



**Town of Surfside  
Budget Workshop  
MINUTES  
July 21, 2020  
7 p.m.**

Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Surfside, FL 33154

**1. Opening**

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**B. Roll Call of Members**

Town Clerk McCready called the roll with the following members present:

Present: Mayor Charles Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, Eliana Salzhauer and Commissioner Charles Kesl. Commissioner Nelly Velasquez arrived at 7:12 pm.

Also present were Interim Town Manager Jason Greene and Town Attorney Lillian Arango.

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

**D. Presentation of FY 2021 Budget and Proposed Operating Millage Rate –  
Jason D. Greene, Interim Town Manager**

Interim Town Manager Greene gave the budget presentation and provided an overview of setting the millage rate. He stated that the goal tonight is to approve the millage rate that will be approved and on the August TRIM Notice. He also addressed the debt that will be involved with the ballot question of undergrounding of powerlines.

Mayor Burkett asked Interim Town Manager Greene to advise the Commission what he is looking for the Commission to accomplish tonight.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated that the Commission needs to advise what the maximum millage rate the Commission would like to set in the interest of developing the program modification.

Commissioner Kesl stated that he likes the idea of the water rebate but does not want to discourage water conservation and has a problem giving a rebate to those who do not conserve water. He also would like to know if there were any studies made by nearby neighbors of their water bills.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated that he did look at neighboring towns' rate structure and he can send it out to the Commission. He stated the Town's rate is lower than North Bay Village and is the same as Bay Harbor, and Bal Harbor had the lowest rates.

Commissioner Kesl would like to reduce the millage rate and meet the 10% goal. He commented on the tourist fund and staffing reductions.

Commissioner Velasquez asked if the money being saved from the general fund is being placed in the tourist fund. She also asked where were the savings made coming from.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated no, that the only money moved from the general fund to the tourist fund are expenses related to the Tennis Center's maintenance and upkeep. He stated that some of the savings are from staff reductions that were done back in June and others are from different areas in detail.

Commissioner Velasquez asked when was the procurement person approved by the Commission as part of the staff.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated that those were modifications discussed in June by the Commission and is part of the proposed budget.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that due to COVID affecting tourism, tourist fund dollars have gone down and would affect the monies being moved over from the reserve.

Interim Town Manager Greene answered Commissioner Velasquez' question regarding the tourist fund and the different plans in utilizing the general fund.

Commissioner Velasquez asked how the residents would be receiving the water rebate. She does not believe that the rebate refund should come from the reserves.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated it would be applied to their December water bill using ad valorem taxes.

Commissioner Velasquez stated the millage rate should stay at 4.4.

Commissioner Salzhauer does not believe the millage rate should be touched due to the time of uncertainty and it should stay where it is. She also believes that the water rebate should not be given and that that money could be used for undergrounding.

Commissioner Salzhauer was in agreement with what Interim Town Manager Greene did with the tourist fund. She spoke about department heads take home vehicles and possibly removing that which would bring savings and have that be restrictive.

Commissioner Salzhauer believes that it is important to have a procurement position that will save the Town money and assist the Finance Department.

Vice Mayor Paul thanked Interim Town Manager Greene for his creative approach and how he took all of their concerns into consideration.

Vice Mayor Paul addressed comments by Commissioner Kesl, Commissioner Velasquez and Commissioner Salzhauer regarding the water rebate and was not aware it was coming from the reserves. She stated they could promote water conservation like the rain barrel program.

Vice Mayor Paul agrees to keep the millage rate the same.

Mayor Burkett thanked Interim Town Manager Greene for the presentation. He stated that part of his campaign was to keep the residents first and he is disappointed that the Commission is not supporting the water rebate. He spoke regarding the water bill being out of control. He spoke regarding the interest of bonds and sewer projects.

Mayor Burkett stated that he worked very hard with the administration to bring relief to the residents.

Mayor Burkett spoke regarding the procurement position and what would be efficient to the Town. He stated it is difficult to find one person who is able to find the best deal for each department. He agrees to try this out and possibly put an ad in the paper to find someone to work at home or come into the office as a part time individual and pay them as an independent contractor on an hourly rate as needed.

Mayor Burkett agrees to reduce the millage rate and stated that Bal Harbour's millage rate is 1.9, Bay Harbor's is 3.6, Aventura's is 1.7 and the Town's is 4.4. He stated that they are significantly higher and would vote to lower taxes. He stated that Interim Town Manager Greene could possibly look at reducing the budget.

Mayor Burkett agrees with water conservation and would still like to give the residents relief and will not support anything that would not give them relief.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that she does not agree to the rebate and the water bill is higher because of the projects that have been done in the Town dealing with water and sewer projects. She recommends not to do the rebate.

Commissioner Velasquez agrees with the idea of a part-time procurement person. She asked regarding the balloon payments due in 2026. She does not agree with the water rebate at this time due to the pandemic. She spoke regarding better parks for our children and purchasing other lands that will expand the parks they currently have.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated that 2026 is the last year of the revenue fund.

Commissioner Kesl spoke regarding reserves and water conservation and rebate could go hand in hand. He would like to go over the taxable base for the last 10 years and believes they could have more options than they currently have.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that there are many residents who want certain projects and need the reserve money to use for those projects.

Commissioner Salzhauer agrees with Commissioner Velasquez' comments and how can they give Interim Town Manager Greene direction without a motion.

Town Attorney Arango stated that they can provide direction by consensus without doing a motion.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that she agrees with having the money go into the Town reserves that would assist with projects like the undergrounding of powerlines and prefers full time staffers instead of part timers.

Vice Mayor Paul agrees to keep the mileage rate as it currently is set at. If you keep the same rate you still have the option to lower it in September.

The following individuals from the public spoke regarding the budget:

Jeff Rose  
Diana Gonzalez  
Clara Diaz Leal  
Robert "Bobby" Cummings  
Deborah Cimadevilla

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that she would like to get the Budget Advisory Committee's input and suggested setting up a joint meeting with that Committee before September and if there is a way to include them in this process.

Commissioner Kesl addressed the comments made by speaker Robert "Bobby" Cummings. He agreed with the joint meeting with the Budget Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Velasquez addressed the comments made by Commissioner Kesl and him not supporting the undergrounding of powerlines. She thanked public speaker Robert "Bobby" Cummings and would like to hear more from the Budget Advisory Committee. She asked if the Sunshine Law only applies to the Board she is the liaison on or with all Boards.

Town Attorney Arango answered Commissioner Velasquez' question and stated it only pertains to the Board she is a liaison on.

Interim Town Manager Greene stated that the Commission has agreed by consensus to leave the milage rate at 4.4 and he will submit it to the County.

Commissioner Salzhauer asked if the August 5, 2020 Budget Advisory Committee Meeting could be a joint meeting.

Mayor Burkett agrees to have a joint meeting for the August 5, 2020 Budget Advisory Committee Meeting.

Town Clerk McCready stated that she can make the August 5, 2020 Budget Advisory Committee Meeting a joint meeting.

The Commission agreed by consensus to have a Joint Town Commission Meeting and Budget Advisory Committee Meeting on August 5, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

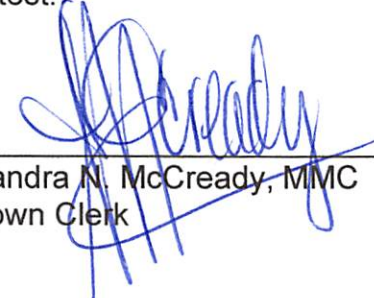
## 2. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to adjourn the meeting without objection at 8:51 p.m. The motion received a second from Commissioner Kesl. All voted in favor.

Accepted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles W. Burkett, Mayor

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra N. McCready, MMC  
Town Clerk