-21

Held on Wednesday, the 6th day of September 2023, at the City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road, SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Palm Bay, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at the hour of 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

MAYOR:	Rob Medina	Present
DEPUTY MAYOR:	Donny Felix	Present
COUNCILMEMBER:	Kenny Johnson	Present
COUNCILMEMBER:	Randy Foster	Present
COUNCILMEMBER:	Vacant	
CITY MANAGER:	Suzanne Sherman	Present
CITY ATTORNEY:	Patricia Smith	Present
CITY CLERK:	Terese Jones	Present

Councilman Foster attended the meeting via teleconference.

CITY STAFF: Juliet Misconi, Deputy City Manager; Angelica Collins, Fiscal Manager; Christopher Little, Utilities Director.

COMMENTARY BY STAFF:

1. Statement Regarding Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2024.

Ms. Sherman announced that the City had tentatively adopted an operating millage rate of 7.5995 for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024, which exceeded the Truth in Millage (TRIM) current year aggregate rolled-back rate of 6.8183 by 11.46%. The percentage increase being above the three percent (3%) cap was caused by new construction being excluded from the three percent (3%) cap.

Contributing to the operating millage rate increase over the rolled-back rate was:

- \$2.1 million in high priority funding needs including contractual obligations requiring payment.

- \$3.7 million capital funding needs for vehicle replacements, public safety equipment, including required radio replacements, information technology investments and funding toward the construction of Fire Station 7.
- \$2.75 million toward Road Maintenance Fund investments.
- Funding required for police and fire pension contribution obligations of \$6.7 million resulting in a 38.2% increase from the previous fiscal year.
- \$2.3 million in personnel adjustments including nine (9) additional firefighters and eight (8) additional police officers.

The City had also tentatively adopted a debt millage rate of 0.9084 for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024. The tentative debt millage rate shall generate estimated revenues totaling \$6,972,219 based on the gross taxable value certified by the Property Appraiser's Office.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Discussion of tentative millage rate for Tax Year 2023 and City Manager's summary of proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

The public hearing was opened. Ms. Collins provided an overview of the proposed budget.

Individuals commented on the budget. Ms. Sherman responded to comments regarding line items of the budget.

The public hearing was closed.

BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of tentative millage rate for Tax Year 2023; re-computation, if needed, and announcement of tentative millage rate and percentage increase over rolled-back rate.

Ms. Sherman said the tentative millage rate for tax year 2023 was 7.0171 and the road bond debt millage was 0.9084.

Randall Olszewski, resident, disagreed with the proposed millage rate being high and then being lowered by City Council. He felt the process was confusing to residents.

Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Felix, to set the tentative millage rate at 7.0171. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Felix, to set the road bond debt millage rate at 0.9084. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

2. Ordinance 2023-86, amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 200, Utilities Code, by adjusting the rates, fees and charges for the City's utilities system and services, first reading.

The City Attorney read the ordinance in caption only.

Ms. Sherman presented the request to Council.

Randall Olszewski, resident, asked about expansion of infrastructure.

Mr. Little and Jeff Dykstra, of Stantec (City consultant), responded to questions. Mr. Little advised that pursuant to the five-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), there were plans to expand the utility plants. There would be future discussions of mandatory connection for those that had services available.

Motion by Deputy Mayor Felix, seconded by Mr. Foster, to approve Ordinance 2023-86.

Deputy Mayor Felix said Council had an obligation to ensure that the residents received the best quality of life. He wanted everyone to have access to city water and sewer now rather than later, even if it was in small increments. Mr. Foster agreed that everyone in the city should have the opportunity to have city water and sewer. Mr. Johnson said that if there was access for city water and sewer, everyone should be connected.

Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

3. Ordinance 2023-87, amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 201, Sewer Use, Subchapter 'Miscellaneous Provisions', by adjusting the permit fees and other charges related to the City's utilities wastewater system, first reading.

The City Attorney read the ordinance in caption only.

Ms. Sherman presented the request to Council.

Randall Olszewski, resident, said that utilities were available on his street, and he had suggested that his neighbors connect to the system. He said a local company was promoting its services to connect residents through grant monies. He felt the city should use the company to speed up the connection process for residents.

Ms. Sherman stated that the program through the Save Our Indian River Lagoon had a list of contractors to perform the connection services. The City was also working on its own program through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Felix, to approve Ordinance 2023-87. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

4. Ordinance 2023-88, amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 202, Reclaimed Water, by adjusting the rates, fees, and charges for reclaimed water, first reading.

The City Attorney read the ordinance in caption only.

Ms. Sherman presented the request to Council.

Randall Olszewski, resident, questioned how the use of reclaimed water could be promoted throughout the city.

Mr. Little addressed the comments by Mr. Olszewski. There had been a push to get reclaimed water out to the communities. The City had an obligation in the consumptive use permit to utilize as much reclaimed water as possible. There were several communities that used reclaimed water, but water quality was an issue.

Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Felix, to approve Ordinance 2023-88. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

5. Ordinance 2023-89, adopting the final budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, first reading.

The City Attorney read the ordinance in caption only.

Ms. Sherman presented the request to Council.

Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Felix, to approve Ordinance 2023-89. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Felix, Yea; Councilman Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 8:05 P.M.

Rob Medina, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Terese M. Jones, CITY CLERK