



MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING - WORKSHOP

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Bonifay City Hall Council Meeting Room – 301 J Harvey Etheridge St.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McCann called the Meeting to Order at 6:00 PM.

A. Invocation

City Clerk Rickey Callahan gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. VISITORS – PUBLIC ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL

NON- AGENDA AUDIENCE

Effective October 1, 2013, Florida Statute 286.0114 mandates that “members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a Board or Commission.” Each individual shall have three (3) minutes to speak on the proposition before the Board.

Mayor McCann advised that this meeting is only a Workshop so no decisions will be made nor any action taken. It will be discussion only. She then opened the floor for any non-Agenda members of the Audience to speak before the Council

1. James Russell spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
2. Richard Willsey spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
3. Joyce Everett spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
4. Alice Pippins spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
5. Thomas Nadery spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
6. Sheila Boswell spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.

7. Stacy Armondi spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.
8. Shannon Carroll spoke in support of the Bonifay Police Department.

III. NEW BUSINESS

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Mayor McCann read a letter from Holmes County Sheriff John Tate regarding providing law enforcement services for the City of Bonifay:

August 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Per your request the Holmes County Sheriff's Office would provide law enforcement function to the City of Bonifay for \$635,000 a year and \$65,000 for the cemetery maintenance and inmate work crew per year, with a cost increase of 3% every year unless otherwise agreed upon. If this something the Council would want to entertain, we would need to meet and discuss vehicle, equipment and etc.

Sincerely,
Sheriff John Tate

Mayor McCann then went over notes from her meeting:

I had the opportunity to meet with Sheriff Tate to discuss our request for potentially outsourcing our law enforcement services to his office.

Here are some notes from the meeting:

City pays \$635,000 a year for two officers at all times within the city limits.

With changes in many factors, he's requested a max of a 3% increase year to year, if needed.

City pays \$65,000 a year for right of way cutting.

The yearly fee for dispatch services would no longer be needed. (\$71,000)

His office would handle animal control, as long as we continue to pay our contract with Chipley. This would allow us to remove all kennels from city property.

His office would pay the City \$10,000 for the pay off on vehicles and all police related items.

The only exception being the unmarked SUV would stay in the ownership of the City to be used at City Hall for travel purposes.

A HCSO Deputy would be at every meeting.

She also provided a list of ALL services offered by the HCSO.

She then stated the TENTATIVE BUDGET requested for FY 2022-2023 for the Bonifay Police Department is \$1,049,312.31, for 10 Officers and One employee who would serve as Evidence Custodian/Secretary/Administrative Assistant.

She then went over details of the Budget if the Council so chooses to NOT "Defund Law Enforcement", but transition Law Enforcement from a City Police Department to a County Sheriff's Office it would be a reduction in cost of \$414,312.31. This is provided for the Council to review.

The Mayor then presented the Bonifay Police Department previous budgets. For FY 2020-2021 budgeted at \$647,228.83, at year end they were at 102.5% of the budget, For 2021-2022 budgeted at \$490,640.00, they were at 116% of budget, For 2022-2023 budgeted at \$639,022 the BPD has used 85% of their budget with only 75% of the fiscal year having passed. These are the documents provided for you review.

The Mayor stated that should the Council choose to do this, this would NOT be defunding law enforcement, this would be utilizing law enforcement that currently serves everyone else in our County with exception of the City Limits. And then again, that would be two full-time officers around the clock for every shift. She then stated she would answer any questions from the Council.

Council Member Cook asked for clarification of the dispatch cost savings.

The Mayor advised that the cost of dispatch for the City would be eliminated, a savings of \$71,000.

He also asked if we had checked the Worker's Compensation savings between the two options.

The Mayor stated that it would be a "soft cost" and would be hard to estimate. The Mayor also advised that our Worker's Compensation insurance went up 85% this year. Council Member Cook stated the if we took the County option we wouldn't be paying Worker's Comp insurance, to which the Mayor replied that we would no longer be paying it on the Police Department.

Council Member Crews asked that if we went with the agreement with the current Sheriff and another Sheriff took office no longer wanted to provide the service what our plan would be.

The Mayor replied that the concern should be considered and that it's very similar to many other agreements we have in the City that are just year to year.

Council Member Shelley Carroll stated that she would personally like to hear Chief Macon's remarks on if we kept the budget the way we have had it the past few years and kept on six officers or whatever we have been doing in the past few years, that he has not had a chance to go over this budget to see if he could even make it work. That's where I would like to see if he could make that work.

Mayor McCann asked if Council Member Carroll if she was saying he had not had a chance to cut his budget to this. She also said that he had been involved in Department Head budget meetings. She then gave Chief Macon the floor.

Chief Macon stated that:

He absorbed a budget that was already in effect. There were three people who left the Police Department and that from his understanding at least two of them were paid for their vacation

and other things so that has a little bit to do with going over the budget. And it is possible that it happened with the third one, but he was not able to confirm it. He stated to the Mayor that he told her personally when he took the job that he would reduce his salary for two reasons, one reason was Social Security, and the other was to give back to the City, and specifically his police officers. He stated he was very emotional and was going to do his best to maintain his cool. He stated that he knows that this is personal (not from the Mayor), but it is a personal vendetta against him, but he is doing his job.

Mayor McCann told the audience that she realized that this is an emotional time and that she does not want to ask anyone to leave, so please let Chief Macon speak.

Chief Macon continued stating that Firehouse Lock & Key, the people who re-keyed the Police Department multiple times (at least three times since he has been here) was a significant cost that caused the budget to be over at 85%. The cameras for the Police Department which are required was another cost. The other thing is that the Department just purchased things that they needed such as firearms, and all that and that is a waste of taxpayer's money if we are going to do that, and he knows you are talking about turning it over to the Sheriff's Department, however that is a waste of their tax dollars. The other thing is, yes he did ask for 10 Officers because that is City needs. He stated if we don't have the funding, he understands that, but like he told the City, he is willing to work with anybody, but he will currently stay within the budget that he currently has just to maintain his Officers. He stated that these ladies and gentlemen have family, two of them were just recently hired. He stated "If you want to get rid of me, get rid of me for doing my job, okay, get rid of me for doing my job, not for not doing my job, because I am doing my job that you asked me to do. So with that being said is, I can make our Department work for another year with the current budget we have with the current Officers we have and then we re-address it after that one year time frame. Thank you."

Mayor McCann thanked Chief Macon and told him that she knows this is an emotional moment and appreciated him being willing to do that.

Council Member Cook asked Chief Macon if there are two officers on duty 24 hours a day in the City.

Chief Macon said No, that he has asked for that, but that if we can't afford it we can't afford it. That they make do with what they've got. He also stated that he comes out sometime at night along with the other Officers

Council Member Cook asked if we only have one person at night.

Chief Macon replied Yes.

Mayor McCann asked if the Council had any other questions or comments.

Council Member Cook stated he did not. He stated he wanted to look at the numbers and that is what is being done and that he agrees with Mr. Willsey who spoke earlier, that we need to run the City like a business, and if we are going to run the City like a business where it can prosper, we needed to look at the figures, and that is why he asked for them.

Chief Macon stated that he had one other thing he wanted to bring up, that he was on a conference call today at 2:00 PM with a legislator from the Governor's Office, and that the Sheriff's Department two years ago, in 2021 was given additional money from the State and Federal Government to add a minimum salary for every Deputy in the State of Florida to be paid \$45,000 a year. He stated that the conference call today was in reference to Police Departments being left out of that and Governor Ron DeSantis wants to make sure that every officer in the State of Florida is at \$45,000 a year, and this fund will come from the State not the City. He stated that he wanted to ask about two other things. Chief Macon asked how the Police Department is funded, is it strictly City funds, or is there State and Federal Funds.

Mayor McCann responded that we do not have an ad valorem tax, and you can look at the revenue in the budget.

Chief Macon stated that his question is, do we get any funds from the State or Federal Government for Fire and Police.

Mayor McCann responded that to her knowledge, for Police she does not believe so.

Chief Macon asked again if the City takes 100 percent funding local to pay for Police, does anything come from the State or Federal Government.

Mayor McCann stated she would need to research that to be 100% confident with her answer, and she will get an answer to him before the next Council Meeting.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

VI. ADJOURN

Mayor McCann adjourned the Workshop at 6:37 PM

Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact City Hall at (850) 547-4238, at least five days prior to the proceedings.