MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Regular Meeting of The City Council

March 22, 2022

A Regular City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, 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 6:00 p.m.

A moment of silence was held for the people in the Ukraine.

Students from McNair Middle School and teachers were in attendance and Mayor Blake thanked them all for their attendance and for the work they put into the children.

Students from McNair Magnet School provided the invocation and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Lavander Hearn	Deputy Mayor
	Rip Dyal	Councilmember
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Carie Shealy	City Clerk

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Evander Collier, Police Commander; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Rob Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Angela Essing, Growth and Economic

Development Director; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; Samantha Senger, Assistant to the City Manager/PIO; and Erik Montgomery, Helpdesk Support Tech.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. **Agenda:** Regular Meeting of March 22, 2022. (22-165)

2. **Minutes:** N/A

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve the Agenda for the Regular meeting of March 22, 2022.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Awards and Presentations:

1. Proclamation: Proclaiming the Month of April, 2022 as "Water Conservation Month". (22-131). (Utilities Director)

Mr. Walsh read the proclamation into the record.

Councilmember Koss also pointed out that today is "World Water Day."

2. Proclamation: Proclaiming April 10 - 16, 2022 as "National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week." (22-44). (Chief of Police)

Sergeant Amy Moon and Kathy Doran came forward to be recognized from the Police Department. Chief Collier read the proclamation into the record.

Mayor Blake thanked them for all that they do and for being available at all times.

IV. Delegations:

Mitzi Tighe, Titusville, spoke about the Joe Lee Smith Center as she recently found out that they were lacking life guards. She offered to do free swim lessons there in order to support the Center. She felt lessons were imperative and there were others who could help with the lessons as well.

Councilmember Goins advised that at the last council meeting they approved to pay for two citizens to get life guard certifications. There is another gentleman sponsoring two as well. He requested that the City Manager set up a meeting with

the County. He assured Ms. Tighe that they were committed to getting lifeguards and thanked her for stepping up.

Councilmember Koss also thanked her for coming forward and advised that there are only eight total lifeguards so Cocoa may not be the priority. She further pointed out that at a recent Aging Matters luncheon there were several elderly people interested in the pool so she believes that it is important to get the pool ready for a variety of uses.

Aisha Davis, Cape Canaveral, shared her willingness to work with Ms. Tighe on bringing programs to the Center. There are also other programs that can be offered such as Zumba classes.

Short Bo Spirit, Cocoa, mentioned that she met the new Police Chief on a community walk that he did. She was not aware of him and thanked him for what he has done so far, as things seem to be calmed down. She would like something done about the speeding on her road and further mentioned the City's water service and that she had a lot of bad feelings about it. She voiced her concerns about the services and advised she was not in favor of the tax exemption for Walmart.

Hely Martinez, Brevard Early Head Start Education's Center Director, 1403 Dixon Blvd., Cocoa, introduced herself and shared that there are free services for children under three years old. They are now accepting applications for new enrollments in the fall and they have enjoyed being in the community. She invited all to stop by and visit the center.

Linda Dolphin, Cocoa resident, read a statement into the record regarding a citizens' comment at the workshop held on March 15, 2022. She also felt falsely accused for asking to see a zero-millage budget and she stands behind the suggestion. The treatment sets a poor tone for civility and she asked that the Council and City Manager refrain from ridiculing citizen comments.

Mayor Blake thanked her and noted that he has never seen or heard the City Manager ridicule anyone.

Marisol Lanza, 436 Satsuma Street, Cocoa, asked the Police Chief if he had received the ten emails that she has sent as she has never received a response. She provided pictures to Council of the issues she is dealing with and complained

of the music at 434 Satsuma St. as it is getting worse. She would like the issues looked into.

