



City of Starke

"Forging Tomorrow's Small Town, Today"

Budget Workshop of City Commission Minutes

Tuesday, July 7, 2026 at 4:00 PM

Mayor Redding called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

Commissioner Dimple Overstreet was present, Vice Mayor Mortimer was present, Commissioner Danny Nugent was present, Commissioner Bob Milner was present, and Mayor Andy Redding was present. Additionally, City Clerk Chrissy Allen-Thompson was present, City Manager Drew Mullins was present, and City Attorney Scott Walker was present. Also in attendance was Administrative Assistant Lisa Heeder and Assistant City Manager – Finance James Hughes.

Mayor Redding turned the workshop over to City Manager Mullins. City Manager Mullins stated they were going to start out by prefacing that this was a very preliminary, very rough budget. They would not have solid numbers until later on this month and into August. There were some line items that they still needed to go back and change because of the pension and other things. He asked Mayor Redding how they would like to start.

Mayor Redding stated he would like to open it would be up to the Board on how they wanted to start out. He continued that he had some conversations with staff, gone through a lot of this somewhat line by line, went over where he saw differences and got explanations, and had other conversations with them. Some of the things that he was seeing were things with their travel. He said he thought that even as the Commission, they could do to be more disciplined. Some of those conferences, like the FMPA Conference, City Manager Mullins is already traveling to. He stated that in his opinion, it wouldn't be responsible or prudent for both him and City Manager Mullins to go to all the time. That would be the City paying for two hotel rooms, two meals, and other stuff like that. Some of these other conferences, like they talked about have designees, and they tried to go more on that designee role instead of as a Commissioner. Attending as the designee on a particular board where they don't have multiples going. He advised that if they do things like that, in talking with staff, there would be a potential to cut of \$30,000 to \$40,000. They could make other efforts where they would look at the grant process. He stated that they had initiated things with the grants, taking applications, and may have needed to look at some of those measures. He suggested that they may need to look at temporarily not doing that because they were having to make up lost revenues of \$350,000 to \$400,000, and that could easily cut \$40,000 or \$50,000 right there. That's not popular and they want to continue to put into the community, the grants, and stuff like that, but at the same time, they don't want to cut services and what they are actually providing as a whole to the community. He stated that he was not saying they have to do that, but those are things that he was looking at as how they can tighten their belts. He said they have had other positions that have either been vacated or shifted that can potentially capture over \$100,000, maybe closer to \$150,000. When they start looking at stuff like that, they were getting close to actually capturing that number of getting where they need to be within the budget. They still operate effectively and efficiently, and nobody was losing out. There were cuts being made, but that was just some of the things that he had looked at as he had gone through the budget. He said that maybe that would kick off some of the conversation or other things that they have looked at

within the budget and how they can be disciplined. He said he knew that scenarios that had been thrown out before were the additional three positions to the Fire Department, but that would be a significant cut in services. There are other places that they could cut in one fell swoop. They talked about Law Enforcement, but the citizens of Starke are paying for a higher level of service. They were not getting the same service that the County gets because they were going to be entering in and out of Starke all the time. That was another thing he doesn't feel they should cut in one fell swoop. He stated that hopefully this helps to initiate some good, fruitful conversations and ideas. He said he saw some highlights on notes and knew that Commissioner Nugent had notes too. So, if they would like to, they can go down the Board with the Commissioners, or if City Manager Mullins wanted to present and go through what he basically did last time. He continued that he doesn't know that they should be redundant in that review. He asked what was the leisure of the Commission.

Vice Mayor Mortimer inquired about the handout that was given out last time. She does not know what she did with her copy, and asked if there was another copy that she could get. City Clerk Allen-Thompson left to get some additional copies. Commissioner Milner stated that he agreed with Mayor Redding's thought process. He was thinking if City Manager Mullins and Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes had general comments they wanted to make or go through it, and then if Mayor Redding wanted to take it page-by-page instead of Commissioner-by-Commissioner. Then if anybody had something on that page, go ahead and just get that page out of the way to try to streamline the process. Mayor Redding stated he understood and was good with whatever is the leisure of the Commission. Commissioner Nugent asked Mayor Redding if he wanted to know anybody else's opinions. Mayor Redding confirmed that was what they were discussing and he was asking for. Commissioner Nugent stated he felt like Mayor Redding was skipping over to the other side instead of allowing that side to finish. Vice Mayor Mortimer voiced that Commissioner Overstreet just had a question that she was trying to ask. Mayor Redding stated that they were just trying to kick off the conversation and gave Commissioner Overstreet the go ahead. Commissioner Overstreet asked since this was her first time to work with the budget, could she be the last one to speak so that she can see. Mayor Redding stated he understood. Vice Mayor Mortimer said that if they were talking about their protocol and how they were going to do it, then she would like to hear what staff has to say before the Commission starts with their comments. Mayor Redding stated he thinks it would probably just be more of a reiteration of what was covered in the last meeting, but it had been two weeks, and asked City Manager Mullins to refresh their memories.

Vice Mayor Mortimer asked if City Manager Mullins was going to go by that handout he had given or was this a different document. He confirmed the correct document and suggested he wait until City Clerk Allen-Thompson got back so everybody would have the handout. City Manager Mullins stated one thing he wanted to cover was the millage rate. City Manager Mullins and Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes were going to need some direction at the Regular Meeting on where the Commission wanted to go with the millage rate. City Manager Mullins said that the Commissioners received a handout that showed the millage rates. He advised that during the Regular Meeting they would need to vote on what they want to do. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked City Manager Mullins if he was saying during the Regular Meeting they were going to give him a consensus or a vote on the millage rate that they want to go with, so that he could be prepared for the next meeting. She also asked if it was already on the agenda for said meeting. City Manager Mullins stated it would be best to have an actual vote on it for the preliminary setting, and then of

course later on in the year they would have the proper language written out. He advised it was not on the agenda, but that it would need to be added. City Manager Mullins confirmed the Commission was ready and asked if they could go to page two. He stated that this was just some budget assumptions that they have: 3% COLA; performance and competitive pay increase at 2% (They would not necessarily spend all of that 2% of the salaries, but allows for some wiggle room in case somebody got a certification, etc.); employee health insurance increase at 9%; liability insurance increase at 7%; retirement increase at 5%; and then all other expenses increased by 3% (Essentially taking what they spent last year and increasing it by 3%). On page three, he continued that they had the first Fiscal Year 2027 budget, again very preliminary, versus Fiscal Year 2026. The Code Enforcement line was a placeholder of \$150,000 that was kind of cut out. He advised they were not reducing any services in that area, it was just a number of things. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked what that was for. Commissioner Nugent asked that they slow down a little bit. City Manager Mullins stated that it was more like a revenue item. Assistant City Manager - Finance Hughes stated Code Enforcement was now a new line item. It was shown under Other Operating Services instead of down there on separate line items. It wasn't that \$150,000 got moved up there. It was less than \$100,000 this year, but it was in that same line item for accounting purposes as in the City's General Ledger. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated she would like to ask James a question. She inquired if some of the categories that fell under Other Operating Expenses included staff salaries. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated Other Operating Expenses were things like unemployment compensation, election expenses, in the prior years they've had Concerned Citizens of Bradford County donations and other organizations there, things like FEMA expenditures and City Ordinance Codifications, among other things. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes clarified that Code Enforcement was under Outside Services, not Other Operating Expenses. Vice Mayor Mortimer confirmed that because they were going to Outside Services he was increasing it line by about \$50,000. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes confirmed stating it was mainly for Code Enforcement. Vice Mayor Mortimer acknowledged that the increase to Outside Expenses was the additional amount to cover the Code Enforcement and inquired why was it moved. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated it was for presentation purposes and in prior years it was not set up on the General Ledger (GL) yet because they weren't seeing those kinds of things come through their GL. He advised that now that they are seeing it, they have coded it correctly, and now have it in that line item. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked if staff salaries was in there. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes said no. He elaborated that the Outside Services included legal, audit, consulting, professional services, and things of that nature. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked if they have a contracted employee in that department. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes asked if she was referring to the role that Jim Ferrell filled in the past. Vice Mayor Mortimer advised she was asking about Kevin Powell. She stated that she knows he was Building and Zoning, but she just kind of lumped them all together. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated that he didn't want to guess on that and that he was not sure off the top of his head. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated she needed to know. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated he could look into it for her. Commissioner Nugent asked if Outside Services was going to be Code Enforcement, what else was going to be in Outside Services. He continued saying that Code Enforcement was in the black not in the red, so why would they have to increase it thirty-something thousand dollars when they were already making money in that department when that should be an area the City is okay in. Commissioner Nugent stated they were looking at crunching and when they have that big of a difference of that much money, they could be calculating it in another category. Commissioner Nugent stated that he didn't know if City Manager Mullins was building in a cushion or what he was doing. City Manager Mullins stated that is what they were

doing and that it was not an actual increase, but rather a reallocation on a line and not an increase in costs. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes when he would have the information requested. He advised he would have it to her the next day. Mayor Redding stated he wanted to go to the question of “it looks like there was a cushion built in” or “how things have changed” and “how these numbers have changed.” He continued saying that the bottom line at the end on this stuff is not significantly changing, and James correct him if he was wrong, but what has happened is that through the years and actually getting into using better accounting practices, better designations, and better ways to track where and how their dollars are going. When they make these changes within the system, it looks different. He said it was not like taking your daily checkbook and all one has is their mortgage, electric bill, and insurance. They start divvying that stuff out more and more. So, if they move one here, it’s not smoke and mirrors, not changing the whole ball of wax, but it just providing for better tracking. Mayor Redding commented that these are great questions that all of them are asking, but they helped him to understand a lot more because he was very ignorant of it since all he was looking at was that it had changed \$30,000. Commissioner Nugent asked if they were doing all this under the same line item or if they were breaking these in different areas. City Manager Mullins stated that was what they were doing and stated that it was better utilizing the existing ones that the City has for better tracking. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated she would like to add a comment to what he had just said. She said that he was absolutely right and at one time during her novice days as a Commissioner she had no idea, but her concern and questions are that she understands the accounting process and how that works and how it needs to look, but when she sees something that says Outside Services in plural, she wants to know what that was. In her opinion, her question was very valid because even though it looks a certain way to them and they understand it, as somebody that was going to vote on this she needed to have a good understanding. She wanted to know what it was and what was included in these categories. Not that she’s questioning them, but that she just needed to have an inquiring minds question answered. Commissioner Overstreet said that since she didn’t understand a lot of things, she went to Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes. He sat with her, and helped her to understand things like Outside Services and other little things. She said she thinks going in one-on-one helped her to understand this budget and when she sees things like that, hers was highlighted. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes went through everything, and it helped her to know the answers to what they were talking about. She thanked Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes for being patient and kind. Mayor Redding called on Commissioner Milner. Commissioner Milner asked Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes what year the City transitioned from Munis to ADG. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated that was in 2023. Commissioner Milner asked if that was really a single year transition, though. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated it started in late 2022 and took effect in April, May, or June of 2023. Commissioner Milner clarified that they were behind quite a few updates on Munis. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes confirmed that was correct. Commissioner Milner stated as he recalled, they had made a somewhat full transition when they had Lisa Hall and Jim Ferrell and others there, but for the staff there was still a little bit of a learning curve that goes on in terms of accounting practices and where things had to go. As Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes and City Manager Mullins have explained to him, they were just now getting some of that, and part of it also is in response to what auditors say when they are conferring with them all and saying maybe they wanted to start doing it this way and not something they would put in their notes as a finding. He stated that he understands, and that was why the Commissioners have the questions because they don’t see the accounting ledgers. He continued that as Mayor Redding had said, what staff are having to do and input and make sense out of and then try to give them something that

they can make sense out of, is not easy on a multi spreadsheet they were working with every day. He said that he appreciates what they have done. If he had questions, he would ask them. City Manager Mullins continued that they could skip page four. Page five had the Fire Department budget. He asked for any particular questions on that. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked how many FTEs they have. City Manager Mullins stated nine. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked how many part-time employees they have. City Manager Mullins said he can get her that number tomorrow and clarified that she wanted all part-time firefighters. City Manager Mullins stated some may work like once a month. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated she thought she saw something in the packet about the part-time employees and the part-time budget was different from the regular firefighters. City Manager Mullins confirmed. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated that was because they didn't get that grant. City Manager Mullins said they did not. Commissioner Nugent inquired why they were skipping page four because he saw it said salary and wages are on that page. City Manager Mullins said page four was just page three with the ad valorem cuts. Page four and page three are the same, but page four deals with the eliminated property tax. City Clerk Allen-Thompson agreed. City Manager Mullins asked if there was anything else on the Fire Department. There was not. Page six was the same thing as page four. The outside services for Police Services. They are looking at \$812,687 for next year's budget and last year was \$672,614. The actual from 2026 ended up being more. He thinks it was around \$720,000, somewhere in there. Again, that was tied directly to the millage rate. That has to do with the assessed value. They could skip page 8 as well. Commissioner Milner asked if he could ask a question about law enforcement. He stated that he understands what he was saying about the mills, but has the sheriff made a request for a different amount of money next year. City Manager Mullins stated it goes up every year. City Manager Mullins advised to skip page nine since it was a synopsis of the previous slides.

Mayor Redding asked if City Manager Mullins and Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes were ready for questions. Commissioner Nugent asked what funds were in reserves right now for the \$3,718,018. City Manager Mullins stated that was the total General Fund Reserve. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked for clarification of what ALGS was. City Manager Mullins stated that was All Other Government Services. Mayor Redding called on Commissioner Milner. Commissioner Milner stated he was good.

Mayor Redding said that in his own reading and looking at this, a lot of the things that they see were where City Manager Mullins covered at the beginning where they had things that they are having somewhat significant increases on and when it comes down to retirement insurance, liability insurance, etc, those are significant increases that they were going to see within the budget that they don't have control over. He corrected saying that they do have control when they shop around, but said they were not going to see significant changes on those numbers. Some of the other stuff like with the Fire Department, he thinks there were \$125,000 to \$130,000 increases that they see there, but that comes down to their retirement. That's things they cannot change. When they started this conversation, he looked at other things that were fairly significant where they could make some changes in discipline. They could maybe look at some pause to certain things to try to make them up. One thing he said he thinks that they need to consider is that as they look at these property tax changes, it is possible that with this change in governorship there would probably be a special session that would be called. He continued that with changing all these revenues coming in, how they service bonds and stuff like that could change all that. Basically, their insurability and things like that. He said that it was not just going to happen without other things taking place. He furthered says all that to say this, that if they decide to absorb the hit and

not have a decrease in services and all, then things change up in the future it could be said that the City of Starke doesn't need the revenues anymore because they have shown that it isn't necessary to operate. He said he thinks that what they should be looking at now, although this is a preliminary budget because there are still other figures that are yet to come in and get the numbers honed in more as they get closer and closer to budget approval time, is that they would find that they are in a good spot. Overall things are being made, things are being adjusted, and things aren't out of whack. He stated that's just his overall general opinion.

Commissioner Milner stated he does not have anything on the line items per se, because like Commissioner Overstreet said and like Vice Mayor Mortimer was asking, he has gotten with City Manager Mullins and Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes when necessary. Even though it was not a finite concrete budget, he understands where they were at and why they were at it, he stated he thinks they do have to have a split mind here that people could pass this thing at 60 percent. Notwithstanding what a new governor may or may not be able to do relative to calling a special session and if he calls it they've got to hope that the next legislature would do what this legislature initially proposed they were going to do before they voted on the constitutional amendment to go to the people, and that was to opt out fiscally constrained counties as it was well published or they would come up with a separate fund. Well, neither one of those happened at the end of the final session that the governor had called and explained that what happened was the Senate flipped. Commissioner Milner stated that he was disappointed in Senator Albrighton, who he likes personally and is a great man, but he absolutely flipped at the end of it in order to reach a budget reconciliation and the Senate didn't even take it up. Whether or not there was going to be an appetite in a fairly new half the legislature almost turning over to have a special session or address it even in the regular session, which again comes later next year because there were no elections next year. So, they won't know until probably May or so if the people pass the constitutional amendment that they are not allowed to lobby against at all. They can talk about it, but they can't expend any money or say anything bad about it. Then all of them, while it was not a huge hit to the City here compared to what they saw from the League of Cities and the independents that put it out said Keystone Heights and Hampton were in the top five municipalities out of 411 that are going to be impacted negatively by the potential passing of the amendment. He said that he thinks they have got to approach this like he thinks Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes and City Manager Mullins have done as they told them, almost presenting two budgets, and that was one if it passes and one if it doesn't at least it gives them a few more years, because it would have to be put back on the ballot again, and so forth. But said he would end by saying in general his concept. He said he was glad to hear what Mayor Redding said a while ago, not that he's proud of it, but he thinks two things: One was he thinks they do need to curtail the budget on travel that's necessary not that he was inferring that anybody's been on an unnecessary or junket trip or anything else, not at all. Mayor Redding stated there were better ways they can do things. Commissioner Milner stated he thinks they need to show the public, to the extent possible, they are being represented at those conferences, conventions, and training sessions where necessary. So even though they don't have total control over the pension boards and things, one person from each was enough to attend in his opinion, especially if they've got management going, whether it was City Manager Mullins or Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes or Assistant City Manager – Utilities Sparks or whoever else. He added that he does think the Florida League of Cities was one that all of them gain a lot from whether it was in Tallahassee or whether they were going to the Annual Conference, which he was going to miss this time because he would be out of state. He said he had already told City Clerk Allen-Thompson, who had already made them vote on one of

