MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

The Niceville City Council met in special session at 6:00 PM, September 1, 2020 in the Council Chambers, 208 N Partin Drive. All Council members and the Mayor was present. Also present were the City Manager Lannie Corbin; City Clerk, Dan Doucet; Finance Director Steven Rausch and 21 visitors in the audience. Mayor Henkel called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He requested that we limit our presentations to 3 minutes since the Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

Aid to Organizations:

Niceville High School Track Maint:

The City received a letter from Head Coach Todd Brigman stating that three years ago, Niceville High School was able to have its track rubberized after many hours of labored fund-raising. This was a game changer for the athletes. They were able to practice in more realistic meet style conditions, as well as avoid many injuries compared to the previous years. Until June of 2017, Niceville High School had an asphalt track. This was detrimental to athletes’ training because injuries were inevitable. Track athletes use sprint mechanics that put high amounts of force into their steps. This causes the joints in the body to take a great deal of impact upon foot strike. This impact on a hard asphalt track can result in various injuries from shin splints and joint pains to stress fractures. To protect our athletes, we resurfaced the existing asphalt track with six layers of a synthetic rubber surface. This rubber was then bound with a latex system to secure it. The rubber system spans half an inch over the entire track, and provides a major cushioning for the athletes while they train. It also enables them to use proper equipment as well as practice and perform at their highest level. The rubber surface has provided us with the capability of simulating all of the variables of an official state series meet on our home track. Niceville athletes can now use their track spikes, which would have slipped on the old surface, and no longer have to travel to other venues in order to get that authenticity. With the rubberization of the track, we have reaped many benefits that we want to continue for everyone. Maintaining this rubberized track is not only crucial for safe athletic training, but it also provides benefits for the entire community. Thousands of people now have access, and hundreds of people in the community are utilizing the track facilities. Children, students, parents, faculty members, military personnel and community members have enjoyed this rubber cushioning for over a year. This greatly reduces the stress on their joints and bodies, and provides an easily accessible location for various workouts. It is a great place for families to play and work out. Many parents will take their children to the stadium to practice sports while the parents
take turns running. Having the stadium available for all the town members promotes a healthy family lifestyle. It’s a safe and free place to fulfill everyone’s exercise needs. Working to continue this location’s upkeep for our community will have a positive effect and better our society; although, in providing free access to our facility, damages come along with this. The stadium is frequently used for local events such as homecoming parades, suicide awareness walks and more which put significant wear and tear on the surface. These events have made the track a trademark for our City. Unfortunately, this facility will weather and will require dedicated maintenance over the years. Every two-and-a-half years the track will require a new striping, which will cost around $5,000. Every five years, the track will require two more layers of the synthetic rubber, which will then be bound again with a latex system. This will cost more than $20,000. In total, the facilities will require $25,000. Niceville track and field will continue to put in the work fund-raising, but we need your help. We are requesting that the Niceville City Council grants us $2,500 to support our athletes and the community as a whole. We would be honored if you would contribute to our mission. Providing support for the track is greater than the school or the sports, it’s connecting the community.

Economic Development Council:

Mr Nathan Sparks, CEcD of the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (EDC) stated that he is grateful for our long-standing partnership with the City of Niceville. Over the past year the EDC has worked tirelessly to facilitate new jobs and investment in the local area. Especially noteworthy to the City of Niceville was our support for Dynamic Software Solutions” (DS2) new contract with Air Force Material Command and their resulting expansion to a new 5,000 SF facility located at 310 Government Avenue. Of course, the COVID-19 health crisis experienced over the past few months has presented our community with unprecedented challenges. As you would expect, the EDC has been laser focused on assisting businesses reeling from the financial fallout of COVID-19. While the economic impact resulting from the pandemic is still being determined, we’re confident that with the right strategies and partnerships, our local economy will not only recover by reemerge stronger than ever.

The Economic Development Council looks forward to continuing to partner with the City of Niceville in 2021. Key EDC initiatives benefitting our local economy in the year ahead will include:

- Launching “Startup Okaloosa” - a new, on-line virtual acceptor for aspiring entrepreneurs

- Leading advocacy efforts in support of the $9.3B local economic impact derived from the military, especially as it pertains to protecting the eastern Gulf of Mexico from oil drilling.
MINUTES, SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020   PAGE THREE

With the Military Mission Line (MML) set to expire in 2022, the time to act is now.

• Maintaining the OkaloosaSites.com website (currently featuring 14 available commercial/industrial building and sites located within Niceville).

He stated to assist with these and other critical projects, we respectfully request the City of Niceville’s FY 2021 EDC funding allocation be maintained at $5,000/year. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Chamber of Commerce:

Mr. Garret Floyd representing the Chamber of Commerce stated that on behalf of our Board of Directors, members and staff, I would like to thank you, the entire City Staff, Mayor Henkel, and the City Council members for the extraordinary services and amenities that we all enjoy on a daily basis. Your customer service and standard of excellence are second to none, we are truly appreciative. The Chamber of Commerce serves as a partner to enhance your work, serving as a welcome center for visitors and newcomers, and a resource for new businesses. We also provide support for existing businesses and other non-profit organizations, in addition to man other roles within the community. We take pride in our work to promote our area as a business friendly, safe community, and consider it an honor to work side-by side with our City Leaders as we continue to grow.

He stated that this has been a particularly challenging year for us all. The Chamber’s leadership team is working hard to meet the needs of our business community while also sharing helpful information and providing assistance to residents and visitors. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has already caused a substantial decrease in large meetings and events which has resulted in the cancellation of the fundraisers critical to keeping the Chamber open and staffed. Please rest assured we are dedicated to seeing the organization through this challenge and on to better days.

We respectfully request that the City consider financial support for the Chamber during your next fiscal year. We request $6,000 to support the work we do on behalf of the City and our business community. Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing partnership with the Chamber. We look forward to continuing a successful relationship for the betterment of our community.

Bridgeway Center:

Mr. Larry McFarland, LMHC, a Clinical Officer representing the Bridgeway Center (BCI), briefed the Council regarding the services provided by Bridgeway Center. He thanked the
City Council for the opportunity for contribution of $2,500 would draw down $31,340, to support our economically challenged families! 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. They are hoping that the City will partner with the ELC as we work to provide services to low income families in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

Okaloosa-Walton Early Learning Coalition

The City received a letter from the Okaloosa-Walton Early Learning Coalition requesting funding in support of the School Readiness Program which aids economically challenged families living in the City of Niceville. The Early Leaning Coalition’s mission is to support the success of every child and their family through quality early education and care. They are seeking an award of $2,750 from the City of Niceville to support the School Readiness Program during Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

COVID-19 Community Impact Request - $2,000.

During regular operations, early learning childcare providers operate on extremely small margins. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused catastrophic drops in enrollment, as well as unexpected closures, which could put many providers out of business permanently. In addition, those providers that remain open are operating with a fraction of their income in order to provide care during this unprecedented public health care pandemic crisis. Recognizing the impact of this crisis, state and federal stimulus efforts have been enacted to provide relief to American families, small business and major inductees as they struggle wish the effects of this crisis. On the state level, the Division of Emergency Management issued Emergency Order No. 20-004 directing the Department of Education (FDOE) to “take all appropriate actions ... to promote the health safety, welfare and education of Florida students.” Through these stimulus efforts, the early leaning community received support to pay for health and safety cleaning supplies, infrastructure, and professional development of early education teaches at childcare programs. Although these efforts have helped greatly in providing much needed financial support to these programs, the ongoing crisis continues to generate the need for more funding to assist with keeping the doors open at these small businesses. The Early Learning Coalition has increased our request for funding this year to provide additional financial support to childcare programs continuing to operate during these unprecedented times. We propose to use $2,000 toward mini-grants to childcare programs in the Niceville area. 100% of these funds would provide grants for purchasing health and safety cleaning supplies and/or support infrastructure (rent, mortgage, payroll, insurance, utilities, etc.) for the childcare programs. These programs have remained open to provide child care to ensure essential service personnel, i.e. first responders and health care workers could continue providing vital services within our
community. I sincerely hope you will continue to partner with the Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast in these worthy endeavors.

