

**WORKSHOP MEETING
LAKE HELEN CITY COMMISSION
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

EMPLOYEE SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

**JUNE 26, 2008
7:00 PM**

The Workshop Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Lake Helen was called to order by **Mayor Joan Duffy** at approximately 7:00 PM. Present were **Vice-Mayor Buddy Snowden, Commissioners Lou Benton, Alan Cooke, and Ann Robbins**. Also present were **City Administrator Don Findell** and **City Clerk Nancy Wilson**.

Mayor Duffy explained that the workshop meeting was called for the purpose of consideration of employee salary adjustments with a 3% COLA plus an additional 2% increase that was tabled at the regular City Commission meeting on May 1, 2008. She indicated that the Commissioners' file folders contained the same information as on May 1, 2008 except they were in a different order and that Commissioner Ann Robbins provided additional information that was included.

Commissioner Lou Benton commented he noticed certain changes and stated the file folders were not like the May 1, 2008 file folders. Mayor Duffy agreed that a couple of items had been changed.

Mayor Duffy then directed the Commissioners to consider the anniversary dates and the employee hourly rates that were placed into effect in October 2006. She indicated that there hadn't been an increase in 2007.

Commissioner Lou Benton asked City Administrator Findell if the employees were given a COLA raise at that time.

City Administrator Don Findell said, "Yes" and explained how the raises were shown on the document in their file. He indicated that **Lynn Howland** (custodian) was the only employee not to get the raise.

Mayor Duffy directed the Commissioners attention to the next page which, she indicated, was concerning employee hourly rates and anniversary dates.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the City of Lake Helen had historically adjusted employees' salaries in the June-July time frame and not on individual anniversary dates though merit increases on individual anniversary dates had been considered but only materialized in one particular instance.

Mayor Duffy indicated that the City Commission was to consider employee wage increases with a 3% COLA and an additional 2% increase.

City Administrator Don Findell said that this would be for seven employees who did not receive a merit increase on their anniversary date in 2006/2007. He also pointed out that an error had been made concerning employee Andy Straley's proposed increase as it was much higher than what was agreed upon, which was 5%. His current salary of \$11.27 an hour would increase to \$11.83 and not the \$13.00 an hour as shown on the page. The \$13.00 an hour would be a 15% increase, not 5%.

Commissioner Ann Robbins indicated that **City Administrator Don Findell** had previously commented that the city was facing a \$92,000 deficit and she wondered where the money for employee raises was going to come from when the city couldn't balance the budget. She also wondered if the city employees realized how much their health insurance was costing the city. **Commissioner Robbins** stated that it was \$5,585 a year. She said that the different spreadsheets she had prepared would clarify what it is costing the city to employ each individual and what it would cost after raises.

Commissioner Lou Benton indicated that the cost of living adjustments (COLA) was 2.3% with the State of Florida and the federal government but that Lake Helen had been giving 3% or 4% COLA.

City Administrator Don Findell then explained how the federal government arrives at the 2.3%.

Commissioner Lou Benton reiterated that the City of Lake Helen paid 3% instead of 2.3%.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the City of Lake Helen uses a regional CPI that is used by cities in the South with a population under 50,000.

Commissioner Lou Benton said that he respected all of the city employees but did not know where the money would come from to give them raises at this time. He said he was unable to justify the city going "*deeper in the red.*" He indicated that he wasn't anticipating laying off employees but that the city couldn't continue to lose money.

Vice-Mayor Buddy Snowden recalled the previous year's process when the City Commission realized the city didn't have the funds to provide for employee raises so a freeze had to be put in place. He explained that the worsening economy wasn't just a local,

county, state or even country problem, but was a global problem.

Vice-Mayor Snowden echoed **Commissioner Benton's** sentiments regarding his respect for all of the city employees. He said that he was not in favor of taking any further funds from the reserves. He indicated that he feared the burden of the present and future economy on the city.

Commissioner Alan Cooke said that raises were given to some employees in 2006 to bring those employees up on the pay scale where they should have been. He said he wasn't sure how he felt about the 3% COLA and wondered if it could be reduced.

Commissioner Cooke asked **City Administrator Don Findell** if Wendie Levings was given a raise in 2006 and **City Administrator Findell** answered in the affirmative. Commissioner Alan Cooke indicated that her hourly rate rose from \$14.09 to \$14.81.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that Ms. Levings hourly rate rose from last year to the present at the rate of 5%.

Commissioner Robbins indicated that Ms. Levings received 2% more than other employees last year.

Commissioner Lou Benton said that everyone got a raise during the 2006/2007 fiscal period but that some didn't get a merit raise.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that (as an example) Rick Mullen was the last employee to receive a merit raise before employee raises were frozen. Mr. Mullen was given a 3% raise in October, 2006 and then in February or March of 2007 he received his merit evaluation. At this time Mr. Mullen received another 3%. **City Administrator Don Findell** explained that Rick Mullen received, during the 2006/2007 time period, a 6% raise whereas, some employees received a little less and some a little more at the start of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Alan Cooke reiterated he did not vote for the freeze and that he felt certain employees (seven who did not receive increases) should receive raises. He indicated that Wendie Levings remained the same for 2007/2008.

Commissioner Robbins explained that Ms. Levings got the cost of living adjustment in October, 2006 but that she did not get a merit increase.

Commissioner Cooke again reiterated that he felt that Ms. Levings did deserve a raise.

He then brought the Commission's attention to Lt. Mike Walker's request for a raise noting that he did notice that Lt. Walker did receive an increase in 2006 but that his salary had not increased since then.

He added that the same scenario applied to employee Jeff Oransky except he did receive another raise.

City Administrator Don Findell noted that Jeff Oransky was promoted to Foreman so the new job title warranted a raise in pay.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the pay of Police Chief Keith Chester.

It was agreed that Chief Chester had received the \$5,000 but had not received the \$4,000 that had been promised though he was entitled to it.

Commissioner Cooke indicated that he felt this was a matter of morality since the additional \$4,000 had been voted on and had been approved. He then asked for feedback from the other members of the City Commission regarding the additional \$4,000 promised Chief Chester.

Commissioner Lou Benton indicated that he would need to listen to the tape of the meeting as he believed the matter was supposed to be brought back to the City Commission after Chief Chester accomplished certain goals before he was to receive the additional \$4,000. He said he believed the matter was never brought back to the City Commission.

Vice-Mayor Snowden stated that he believed that was correct.

Commissioner Robbins questioned if the freeze had anything to do with it.

Vice-Mayor Snowden denied that the freeze had anything to do with it. He indicated that the goals placed on the additional \$4,000 was kept between **Mayor Shuttleworth, City Administrator Don Findell**, and Chief Chester. If Chief Chester met those goals, he was to come before the City Commission for approval of releasing those funds. He stated that Chief Chester never came back to the City Commission concerning this matter.

Vice-Mayor Snowden noted that the City Commission was never informed about what the goals were.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the mayor did elude to what those goals were. He said they wanted improvements in the Chief's image and improvements in sustainable traffic control enforcement. **City Administrator Findell** indicated that Chief Chester was given six months to accomplish these goals and did so to the satisfaction of **City Administrator Findell** but that the matter was never brought back to the City Commission.

Vice-Mayor Snowden noted that if the matter had been brought back to the Commission, the amount of \$4,000 could have been adjusted to a different amount.

Commissioner Cooke indicated that the matter should have been brought back to the City Commission at the completion of the six months in which the goals were met and expressed his displeasure in the failure of this happening. He reiterated that he felt Chief Chester should receive the \$4,000 as promised and asked the Commission if they felt the same way as he did.

Vice-Mayor Snowden indicated his concerns regarding awarding Chief Chester a substantial raise but only awarding a minimal amount to the other members of the police department.

Commissioner Benton agreed.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the salary classification pay study that had been done during the summer of 2006 demonstrated that the reasonable range suggested for that position started in the neighborhood of what the \$9,000 increase would have amounted to. The range was approximately \$64,000 to about \$4,000/\$5,000 higher. He further indicated that all of the raises given were within the guidelines of this particular study.

Commissioner Ann Robbins indicated the study she did was up to date and suggested the Commission possibly consider that option as it covers cities with a population close to Lake Helen. She mentioned the cities of Bowling Green, Bunnell, and Eatonville with hourly wages of approximately \$14.78 and \$17.33 for officers and Police Captain at \$21.29.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the police chief of Eatonville made \$28.00 an hour which was an annual rate of \$58,240 even though he had only been on the job four months. He suggested that a police chief who had been on the job a considerably longer period of time would accrue a higher rate as a result of merit increases, cost of living increases, etc.

He said that if Chief Chester was awarded the \$4,000 it would bring him up to \$64,000 which would not be out of line with Eatonville.

Commissioner Robbins said that was why she had requested that the cities reveal the length of employment for the different positions in her study.

Commissioner Lou Benton asked what the budget was for Eatonville. He said that he would like to know if the different cities had a higher or lower budget than Lake Helen.

City Administrator Findell indicated that the city of Bunnell paid their police chief \$60,600 who began his employment in that city in January 2007. This confirms that Lake Helen isn't out of line.

Mayor Duffy stated that the document dated August 24, 2006 says that in six months, if Chief Chester passed the goals that were set for him, he would receive \$4,000. She explained that the document was a copy of a paper entitled **Mayor Mark Shuttleworth Proposed City Employee Salary and COLA Adjustments**. **Mayor Duffy** indicated that she found it on her desk but didn't know where it came from.

Vice-Mayor Buddy Snowden stated he believed that the paper was merely a work product of Mayor Shuttleworth and **Commissioner Lou Benton** agreed.

Commissioner Ann Robbins explained that it had been accepted by the City

Commission.

Mayor Duffy indicated that under the words "*police department*" it says "*police chief \$5,000*" with a salary adjustment effective 10/01/06 which was given to him. She agreed that the paper may be a "*work product*" but Chief Chester had been told he would receive an additional \$4,000 if he met the proposed goals. This meant that Chief Chester was to have received the \$4,000 in February 2007.

She said that she didn't understand why it wasn't given to Chief Chester but that she believed he deserved the \$4,000.

Commissioner Benton reiterated that the paper **Mayor Duffy** was looking at was merely Mayor Shuttleworth's proposal and insisted that the mayor and **Commissioner Cooke** should read the minutes and/or listen to the tape pertaining to this subject. He said that he, personally, couldn't recall everything from that time period but stated that the different raises were separate issues.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the minutes could be provided to the Commission when they were ready to make a decision.

Commissioner Cooke explained that he merely wanted to get a consensus of the board.

Commissioner Benton stated he didn't think a consensus was necessary in a workshop and that it should be left to a vote at the next regular Commission Meeting. He explained that tonight's meeting was a workshop and should be conducted as one.

Commissioner Cooke reiterated that he felt the discussion should be about the different amounts proposed for Ms. Levings, Chief Chester, and Jeff Oransky. He said that he couldn't say he agree with that much money for everyone but did say he felt they should all receive some type of merit raise.

Commissioner Ann Robbins indicated that she had included in the files the Commission members had before them, a statement that **City Administrator Don Findell** had made at the May meeting which was, "*City Administrator Don Findell said that in order to create a new position, the Commission has to establish that there is a need for a new position. Then they have to advertised to hire for that position.*" (This could be internally or publicly.)

She noted that the proposed positions for Windy Levings and Lt. Mike Walker were new positions.

Mayor Duffy explained that Ms. Levings had told her not to request a new position for her but that she had requested a consideration for a "*title change*" for Ms. Levings and also, for Lt. Walker.

City Administrator Don Findell said that it was possible to change a title of a certain position with the work responsibilities remaining the same but that in this particular situation the job description was changed to a position that had not existed previously. He explained

that the new position needed to be voted on by the Commission before it could be created.

Mayor Joan Duffy said that she had requested and received the list of duties from Ms. Levings and Lt. Walker so that what appeared under the job description were actually the duties they were performing at this time. She indicated that she was led to believe that she was merely changing their titles. She noted that Lt. Walker had received his Bachelor's degree and that should be added under education.

Commissioner Lou Benton asked why the titles to their jobs needed to be changed.

City Administrator Don Findell stated that the titles do not have to be changed. It remained at the discretion of the City Commission.