the last agendas for him to go to the Florida Gas Utilities Conference because he was the alternate, to pull that. They have their first meeting in October, and it starts the next day in Marathon in the Keys. He stated he was not flying on the City's money. He said it was just too far, and he had told City Manager Mullins and City Clerk Allen-Thompson that even though they voted on it to take him off of that. City Manager Mullins can handle Florida Gas Utilities, and he could zoom in on a meeting or something if he needed to. The second thing, and it was certainly more controversial, was their not-for-profits that make their requests. He said he thinks the Commission has struggled with this for years, and he thinks the ones that they have given to, they could substantiate and justify before the public as a legitimate public expenditure into worthwhile organizations that then do things here in the community that have absolutely positive effects. He furthered that it doesn't mean they can support them necessarily, and for this year, especially when he saw the governor veto the ARCs specifically for Bradford ARC that were already way down on Medicaid money and so forth from the federal government, he thinks as they move into preparing to vote in a month or so, on the actual budget proposed by staff, he thinks they should take a moratorium for at least a year until they see where they are with the property tax potential hit that they would take.. He wanted to be clear that he was not a part of the organization even though he used to be on the board years ago, as well as Communities for Schools and other things. He wanted it noted that had nothing to do with the worthwhileness of any organization. Now he may be the only one who feels that way, and so it would go by the wayside, but he said he just thinks they need to do it, go ahead and let those organizations know that had applied, and maybe they would be accepted and put into the budget. As they said about a couple of things, \$50,000 here and \$50,000 there. Well, if they were trying to close that \$300,000 hole, besides them as Commissioners demonstrating due diligence on their part by reducing the number of people going to conventions or other travel, and then secondarily, their limited amount of taxes if they don't want to raise the taxes or don't want to raise the millage, not saying they would or won't, then they would have to say what else was not absolutely necessary to run the City of Starke from a government or public administration point of view. The employees with all of their salaries and expenses and the operating expenses that are absolutely necessary, then once they do that, they would see if they had anything left over. He knows it would be a big disappointment, and he supports every one of those organizations personally and professionally, but he just doesn't think this year they need to plan to give to anybody. He said that was just him, and he would go ahead and take the hit on that one.

Mayor Redding called on Commissioner Nugent. Commissioner Nugent stated he had a few items, but he kind of agreed on some of those things. He said he thinks they should take a year off on donations as well. The organizations would still get some of those donations from other agencies, like CIS gets money from the League of Cities and they probably get support from other places. He stated that some of these businesses just need not think about getting money from the City, because \$10,000 here and \$10,000 there adds up and some stuff they can do themselves. He said that they have people who can make contact. He said he also believes that groups like the Pension Boards need to go to training because each pension person needed to learn what they were doing and be able to get certified. Vice Mayor Mortimer, Trustee Jackie Moore, and Trustee Wendy Sullivan just went and each one of them had to learn something from the policies because the pension they can't play around with. He stated that was important since it was people's retirement. That was something that the City has to have the Pension Board there, if they can make it. He stated he thought that was important, but that was one of the exceptions to it. He knows they have a few others but agreed that they would save money. He also said that he believes if they were assigned to a committee, he agrees that would be great, but they don't need seven people unless

they were assigned to it because some might be officers. In that case, they have to go because they were assigned as an officer. It was a different story. He said that he thinks all promotions and raises should be frozen. If somebody needs to be hired in the City, it should come to the Commission to approve that because he thinks they are trying to keep track of what was going on, and they should be aware of what was going on. He said he mentioned that also to City Manager Mullins and they butt heads a little bit on that, but that was a different story. He said he doesn't think they should buy equipment unless they absolutely need it. If it can last another year, he suggested don't buy anything. They save money by not buying equipment. For example, the grapple truck was running, patch it, and make sure they go for another year. That saves them money. A couple \$100,000 there, which makes a difference. It was all different accounts, but it was all money that goes for the City. Like major purchases City Manager Mullins can kind of keep an eye on them. Anything major, should be brought to the Commission to see if they can actually afford it. Small items he understands like \$5,000 to \$10,000 that was not a major thing because that was when you pay for like a lift station, but anything higher they need to make sure it was not affecting the budget. They need to know before it gets done, not find out after the fact because they were going to be frugal. The Mayor needs to know what was going on at all times. Those were things he was looking at, not much more. He said he had other concerns, but for now he talked to Sheriff Smith who hasn't came across about how he was considering about certain agencies. Commissioner Nugent said he was not enticed to do anything to the Fire Department, but he was waiting to see about other things that he's looking at. He would let him speak about that later when he decides something.

Mayor Redding called on Vice Mayor Mortimer. Vice Mayor Mortimer wanted to speak about the comments about meeting with staff. she said that was great and good, but not all of them have an opportunity to do that. She thinks that was the reason why they have these workshops and these meetings so that they can ask these questions and she doesn't want anybody to feel stifled because they didn't have an opportunity to meet with them because of circumstances. She said she was here at this meeting now to ask her questions. She just thinks it was important that they understand that even if she meets with the staff and gets questions answered, something else may come up later on that would require the need to ask a question in a meeting. She stated she hates meetings where everything was status quo. They were tasked with making policy decisions, and staff do the best they can. They do an excellent job, but she thinks sometimes the Commissioners have to stay on their Ps and Qs in order to do their job effectively and being the voice for the people that they represent. On the travel, she thinks it was a great idea that they do curtail their travel, but she thinks it was also important for them to remember that when they go to these conferences, there is always information that they can use that would help make their City better, and the opportunities to network with folks from other places, best practices that they were doing can be invaluable. She said she thinks that they don't need to send eight people to one conference, but she doesn't think that they need to make it a point where "Mary's going to go so John can't go" or "Commissioner Overstreet was going to go and Vice Mayor Mortimer can't go." She really doesn't think they need to micromanage it to that point. She said she thinks they need to use some common sense when it comes to that. At the same time, they need to be responsible and bring something back. If staff was going to go, then look for staff to bring them something back and give them an overview of what it was or what they got out of sessions or whatever the case may be. She thinks it was a great idea because their travel budget is somewhat out of sorts, in her opinion. As far as support and contributing to nonprofits, she definitely does not support not giving to the three main organizations that they have contributed to for the last several years, because those were true

nonprofit organizations, meaning they don't have a profit. That means that they know that those menial funds of \$10,000 that they give them most or all of it usually was used for their operations. It would have a tremendous negative impact on the community City of Starke wide if \$10,000 was taken out of their budget. She does not support them giving money or making contributions or grants to organizations that don't have a true function in the City, just because somebody shows them a picture of something that they may have done or they may show them a picture of a check that they may have contributed at one time, \$200 or \$300 whatever the case may be, to somebody in the City doesn't mean that they have a footprint in the City. The three main organizations that they have consistently supported rely on that \$10,000 for operations, and she thinks it would be cruel of them, even in a budget crunch, to not at least try to continue to support those people. They could let them know that next year it may be different, but this year because they have had them go through this grant process so that the City can stay in compliance with DOGE because they don't want the City to get redlined. They have been in compliance with that in this new procedure. She thinks it would be really cruel of the Commission to not move forward with at least funding those three organizations that they know desperately need those funds. She does think that in light of some of the hard decisions that they have to make, traditionally they have given their employees a 3% COLA increase, but the performance and incentive pay at 2% is something that was started when a former clerk was here. She asked City Manager Mullins what was the total amount that they budgeted for that, because she remembers that he said that he knows that doesn't mean that all the money was going to be expended, but how much money were they talking about. She furthered by saying that they had written the policy up to give the City Manager, the department heads, and the Clerk at that time, the authority to determine who gets what. She doesn't think that the Commission needs to be responsible for that. She said that she doesn't know about the others, but this is a part-time job for her. Now the others may make it full-time, but for her it was part-time because she's not going to work a full-time job for \$15,000. She was far more valuable than that. She, as a Commissioner, doesn't want to get in the weeds of the everyday operations of the City. She does not want to get in the weeds of knowing who was getting a raise or who was up for a promotion or who got fired. There are some circumstances that she would like to just have a heads up, but not have the authority to say do or don't. She was not in favor of ever putting herself or this Board in the position of micromanaging the everyday workings of the City, but she does think it was important that they are given some information just for knowledge, because sometimes the word on the street gets distorted. Then they were the ones who got approached by the people on the street about the word on the street and they had no idea what had happened. She stated she thinks it was important for them to at least know what the amount in the budget is that they were setting aside for performance. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated roughly \$25,000 to \$30,000. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked if that was the same amount from last year. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated he did not remember.

Mayor Redding asked for Commissioner Overstreet. Commissioner Overstreet stated she took in all this information. They have taken the old computer systems and brought them up-to-date. They were constantly finding things that would help them to make it better for them, and she thought that was fantastic. That was how they learn, and that was how they grow. Back to the travel, she agreed that could be cut she was sure. In organizations she was in, they pay half the room. There were a lot of things that could change. Listening to the discussions about the travel, she was all for that. Listening to the different things that have been brought up has been good and she was learning. That was why she's here, and that was how she was seeing. Then with Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes taking up the time with her, which has helped her tremendously. She

thinks another thing they need to think about was, do they want to cut their salaries, and asked if they have thought about that. Commissioner Nugent stated that they would not be cutting his pay. Vice Mayor Mortimer said it was part-time for her. Commissioner Overstreet said another thing was about handing out money. She ran two businesses and she never once had to go to the bank to get a dime. They could make it work. So, as far as constantly handing out money, yeah help them, but let it be known that they might not get help next year. They have to find somewhere to say, look, there was a limit here to how much money. They came to her constantly, and it was people who actually did not need her handout, and they were not happy when she didn't hand it out. People can do if they know they have to. So that was another way they could cut. They don't have to give everybody something, and they can always cut it back. Then there was just other little ways, which she thinks Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes would find as they were working through their money and working through that he would see that they could do this different or could do that different. She thinks that was why they pay Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes to educate them on where their money was and where exactly they can cut back and not hurt their employees. They want their employees to want to come to work and feel like they were honored, so they don't want to cut their money because they do the job. They do the job that makes this town work, so she doesn't think they need to be thinking about cutting a salary. She thinks that was where they needed to think about cutting where they were just handing out and where they knew it was doing.

Mayor Redding stated he had not recognized City Clerk Allen-Thompson. He asked if she had anything to add because she was in the office every day and she reviewed those numbers. City Clerk Allen-Thompson stated she meets with Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes very often and City Manager Mullins as well. Her opinion would be to go the way that they were going. She would say that, along with Commissioner Milner, she believes that this was going to pass. She just thinks that the way that it was going to be presented, it would come back. She said she does think they would have to make some cuts. She stated she feels if they make too many cuts too quickly, people would say Starke could do it without help or anything. Which sure they could go through and cut every single thing that they wanted to and make it fit in the line-item budget or in the special box or what have you, but she thought that would be shooting themselves in the foot. Honestly, she said she was definitely not in favor at any time cutting the Fire Department or any of their services. She does think along the lines of all five of them and they have great ideas. She thinks travel was one of hers and City Manager Mullins things when she first got there. She thinks that they should be mindful of where they were going. She thinks if they were going it should be something that was paying for itself, or the outcome would benefit what they were spending. So that if it was a Florida League of Cities or something that was going to affect every single department, sure, that would be an okay thing. Same thing with ADG. They sent seven people because they needed that specialized training and they needed to do that. That was going to benefit them in the long haul as to what they could and couldn't do. But on the things that they can just Zoom, or half of them can go, or those kinds of things, she thinks that would be an easy \$40,000 cut. She was very torn on the grants. They know where her heart lies was in the nonprofits. She's been on every board that they give to. However, she totally thinks that was a \$50,000 easy something that they just hold off for maybe a little bit or half of it and say they were going to see where they were. They have been fortunate enough in the years that Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes had been here and had made some good investments. This was the most they were ever able to give to people in the long haul as a Commissioner or as the Clerk, and she thinks they do depend on them. So, she totally agrees with that, but feels like they need to be mindful.

