

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Hernando met for the Recessed Meeting at City Hall on Tuesday, August 31, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. with Mayor Chip Johnson presiding. Alderpersons present were: Alderman W.I. "Doc" Harris, Alderwoman Natalie Lynch, Alderman Andrew Miller, Alderman Bruce Robinson, Alderman Chad Wicker, Alderwoman Beth Ross, and Alderman Ben Piper. Also present for the meeting were: City Clerk Pam Pyle, Court Clerk Cassi Perry, Human Resources Director Julie Gates, Police Chief Scott Worsham, Assistant Police Chief Shane Ellis, Fire Chief Marshal Berry, Deputy Fire Chief Sam Witt, Dispatch Director Dana Lowrey, Animal Shelter Director Susan Huff, James Ratliff, Captain Kyle Hodge, Captain Charles Lanphere, Mitch Lemmon, Tony Nowak, Jarrett Mashaw, Nester Duran.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance

INVOCATION

Alderman Miller gave the invocation.

CONTINUATION OF FY22 BUDGET WORKSHOP-DEPARTMENT HEADS

Alderman Miller stated that he wants the \$250,000.00 that we will receive from the State to be set aside until we get clarification on what we can use it for. He would like to use it for the Oak Grove/Highway 51 project so that it does not go into Road Improvement/Overlays.

Mayor Johnson presented:

Building permits will be significantly lower, because AWG was such a large amount last year. Sales taxes will probably be ending the year with \$4,850,000.00 and I am going to forecast it as flat not knowing how we will do this year, which is \$1,150,000.00 more than last year. We should not need to get a Tax Anticipation loan this year. Cell Tower rent will go down because CSpire is pulling off of our towers. Loan Proceeds has \$295,000.00 for Police Cars and \$665,000.00 for the Animal Shelter building. Also, allocating from the Bond fund about \$235,000.00 set aside for the Animal Shelter building. We have a total revenue number of \$16,616,931.00.

General Administrative:

Salaries include a 3% increase. Professional Services was very large because it included the Annexation and Redistricting charges. We will not have that in FY22, so instead of \$234,780.00, it will be budgeted at \$25,000.00. On Dues and Subscriptions, we need to be sure we are members of the National League of Cities, so we can network. The Transfer to Parks will be \$550,000.00 which is about \$57,000.00 less than what was presented.

Planning & Zoning:

We looked at raising the pay for the Planning Director, but with our size and population, the figure we have is in line. If we had to, we could make adjustments to get someone. At this time, we have one employee. On the Consulting item, when we get a new Planning Director, this item will eventually go away.

Alderman Piper stated that as Alderman, he does not need to get a pay raise. There are people here that need those dollars more. We knew what the pay was when we ran. Alderman Lynch agreed that they can take it off and Alderman Robinson agreed.

Chief Scott Worsham presented the Police Department:

Showing a slide show, he presented comparisons of salaries with other cities. We have not added any addition positions since 2012. In 2009 we had 34 officers, and this year we have 38. Our Officers are paid less that any other city in DeSoto County. The city does not have an IT department, but city wide, one is needed. We are unique as Memphis Tennessee is so close. Felony Crime Data shows a significant case load increase from 2009 through 2021 with the small staff that we have now. As the population grows and with our geographical location, crimes will increase. Projecting out, we need 20 new officers by 2026. I am asking for 5 new positions this year. Calls for service has increased 260% since 2009. Looking at the budget, salaries include 5 new positions. We need to hire based on experience, which we do not do now. It was discussed to bring them in at a lateral move.

Alderman Miller stated that Chief is advocating for his people as all of the department heads are. What type of percentage are you looking at for your department? I need a percentage wise number. Alderwoman Lynch said she figures about 10%. After discussion it looks like in excess of 6%.

Capital Outlay:

We do not have a Sally Port and that is a safety/security issue. The Gale Center is constructed in a way that we can add a Sally Port there. I had someone come in and give us a rough estimate on the cost which came in around \$314,000.00. That would add a double and single bay, a booking station, booking terminal, and 2 singular cells. A bathroom with industry standard stainless fixtures. It also includes a new DUI booking section and benches. This would be used daily. Would you rather have a Sally Port or 5 officers? I would rather have 5 officers. 2 of the 5 new positions would be for investigations. We are missing out on around \$150,000.00 in fines revenue by not having any investigation officers. If we can get our pay comparable, we can get officers because they want to come to Hernando. We did not purchase any vehicles last year and we will need 7 cars this year. Alderman Piper asked where are we on overtime if you get your new hires? Chief said we have a lot of races and events that we have to attend. We have illness, vacations, training we will continue to have overtime for safety.

Dana Lowrey presented Dispatch:

In the last 10 to 12 years, we have not increased positions. On a good day we have 2 dispatchers. The Fire Bureau Rating came and rated us, and at our call level we need to have 4 dispatchers per shift. I am asking for 2 full time positions to replace the 3 part time positions. This will cut overtime drastically. We are looking at 7% to 11% salary increases. Our equipment is very dated, and we need to replace some computers. We need to upgrade to larger capacity computers. We handle Police, Fire, Animal Shelter, Public Works, and if we have Code Enforcement.

Cassi Perry presented Court Department:

We are asking for 3% to 7% except for one employee that will be at her 90 days. I am asking for 1 part time due to regulations. We do not have enough people to be adequately staffed. They could work Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays. We could also use them to help get the necessary work done for the docket. Alderman Piper asked if we need to add another court day. Tony Nowak stated that we can only have so many people in the court room due to COVID. We would not need another court day at this time and do not want to add one now, if not needed. Cassi said if we do increase our court days, the part time person could be upgraded to full time. The 3% to 7% increase does not include mine. I am the only department head on hourly. I work on the weekends, after hours and I do not count that. Alderman Wicker asked where does your salary compare to other cities. It is low and I have been the Court Clerk for 16 years. Alderman Miller stated that the Mayor needs to come back to the board with his recommendation on Cassi's salary.

Cassi stated that Public Defenders need to be increased from \$250.00 to \$350.00 and allow 5 additional stand in spots, and leave the 5 additional at \$250.00. Our cases have increased and need more help to process them. The number of inmates that the Public Defenders handle have increased substantially and will not slow down.

Capital Improvement: I am looking at a drop box, benches, and some mesh attached to the canopy because birds get in there and make a mess. I am going to need a new heat and air unit. I am getting quotes and the one I have now is around \$8,000.00 for a 3-ton unit. The quotes I have for the benches are \$3,500.00 for 4 6ft. and \$3,300.00 for 3 8ft., and they match the ones on the square. Tony Nowak stated he could not say enough about Cassi. If you could see a way to increase her pay, I would not want mine increased.

Chief Marshal Berry presented the Fire Department:

My salaries will be 0% for me all the way up to 20% for my Medics, and with that we are still the lowest paid department in the County. We combined the EMS with Fire budget. We now cross train and have Medics that can drive fire trucks, firemen that are medics. The fire rate bureau gave us the best rating we have ever had. We are just a few points away from a Class 4. The fire department rated the lowest of all 4 categories. We have not hired a new position to ride on the fire trucks since 2004. We should have 4 people on a fire truck every day. We hire to have 3 people on a truck. I either have to have 3 people or we will continue to pay significant over time. The last 4 years we have lost 6 firemen a year. They get trained and then go somewhere else for a higher pay. Alderman Miller stated that he did not want Chief Berry to paint a picture to the new board members that the last board did not do anything for the fire department in the past. We drastically increased salaries in the fire department in the last 2 years. You are talking as though you have not received anything ya'll came in here with a proposal with what you needed and we did exactly what you wanted us to do. 2 months later you had 5 or 6 firefighters leaving. Chief Berry said that he was not the one who asked for that at the time. Alderman Miller said you are asking the same thing tonight, that if we do not get what we are asking for, people are going to leave. With the new structure of consolidating your department to make it more efficient. Some of this board did what the department asked, and they still left. Chief Berry said that was 4 years ago when we got our pay adjustment and it was a good pay adjustment. I cannot ask for as much as the other cities pay because we cannot match them. We still have not caught up with those increasing as well. I was not the Chief then, but Deputy Chief since 2004. The board was very good to us. We pay the position and not the person, and we don't have longevity

pay. I am asking for 2 part timers. The \$796,000.00 we are combining the EMS and Fire and not asking for any additional positions, but asking for raises. Maybe add people next year.

We do not have a Fire Marshal at this time. We could have that and charge the fees to pay for that position. Alderman Miller said that the overall Fire Department change for this budget is \$306,572.25. Chief says he needs a backup ambulance and one of the ambulances has electrical issues. At this time, we use someone else's backup ambulance. We need 9 new air packs and NARC safes that would be electronic and track usage of the safe.

Salaries and capital improvements is the major increase. I have a need for sewer run to the fire station and we bid it out at \$40,000.00. Right now, it is on a septic tank. Two of the positions are Deputy Fire Marshall and Training Officer. The Fire Marshal could be funded by the fees for inspections and the Training Officer could reduce the Fire Academy cost. The Fire Academy has reduced the training capacity due to COVID. A Training Officer could train a batch in house and also teach grant writing. Alderman Piper said that the tax increase of 7.2% is in line with the budget ask from the Fire Department. I think a \$306,572.25 ask is reasonable. There are only so many dollars to go around.

Mayor Johnson stated that we have \$620,000.00 in its own bank account from the MS Modernization Plan of 2018 from the lottery money. We can use this for only road improvements. I will talk to the States Auditors office to make sure how we are to use it. Alderman Miller said we also need to plan on having a reserve account.

Animal Control:

Mayor Johnson said Susan Huff makes \$31,000.00 per year and I am proposing \$40,000.00 per year for her. I have looked at the plans for the Animal Shelter, and I am putting \$900,000.00, which is what it was bid at. We will rebid and see where we stand. Alderman Miller said we need to get this done. Prices are only going up and we need to get it away from the fire station. We spent money on the site to get ready already. We can get a loan to pay for this, and it would be only used for the Animal Shelter. In the bond fund we borrowed \$5M. there is \$235,000.00 still there to go towards the shelter building. We can form a committee and get this done. Alderman Robinson, Alderwoman Lynch, and Alderwoman Ross will be on the committee.

Susan Huff presented Animal Control:

We are pretty much run by volunteers. We have saved the city about \$58,000.00 by using volunteers. The city is too large to just have volunteers only. I do not have enough staff to cover a week. We have open positions that have to be filled.

Mayor Johnson: Debt Service

We are not doing a Tax Anticipation Loan; our Contingency is about \$268,000.00. If we put \$300,000.00 in here from the Overlays like we talked about, our contingency will be \$568,000.00 for rainy day fund. Alderman Wicker asked how much we are borrowing in this budget. Mayor Johnson stated in Loan Proceeds for all capital improvements we would potentially borrow \$1,310,000.00.

Alderman Piper asked if we are going to do an across-the-board percentage increase or go by what has been presented here? Mayor Johnson said nothing is locked in here. We will look at what was presented and see how it looks and present it to you on September 7, 2021. We will

look at it at that meeting and make any changes that you see fit. Alderman Miller says in the budget process the Executive Branch presents the Legislative Branch a balanced budget to accept or reject which will happen on September 7, 2021. Alderman Harris suggest that they need to add people but did not put them in their budget. I would like for them to put those in their budget for us to approve or reject. I'd rather take them out than try to put them in there.

Alderman Miller stated that he and Alderman Wicker were selected to sit on the Board at MML. It is a great honor to serve on the Board, and asks this board to make a list of things that they could present to the MML Board to help our city.

ADJOURN

There being no further business at this time a motion was duly made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Wicker to adjourn.

Motion passed with a unanimous vote of "Aye".

ORDERED AND DONE this the 31th day of August, 2021.

MAYOR CHIP JOHNSON

ATTEST:

PAM PYLE, CITY CLERK