

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

The Niceville City Council met in special session at 6:00 PM, September 3, 2015 in the Council Chambers, 208 N Partin Drive. All Council members were present except for Councilmen Henkel and Nodjomian, and the Mayor was present. Also present were City Manager, Lannie Corbin; City Clerk, Dan Doucet; a member of the press and 14 visitors in the office. Mayor Wise called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

Aid to Organizations:

Chamber of Commerce:

Ms Tricia Brunson, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce expressed her appreciation to the Council for the outstanding support received during the past year. She stated that together we have worked to improve our community. We commend the City for an outstanding fireworks show again this year. We hope we were of assistance in securing donations and business support for the project. in the past. She stated that funding is always an issue for all of us. She advised that our annual budget is \$ 288,000 with approximately 40% of revenues received come from dues and the balance come from donations and support for Valparaiso and Niceville. They conduct fund raisers throughout the year to help make up for budget shortfalls. She stated the chamber staff enjoy being the official welcome center for new residents and visitors and will continue to do so for many years to come. They look forward to representing our business community through the RESTORE act projects taking us well into planning for future community development and progress. She stated we are excited about the Community Redevelopment projects and are pleased to have City representation on our Vision 2025 Task Force as well. She requested on behalf of the Board of Directors, that the City consider continuation of financial support for the Chamber during the next fiscal year. She requested funding in the amount of \$5,000.

Economic Development Council:

Mr Nathan Sparks the Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County stated he is grateful for our long-standing partnership with the City of Niceville. He stated over the past year their staff has worked tirelessly to facilitate new jobs and investment in the local area. With the EDC's dual focus on supporting exiting industries and attracting new businesses, Okaloosa County continues to enjoy one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state, and a rate that remains lower than national averages. Of

course, economic development is increasingly competitive and with neighboring communities and states aggressively funding economic development strategies, we can't afford to be complacent. He advised the EDC is constantly working to improve our community's tangible assets while ensuring that more decision makers have the opportunity to discover Okaloosa County's unique business proposition and attributes. Of course it goes without saying that we could not do this effectively without the ongoing support of partners like the City of Niceville. He advised that the EDC wishes to build on the success we have enjoyed over the past year while diligently working to provide top notch economic development service to our community. In order to do this, we respectfully request a FY 2016 funding allocation be maintained at \$5,000. These resources will be used in part to support our newly-developed Okaloosa Sites.com website, which currently features listing for 49 commercial properties located in Niceville. He stated these listings that can now be accessed anywhere in the world. We are confident that this tool will allow even more businesses to discover our wonderful community, while also providing a free source of value-added information that can be utilized by municipal leaders in planning and decision-making. Mr Sparks provide a copy of the EDC's 2014 Annual Report for review.

Bridgeway Center:

Mr Daniel Cobbs, CEO of the Bridgeway Center briefed the council regarding the services provided by Bridgeway Center. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to seek funding in support of our in-home family services through Family Support Services (FSS) and the Family Care Unit (FCU) programs. He stated that the Bridgeway Center works closely with the Okaloosa County First Judicial Circuit Court, Dependency Court to offer pro-bono services to parents referred to them for family counseling, re-unification, and crisis management. Mr Cobbs stated that there is a \$ 200k match for medical and there was no match on social work. He stated we seek out grants and receive approximately \$1.8M every year to take care of the uninsured. He stated that Bridgeway Center will use the funding (if received) from the City of Niceville to purchase refurbished equipment for a significant savings from full retail cost. Equipment includes Screen Recording Software for Child Supervision monitoring; 8TB Backup Drive for the Parent Child Supervision Process; Server RAM upgrade, and the purchase of 7 refurbished laptop computers for in-home and in-community therapy teams for a total cost of \$1,991.86. The retail value of these components total \$9,622.73. He provided handout information regarding their Nurturing Parenting for Dependency Court Cases program. Councilwoman Boudreaux praised the work done by the Bridgeway Center. She asked if he could provide the number of Niceville residents that received service from Bridgeway this past year? Mr Cobbs stated he did not have that information tonight, however, he will research records and provide the information to the City Clerk. Discussion followed.

Okaloosa - Walton Early Learning Coalition

Ms Mayo, Executive Director for the Early Learning Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties stated the ELC is a not-for-profit entity responsible for administering the funding for the subsidized child care program (School Readiness) and for Florida's Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program. She stated that the School Readiness program enables children from economically challenged families to be placed with quality childcare providers who have contracted with the ELC. These providers offer an environment rich in early education, which stimulates the children's mental, physical and social-emotional growth towards becoming productive members of society. The School Readiness program further allows parents the opportunity to become self-sufficient, by having more money left from their paycheck to cover life's necessities. Ms Mayo stated that all monies contributed go to servicing children and are not used for employee benefits. We provide before and after school care for children from birth to age 5. She stated there are 110 clients that fall in that category that live within the 32578 zip code. The ELC is required by the State to raise 6% of their funding through local cash-match dollars (approximately \$240,000). The ELC will draw down \$15.00 in federal funding for every \$1.00 received in local cash match. Your contribution of \$1,500 would allow the \$24,000 to support our economically challenged families! She stated it is only through the generosity and support of our local governments, businesses and citizens, we are able to raise local cash match dollars to serve eligible families. Ms Mayo stated that she hoped the council will continue to partner with ELC again this year, in this very noble endeavor.

Shelter House, Inc.

Ms Rosalyn Iovieno, Executive Director for the Shelter House stated that Shelter House, Inc. is a non-profit 501c (3) organization and provides services to victims of domestic violence in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. She stated that Shelter House was organized in 1988, to provide confidential shelter, 24-hour crisis hotline, transitional housing, counseling and support groups, legal advocacy, referrals, community education and outreach. These services are provided free of charge to the victims. She stated that last fiscal year, Shelter House touched the lives of over 642 women, children and men. Advocates provided 7097.25 hours of counseling and services, the 24-hour crisis hotline received approximately 1,260 calls and the Shelter provided 5,644 bed nights. Without these much needed services, victims of domestic violence would have no other choice but to remain with their abuser and be subjected to further abuse or become homeless. She stated that Shelter House relies heavily on support from community partners like the City of Niceville to continue providing these essential services. I appreciate your continued support and thank you for partnering with Shelter House in our efforts to end the cycle of violence. Councilman Schaetzle asked Shelter House receives matching funds. Ms Iovieno stated that they receive In kind

donations and funds from United Way.

Northwest Fla Symphony Orchestra-NFSC

Mr Jeffery Rink representing the Symphony Orchestra advised the Symphony Orchestra has conducted performances for twenty-eight years of classical excellence for the greater community we serve! He stated the contributions received will help students attend future concerts. He expressed his appreciation for the support provided by the City in the past and requested funding in the amount of \$500 for FY-16.

Children's Advocacy Center, Inc.

Mr Tom Dunn representing the Children's Advocacy Center explained the various organizational elements that make up the Advocacy Center. He stated last year the Center helped 685 children, providing over 5500 services. He stated we are very proud to have our Center in the City of Niceville and truly appreciates the support the City has provided for the last 15 years. He advised the Center is requesting funding in the amount of \$3,000 for FY 2016.

Sharing & Caring:

The Secretary/Treasurer for Sharing and Carrying stated that Sharing and Caring (S&C) was created in 1989, formed under the umbrella of the Sharing & Caring Inc., begun in Ft Walton Beach in 1984. Our mission remains the same to coordinate community efforts to meet emergency needs of families in the Niceville-Valparaiso-Choctaw Beach area. Our all-volunteer organization is funded by area churches, civic organizations, schools and school service clubs, individuals, and the United Way. She stated that during 2014 they provided food for 9,620 people (this number reflects multiple visits throughout the year), the community donated \$232,637 in food items, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Bank donated \$459,754 in food products, S &C spent \$42,041. They provided financial assistance to 2,080 people for Rent (\$41,793) Utilities \$55,841 for electricity, gas, water) and Medicine (\$2357) Referred \$ 575 clients to Bargain Box for free clothing and household items; referred 1,312 clients to area churches for assistance. Coordinate with area churches and civic organizations to provide Thanksgiving Meals for 271 families (9) of these assisted by S&C and Christmas meals for 384 families 176 of these by S&C and Gifts for 472 children & 63 children by S&C. S&C provided \$2,050 for the Thanksgiving/Christmas program to add meat for the meals and gift cards to children for clothes. Furnished School Supplies for 320 students. Community-donated supplies and monetary donations totaled \$15,670. S&C provided \$6,386 for clothing, book bags, and supplies. Assisted 93 clients with food stamp application process. A very successful 2014 - S&C provided \$366,387 in

food and financial assistance in support of local families.

Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start - Child Development, Inc.

Ms Cerita Reeves, Fiscal Manager stated Okaloosa County Head Start is a federal program that provides school readiness for children of low-income families. Each weekday at our eight county-wide centers, our Head Start children ages zero through five receive (entirely free of charge) six hours of federally approved curriculum-based learning designed to enhance their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development in preparation for public school. Each child also receives two nutritious meals and two snacks each day. Speech, language, hearing, vision and dental screening are also available, free of charge. Head Start parents are offered free parenting education, mental health services, nutrition education, and services to pregnant women. Our program serves 257 Head Start and 64 Early Head children and families throughout Okaloosa County. She stated that Grant Funds do not cover all of the costs necessary to administer this program. In past years, the City of Niceville has been very gracious in supporting this worthy cause. This year we are asking for your continued support with a \$1,500 donation. We sincerely appreciate any help you can provide.

Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem Foundation, Inc.

Mr Charles Schuster, President of the Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem Foundation Inc., thanked the council for allowing him to come and discuss the scope and services provided by his organization. He stated that we are an IRS approved 501c (3) public charity whose mission is to support the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program for the First Judicial Circuit. The First Judicial Circuit consists of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties. Our mission includes providing support for abused, neglected, or abandoned children in need who have been assigned to the GAL program by the dependency courts as well as to support the recruitment and retention of the volunteer GALs, who are essential advocates before the court for these children. He stated that currently there are 505 children in Okaloosa County in the GAL program and only 209 certified volunteers. The only source of funding to support our mission is through donations or fund raising activities. We would very much appreciate being favorably considered for a donation of \$1,500 from the City of Niceville. I assure you your contribution will be used in Okaloosa County for the purposes specified. Your contribution will make a difference.

Mayor Wise advised that a decision regarding funding individual requests will be made by the council at a later date. He thanked everyone for their presentations.

Mr Doucet stated that this meeting concludes our Budget Workshops. He stated that our tentative hearing is scheduled for September 10, 2015 at 6:00 PM.

Breland Property Purchase:

Mr Corbin stated that this item will be discussed at a later date pending a current appraisal.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK