

# Town of Melbourne Beach

## TOWN COMMISSION WORKSHOP August 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. COMMUNITY CENTER – 509 OCEAN AVENUE

### MINUTES

#### Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington  
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie  
Commissioner Corey Runte  
Commissioner Marivi Walker  
Commissioner Adam Meyer

#### Staff Members:

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro  
Town Attorney Ryan Knight  
Town Clerk Amber Brown

#### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Alison Dennington called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

#### Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington  
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie  
Commissioner Corey Runte  
Commissioner Marivi Walker  
Commissioner Adam Meyer

#### Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro  
Police Chief Tim Zander  
Town Clerk Amber Brown

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Mayor Alison Dennington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the supporting documents that were provided including a comparison of all positions with salaries from Melbourne Beach, Indialantic, and Satellite Beach, the second document is a quote from Garber for a police vehicle, and the third document is a list of the police department employees that were hired and left within the year's time.

### 4. Public Comments -

After being acknowledged by the Mayor, members of the public should state their name and address for the record. The Commission encourages citizens to prepare their comments in advance. Each individual will have three (3) minutes to address the Commission on any topic(s) related to town business, not on the Agenda.

***Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash Ave – Asked about the recording and the capturing of the audio. Can that help to do the minutes?***

Town Clerk Amber Brown spoke about the software does capture the audio, however, it is not completely accurate, it does not capture names, and it does not capture if someone's microphone is off. She has spoken with other clerks around the State and no one has a perfect software to capture audio. Plus we do not do verbatim minutes, so parts would need to be deleted. She does not think technology is there quite yet.

### 5. New Business

#### A. Discussion regarding the FY 2024-2025 budget

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about suggestions from the last Budget workshop was to add a Deputy Town Clerk, increase the Code Enforcement Officer to full-time or hire a second part-time, reduce or eliminate a position the Police Department is asking for, and review the flat pay increase for the Police Department. She provided salary data from Satellite and Indialantic and reviewed the provided document.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about having enough information to make a decision, and thinks the best comparable is Indialantic. The questions to answer, are we adding employees if so one or two, and what salary modifications.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about wanting to reallocate some money to where it's needed, have a moderate raise, and lower taxes. There are years that it will need to be raised, so when it can be lowered it should be. There has not been a large increase in population or crime. Does not think this amount of raise will make a big change in what officers we will get. Would like to see an organization chart, listing of all benefits by department or employee, and a list of the positions in the police department and how long they were empty.

Police Chief Tim Zander spoke about not being able to compete with other county's, but we need to compete within our county. Not asking to be in the top, just don't allow us to be the bottom. This agency has been behind on officer safety for a really long time. Next year we will be in the same position like every other agency and position, but hopefully, the request will be for less.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about Melbourne Beach's budget is a little less than 5 million and Indialantic's is 9.44 million.

Commissioner Adam Meyer spoke about understanding being proportional based on revenue, but if you have one community with rich people and one community with poor people it doesn't mean the poor people need fewer police officers. There are several factors. We need to 100% be able to compete with other Towns in our County. Whatever the amount is to be able to compete either \$7,200 or \$7,000. If we don't deal with it now, next year we will still be in last and push the issue down the road. It needs to be dealt with at some point. It is concerning having an officer out on the road on their own without having any backup. However, the amount of increase in the budget is also a concern. There are a lot of places in the budget that can be adjusted to fund the officers, and not increase the budget. Could some parking funds cover part of an officer? Public safety is very important and there are a lot more people coming through Town.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about retention is important, and a part of that is environment, safety, and pay. We need to have at least two officers that are capable of protecting our citizens at any time. Perhaps we could push the capital projects like a police vehicle over one year, if it will make a difference in the budget. Another item that might be able to be adjusted is gas and oil for all of the departments. Look at the current years budget and how much has been spent and perhaps those numbers for all departments can be increased. Perhaps equipment maintenance across the board could be slightly reduced. Is in favor of the increase because we cannot lose our safety.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about Fund 351 Land and Road Improvement will have a substantial amount of money left in the current budget, so we can remove the \$40,000. All of the money in this fund is from Ryckman Park parking fees.

Commissioner Adam Meyer spoke about if you use parking fees then they have to be used every year because the position is not going to go away.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about agreeing with increasing the salaries and thinks we need more officers, and thinks we can afford one. Does not want to start gutting the parking funds to fund other things. The original intent for the parking fees is for beautification of the parks and to keep the money in the parks.

Commissioner Marivi walker spoke about agreeing with what the Police Chief is requesting. Spoke with 24 residents, 17 said increase the pay but not add officers. They thought doing all of the requests in one year was too much. In favor of the salary increase, but not adding 2 officers, unless the money comes from somewhere else.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about agreeing with having a competitive salary. The question is how much should the pay raise be. Asked for the data of the vacancy rate. She is against adding 2 officers. If it is truly about safety pull the money from fluff places. Suggested only doing the pay raise, and track the vacancy rate until next year to see if salary makes a difference. Regarding overtime, after a large pay raise the overtime is going to be higher. Spoke with the Police Chief and he is not going to force officers to come in when someone calls out sick, so no matter how many officers there are, if no one volunteers to come in then the officer is on their own anyway.

