

TOWN OF OCEAN BREEZE
MINUTES TENTATIVE BUDGET AND PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE HEARING
Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
Ocean Breeze Resort Clubhouse, Pineapple Bay Room
700 NE Seabreeze Way, Ocean Breeze, FL

1. **Call to Order** – President De Angeles called the meeting to order at 6.00 p.m.
 - Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Ostrand led the Pledge of Allegiance
 - Roll Call – Present: Mayor Karen M. Ostrand, President Kenneth De Angeles, Vice-President Bill Arnold, Council Members Kevin Docherty, Sandra Kelley, Gina Kent and Liz Reese
 - Staff Present –Town Management Consultant, Terry O’Neil; Town Financial Consultant, Holly Vath; Town Clerk, Kim Stanton

2. Proposed Millage for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 - Holly Vath, Town Financial Consultant – Ms. Vath provided an overview from the July 26, 2023 Budget Workshop hearing in which a tentative millage rate of .9 mills was passed. She explained that staff would be bringing forth a 2022/2023 budget amendment at the October meeting for roughly \$30,000 - \$35,000 which would come out of reserves for unanticipated expenses. She continued to explain the 2023/2024 budget summary stating that the recommended reserve level should be 45-60% of the budget. She added that the patrols by the Martin County Sheriff’s office remained in the budget. She commented that the Town’s liability insurance had increased by 30%. She continued that the implementation of Office 365 for email had been initiated, along with the update of the web site to ADA compliance and adding the building permit status, which were mandated. She added that there would be election expenses for the November 2023 election because it was an “off year”.

Ms. Vath explained that a millage rate of .9 mills or less would need to be adopted at this meeting. She spoke about the specific instructions for adoption of a millage rate and budget stating that the millage rate, by Florida State Statute, had to be adopted first, then the budget by resolution.

She took questions from the Council regarding the current millage rate versus the rolled-back rate, which she defined. She explained that at the current rate of .9 mills, the taxes were being lowered by 4.45%. She continued to take questions from the Council regarding the standard homestead exemption, and portability of value (Save Our Homes Amendment).

President De Angeles asked for comments from the public.

Richard Dixon, 1344 NE White Pine Terrace, Ocean Breeze, proposed a millage rate of .8 mills. He spoke about the \$18,000 for patrols and that he did not believe the Town should continue these patrols.

President De Angeles asked for further comments from the public.

There were none.

President De Angeles asked for a motion by the Council to adopt a millage rate.

Council Member Reese, seconded by Council Member Kelley, made a Motion to adopt a millage rate of .8 mills.

Council Member Docherty spoke about the possibility of litigation regarding the close-out of the DR Horton project.

Mr. O'Neil stated that this was a possibility because the Town was collaborating with attorneys to get the close-out of the project across the finish line in terms of compliance with the PUD, the bond and building code related issues. He asked Ms. Vath the impact a millage rate of .8 rate would have on the reserves.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact a .8 millage rate would have on the reserve balance and the patrols by the Martin County Sheriff's Department.

President De Angeles stated that a millage rate would have to be set before further discussion of the budget.

Council Member Kelley asked if the millage rate being proposed was .8 mills.

President De Angeles confirmed that the motion was for .8 mills.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Kelley, Reese, De Angeles, Kent; No: Arnold, Docherty; Motion Passed - 4 - 2

Council Member Reese made a Motion to delete the item for additional patrols by the Martin County Sheriff's Department in the amount of \$18,000 from the budget.

President De Angeles asked Martin County Sheriff's Deputy Andrew Adams to speak about this item.

Martin County Sheriff's Deputy Andrew Adams spoke about the extra patrols, the detail coordinator at the Sheriff's Department, difficulty in measuring service, the processes on how the patrols were gaged, gathering data, the outcomes of patrols, times in which patrols were made, scheduling of patrols, codes for the gates at Ocean Breeze Resort and Seawalk and visibility of patrols. He added that he could inquire of his detail coordinator as to the specific times and trackability of patrols. He urged all citizens to call the Sheriff's Department in the event of a crime.

Vice President Arnold asked about the code for the gate at Seawalk and that he would like to know the number of patrols in that area.

Discussion ensued regarding the patrols, gate codes, less kids riding around Ocean Breeze Plaza, homeless individuals, utilizing the patrols half of the current scheduled times, 3 hour minimum for patrols at \$60 an hour, random patrols, the Town of Ocean Breeze versus Jensen Beach, night-time patrols versus day-time patrols, call volume data, scheduled times for patrols, patrols in Ocean Breeze Plaza and the various zones within the Martin County Sheriff's Department.

President De Angeles asked Council Member Reese to restate the Motion.

Council Member Reese, seconded by Council Member Kelley, made a motion to delete the \$18,000 patrol item from the budget.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: De Angeles, Kent, Reese, Kelley, Docherty; No: Arnold; Motion Passed - 5 - 1

Council Member Docherty asked about offsetting this savings by converting the millage rate back to .9 mills.