**Shelter House, Inc.**

Ms Rosalyn Wik, the Executive Director, she stated in her letter that last year the City made a generous contribution and she would like to request continued support in the amount of $1,500 this year. Shelter House, Inc. is a non-profit 501c (3) organization (Federal ID# 59-2634092) and provides services to victims of domestic and sexual 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 2,251 women, children and men. Advocates provided 7,800 hours of counseling and services, the 24-hour crisis hotline received approximately 1,531 calls with 274 of those calls being related to sexual assault. The Rape Response Team (RRT) was activated 96 times to support rape victims at local hospitals. The shelter provided 8,223 nights of shelter to families in need of a safe place to stay. This past year 18 pets accompanied their human families to the shelter and stayed in 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. Shelter house relies heavily on support from community partners like the City of Niceville to continue providing these essential services. Her letter concluded by appreciating continued support and thank you for partnering with Shelter House in our efforts to end the cycle of violence.

**Northwest Fla Symphony Orchestra-NFSC**

Mrs Jeanette Shires stated the this season the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO) at Northwest Florida State College will celebrate its 34th year as the Emerald Coast’s premier, fully-profession orchestra! The Mattie Kelly Arts Center on the college’s Niceville Campus hosts NFSO concerts under the direction of guest conductors, Kellen Gray, Christopher Confessore, Todd Carven, Steven Byess, Jason Altieri, Jeffrey Rink, and Glen Cortese.

The six concert NFSO performance season is a community partnership that is paid for through single ticket sales and season ticket subscriptions as well as through public and private contributions. While the NFSO brings classical music to a wide variety of area residents, it also enables young students to attend symphony concerts under the auspices of the Kids at the Symphony program (KATS). KATS is designed to introduce youngsters, and
a parent or guardian, to live orchestral music, a new experience for many of them. Since this program’s conception KATS contributions have made it possible for more than 1,000 area youngsters to attend NFSO concerts that otherwise would not have been able to. Once students hear a five symphony orchestra they are more likely to attend future performances and/or develop a desire to study a musical instrument. Numerous studies have clearly demonstrated a strong link between the study and appreciation of music and improved academic performance.

Thanks to the Niceville City Council’s support last year we were able to host more than 100 students and parents at NFSO concerts; another record year. I believe it’s safe to say that KATS has become an important cultural fixture for our area’s youth.

The Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and the entire college community appreciate your past funding designated to assist these endeavors. We respectfully request the City of Niceville’s financial support in the amount of $1,000 to be designated for the KATS program.

**Children’s Advocacy Center, Inc.**

Julie Porterfield, Chief Executive Officer representing the Children’s Advocacy Center explained the various organizational elements that make up the Advocacy Center. She stated that the Advocacy Center would like to submit a request for funding for budget year 2020/21. The Center would like to thank the City of Niceville for supporting our programs providing services to child victims of physical and sexual abuse. Last year the Center helped 752 children, providing over 6500 services.

The Center would request for this upcoming year funds in the amount of $3,000. Funds will help the Center continue provide services such as mental health counseling, family/client needs, for profits, we have seen a reduction in funding due to COVID-19. We continue to adapt to ensure children are served in these uncertain times.

We are very proud to have our Center in the City of Niceville, We truly appreciate the support the City has provided for the last 20 years. We most appreciate your consideration again this year.

**Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start - Child Development, Inc.**

The City received a letter requesting funding from Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start - Child Development, Inc. requesting funding in the amount of $3,000. They are a 501 c (3) federally funded program targeted to serve at risk children and families. Families must
meet set income eligibility guidelines. Children under the foster care system or those receiving SSI, TANF or children in a homeless status are automatically eligible for the program.

Objectives of Okaloosa Head Start Organization

- To provide reliable and responsive comprehensive services to children and families in Okaloosa County; to exemplify professionalism and integrity as we work to empower our children, families, and staff as they exercise their right to develop their personal growth that advances them towards a high quality of life.

- Develop and design systems for transitioning families and children out of poverty while simultaneously creating a measurable educational experience for children and fully developed parents and children who are school-ready.

Okaloosa Head Start Community Impact in Current Year:

The agency is currently providing quality education and services to 40 children and families in the Niceville community. We provide an open and inviting classroom environment for children, families and staff. Staff is continually trained/mentored/coached by us to provide articulate early childhood education philosophies. Okaloosa County Head Start/Early Head Start currently provides the Okaloosa County community with ten percent of our funded enrollment opportunities to serve children with disabilities regardless of their severity. In addition, the agency as allocated 35% of enrollment for income up to 130% of the poverty level and 10% over the income guidelines.

