

**CITY OF BELLE ISLE
PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday, July 21, 2009
5:30 P.M.**

The Belle Isle City Council met in a Budget Public Meeting on Tuesday, July 21st, 2009 at 5:30 PM in the Belle Isle City Hall Council Chambers, 1600 Nela Avenue, Belle Isle, FL 32809.

The following members were present:

William G. Brooks	Mayor
Keith Severns	District 2
Charles Scott	District 3
Larry Ady	District 4
Harvey Readey	District 5
Lydia Pisano	District 6
Eric Spaulding	District 7

Not present was Commissioner Petruzzi, District 1

Also present were City Manager Be Bateman, City Attorneys John Bennett, Police Chief Tegg, City Clerk Miriam Rodriguez, and others

Mayor Brooks called the meeting to order, lead the invocation and the pledge to the flag.

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Matthew Falconer, handed out a 100 page report that includes 1.1 billion dollars a year. The two key reforms are public employees and regionalization; we estimate we can reduce fire protection services by 20%; If Belle Isle consolidates with Edgewood. I am running for Orange County Mayor in general my mission is to lower taxes.

We studied all department planning, finance and administration. I think local communities should form their own police department. I think the problem with Orange County is the county was made to be rural never meant to be urbanized. I think you have to give power and money away. Local police departments patrolling out of their jurisdiction should be reimbursed for that work.

Mayor Brooks thanked Mr. Falconer for his review.

Mayor Brooks recognized Mrs. Bateman. I want to thank Council for meeting with

Be and Lucy. Just keep in mind there are people raising their families here. It is easy to close things it is hard to open them.

Mrs. Bateman said after meeting with several of the commissioners, I sat down with some, I spoke on the phone with others, we went through the proposed budget. We looked at what the impact would be on going to the rolled back. We were able to do a revenue neutral budget using the roll back rate of 3.7434 mil, not a tax increase

Vice Mayor Ady asked if that was the same as last year

Mrs. Bateman said no.

Mayor Brooks said the definition for roll back is revenue neutrals.

Mrs. Bateman said, all this does, it will allow us to do a mill rate at revenue neutral rate. This is based on what the current value is, it is less 5%, we only budget at 95%.

Mayor Brooks said the number that we get for the property value come from the state through the County's property appraisal. We can't change what they tell us, they missed that number last year by 22%.

Mrs. Bateman said we did have to eliminate three full time positions from the city and outsource the landscaping portion. I want the community to understand that this city has slashed its staff by 30% to accomplish this. This budget includes the garbage rate service which is about \$193 per year per house.

Commissioner Scott said I'd rather go with your original suggestion. If we have to make any changes we could lower that.

Lucy Ramos said I just want to bring to your attention the cutbacks and analysis on the market today perhaps going to rollback rate would be the best, the budget this year truly is a tool. I know it is a difficult time in the economics to propose a half mil but it might be the option that we all have in order to carry us through the year. When we do the ad valorem and present it to the state they give us an operating millage rate, it means that there could be a deficit so if we go ahead with such a strict budget, I want Council to be prepared that perhaps in six months we might need to come back here and discuss how we are going forward. We have to anticipate we are looking at an average of 15-20% decrease; we could really land at 20-30%. That is the reality of the economy. On the SBA, we did the analysis last year and Larry Williams proposed that we will let the funds sit there for another year and hope that things pick up. I am very sorry but we lost \$60,000 on the investment and to-date we have lost \$90,300. I think if we can make a decision today we can roll it on to our regular account; the plan that they had in place did not pick up. Things like this are what we should take into account.

I want our city to be prepared and have a plan B just in case Plan A doesn't work. We know where we are heading, we need to prepare, build a reserve.

Mayor Brooks said I want to make sure that the reserve was not going to be used to fill holes.

Vice Mayor Ady said I know the County charges 10% on its utility taxes, what do we charge?

Lucia Ramos said 3-4% average.

Mayor Brooks said the only other potential sources would be municipal service tax and municipal electrical fees. There is not a whole lot resources out there.

Lucia Ramos suggested to target the grants and see what grants are available.

Commissioner Scott moved to use the initial proposed increased mill rate of 4.0378

Lucia Ramos said the initial proposed rate does not reflect the three full time positions or the amendment to the roll back. The revenue rolled back budget is the one that everyone participated, it does not reflect the tax increase.

Commissioner Scott said I would rather go with the full staff and lay off throughout the year.

Vice Mayor Ady said it is a huge impact on the citizens of Belle Isle. I don't think this is the time to have that millage increase.

Commissioner Pisano said I think in this time of the economy I am still not thrilled about the \$193 for trash. I can live with that. I don't want to see anybody losing their job. I think maybe next year we can look at modifying the millage rate. The City Manager made some modifications and I just think with the properties starting to go up not this year but next year, my recommendation would be to do a roll back.

Mayor Brooks asked if there was a second to the motion for a half millage rate increase for 2009-2010 on the floor.

Commissioner Severns seconded the motion, upon roll call motion failed 3:3

Vice Mayor Ady – Nay

Commissioner Severns – Yes

Commissioner Pisano – Nay

Commissioner Spaulding – Yes

Commissioner Scott – Yes

Commissioner Readey – Nay

Mayor Brooks said we are open for a second motion.

Vice Mayor Ady moved to adopt roll back rate of 3.7432 mill for the budget year 2009-2010

Commissioner Pisano seconded the motion and said I think it is the only thing to do.

Commissioner Scott said I think in order to show good faith, I think we should restrict or eliminate per diem to save money.

Mrs. Bateman said this roll back rate budget is a hard decision to make. The Citizens of Belle Isle are going to look to us for leadership. This budget allows us to say it was with great pain, it was a hard decision to make and it took a lot of courage to take this step. I hope that the residents while they are going to have to pay for garbage service remember the days when they did not have to pay for it. This is something that most cities do not do and I think that is something we can justify and defend. I appreciate the Council's support. I think it is the best thing we can do to show our residents how serious we are.

Commissioner Spaulding said I think this issue with the roll back, will we be covered if we get hit by four hurricanes. What if the County misses the mark again by 20%? Are we going to have the money to do the projects that we have to do?

Vice Mayor Ady asked in the past we have always had a surplus unexpected amount of money, do we have that?

Mrs. Bateman said we have projects that possibly will close October 1st. some of that money might be carried over and re-budgeted. Just remember this is just a planning tool.

Mayor Brooks said we have a motion and a second, upon roll call,

Vice Mayor Ady, Yes
Commissioner Severns Yes
Commissioner Pisano Yes
Commissioner Spaulding Yes
Commissioner Scott Nay
Commissioner Readey Yes

Motion passes 5:1 and we have adopted the roll back rate for the TRIM notice.

Mayor Brooks gave a quick update on the Charter School

Chief Tegg gave a quick update on the police department

Mrs. Bateman gave an update on the annex building

There being no further business to come before Council, Commissioner Readey moved to adjourn. Commissioner Spaulding seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Miriam Rodriguez
City Clerk