



City of  
**Panama City Beach**

City Hall  
17007 PCB Parkway  
PCB, FL 32413  
www.pcbfl.gov

**MINUTES** of the **August 18, 2021** Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, and when permitted or required by the subject matter, the Panama City Beach Community Redevelopment Agency.

**Mayor Sheldon called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

**MAYOR MARK SHELDON**

**VICE MAYOR GEOFF MCCONNELL**

**PHIL CHESTER**

**PAUL CASTO**

**MICHAEL JARMAN**

Others present were City Manager Drew Whitman, Assistant City Manager Holly White, City Attorneys Amy Myers and Cole Davis, City Clerk Lynne Fasone, Directors, staff and members of the public and press.

Councilman Phil Chester led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Sheldon called for approval of the August 4, 2021 special meeting minutes. Vice Mayor McConnell so moved. Councilman Casto seconded the motion. All were in favor of approval by a roll call vote.

Councilman Chester	Aye
Vice Mayor McConnell	Aye
Councilman Jarman	Aye
Councilman Casto	Aye
Mayor Sheldon	Aye

**BUDGET WORKSHOP AND PUBLIC HEARING**

Mayor Sheldon called for public comments. Hearing and seeing none.

Mayor Sheldon opened-up the **General Fund FY 2022** discussion.

Assistant City Manager White began review where Council left off on August 4<sup>th</sup>, with the **Law Enforcement Fund**.

Discussion regarding funding the east end substation, FEMA grant award for the substation and staffing the substation took place. Ms. White reviewed the **attached PowerPoint (beginning on page 18)** with respect to the Law Enforcement Fund. Discussion regarding police vehicle purchases, including the difficulty in purchasing vehicles because of supply and demand took place.

Councilman Casto noted his support for the Police Department and recommended hiring half of the proposed employees. Vice Mayor McConnell concurred with Councilman Casto and recommended seeing the effects of the 3 new hires, coming into the off season. Councilman Jarman recommended funding number of officers in the 5-year plan, 2 new hires. Councilman Jarman recommended Council make decisions on the CSI, and intel analyst positions. Councilman Chester and Mayor Sheldon noted they were fine with hiring the 5-5 ½ new positions. City Manager Whitman invited Deputy Chief Lindsey to the podium.

Deputy Chief discussed improvements at the Department, blackout dates, the city's growth, and recruitment and retention. Deputy Lindsey reported that the Department was behind in staffing and strongly recommended hiring the proposed 5 ½ positions. Deputy Chief invited Captain Deegan to the podium to review numbers/data.

Councilman Casto inquired about mutual aid assistance. Deputy Lindsey reported that mutual aid was great for assisting the city with crowds and visibility, but it did not help with responding to calls, per Florida statutes. Deputy Chief additionally discussed the difficulty with getting mutual aid assistance.

Mayor Sheldon reported that 2 of the officers were in the 5-year plan and already budgeted. Manager Whitman concurred. Deputy Chief reported that officers had responded to over 80,000 calls for service last year and were on track to respond to even more this year. Discussion regarding the City's events policy and staffing events took place.

Vice Mayor McConnell recommended hiring 3 officers and the communications officer. Councilman Jarman recommended hiring the officers in the 5-year plan and the intel analyst, since a Captain was currently doing that job and the captain's job. Mayor Sheldon noted his support for hiring 3 officers, which would bring the city to even, especially with the latest census numbers.

Further discussion regarding revenue numbers, capital improvements, adding \$10 million to this year's budget, calls for service increasing, the city not having an ad valorem tax, PD overtime and Chiefs' working on the streets took place.

Councilman Chester inquired if the PD was fully staffed. Capitan Deegan reported yes, 75 sworn officers with a total of 95 personnel in the PD.

Councilman Casto recommending budgeting for and hiring the 2 officers already in the budget, the CSI position, intel analyst and the part-time dispatcher. Councilman Jarman concurred. Council members further discussed cutting the capital budget rather than cutting the public safety budget. Manager Whitman reported that the Police Department would be losing between 5 to 10 officers next year because of burnout and further discussed the high burnout rate.

Councilman Jarman inquired if Council supported hiring the 2 officers already in the budget, the CSI position, the intel analyst and the part-time dispatcher. Vice Mayor McConnell and Councilman Casto noted their support. Councilman Chester and Mayor Sheldon reported that they were fine budgeting all new proposed positions, however, they would agree.

Mayor Sheldon restated that Council supported hiring the 2 officers already in the budget, the CSI position, the intel analyst and the part-time dispatcher. Council asked Manager Whitman to bring back to Council east end substation funding numbers. Further discussion regarding possible grants for officers and advertising now for the sworn positions took place.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Fire Department Fund (beginning on page 20)**.

Mayor Sheldon invited Chief Morgan to the podium. Discussion regarding staffing took place. Chief Morgan reported that he had asked for a training chief for the last 2 years and supported the request, however, he would push the position until next year given the construction timeline of the new training tower. Chief Morgan requested Council fund the 2 lifeguard positions now. Discussion regarding the TDC funding the lifeguards and number of drownings took place.

Vice Mayor McConnell noted his support of Chief Morgan's recommendation, funding; 2 lifeguards and pushing the training chief position off one year. Vice Mayor McConnell noted he would like to see a plan developed for the new fire station facilities. Discussion regarding rebuilding fire stations #31 and #32 and finding land for fire station #32 and funding that purchase took place.

Mayor Sheldon restated that Council supported funding 2 lifeguards and pushing the training chief position to next year, and the truck for that position, and funding for land acquisition in the budget. Council members concurred. Mayor Sheldon called for further comments on the Fire Department budget. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked Chief Ray.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Building Department Fund (beginning on page 27)**. Ms. White reported that the budget was status quo. Ms. White added that all the budgets take into account a 5% cost-of-living increase. Vice Mayor McConnell inquired about contractual services. Discussion regarding funding contractual services with restricted funds took place. No changes recommended.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Street Department Fund (beginning on page 28)**. Ms. White reported that no new people/positions were being requested. Discussion regarding feeling confident on receiving the North Richard Jackson Blvd. grant took place.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Library Fund (beginning on page 29)**. Discussion regarding Bay County running the library took place. No changes recommended.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Recreation Fund (beginning on page 30)**. Ms. White reported that 2 new people were being proposed, as well as the items highlighted in yellow which were not in the 5-year plan.

Vice Mayor McConnell recommended removing the resurfacing of Festival Road and removing the 2 new positions. Councilman Casto concurred and inquired about the purchase of a midsize tractor at \$55,000. City Manager Whitman reported that he cut out the request for a large tractor, however, this midsize tractor was used almost daily. City Manager Whitman reported further that as for the new employees, he did cut out some seasonal positions to be able to fund the full-time positions. City Manager Whitman invited Director Ponek to the podium. Director Ponek concurred. Director Ponek added that he removed three seasonal positions to fund one full-time maintenance position and the new Rec Supervisor position who would cover all events. Director Ponek added that he could push off the new Rec Supervisor position to next year, however, he really needed the maintenance employee.

Discussion regarding purchasing new trucks and setting aside funds each year to resurface roads, pickleball, basketball and tennis courts took place.

Mayor Sheldon called for further discussion. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked Director Ponek. Mayor Sheldon restated that Council supported funding the maintenance position and pushing off until next year the resurfacing to the courts, festival road and the Rec Supervisor position. Council members concurred.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **5-year Financial Forecast (beginning on page 33)** and the **Stormwater Fund (beginning on page 36)**.

Mayor Sheldon called for comments. Councilman Casto noted he was opposed to a rate increase.

Mayor Sheldon invited Director Jenkins to the podium. Director Jenkins reported that she was willing to rework the budget to reflect the projects that Council would like to fund in 2022. Councilman Casto and Ms. Jenkins discussed changing the stormwater methodology. Mayor Sheldon inquired which projects needed to stay in the budget this year. Director Jenkins recommended Vestavia needs to stay in the budget and the City would be receiving some grant funding for that project. Further discussion regarding projects and one new proposed position took place.

Mayor Sheldon called for further discussion. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked Director Jenkins. Mayor Sheldon restated that Council supported funding the one new stormwater maintenance worker position

**At 12:12 p.m. Mayor Sheldon called for a 30-minute recess.**

**Mayor Sheldon reconvene the meeting at 12:47 p.m.**

Mayor Sheldon called for further discussion on the **Stormwater Fund**. Council reviewed the **attached 3 scenarios for the Stormwater 5-year Financial Forecast**. Council agreed they would like to hold tight on the stormwater assessment rates and redo the budget leaving it flat.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Pier Fund (beginning on page 50)**. Discussion regarding the proposed ½ Pier employee and vehicle purchases took place. Mayor Sheldon noted he was fine with the truck purchase as it was in the 5-year plan. Discussion regarding funding the rehabbing of beach accesses took place. Councilman Chester recommended purchasing an F150 instead of a F250 truck to help reduce costs.

