

DESTIN FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

Budget Workshop
Main Station
848 Airport Road
Destin, Florida

July 22, 2014

Minutes

Commissioners present: Tommy Green, Hillary Anderson, Mike Buckingham, Jack Wilson, Rick Moore

Staff present: Kevin Sasser, Kathryn Wagner

The workshop was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Tommy Green. He stated that the workshop is to discuss the budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Chief Sasser stated that seven individuals have accepted the VSIP. He stated the budget is presented with six vacant positions, the cost we would incur to continue to provide ALS service, as well as a 3% COLA which we ask the board to consider as the employees have not received any increase since October 2009.

Kathryn Wagner stated no change has been made to annual revenue since our last meeting. She stated personnel services have been adjusted to remove the seven employees who have accepted the VSIP and we have added back two new firefighters with the assumption that one will be hired as an EMT and one as a paramedic.

Personnel service items are based on the number of personnel which the District employs. Insurance benefits have been adjusted for a 15% increase in medical insurance and a 5% increase in the other auxiliary insurances. She stated that we are waiting for our renewal on these insurances. Medical shots have been added back into the budget for \$1,000. Commissioners pay is budgeted at its full \$30,000 and can be reduced should any of the commissioners decide to waive their stipend.

Professional services have been adjusted for accounting services to decrease this item by \$1,000 as we are still under a three year contract for our audit which will go through September 30, 2015.

Under other expenses the transfer to the asset fund has been reduced by an additional \$13,000 due to updating the asset fund depreciation schedule for the purchase and removal of assets in the current year as well as adding the projected 2014-2015 acquisitions.

Pages three shows our total annual expenditures of \$5,421,922, which reflects the beach safety expenditures as a mirror of the current year budget which is offset by revenue from TDC and the City.

Kathryn Wagner stated that with the adjustments we have made to our budget for all of our operating expenditures, all of our personnel costs and for continuing to run ALS we have an overage of \$39,069.

Page four shows no change to the Impact Fee Fund. The Asset Fund has been changed to adjust the transfer in from the General Fund of \$284,000 and to budget for a few expenditures. The Asset Fund has been reviewed to determine what might need to be replaced in the upcoming fiscal year and it has been determined two asset will be replaced at a cost of \$12,500.

Rick Moore asked where the COLA was presented. Chief Sasser stated it would be spread throughout the personnel expenditures. Kathryn Wagner stated the majority of it will be under wages-hourly and small increases in the retirement and payroll tax items.

Jack Wilson stated we have seven people who took the VSIP, plus one empty slot, which puts us down eight and we will add back two firefighters, so the net is we are down six. He asked what is it that we don't do next year because we have six less firefighters. He stated we had looked at, as a way of dealing with the budget problem, our choices and they were we could take everything from a few people or we could take a little bit from everybody. He stated what we did was now we have seven people who are not here anymore and we are adding back a COLA you are proposing to the remaining people. He stated his concern is the ALS is taking a little bit from everybody and he looked at that as our secondary mission. Jack Wilson stated our primary mission is fire. He asked if we are degrading our ability to meet our primary mission so that we can maintain our secondary mission which is the County's job.

Kevin Sasser stated yes.

Jack Wilson asked, what do we tell the public that they don't get now because we are degrading our firefighting capability. He stated he is not saying we should not do it, but we need to understand what we are doing is deciding not to cut backfilling the County, which they get paid to do it, and we are undercutting our own capability for what nobody but us can do.

Tommy Green stated that until we get some hard numbers from the County and from our health insurance he does not see how we can back off of anything at this time. He stated this is something he would love to see, is for us to keep it, but we should not promise the people that is going to happen right now.

Jack Wilson stated we have taken the heat off of ALS but we have six less firefighters on duty now, who manned the third apparatus. He stated that now our max capability to respond is two apparatuses so if we get a third call, medical or otherwise, there is no one here to drive the truck.

Kevin Sasser stated we are losing response time, additional firefighting capability, efficiency in operation and we are changing tactics in fighting fire. He stated this is a degradation in service.

Jack Wilson stated on the surface it does not make sense at all, but if you stop and reflect a little bit, 80% of the times we roll out is for medical. He stated all the people who have talked to him have been about ALS and how they can't live without it. He further stated that the probability is higher that he or his family is going to need medical support more then his house burning down.

Jack Wilson told Chief Sasser that he has done a heck of a job squeezing this thing together. He stated there was a lot of hard work which has gone into this and he complements you.

Tommy Green stated he was astonished about the number of people who thought the ALS should be there but there has been no grass root efforts to try to do anything to change it.

Mick Buckingham stated that no one is here asking for it either. He stated all the people want it but no one is here trying to help us out.

Hillary Anderson stated she worries about the implications of keeping ALS after October 1st when the level of service we are now able to provide is down.

Kevin Sasser asked if there were any adjustments which the Board would like for us to make to the budget presented prior to our next meeting.

Jack asked to once again hear the rational for the COLA for the employees who did not elect to leave. Kevin Sasser stated that we have less personnel who's responsibilities have been spread across the spectrum of the employees which we currently have and with reduction of additional personnel, those six, there will be additional responsibilities of others to take those tasks on as well. He stated that the employees have not received any pay increase of any kind, COLA or any other, since October 2009, and with there being an ability from the separation program of having some funds available, he was hoping to provide the employees with a modest COLA.

Tommy Green asked what the cost was for the COLA. Kathryn Wagner stated it would cost approximately \$76,000 which is the total cost among 33 employees.

Jack Wilson asked if there is any basis on the 3% COLA. Kevin Sasser stated we looked at the City, County, School Board, and a couple of local fire districts and that appeared to be an appropriate number based upon what we have seen them giving. He stated we also looked at social security and the CPI.

Jack Wilson stated we have some employees who have gone through difficult times over the past four years here and they elected to stay with us and I would like to be able to say thank you in some way. He stated the flip side of it is a year before we go into contract negotiations we raise the base line.

Tommy Green stated not only did employees elect to stay and show their loyalty to the department, but also a lot of them are taking on additional duty.

The floor was open for public comments.

Bob Wagner of 311 Misty Way stated with only a balance of \$30,000 left over in the budget, with the 3% COLA to the firefighters, which he stated he agrees they deserve as it has been five years, the perception is that \$70,000 extra could go a long way to help in case something happened with a hurricane. He stated that there is already a contract in place and to give money that is not in the contract is the wrong idea and you should wait until next year.

Tommy Green stated we have the asset fund which is reserved for hurricanes. Kathryn Wagner stated that at the end of the projected fiscal year of September 30, 2015 the asset fund will have an equivalent of six months of expenditures.

Mike Buckingham stated that there has been discussion about engine 9 needing to be replaced or refurbished and he would like the Chief and Battalion Chief Taylor to get together with him to work on a game plan for that.

Discussion was held on the next budget workshop scheduled for August 5, 2014. Decision was made to cancel this meeting and have the next budget workshop on August 12, 2014 at 6:00pm.

With no other discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.