

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2017**

A workshop meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor John L. Gunter, Jr., Commissioners Christopher Bell, Ray Lewis, and Rick Ranize.

Also Present: City Manager Gary La Venia, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver, City Treasurer; Jeannine Racine; Police Chief Michael Fewless; Captain Eric Luce; Interim Fire Chief Don Gilpin; Community Development Director Charlie Rector, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

At Mayor Cheshire's request, Ms. Coulson called the roll.

3. FRUITLAND PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT

• **Vehicle Auctions**

Chief Fewless relayed Mr. La Venia's request to provide information relating to the police vehicles that were auctioned (George Gideon Auctioneers Inc. on April 24, 2017) resulting in \$10,974.06.

Chief Fewless explained that after he had completed the budget for FY 2017/18, he relayed the police department staff's findings of five inoperable Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) currently in the patrol cars, noted their replacement cost of \$1,100, and requested that funds from the vehicle auction be offset towards the AEDs and additional fire arms which he estimated would be at a cost of up to \$1,500.

In response, Mr. La Venia stressed the importance of Chief Fewless' request previously made to him; mentioned the intent to bring the matter before the city commission for consideration, and relayed the recommendation to purchase same from surplus funds (namely, \$1,100 for the police department and \$4,000 for public works to be restored into the respective departments' budgets).

After discussion, **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with the Police Department Chief's request.** (The police chief will provide a report on the history of inoperable AEDs to the city commission to expedite their replacement.)

Commencing budget fiscal year 2017-18, Chief Fewless announced the police department's goal in working towards becoming a law enforcement accredited agency and reviewed the agency savings as depicted in the document that was

distributed at this evening's meeting, a copy of which is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

- **Spillman Training**

Chief Fewless referred to the city commission's previous approval at its regular meeting of a record management system from Spillman Technologies Inc. for approximately \$54,000 and indicated that training at a cost of about \$55,000 was not included which has not been presented before the city commission.

Chief Fewless relayed his communication with the City of Mount Dora's Police Chief John O'Grady whose agency is undergoing the same training where he had no objections to his request for the Fruitland Park Police Department to jointly train with their agency at no cost. Chief Fewless conveyed his telephone call with the Spillman Technologies sales and business manager who reduced the costs charged to the city by another \$5,000.

- **Boulevard Tire Center**

Chief Fewless addressed the costs for tire and oil change services before he was retained and conveyed his communication with Mr. Tony Colon, Boulevard Tire Center, Lady Lake, who has since placed the police department under the State of Florida's procurement registry resulting in the city receiving lower price adjustments to almost half.

- **Tent**

Due to the delay of HG2 Emergency Lighting providing vehicles to the police department, Chief Fewless pointed out his negotiations with them to provide a tent at the April 1, 2017 Fruitland Park Day event. (where they included a table cloth and cooler valued at approximately \$1,500).

- **Police Bicycles**

With the intent to start a bike unit at the police department, Chief Fewless reported on the donation of two bicycles valued at approximately \$2,000 that he previously requested from the Orange County Sheriff's Office.

- **Training**

With more than 5,000 training offered, Chief Fewless mentioned the police department staff receiving free training from various chiefs in the area agencies.

- **Dispatch Fees**

Chief Fewless pointed out the meeting he had earlier this year with Captain Todd Luce, Lake County Sheriff's Office, regarding Sheriff Peyton C. Grinnell's desire to charge (communications center service) dispatch fees

to all municipalities to be considered (\$33,000, \$66,000 and \$99,000 respectively for three fiscal years) before the city commission.

- **Radios**

Chief Fewless indicated that police vehicles are equipped with radios valued at more than \$5,000; noted the testing conducted by Captain Luce and himself, and described the method of operations believing it would be a future savings for the department.

- **Evaluation**

Chief Fewless reviewed the annual review form and highlighted the disclaimers required to be signed by the police department employees which limits the damage to be claimed to which Ms. Geraci-Carver confirmed in the affirmative to be beneficial to the city.

With regards to the disclaimer confirming that the employee has a valid driver's license, Mr. La Venia verified that the city conducts same annually for its employees with its insurance company.

- **Pay Discrepancy**

Chief Fewless made comparisons of compensation to former Police Chief Terry Isaacs and himself since 2014 noting the difference in the entire package offered by the city. He requested for the \$12,494 difference to be made up to the same rate that the city would have been paying to the former chief.

After extensive discussions and recognizing the current success of the police department, **the city commission, by unanimous consent, directed the city manager to compare and review the market-rate of pay for police chiefs of comparable municipalities in the area.**

- **Personnel Shortage**

Chief Fewless expressed concerns on the shortage of personnel in the police department; recognized the heavy presence of high crime in the City of Leesburg, and reviewed the statistics on previous criminality in the City of Fruitland Park due to the City of Leesburg's overflow.

