

DeFuniak Springs City Council

Facility Rentals Workshop

October 19, 2009

The DeFuniak Springs City Council met in Workshop Session at 5:30 PM with the following members present: Mayor C. Harold Carpenter; Mayor Pro-Tem James Huffman; City Council Members: James Coffield, Henry Ennis and Wayne Graham; City Manager Kim Kirby, City Clerk Susie Campbell-Work and Deputy Clerk Vanessa Mitchell. Council Member Don Harrison was absent.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order and turned the meeting over to City Manager, Kim Kirby.

Kim Kirby introduced the item. She briefly spoke about the background of the item and how it originated from the Leadership Walton course.

MICHELLE SHACK, FACILITY RENTALS PRESENTATION: Michelle Schack made her Facility Rentals presentation. Mrs. Schack gave an overview of the handout presented before the Council. She asked if there were any questions.

Mr. James Huffman asked what the task was for the night's workshop meeting. Mrs. Kirby answered that this was an item continued from a Council Meeting and they were looking for guidance with the matter. Mr. Henry Ennis questioned the cost of labor on page 2. He asked if the City hired extra labor. Sara Bowers answered that the City hired the extra help for overtime purposes. Mrs. Kirby added that the employee has to come in and open and close the facility and at times this would be done after hours. Mr. Huffman asked if the employee could be given the option of time off instead of overtime pay. Mrs. Bowers stated that they are limited with the labor laws and the employees make the choice of how they want to be compensated.

Discussion then turned on how to save money when dropping a key off. Kendra Zamoiski asked about the need of a key drop box or a key fab. Bill Holloway said that there are back to back rentals and they have to have someone come in and clean before the next rental or do repairs. Ed Joyner added that most Saturdays the Civic Center is rented out and then churches have it rented out on Sundays. So, they have to have an employee come in and check to make sure everything is back in order. He said that his staff recommends the \$50 deposit, as suggested in the presentation, because a lot of the times the facility that has been rented is disorganized and dirty.

Mayor Carpenter said that he goes to two places every year. He said that at both places he gives them \$35.00 and they give him a key. There is not an employee that comes in to open or close the facility. The customer is the responsible party.

Henry Ennis said that there are two places that he is familiar with in Panama City. He said that the smaller one is \$75.00 to rent the facility. Mr. Coffield said that he goes to the Paxton Ag Center twice a year and he believes it is \$75, as well. He said that if you don't clean the facility or stack the chairs, you do not get your deposit back. He said there is another place that is a flat \$100.00. He said they do unlock the doors there.

Mr. Ennis said that he doesn't believe it is the time to be raising fees. Bill Holloway spoke about the level of service. He said that when the Sunday morning renters come in, they need to get the same level of service that the Saturday night renters got. He believed that holding a deposit would ensure this.

James Huffman complimented Mrs. Schack on the document and said that it is obvious she did a lot of work. He said he has concerns with what the City considers a loss. He said that there is a variable that you figure in there. If there is a loss, you have to assume it is being used everyday. He said as he sees this, there are certain things in the city that needed to given to the citizens. Mr. Huffman added that this is a service that will never operate in the black. He said you don't want to overprice things where citizens can't afford to use it. He thinks that these things here presented at the meeting are a cost of

doing business. He said they should not be trying to make money. They should be trying to provide services to the citizens. He said they have been really generous with salaries and they could figure out a way to find someone to close the buildings.

Ed Joyner said that they looked at several options. He said that this gave the employees a way to make extra money. James Huffman said we cannot be totally ignorant to why we are here. We are here to serve. He said that we, as a City, are doing well. The City has money in the reserves. He said he doesn't believe it is time to raise fees. The City needed to find other options to bring in money.

Kim Kirby brought back the discussion about the deposit portion of the presentation. James Huffman said just raising prices is not always the best answer. He said that we do not need to price the citizens out of services. James Huffman and Henry Ennis thanked Michelle Schack for her presentation.

JB Hillard, spoke from the audience, that common sense tells him that they should have a deposit. He said people don't necessarily respect government property. He said the very minimum the City could do is have the deposit that has been recommended. Mr. Huffman said that his comments reflected the increase of the rentals, not the deposit. He is not opposed to the deposit.

Further discussion on who could open and close the facility took place. James Coffield suggested a police officer could lock or unlock the facility. He added that someone is always in dispatch. Mr. Wayne Graham said that there could be a combination lock with a keypad. Sara Bowers said she would look into the key pad idea. Someone from the audience said the county just put one on the old armory doors.

Kevin Chilcutt added that if you put a \$75 deposit, generally it works well. He said that they should have a legal contract to bill for any excess time. There is still going to be need for someone to come in and clean on the off chance that the renters did not comply with the agreement.

Mrs. Kirby asked how often they really needed to come in and clean up after renters. Bill Holloway said that sometimes they put nails in the walls and, often times, leave a mess.

James Huffman said that he liked Mr. Chilcutt's suggestion. JB Hillard agreed and said to set an hourly fee for repairs.

Ed Joyner said that some of the callouts are for emergency repairs, like for blown fuses. He said it is not always to lock up and to open a facility. There are call out for different things. Mr. Graham said the City can schedule for the employees to work through the weekend: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Mr. Joyner said that he and Michelle looked at that. They said it would not be feasible.

Discussion took place about having Police as security at the venue.

Mr. Graham suggested the City could rotate supervisors and officers to open the Civic Center. He said that they are on salary and could rotate turns. Mrs. Kirby said only the Department Heads could do that, not the supervisors.

Mayor Carpenter suggested giving keys to the renters if there were keys that could not be duplicated.

Mr. Ennis said that it boils down to anything you do there is going to be a problem. Mr. Huffman said that anytime you allow access to a building, the renters want to know how to operate anything and everything. He said, with that, comes the possibility of a problem.

Mrs. Bowers said maybe there needs to be a higher deposit for parties. She said she would like to see the deposit high enough that it hurts to not get it back. Mrs. Kirby asked if they should bring back another deposit schedule. Mr. Coffield asked if it was possible for Michelle to break out the utility cost for each time rented. Mrs. Schack said that it would be difficult because they are all lumped together.

Mr. Huffman reiterated that whatever you do, the City will still have problems. Mr. Coffield echoed that as long as you have a place to rent, you are always going to have problems with clientele. Mr. Huffman said that if the City raised the deposit, it would motivate people to clean it up. Mrs. Kirby offered a suggestion of making the deposit equal to the rental fee.

Alicia Leonard asked what would the City do for waiving non-profit fees. Mrs. Bowers said they would still want to get a deposit fee. She added that it isn't like it used to be.

Kevin Chilcutt asked if all the non profits come before the council. He said then you know who they are in the community and they won't make a mistake or mess up the facility. Mr. Huffman said that he was right. Mayor Carpenter agreed. Mr. Huffman said a lot of the non-profits bring economics to the city.

Mayor Carpenter said they have all given their opinion. He said they need to work on the deposit portion of the presentation and go from there. He said one good idea to look into was the idea for keys that cannot be duplicated. He said that would reduce overtime where possible. He said some overtime with back to back rentals and with repairs was going to be necessary and unavoidable.

Mr. Huffman asked if overtime was a regular rate. Mrs. Bowers said it was time and a half. Mr. Joyner said the City pays the employees an hour to open and an hour to close. Mr. Coffield asked if there was a way to come up with guidelines for waiver of the fees. Mr. Huffman said it would be hard. He said each one would have to come before the Council individually. Mrs. Kirby added the upside of that would be that it helps give them a say. Mr. Huffman acknowledged what the Mayor said was right. He said they need to go back to the drawing board and see if there could be a way to adjust things.

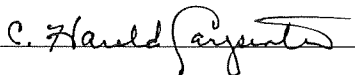
Mr. Holloway added the deposit would help with the overtime because the fees would cover the overtime. Mr. Huffman said to add in a clean up fee because some people would rather pay then clean up.

Mayor Carpenter asked for any other questions. There were none.

Mrs. Kirby talked about announcements. She said there would be and Appraisal Training this Friday.

There being no further business, Mayor C. Harold Carpenter adjourned the meeting.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of November, 2009



C. Harold Carpenter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Elizabeth S. Campbell-Work, City Clerk