

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

The Niceville City Council met in special session at 6:00 PM, September 1, 2016 in the Council Chambers, 208 N Partin Drive. All Council members and the Mayor was present. Also present were City Manager, Lannie Corbin; City Clerk, Dan Doucet; a member of the press and 19 visitors in the audience. 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 and hope we were of assistance in securing donations and business support for this community tradition. She stated that the Chamber staff and our members enjoy serving as the official welcome center for new residents and visitors as we strive to build our local economy. She advised that next month the Chamber will be celebrating their 60th year of service to the community! We are excited to see so much new development in Niceville, both commercial and residential. They look forward and are excited about the Community Redevelopment projects and are pleased to have City representation on our Vision 2025 Task Force as well. She advised that they have increased their Web presence by working with the Technology Department. In addition, they are working on a new detailed street map and expressed appreciation to our new GIS employee who is working on this with us. They also have plans to renovate their building since it's 13 years old via the use of Restore Act Funding. 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 in support of basic Chamber operations.

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.

Bridgeway Center:

Mr Daniel Cobbs, CEO of the Bridgeway Center (BCI) briefed the Council regarding the services provided by Bridgeway Center. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to seek funding from Niceville to help support and provide services to Niceville's "Childcare Professionals". BCI has elected to strengthen the family unit by expanding behavioral healthcare continuing education. This program will make a significant and positive impact on the lives of our very young children. He stated that BCI would like to reach those "Childcare Professionals" that work in Niceville's daycare organizations by offering the Circle of Security Parenting DVD series. This program consists of 8 one-hour sessions and allows participants reflection on: (1) attachment, (2) allowing a child to be an instruction manual, (3) learning to understand child behavior, and (4) realizing one's own emotions is imperative to help a child manage their emotions. Participants will learn how to be a secure base for each of the children they work with as well as help parents understand the Circle of Security . The more "the Childcare Professional" understands child behaviors, "the Childcare Professional" learns how their responses to a child's action can encourage healthy physical and emotional child development as well as a secure attachment; this enhances their ability to favorably impact the child's functioning in later years. Discussion followed. We would like to offer at least one class to the directors of all childcare organizations in Niceville to include: Kid's Discovery, Childcare Network, La Petite Academy, Crosspoint Academy, Sunny Day Creations, Discovery Learning Academy, ABC Academy of Niceville, Inc., Okaloosa County Head start Development, the Montessori School for the Arts, and Pam's Lighthouse Learning Center. We will then offer three additional classes offered up to 15 providers that are employed at the Niceville childcare organizations that attended the initial class. BCI will utilize the funding as follows:

A. The time for two master's degree staff members to prepare for and provide training 55 hours \$ 1,650. B. Handouts and training material that the participant will be able to keep. \$500. C. He respectfully requested funding from the City of Niceville in the amount of \$ 2,150 to be able to fund for twenty-five (25) childcare professionals.

Okaloosa - Walton Early Learning Coalition

Ms Renea Black, 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 Pe-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 Black stated the ELC is required by the State to raise 6% of this funding through local cash-match dollars (approximately \$240,000). For every dollar of local cash match raised, we are able to receive \$15.67 in federal and state funding. Your contribution of \$2,000 would draw down \$31,340, to support our economically challenged families! She stated it is only through the generosity and support of our local governments, businesses and citizens, that we are able to raise local cash match dollars to serve eligible families. She stated that she hoped that the City will partner with the ELC as we work to provide services to low income families in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

Shelter House, Inc.

Ms Katie Cholcher spoke on behalf of Rosalyn Iovieno, Executive Director for the Shelter House who was out of town on business. She 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 6,400 women, children and men. Advocates provided 8,542 hours of counseling and services, the 24-hour crisis hotline received approximately 1,550 calls with 183 of those calls being related to sexual assault. The Rape Response Team (RRT) was activated 70 times to support rape victims at local hospitals. The shelter provided 7,185 nights of shelter and our transitional housing program provided 9,502 bed nights.

This past year five (5) dogs and nine (9) cats accompanied their human families to the shelter and stayed in the Kind Heart Kennel, Shelter House's onsite kennel. Many times, without these much needed services, victims of domestic and sexual 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.

Northwest Fla Symphony Orchestra-NFSC

Mr Jeffery Rink representing the Symphony Orchestra advised the Symphony Orchestra has conducted performances for 30 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-17.

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 756 children, providing over 6,000 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 16 years. He advised the Center is requesting funding in the amount of \$3,000 for FY 2017.

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 S &C provided \$350,897 in food and financial assistance in support of local families. In August 2015, through our Tools for School we provided school supplies for about 252 children. This program has been ongoing for many years and will continue through the generosity of our community with their donations. She thanked the City Council for honoring Sharing & Caring with a grant the past ten years.

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

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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 434 children in Okaloosa County in the GAL program and only 211 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.

Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida

Mr Charles Schuster stated that Mrs Gina Marini, the Museum Manager, was unable to speak and asked that he read her letter request to the Council. He stated that she wanted

to thank the City of Niceville for all the support they have given to the Museum this past year. They are very grateful for the donations of billboard space, auction items and the use of tents and equipment for our events and fund-raisers. It is nice to know that we can count on the City of Niceville when we need help. As you know, the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, a non-profit 501C3 organization has been collecting material culture pertaining to our local and regional heritage since 1971. Today we house a vast collection of historic artifacts, textiles, and an extensive library archives. These collections are made available to the public through the research library, exhibits, school tours that meet the state standards for education, interactive and educational public programs, as well as unique, community-engaging events for all ages. We are dedicated to keeping history alive, but we need your support and the help of our community to do it! On behalf of the board of Trustees, I respectfully request a financial contribution of \$2,000 to help subsidize our operational needs which supports educational tours, annual insurance premiums and facility maintenance. Your monetary support in addition to the in-kind contributions will ultimately help us to maximize our potential and present quality programming to our local communities. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued support of our efforts to preserve the past for future generations to come.

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 8, 2016 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK