TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA

TOWN COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING – 1st Budget HEARING

MINUTES

Jarvis Hall

4505 Ocean Drive
Thursday, September 12, 2013
7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER, MAYOR ROSEANN MINNET

Mayor Roseann Minnet called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Also present were Vice Mayor Scot Sasser, Commissioner Mark Brown, Commissioner Stuart Dodd, Commissioner Chris Vincent, Assistant Town Attorney Kathryn Mehaffey, Town Manager Connie Hoffmann, Assistant Town Manager Bud Bentley, Finance Director Tony Bryan, Municipal Services Director Don Prince and Town Clerk Vanessa Castillo.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

4. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

5. RESOLUTIONS

These items were discussed after Item 2

a. **Resolution 2013-40:** 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, 2013 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2014; CONFIRMING THE FINAL ASSESSMENT ROLLS AND LEVYING SUCH SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS. (FINANCE DIRECTOR TONY BRYAN)

Finance Director Bryan reviewed the details of the resolution, as set forth in the backup, noting while most Broward municipalities were increasing their fire assessments, and a few would remain the same, the Town was the only one reducing its fire fee.

Town Manager Hoffmann added that the fire fee was being reduced by five percent for residential and commercial properties.

Mayor Minnet pointed out that it was important to recognize that when the reduction was considered along with properties with an increase in taxable value, the increase in tax revenue to the Town remained minimal.

Commissioner Vincent asked if the five percent reduction that was going to commercial properties was after the adoption of the new methodology.

Finance Director Bryan affirmed that was correct, stating the new methodology had been implemented for commercial properties, switching from the current method of a tiered rate structure to a flat amount per square foot. He noted that for individual commercial businesses, fire assessment fees could go up or down, depending on how they were affected by the change in methodology. Overall, commercial properties were paying five percent less in fire assessment.

Commissioner Brown wanted to give credit where it was due saying that the Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) was doing a good job holding their costs down, while retooling and improving their equipment and training. The Town could not have as low a fire assessment if it was not for their efforts.

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to approve Resolution 2013-40. Vice Mayor Sasser seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

b. **Resolution 2013-41:** 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 3.9312 MILS PER THOUSAND DOLLARS OF TAXABLE ASSESSED VALUE, WHICH IS 3.01% ABOVE THE ROLLED BACK RATE COMPUTED PURSUANT TO STATE LAW, FOR THE 2013 TAX YEAR; ANNOUNCING THE SECOND AND FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE FINAL MILLAGE RATE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (FINANCE DIRECTOR TONY BRYAN)

Finance Director Bryan presented the proposed resolution, as detailed in the backup, mentioning the Town's millage rate was the fourth lowest in Broward County.

Commissioner Brown commented that at present, the Town also had the lowest garbage rate in Broward County. He mentioned a compilation done by the *Sun Sentinel* which looked at the total cost of government in all Broward municipalities, and the Town came out fourth lowest in the County. Their numbers were somewhat skewed, as both Sea Ranch Lakes and Hillsboro paid for garbage services in their property taxes, and Sea Ranch Lakes and Southwest Ranches had no sewer charges since they had septic tanks. He said that in an apples-to-apples comparison, it was likely that the Town would be the second lowest location in terms of taxes paid to local government. The only area

in which the Town was high was water and sewer charges, two services over which the Town had little control, as they were supplied and charged by Fort Lauderdale and Pompano Beach. He stated Town staff was working to keep the millage rate down, along with providing high quality services, such as police, fire, and maintaining the Town's cleanliness. There were various improvement projects in both residential and commercial areas, and the Town Commission and staff found ways to fund those projects without borrowing money or raising taxes. Commissioner Brown felt this was a very encouraging picture for the Town, reiterating the credit should be given to Town Manager Hoffmann and her staff for doing a great job. He hoped members of the community understood the taxes they paid in the Town were only 19 percent of their total tax bill, so the Town Commission and staff were the ones holding their local taxes down. He was pleased to support the subject resolution.

Assistant Town Attorney Mehaffey asked staff to briefly go over the information in the backup pertaining to the percentage increase in the millage rate over the rollback rate.

Town Manager Hoffmann responded the proposed millage rate was 3.01 percent more than the rollback rate of 3.8165. The proposed millage rate was 3.9312 mils and that was levied against every $1,000 of evaluation that was taxable for individual properties. She said individuals who owned and resided in their primary residence received a substantial reduction in their valuation, as it was their homesteaded property.

Commissioner Dodd commented the Town's property values were among the highest, but this did not take away from the great job staff did. He urged members of the community to lobby the County and School Board to do a better job, as the Town Commission and staff did everything it could to keep the Town's costs down. Taxpayers should tell the two taxing entities that made up 80 percent of their taxes that they could not continue to increase taxes without improving levels of service.

Town Manager Hoffmann pointed out the millage rate for the Town's neighbor, Sea Ranch Lakes, was 7.5, almost double the Town's millage rate.

Mayor Minnet thanked the Town Manager and her staff for doing an excellent job serving the Town and its citizens, and she hoped members of the community realized what a great staff they had working for them. She opened the discussion for public comment, which she closed upon receiving no input.

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to approve Resolution 2013-41. Commissioner Vincent seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Minnet mentioned the next meeting was scheduled for September 26, 2013, at 7:00 p.m., asking if it was too late to change the time to 6:00 p.m..

Finance Director Bryan indicated it was not too late, as the notice for the second meeting on September 26th, 2013, would go out on September 13, 2013.

Assistant Town Attorney Mehaffey recommended a motion to amend and reconsider Resolution 2013-41, changing the meeting time to 6:00 p.m. on September 26, 2013.

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to amend and reconsider Resolution 2013-41, changing the meeting time to 6:00 p.m. on September 26, 2013. Vice Mayor Sasser seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

c. **Resolution 2013-42:** A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ATTACHED TENTATIVE TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 2013/2014 FISCAL YEAR; ANNOUNCING THE SECOND AND FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE FINAL TOWN BUDGET FOR THE 2013/2014 FISCAL YEAR; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (FINANCE DIRECTOR TONY BRYAN AND TOWN MANAGER CONNIE HOFFMANN)

Mayor Minnet opened the discussion for public comment, which she closed upon receiving no input.

Finance Director Bryan presented the highlights of the proposed resolution, as illustrated in the backup.

Town Manager Hoffmann clarified that based on staff's understanding of what the Commission decided at a July Town Commission Meeting, the Town Attorney's budget was reduced to $338,000, as suggested by Vice Mayor Sasser. In the minutes, Vice Mayor Sasser said several times he proposed a reduction of $35,000 to $338,000. But taking the budgeted amount down to $338,000 was only a $30,000 reduction. If there was a different intention, staff required further direction from the Commission.

Vice Mayor Sasser was satisfied with the $30,000 reduction.

Mayor Minnet noted no members of the public appeared to speak on the budget, stating it was a testament to the Town Commission and staff that the residents truly believed in what the Town was doing. She hoped members of the community were watching the meeting, particularly when Commission Dodd urged residents to hold their County Officials and School Board members accountable for their actions, particularly those affecting their taxes.

Town Manager Hoffmann stated the current budget contained a number of changes made by staff compared to the budget she recommended in July. The Commission was aware of most of those changes, and they were outlined in the memo contained in the backup. She noted that the decisions made at the Commission meeting on Tuesday, September 10, 2013, about the garbage rates, and funding some expenditures related to garbage collection and keeping the Town clean were not yet reflected in the budget. Staff would make those changes before the Commission adopted the final budget in two weeks.

Commissioner Dodd commended staff on the budget presentation. In the face of the numerous budget changes and requests, staff was doing a great job providing the Commission with the figures. This allowed the Commission to determine if the Town had extra revenue to take actions they desired to make.

Mayor Minnet mentioned that Mr. Bryan had passed his CPA exams and was to be congratulated.

Commissioner Dodd made a motion to approve Resolution 2013-41, amending the meeting time to 6:00 p.m. on September 26, 2013. Vice Mayor Sasser seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2nd AND FINAL PUBLIC HEARING ON MILLAGE AND BUDGET

Mayor Minnet announced the second and final public hearing to set the millage rate and approve the final budget would take place Thursday, September 26, 2013, at 6:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Commission, Mayor Minnet adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Roseann Minnet

Mayor Roseann Minnet

ATTEST:

Vanessa Castillo

Town Clerk Vanessa Castillo

10/22/13

Date