Chief Fewless commended the performance of Orange County Sheriff Jerry L. Demings and Orlando Police Chief John Mina who are defeating crime at Pine Hills (an unincorporated area of Orange County); however, such activities are encroaching Lake County including the recent incidents at Legends Café and Honest Autos in the City of Fruitland Park (one with similar activities and the other which ended in Pine Hills). Chief Fewless explained that he does not want any such crimes in the city.

Chief Fewless compared the statistics on the ratio of police to citizens as well as the criminal justice agency profile reports since the increase of more than 2,000 additional service calls in the City of Fruitland Park for 1,000 residents; namely, 2.5 (currently with 16 sworn officers), and 2.0 (2015 during the increase in population), and 3.5 (in previous years). He reported on the following ratios for 1,000 residents:

- ❖ 2.6, the national average;
- ❖ 2.5, Lake County;
- ❖ 2.7, The Town of Lady Lake, and
- ❖ 3.5, the City of Leesburg (20,000 residents)

Chief Fewless recognized the activities taking place in the unincorporated area of the City of Fruitland Park and reviewed the chart on the police to citizen ratio. He addressed the consequences on the growth in criminal activities, the costs of budgeting for a law enforcement officer and lack of timely planning for expansion in the City of Leesburg when the population increased and the problem faced in the City of Tavares with the shortage of officers. Chief Fewless mentioned the City of Fruitland Park's strategies in keeping such activities out of the city and relayed his meeting with the City of Tavares' staff and police chief who are operating at a ratio of 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents.

Chief Fewless referred to his request for an additional five officers and noted the city's population (The Villages) growth based on the issuance of the certificates of occupancy including the historical city, and other areas since his tenure to the time of buildout at approximately 10,000.

With The Villages expansion of an anticipated population of 8,000 with 16 law enforcement officers (a ratio of 2.0 per 1,000 resident), if the city agrees to 18 officers for FY 2017-18, previously suggested by Mr. La Venia and Ms. Racine, the ratio would be 2.3 per 1,000 residents (a situation similar to the City of Tavares to which he believes is undesirable for the city). He gave reasons, noting the importance of public safety, why operating at two officers a year is inadequate. Chief Fewless referred to the May 25, 2017 article entitled "*Fruitland Park Growth Ranks Fastest in Florida*"; a copy of which is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Commissioner Ranize referred to his recent meeting with Ms. Janet Y. Tutt, Village Community Development District (VCDD) Manager, regarding VCDD 11 which has a 70 percent occupancy rate (2,054 homes) where the district residents would be required to pay for wastewater and the tax revenue would not be realized until homes are occupied for a year.

In response to several inquiries posed by Commissioner Lewis, Mr. La Venia confirmed his review together with Ms. Racine of Chief Fewless' concerns and the impacts to the FY 2017-18 budget. He anticipated receiving additional information for the city commission to consider personnel and compensation and capital improvement plan (CIP) funding requests during the budget process.

After discussion, Mayor Cheshire and Commissioner Bell requested the review of the FY 2017-18 budget prior to the July 12 and 13, 2017 budget workshops.

Following further discussion, Mayor Cheshire concurred with Commissioner Lewis' suggestion for public safety impact funds to be supplanted towards the cost of public safety (equipment in vehicles); Mr. La Venia voiced his agreement with his proposition to utilize impact fee funding, and Ms. Geraci-Carver interjected that same could be based towards the impact created by the additional growth in population but not as law enforcement vehicle replacement.

In response to Mr. La Venia's comments, Chief Fewless expressed his preference for funds, until a determination is reached, to be earmarked towards the costs of the public safety building needed for the entire police department.

Mr. La Venia reported on the status of work by Senatore Inc., the architect retained by the city, on the public safety building and the plan towards working on the public works building; the previous visit by Interim Chief Gilpin and himself to the Sumter County Fire Station with an emergency management system, and relayed the requests of Chief Fewless and Interim Chief Gilpin for building needs with CIP with Senatore, unless the city commission decides otherwise.

After Mayor Cheshire acknowledged the population growth occurring faster than the revenues and the need for control, he questioned the adequacy of additional law enforcement officers for FY 2017-18 and requested a breakdown of the service calls.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Ranize noted the funds received whereby the city would be a year or two behind the double population increase and outlined the impacts to the city and the largest expenditure of funds towards public safety and utilities by The Villages except for the streets.

Upon Mayor Cheshire's clarification and **by unanimous consent, the city commission took the position of recognizing public safety as the essential role by the police department to be considered in the FY 2017/18 budget.**

4. OTHER BUSINESS

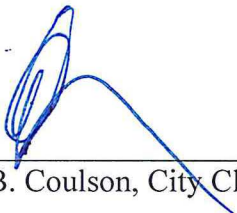
Fire Assessment

After much discussion and **the city commission, by unanimous consent, accepted the city manager's recommendation and directed the city attorney to draft fire assessment rate resolutions for fire services (funded at 90 percent or 100 percent respectively) for consideration at its June 22, 2017 regular meeting.**

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the July 27, 2017 regular meeting.

Signed 

Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed 

Chris Cheshire, Mayor