

**SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
PLANTATION, FLORIDA**

August 27, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Councilwoman Bendekovic, President of the City Council.

1. Roll call by the City Clerk:

Councilmember: Diane Veltri Bendekovic
Jerry Fadgen
Robert A. Levy
Peter S. Tingom
Sharon Moody Uria

Mayor: Rae Carole Armstrong
City Attorney: Donald J. Lunny, Jr.

Also Present: Dan Keefe, Assistant to the Mayor
Susan Slattery, City Clerk
Diana Berchielli, Landscape
Administrator
Hank Breitenkam, Utilities Director
Brett Butler, City Engineer
Robert Castro, Information
Technology Director
Frank DeCelles, Director of Public
Works
Danny Ezzedine, D & C Director
Herbert Herriman, Finance Director
Monika Knapp, Library Director
Larry Leeds, PZED Director
Larry Massey, Police Chief
Margie Moale, Human Resources
Director
Robert Pudney, Fire Chief
Sue Reed, Executive Secretary
James Romano, Director of Parks and
Recreation
Paul Scott, General Manager
Plantation Preserve
Jeff Sabouri, Building Director

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1. DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND ALL OTHER FUNDS FOR THE CITY OF PLANTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009/2010.

Mayor Armstrong provided an overview of the backup material. She acknowledged Mr. Keefe, Mr. Herriman and the Finance Department for their efforts with regard to the budget. She noted this is a survival budget in order to balance the needs of residents, services provided and to be sure we have a financially sound position for the City of Plantation as we go into the future. There has already been a budget workshop with the larger departments at which time options were discussed. A balanced budget has been produced and the \$7,000,000 shortfall has been made up. The budget presented is \$78,513,000 and last year's budget was \$80,554,000; a reduction of \$2,041,000, which is approximately 2.53%. The other thing done to balance the budget was to recommend a millage rate of 4.5142, which generates additional revenues of \$2.9 million and that is part of what it has taken in order to present a balanced budget. The other things included in this budget are revenues anticipated from a red light camera program and the stormwater sewer program that will be brought back over the period of the next few months. The red light camera program will be approached with a realistic amount of caution, recognizing that those revenues may not be generated and will have to be balanced with funds from another source. Within that revenue increase is approximately \$768,000, which also includes funds that had been identified as additional revenues in the recycling program and the NSP Administration. The other component of balancing the budget is the use of non recurring revenues in the amount of \$2,256,000. This was done last year with a slightly higher amount. In order to avoid costs, a wage freeze has been proposed in lieu of layoffs. Multiple directions were reviewed that could have been taken in order to again reduce expenses. Employees have been requested to work through this year and to recognize that conditions will get better. The budget statement shows that the salaries and wages are down by \$1.8 million, which includes \$450,000 that had to be rolled out in order to freeze wages next year and pick up on obligations that have been made for 2009. In order to do this, vacated positions have been eliminated. There are currently less employees in the City than there were in 2001. A lot of work is being done with a lot fewer people. Employee benefits numbers went up by \$2.7 million and the largest part of that was tied to the pension and the increased cost for the pension this year. Included in the \$2.7 million is \$1.4 million, which are funds received for 185 money that go into the Police and Fire Rescue pension plan that are offset by revenue that comes in from the State. Services are down by \$2.6 million, materials and supplies are down \$280,000 and the capital number is down \$230,000. The capital number, which includes police cars, fire rescue vehicles and those that need to be replaced and are out of the work cycle on the Administrative side, have not been in our budget for the past two years and they are not included in this budget. As far as the capital is concerned, there is a growing, definitively visible need to put some movement into place in the direction of being able to keep the equipment working at Public Works and to put a new microphone system in City Hall. The 2011 budget is also being reviewed, knowing that some of the same conditions will be present. Mayor Armstrong is extremely confident that once we get through this budget the next one will not be more difficult.

Councilman Fadgen questioned whether outside services were included and whether anything else could be privatized. He suggested that fees for supplies be brought to a lower number because the current numbers are unacceptable. He also suggested not paying for non functioning street lights, as they are usually out for two months at a time. He noted that perhaps the City should have a core of volunteers that can handle a variety of services, particularly in the park system. In his opinion, an alternative plan needs to be developed, perhaps with some type of incentive.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Mr. Herriman advised that consulting services were included in the number. A lot of the numbers are smaller but total a large number when all are brought forward.

