

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP
OF THE CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL**

WHEN: TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

WHERE: CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
33 EASY STREET, CAREFREE, AZ 85377

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

Town Council Attending:

Mayor Les Peterson
Vice Mayor John Crane
Vince D'Aliesio
Tony Geiger
Stephen Hatcher
Mike Johnson
Cheryl Kroyer

Town Council Absent:

Staff Present:

Gary Neiss, Town Administrator; Jim Keen, Town Accountant; Kandace French, Town Clerk/Treasurer.

Mayor Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

A members of the Council may participate by technological means or methods pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431(4).

AGENDA:

ITEM #1 **Workshop to discuss Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget.**

Mayor Peterson shared an observation from a Town of Carefree resident who viewed the first Town of Carefree budget workshop, who asserted, the polish of the people who presented and scope and inter-relationship of their activities, far surpassed what he was accustomed to in Washington state where he was from. And frankly, Mayor Peterson added, he feels the same way.

Town Administrator, Gary Neiss reminded, the budget workshops are broadcasted live on the Town's You Tube channel, the recording of the workshops are included in the Town's newsletter and the Program Based Budget, presentation slides and audio are also made available to the public. Transparency, community engagement and answering questions now and in the future, is priority so the public understands how the public funds are vested in the community.

Town Administrator, Gary Neiss presented via PowerPoint, the 3rd and final public Budget Workshop and provided a brief overview of the budget process and timeline.

Mr. Neiss displayed the budget dashboard, a high-level summary of funds coming into the Town, the operational budget, and explained how capital reserves are utilized.

Mr. Neiss displayed the FY 2022-2023 Budget Dashboard:

- Forecasted revenues
 - Municipal Sales Tax – 60%
 - User Fees – 16%
 - State Shared Revenue – 24 %

- Anticipated Expenses
 - Operations – 31%
 - Public Safety – 39%
 - This does not include going into Automatic Aid. This is a bridge contract with Rural Metro that will be considered sometime in June. Mr. Neiss stated, we need to ensure that whatever decisions that are made from an expenditure perspective are solvent, not just short term, but long term. Adding, this process will be similar to the budget process, transparent, and promoting citizen involvement, critical to the Town and critical to the residents.

 - HR – 30%
 - 17 full time employees

- Capital Reserves
 - Expenses
 - Drainage Project
 - Signage
 - Pavement
 - Maintenance Project
 - Fire Infrastructure
 - Revenues
 - Potential Fire Grants
 - County Drainage Grant
 - Capital Reserve/HURF
 - Contribution

Mr. Neiss responded to questions and comments from Council.

Mayor Peterson commented, as with any budget this is a large sum of money. There are different points of view of how these monies should be spent and what the priorities are. Mayor Peterson explained, it is during these public budget workshops, that the opportunity is provided for citizens to share comments and ask questions surrounding the budget, not after the budget has been approved.

Regarding staff, Council person D’Aliesio asked Mr. Neiss, over the next two years, does he anticipate having to increase the Town’s staff size? Mr. Neiss responded, the only projected increase would be the potential of going with our own Municipal Fire Department which would double the size of staff. Additionally, the potential of hiring a fifth Public Works employee to maintain a 4-person crew in the event of someone being out.

Mr. Neiss responded to questions from Councilperson Geiger regarding the fire program. Looking at a Municipal Fire Department, could it be its own entity, or does it need to be a department of the Town? Mr. Neiss explained, we could set up policies, so it acts that way, however, in order to qualify for automatic aid, the automatic aid consortium would like to see the Town be our own Municipal Fire Department that's controlled by the Town Council and acts in the same fashion as other Municipal Fire Departments or join a neighboring fire district. These are the two options presented by those in Automatic Aid that open the door for Carefree to join that partnership.

Councilperson Hatcher asked if Rural Metro has volunteer or part time employees? Mr. Neiss responded, no, they are all full time, salaried employees.

Mr. Neiss responded to question from Councilperson Hatcher regarding equipment within the Fire House. Explaining, when joining the Automatic Aid partnership, they will make a determination to the type of equipment to add value to the system. They will want to see a standard fire truck, perhaps a brush truck or tender truck. These are the standards that Cave Creek brought to the table. Whether those standards or something lesser are applied to the Town of Carefree, is uncertain at this time. Concluding, this will be vetted as we go through this process.

Councilperson Johnson inquired, are we considering, as part of our analysis, additional police services, such as an additional MCSO officer? Mr. Neiss explained, we are not. This is a question that the Public Safety Advisory Committee asked the Commander, whether the Town of Carefree needs additional resources at this time and any time in the near future. The Commander, being very emphatic with his answer, said, "no". Carefree is a safe community, and has the appropriate resources, the trends don't dictate the need for those additional resources.

Councilperson Geiger asked what is the status of the evaluation of the speed cameras? Mr. Neiss explained, we are waiting on MCSO to get clearance from their legal department on the application and use of photo radar because they are our law enforcement agency. State law governs the application of photo radar, requiring that a law enforcement agency process the ticket. The processing of the ticket for MCSO is more involved due to a Federal Judges mandate on how the tickets are processed, ensuring there is no discrimination in the processing of those tickets. This requirement is impacting their review of the use and application of photo radar. Additionally, the administrative office of the court, to process those tickets, would need to amend their software program, which at this time is not in alignment with the processing of these types of the filings. Concluding, photo radar is proven to change the behavior of the bad actors; however, we must ensure the supporting infrastructure to process these violations in accordance to the law are addressed. To date, we have not received such approval by these outside entities.

Mayor Peterson opened public comment. Hearing none, asked for a Motion to Adjourn.

Councilperson Kroyer reiterated how great this budget process works and appreciates how it is presented, easily understood, and navigated. Ms. Kroyer commended Town Administrator Neiss on his hard work and dedication.


ITEM #2 Adjournment.

Council person Kroyer **MOVED TO ADJOURN. SECONDED** by Councilperson D'Aliesio. **CARRIED**, unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

DATED this 26th day of April, 2022.

TOWN OF CAREFREE




By: Samantha Gesell, Planning Clerk



Les Peterson, Mayor


Attest:



Samantha Gesell, Planning Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Budget Workshop of the Town of Carefree held April 26, 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Samantha J. Gesell, Planning Clerk