



**CITY OF COOPER CITY
CITY COMMISSION**

**SPECIAL MEETING
January 29, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Ross opened the meeting at 6:30 PM and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Pulcini, Meltzer, Green, Curran and Mayor Ross.

3. Public Comments (each member of the public is allowed to speak for four (4) minutes)

Jennifer Goldfarb, 11869 SW 55 St, asked about the City Managers report and who is responsible for the financials in those report. She advised she is an accountant and some concerns she found in looking through past City Mangers reports. She asked about a line item called AR uncollectable and the amount that appears to be the same amount as previously written in 2017. She asked about the negative liability under group insurance, November 2018. The City spent 24% of entire year's budget on BSO; she asked to see the ledgers. She also advised of her concerns with the general fund and the expenditures. She asked for the Commission to establish a Finance Advisory Board immediately to address financial concerns.

Mike Bufalo, 11648 SW 59 St, spoke on his concerns with fiscal responsibility and spending money out of fund balance for the City budget. He advised of two lines in the financial plan presentation that he has concerns about, the 2 and 3 million loans listed. He advised he would like to see more savings.

David Nall, 3620 NW 89th Way, asked the Commission for leniency with the resident's tonight in voicing their concerns. He spoke on the fund balance and the financial plan and his disappointment in the Commission. He also spoke about the park and the loan from the water and sewer fund. He spoke about his concerns with overspending and the previous City Manager.

4. Financial Plan Presentation

Interim City Manager Marie Elianor advised that at the December 4, 2018 City Commission Workshop the Commission was presented with preliminary financial information that they had available. At that meeting, the Commission directed staff to bring back a financial plan.

Customer Service Supervisor Robert Anathan addressed some concerns that were brought up prior in the meeting. Mr. Anathan advised the Water and Sewer fund is in great shape. Mr. Anathan advised the previously implied General Fund reserve amount of -\$239,000 from the December 4th Workshop after review would be at least \$2 million in the positive in Fiscal Year 2019. In the Financial Action Plan it specifies that in Fiscal Year 2013 to Fiscal Year 2016 there was an increase in the Fund Balance and then a decrease in FY 17 and FY 18. The outlook for the City in terms of the operating mileage rate should remain unchanged through FY 2021. Tax Base growth will be around 4.4%. The BSO contract expectation is a growth of 5%; there is a contingency line should it be more. Two possible minor revenue enhancements include adding an additional day to the passport-processing department and an increase to the lien search charge that will be more in line with other cities. The improvement of the General Fund to the proposed amount of \$5.4 million includes alternate funding of CIP, vacancy credits, expenses that were identified after the December 4 meeting, minor rebalance from the Building Department and a lesser amount in the Road and Bridge Fund. Mr. Anathan recommended the following actions to ensure maintenance and strengthening of reserves: engage professional services of a well-qualified consulting firm to provide an organizational assessment of City Operations; engage BS&A software company to conduct an operational assessment; engage Florida League of Cities cost reduction program and work with the League to ensure maximum awareness of all relevant grants; provide monthly financial results to ensure fiscal stability and enhance the budget process to be more performance-orientated; establishing an emergency line of credit and conduct a review of the City's compensation plan as well as developing a strategy for keeping public safety cost growth in line with what the City can afford.

5. Commission Discussion

Commissioner Pulcini thanked Bob Anathan and the Interim City Manager for the presentation. Commissioner Pulcini expressed his concerns that the plan does not account for loss. He said he believed that operational issues are what caused the losses we have incurred. He advised he liked many things about the plan but would like to focus more on the operation side. He also said BSO increased less than revenues or personnel costs and Ad-Valorem taxes are growing faster than revenues.

Commissioner Meltzer thanked Bob Anathan and the Interim City Manager for the presentation. He asked Mr. Anathan about the \$5.4 million dollar improvements in the FY19 General Fund. He asked from where the alternate funding of capital improvement programs was coming. Mr. Anathan responded

by saying that the city would be receiving \$2 million in grant funding. Commissioner Meltzer asked from where the updated G&A fund allocation from general fund was coming, to which Mr. Anathan advised that those funds owe the general fund. The Commissioner asked about the updated Fiscal Year 2018 balance, to which Mr. Anathan advised that the balance changed due to there being no need to transfer funds to the Building Department. He also asked about the alternate funding of Road and Bridge fund, to which Mr. Anathan advised there was money allocated to be transferred to the building fund that was not needed. Commissioner Meltzer said if you add those numbers together, it totals around \$3 million in transfer to the General Fund. His concern is the change to the general fund seems to be money moving from fund to fund and loans. He will express his ideas on improvements in the near future.