V. Consent Agenda:

(A) General Consent Items:

1. Approve the Purchase of Two (2) New 2022 F-250 Regular Cab, 2 Wheel Drive, XL 8 Foot Bed, 142 Wheel Base Trucks Utilizing the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contract # 060920-NAF, Expiring August 1, 2024; To Approve a Resolution Amending the FY22 Budget (BAF#22-058-T). (22-132). (Public Works Director)

2. Approve an additional field acceptance testing cost of $10,635.00 toward RFP P-22-03-COC ($252,212.00) to the contract being negotiated with Tierra, Inc. for Construction, Engineering and Inspection (CEI) Services for the oversight of the Fiske Blvd. and Broadmoor Acres Drainage Improvements Project; Approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to approve Change Orders in an Amount Not to Exceed $26,284.70 (10%) for a CEI Services Total of $289,131.70. (22-148). (Public Works Director)

3. Approve a HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program Agreement with Community Housing Initiative, Inc. (CHI) in the amount of $301,679.54 to award funds for the administration of the City's Purchase Assistance Program. Approve a Resolution amending the FY 2022 Budget (BAF# 22-060-T) transferring grant funding into the appropriate account. (22-149). (Community Services Director)

4. Approve a Resolution to Establish the Stabilization and Health Insurance Reserves for Fiscal Year 2022. (22-150). (Finance Director)

5. Approval of the requested Pay Plan change for Fiscal Year 2022. (22-151). (City Manager)

(B) Multi-Year Contracts:

None.

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to approve the Consent agenda.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. Public Hearings:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing to obtain citizen input and comments on housing and community development needs; approve recommendations on the FY 2022-2023 CDBG and HOME program funding; and provide notice to solicit public comment for both the FY 2022-2027 (5) year Consolidated Plan and notice of final public hearing scheduled for April 26, 2022. (22-141). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman stated that for FY 2022-2023, and based on last year's allocation, the City anticipates receiving $175,249 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) as a direct entitlement. The City also anticipates receiving $81,562.93, based on last year's allocation, in HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds from HUD as part of the Brevard County HOME Consortium, which is composed of the cities of Cocoa, Melbourne, Palm Bay, Titusville, and Brevard County.

She explained the criteria in detail that the CDBG funds must meet and what the funds can be used for. Additionally, all activities that are carried out with the CDBG and HOME funds must be consistent with the priorities and needs of the five (5) year Consolidated Plan.

Ms. Neuterman provided staff's recommendations for funding as well as the amounts. She further added that Endeavor was not funded this year and explained the reasonings behind their decision. She pointed out that they provided feedback to them so that they could reapply next year.

Based on thorough review of each agency's proposal and financial statements, the committee's recommendations are as follows:

CDBG Public Services - Maximum 15% allowed $26,287			
Name of Agency	**Description of services to be provided**	**Amount Requested**	**Amount Recommended**
Community Services Council of Brevard -	Provide 13,953 well-balanced nutritional meals to 99 frail and nutritionally at-risk seniors.	$12,000	$12,000*

Senior Nutrition Program.			
Central Brevard Sharing Center	Provide daily nutritional meals to 357 low/mod income persons.	$15,000	$7,144*
The Salvation Army North Central Brevard Corps	Provide daily nutritional meals and provide basic necessities to 122 residents of their domestic violence shelter.	$5,000	$7,143*
Endeavour STEAM Summer Camp	Provide 2.87 days for 150	$5,000	$0
CDBG SECTION 108 Payments - $114,912			
Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program	Repayment of Section 108 Loan	$0	$114,912
CDBG Administration - 20% - $34,050			
City Staff			$33,050*
Fair Housing			$ 1,000
Total CDBG Admin			$34,050
Total CDBG Allocation			***$175,249***
****Any increase or decrease in funding will be deducted from the award.***			

HOME Administration- 7.43%* ***Brevard County Staff Admin 2.57%* - Total Admin 10%***			
Brevard County Staff Admin			$2,096*
City Staff Admin			$6,060*
HOME CHDO & Housing Set Aside - $79,466*			
CHDO Housing Activity	15% Mandatory CHDO set aside		$12,234*

Housing	Housing Activities		$61,172*
Total HOME Allocation			***$81,562***
****Any increase or decrease in funding will be deducted from the award.***			

Lastly, Ms. Neuterman stated that the next public hearing was listed for April 26, 2022 but according to the County it will not be ready for that time so it will be brought back at a later date.

Councilmember Koss asked about the $114,912 which was going towards the Joe Lee Smith Community Center and inquired about how long they would be paying for that debt. In response, Ms. Neuterman advised that it was the second year of the loan and they make payments as funds are available. Ms. Bowman further explained that the principal on the loan was about $45,000-60,000 per year, however, anything extra is being used to pay down the debt as there is no guarantee that the City will always receive CDBG funds. The interest rate is fairly low at this point until HUD decides that they want to sell it.

Councilmember Koss further asked why the Salvation Army was granted a little more. In response, Ms. Neuterman noted that it was based on the scoring and that they have a proven need as they have served above and beyond what has been given from the City.

Susan Blakesly, Central Brevard Sharing Center, thanked Council and provided their mission statement. She spoke in detail about the services that are provided and that they feed every day and clients range from infants to the elderly. Seventy percent of all services they provide are given to Cocoa residents. She invited them to their BBQ on April 2nd at Burton Smith Park.

Miriam Acosta, Chief Financial Officer for Aging Matters in Brevard, spoke on their behalf and stated they have been in this community for many years. They strive to help aging citizens have an independent and quality life. They have moved into a larger facility so that they can house more seniors for their activities. She invited Council to come visit between 11 am and 1 pm daily. There are also twelve other sites around the county. Lastly, she mentioned the Stable Home Program and stated that the City of Cocoa was the first city to help with this.

Cindy Mitchell, Director of the Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program, stated that they have been operating for thirty-eight years in Brevard County. They offer

residential and non-residential services to survivors. She thanked the City for their help and explained what they utilize the funding for which is food and shelter. Services provided are voluntary, confidential, and completely free, as everything provided for survivors during their stay.

Mayor Blake closed the hearing to the public and returned it to Council.

Councilmember Goins advised that there was an overage of funding for the Salvation Army and expressed his appreciation for what they do but recommended to spread some of the funding around. He mentioned the programs at Endeavor and that he would like to take the overages and give it to them as they are providing great services.

He clarified that he was recommending to take $2,143 from Salvation Army which would bring them to $5,000; and to take $2,857 from Aging Matters which would bring them to $5,000.

Ms. Bowman pointed out that these are grant funds and she pointed out that there are laws and regulations that staff has to abide by when spending the money. If they make a change they could be at risk for losing funding in the future.

Councilman Goins provided information from the agenda item and pointed out why he thought Endeavor qualified for funding.

Ms. Neuterman explained that the committee met and she explained in further detail why Endeavor did not meet the requirements. She agreed that this could present a challenge and could disqualify the City for future funding.

City Manager Whitten asked Ms. Bowman if there were funds available under ARPA. Ms. Bowman agreed to check.

Mayor Blake asked everyone to give the process a chance.

Deputy Mayor Hearn commended Councilmember Goins for trying to expand funding around the city. He also thanked all of the organizations for everything that they do.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to approve the item.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

City Manager Whitten advised that staff has worked with Endeavor.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Koss, to fund the Endeavor Program through ARPA if they are able, and to allow Finance to make all necessary budget amendments and transfers needed.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VII. Council Business:

1. Accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (ACFR) and the Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2021. (22-120). (Finance Director)

Joel Knopp, a Shareholder with MSL, provided a presentation[1] and advised that they received full cooperation from City staff while conducting the audit. Ms. Bowman oversaw the audit and he stated that it is quite a process. He explained the audit reports and opinions provided.

Mr. Knopp explained an overview of the audit, including required communications, and the reports included in the CAFR. He announced that a clean opinion was provided and that there were no management letter comments.

The last report was the Auditor's Report on Compliance for each major Federal program and on Internal Control over Compliance and Report on schedule of expenditures of Federal awards. There were no compliance findings related to major grants and no internal control over compliance findings related to major grants.

Mr. Knopp reiterated that there is a lot of work that goes into the audit and they are here about six months out of the year. He congratulated City staff on a job well done.

Lastly, Mr. Knopp provided the financial highlights including a City-wide analysis, General Fund, General Fund Budget, and the Proprietary Fund (Water & Sewer).

