MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Special City Council Meeting

August 22, 2023

A Special City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Councilman Goins provided the invocation and a US Airforce veteran led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The Interim City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Lavander Hearn	Deputy Mayor (via phone)
	Rip Dyal	Councilmember
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Kristin Eick	Asst. City Attorney
	Monica Arsenault	Interim City Clerk

ABSENT:

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director (via phone); Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Evander Collier, Police Chief; Lora Howell, Deputy Finance Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Rob Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Samantha Senger, Communications/Economic Development Director; Abby Morgan, Interim Public

Works Director; Jason Dowty, Helpdesk Support Tech; and Lisa Richardson, Helpdesk Support Tech.

II. Budget Presentations:

Ms. Bowman provided a budget presentation[1]. She reviewed the City's recent priorities and accomplishments, mentioning educational assistance programs, the High School Sponsorship Program for the Police and Fire Academies, adjusting the way capital projects are funded through recurring revenue and affordable housing projects.

Ms. Bowman addressed recruitment and retention issues that are facing the nation as a whole. It was noted that according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics there has been and will be a shortfall of six million engineers or more between 2016 and 2026. She shared several news articles from around the US discussing the shortages and recruitment issues.

Ms. Bowman shared the details for the FY24 budget priorities as follows:

- Public Safety – Recruitment & Retention/Equipment
- Investment in Public Infrastructure

City Manager Whitten gave an overview of property taxes, sharing a comparison of homes from an actual street in Cocoa. Tax values in the City of Cocoa were discussed as well as a breakdown about how tax dollars are spent.

The FY24 General Fund Budget was discussed in detail. Over the past few years the City has experienced noticeable increases in operating expenses. Staff worked diligently to provide a balanced budget and explore ways to manage the increases which include:

- Property Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Utilities (Electric/Water)
- Wages

Projected Ad Valorem Revenue for FY24 was shared and a breakdown was provided to show what the money pays for.

Ms. Bowman reviewed the FY24 Special Revenue Funds Budget. She shared the highlights of the Special Funds Budget which includes an increase to the Cocoa CRA revenue and the Diamond Square revenue due to increased property tax values.

[1] Exhibit A: FY24 Budget Presentation

Additionally, a decrease in revenue for CDBG, SHIP and HOME from State funding sources resulting in an associated decrease in expenditures for social services. Lastly, an anticipated increase in Building Permit revenue is due to continued strong economic development.

Ms. Bowman talked about the FY24 Debt Service Fund Budget. A decrease of $366,000 in debt service payments will be due to a payoff of a prior bond issue. Scheduled debt service payments for all other outstanding debt will need to be maintained as well.

The FY24 Proprietary Funds Budget was reviewed and Ms. Bowman shared the highlights which include the Stormwater Fund and Water/Sewer Funds.

Lastly, Ms. Bowman went over the Fund Balance in different categories in detail.

City Manager Whitten and Ms. Morgan gave park improvement updates as follows:

- Provost Park
  - New parking lot with lights and stormwater
  - New multipurpose field with irrigation, scoreboard and fencing
  - Reconstruct basketball and pickleball courts
  - South sidewalk
  - Perimeter fencing

- Don "Mo" Stradley Memorial Park
  - New football field with irrigation and stormwater
  - Goal posts
  - 3-sided perimeter fencing

- Junny Rios Martinez Park
  - Splash pad with related pump room
  - Pavilion

Funding concerns were discussed in detail. The following is the approximate remaining Assigned Fund Balance dedicated to each park after design purchase order commitments:

- Provost Park - $770,000
- Don "Mo" Stradley Memorial Park - $527,000
- Junny Rios Martinez Park - $640,000

The $1,969,004 GMP for Provost Park does not include lighting, which is an additional $340,000 for a total of $2,309,004.

City Manager Whitten provided a proposal for Provost Park Funding as follows:

- GMP of $1,969,004 + $340,000 for lights = $2,309,004
- Budgeted: $756,000
- Reassignment of ARPA: $732,000
- Reassignment of ERP software AFB: $821,000
- ERP Software implementation won't occur for at least another two or three fiscal years
- The total cost of software and implementation is unknown
- Funding is ultimately shared between the General Fund and the Utility Fund. Currently, $3 million is assigned in the General Fund
- Replenishing General Fund portion of the ERP Software Project when ready to implement

III. Council Discussion/Direction:

Councilman Goins confirmed that all three parks went out to bid and no responses were received. In response, Ms. Morgan confirmed that no responses were received.

Councilman Goins wished to make a suggestion to hold off on improvements at Junny Rios Park to focus solely on the two other parks since they are more outdated. He explained that it's not that Junny Rios is not important, he just feels like this would allow them to cover more of the cost deficits for the other two parks. He asked if the improvements could be done at that park at a later time since they aren't needed right away.

In response, Councilman Dyal shared that he understands Councilman Goins' point, however District 3 pays the most in taxes but yet his district isn't receiving anything in return and his constituents are starting to talk and get upset.

Councilwoman Koss feels that Junny Rios park is one of the nicest parks in the County and has a lot of amenities. She is more concerned with Don "Mo" Stradley park. She feels the kids deserve better as the bathrooms need work, the fields need work and there are flooding concerns.

Mayor Blake noted that he visited all of the parks and there are in fact flooding concerns at Stradley Park. There are also issues with the entrance and exits at the park. Additionally, he talked about the deficiencies at Provost Park. He asked Council to be logical and equitable when making their decision.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Goins; Seconded by Mayor Blake, to approve the Provost Funding Proposal as written.**

Deputy Mayor Hearn agreed that Provost Park is an eyesore and it needs a lot of work. He feels that whatever it takes to get it done should be done.

Councilmember Dyal wished to point out that one of the bathrooms at Junny Rios is boarded up and there is one working bathroom, however it hasn't been pumped in a long time. In response, Ms. Morgan shared it is being worked on and City Manager Whitten made a note to follow up.

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

IV. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting of August 22, 2023.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

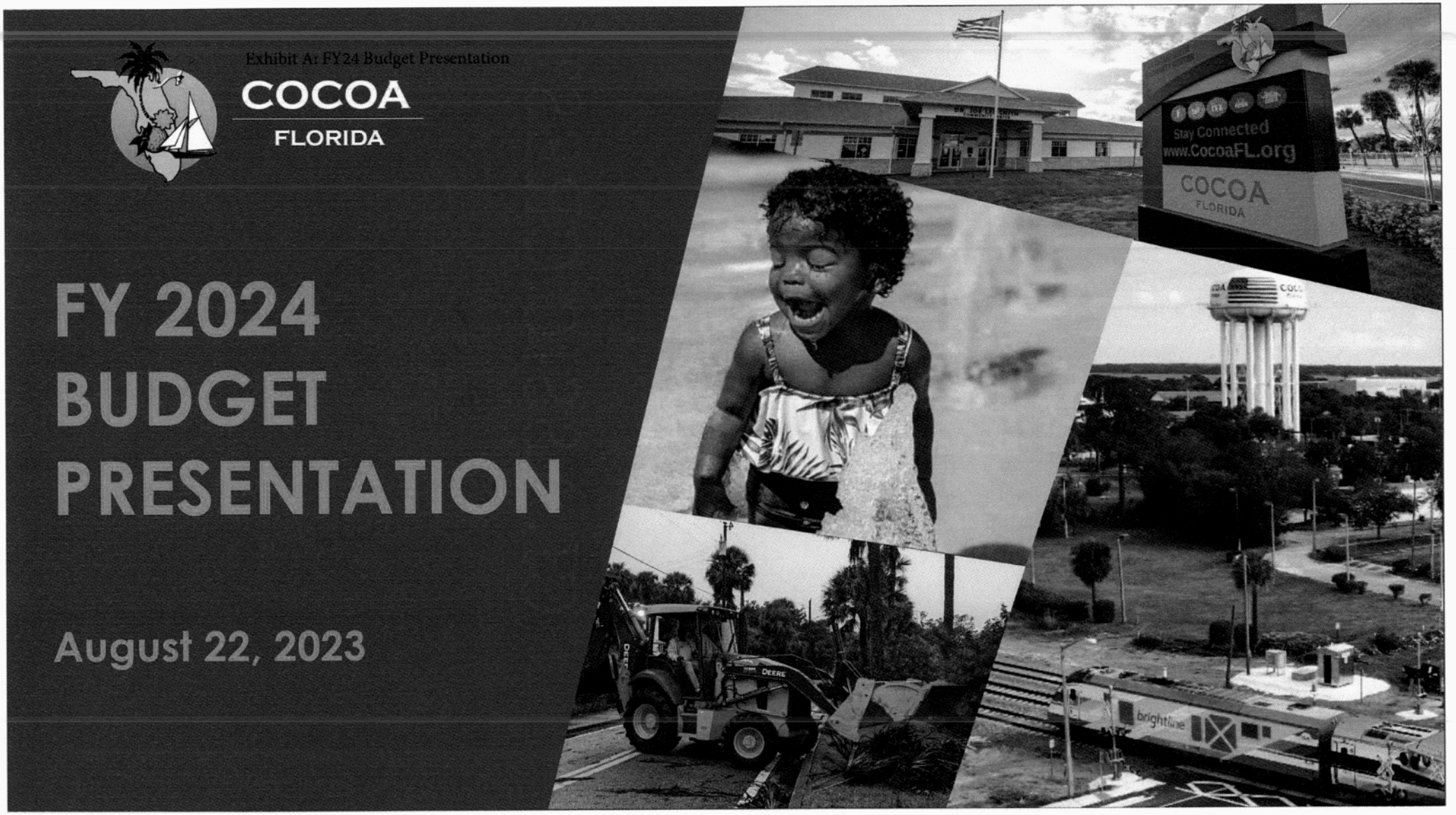
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Monica Arsenault, Interim City Clerk


Exhibit A: FY24 Budget Presentation
COCOA
FLORIDA
FY 2024
BUDGET
PRESENTATION
August 22, 2023
Stay Connected
www.CocoaFL.org
COCOA
FLORIDA
DEERE
brightline

AGENDA

COCOA
FLORIDA

- FY 2024 Budget Priorities
- Property Tax Overview
- FY 2024 General Fund Budget
- FY 2024 Special Revenue Funds Budget
- FY 2024 Debt Services Fund Budget
- FY 2024 Proprietary Fund Budget
- Fund Balance
- Parks Improvement Updates

BUDGET PRIORITIES

CURRENT & FY2024



COCOA
FLORIDA

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Recent priorities and accomplishments

COCOA
FLORIDA

- Educational assistance programs
- High School Sponsorship Program for the Police and Fire Academies
- Adjusting the way capital projects are funded through recurring revenue to allow for on-going maintenance
- Affordable housing projects







FACING THE NATION

Recruitment and retention issues can be seen across the country

COCOA
FLORIDA

Baltimore Firefighters Stretched Thin Because Of Dozens Of Vacancies In Department

BALTIMORE – Baltimore City firefighters are being stretched thin because of dozens of vacancies within its department. The head of the Baltimore City Fire Union told WJZ that burnout is real at the fire department. Just last month, it lost five members to Harford County. City fire leaders told council members on Tuesday that more [...]

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Law enforcement retention measures taken in Calif. county

Law enforcement officers in California's Kern County will receive 3% pay increases annually through 2025 after an agreement between the Kern Law Enforcement Association and the Kern County Board of Commissioners. The agreement, an effort to boost retention and strengthen recruitment, also allows officers to count leave time as hours worked and to receive longevity pay at specified milestones.

Full Story: KABC-TV (Los Angeles) (7/25)

FACING THE NATION

Recruitment and retention issues can be seen across the country

COCOA
FLORIDA

ABC News

'Vicious cycle': Inside the police recruiting crunch with resignations on the rise



Police departments across the country are facing a "vicious cycle" of retirements, resignations, and fewer hires.

Apr 6, 2023

Ocala-News.com

Marion seeks $21 million contract to address firefighter recruitment and retention

Marion County's negotiation team has tentatively agreed to a $21 million contract with the fire union that aims to address Marion County...

May 28, 2023

FACING THE NATION

Recruitment and retention issues can be seen across the country

COCOA
FLORIDA



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Police departments across the country are struggling to fill their ranks, creating what many current and former officials say is a staffing emergency that threatens public safety.

Wages, Not Work Environment, Drove North Hampton Police Department, Union Says

NORTH HAMPTON — The town's Select Board has released an email from the police union stating wages were the No. 1 concern of the remaining officers in the town police department after a mass exodus. Town Administrator Michael Tully released the email that stated, "Per your request during the meeting on April 10, 2023, the North Hampton Police […]

FACING THE NATION

Recruitment and retention issues can be seen across the country

COCOA
FLORIDA

The US is facing a critical shortage of high tech engineers

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2016 and 2026 there has been and will be a shortfall of six million engineers, or more.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 575,000 job openings in state and local government in December 2022, compared to only 195,000 hires. While the private sector has recovered the jobs lost during the pandemic, state and local government had 450,000 fewer employees in January 2023 than in February 2020.

FACING THE NATION

Recruitment and retention issues can be seen across the country

COCOA
FLORIDA

Report: Labor shortage, hiring challenges persist for state and local government hiring managers

"State and local governments continue to face severe labor shortages and are deploying new strategies to attract and retain public service workers," reads a brief outlining the findings of a new report, "State and Local Workforce: 2023 Survey Findings." "State and local governments hired more full-time or part-time staff in 2022 than in 2021, but it was more common for agencies to report that quits and retirements increased rather than decreased."

The accountant shortage is so real that dozens of cities have no credit score because they didn't file financial paperwork in time

A growing shortage of accountants has exacerbated issues for Marion and plagued dozens of cities and counties across the US. Marion saw its general obligation debt rating downgraded two notches in June and has struggled to file its financials on time. Other municipalities have recently seen their bond ratings deteriorate or disappear, threatening their ability to finance projects and borrow at affordable interest rates.

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITIES



PUBLIC SAFETY - RECRUITMENT & RETENTION/EQUIPMENT

- In order to attract and retain a skilled, community oriented, and diverse public safety workforce, we must have competitive wages. Without increasing wages, Cocoa's salary for public safety personnel would be the lowest in the area in FY 2024.

$1.1 million

- Upgrades to public safety communication radios which is a requirement to make them compliant with Federal, State Local communications requirements and increased public safety vehicle replacements.

$1 million

INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Allocation of additional funds towards the annual street paving schedule.

$200,000

- Continued maintenance of public facilities and parks including maintenance of neglected cemeteries.

$494,000

Serving our community with P.R.I.D.E!

PROPERTY TAX

OVERVIEW



COCOA
FLORIDA

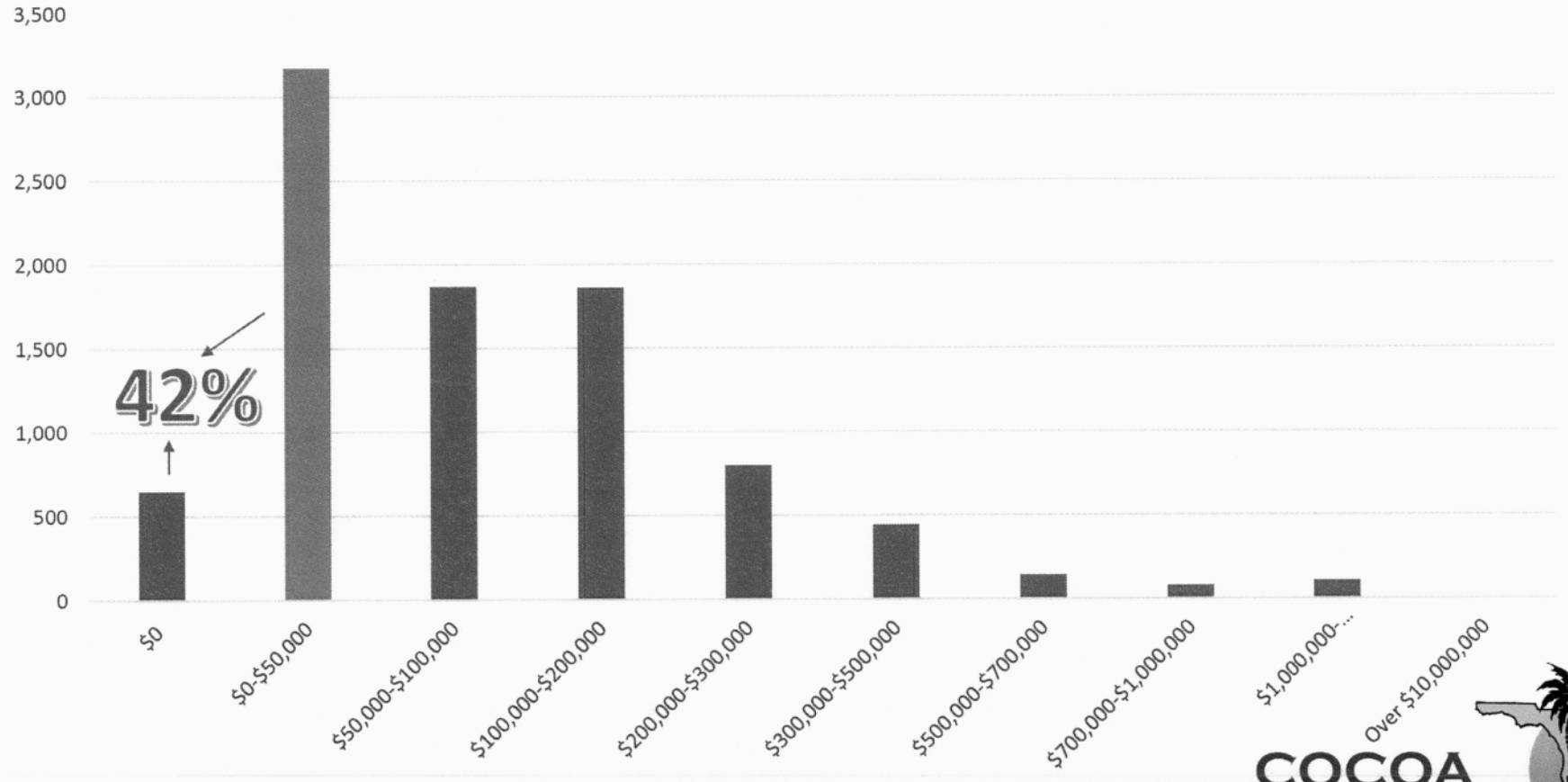
PROPERTY TAXES AT A GLANCE

Comparison of homes from an actual street in the City of Cocoa



	House #1	Next-door Neighbor #1	Next-door Neighbor #2
Year Built	1980	1980	1980
Year Purchased	1980	2002	2020
Assessed Value 2022	$74,180	$67,410	$160,540
Exemptions 2022	$74,180	$42,410	$0
Taxable Value 2022	$0.00	$25,000	$160,540
Property Taxes Paid to the City of Cocoa 2022 at 6.4532 mills	$0.00	$161.33	$1,036.00
Estimated 2023 Property Taxes to the City of Cocoa with proposed increase to 6.9532 mills	$0.00	$173.83 (An annual increase of $12.50)	$1,227.87 (An annual increase of $191.87)

TAX VALUES IN THE CITY OF COCOA



COCOA
FLORIDA

WHERE DOES YOUR TAX DOLLAR GO?

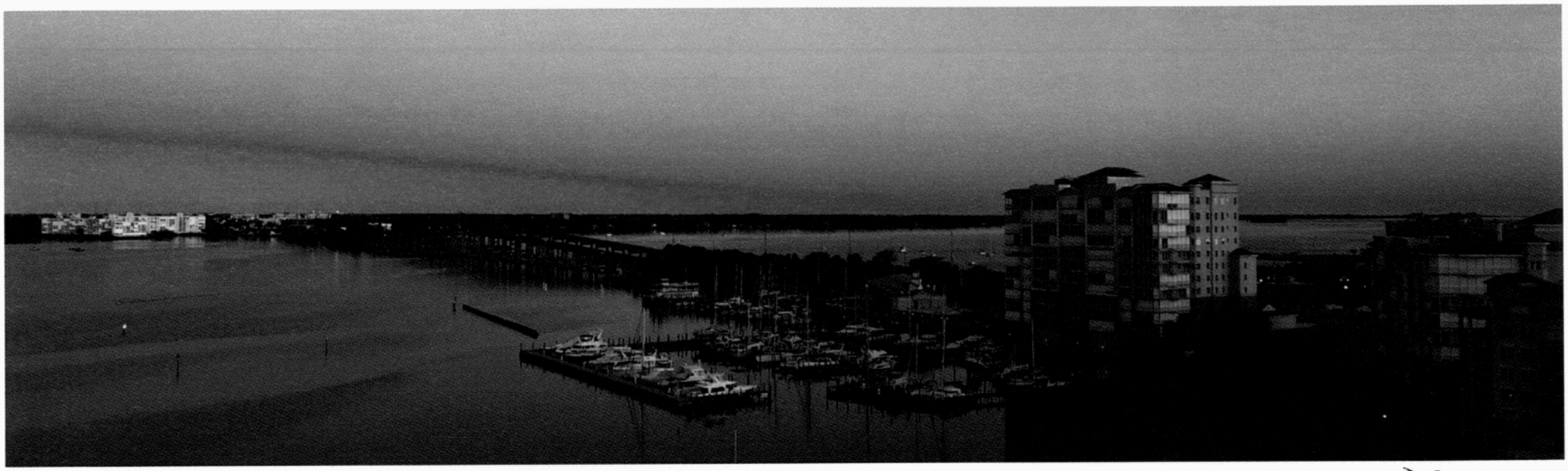
For fiscal year 2022, your tax dollar was split amongst the following entities:

COCOA
FLORIDA



FISCAL YEAR 2024

GENERAL FUND BUDGET

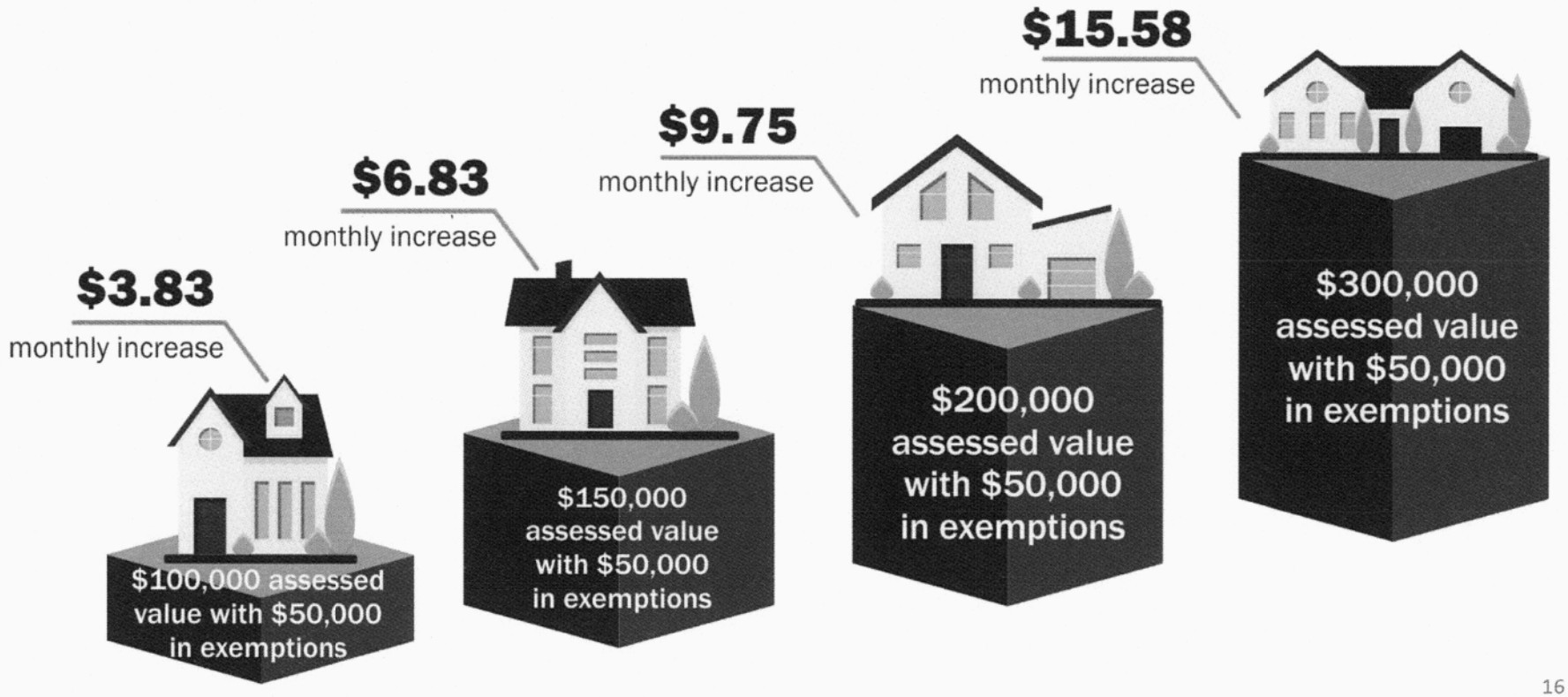


COCOA
FLORIDA

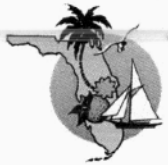
PROPOSED TAX RATE

Serving our community with P.R.I.D.E!

This is based on the average assessed value of homes with the standard homestead exemptions of $50,000 and a millage rate increase from FY 2023 at 6.4532 to the proposed 6.9532 for FY 2024.



GENERAL FUND OPERATING INCREASES



Serving our community with P.R.I.D.E!

Over the past few years, the City has experienced noticeable increases in operating expenses. Staff worked diligently to provide a balanced budget and explore ways to manage these increases.

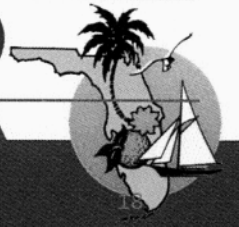
General Fund Increases	Amount
Property Insurance	↑ $299,439*
Health Insurance	↑ $201,611
Utilities (Electric/Water)	↑ $100,679
Wages	↑ $1,826,470

*Utility portion of property insurance is $880,400

WHAT DOES THE MONEY PAY FOR?



Projected Ad Valorem Revenue for FY 2024 (At 95% Collection Rate)	**$10,642,032**
TIF Revenue Transferred to CRA's	(1,542,304)
Ad Valorem Revenue Supporting General Fund	**9,099,728**
Cocoa Police FY 2024 Proposed Budget	(13,350,042)
Cocoa Fire FY 2024 Proposed Budget	(8,407,738)
Cocoa Public Works FY 2024 Proposed Budget	(10,890,512)
Funded By Other Revenue Sources:	**($23,548,564)**