Commissioner Green thanked Bob Anathan and the Interim City Manager for the presentation. He asked Mike Bailey about money used from the Water and Sewer fund for Natalie's Cove flooding. Mr. Bailey advised the money was funded by a \$1.9-million-dollar bank loan, \$500,000 grant and \$77,000 from the Water and Sewer fund. The bank loan will be paid by the storm water fund. He asked Mr. Anathan about moving money from accounts to raise the general fund. He asked if there are any additional revenue streams that Mr. Anathan had come across during his research that could benefit the City besides adding a day to the passport services and the lien search fee. Mr. Anathan advised no, other than a possible review of recreation fees.

Commissioner Curran thanked Bob Anathan and the Interim City Manager for the presentation. He asked how much the Flamingo West Park loan would be. Mr. Anathan advised \$2 million. Commissioner Curran asked what particular project is the \$1-million-dollar loan allocated for. Mr. Anathan advised it is a \$1 million bridge loan that relates to a \$3 million project that was not in the budget. Commissioner Curran advised he does not believe in borrowing to get out of debt and wants to look into alternatives. He also stated that raising water rates instead of taxes and raising other fees is not something valuable. He wants to see cuts across the board. Mr. Anathan advised BSO allocation could not be cut and \$700,000 was taken out of operating expense and capital expenditure in this presentation.

Mayor Ross asked Mr. Anathan to look into an increase in non-ad valorem to help further revenues. He also asked about the expenditure with BSO already being 25% in the 3rd month. Mayor Ross advised that potentially decreasing costs with BSO could be looked at and look into accountability into what services we are receiving in what we pay for. Mayor Ross asked why the \$3 million dollar well project was not budgeted for. Mike Bailey advised the damage to the well occurred after the budget was completed and the damage to the well was not foreseen.

Commissioner Pulcini agreed with Commissioner Curran and would not like to take out a loan but find ways to increase fund balance by decreasing operational expenses.

Commissioner Meltzer agreed he did not want to borrow money but to generate money from cutting operational costs. He advised to possible changes to the pension for employees that may take some burden off the City. He also asked Directors to look into cost savings in their departments. Mr. Anathan advised each Director did make some deductions already. Commissioner Meltzer also spoke about job openings and if these jobs are not essential to wait. He also advised to look at non ad valorem and transport fees. He also advised looking into revenue from vacate land commercial and residential.

Commissioner Green spoke on the BSO contract and the lack of flexibility as of now but advised that for the future that if BSO does not have the personnel to give us we should not pay for that personnel. He asked the Interim City Manager about the pension plan and options for new hires and if the City contribution has a cap. Mrs. Elianor advised increases are minimal.

Commissioner Curran advised code expenses are very high and possibly hiring retired officers to help aid in savings. He also spoke on vacancies and that the City loses money on the vacancy credits. He recommended cutting positions until they can be filled. Recreation fees may not be an option if we lose attendees due to the higher fees. He also asked Mr. Anathan about the \$645,000 reduction in operating costs. Mr Anathan advised he does not have the details but that he can provide more information at a further time.

Mayor Ross asked about \$897,000 in uncollectable receivables. He advised on Fire Department shift alternatives. He addressed job openings and accounting as a priority. Mayor Ross asked the Directors what they all could cut from their departments. Interim City Manager Elianor advised she is retrieving those numbers.

Commissioner Pulcini asked Mr. Anathan about the \$64,000 in personnel cuts, and the building fund listing of \$158,000 in personnel cuts. Mr. Anathan advised those are separate savings.

6. Additional Public Comments (each member of the public is allowed to speak for an additional two (2) minutes)

Lisa Dodge, Exempt, thanked the City for the presentation and asked the Commission how much money do we have today and also advised to keep suggestions of cuts in police quiet in concerns for crime and that in her opinion a ladder truck is not needed.

Ryan Shrouder, Exempt, asked how much we have in the General Fund. Interim City Manager Elianor advised in terms of cash and cash equivalent as

of December 31st the City has 16.1 million dollars. He also asked what the amount of City reserves is. His concern is operating cost and capital expense cuts in the plan as well as pensions and possible 401A options.

Steve Carl, 2940 Oslo Ave, spoke on his concerns with credits regarding BSO. He also advised his concerns with cutting Police and Fire services. He also asked about a \$4.9 million loss in the prior budget. Interim City Manager Elianor advised the \$4.9 million loss is mostly attributed to Hurricane Irma expenses. He asked the Interim City Manager exactly how much was attributed to the hurricane. Interim City Manager Elianor advised approximately \$3 million. Mr. Carl asked about the remaining loss of \$1 million. Interim City Manager Elianor advised staff will provide that information momentarily.

Bob Sands, 10585 Grove Pl, spoke on Commissioner Curran and spoke about staff providing information when questions are asked and answers are needed.

Jimmy Goulet, 5215 SW 90th Ter, spoke on his concerns with the strategic plan presented at the last meeting. He asked about grants for the park and FEMA owed debts and hiring a firm to collect debts. He also expressed his opinion of having the Commission approve a certain amount rather than the City Manager.

Mike Bufalo, 11648 SW 59th St, spoke about spending and getting opinions from the residents about cutting the public safety budget or raising the water rates.

Andrew Gross, 5010 Regency Isles Way, spoke about his concerns with potentially reducing staffing of Fire Rescue and the ladder truck.

Jennifer Goldfarb, 11869 SW 55 St, spoke on concerns with not cutting enough operational costs and her agreement with the Commissioners on their concerns.

David Nall, 3620 NW 89th Way spoke on his support of Commissioner Curran and his opinion of directing each Director to cut 10%. And health contributions from employees and his concern with the tax base growth projection.

Mayor Ross asked to have the \$645,000 deduction from Directors be itemized to review. Mr. Anathan read the list of cuts in operating expenses

- Commission - \$25,355
- Administration - \$1,500
- City Clerk - \$36,470
- Finance - \$20,400
- Non departmental-\$20,200
- Growth Management -\$47,000

- Code – \$8,000
- Public Works Admin- \$27,060
- Public Works Property Maintenance - \$23,900
- Public Works Parks - \$40,320
- Fleet – \$8,300
- Police – \$72,000
- Fire - \$33,500
- Recreation – \$40,500

Capital expenses

- Admin- \$5,000
- Clerk – \$1,000
- Finance - \$1,200
- Non Departmental – \$90,000
- Property- \$34,900
- Parks \$91,200
- Recreation – \$29,000

Commissioner Pulcini spoke on budgeting at a reduced mileage rate.

Commissioner Green advised the mileage rate deduction would be done in September.

Commissioner Curran spoke on possible reductions as the following, the pergola at the community center \$150,000, choose one generator instead of two, \$250,000. Commissioner Curran asked Public Works Director Denise Yoezle about the Fire Station doors. She advised there is a grant submittal in and the doors are in terrible condition. He also advised of his support for the three-manned fire truck and clarified that the cuts he referred to in Police are the vacancy credits. Commissioner Curran advised he will find \$400,000 in further reductions and does not agree with cutting staff.

Mayor Ross advised that staff needs to address and revisit the forfeiture of funds issue. He also advised he is not opposed to staff cuts if it is required and the possibility of combining departments. He also advised that every department should look into more cuts or changes, even Police and Fire. He also advised the ladder truck could be supported by a bordering city.

Commissioner Pulcini stated that he believes we should wait on the strategic plan that was presented at the January 22, 2019 Commission meeting.

Commissioner Meltzer advised additional cutting could be made in the following areas the contingency and charitable contributions. He asked Mr. Anathan about the County Transportation tax increase and if there will be any impact for us. Mr. Anathan answered that was not included and is spoken for. He also recommended full cost recovery of the fire assessment. He advised

that a full cost recovery to add to the general fund. He also believes that a new fire assessment study should be done.

Commissioner Green advised that charitable contributions are matched by the state and support the residents. He also mentioned that decreasing the millage rate and increasing the fire assessment fee needs to be handled cautiously.

Commissioner Curran believes the Fire and Police should be a line item on a tax bill. He believes that showing the residents will help aid in transparency and show money spent on safety.

Mayor Ross advised the fire assessment increase is not popular but may be necessary. He advised the charities are not necessary but they do serve the residents. He mentioned repealing the ordinance prohibiting water service for adjacent neighboring cities for extra revenue. Mayor Ross also thanked staff and the residents for all the information and ideas.

Steve Carl, 2940 Oslo Ave, asked about the \$4.9 million deficit he asked about previously. Assistant Finance Director Sherry Walker advised \$2.7 million was budgeted, as appropriation from fund balance from prior year budget, and the remaining \$2.7 million was grant revenue that was funding that was budgeted to be reimbursed from FEMA. \$687,000 was more revenues than budgeted for and \$195,000 under budgeted. Commissioner Curran asked if the \$195,000 was from the Recreation Center. Mrs. Walker advised it is line by line and listed the following unbudgeted item costs.