Mayor Sheldon called for further discussion. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon restated that Council supported funding the proposed ½ Pier employee position and the ½-ton truck. Council members concurred.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Aquatics Fund (beginning on page 60)**. Discussion regarding funding the pool took place. Discussion regarding annual pool passes took place. Discussion regarding staffing, difficulty finding staffing and operations took place. Discussion regarding looking at an analysis of going to a seasonal pool took place.

Director Ponek reported on improvements, repairing and/or planning for the replacement of kiddy pool play features. Discussion regarding the pool and recreation facilities attributing to residents' quality of life took place. Discussion regarding looking at the seasonality of the pool took place. Discussion regarding the swim lessons program being a success this year with over 500 kids going through the program took place. Discussion regarding swim meets and the TDC being involved with the swim meets took place.

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **CRA Fund (beginning on page 70)**. Discussion regarding funding for 2 new trucks took place. Mayor Sheldon invited CRA Manager David Campbell to the podium. Council members and Manager Campbell discussed CRA funding, employees, labor costs and debt service.

Vice Mayor McConnell noted that he was struggling with proposed 5% raise and would probably settle at 2 ½-3%. Mayor Sheldon and Councilman Jarman recommended a 3% raise. Discussion regarding the past pay study and raises in general took place. Councilman Chester noted that he was fine with a 5% raise.

Councilman Casto recommended cutting one position and one truck out of the proposed CRA budget. Discussion regarding the bucket truck being split between several departments took place. Manager Campbell respectfully requested that the inspector position be funded, more than the other positions. City Manager Whitman recommended that the CRA worker position be moved forward a year, as well as the truck that goes with that position, to fund the inspector position.

Mayor Sheldon called for further discussion. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked Manager Campbell and restated that Council supported funding the proposed Pier/CRA Maintenance Worker position and the P/T Inspector/Project Manager position. Council members concurred.

**At 2:00 p.m. Mayor Sheldon called for a 15-minute recess.**

**Mayor Sheldon reconvene the meeting at 2:19 p.m.**

Assistant City Manager White reviewed the **Utilities/Water Funds (beginning on page 81)**. Ms. White reviewed the proposed new positions, proposed capital outlays including funding a traveling bridge. Discussion regarding the purpose of a traveling bridge took place. Mayor Sheldon asked for an update on the Odor Control Program. Director Shaeffer reported that it was in the drawing/design phase. Discussion regarding debt service being \$3.3 million and refunding took place. Mayor Sheldon called for further questions for Director Shaeffer. Discussion regarding moving/relocating utilities and DOT projects to accommodate growth took place. Discussion regarding the pole barn and the location of the fire department training tower took place.

Mayor Sheldon called for additional questions for Director Shaeffer. Hearing and seeing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked Director Shaeffer. Mayor Sheldon noted Council supported the proposed 2022 budget. Council members concurred.

Mayor Sheldon called for discussion on the **proposed 5% cost-of-living/pay increase**. Councilman Casto inquired as to the actual cost-of-living increase. Director White reported that it was 4.9%, the highest she had ever seen.

Councilman Jarman reported that he struggled with a 5% increase to employees and recommended a 3% increase. Vice Mayor McConnell concurred and recommended a 3% increase. Councilman Chester recommended a 5% increase, to help employees and attract new employees. Councilman Chester added that the city had done an excellent job with managing its money. Councilman Chester noted that he would go with a 3% increase if Council agreed to add another police officer to the budget. Councilman Chester added that the employees were doing more with less. Councilman Casto noted that if Council went along with the 5%, he would be willing to add another police officer to the budget. Mayor Sheldon noted that he struggled with a 5% increase as well. Mayor Sheldon discussed the city not having ad valorem tax. Council further discussed the cost-of-living increase versus city revenue.

Mayor Sheldon called for additional comments. Hearing seeing none, Mayor Sheldon noted that what he was hearing was that Council supported a cost-of-living increase for employees at 4% and adding an additional police officer, on top off the number of officers previously approved. All Council members concurred.

Mayor Sheldon called for further comments. Hearing none, Mayor Sheldon thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 2:52 p.m.

READ AND APPROVED this 20th day of October, 2021.



Mark Sheldon, Mayor  
City of Panama City Beach, Florida

ATTEST:



Lynne Fasone, MMC  
City Clerk

\* ACTION ITEMS NOTED WITH AN ASTERISK ARE TAKEN BOTH BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE PANAMA CITY BEACH REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY JOINTLY AND CONCURRENTLY. IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FOREGOING MINUTES AND A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THESE MINUTES, THE FOREGOING MINUTES SHALL CONTROL.