

**MINUTES OF
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL
MAY 16, 2022 – 5:30 PM**

PRESENT

MAYOR

TODD M. HARRELSON

COUNCIL

**JOAN GAUSE
LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR.
ANDREA L. COLEMAN
CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR.
MICHAEL E. SUGGS
JAN P. VESCOVI**

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Harrelson at 5:34 pm on Monday, May 16, 2022.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Councilman Hardee.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Harrelson.

ROLL CALL:

The roll was called by Clerk Massey.

FOIA:

Notice of the meeting with an agenda was publicly posted, published, and forwarded to the media no less than 24 hours prior to commencement.

BUSINESS:

A. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Police Chief Buley advised Council that the department's budget had a slight increase due to inflation (i.e., fuel, maintenance, etc.). He stated that the department is discussing different avenues to increase the department's appeal with regard to hiring inquiries and officer retention, including potential salary increases comparable to surrounding agencies. Chief Buley added that the department's budget includes a school resource officer; however, the department receives reimbursement for this position through a previously awarded grant. Councilman Suggs requested clarification that the school resource officer position was completely funded through the awarded grant; Chief Buley confirmed. Councilman Suggs questioned Chief Buley regarding the foresight of any major purchases during the upcoming fiscal year; Chief Buley responded that he was not aware of any. Administrator Young added that the proposed budget included the purchase of one vehicle through the General Fund Budget and one vehicle through the Hospitality Fund. Attorney Moss requested clarification on whether the vehicle mentioned was for public safety; Administrator Young clarified that there was a vehicle designated for public safety. Councilman Suggs inquired whether the City obtained a vehicle by way of American Rescue Funds; Administrator Young responded that the vehicle in question was acquired prior to the Fiscal Year Budget subject to this meeting. Councilman Suggs further inquired whether the vehicles included in the proposed budget are for the replacement of current city vehicles or an addition to the fleet; Administrator Young responded that the discussed vehicles are to replace city-owned vehicles that are requiring higher maintenance. Chief Buley added that there are various reasons the vehicles are considered high maintenance, including the age and general wear of the vehicle, higher mileage, not properly maintained, etc.

Recreation Director Tim Zeltwanger advised Council he had collaborated with City Administration concerning the Department's budget. He stated that the increase in the Department's proposed budget reflected the sizable increase in participation and had received numerous positive responses from the community. Director Zeltwanger added that the department has been a positive beacon to the community during the 2022 Spring season and is optimistic for continued growth. He relayed to Council that representatives from Triple USA and Top Gun advised that teams within their respective organizations rarely decline a tournament held at Heniford Field hosted by the Loris Recreation Department. Councilman Suggs questioned Director Zeltwanger about the condition of the department's equipment; Clerk Massey responded that the equipment was in good condition upon inspection and equipment in poor condition had previously been replaced. Clerk Massey added that the PARD Grant line item was increased under the advisement of state representatives.

Administrator Young advised Council that the City received an increase in garbage/sanitation services from Jordan Waste and that increase was reflected in the proposed budget. He added there was no millage increase in the proposed budget. Administrator Young stated the only other increase in the budget was for water/sewer rates and was based on the rate increase from Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority. Clerk Massey further explained to Council the rate changes shown in the proposed budget. Attorney Moss stated concern that the proposed budget discussed only reflected the rate increase as an exact match to the rate increase from Grand

Strand Water & Sewer Authority and did not address the increase in costs for providing such services. Councilwoman Vescovi requested further explanation of the bulk-rate gallons purchased from Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority; Clerk Massey responded that the City of Loris is metered as a city, but the City is billed the same as a regular customer and does not receive a discounted, bulk rate. Councilman Hardee questioned whether the City was paying the same rate per gallon as a customer outside of the city limits was purchasing directly from Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority; Clerk Massey confirmed and added that, basically, the City was retailing water without receiving the marginal revenue due to the lack of wholesale overhead.

Administrator Young advised Council that staff recommended that the City paid off various leases via the applicable, designated funds. Attorney Moss requested clarification that the proposed lease payoff would leave only the fire truck as the remaining debt, Clerk Massey confirmed. Administrator Young stated that the only G.O. Bond that would be outstanding is for the Public Safety Building at approximately \$54,000 per year. He added that based on figures received from Horry County regarding millage, the City should receive a slight increase from that of the previous year. Councilman Padgett questioned whether the proposed budget would reduce that millage to 5; Administrator Young confirmed 105.8 [mils] General Fund plus 5 [mils] Debt Service Fund, for a total of 110.8 [mils]; Attorney Moss added that part of that reduction was based on current property values. Administrator Young stated that he reviewed previous property values and noted that the property values for Loris had steadily grown, and a reliable indication that the community is actually growing in assessed values. Attorney Moss further added that the property values and the number of taxed properties were increasing. Councilman Suggs redirected the discussion concerning the bond accounts and stated that it appeared that the separate bond account was closed; he advised that circumstances surrounding the closure of the said account needed further investigation. Administrator Young assured that the auditor and Administration would follow up on the subject. Councilman Padgett questioned Attorney Moss on the legality of the millage rate remaining the same as the previous year and placing that money in reserve for anticipation of attempting to replenish that account; Attorney Moss replied that he would research the answer to this inquiry. Administrator Young advised Council that the completed audits would indicate the actual amount received, the amount needed for the bond payments, and any excess that should have been held in the bond account. Councilwoman Vescovi questioned if the audit would be completed prior to the reading of the proposed budget; Administrator Young stated that it would not but a total of four audits should be available in the coming months.

Administrator Young stated the ARP fund indicated that the [public works] lift stations were still pending completion due to awaiting bids for the project; Clerk Massey added that Mr. Ricky Bellamy would present the closed bids to Council at the June 6th meeting.

B. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 04-22, AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF LORIS, SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023, ENDING JUNE 30, 2023

Motion made by Councilwoman Gause; Seconded by Councilwoman Vescovi. The Motion passed with members Gause, Hardee, Coleman, Harrelson, Padgett, and Vescovi in favor, and Suggs voting against.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A. DISCUSSION ON PERSONNEL MATTERS

Motion made by Councilman Padgett to enter Executive Session for discussion on personnel matters; Seconded by Councilman Hardee. All members voted in favor to enter Executive Session at 6:19 pm.

Motion made by Councilman Hardee to exit Executive Session; Seconded by Councilwoman Gause. All members voted in favor to exit Executive Session at 7:04 pm.

Mayor Harrelson stated that no action was taken during Executive Session.

PUBLIC AND PRESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Councilman Hardee for adjournment; Seconded by Councilwoman Gause. All members voted in favor. There being no further business, the Council Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

ATTEST:

TODD K. MASSEY, II
CITY CLERK

TODD M. HARRELSON
MAYOR

LORIS COUNCIL MEMBERS

JOAN S. GAUSE

LEWIS C. HARDEE JR.

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