They have to take care of themselves first and then help those that they can. In every other thing, she thinks they were on the right track. She thinks they need to be mindful and a little bit here and a little bit there, they have made some interoffice things not filling positions. She thinks that was somewhere where they need to be leading, so that they were not spending where they did not need to. This was just the General Fund. When they get to the Utilities she has the confidence in Assistant City Manager – Utilities Sparks knows exactly what they need and where they need to spend it. She appreciated the time.

Mayor Redding thanked everyone for their input. He asked if anybody had anything else at this time regarding the budget. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated she had some questions about line-items. On page five, the contractual service for building and zoning. The 2026 budget was \$52,358 and the 2027 was \$64,905 That was a \$12,547 increase. Then go down under general government services, the professional services there. The outside services they went over the \$50,000 increase. She asked Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes did he move Code Enforcement up there. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated these are both preliminary. Some numbers changed from when they first handed this out because he doesn't typically get the line-item budget out until later in August, right before they finalized everything. When it comes to specific line items it was easier for him to answer in front of his computer. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated he had one that was \$30,000 and increased to \$163,115, donations to organizations. City Manager Mullins stated that was for Bradford Sports United, the \$150,000. Vice Mayor Mortimer stated that doesn't include the \$50,000 or that \$10,000. Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes stated that number would need to be higher if they do decide to donate the \$50,000 on top of recreation. Mayor Redding stated if they don't have anything further at this time, they need to look at City Manager Mullins' and Assistant City Manager – Finance Hughes' perspective where were they at for looking at having another budget workshop. He doesn't know that they need to have these every two weeks until later in August. City Manager Mullins stated he would like to present the Utility side, the Enterprise Fund on their first meeting in August. Mayor Redding stated maybe a budget workshop before the second meeting. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked for the second meeting of July or August. Mayor Redding stated they were looking at the next presentation budgetarily for the first meeting in August. So then let them look at having a budget workshop before that second meeting on that same Tuesday. He asked if everybody was on the same page. Commissioner Milner stated yes, sir. Commissioner Milner asked about the millage. City Manager Mullins stated they would do it in the Regular Meeting. Mayor Redding stated for a consensus vote, basically tonight, on the millage for this meeting. Mayor Redding stated they were looking at a Budget Workshop, which would be on August 18th. Commissioner Nugent stated he would be out of the country. Commissioner Milner suggested Commissioner Nugent call in. Mayor Redding stated they would have to have it so they'll do the workshop then at 4:00 PM. Commissioner Nugent stated they could have done it the next week, but that was fine. Mayor Redding stated they don't have a meeting the next week, and he'll be out of pocket that day. Commissioner Nugent stated so you said it works for one, but not for the other. Mayor Redding stated they could change it to September 1, but he would highly recommend doing the second meeting in August. Vice Mayor Mortimer asked why didn't they go with the first meeting. Mayor Redding stated so he was presenting the first meeting. Mayor Redding stated that would give them two weeks to digest that, get other information that they need, have those conversations with staff independently, and then they can have that Budget Workshop on the 18th. With some of these numbers too, what he's starting to understand the conversations were the further they are out from where it actually takes place, they were just going on theoretical numbers. So, August 18 at 4:00 PM.

Mayor Redding entertained a motion to adjourn. Vice Mayor Mortimer made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM.