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**HIGH SPRINGS
CITY COMMISSION GENERAL WORKSHOP
(CIVIC CENTER)
MAY 7, 2026 5:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

ROLL CALL CITY COMMISSION:

Mayor Andrew Miller – Present
Vice Mayor Wayne Bloodsworth - Present
Commissioner Tristan Grunder – Present
Commissioner Chad Howell – Present
Commissioner Katherine Weitz – Present

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeremy Marshall, City Manager
Angela Stone, City Clerk
Jami Echeverri, Assistant City Clerk
Amy Bohannon, CRA Manager
Joe Peters, Fire Chief
Kevin Mangan, PIO
Antoine Sheppard, Police Lieutenant
Allan Alligood, Building Official

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation by:

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Weitz motioned to approve the agenda for May 7th 2026.
Commissioner Howell Seconded
Motion Carried 5-0

BUSINESS ITEMS: DISCUSSION ON FIRE AND POLICE BUDGETS AND STAFFING LEVELS.

Mayor Miller advised that the City Manager would speak first, then the fire chief, then police chief then the commission.

City Manager Marshall explained the reason and purpose of the budget workshop to discuss the funding and budget for the Fire and Police departments.

He advised that the development Bridlewood has officially pulled their first permit and infrastructure to support both existing and future development.

Fire Chief Peters: gave a presentation of the current personnel staffed. He advised that after staffing resigning, retiring, etc. it is currently difficult to maintain a fully staffed shift, thus reducing apparatus that can respond.

He advised that if staffing was dropped from a 4 person to a 3 person shift, the ISO rating would drop from a 4 to a 10. He believes this could potentially affect homeowners insurance costs.

Commissioner Weitz asked for clarification on how the county's formula for the assessment was calculated.

Chief Peters advised they were calculated the same as the City of High Springs.

Commissioner Bloodsworth advised he has done some rough calculations on his own property if the county were to absorb the department vs maintaining staff as it is now. He stated that per the calculations performed, his assessment would go up if it were city vs county.

Commissioner Howell, did some research and believes if the fire assessment is increased it could cover from 35% and would go up to 75%. He has concerns that if the county sees the increase in revenue from the assessment, they could potentially reduce their contributions paid from mutual aid.

Commissioner Grunder commended that the assessment could be on a sliding scale based on value or square footage of the home rather than a flat rate. There needs to be a new assessment study performed to see what it would take to be equal to the county fire assessment.

Vice Mayor Bloodsworth asked what the figure was that we could have gone up to.

Chief Peters advised the very top number was \$360.00 per household. 335 is what was set by resolution.

City Manager Marshall advised there would need to be a new assessment study.

Commissioner Howell asked if the City has ever discussed with the county bringing an ambulance into High Springs in partnership.

City Manager Marshall has had conversations with County Chief Theus regarding this but nothing formal or official. He advised that at the joint county meeting, the County Fire Chief would be present to answer questions as well.

Commissioner Weitz, if one of the City's personnel ride with the ambulance to the hospital, is there compensation or any in-kind agreement.

Chief Peters advised no, that it's typical and mostly standard across fire/ems service for medics and emts to assist when needed.

Commissioner Howell asked clarification on what was voted on during budget discussions for the fiscal year.

Chief Peters advised it was initially voted to maintain staffing at a 5 man crew, but due to resignations, retirements, etc it had reduced and the positions had not been rehired.

Commissioner Bloodsworth asked for clarification on the leased vehicle (the engine).

Chief Peters advised that we were 4 years into a 10 year lease, leaving 6 years remaining on the engine.

Commissioner Howell has concerns about what the state property tax legislation could do to funding if passed. He does not want to see staff placed in unsafe situations due to lack of funding.

Commissioner Weitz asked how much comes in from Commercial assessment.

Chief Peters advised commercial, industrial, and institutional is assessed at a per square footage.

Mayor Miller asked regarding the PIO/Administrative personnel fund being 50/50 rather than 80/20 as it is now (fire high).

City Manager Marshall advised it could be done, but overall wouldn't be beneficial financially as it still gets drawn from the general fund.

Mayor Miller asked could some of the budget be funded through CRA.

Commissioner Weitz discussed splitting the budget for the PIO amongst multiple departments rather than primarily one. She discussed reducing the vehicle or reassigning it. She commended chief peters for what he has cut to assist with the budget.

Mr. Marshall, discussed there are stipulations and regulations regarding building department and CRA funds. Dividing the budget amongst the general fund accounts is still general fun.

Mayor Miller would like to have the CRA funding researched.

Police Chief Antoine Sheppard: Provided a presentation on the police department's budget, staffing, and cost saving measures, as well as grant funding.

Commissioner Grunder does not believe cutting the police department is an option.

Commissioner Weitz asked for clarification on why the estimate contract from the county is so much higher for High Springs compared to the City of Newberry seeing as they are larger and also have school resource officers etc. She researched the calls for both agencies and the calls were comparable, so she is confused where there is such a discrepancy with the estimate provided to the City of High Springs.

Chief Sheppard advised that would be a discussion that would need to occur with Sheriff Scott and City Manager Marshall.

Commissioner Weitz asked could APD be available for mutual aid assistance.

Mayor Miller asked what the cost of the reality tv show was.

Chief Sheppard advised there is no cost, it's while on duty.

Commissioner Howell remarked that the city of Hawthorn pays MTSU tax, unlike Newberry which is contracted.

Mayor Miller remarked would it be better to wait until a finance director is hired to make a decision regarding the two public safety departments.

Commissioner Weitz commented on the enterprise funds that had been spent incorrectly in the past and it has become a concern now.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Vernon Higginbotham: A High Springs Police Officer, just wants what is best for the citizens and residents of High Springs. He believes if they want to keep public safety, they will pay for it.

Unnamed Citizen supports keeping public safety.

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Charles Moore: supports keeping public safety.

Ronald Wilson: supports keeping public safety.

Rebecca Burns: supports keeping public safety.

George Tatum: supports keeping public safety.

Bob Watson: supports keeping public safety.

John Millet: Discussed CRA funding and lack of reporting. He supports keeping public safety.

Leena Nunez: Asked to give her time to John Millet (not approved)

Ken Miller: supports keeping public safety. He would like to see more revenue sources researched.

John Linch: supports keeping public safety.

Christina Tatum: supports keeping public safety. She has concerns about minor calls that are being called into the fire department distracting from what she feels are more legitimate emergencies.

Jordan: shared information and data regarding community events, outreach efforts, charity donations etc. provided by the public safety departments.

Riva Huey: supports keeping public safety.

Janet Evans: asked (of Commissioner Howell) confirmation that other cities budgets are approximately 25% public service?

COMMISSION RESPONSE:

Commissioner Weitz asked of the Chiefs what the legalities are of increasing speeding tickets, inspections, fees etc.

Chief Peters discussed fire inspections being required annually, etc.

Chief Sheppard discussed the redline speed camera, and other such fees and revenue.

Commissioner Weitz asked could faith-based organizations be charged a fire inspection.

Commissioner Howell: understands citizens want to keep fire and police departments, however he encouraged the residents to do more research before placing blame. He encouraged them to look at the budget posted on the city website before making statements and claims etc. He is setting a table at the farmers market May 8th, and May 22nd for citizens to come ask questions and provide ideas.

Commissioner Bloodsworth: agreed with commissioner Howell. He understands some citizens support paying the cost for keeping and maintaining the budget and but he also needs to consider citizens and residents who may not be able to afford such things. He wants to save the town but he has to consider all residents, and all citizens. He encouraged citizens to email any suggestions they have for him and the commission to consider.

City Manager Marshal reminded the commission of the joint meeting May 14th.

Mayor Miller: addressing John Millet, advised that when he joined the commission and CRA board, the issues he discussed during his public comment were already in effect prior to the current administration.

Vice Mayor Bloodsworth motioned to adjourn.

Mayor Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm