

City of Gulfport Florida
Special City Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 17, 2009

The Special Meeting of the Gulfport City Council was held on Thursday, September 17, 2009, in the City Hall, City Council Chambers, 2401 53rd Street South, Gulfport, Florida.

Michael J. Yakes, Mayor, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call.

Present were: Councilmembers Michele King, Judy Ryerson and Samuel Henderson; Vice Mayor Robert Worthington; Mayor Michael J. Yakes; Interim City Manager James O'Reilly; Interim City Attorney Thomas Minkoff and City Clerk Lesley DeMuth.

1. Ordinances:

- a. 2009-11, **Second Reading and Public Hearing: An Ordinance of the City of Gulfport, Florida, providing for the Ad Valorem Tax Levy for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2009 and ending September 30, 2010; and providing for an effective date.**

City Clerk DeMuth read Ordinance 2009-11 in its entirety.

Mayor Yakes opened the Public Hearing.

Dottie Wolski, 2652 - 44th Street S., spoke on Enterprise Funds.

Frank Crupi, 2845 Seabreeze Drive S., spoke against a tax increase, saying it was unreasonable.

David Stokes, 6210 Pasadena Point Blvd., provided a brief summary of properties that did not pay taxes adding, to raise taxes was a big deal for those who could not afford the increase.

Art Padula, 2508 – 50th Street S., spoke against an increase in taxes and mentioned that the City Manager had presented a balanced budget at the existing rate of 3.4 mills, which was pretty impressive.

Ed Clarini, 6201 Gulfport Blvd, commented that he did not understand why all levels of City government had to stay “revenue neutral” by raising the millage rate.

Bruce Stone, 2012 – 53rd Street S., spoke on the artificial tax base, against raising taxes and the need for a stronger form of City government who they could hold accountable.

Helen Black, 2808 Clinton Street, spoke against raising taxes.

John Balogh, 5301 - 31st Avenue S., spoke on cost of taxes and insurance and said he was against a tax increase.

Dan Lipkey, 2800 block of Kipps Colony Dr., spoke on Florida's Property Tax Reform Amendment One which passed with 65% of the vote in favor of permanent tax relief. He asked Council to not raise the millage rate and honor the majority vote in Amendment One.

Jennifer Salmon, 1207 - 60th Street S., requested Council return the millage rate suggested by Staff to 3.4742, and commended Staff for their efforts.

Ed Jenson, 6216 Pasadena Point Blvd, spoke in favor of not increasing the millage rate.

Margarete Tober, 1513 - 59th Street S., spoke in more detail about the budget, the impact of what the average increase in property taxes would mean, and the loss of two police officers.

Bob Newcomb, 921 Fremont Street S., spoke on the Reserve Fund/Emergency Fund, and protecting the surplus, stating it was short-sighted to cut taxes and said they needed to think about the future, by staying at the 3.855 tax rate.

Henry Goldsmith, 6313 Pasadena Point Blvd, commented that Staff had done what the Council had charged them to do and did not understand why suddenly they changed the millage rate to 3.855.

After receiving all public comment, Mayor Yakes closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Henderson, second by Councilmember King to open for discussion.

Councilmember King provided a hand-out to Council depicting the General Fund Budget from 2005 up to the projected estimates in 2010, including the Ad Valorum Taxes and stated her reasons for not increasing the millage.

Councilmember Ryerson said they need to stay with the original Ad Valorum Tax that they set, and spoke on the Reserves that they had not touched.

Councilmember Henderson explained the reason why he was in support of the increase to 3.855, and referenced an article in the Nation's Cities Weekly which predicted Cities would be navigating the implications of the down turn for awhile longer, even if the business climate turned around immediately.

Vice Mayor Worthington spoke on the reasons why he felt they should increase the taxes and mentioned all of the things the City had been able to accomplish.

Mayor Yakes called the question.

Vice Mayor Worthington said the motion for discussion was on the floor.

