



**Town of Surfside
Town Commission Workshop
MINUTES
June 18, 2024
5:15 PM**

Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Avenue
Surfside, FL 33154

1) Opening

1.A) Call to Order

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

1.B) Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk McCready called the roll with the following members present.

Present: Mayor Charles W. Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, Commissioner Ruben Coto, Commissioner Nelly Velasquez and Commissioner Gerardo Vildostegui.

Also Present: Interim Town Attorney Mark Blumstein and Interim Town Manager Marisol Vargas.

1.C) Pledge of Allegiance

Captain of Police Flaherty led the pledge of allegiance.

2) Mayor, Commission and Staff Communication

2.A) Budget Workshop, Discussion, and Direction for FY 2025 Budget
FY2025 Budget Workshop Presentation

Interim Town Manager Vargas introduced Budget Officer Andrea Meiri to present to the Commission the 2024-2025 budget.

Budget Officer Meiri continued to introduce the budget. She continued to present on the Town's property value and millage summary.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked Budget Officer Meiri what the net 95% figure was.

Budget Officer Meiri stated that the net has been based on previous years millage rates. She stated how this would generate \$17.9 million dollars in

revenue, with an increase of \$496 million dollar from last year.

Commissioner Velasquez asked Budget Officer Meiri what will the surplus going into the general fund be.

Budget Officer Meiri stated she does not have that number yet but will be presenting that number during the July budget meeting.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if it was premature to speak on lowering the millage rate.

Budget Officer Meiri stated the Commission will have time to do so during the future budget meetings.

Commissioner Velasquez asked what the deadline was to lower or raise the millage rate.

Budget Officer Meiri stated the Commission would lower and would have a deadline by August 4th to submit to the County that the Town would like to publicize in the trim notice and the Commission would lower the rates by the first or second budget hearing in September.

Budget Officer Meiri continued to present the summary of new program modifications for the 2025 fiscal year.

Vice Mayor Paul asked Budget Officer Meiri regarding the Public Safety Position and if that position had already been budgeted.

Budget Officer Meiri stated that position will start this year and will be replacing a communications officer that is no longer needed.

Commissioner Velasquez asked regarding the taser replacement for the police department and its price.

Chief of Police Doce explained how the current taser models are being replaced due to becoming non-reparable. He stated how the newer model has better upgrades. He stated how the taser company allows you to pay the tasers off in five years.

Vice Mayor Paul asked how often are the tasers used.

Chief Doce stated that it is not used often in Surfside.
Commissioner Coto asked how long would the tasers last.

Chief Doce stated that the tasers would last six to seven years. He continued to present the budget item for car rentals for the criminal investigation unit. He stated how the department will not be purchasing vehicles for detectives but renting and exchanging them every couple of months, which would be effective for undercover and surveillance work.

Mayor Burkett asked Chief Doce regarding having off-duty policemen to do patrol in the Town. He asked the Commission to give the Chief flexibility to use the money to bring other off-duty officers to supplement while permanent officers are being hired.

Commissioner Coto stated how the Police Department is currently short staffed.

Chief Doce stated how there is not enough personnel to meet the Town's needs. He continued to explain how many officers are in each shift.

Mayor Burkett expressed how he believes the 12-hour shifts are too long and how the officers will be tired. He explained how more officers should be hired and the shift hours reduced.

Chief Doce explained that the 12-hour shift is the more efficient shift with the staff that the Police Department currently has. He shared how the Police Department needs to be more efficient with their hours and it cannot be done with the number of staff that the Police Department currently has.

Commissioner Velasquez asked regarding the off-duty officers and if it could be a permanent solution. She stated how more officers could be needed to give traffic tickets and send a message to those who do not respect the traffic laws in the Town.

Chief Doce stated that the off-duty officers are a great option to give the Police Department time to look for quality candidates. He stated how those officers will be required to do heavy traffic control. He stated that the new four officers being hired will be for the traffic unit.

Commissioner Velasquez asked regarding the public safety specialist.

Chief Doce explained that the position will be replacing a communications officer. He stated that this position will be serving as an administrative aide for body worn camera videos for public records request. He shared that the department is looking into getting software to help with staff attendance.

Commissioner Coto asked regarding a new technology being brought to the Police Department.

Chief Doce explained that five new software programs will be brought into the department, three of those being free. He continued to explain the softwares.

Commissioner Velasquez asked Chief Doce regarding license plate readers and if they are more effective than cameras.

Chief Doce stated that both are needed. He shared that the Town Manager is looking into adding cameras.

Vice Mayor Paul asked regarding the rental of the vehicles for the detectives.

Chief Doce explained that the cars the detectives currently operate do not camouflage very well in the Town and by renting a car that does not look like a police car, would benefit the work of the detectives.

Commissioner Velasquez asked if one year the purchase of the four police

cars is not in the budget.

Chief Doce explained that older cars cost more money to keep than to get rid of.