Description of use of requested funds (local community impact)

Okaloosa County Head Start will use the requested funds to assist the agency with continuous priorities to prepare children and their families for entrance into preschool and kindergarten. The funds will be used to assist children and families with various parent engagement and involvement activities i.e. Parent literacy support materials. The agency will encourage parent participation in various collaborative efforts to ensure expectations are consistent and developmentally appropriate. Next, funds will be used to assist with classroom activities designed to ensure a successful and healthy transition and continue learning Kindergarten and beyond.
Sharing & Caring:

The City received a letter from Ms Clarie Jones, the President of Sharing & Caring. She wrote on behalf of the Board of Directors, the more than 105 faithful volunteers, and the families Sharing & Caring serves, thank you so much for your past grant donations to our organization. Without continued community support, Sharing and Caring can do a little, but together we can do a lot. Our organization depends on the donations of individuals, churches, civic organizations, and the United Way. We ask that you consider Sharing and Caring’s request for a $5,000 grant donation. Donations received each month at Sharing and Caring are used to assist families with food and/or help pay clients’ rent, utility bills and medicine prescriptions. Thank you for considering our grant request. We look forward in hearing from you.

Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem Foundation, Inc.

Mr Jack Daly, Director 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 368 children in Okaloosa County in the GAL program and only 236 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. Your contribution will be used to support the children and volunteers from Niceville for the purposes specified. We understand the critical finances running a City and respect our working relationship and the value you have had on our programs and services.

Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida

Mrs. Barbara Palmgren, Ed.D and Mrs. Hallian stated that we at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida would like to thank you and the City of Niceville for the contributions they have given to our museum over the years. The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida is a non-profit 501 c (3) organization. And we strive to maintain the highest level of standards in presenting local and regional history since 1971. Our collection includes an artifacts library and a collections department which is accessible to the public. We offer tours to the general public as well as school field trips and other public programs to teach the public about the regions history and to keep history alive!
They stated on behalf of the Board of Trustees, we respectfully request that continued support of $2,000.00 for the next fiscal year. This contribution will help our museum maintain our high standards and assist in sponsoring the public programs that will keep our history alive.

**Crisis aid for Littles and Moms (CALM)**

Mrs. Grace Nufffer CALM President/Execute Director introduced herself to the City Council and stated it’s amazing! Less than two years ago, we accepted our first mom into our transitional home, a 501c3 non-profit, Crisis Aid for Littles and Moms aka CALM, at 201 Redwood Avenue, NICEVILLE Florida! Since then we have housed 18 moms and 27 children, five of which were newborns. We have been able to save taxpayer dollars by rescuing thee moms and their 5 babies and keep the family together.

CALM respectfully requests for your consideration when distributing the proceeds of City revenue for FY-21. We totally rely on private donors, accept no state or federal funding, and were not able to hold our main fund-raise this year due to COVID-19. Nor have we been able to rent our meeting and event space, VenYou201, which generates income that goes directly to fund our operating expenses. Also we need to install additional internet equipment in order to provide local businesses and groups a live-streaming capability need highlighted by the coronavirus social distancing requirements. Lastly, for our mom’s and kid’s safety, we need additional security cameras. Therefore CALM’s request is for $460.00 for equipment, $1,000.00 for two months of internet streaming service, and $540.00 for COVID costs and to offset part of the fund-raising losses for a total of $2,000.00.

CALM’s mission is to offer single mothers and their children in crisis, such as homelessness, the opportunity to find stability and consistency, by teaching hands-on training life skills to help end the cycle of generational poverty. www.NicevilleCALM.com. Facebook. VenYou201.

CALM is the only transitional home in Niceville that accepts both moms and their children. Most county shelters and facilities will take one or the other but not both. Our goal is to keep the family together, offer training and skills to help transform moms, and I’ve them a chance at living independently off the streets.

Please consider our funding request and help us continue to rescue and transform moms in crisis into successful independent women and families. My P.C. for questions is Wanda Siefke: wandan@cox.net, 850.543.0534.

The Council asked various questions during the presentations.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

ATTEST:

MINUTES, SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 PAGE TEN

MAYOR

CITY CLERK

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There will be a Special Council meeting at 6:00 PM, September 1, 2020 in the council chambers 208 N Partin Drive.

Purpose of Meeting:

Budget Workshop - Aid to Organizations

Please plan to attend.

Sincerely,

D/J Doucet
City Clerk

cc: News Media