

**TOWN OF MELBOURNE VILLAGE**  
**MINUTES**  
**Special Commission Meeting**  
**Tuesday August 11, 2022**  
**6:30 PM – Town Office**

I. **Call to Order** – 6:37 by Mayor Niemann

II. **Pledge of Allegiance** led by Mayor Niemann

III. **Roll Call** – Present: Commissioners Anderson, Ditty, Ingram, Jones, Murphy, Vice Mayor Calenda and Mayor Niemann. Absent: None

IV. **Mayor's Report**

- New Maintenance Technician has been hired.
- The Town Clerk position remains open and is difficult to fill. Other municipalities are having the same problem. Mayor Niemann presented the possibility of hiring accounting consultant Heather Roberts as a temporary part time employee, 20-25 hour/week, until the position is filled.
- The Commission discussed this option.
- **MOTION** by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner “to Hire Heather Roberts to work part time as Clerk/Treasurer, not to exceed \$45/hour.”  
Roll Call: Commissioners Anderson - yes, Ditty - yes, Ingram - yes, Jones - yes, Murphy- yes, Vice-Mayor Calenda - yes, and Mayor Niemann – yes. **Motion passed.**
- Mayor Niemann met with a Benefits Administrator to manage town Health and Life Insurance benefits. She would reach out monthly to each employee and keep insurance enrollments up to date. The Administrator would shop health insurance plans from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, United Healthcare and Wuestohff for estimates and look for dental and vision options as well as seek a life insurance company than the one currently employed. Note- Health First health plan is not available for our small group. Consider that health plan will rise ~20% annually.
- Hoping that open enrollment for benefits will line up with the Budget year of Oct 1-Sept 30 as opposed to the current calendar year system. This would be easier to track for budgetary purposes.

V. **Correspondence, Appearances, Presentations**

- Richard Jones reviewed his observations of first budget draft in the letter he submitted on August 5 (included with Agenda documents). He recommended correction of some math calculations and thinks the town's financial condition in this budget does not support a need to cut services.
- Commissioner Calenda asked what would be a recommended consideration for budgeting employee contributions for healthcare in the event of high employee turnover. Mr. Jones recommends the Federal model with an employee contribution of 28%.
- Commissioners and Mayor Niemann thanked Mr. Jones for his letter and responded that they and the Finance Committee would take it into consideration as budget development progresses.
- Iver Duedall asked about Mr. Jones suggestion that the town be annexed by West Melbourne as a way to reduce taxes. Mayor Niemann stated that the Commission has not discussed or considered such to date. Mr. Duedall would be open to discussion about this in the future. Commissioner

Ditty said that should annexation become a consideration, discussion and education would be essential for community input.

- Ondine Constable asked if Mr. Jones' letter suggests that the budget is in better shape than what was recently presented. Mayor Niemann responded that there is a need to build up the reserve fund in order to address numerous aging infrastructure issues.
- Sandra Jones asked about Town's investment account. Commissioner Ingram stated that the Finance Committee is researching how to properly invest the funds and get returns back to historical rates. We are limited in ways the funds can be invested.
- Commissioner Calenda noted that the town is and has been looking for individuals to create a subcommittee to research and present investment opportunity findings to the commission.

## VI. Approval for New Hire

A) Jeff Conklin, Public Works Maintenance technician

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to "hire Mr. Conklin for \$15/hour as a full time employee."

Roll Call: Commissioners Anderson - yes, Ditty - yes, Ingram - yes, Jones - yes, Murphy- yes, Vice-Mayor Calenda - yes, and Mayor Niemann – yes. **Motion passed.**

## VII. Budget Discussion

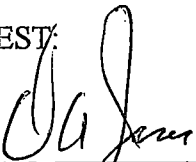
- **Public Works Budget** - Supervisor Bill Losee discussed addition of the budget line item for purchase of a utility vehicle. He presented several models. This type of vehicle would benefit the town by enabling the Public Works staff to work independently and would also create less wear and tear on the truck.
- Discussion ensued as to whether the vehicle is allowable on our roads, as it is not approved in the Golf Cart Ordinance. The Commission will work to find a way to make operation of such a Town owned and operated vehicle legal on town roads prior to purchase if approved in FY2023 budget.
- Maintenance building on Hall Rd. has some water damage that will need to be addressed in the upcoming budget. Supervisor Losee will research options for repair and make recommendations. There is also an unused shipping container in the way that needs to be moved/removed from the site. Mr. Losee will research the market for selling.
- **Police Department Budget** – Page 5 of Commission packet contains Chief Loos' response to the options presented at the previous budget meeting. He would like a 10 - 15% salary increase for current officers. Mayor Niemann stated that the town doesn't have the funds to entertain such an increase and that options must be considered, including the possibility of transferring some coverage to the Sheriffs Department.
- Commissioners Calenda and Ditty clarified that rumors that the Commission is seeking to eliminate our Police Department are untrue. It is the Commission's responsibility to look at all options and make a fiscally responsible decision. The Police Department budget is 60% of the total budget and the options under consideration range from status quo to Sheriffs department coverage and everything in between.
- The only option that would require a referendum is the MSTU (Municipal Special Taxing Unit). This option couldn't come into consideration until a referendum vote is taken at a general election – at least one year from now. Commissioner Ditty requested that this discussion be tabled for this evening's discussion as it not an option for the FY2022-2023 Budget year under discussion.

- Commissioner Jones addressed the reality that Police and Sheriffs department are all having difficulty in hiring officers. Municipalities and the state are offering higher salaries and hiring bonuses that Melbourne Village cannot compete with.
- We don't want our staff to feel unappreciated and are trying to find a way to meet in the middle by selecting an appropriate option.
- The Mayor is concerned that we may not be able to backfill any of the open positions, leading us to discuss and find a workable option.
- Sandra Smith is concerned that if we can't find a way to provide proper training to our officers to educate them to ensure we are following state laws, then we have an issue. If we don't have enough officers to provide coverage so they can go get proper training, then this is wrong on our part. We need to do whatever is possible to put the most professional officers on the force that we can. We've got to figure out a way to support them or figure out another way.
- Mayor Niemann relayed her discussion with the Sherriff department regarding the coverage they can offer. We would get all services they can provide, including a specialized drug unit and dedicated traffic enforcement.
- In the current circumstance, the Sheriffs department will provide us with services at no cost while we are actively searching to fill open positions. It is unclear whether their current service can be provided into the next year. Open positions have been posted but are proving difficult to fill. This is true throughout the county agencies.
- This area of budget discussion will continue until it is resolved for the upcoming budget year.
- A Special Commission meeting with the Sheriffs department will be held in the coming weeks - as soon as can be scheduled. This will give the Commission and residents an opportunity to hear about possible options and ask questions.
- **Additional Budget idea** - Iver Duedall offered to research the possibility that there are benefactors that may be able to help small communities. He will report back to the Commission.
- Budget Discussion will continue at the next Special Commission Meeting - August 18 at 6:30 pm.
- In closing, Mayor Niemann stated that Commissioner Ditty announced her candidacy for the position of Mayor in the upcoming election and is resigning her Commission seat as of August 17, 2022. An interim Commissioner must be appointed to hold the seat until the election has been decided. Interested residents may apply by contacting the Town office.

### VIII. Adjournment at 8:43 pm

If an individual decides to appeal any decision made by the Town Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, a record and transcript of the proceedings will be required and the individual will need to ensure that a verbatim record and transcript of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based and will be acceptable in a court of law (FS286.0105). Such person must provide a method for recording and transcribing the proceedings verbatim as the Town does not provide such a record or transcript. In accordance with the Americans Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons needing special accommodations for this meeting shall, within a reasonable time prior to the meeting contact the Town Clerks office (321) 723-8300.

ATTEST:



David Jones, Commissioner



Tabitha Niemann, Mayor