COCOA
FLORIDA

FISCAL YEAR 2024

SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS BUDGET



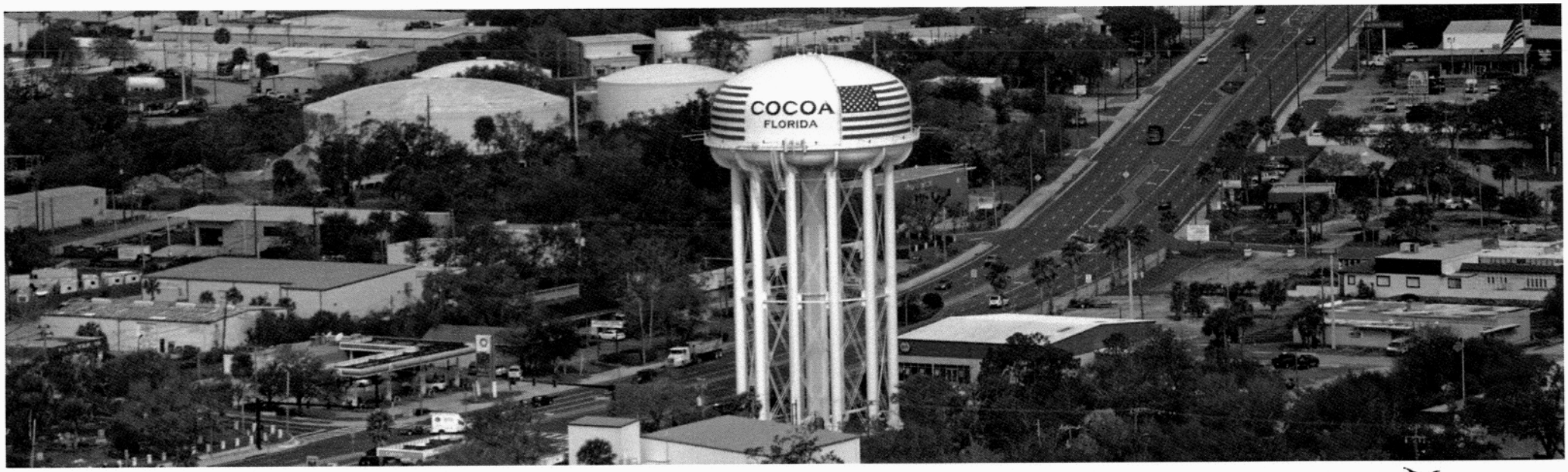
COCOA
FLORIDA

SPECIAL FUNDS BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- An increase of $728,949 to the Cocoa CRA revenue due to increased property tax values and the increased millage rate. $50,000 is allocated to update the Cocoa CRA Master Plan.
- An increase of $125,384 to the Diamond Square revenue due to increased property tax values and the increased millage rate. An increase of $475,000 is for new home construction assistance.
- A decrease in revenue for CDBG, SHIP and HOME of $134,618 from State funding sources, resulting in an associated decrease in expenditures for social services.
- An anticipated $12,000 increase in Building Permit revenue due to continued strong economic development. Continued dependence on consultations for building inspections when necessary, in addition to plan reviews. An increase in training to meet building inspection standards.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

DEBT SERVICE FUND BUDGET



COCOA
FLORIDA

DEBT SERVICE FUND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- A decrease of $366,000 in debt service payments due to payoff of a prior bond issue.
- Maintain scheduled debt service payments for all other outstanding debt.

COCOA FLORIDA

FISCAL YEAR 2024
PROPRIETARY FUNDS BUDGET



COCOA
FLORIDA

PROPRIETARY FUNDS BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Stormwater Fund

- 4% increase in stormwater special assessment, generating an additional $100,288 in revenue.
- An increase of $26,100 in expenses for floating wetland maintenance and testing.
- An additional increase of $12,418 for replacement of an aged truck.
- An increase of $14,881 in the interfund transfer to the General Fund for increased overhead costs.

PROPRIETARY FUNDS BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Water/Sewer Funds

- A 4% increase in water and sewer rates, generating an additional $3,109,446 in utility revenue.
- A 34% decrease in renewal and replacement expenditures ($3,704,291) due to fewer current capital projects.
- A 51% increase $134,950 in Administration's professional services due to anticipated start of the Taylor Creek Reserve Project.
- A 24% increase $1,188,844 in the chemical expense for the Dyal plant due to increased chemical costs .
- An increase of 458% $736,052 for replacement vehicles and meter bench test equipment for Water Field Operations.
- A decrease of 36% ($554,000) in Sewer Field Operations due to fewer current capital projects.

FUND BALANCE



COCOA
FLORIDA

FUND BALANCE REVIEW

FY 2022 Fund Balance	**$38,040,994**
Nonspendable and Restricted Fund Balance	(405,544)
Committed Fund Balance:	
Stabilization Reserve	(11,344,341)
Capitalization Reserve	(500,000)
Assigned Fund Balance	(12,260,884)
Unassigned Fund Balance per the FY 2022 ACFR	$13,529,925

FUND BALANCE REVIEW

FY 2022 Unassigned Fund Balance	**$13,529,925**
PO & Projects Rollover	(2,151,066)
FY 2023 Budgeted Use of Fund Balance	(888,336)
Fire Truck/Other Uses	(998,420)
Liquidity Reserve	(7,414,896)
Projected Available Unassigned Fund Balance as of March, 2023	$2,077,207

COCOA FLORIDA

FUND BALANCE REVIEW

Available Assigned Fund Balance	$2,077,207
FY 2023 Fund Balance Activity:	
Fiske Blvd	1,400,437
Fire Apparatus	(269,920)
Emergency Disaster Expenditures	(346,383)
Grant Matches	(163,222)
Equipment	(197,746)
UFB Prior to FY 2024 Budget Approval	2,500,373
FY 2024 Use of Fund Balance	**(1,309,688)**
Available Unassigned Fund Balance Projection as of 8/22/23	**$1,190,685**

COCOA
FLORIDA

PARKS IMPROVEMENTS

OVERVIEW



COCOA
FLORIDA

PLANNED PARKS IMPROVEMENT UPDATES (City Funded)

1) **Provost Park**
   - New Parking Lot with lights and stormwater
   - New Multipurpose field with irrigation, scoreboard and fencing
   - Reconstruct basketball and pickleball courts
   - South sidewalk
   - Perimeter fencing
2) **Don "Mo" Stradley Memorial Park**
   - New football field with irrigation and stormwater
   - Goal posts
   - 3-sided perimeter fencing
3) **Junny Rios Martinez Park**
   - Splash Pad with related pump room
   - Pavilion

PLANNED PARKS IMPROVEMENT UPDATES
(FY 2024 Parks District 4 Funded)

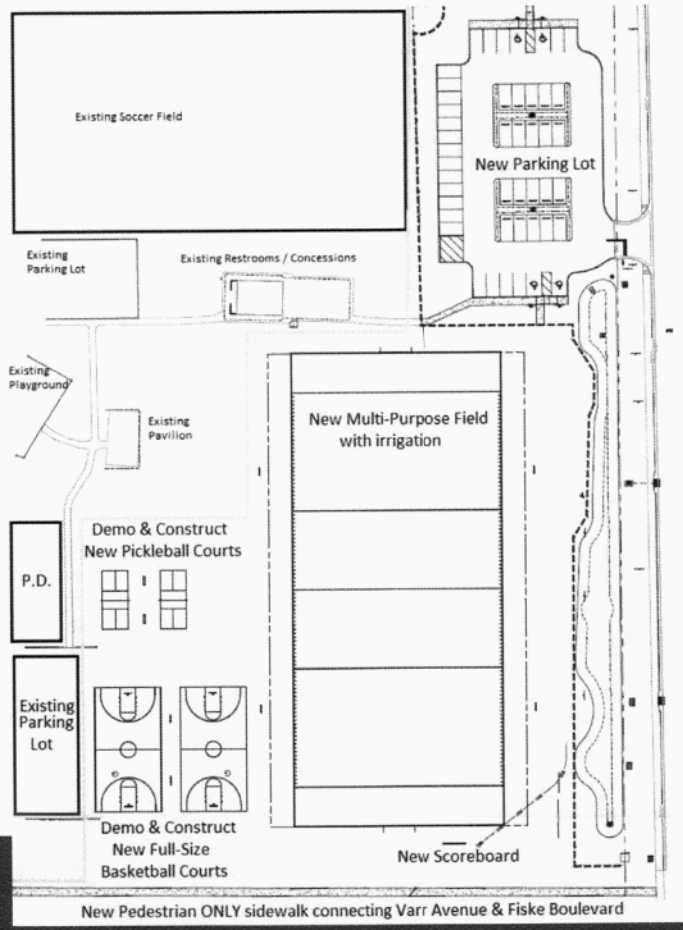
Don "Mo" Stradley Memorial Park

▪Park Paving	$300,000
▪Football Concession Renovations	200,000
▪Softball & Baseball Concession Renovations	200,000
▪Softball Field Renovations	162,928
Total Estimated Costs	**$862,928**

COCOA FLORIDA

PROVOST PARK

GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE (GMP)



Provost Park – GMP	$1,889,004
Owner Directed C/O's	80,000
Total Project	$1,969,004

- Complete renovation of two-thirds of the park

COCOA FLORIDA

FUNDING CONCERNS

- The following is the approximate remaining Assigned Fund Balance (AFB) dedicated to each park after design purchase order commitments:
  - Provost Park ~ $770,000
  - Don "Mo" Stradley Memorial Park ~ $527,000
  - Junny Rios Martinez Park ~ $640,000
- The $1,969,004 GMP for Provost Park does not include lighting, which is an additional $340,000 for a total of $2,309,004.

PROVOST FUNDING PROPOSAL

- GMP of $1,969,004 + $340,000 for Lights = $2,309,004

Budgeted	$756,000
Reassignment of ARPA	$732,000
Reassignment of ERP software AFB	$821,000

- ERP Software implementation won't occur for a least another two or three fiscal years.
- The total cost of software and implementation is unknown.
- Funding is ultimately shared between the General Fund and the Utility Fund. Currently $3.0 million is assigned in the General Fund.
- Replenishing General Fund portion of the ERP Software Project when ready to implement.



QUESTIONS