Mayor Burkett addressed Chief Doce and explained to him that the Police Department needs to look into their budget and be efficient with it.

Chief Doce addressed the Commission and stated that in his short time in the Town, major changes have been made.

Major Burkett addressed Chief Doce and explained how he wants the residents to feel like they are priority for the Town's police, even if it means hiring more police officers.

Chief Doce stated how he is trying to be productive with hiring the four new officers and how the traffic unit will be the more impactful in the Town.

Budget Officer Meiri introduced the public safety fleet car washes.

Chief Doce explained that this car wash is contracted with the Bal Harbor shops car wash. He shared that each car can be washed inside and out for \$25 as well as other cleaning supplies.

Budget Officer Meiri introduced the additional youth programming at the 96th street park as well as other structural repairs.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Adrian Hernandez gave information regarding the new programming in the 96th street park.

Mayor Burkett asked if new staff would be hired.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez explained that the park's programming is contracted.

Vice Mayor Paul asked regarding the staffing for the new 96th street park for the kayak launch.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez stated that the prior Commission approved extra staff for the park.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if the Town will be purchasing kayaks for those who do not have.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez stated that it would be up to the Commission if they would like to rent the kayaks or lend them out.

Commissioner Velasquez shared her thought regarding a system to rent the kayaks.

Interim Town Manager Vargas stated how they can have a conversation regarding the kayak rental.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez spoke regarding the

full restorations of the three slides in the Community Center. He stated that they need restoration as soon as possible.

Commissioner Velasquez asked when will the repair be done.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez shared that they like to do repairs for the pool during the wintertime. He stated the work would take one to two weeks. He stated that the slides had some work done that will get them through this year but not longer than that.

Vice Mayor Paul requested an addition to the Parks and Recreation budget. She suggested adding \$1,000 for the art class supplies as well as adding an LED community center sign.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez stated they looked into the LED sign and how the sign can become a digital banner to display parks and recreation activities.

Mayor Burkett asked for a drawing of the LED sign to be able to visualize it better.

A conversation was held amongst the Commission regarding the location of the LED signs.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez stated that he can bring a rendering of the design and location of the sign.

Commissioner Velasquez suggested putting an LED sign outside the community center to display Town programming.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez introduced the community center fences and gates that need to be completely replaced.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if different latches can be looked into for the gates of the community center.

Interim Town Manager Vargas stated that they are currently looking into a digital fob system for residents.

Mayor Burkett asked if the white building where the beach chairs are stored can be painted into a mural that matches the atmosphere of the beach.

Commissioner Vildostegui suggested for a painting or artistic decoration.

Mayor Burkett asked if direction can be given regarding this issue.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Hernandez continued to speak on the need of purchasing of new beach vehicles, he stated that one vehicle broke down and they are only using one vehicle at a time. He stated that due to being on the beach all day, the vehicles do not last many years.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked if he could get a cost estimate for possible pay raises for public works sanitation workers. He stated how

there have been increases for the white-collar employees in the Town, but not for the blue-collar employees.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that the public works employees are in a union in which they negotiated the 3% raise and due to being in a union contract, their salaries cannot be increased by the Commission.

Interim Town Manager Vargas introduced Human Resources Director Yamileth Slate-McCloud to speak on the matter.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if the salaries were increased when the pay study was done.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that the pay raise was for white-collar employees.

Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud stated that the pay study was done for every classification of employees. She stated that while the study was being done, the Town was negotiating with the union and that the salaries that the Town has today, were the salaries the union had proposed to the Town. She shared how the Town's pay range was higher than the union's and, therefore, they accepted their ranges.

Mayor Burkett asked Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud if she could share the pay study with the Commission.

Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud explained that if the Commission wishes to change the salaries, they would have to open up the article containing the years of service and raises the union has. She shared the third-year agreement ends starting on October 1st and will be negotiating a new agreement next year. She stated how it is a struggle to retain employees due to the union's agreement for salaries.

Mayor Burkett stated that this new Commission wants the employees to be paid fairly and well, which should be brought into the conversation when negotiating with the union.

Commissioner Velasquez asked if there was a way to add more trees in the hardpack in order for residents to walk under shade and beautify the Town.

Vice Mayor Paul agreed with Commissioner Velasquez and stated that many trees have been cut down.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that she is referring to adding the trees between the hardpack and the walking path to have shade.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if the addition of the trees can be added into the dune restoration project. She suggested to have trees in the Town that do not make too much debris.

Commissioner Vildostegui suggested consulting with one of the dune protection organizations to find out which trees would be best in order to protect the dunes.

Commissioner Coto suggested to have a presentation by plastic fisherman regarding the protection of the dunes.

Commissioner Vildostegui suggested making policies for the protection of the dunes.

3) **Adjournment**


There being no further business to discuss before the Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Coto to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Vildostegui. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

Accepted this 9th day of July, 2024.



Charles W. Burkett, Mayor

Attest:


For Sandra N. McCready, MMC, MPA
Town Clerk

