

**TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA
TOWN COMMISSION
1ST PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Chris Vincent called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Also present were Vice Mayor Alfred “Buz” Oldaker, Commissioner Edmund Malkoon, Commissioner Elliot Sokolow, Commissioner Randy Strauss, Interim Town Manager Linda Connors, Assistant to the Town Manager Neysa Herrera, Town Attorney Susan Trevarthen, Public Works Director Ken Rubach, Director of Finance and Budget Lucila Lang, Acting Development Services Director Jhanelle Campbell, Special Events and Marketing Manager Debbie Hime, Public Information Officer/IT Administrator Steve d’Oliveira, and Town Clerk Tedra Allen.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PRESENTATION

a. Florida Fish and Wildlife and Force Blue Marine Monitoring Event

This Item was rescheduled for the regular Commission meeting.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time Mayor Vincent opened public comment.

Bill Ciani, resident, expressed concern with the loss of Downtown parking spaces in order to provide more outdoor seating for restaurants. He pointed out that his tenants in the Downtown area depend upon these parking spaces for their businesses. He requested an independent study by a consultant before making any of the proposed changes for Downtown.

Barbara Cole, resident, requested clarification of the changes in the revised budget. She asked that the search for a permanent Town Manager be reflected in the budget, and that the Commission discuss what will be eliminated under the rolled back millage rate. She also questioned the use of taxpayer money for charitable donations, increases for the Visitor Center, and proposed salary increases for the Commission.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

Candice Ericks, representing advocacy team Ericks Consulting, noted that the Town's legislative efforts are not reflected in the proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022. She emphasized that the coming fiscal year is an election year, in which more funds are typically allocated for municipal projects and grant programs.

Lauren Jackson, also representing Ericks Consulting, advised that the financial outlook and political climate are both positive for the pursuit of grant projects in FY 2021-2022.

Ken Brenner, resident, stated that residences make up 97.9% of all taxable parcels in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea and pay approximately 82.87% of the annual budget. He recommended that a fire study be done to implement a more equitable method. He urged the Commission to distribute COVID-19 relief funds to those who need them most.

With no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Mayor Vincent closed the public hearing.

5. RESOLUTIONS

- a. Resolution 2021-47 – A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE FINAL FIRE ASSESSMENT RATE ON PROPERTY THAT IS SPECIALLY BENEFITED BY FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2021 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022; CONFIRMING THE FINAL ASSESSMENT ROLLS AND LEVYING SUCH SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS.**

At this time Mayor Vincent opened public comment, which he closed upon receiving no input.

Commissioner Malkoon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sokolow, to adopt Resolution 2021-47. Motion carried 5-0.

- b. Resolution 2021-48 – A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE PROPOSED TOWN AD VALOREM TAX MILLAGE RATE AT 3.3923 MILLS PER THOUSAND DOLLARS OF TAXABLE ASSESSED VALUE, WHICH IS 0% ABOVE THE BACK MILLAGE RATE OF 3.3923 MILLS COMPUTED PURSUANT TO STATE LAW, FOR THE 2021 TAX YEAR; ANNOUNCING THE**

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

SECOND AND FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE FINAL MILLAGE RATE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

At this time Mayor Vincent opened public comment.

Ron Piersante, resident, recalled that Staff was directed to prepare a revised budget that would reduce Town expenses by approximately \$285,000. He noted that these funds could have been used toward public needs, and added that the Town already has one of the lowest millage rates in Broward County. He concluded that residents will save approximately \$30 due to this reduction.

With no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Mayor Vincent closed public comment.

Commissioner Sokolow requested a recap of the \$285,000 taken from the budget. Interim Town Manager Linda Connors noted that p.19 of the Commissioners' backup materials lists some of these eliminated items, which include:

- Some training in all Departments
- Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan is postponed until FY 2022-2023
- New ATV to replace an existing vehicle
- Funds for two new Town events as well as assistance to the Farmers' Market
- New Year's Eve celebration funds to assist businesses with additional security
- Postponement of some capital improvements until a later date
- Improvements/repairs to beach portals
- Drainage repairs on Bougainvillea Drive
- Canal dredging extended from two years to three years
- Reduced Palm Club septic to sewer funds
- Reduced funds for Codrington Drive improvements
- Postpone the replacement of floors in Town Hall

Commissioner Strauss noted that these items can be brought back upon request, and monies to pay for them obtained through other means over the next year. He pointed out that reserve funds are available if needed. He concluded that he was comfortable standing by the proposed rolled back millage rate, and that the funds saved for households served as an important gesture to residents.

Mayor Vincent requested additional information on the Town's contractual obligation to Ericks Consulting. Interim Town Manager Connors replied that the Town did not budget funds under either the original proposed millage rate or the current rolled back rate for

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

ongoing advocacy services. Ericks Consulting was originally hired to address needs for the Palm Club project at a cost of \$30,000.

Mayor Vincent felt it was extremely important to retain a political consultant, as otherwise they would have no representation in Tallahassee when needed. He recommended that this contract be continued past its current expiration date.