Recreation - \$1,000,000
Property and Maintenance - \$9,000,
Public Safety - \$307,000
General Government - \$494,000.

Steve Carl, 2940 Oslo Ave, asked about the loss of revenue in over budget. Mrs. Walker advised the Departments came in under budget but the reason why the \$4.6 million total loss was that we budgeted for \$2.7 million to be used from fund balance.

David Nall, 3620 NW 89th Way, spoke about the ability to assess tax-exempt properties.

Ryan Shrouder, Exempt, asked what our reserves are as of today. Assistant Finance Director Sherry Walker advised that the general fund reserves are \$17,947,319 but property taxes will affect this. Our most recent unassigned fund balance for general fund is \$39,753. Mr. Anathan advised as of September 30, 2019 it would be \$5.2 million. Mr. Anathan advised \$2.6 million restricted. Mrs. Walker advised for FY 2018 our projected revenues were \$38 million and we brought in \$36 million. Mr. Anathan advised we were not short \$7 million in projected revenues as previously mentioned.

Mike Bufalo, 11648 SW 59th St, asked where the expenses were listed in to which Mrs. Walker advised that they are hurricane related expenses. He then asked about the \$4.9 million loss, to which Mrs. Walker advised of a budgeted deficit of \$2.7 million in the adopted FY 2018 budget. Interim City Manager Elianor advised that was due to FEMA costs and needed to balance the budget. The other \$2.7 million was from fund balance. Mr. Buffalo advised of his concern of how we intend to produce additional revenues when we had a loss the prior year. Mr. Anathan advised the budget was made to overspend and then the hurricane added expenses.

Jen Goldfarb, 11869 SW 55 St, advised she does not want Cooper City to be compared to Oakland Park. She also advised that revenue is going up faster than BSO services. She advised safety is her number one concern. She also advised of more efficiency in code enforcement and combining parks and recreation. She also advised the Finance committee should be voted upon tonight.

Bob Sands, 10382 Grove Place, spoke on his concerns with comments stated earlier about communication. He advised that communication needs to come from the City and accountability with answers.

Carol Gonzales, 9707 SW 57 St, spoke on code enforcement and her missed bulk trash. She called the City and reported the missed pickup and then Code Enforcement showed up to her home. She advised of a previous instance she was visited by code enforcement in regards to placement of her cans and her concerns with selected enforcement by Code officers.

Commissioner Meltzer asked Ms. Gonzales to call him.

Mayor Ross advised that she could always contact the Commission or the City with these concerns. He also advised that the code process needs to be evaluated.

MOTION: To create a Finance Review Board
Moved by Commissioner Pulcini. Seconded by Commissioner Meltzer.
No vote called.

City Attorney Horowitz advised that because that item was not on the agenda its best to place it on the upcoming agenda to adhere to notice requirements.

Commissioner Meltzer advised to keep in mind in the fire assessment commercial properties, vacant properties and commercial and warehouse that could add revenue.

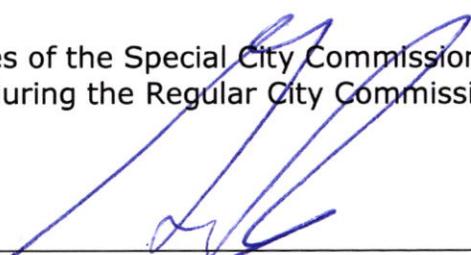
Commissioner Curran spoke on the earlier mention of starting at different points. He advised that was in regards to lack of information provided. He

stated he would like to see the Directors seated up front at meetings to be heard. He also believes that combining directors is not efficient.

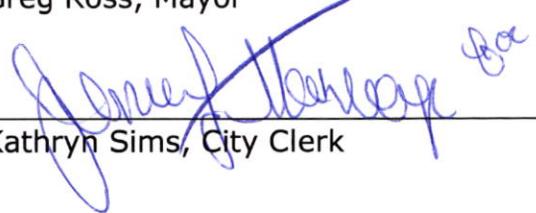
Mayor Ross advised this meeting was educational but disappointing. He believes that resident and Commission questions need answers and that this cannot happen again. Mayor Ross thanked Chris Garcia for her attendance.

7. Adjournment

The minutes of the Special City Commission Meeting of January 29, 2019 were approved during the Regular City Commission Meeting of March 19, 2019.



Greg Ross, Mayor



Kathryn Sims, City Clerk