Interim City Attorney Minkoff said he understood the motion to be for the Ordinance with a second, and said a vote in the affirmative would be for the 3.855 rate, and if voting in the negative they were voting the motion down.

VOTE:	COUNCILMEMBER KING	NO
	COUNCILMEMBER RYERSON	NO
	COUNCILMEMBER HENDERSON	NO

VICE MAYOR WORTHINGTON	YES
MAYOR YAKES	NO

MOTION FAILED: 4 TO 1.

Motion by Councilmember Henderson, second by Councilmember King to amend Ordinance No. 2009-11 on Second Reading and to adopt the Ordinance at the 3.4742 millage rate.

VOTE:	COUNCILMEMBER KING	YES
	COUNCILMEMBER RYERSON	YES
	COUNCILMEMBER HENDERSON	YES
	VICE MAYOR WORTHINGTON	NO
	MAYOR YAKES	YES

MOTION CARRIED: 4 TO 1.

b. 2009-12, Second Reading and Public Hearing: An Ordinance of the City of Gulfport, Florida, adopting the Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2009 and ending September 30, 2010; and providing for an effective date.

City Clerk DeMuth read Ordinance 2009-12 by title only. City Clerk DeMuth stated the Ordinances before Council was 3.855, but she had the Ordinances presented on First Reading at the 3.4742 rate if they wanted to make a comparison.

Interim City Manager O'Reilly confirmed the Operating Budget presented that evening was a balanced budget.

Mayor Yakes opened the Public Hearing.

Dotty Wolski, 2652 - 44th Street S., commented that property taxes pay less than 30% of the Operating Budget to the General Fund.

Margarete Tober, 1513 59th Street S., complimented the City Manager, and invited the public to participate in Budget Committees/meetings in general.

Ann Hays, 3026 Dupont Street S., explained this was her first meeting, she loved Gulfport and glad the taxes were lowered.

Marjory Milford, 2845 Skimmer Point Drive S., expressed her appreciation to Council and Staff and acknowledged their job was not easy.

Art Padula, 2508 – 50th Street S., wanted clarification associated with a previous comment that approximately one million was taken from Reserves to balance the budget.

Interim City Manager O'Reilly stated according to governmental accounting the savings from this year have to be put back into the Reserves before they can be appropriated forward.

Bob Newcomb, 921 Freemont Street S., complimented Staff, and said he hoped the one million would be replaced, though he thought it would significantly fall short and expressed concern over future cutbacks and services that will become necessary at the 3.4742 rate.

Ed Clarini, 6201 Gulfport Blvd, said he was not clear on the allocation of the 1.1 million from one year to the next, and spoke on the need to prioritize expenses.

Interim City Manager O'Reilly reiterated what he had previously explained, and stated the 1.1 million was over and above the actual 4.4 million in Reserves.

Bruce Stone, 2012 – 53rd Street S., spoke on organized labor, increased pay and benefit packages and how government needs to make reductions.

John Balogh, 5301 - 31st Avenue S., commended all City Staff and the work they do, and said he felt safe in our City.

Catherine..., 1850 - 53rd Street S., suggested the City hold fund raisers and stated she would be willing to work them.

After receiving all public comments, Mayor Yakes closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilmember King, second by Councilmember Ryerson to adopt Ordinance 2009-12, with a 3.4742 millage rate and a Budget that reflects that millage rate.

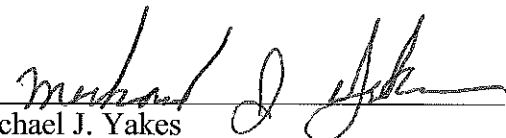
VOTE:	COUNCIL MEMBER KING	YES
	COUNCIL MEMBER RYERSON	YES
	COUNCIL MEMBER HENDERSON	YES
	VICE MAYOR WORTHINGTON	YES
	MAYOR YAKES	YES

MOTION CARRIED.

2. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice Mayor Worthington, second by Councilmember Henderson to adjourn.

Date Approved: 3-16-10


Michael J. Yakes


Lesley DeMuth, City Clerk