Vice Mayor Oldaker agreed with the Mayor's concerns regarding political representation, and pointed out that this illustrated one of his concerns with adopting the rolled back millage rate: if the contract is added back into the budget, other cuts will need to be made.

Commissioner Malkoon requested clarification of the scope of Ericks Consulting's work. Interim Town Manager Connors replied that the original contract, which has been in effect for the past three years, covered appropriations. The consultant has expanded these services to include updates on activity during Florida legislative sessions. The budget prepared for the previously proposed millage rate included \$30,000 for a grant writer as well as for a lobbyist, which provided some flexibility through which the Town could apply for grant funding.

Interim Town Manager Connors advised that the Town may wish to negotiate a lesser contract with Ericks Consulting, as they are not asking for appropriations linked to a specific project at this time. Commissioner Malkoon confirmed that he would be in favor of using a portion of the funds allocated to grant writing.

Mayor Vincent commented that the Town currently has a strategic plan budget of approximately \$35,000, which he did not feel was necessary, as the Town updates its Action Plan annually. He felt these funds could be used toward maintaining a consultant.

Mayor Vincent continued that the budget reflects a \$10,000 contract for administrative services for the Development Services Department, and requested clarification of this line item. Interim Town Manager Connors replied that while no new contractors were added to the FY 2021-2022 budget, the \$10,000 would go toward the administration of business tax receipts (BTRs), which are overseen by Development Services. As no new employee was retained to help with the processing of BTRs, funds were set aside to hire contractual employees who can assist Staff at a reasonable rate with no benefits. This expense has been reduced from its original \$30,000 in order to identify savings to accommodate the rolled back rate.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

Commissioner Strauss asked if the Town has received a net benefit from the retention of Ericks Consulting that could quantify the firm's costs. Interim Town Manager Connors advised that the Town has spent \$30,000 each year over three years. The intent upon their retention was to receive state funds to allocate to the Palm Club project. While this effort was not 100% successful, the Town expects to receive roughly \$100,000 from the County as well as from Pompano Beach but this has not yet been finalized.

Commissioner Strauss concluded that he also felt it was important to retain representation in Tallahassee, although he would like to see quantification of the Town's benefits from this advocacy. Interim Town Manager Connors further clarified that with the state and County receiving relief funds, it may be more likely for the Town to receive both state and County funds.

Commissioner Sokolow made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Malkoon, to adopt Resolution 2021-048, setting the millage rate at 3.3923 for the fiscal year 2021-2022 and establishing the second public hearing to consider adoption of the final millage rate and budget. Motion carried 4-1 (Vice Mayor Oldaker dissenting).

- c. Resolution 2021-49 – A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ATTACHED TENTATIVE TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 2021/2022 FISCAL YEAR; ANNOUNCING THE SECOND AND FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE FINAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 2021/2022 FISCAL YEAR; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Interim Town Manager Connors explained that Staff has prepared an overview of the budget process for the general public. She described the process as ongoing collaboration throughout the year by all Departments. This year's budget includes summary worksheets for the Commissioners, as well as "bottom line" numbers for each line item.

Director of Finance and Budget Lucila Lang noted that the Town's budget is comprised of several different funds, including Building, Sewer, Fire, Parking, General, and Capital Projects. Some of these are discretionary, while others, such as the Building, Sewer, and Fire Funds, are paid for entirely through their assessments. Most of the money received for the Town's budget is in the General Fund. The budget also includes donations, which increased significantly this year.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

Vice Mayor Oldaker addressed donations, suggesting that in the future the Commission review its procedure for placing charitable or nonprofit organizations on the list. He recommended a more structured approach to donations in subsequent years, as well as placing a possible cap on the amount the Town can give. Another option is giving the Town Manager discretion regarding some of these funds in the future.

Commissioner Sokolow noted that the Commission has made it clear that they would like to retain Ericks Consulting for another year, and the budget is sufficiently flexible that funds can be identified for this purpose without great difficulty. Regarding donations, he pointed out that a number of organizations have made presentations to the Commission to show the services they provide to Town residents. He did not, however, feel donations should be significantly changed at this point. He proposed approving the budget in total, with a request that before the second public hearing Staff reallocate funds to reflect this evening's discussion.

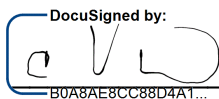
Mayor Vincent advised that the Town's budget is prepared to reflect 95% collection of ad valorem taxes; when additional funds are collected each year, this provides an amount that is roughly equal to the amount trimmed from the budget under the rolled back rate. He acknowledged that some of the COVID-19 funds the Town expects to receive will be regulated so they cannot be used for all purposes.

Commissioner Sokolow made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Oldaker, to adopt Resolution 2021-49 approving the tentative budget (including funds to be allocated to Ericks Consulting). Motion carried 5-0.

It was noted that the next public budget and millage rate hearing is scheduled for September 28, 2021 at 6 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

B0A8AE8CC88D4A1...

Mayor Chris Vincent

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
First Public Budget Hearing
September 13, 2021

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

F79938A3F45D42E...

Town Clerk Tedra Allen

11/5/2021

Date