Mr. O'Neil explained the voting process regarding undoing a previous motion and explained that the motion would have to be initiated and reconsidered by an individual on the winning side of the previous vote.

President De Angeles asked if anyone who voted "yes" to set the millage rate at .8 mills would choose to reconsider their vote to set the millage rate at .9 mills.

President De Angeles stated that hearing none, the millage rate would remain at .8 mills.

Ms. Vath explained that Resolution #338-2023 would need to be adopted and read into the record.

3. Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 – Holly Vath, Town Financial Consultant – Council Member Kelley asked for clarification of the increase in salary for the Gross Payroll, second line-item, in which there was an increase in salary of almost \$11,000. She stated that she believed this increase was high. She referred to the Mayor's memo regarding extra functions for the position but that she did not believe that it would justify an increase of that amount. She asked that the line-item on Page 5, second line-item, Gross Payroll for Administrative Assistant be negotiated, and asked for further thoughts.

Discussion ensued regarding saving of dollars in the Computer Services line-item, the duties of the Administrative Assistant, Software Support line-item, proposal of increase in salary of \$5,000 instead of the \$11,000, relying on consultants versus having an employee with the same skill-set, changing title of Administrative Assistant to Deputy Town Clerk, State mandates regarding the Town's web-site and Computer Services line-item.

Mr. O'Neil recommended to President De Angeles that the Administrative Assistant line-item remain "as is" for this meeting and then, at the final hearing, staff would bring back an assessment along with the details.

Council Member Kelley made a motion to reduce the Administrative Assistant line-item.

President De Angeles asked for a second.

There was none.
Motion failed.

President De Angeles asked for further comments on the budget.

Council Member Kelley asked about Special Projects line-item.

Town Clerk, Kim Stanton, explained that Special Projects line-item was utilized for digitizing the Town records and that Administrative Assistant, Shannon Roger, had performed this task along with her additional duties.

Council Member Kelley asked about the line item of Public Advertising Notice with the Treasure Coast Newspapers.

Town Clerk, Kim Stanton, explained that the Town was required by State Statute to advertise the election, TRIM notices, hearings, and Ordinances in the local newspaper.

Council Member Kelley asked about the Office Supplies and Expense line-item for election mailing.

Mayor Ostrand explained that the reason for the mailing was to reach the entire public regarding the three budget hearings along with the Election Proclamation for the annual election.

Council Member Kelley asked about unused cell phone/internet stipends.

Mr. O'Neil explained that the stipend was available for use and at the end of the fiscal year, the unused dollars would remain in the funds and roll-over into the following year.

President De Angeles asked for additional comments from the Council regarding the budget.

There were none.

Mr. O'Neil gave direction on passing the millage rate resolution and then, passing the budget resolution.

President De Angeles asked the Town Clerk to read Resolution No. 338-2023 into the record.

Town Clerk, Kim Stanton, read Resolution No. 338-2023 into the record:

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF OCEAN BREEZE, MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA ADOPTING THE TENTATIVE LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE TOWN OF OCEAN BREEZE, MARTIN COUNTY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

President De Angeles asked for a motion to adopt the Resolution No. 338-2023.

Council Member Reese, seconded by Council Member Docherty, made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 338-2023.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Docherty, Kent, Reese, Kelley, De Angeles; No: Arnold; Motion Passed – 5 – 1

President De Angeles asked the Town Clerk to read Resolution No. 339-2023 into the record.

Town Clerk, Kim Stanton, read Resolution No. 339-2023 into the record.

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF OCEAN BREEZE, MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

President De Angeles asked for a motion to adopt the Resolution No. 339-2023.

Council Member Docherty asked for clarification about the final hearing.

Council Member Kelley, seconded by Council Member Reese, made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 339-2023 with adjustments to be made at the final hearing.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Kelley, De Angeles, Reese, Kent, Docherty, Arnold; No: None; Motion Passed – 6 – 0

4. Announcements – Public meetings to be held at Ocean Breeze Clubhouse, Pineapple Bay Room, 700 NE Seabreeze Way, Ocean Breeze:

- Adoption of Final Millage Rate and Budget for FY 2023/2024, Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 6:00 pm
- Regular Town Council Meeting – Monday, October 9, 2023, at 6:00 pm
- Canvassing Board Meeting – Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 10:00 am
- Regular Town Council Meeting – Monday November 13, 2023, at 10:30 am

Mayor Ostrand announced that Council Member Docherty donated a new shredder to the Town office.

5. Adjourn – Council Member Arnold, seconded by Council Member Reese, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 pm.

All in Favor: Yes: De Angeles, Docherty, Kent, Arnold, Reese; Kelley; No: None; Motion Passed – 6 - 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Stanton
Town Clerk

Minutes approved: Dec. 11, 2023