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[1] EXHIBIT A: Audit Report Presentation

Mayor Blake clarified that they have been good with the City's dollars and he provided kudos to the Finance team. Ms. Bowman thanked other departments as well.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Councilmember Koss, to Accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (ACFR) and the Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2021.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Requesting Council approval for a revised street closure for the upcoming Historic Cocoa Village Main Street Car Show on April 2, 2022. (22-139). (Asst. to the CM/PIO)

Ms. Senger explained this street closure and that they are requesting to include two streets for the upcoming car show.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve the item.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

3. Consider the reappointment of Ms. Candace Rogers as a member of the Cocoa CRA through April, 2026. (22-166). (Administrative Services Director)

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to Approve the Reappointment of Ms. Candace Rogers as a member of the Cocoa CRA through April, 2026.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Ms. Rogers thanked Council and staff for their support.

Deputy Mayor Hearn thanked her and felt she was an asset to the board.

VIII. City Business:

1. Approval of the 2021 AVT exemption for Walmart based on the fulfillment of all the requirements of the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Economic Incentive Agreement by maintaining 239 jobs at an average annual wage above $42,421. (22-142). (Economic Development Manager)

   Ms. Essing provided the background to this item. She noted that they have maintained the jobs and the annual average wage has gone up to $58,000. They have increased their employment to 322 for a mixture of full and part-time jobs and they now distribute to all Sams Clubs in Florida.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to approve the 2021 AVT exemption for Walmart based on the fulfillment of all the requirements of the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Economic Incentive Agreement by maintaining 239 jobs at an average annual wage above $42,421.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Multi-Year Contracts:

None.

IX. Informational Agenda:

1. Calls for service provided by the Cocoa Fire Rescue Department for the month of February 2022. (22-137). (Fire Chief)

2. Cumulative purchase approvals over $35,000 and under $50,000 for period 10/01/2021 to 2/28/2022. (22-145). (Finance Director)

3. FY 2022 Budget Adjustment Report. (22-152). (Finance Director)

4. Data showing the relation between the estimated and actual income and expenses to date. (22-153). (Finance Director)

5. Approved change orders to construction contracts that the City Council has authorized the City Manager, by resolution, to approve in excess of the City Manager's spending authority. (22-154). (Finance Director)

X. Reports:

City Manager Whitten spoke to the comments made during Delegations and he re-watched the video and did not ridicule anyone on that date. He takes exception to the comments that he ridiculed anyone on that day.

Ms. Neuterman pointed out that March is Women's History Month and the Cocoa PAL Youth Leadership Council would be honoring Ms. Jewel Collins at an upcoming event.

Ms. Senger asked for a consensus from Council if they would like to remove the requirement to have event organizers require a Covid protocol for their events.

* **CONSENSUS AMONG COUNCIL TO NO LONGER REQUIRE EVENT ORGANIZERS TO SUBMIT A COVID PROTOCOL FOR THEIR EVENTS.**

Chief Lamm spoke about Covid and that they have continued to see a decline in the cases of Covid. He asked Council if they would like to continue to receive a report at every meeting or only if they noticed a spike or any other issues relating to Covid.

Council agreed to only be updated if issues arose or a spike in cases happens.

Chief Lamm asked everyone to keep John Taylor's family in their prayers as they were notified that he had passed away.

Mr. Smith advised that the Brightline closure on Dixon Blvd. had been extended and stated the next closure would be Highland.

Mayor Blake thanked Public Works for the cleanup on SR 520 but that this was an ongoing issue.

Deputy Mayor Hearn provided kudos to dispatchers as a couple of days ago a tree had fallen on Dixon Blvd. He called the non-emergency number and it was gone quickly.

Councilmember Koss mentioned that the Brevard Heritage Council gave walking tours through Cocoa Village and it was a great turnout.

She noted that while on Council you see rewarding things happen. She felt two things that have been rewarding recently were the opening of Family Promise at the old fire station and Aging Matters moving to the new Joe Lee Smith Center.

Councilmember Goins talked about McNair Magnet School's Civics class and thanked them for attending this meeting. He was with them yesterday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. He commended the students, teachers, and their Principal Mrs. DeLaughter and mentioned that during Covid, they went door to door to students' homes to check on them.

He attended the IEMO III Leadership Class and thought it was a great class and he learned a lot.

Councilmember Goins provided an update on Juneteenth and advised that they have been meeting since November in order to make this a great event. He advised that they may need to increase the budget.

Lastly, he invited Council and the community to come to Cocoa High School on April 10th to help paint the stadium bleachers from 1-5 p.m. Cocoa High will be providing the paint.

Councilmember Dyal enjoyed having McNair Magnet School in attendance tonight and reminded everyone of the upcoming car show in the Village on April 2nd. It is the first time that the 1947 Fire Truck will be in it.

In closing, Mayor Blake stated that you will never be criticized by someone doing more than you, you will always be criticized by someone doing less than you.

XI. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to adjourn the Regular meeting of March 22, 2022.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Michael C. Blake

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Carie Shealy

Carie Shealy, MMC, City Clerk

SEAL

FLORIDA



EXHIBIT A: Audit Report Presentation

CITY OF COCOA, FLORIDA

Required Auditor Communications
Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2021

Presented by:
Joel Knopp, CPA
Shareholder

MSL
CPAs & ADVISORS



AUDIT OVERVIEW

MSL

FLORIDA ROOTS. GLOBAL REACH.

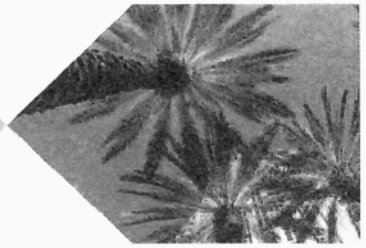
Required Communications



- Auditor Responsibilities
- Management Responsibilities
- Internal Controls and Compliance
- Significant Matters
- Management Representations
- Assigned Individual for Oversight
- Audit Schedule

MSL

Services and Deliverables



Auditor's Report on Financial Statements (Pages 1-3)

- Unmodified Opinion

Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters (Pages 179-180)

- No current year findings

Services and Deliverables *(Cont.)*



Auditor's Management Letter (Pages 181-183)

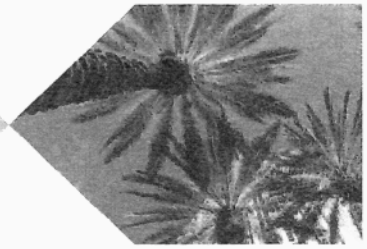
- No management letter comments

Independent Accountant's Report (Page 184)

- No investment compliance findings

MSL

Services and Deliverables *(Cont.)*



Auditor's Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program and on Internal Control over Compliance and Report on Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (Pages 186-188)

- No compliance findings related to major grants
- No internal control over compliance findings related to major grants

MSL

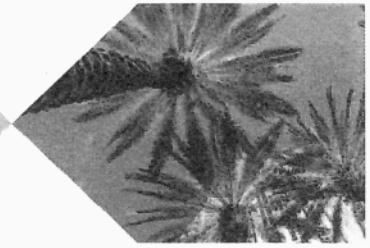


FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

MSL

FLORIDA ROOTS. GLOBAL REACH.

City-Wide Analysis (Pages 18-20)



	Governmental Activities		Business-type Activities	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Total Assets & Def Outflows	$115.4M	$107.4M	$341.3M	$332.6M
Total Liabilities & Def Inflows	$75.1M	$76.9M	$143.7M	$151.6M
Net Position:				
Net Investment in Capital Assets	$35.7M	$34.9M	$144.1M	$144.8M
Restricted	1.5M	0.9M	33.1M	27.8M
Unrestricted	3.0M	(5.2M)	20.3M	8.3M
Total Net Position	$40.2M	$30.6M	$197.5M	$180.9M
Unrestricted NP as a % of Total Expenses	8.1%	(13.3%)	39%	15%
Change in Net Position	$9.6M	$2.7M	$16.6M	$14.7M

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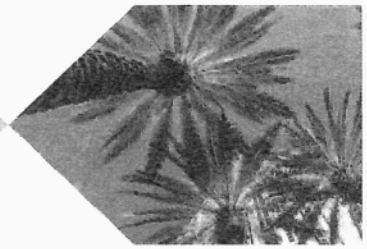
General Fund (Pages 21 and 23)



	2021	2020
Total Assets	$36.3M	$31.5M
Total Liabilities & Def Inflows	$4.0M	$4.0M
Fund Balance:		
Nonspendable	$1.6M	$1.4M
Restricted	0.1M	0.1M
Committed (includes stabilization fund)	11.8M	12.3M
Assigned	8.6M	8.8M
Unassigned	10.1M	4.9M
Total Fund Balance	$32.2M	$27.5M
Unassigned FB as a % of Total Expenditures and Transfers Out	30.8%	13.7%
Net Change in Fund Balance	$4.7M	$1.8M

MSL

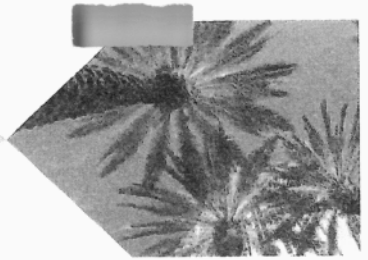
General Fund Budget (Pages 109-111)



	Budget	Actual	Positive (Negative)
Resources:			
Beginning Fund Balance	$27.5M	$27.5M	
Total Revenues & Transfers In	40.3M	42.7M	$2.4M
Total Resources	67.8M	70.2M	
Total Expenditures & Transfers Out	46.8M	38.0M	8.8M
Ending Fund Balance	$21.0M	$32.2M	
Net Change in Fund Balance	$(6.5M)	$4.7M	$11.2M

MSL

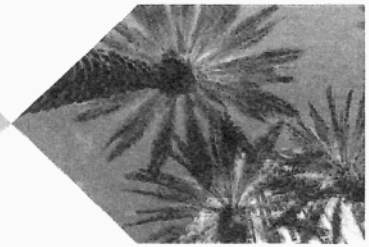
Proprietary Fund – Water and Sewer (Pages 25-27)



	2021	2020
Total Assets & Def Outflows	$334.4M	$326.1M
Total Liabilities & Def Inflows	143.0M	150.9M
Net Position:		
Net Investment in Capital Assets	139.3M	140.0M
Restricted	32.6M	27.3M
Unrestricted	19.4M	8.0M
Total Net Position	$191.3M	$175.3M
Total Operating Revenues	$70.6M	$71.5M
Total Operating Expenses	46.9M	49.7M
Operating Income	$23.7M	$21.8M

MSL

Questions or Comments



MSL

From: Kristin Lortie
To: Samantha Senger; Carie Shealy
Subject: Delegations Comment - Cocoa City Council Meeting - March 22, 2022
Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 3:36:38 PM

EXTERNAL MESSAGE - USE CAUTION WITH LINKS AND ATTACHMENTS!

Ms. Shealy,

I am submitting the statement below, with a request that my statement be included in the March 22, 2022 meeting minutes as a public delegation comment to city council. Confirmation that my statement is being submitted to council and included in the meeting record is requested.

Mayor Blake, City Council Members and Mr. Whitten,

My comment is a follow up to the March 15th Goal Setting & Priorities workshop from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., and that began with a budget presentation.

As an attendee that attended all 6-hours of the March 15th workshop, I am one of a few citizens who was present from the beginning through to the end, and who prepared for the workshop in advance by facilitating 2 citizen gatherings, and collecting citizen input regarding the updating of the strategic plan. These citizen priorities were submitted to city council at the March 8th, 2022 city council meeting, and again at the March 15th workshop.

Preparing for the March 15th workshop was unsettling, due largely to the lack of information on what would be included as public participation, the lack of response to an email to the city manager on whether the meeting would be recorded/live-streamed, and even something as simple as revealing the time and duration of lunch beforehand, and to which some attendees scrambled to locate a lunch option during the 30-minute lunch window.

Regarding the budget presentation, staff is suggesting that a millage increase will be needed this year similar to last year. I support the public commenter that suggested at the workshop that if the city does not believe it can achieve the city business without a millage increase, that city staff provide a zero-millage increase budget, so that taxpayers can review the impacts to the city of not having a millage increase.

On the planning presentation that occurred in the afternoon, I object to the City of Cocoa strategic plan being updated without the following items:
1) a community engagement workshop to inquire on citizen priorities and to obtain citizen feedback on all planning measures;
2) a 30-day public input window for citizens to provide feedback to the city;
3) an opportunity for citizens to weigh in on the draft plan revisions, and that currently includes **significant changes to the city's vision, priorities, core values, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis).**

While the city has indicated that there will be citizen inclusion later in the process to obtain some feedback, citizens are being denied the outreach of the city to solicit input, and that

affects the blueprint and core of the plan updates.

Based on comments made at the workshop, it appears the city manager is advocating for the single afternoon session of the March 15th workshop to be the total of the updated planning for the strategic planning items noted above, whereas the original planning took over 2 years to complete, beginning in 2014 and ending in 2016. It appears the city staff will no longer set out goals and objectives in advance, as they did in the original strategic plan, but will instead simply post project updates to the city website on priorities that they themselves selected. No timeline duration for the revised plan "updating" was given.

The process I witnessed during the workshop excludes citizens from "having the opportunity to participate in community decisions", as stated in the current city vision. Only the citizens who attended the workshop had an opportunity to be heard in person as a part of the updating of the strategic plan. The revised vision statement was one of the key items changing from a strong statement, to a pleasant-sounding yet diluted statement from the current statement.

In closing, I am strongly opposed to the current process of updating the strategic plan, and without including citizens in all parts of the revised planning. The city manager made a point when he stated that one citizen goes to the right when he goes to the left, and appeared to be referring to me after my comment stating my objections to the changing of the city's vision without requesting citizen input. I am advocating on behalf of the opportunities of all Cocoa residents to fulfill the city's vision for us to participate in community decisions.

For the record, since there seems to be some confusion on what citizen participation means, I would like to clarify that citizens participating in community decisions is much more than enduring the citizens of Cocoa during their public comments at city meetings. I support #teamcocoa in creating participatory spaces where we can address our community needs together.

Regards,

Kristin Lortie, 5524 Brilliance Circle, Cocoa, FL 32926

E-Comment rec'd from K. Lortie
re: Item VI.1

From: Kristin Lortie
To: Samantha Senger; Carie Shealy
Cc: Ibis Berardi; Cassandra Black
Subject: 3/22/22 Meeting Comment Agenda Item 22-141 - Public Hearing to Obtain Citizen Input on Housing and Community Needs
Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 12:34:42 PM

EXTERNAL MESSAGE - USE CAUTION WITH LINKS AND ATTACHMENTS!

Ms Shealy,

I am emailing the meetings@cocoafl.org address to request that the comment below be included with the 3/22/22 meeting in regard to Agenda item 22-141. I am also requesting that my comments be included with the public comments that are being compiled by Housing Program Manager Ibis Berardi as a part of the updating of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and the FY2022-23 program funding.

March 22, 2022 Public Hearing Comment:

I am a Cocoa resident that attended the November 4th and 5th, 2021 Consolidated Plan Update community presentations, completed the community services public survey in 2021, shared the survey with others to help encourage resident participation, and provided follow-up input.

It was a surprise to me to learn on March 18, 2022 when reviewing the city council meeting agenda (posted on March 18th), that there was a public hearing just 4 days later on March 22, 2022 to solicit public comment regarding housing and community needs. I review the city's Facebook page regularly, and did not see the hearing posted on the city's Facebook page where events are typically posted. In reviewing the agenda detail information, I learned that there was a notice placed in the Florida Today newspaper on February 17, 2022 for the March 22nd public hearing, and that there was a publicly noticed meeting on February 4th, 2022, to review the proposals submitted for funding requests. I was not aware of the February 17th newspaper notice or the February 4, 2022 proposal review meeting.

My suggestions to the housing program are the following:

1) When there is a public hearing to request public input, provide notice to the public through multiple avenues other than newspaper notices that residents are not accustomed to looking for information. The topic of housing and community needs is an important one in our community. It would show good faith on the city's part to ensure that residents have ample opportunity to know that the city is requesting their input. The program appears to receive little public input, as evidenced in a review of the 2021 and 2019-20 program reports that show no public input was provided. I hope to see more public comments in the FY2022-23 update, and have already submitted multiple comments regarding the updating of the 2022-27 5-year Consolidated Plan.

2) Include an email address for the public to email comments in all notices. This is a time when many people depend on electronic access for participation, and cannot always access in-person meetings and deliver or mail letters. The posted requirements from the February 17th announcement are overly cumbersome by not including a location for emailed comments.

3) Update the participation plan to include a goal to receive citizen feedback as a part of all reports and public hearings, with specific objectives for achieving the goals. There are too many report updates that contain little to no public comments or input.

I hope to see additional community outreach prior to the final hearing on April 26, 2022, including making draft materials of the FY2022-23 and the 2022-27 plan easily available to the public well ahead of the April 26th, 2022 Final Hearing.

Additional comments are in my email below, including requests for clarification and information to be informed on this agenda item, and that I look forward to receiving. If any other steps are needed to have my feedback included in the meeting minutes and the above-noted presentations, please let me know. I am requesting confirmation that my feedback will be included.

Regards,

Kristin Lortie, Cocoa Resident

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Kristin Lortie** <kristin.lortie@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 20, 2022 at 6:35 PM
Subject: 3/22/22 Public Hearing Inquiry - Cocoa Housing & Community Development
To: Ibis Berardi <iberardi@cocoafl.org>
Cc: Cassandra Black <cblack@cocoafl.org>

Ms. Berardi,

I am writing with questions prior to the 3/22/22 Public Hearing requesting input regarding housing and community development to **"Conduct a Public Hearing to obtain citizen input and comments on housing and community development needs"**, and have a few questions prior to the hearing.

1. I found out about the public hearing on Friday, 3/18/22 when the City of Cocoa 3/22/2022 council meeting agenda was posted online. The agenda details reflect that the meeting was posted in a Florida Today announcement on 2/17/22.

- Was the 2/17/22 Florida Today notice the only place that the public notice was posted? I did not see it announced on the city's Facebook page or on the city website in the Housing & Neighborhood Services section;
- Since the city is expressly soliciting citizen input and comments, would it have been helpful to ensure that notice of the 3/22/22 meeting was shared widely with the public through the city's standard information distribution channels?
- The 2/17/22 notice states that public comments will only be accepted in person, by mail, and at the 3/22/22 public hearing.
    - How will emailed comments from the public be treated?
    - Will emailed comments be included as public comments with the hearing information?

2. The 3/22 city agenda item states that ***"All proposals were reviewed at a publicly noticed meeting by a staff review committee."***

- What type of meeting were the submitted proposals reviewed at?
- Was this public notice placed only in the Florida Today newspaper, or was the meeting noticed elsewhere?
- What date was the proposal review meeting notice placed in the Florida Today newspaper?
- I am requesting the following information:
    - 1) copies of the proposals submitted, and
    - 2) a copy of the notice for the meeting that the proposals were reviewed at.

3. Is the draft 2022-27 (5) year consolidated plan available for review?

- I checked the Housing & Neighborhood Services on the City of Cocoa website, and do not see information on the updated consolidated plan.
- Can you please email a copy of the draft plan?

4. As you know from my prior participation, I am a citizen interested in this topic, and that attended both of the 2021 public workshops. Based on the poor visibility of advance information regarding the public meeting to review proposals, and the 3/22/22 public hearing, it gives the public the appearance that the city may only be conducting a formality of public engagement and notification, and as required by the funding agencies. Can you please help to dispel me of this perception, by advising on where I have missed access to information regarding these two meetings?

Providing the information at your earliest convenience would be a help to me to prepare for the 3/22/22 public hearing.

Thank you,

Kristin Lortie