

BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
Southwest Ranches, Florida

Thursday 7:00 PM

August 15, 2023

13400 Griffin Road

Present:

Mayor Steve Breitkreuz

Andrew Berns, Town Administrator

Vice Mayor Jim Allbritton

Russell Muniz, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk

Council Member Bob Hartmann

Emil C. Lopez, Town Financial Administrator

Council Member Gary Jablonski

Keith Poliakoff, Town Attorney

Council Member David S. Kuczenski, Esq.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Workshop of the Town Council of Southwest Ranches was held at 13400 Griffin Road in the Southwest Ranches Council Chambers. The meeting, having been properly noticed, was called to order by Mayor Breitkreuz at 7:00 PM. Attendance was noted by roll call and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Presentation – Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

Mayor Breitkreuz opened the workshop by thanking members of the public and staff for attending, then turned it over to Town Administrator Berns. Town Administrator Berns advised the meeting was the next step in the budget process and that the preliminary rates had been set to meet the TRIM requirements. He also stated the meeting would provide more in-depth knowledge regarding the proposed millage, fire and solid waste assessments, and the overall budget. He thanked the Council, the Assistant Town Administrator, the Financial Administrator, Finance Staff, and Southwest Ranches Staff for their hard work in putting the budget together. He then turned the meeting over to Town Finance Director Lopez for the presentation.

Town Financial Administrator Lopez and Town Controller Rich Strum presented the PowerPoint presentation summarizing the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget.

Mayor Breitkreuz opened the floor to public comment after the presentation, then turned it over to Council Member Jablonski after public comment closed.

Council Member Jablonski opened with requesting the funding for the project for the twelve flashing speed signs be removed from the general fund that affects the millage rate and to be taken from the "forfeiture fund". Council Member Hartmann questioned the effectiveness of the speed signs compared to their annual cost and would like to meet with the Town Public Works Department later for more information on the data the signs provide. After further discussion, Council agreed to using the funds from the "forfeiture fund" to purchase the signs. He then discussed removing the funds in the amount of \$17,850 for the surface material replenishment at Country Estates Park, due to it being purchased this year as part of the project for the canopy structure at the park. He then recommended that the funds allocated for the Volunteer Fire Department apparatus gear be removed from the budget and be processed through budget adjustments. He wanted the gear to be purchased as needed and individually, instead of in bulk. Mayor Breitkreuz opposed the idea and stated that the if the items were not needed, they should be removed from the budget and that even if the items were purchased on an as needed basis,

they would still need to be budgeted as part of the Town's financial plan. Mayor Breitkreuz stated the Council could make the decisions later to purchase the items if they were needed or not but that it would be best to have the funds in the budget. Vice Mayor Allbritton raised the question of the lifespan of the equipment and what happens to the equipment afterwards. Mayor Breitkreuz stated that the average lifespan was about eight years, but the Town buys a portion of the equipment each year instead of all at once. It was decided to leave the funds in the account. Council Member Jablonski then brought up the new position of Parks and Recreation Coordinator and the salary of \$67,630. He believed the position is premature and that the parks should be developed more before the position is created, and that a defined job description is needed. Mayor Breitkreuz asked Council Member Jablonski if he could interject on the topic because he asked for the position to be created. He then explained that the position was initially going to be a part time position as a program director for the parks. The position was intended to focus on creating programs for the Town's residents that are currently not available in the Town but are part of other municipalities in the local area. Mayor Breitkreuz said the position will create programs such as youth sports leagues and programs for seniors to promote a stronger bond within the community. He stated the position became a full-time position after speaking with the Town Administration and it recommended making it a full-time position with a dual role. Part of the time the position would be working on creating and managing programs and the rest of their time working on assisting the PROS Manager with the maintenance and upkeep of the parks. He stated that the position would have a clear and defined job description and that the person hired should have the background as stated. Council Member Jablonski was looking forward to seeing the plan but would like to see the parks developed more before hiring the person.

Council Member Hartmann spoke next regarding the zero-waste initiative and hiring a lobbyist that will be able to assist the Town with dealing with Broward County. He brought up the point that the Town needs to be the leader on this initiative and promote recycling in addition to hiring a lobbyist. Town Attorney Poliakoff advised that the estimated cost for a county lobbyist would be \$35,000. He also said the Town could investigate the options of hiring multiple lobbyists and splitting the costs with other local municipalities. Council Member Hartmann raised the issue of the fees for the Waste Authority being paid and what the amount would be for the Town. Town Administrator Berns answered that the fee is based on population size and the fee was estimated at \$10,000. Mayor Breitkreuz checked with Town Financial Administrator Lopez if the items were in the budget, but they were not. After discussing the two items, the Council decided to include the \$10,000 fee for Solid Waste Authority membership fee but did not include the \$35,000 lobbyist fee.

Mayor Breitkreuz recommended that instead of lowering the fire fees this year to keep them at the same rate as this year's rate. He stated that to help cover the future costs the excess monies could be kept in the reserves to help offset the cost in the future. Town Administrator Berns interjected that when the preliminary rates set for TRIM the fire fee was set at the maximum amount of \$758 so the Town could not go higher than that. Council Member Jablonski stated that he would like to try and keep the fees as low as possible to offset the increase in the other fees but understood Mayor Breitkreuz's concerns. Mayor Breitkreuz next discussed the issue of TSDOR

and the fact that it only had the amount of \$295,000 in it. He wanted to raise the amount to \$450,000, which was established as the minimum amount in the past, to be able to complete road projects in the Town. Council Member Jablonski recommended the \$155,000 amount could be taken from the "forfeiture fund". Vice Mayor Allbritton voiced the concern that TSDOR is an ongoing project and that taking the funds from the "forfeiture fund" may not be something that can be done in the future. Mayor Breitkreuz acknowledged the issue and stated that we should adjust accordingly in the future. Mayor Breitkreuz then went on to state that he was proud of the Administration and Legal Team for the work they did on the Emergency Services contract and keeping the cost per capita down to such a level. He also stated that the services provided by the Town of Davie and the personnel are the best in the County.

Council Member Hartmann brought up the subject of the lobbyist again and asked Town Attorney Poliakoff for further information on the matter. Town Attorney Poliakoff explained that having a "sole topic lobbyist" would be advantageous to the Town. The lobbyist would be able to dedicate the time and energy needed to monitor all agendas, attend all meetings, etc., regarding the zero-waste issue. He stated that the fee would be as a monthly flat rate and terminable at any time. He also added that even after adding the additional funds to the TSDOR line item does not mean that all the funds would be used. Mayor Breitkreuz advised the Town Financial Administrator Lopez to add the funds for the lobbyist.

Town Financial Administrator Lopez then asked for clarity on some of the items discussed. The first item was raising the fire assessment rate to \$758 instead of \$733. He stated if the Town raised the rate to \$758 the Town would still be able to save an estimated \$110 for the reserves fund. He then clarified that the monies saved would not offset the millage rate, only add to the Town's savings. His second item was informing Council that if the funds requested to be used from the "unassigned fund balance" were used, there would be a balance of roughly \$159,000 left in the fund. He also recommended not using savings funds for operational expenses, so next year these items and amounts would be considered when calculating the millage rate.

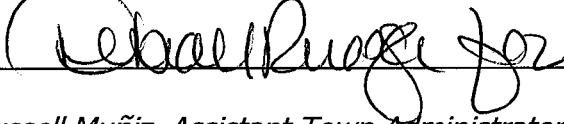
Town Attorney Poliakoff stated for the record that the "forfeiture fund" mentioned by Council during the meeting is "general fund revenue" that is collected through Code Enforcement, and that there is no separate fund designated as "forfeiture fund".

Council Member Hartmann asked Town Administrator Berns if there were any additional personnel positions other than the Parks and Recreation Coordinator being added to the budget. Town Administrator Berns answered that no other positions were added.

4. Adjournment


Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Russell Muñiz, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk

Adopted by the Town Council on this 12th day of October, 2023.



Steve Breitkreuz, Mayor

PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTES 286.0105, THE TOWN HEREBY ADVISES THE PUBLIC THAT IF A PERSON DECIDES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THIS COUNCIL WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT ITS MEETING OR HEARING, HE OR SHE WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND THAT FOR SUCH PURPOSE, THE AFFECTED PERSON MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDING IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED THIS NOTICE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE CONSENT BY THE TOWN FOR THE INTRODUCTION OR ADMISSION OF OTHERWISE INADMISSIBLE OR IRRELEVANT EVIDENCE, NOR DOES IT AUTHORIZE CHALLENGES OR APPEALS NOT OTHERWISE ALLOWED BY LAW.