Mayor Armstrong responded to Councilman Fadgen's comments. She noted that an extensive list of all privatized services was developed in the past. A lot of those services do not back up the fact that they are any less costly and the services are not the same as when they are controlled. She was of the opinion that the departments have reviewed this topic and whenever possible, if there is a reason to do so, the privatized source has been used. The analysis is one that is unique to each department. With regard to the street lights, they are in the RTC fund; therefore, it would not make a difference as far as the General Fund budget is concerned but we do want to be very aware of the costs.

Councilman Levy commended Mayor Armstrong for the fine tuning that has been done to come up with a reduction of over \$2 million dollars. Jobs are not being cut; however, jobs that were frozen last year have been eliminated, which means that all employees are doing more. He noted that this budget is not written in stone, it is a tool that can be used next year in order to achieve our goal of providing services to the residents. The budget can be discussed and amended if necessary. During previous experience, he emphasized that privatization does not work; it is a very simplistic solution to a difficult situation.

Ms. Slattery advised the City Clerk's office has a smaller budget this year and the executive secretary position is not being filled at this time. There are currently six full time employees and one part time employee.

Mr. Herriman recognized Cindy Iglesias and Nancy Romanella in Finance, as they were both instrumental in preparing the budget. He commented that Finance is involved in many aspects of what happens in the financial health of the City. Monies are received, disbursed, invested and debt is issued. Support services are provided for the departments relative to their budgets. Mr. Herriman noted that the Finance Department is relatively smaller than that of other municipalities. Currently there are 17 full time employees, two full time employees in Purchasing and four part time couriers. Accounting is done on an annual basis and everything is in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles as well as statutory laws and ordinances.

Councilwoman Bendekovic questioned why the budget was received four days prior to the meeting instead of two weeks prior. She was of the opinion that if we have the software and technology that it would help rather than hinder getting the information in a timely manner. She requested the information be provided at least two weeks ahead of time in the future. She questioned whether there is any consideration in reducing staff once the software is up and running the way it should be. During a conversation with Mr. Keefe, it was noted that a survey had been done, which indicated the Finance Department is comparable to other cities our size.

Mr. Herriman advised that he would not consider reducing staff. Once the technology is working the way it is supposed to more should be done; however, it will not replace staff. If anything, the software has actually put more demands on staff. As far as the budget is concerned, they continued having glitches. He apologized for the delay and noted that it was with reason.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Mr. Herriman advised the new accounting system is fully implemented and has been for one year; however, it is not fully functional as far as having all of the so called glitches resolved. They are working on one of the areas relative to streamlining, which is currently with their consultant for review.

Councilwoman Bendekovic questioned why software was selected that is so difficult to implement.

Mr. Herriman advised the software was implemented within a short period of time. Other municipalities have also had problems with their software, which had to be worked out. Their consultant, Tribridge, has been working very closely with them to work out the areas of concern. Human Resources has also adopted a payroll

system and there is a lot of coordination between those systems. Our City also has to coordinate with existing systems that are in different departments such as Rec Trac, Fire House, etc., as they have their own systems and it all has to be integrated.

Councilman Tingom commented that all software is relatively good and bad. The implementation of the software is the most difficult piece. Downloading of the systems takes time. He noted that it would probably take approximately two years before the system is running the way they want it.

In response to Councilwoman Uria, Mr. Herriman advised that normally the budget would be page numbered and there would be indexes along with the necessary organization.

In response to Councilwoman Bendekovic, Ms. Moale explained that all providers are the same in both the open access and the PPO. The difference is that if there is not a physician or provider within 50 miles of your home address United Healthcare, under the open access, will authorize you to go out of network and pay as if it were in network. She advised that during open enrollment in March 2009, 38 people switched to the open access because they are beginning to understand that the benefits are exactly the same; the only difference is in the PPO you have a deductible of \$200 and the ability to go out of network with a reduced benefit. With the 38 people that switched over, we avoided the expense of \$95,000.

Councilwoman Bendekovic recommended that all of the Council members go with the open access because it would save a considerable amount of money.

In response to Councilwoman Uria, Ms. Moale indicated that the Pension Administrator salary is coming out of the General Fund. Ms. Haines' work is about 50% pension related and the other 50% is used for supporting benefits.

With regard to the \$54,000 for holiday benefits, Ms. Moale advised that that amount includes the holiday luncheon, which costs about \$5,000, and the Thanksgiving and Christmas money given to employees.

Mayor Armstrong advised the Thanksgiving and Christmas money has always been a tradition in the City of Plantation. She noted this money is taxed.

Councilman Tingom concurred with Councilwoman Bendekovic with regard to the open access. During open enrollment he elected to go with the open access and has been very satisfied. He referenced legal services allocation and noticed the number in 2007 was approximately \$47,000; 2008 was \$186,000; and the budget for this year and next year is \$200,000. He questioned what has led to the dramatic increase.

Ms. Moale advised the City gets sued and must be defended. The expense is for outside labor council, not for City Attorney services. An enormous amount of fees were spent this year due to unexpected law suits.

Mr. Castro indicated over the course of the last three or four years a lot of technology has been implemented within the City, probably more than what was reasonable at times. All of the applications have been integrated to talk to one another and there is a sharing of information so there is not a double entry. At this point they are on the downward side; a lot of these projects have been multi year deployments.

Councilman Fadgen commented about using local vendors for some items such as back up batteries. He questioned whether any of that has been implemented.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Mr. Castro advised that he spoke with the Purchasing Department with regard to using local vendors when possible. He indicated there was a need for the back up batteries; however, he was not sure whether a local vendor was used or not; he forwarded the request to Purchasing and they handled the rest. One of the large UPS's that went into the Police Department renovation was purchased locally, which was a \$40,000 item. They use local vendors whenever possible.

Councilman Fadgen commented that the County has set aside a percentage of contracts that must go to a local vendor and thought we might consider the same, as many of the local vendors are having a difficult time.

Councilwoman Bendekovic's primary concern was what the residents deserve; they deserve customer service, public safety and parks and recreation. She questioned whether the Economic Development Division should be sunsetted for a couple of years until the economics turn around. During research she was told by several people that they come to Plantation because of location, millage rates, taxes, appearance and because we are such a fiscally sound community.

Mr. Leeds did not recommend considering suspending these services at this time. There are initiatives in place that are devoted to increasing tax base and two things of importance are maintaining and increasing the tax base and job creating in a time when there are local, county wide and country wide job losses. He believed sunseting this division would not be a good idea because a competitive advantage would be lost, as other cities are being very aggressive in attracting new development. Plantation requires very high standards and the quality of not only our natural environment but our built environment and we want to continue that. Other cities are willing to lower their standards to attract quality job generating tax base intensive development. We need an Economic Development division to maintain the competitive edge with other cities. He reiterated that the most important thing is job generation.

Councilwoman Uria expressed appreciation to Mr. Ezzedine for keeping the contractors and vendors on their toes.

With regard to the aforementioned Economic Development discussion, Councilwoman Uria concurred with Mr. Leeds with regard to marketing. In business, when things are slow, the first thing to get cut is marketing and that is actually the last thing that should be cut because that is when things should be done. She also concurred with Councilwoman Bendekovic and believed that other things could be done that would be advantageous. Perhaps this issue could be discussed during a workshop because there was a great Ad Hoc Committee that put several things together. Some things should be done that have not been done.

Mayor Armstrong believed there are opportunities and noted there was a time when the Economic Development department was critical and extremely instrumental in getting us where we are with Midtown, Gateway and the CRA. This is a point and time that we need to consider rejuvenating and updating our expectations and plans in those areas.

Councilwoman Bendekovic suggested the Ad Hoc Committee be revisited in an attempt to refresh the department.

Chief Massey indicated there were several things he wanted to happen before his departure with the City; for Deputy Chief Harrison to get the job, which has become a reality; the budget would be completed; the renovation to the Police Department, which is looking promising; and to have the FOP contract settled and resolved. He encouraged the FOP and the City to continue meeting because it is in the best interest of everyone involved to settle this by October if possible. The FOP and civilian employees are good, honest, hard working

people and he feels they all deserve a raise and have earned it; the question is whether we can afford to give them one.

Councilwoman Bendekovic referenced a memo regarding Code Enforcement versus Special Magistrate costs. She recommended that the chronic offenders go before the Special Magistrate instead of Code Enforcement. She got a list of all of the foreclosures and liens the City has and there are \$3.9 million dollars in non Homestead liens. She is looking for a way to get some of these off of the books even if an amnesty has to be done for six months.

Mr. Lunny explained that a long time ago Code Enforcement was under the Building Department and then was taken over by the Police Department. He advised that the differential between \$170 per hour, which is Mr. Morgan's rate, and the Special Magistrate's rate result from the Code Enforcement Board, which is a volunteer, non professional Board versus the Magistrate, which hears cases that under the same Statute, is an attorney with at least five years of experience. As to the cost of prosecution, they are slightly more efficient in going to the Magistrate. There was an extensive review of all of the Code Enforcement procedures with the County this year and all of the changes requested were made including the discounting of fines. The Code Enforcement Board primarily hears the residential type violations and as long as that Board continues to hear the cases or continues to be constituted they will need Counsel in attendance. Once the case is complete and the fines are set there is a process where he and Mayor Armstrong spend the Code Enforcement budget in terms of attempting to determine which cases will be pursued and which ones will not. In many of the cases that are very expensive and carried on the books as very expensive are ones that we were not successful on or are in the process of being settled. He provided several examples of the cases and discussed why the fines are still being carried. In his judgment, the \$3.9 million dollar number is kind of high given the reality of the matter. The policy has always been when the fines get over \$400,000 department heads can refer the case to the Mayor for collection and it can be sent to him. An amnesty might work but sometimes respondents refuse to come into compliance until they are served with a summons. There has to be a management supervision of this and he is one of the more supervised people and is regularly asked for reports. He believed an amnesty is a great idea and might help those that are in compliance and might otherwise pay. The discounts that were approved are almost an amnesty. Two changes that are currently being done are a citation system in an attempt to cut out staff time and the other is if there is a repeater they opt not to use Code Enforcement and should use an injunction or take them to County Court. Those are different processes and sometimes are more expensive. There are a tremendous number of cases as a result of the robust foreclosure market we are suffering. Plantation gets sued all the time with banks attempting to eliminate our liens, which has caused a drain on our resources. He is completely open to any kind of cost savings.

Councilman Fadgen suggested there be a provision in the amnesty program, if there is one, so if they are not in compliance they have to adhere to it prior to any amnesty.

Mayor Armstrong advised this is an opportunity to review and consider an amnesty program. The other thing she felt confident in was using the citation program, particularly for the Homestead type of properties in lieu of going through this process, which will alleviate some of the time that is currently being taken up at the Code Enforcement Board level.

Councilman Tingom was not in favor of an amnesty program. He felt that citations and legal remedies would be a better avenue to get the cases out of the Code Enforcement Board.

Councilwoman Uria referenced the approval of the new communication, Nixel and crime mapping.

Deputy Chief Harrison advised that the crime mapping is attached to the Police Department website, which is a great service to the community. The Nixel is an alert system, which provides updates from the Police Department.

Councilwoman Bendekovic congratulated Deputy Chief Harrison on his new position.

Chief Pudney provided an update on additional duties the Fire Department has been requested to do. Local government has been asked to handle the H1N1 Swine Flu vaccinations of 1.8 million people in Broward County with no reimbursement for that cost. In addition, the economy has impacted our residents in a negative manner and over the months, what he calls primary health care, has been provided at the home. This has an impact on the budget because the City of Plantation charges for transportation if the patient is transported to the hospital. Because of the economy, calls are being received to the home and office to provide primary health care and there is no transportation anticipated by the patient. Residents like to have their infection checked and know that care is being provided; however, it is impacting the revenue stream as well as the cost side of the equation. It is not believed this will get much better in the near future. Since June those types of calls have steadily been increasing. On the fire side, the economy is also having an impact. There seems to be more accidental fires on properties that are being foreclosed upon and on vehicles that are no longer being paid. There is actually a reduction in calls for service but the calls for service that are being provided are impacting them from not only a personnel standpoint, but from a budget standpoint more directly than if there were a general increase in calls. The budget presented is no different than what was discussed in June. The issues outlined in June are still the same. He believes that cost is never an issue except in the absence of value. The value received from the Fire Department, in his opinion, far exceeds the cost and the service being discussed is what the City provides. The value is gaining more value every day and the dollars requested are declining and that formula will only work for so long.

Councilwoman Bendekovic questioned whether a fee could be charged if patients are not transported and if so, whether it would be a user fee. She noted that perhaps a user fee would discourage these types of calls for primary care.

Chief Pudney did not believe residents are abusing the system, there are people in the community who need health care and as the months and weeks go on in this economy they are having difficulty receiving that health care. Those people truly need services and probably do not have the capacity to pay. There is another group of people who are called the "frequent fliers", who simply want a visit at 2:00 a.m. for help moving from the bed to the bathroom or the bathroom back to the bed. Some people have even called for help getting the remote control for the television. There is an ordinance that allows a charge for that type of service; it is called a Civil Assist and a fee is charged for that. The "frequent flyer" category has done rather well in reducing those calls for service, which have a small impact on delivery. The delivery of emergency medical care, non transport, is the concern. The answer to the question directly is that they would have to meet with the City Attorney and determine the legality of charging for non transport service. They would not be reimbursed by Medicare or Medicaid; it is not a reimbursable event; therefore, it would be private pay, private insurance or billing the individual directly. He believed there would be some philosophical issues because those are the people that are falling through the cracks and need primary care issues dealt with in the home.

In response to Councilwoman Bendekovic, Chief Pudney advised these people are not indigent; indigent people are the type of people they respond to every day and every night along with the Police Department, who really do not have a place to stay. They are homeless or on the street and move from area to area. They have health issues and we respond and deal with them as best as possible. Interestingly, those people want to be transported to the hospital because they know the system and know the hospital has to receive them and those become a

write off for that particular hospital. The group he is speaking of reside in the City, live in a house and do not necessarily want to go to the hospital because they either do not want to be a burden or they believe that is not part of the system but they need someone with medical expertise to check them out to make them feel certain they are not getting worse or have an issue that does not require attention. Rescue attempts to transport every person they contact. In the medical sense, it is very difficult to leave a patient, by getting a signed release, and returning back to the station knowing they actually need some definitive care that could not be provided. More patients are being seen who are willing to sign the release and he believes it is part of the economy. There would be a poor collection rate on those people.

In response to Councilwoman Uria, Chief Pudney advised the transport fees offset roughly 50% of the cost of the service and the General Fund provides the other 50% to provide that service in that particular division of the department. Those costs are increasing overall and the revenues for transport are not and the reason for that is due to a greater number of calls that do not result in a transport. He indicated the paramedics are very well trained in providing emergency medical care and our medical director is very strong and strict about sick people belonging in the hospital and that is the primary purpose of their service. The right of an individual that is lucid is the ability to refuse medical treatment and they do. In many cases in this type of response, the patient or their family start discussing costs and then a patient is left even though it is believed they should be transported to the hospital for medical care. They sign a release and that is satisfactory. Patients are advised against medical advice that they are waiving the right to transport and they are even told that death can be a result and a pamphlet is left. Sometimes personnel spend time on the phone with the hospital or with family members in an attempt to convince the patient to go to the hospital and they do not. It is a cost factor in many cases.

Councilwoman Uria would agree to look at some type of different procedure because this is a growing and reoccurring situation.

Chief Pudney noted that people are well aware of the system and how to make it work. Most people know if you go to the emergency room on a busy night you wait in the waiting room for hours and when transported they are brought in the back door.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Chief Pudney advised that the Federal Government has determined that the H1N1 vaccine, at this point, will not be administered through the private sector, only by the public sector. He did not know whether they would be prohibited from charging a fee. Reimbursement and revenue has been discussed to provide the service and both the State and Local Health Department have indicated that there are no funds. To his knowledge there has not been a discussion with regard to charging a fee. Donations could be suggested. He also noted that records have to be entered electronically into a database, which is not yet functional.

Mayor Armstrong commented that the other key to this is whether we have the available personnel to be able to provide the vaccinations.

Mr. Lunny advised the other concern is the expectation of the residents. Their expectation is that the City or primary governmental entity will provide the service and as soon as the press says this is how you get it they will be lining up; it will be a major problem.

Councilwoman Bendekovic noted two shots are required within a three week period.

Councilman Fadgen advised that stimulus money should be sent for that. He suggested contacting our Congressman.

Mr. Lunny indicated the President of the United States is saying this needs to be done and the residents are waiting; we cannot discharge an imposed duty. It is not an option.