Recess 7:15 – 7:20

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

**Commission Members Present**

Mayor Alison Dennington  
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie  
Commissioner Corey Runte  
Commissioner Marivi Walker  
Commissioner Adam Meyer

**Staff Members Present**

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro  
Police Chief Tim Zander  
Town Clerk Amber Brown

Mayor Alison Dennington asked for data on the vacancy rate. If we don't have a policy or train officers on what needs to be enforced it does not matter how many officers there are. She asked how much is the gas and oil expenses for the marine rescue units.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about being here to decide if the Commission wants 0, 1, or 2 officers and the pay raise.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about there should be a portion of the parking funds going to the Police Department in order for their presence and patrols for safety.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about being in favor of one additional officer, and the \$7,200 raise to get the starting salary to \$50,000.

Commissioner Marivi Walker spoke about being in favor of the full pay raise. Hold off until next year on the additional officers.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about being good with the pay raise and the 2 additional officers.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about being in favor of the balance budget which had the two officers and the pay raise.

Commissioner Adam Meyer spoke about being in favor of the \$7,200 pay raise and one additional officer with the majority (\$40,000) of the funds coming from parking funds every year.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about being in favor of a pay raise between \$3,500-\$5,000 without any additional information. With more data she might be okay with a higher raise. Not in favor of additional officers. If the Commission approves additional officers then take the money from the parking funds, so if the money goes away so does the position.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about the money should be taken from both parks and disagrees with tying the position to parking funds.

***Anna Butler – 312 Avenue A – Spoke about having a background in corporate recruiting. Anytime someone addressed staffing then data was required.***

***Mark McBride – 310 Second Ave – Asked what is going to be done about the short term rental situation. What has been allocated for enforcement of short term rentals? You cannot change anything that does not have a budget.***

Marivi Walker spoke about adding a 20-hour part-time Code Enforcement Officer or having a full-time Code Enforcement Officer.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about having a \$3,500-\$5,000 raise, no additional officers, and adding a second part-time Code Enforcement Officer.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about the Police Department needs to be involved in the code enforcement process.

***AnneMarie McBride – 312 Second – Spoke about being tired with the fighting and the Commission not listening to what the residents want. We do not need extra police officers.***

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about being in favor of adding one 20-hour Code Enforcement Officer, and only one additional Police Officer.

Commissioner Adam Meyer spoke about being in favor of an additional 20-hour Code Enforcement Officer and one additional Police Officer.

***Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash Ave – Asked if the Commission is in favor of keeping the millage rate the same. Times are tough and these are the years where you can roll back.***

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about wanting to lower it.

Commissioner Adam Meyer spoke about with the reductions that have been discussed he would expect the millage rate to be reduced.

***Tim Reed – 302 Fourth Ave – Spoke about the County taxes are reducing, but Melbourne Beach is not. There are two ways to adjust the budget reduce spending or increase revenue. He is in favor of an appropriate pay raise, but not in favor of adding 2 additional police officers because there has not been sufficient justification.***

**Frank LaGrassa – 412 First Ave – Spoke about the town needs to be run like a business. Things are too loose. Government inherently runs things defectively. Postpone any pay hick and make the pay retroactive pending more data.**

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro recapped:

- Police Pay Raise - 3 in favor of \$7,200, 1 in favor of \$5,000, 1 in favor of \$3,500-\$5,000
- Additional Officers – 1 in favor of 2 officers, 1 in favor of 0 officers, 2 in favor of 1 officer
- Code Enforcement 4 in favor of adding a 20-hour Code Enforcement Officer

**Steve Walters – 416 Sixth Ave – Asked how we got 17% behind on pay raises. There were 9 officers when he was in the department and 10 for 3 years and there were always 2 people on. Pay is one thing that you should keep as average. Are you going to give the new staff members the same raise as well to be fair?**

**Frank LaGrassa – 412 First Ave – Why not go by the rule of thumb of doing what it takes to get the job filled? Don't compare to other governments that is how the country has gone bankrupt.**

**Bruce Larson – 1507 Pine St – Spoke about we need to pay them what is fair. There needs to be a lot of data for staffing. Our revenue has gone down, but our taxes have gone up. It is unacceptable to have an officer working on their own and Indialantic is too far to respond when you need help now. The numbers in the summary sheet do not make sense. A starting salary of \$50,000 seems low.**

## 6. Adjournment

**Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adjourn; Commissioner Marivi Walker seconded; Motion carried 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

  
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Alison Dennington  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Amber Brown, CMC  
Town Clerk

