

CITY OF LABELLE



MINUTES

City Commission Workshop

Thursday, August 22, 2024, at 4:00 PM

LaBelle Commission Chambers
481 West Hickpochee Avenue
LaBelle, Florida 33935

CITY COMMISSION:

Julie C. Wilkins., Mayor
Dainel Akin, Commissioner
Jackie Ratica, Commissioner
Bobbie Spratt, Commissioner
Hugo Vargas, Commissioner

ADMINISTRATION:

Tijauna Warner, BAS, MMC, Deputy City Clerk
Derek Rooney, Esq., City Attorney
Mitchell Wills, Superintendent PW

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Mayor Akin at 4:04 PM.

B. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Vargas led the invocation, Commissioner Spratt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mayor Julie C. Wilkins
Commissioner Dainel Akin
Commissioner Jackie Ratica
Commissioner Bobbie Spratt
Commissioner Hugo Vargas
Deputy City Clerk Tijauna Warner *arrives @4:47 p.m.*
City Attorney Derek Rooney

Lilly Davenport presented a detailed analysis of the City of LaBelle's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget. The analysis highlighted several key updates and adjustments. The budget has been revised to include updated insurance figures. Notably, an adjustment to workers' compensation, as identified by Lisa, has been incorporated, resulting in an increase in workers' compensation costs. However, insurance premiums have been reduced. An error was corrected where a part-time position had been mistakenly classified as full-time. This adjustment has been made, bringing the budget back to its previous status. She advised the budget currently reflects a \$44,000 funding shortfall. This is partly due to the county's restriction on its contribution under the interlocal agreement, which is limited to a 5% increase over the previous year. Consequently, the fire department budget does not include incentive compensation or an increase in volunteer rates. Specifically, the \$18,000 increase for the highest-paid fire personnel has been excluded.

Lilly informed the commission that for animal control there's a 50/50 funding split per the agreement was maintained, resulting in a 36% increase over the prior year. If the county's contribution were restricted to a 5% increase, this would create a \$67,000 deficit that would need to be covered by the general fund. Also, the utility budget reflects a higher split but still shows an operating loss. However, on a cash basis, the budget covers cash flow requirements. Lilly Davenport has requested capital outlay projections from Woodward and Curran, who have assured us that the required funding will be provided. These figures will be included in the final budget.

Finally, she explained the higher-wage employees will experience a real-term pay cut if the cost-of-living increases by 3%, as their pay increase is less than this percentage. Affected employees include Stevens, Aubrey, Wills, and Lynch. This situation prompted further discussion with the commissioners.

Lilly Davenport reviewed the fire department budget and proposed sharing the administrative assistant position with City Hall as a potential cost-saving measure. She also presented various options for consideration. One such proposal suggested reallocating funds to increase salaries by \$18 per position, instead of hiring three additional firefighters. She emphasized the necessity of

hiring the three firefighters and indicated that the current staff would likely accept the 14% salary increase already budgeted. She advised if we incorporate the full increases for firefighters, along with the provision for incentive pay, the budget shortfall expands to \$209,000. To address this, removing the new allocations for animal control and code enforcement, including the animal control truck, the code enforcement truck, and the mower, would result in a budgetary surplus.

Overall, the budget remains in line with previous projections, but several adjustments and considerations will need to be addressed to balance the shortfall and manage departmental funding.

There being no further business to discuss, Vice Mayor Akin adjourned the workshop at 6:12 PM.

Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor

ATTEST: Tijauna Warner, BAS, MMC, City Clerk