Councilman Levy believes the answer is the Civil Assist fee and that it be made more wide spread; that for any assistance that is not transport the Civil Assist fee will come into play because you are certainly entitled to recover costs. Consideration of expanding the Civil Assist fee would cover the costs. The other way would be a Fire fee and we do not want to call it that. If a recommendation were made from this Council, it would be to recover all of your costs when getting the questionable calls to assist for whatever reason when there is no transport.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Chief Pudney advised the Civil Assist fee is \$50 and the transport fee is based on the type of medical transport; there is Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support I and II; there is a sliding scale that ranges from about \$650 plus mileage and oxygen down to about \$380 plus mileage and oxygen, depending on the procedures and the distance traveled.

Councilman Fadgen believed the Civil Assist fee should be higher. He questioned the percentage of calls that do not require transport.

Mayor Armstrong advised that the Civil Assist fee could be reviewed.

Chief Pudney advised that the Fire Department believes if they are called there should be a transport. Approximately 32% of the calls do not result in a transport and vehicle accidents are included in that number. Sometimes upon arrival it is found that there are no injuries or minor injuries; therefore, there was no transport.

In response to Councilwoman Uria, Chief Pudney indicated they can differentiate between someone who has been in an accident and someone who calls and decides not to be transported and that data set is collected differently.

Mr. DeCelles advised the most upsetting thing for him is to listen to residents or people who have comments about how overpaid government employees are. He has highlighted equipment listed on four pages that is between 15 and 22 years old. He noted there is equipment parked in the rear of the Public Works Department that can no longer be used because we are at the end of the year and cannot afford to fix it. Everyone appreciates a beautiful City but they should remember that it takes a lot of the small hand equipment to keep it that way.

Councilwoman Bendekovic commented that she has read several articles on privatization and from what she understands, most of the time the privatization does not work. Privatization is about profit and the City having their own Public Works Department is about pride, loyalty, quality and service.

Mr. DeCelles indicated when departments needed things moved it was the grass cutters who did it because they were finished with their duties. As Councilman Levy said, everything should be listed in the contract because they will only perform what is listed and nothing more. Custodians in the building do whatever they are asked; however, if a company were hired to clean the building that is all they would do. Staff does a lot of extras that would not be done if there were a contract.

Councilman Tingom advised that he has had three extremely bad experiences with privatization in the past. Our employees do anything requested by Mayor Armstrong and he would be very much opposed to privatizing the services that Public Works provides.

Mr. Romano commented that Parks and Recreation took the largest hit of \$1.2 million dollars, which means that some facilities are going to be closed. A lot of hours have been reduced and several changes have been made. This will affect some of the phone calls received. During research it was learned that for \$25,000 the pool could be open two mornings during the week during the winter months with adequate staffing available.

In response to Councilwoman Uria, Mr. Romano indicated that between 6 and 12 people use the pool in the mornings during the winter.

Councilman Uria did not have a problem telling residents that the pool cannot be open for 6 to 12 people.

Councilwoman Bendekovic concurred.

Mr. Romano advised when the budget was put together one of the things noted was contracting out the summer recreation program. A lot of comments were received from parents of the children along with several requests as to whether that could be reconsidered. The cost to run the summer program is approximately \$320,000.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Mr. Romano advised the revenue from the program is not a lot, perhaps \$15,000 to \$20,000. When contracting out the program more revenue will be netted; however, the revenue number will be reduced because we are not taking in the \$600 to \$800 registration fees for the campers. Gross revenues will go down but net will go up slightly. The costs for the program are paying salaries, purchasing equipment and other things. On the net side, we will not be paying the salaries if the program is contracted.

In response to Councilwoman Bendekovic, Mr. Romano advised the program is cost neutral. Based on today's numbers we net about \$15,000 to \$20,000. When contracting out, they will pay us 25% of that number. The reason for contracting out is because of saving \$320,000 in revenue that we have budgeted. Once times change he would definitely encourage bringing the program back to the City. When it is in our control we control it and when it is out of our hands there will be some interesting phone calls.

Mayor Armstrong questioned how everyone feels individually about retaining this program. There are dollars associated with it and there are funds that have been eliminated from the Parks and Recreation budget in order to take this private to see whether it will work. She is not in support of contracting the program but will take it on the basis of a trial, which was the recommendation from Parks and Recreation. We may not make much money on the program but we are going to lose money in the process of contracting the program. The biggest loss is probably the part of the young people who have worked as counselors who have gone through the City training program and have connected to the City of Plantation.

Councilwoman Bendekovic suggested contracting out during the holidays to see whether the program would work. A test run could be done during the school year as short term. She is hesitant on farming the children out and knows that more children are put in a group per adult than what are supposed to be.

Mr. Romano advised that suggestion could be reviewed. We always pride ourselves on the ratios; their standards are 1 to 25 and ours are lower. It is a concern.

Councilman Fadgen was in favor of contracting out the summer program and suggesting letting the contractor know they are under observation.

Mr. Romano indicated this is the first time we are venturing away from what we typically do in the City; this is a large step.

In response to Councilman Fadgen, Mr. Romano stated the fees have always risen like the economy and they rise with the cost of doing business. Fees charged are zero neutral as far as the program is concerned.

With regard to the Royal Egg Hunt, Mr. Romano advised that the Women's Club donated funds to sponsor the program for the past two years. This program has been cancelled by the City.

Mr. Romano advised that the City assisted with PAL registrations this past weekend. He was happy to report that PAL took in approximately \$39,000 and the City received just over \$1,500 with the \$3.00 registration fee. The non resident fee revenue was just under \$1,300. Registration will continue this Friday and Saturday and will be kept open for another month for online registration only.

In response to Councilman Tingom, Mr. Romano stated that 90% of the part time camp counselors return to the City on a yearly basis. They usually work for a few years and then find a full time job.

Mayor Armstrong questioned whether anyone had any recommendations on any of the context seen in the budget.

Councilwoman Bendekovic requested that once the budget is finalized it get put online. She was told by one resident that we are a lot better off than a lot of other cities in the County. She is very cognizant that the millage rate will go up but at the same time it is at the same rate as in 2005/2006. Sacrifices have to be made but we also have to be fiscally responsible.

In response to Councilwoman Bendekovic, Mayor Armstrong commented that as far as planning and looking ahead, we are attempting to pay off bond debt and allow the Utility Department to get some capital they need. The time frame is approximately two years and if we were to find some advantageous reason to move that forward, whether we would get some stimulus money, we would look at offsetting in trying to do that sooner. That is going to be the vehicle we are going to use when things turn around in order to recover from some of the things we have heard with regard to equipment. With regard to bonds, the projects that are contained and will continue to work this year are the undergrounding of the utilities on State Road 7 and the Plantation Woods Park at the Kennedy Community Center, which has begun. We will be very well positioned within the next two years.

Councilman Levy referenced the summer camp program and expressed concern with regard to standards and ratios. He agreed to try the contractor for one year. He believes Parks and Recreation has done a wonderful job and commended Mr. Romano and staff for what they have done.

Councilman Fadgen concurred with Councilman Levy; the quality of work is good. We are into a different model for government and he would like to see as an alternative, some sort of incentive plan to possibly have some of the employees exit if necessary.

Councilwoman Uria encouraged everyone to keep an open mind as far as privatization. She is usually not in favor of privatization but sometimes it is a good option. She referenced the Plantation Preserve as an example.

Councilman Tingom commented that he was very impressed with the hard decisions and quality of thought by the directors. He concurred with Councilwoman Uria that some things can be privatized; however, he has seen

too many times when it has failed. He recommended working with the Property Appraiser to determine whether there are any Homestead violations within Plantation. His biggest concern is the fact that nothing is being done for our infrastructure of capital improvements and in the long term that will cost us. He would like to see the summer recreation program kept within the City's hands, as it would benefit the City. Perhaps trying it out on days off or during the school breaks would be best.

Mayor Armstrong advised all of the recommendations will be considered and there will be additional conversations. This is a blueprint with recommendations and there is always an opportunity to make adjustment. She thanked the directors for their time and appreciates the time that was put into this plan.

In response to Councilman Tingom, Mayor Armstrong noted that the five-year plan is being changed. With regard to the infrastructure, the roofs and air conditioners were repaired and generators are in place. If we can get one new fire station and equipment we would be in really good shape.

* * * * *

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Diane Veltri Bendekovic, President
City Council

ATTEST:

Susan Slattery
City Clerk

RECORD ENTRY:

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the Original of the foregoing signed document was received by the Office of the City Clerk and entered into the Public Record this _____ day of _____, 2009.

Susan Slattery, City Clerk