Commissioner Benton indicated that the new job titles and descriptions did not come before the Commission.

City Administrator Findell suggested that since this meeting was a workshop there was adequate time to get the job descriptions and new job titles for each of the individuals that currently exist and that if the Commission agrees, they may vote on it at the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Benton indicated that every new job title that has been brought before the Commission had always come with a dollar amount that possibly will bring more money to the employee requesting it.

Mayor Duffy said, *"It's a feel good thing."*

Commissioner Lou Benton continued to say that the employees that usually change their job titles are continuing to do the same duties but then receive more money. He questioned the validity and necessity of the title Administrator Service Manager considering that Ms. Levings is the only employee in that department.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the job description presented for Ms. Levings go beyond the duties of an occupational license clerk or zoning technician. Those titles are at the lower end of the career ladder. He explained that some employees perform many different jobs because Lake Helen is a small city.

Commissioner Benton reiterated his objections to the proposed title change for Ms. Levings.

Commissioner Alan Cooke indicated that Ms. Levings performs several other duties other than what is in her job description.

Commissioner Lou Benton said that Lake Helen is climbing up hill while the taxpayers are going down hill and indicated that it was the taxpayer that was getting the short end of the stick.

He then added that because of the worsening economy there are only a minute number of building permits issued.

Mayor Duffy indicated that during a conversation with the building inspector, he had told her that there were more building inspections and permits going through in Lake Helen than any other city he works for.

Commissioner Benton said that the building inspector only works two days a week in Lake Helen and reiterated that the City of Lake Helen does not have a lot of building permits. He said that he would like to know the dollar amount generated from building permits but that he has been unable to obtain that information.

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that the amount was approximately \$9,200 for the year to date and that last year at this time it was about \$7,000.

Mayor Duffy explained that Ms. Levings has to know the ordinances, the land use, plus anything else that goes with the building permits. She said that Ms. Levings job was not an easy job to perform along with everything else she does for the city.

Commissioner Alan Cooke recalled a conversation he had with Ms. Levings when she told him that in spite of the economy, more building permits were being issued this year than the year before. He said, *"The lady is busier this year than she was last year."*

Commissioner Ann Robbins said, *"Current year building permits is \$9,212.32 through May 31, 2008 and this was with a \$10,000 budget for the full year."* She then named off the different types of building permits and what each had brought in monetarily to the city. She explained that Ms. Levings gave her a list of permits and noted that there were only four new houses, one of which was a million dollar house to be located on Lemon. The other permits were for upgrades and repairs to existing homes.

Commissioner Benton recalled that when he moved to Lake Helen, Ann Robbins was the only person who did the water billing, building permits, occupation licenses, bookkeeping, plus other work.

Mayor Duffy asked **Commissioner Robbins** what her job title was and Commissioner Robbins answered that it was Billing Clerk and Bookkeeper until **City Administrator Don Findell** came to work for Lake Helen.

City Administrator Findell indicated that was when pay classifications were started and noted he reclassified Ms. Robbins' job title to Finance Manager as he recognized the responsibilities she actually had at that time.

Commissioner Ann Robbins noted that at that time she received a small amount over a \$1.00 raise. Ms. Levings was then given the title Building Permit Licensing Specialist and was given over a \$2.00 raise because she had two classifications. Jeannie became Deputy City Clerk/Special Project Coordinator plus another title regarding grants. She received over \$3.00 an hour in a raise.

Commissioner Benton pointed out that the amount of money brought in through licensing and permits does not cover Ms. Levings paycheck. He indicated that the city does not break even in this department and **City Administrator Don Findell** agreed.

Commissioner Benton reiterated his objections to Ms. Levings receiving a \$3.15 pay raise.

Mayor Duffy indicated that Ms. Levings performs other duties for the city such as additional reporting to the county, the state, and some federal reports that she has to account for. **Mayor Duffy** stressed that no one else can perform these duties other than Ms. Levings.

Commissioner Alan Cooke agreed and added that Ms. Levings was also in charge of the rentals of Hopkins Hall and coordinates many of the activities for the city.

Mayor Duffy said that at a later time the Commission should work on updating Lake Helen's prices on many different things.

Commissioner Cooke added that Lt. Mike Walker has worked for Lake Helen for many years and has worked hard. He indicated that an upgrade in Lt. Walker's job title would help him in the future.

Mayor Duffy added that Lt. Walker has performed many of the administrative and supervisory tasks particularly in the past few years while the Chief had been involved in other major projects for the city.

Commissioner Lou Benton indicated that if titles were to be changed, he felt another title should also be changed and that was for the Animal Control/Code Enforcement officer, Officer Patrick Clarino. He suggested that the Commission could work on a new title for that position.

City Administrator Don Findell stated that other communities do have other titles to cover this job description. One of these titles was Community Improvement Officer.

Commissioner Benton said he had no problem with that title.

Mayor Duffy thought that title was a nice title.

City Administrator Findell said that another title for the same position was Community Services Officer.

Commissioner Alan Cooke asked if Lt. Walker and/or Officer Patrick Clarino would come to the microphone and express their feelings about this situation.

Lt. Mike Walker approached the microphone and stated that the suggested title of Commander had been brought up for several years. He said that the title of Lieutenant would be eliminated. Lt. Walker added that he also had researched the salary for his

position by calling agencies in Volusia County. This revealed that his salary was approximately that of a Lieutenant of three years. He added that normally a Lieutenant is in charge of one division but that he is in charge of all divisions plus is on call 24 hours a day.

Lt. Walker said he would be happy with half the raise requested and the title of Commander. He said that the title of Commander sounded better to him.

Commissioner Lou Benton explained that Lake Helen only has seven officers and that it was his opinion that the city didn't need a Commander like that of large cities. He reiterated his stance on the budgets of other cities compared to Lake Helen's budget and stated that they can't be compared because of that missing budget figure.

Lt. Walker asked Commissioner Benton if he had a problem with the title or the money.

Commissioner Benton replied that the title was attached to additional money so it has to be considered as a total package. If the title had been submitted separately, it may have brought about a different answer or solution. He concluded that as it stood, it was a new title, new job description, with an additional increase in pay.

Commissioner Lou Benton said that he wouldn't have a problem with a simple title change without an increase in pay but that if the title of Commander meant the city would be paying out additional monies, he didn't feel Lake Helen needed a Commander.

Lt. Mike Walker thanked the City Commission and excused himself.

Commissioner Alan Cooke called for Officer Patrick Clarino to approach the microphone.

Officer Clarino approached, gave his Lake Helen address, and stated that he was an employee, resident, taxpayer, and registered voter in Lake Helen. He said that he appreciated the discussion concerning employee raises.

He indicated that he was concerned about *"across-the-board"* raises because there are different skill levels that need to be attained and retained by the police department. (He mentioned the certified instructor with FDLE for the shooting range who requires a certain ability to be demonstrated by the officers.) He added that there were certain educational expectations that needed to be met such as 40 hours in-house training every four years and that as an Animal Control officer, he is responsible for receiving continuing educational credits. Therefore, he felt that *"across-the-board"* raises were not fair toward him as his skill level is higher than someone pushing a lawnmower.

Officer Clarino indicated that he agreed with **City Administrator Don Findell** concerning merit raises based on performance and evaluation. He said, *"I want to be evaluated. I want my bosses, the City Administrator, the Police Chief, or the Commander to evaluate my job performance because there are things that people see in me that I don't."* He added that he would like to be able to work with his bosses so that they could help him perform at a higher level.

Officer Clarino said that he thought Community Improvement Officer was a great title and thought that his job was to help make Lake Helen be a better place to live for its citizens. He said he was trying to make the time to work with individual citizens who don't have the finances to bring their properties to the standards they need to be at in their homes and their yards.

He reiterated his appreciation to Commissioner Lou Benton and the job title change and added that he realized he would have the same job.

Officer Clarino thanked the Commission for allowing him to speak with them.

Commissioner Cooke told Officer Clarino how much he appreciated his dedication and hard work. He said that he was well aware that he had a difficult job and that he realized how much time he devoted to it.

Commissioner Alan Cooke then included Lt. Mike Walker and other members of the police department in that statement.

Officer Clarino thanked the Commission once again for their support.

Robert Radosti approached the microphone saying that he had been with the Lake Helen Police Department since 1998 and started off as a reserve officer. He wanted to show his support for Lt. Mike Walker by saying that there had been many times he had to call Lt. Walker to come to provide back-up even though it was late at night. Officer Radosti added that Lt. Walker would come at other times during investigations when Officer Radosti called him. He said, *"I can't vouch for a better lieutenant or commander. He's done a lot for us."* He added, *"Officer Clarino – we've worked together for awhile. I have to vouch for him, too."*

Officer Radosti said that he appreciated everything that the Commission had done for the police department. He added that he was there to serve the citizens of the City of Lake Helen. He talked about how well the Lake Helen Police Department works together toward that same goal.

Officer Radosti explained that law enforcement had changed over the years creating an abundance of detailed paperwork to be able to get a conviction of a criminal. He said that they have attempted to get reimbursed for investigative fees. He added that Deland had passed a law recently that would require the person at fault in a vehicle crash to be liable to pay the investigative fees. Officer Radosti suggested that this would be one of the avenues that could be pursued to bring in more income to cover expenses.

Mayor Duffy indicated that she would like to have a workshop with the City Commission and the police department to address that subject. She then thanked Officer Radosti who then left the microphone.

Commissioner Lou Benton stated that Lake Helen was number one in the state of Florida for solving crimes according to a report by the FDLE. He then indicated that he wished to drop down to number “E” (Reinstate Holidays) on the agenda.

Commissioner Benton said that employee birthdays were traded off for Veterans Day and that all cities were open the day after Christmas.

City Administrator Don Findell conceded that most cities were open but that some were not.

Commissioner Benton said that the day following Christmas as a day off that was started when Chris Craft was Mayor. He said that it was because Christmas fell in the middle of the work week that year and it was only to be applied in years where Christmas fell in the middle of the work week – not every year.

Mayor Duffy said that employees have asked her to bring back the days off for their birthdays and the day after Christmas.

Vice-Mayor Buddy Snowden asked if they wanted to trade Veterans Day back for their birthdays as a day off instead.

City Administrator Findell indicated that when this had been discussed in the past, there were two days that the city employees had removed from their holiday schedule and one day, Veterans Day, was added. He said the employees birthdays and the day after Christmas was subtracted so there was a net loss of one day.

Vice-Mayor Snowden indicated that during the process the employees were permitted to have time accounted for as personal time as opposed to sick time so the employee did not have a loss. He said that it was an actual improvement over what they had before the changes were made.

Mayor Duffy asked if the employees' birthdays could be taken off as a personal day and **City Administrator Findell** concurred.

City Administrator Findell explained, *“I believe that what Buddy is saying is that forever and a day, until the Commission changed this policy, the employees accumulated (accrued) vacation (days) and they accrued sick leave. One of the items that was considered during the entire rewrite of the employees personnel policy and procedures manual was converting sick leave to personal leave so that an individual did not have to say that they were sick in order to take an hour or a half a day, or whatever it was they needed to attend to personal matters. So from a practical stand point if that time is used judiciously the net result would be that there are more days available for personal activities than there would have been under the old policy of accrual of sick leave and then the addition of the holidays.”*

Commissioner Alan Cooke indicated that if the majority of the employees decide they want the day after Christmas and their birthdays off, the Commission should abide by their

wishes.

Commissioner Lou Benton suggested that the employees could go back to sick leave.

Mayor Duffy and **Commissioner Ann Robbins** asked if this meant the employees would not get Veterans Day off.

Vice-Mayor Snowden indicated that the average, across the scale government holidays was 8 (eight) holidays a year but that Lake Helen employees have about 11 (eleven) holidays a year as it stands. If the matter being discussed was approved, it would total 12 (twelve) holidays a year for the city employees.

Commissioner Cooke said that he simply agreed with the employees that they could exchange one holiday for another.

Commissioner Cooke asked if the day after Christmas would be replacing Veterans Day and **Mayor Duffy** answered in the affirmative. He then asked what the employee's birthday off be changed to.

City Administrator Don Findell explained that the birthdays would be considered as a personal day.

It was agreed that Lake Helen went from 11 (eleven) paid holidays to 10 (ten).

Commissioner Benton explained that a form was given to all city employees who filled them out and returned by them to city hall. The form asked employees what holiday they would give up so that they could have their birthdays off. The answer was Veterans Day. The day after Christmas was eliminated when personal time off was added.

Commissioner Robbins read off the holidays allowed by the city for its employees.

Vice-Mayor Snowden asked how many employees expressed their desire to have their birthdays off.

Mayor Duffy indicated that most of the employees that spoke to her wanted the day after Christmas back. She did not remember how many employees it was but indicated that it was "*quite a few.*" **Mayor Duffy** did say she would do a survey.

Commissioner Benton reiterated that the employees are able to take their birthdays off as "*personal time.*" He suggested that **Mayor Duffy** should listen to the tapes of the discussions regarding the subject.

Mayor Duffy said that the workshop had concluded and asked the Commission to be prepared to vote on the matter at the next Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Benton asked **City Administrator Don Findell** to get the "*true numbers*" as to what all of this would cost the city. He said he wanted to know how much further in

the red the city was willing to go. He asked, *"Where's the money coming from?"*

Commissioner Robbins indicated that the answer to what it would cost the city was in the packet she had provided each Commissioner. *"Analysis with Chester, Walker, Levings raises plus 3% COLA."* She explained that she added the 3% to the 7 (seven) employees who had not gotten a raise but noted that the agenda for this meeting had an additional 2%. She offered to update her work.

Commissioner Lou Benton reiterated his desire to know how much more the city was going to go into the red if these pay increases were granted. He said, *"That's the key."*

City Administrator Don Findell indicated that he felt something wasn't right with the chart and that he would need to go back over the figures.

During the discussion of what might be wrong with the chart, **Commissioner Robbins** said that the Special Risk Rate for the Florida Municipal Trust Fund was 30.2%. She noted that as the Lake Helen police officers *"become longer standing"* with the department and become older, the actuarial study shows those officers might retire soon. *"We have to have in our fund, based on what they (employees) contribute, the city contributes, and what the excise tax money is, \$55,000 a year."*

Commissioner Robbins added, *"What we pay per hour – you can't just look at that. I worked with all of these people and I love them all but you have to be realistic about it."* She noted that Chief Chester could retire in two years and could retire with 60% or more of what his paycheck is now. She said, *"I'm making as much as when I worked with just my state retirement."*

Commissioner Alan Cooke asked for clarification on Lt. Walker's pay.

Commissioner Ann Robbins explained that his normal yearly work schedule would be 2,080 hours (a year) but then the .0765 FICA needed to be applied plus the 20.9% to his retirement fund.

Commissioner Cooke indicated that it might be a fair idea to give Lt. Walker \$2.75 (per hour increase) less the FICA and retirement.

City Administrator Don Findell responded, *"What Lou is asking, is to have an understanding of what the actual cost to the city will be when you add the benefits to the proposed increases."* He indicated that **Commissioner Cooke** was looking at the matter from a different direction.

Commissioner Cooke then asked **City Administrator Findell** if he could prepare the figures of what it would cost the city using his idea as he explained using Lt. Walker's increase as an example. He then continued that he would also like the figures totaled for the other increases discussed earlier.

City Administrator Findell indicated that those figures were in the packet the

Commissioners received earlier and pointed them out to **Commissioner Cooke** noting one error and certain employees that were not included.

City Administrator Don Findell noted, *"If my math is correct when I take Keith (Chester) as an example, I look at the current and I look at the proposed, those amounts are equal to what his current salary is and what the proposed \$4,000 increase would be. They don't include the benefits."*

Commissioner Robbins concurred.

Commissioner Benton asked if the \$47,000 included benefits.

Commissioner Robbins answered in the negative.

Commissioner Lou Benton asked, *"So it's more than that?"*

Commissioner Robbins concurred.

Commissioner Benton added that another 27% needed to be added and that was the number he was looking for. *"That's going to tell us how much more in the red we're going to go."*

Commissioner Robbins indicated that when considering the 5 (five) officers (Clarino, Marcel, Mullins, Radosti, Bellesfield) 30.2% needed to be added. She added, *"Mike (Walker) and Keith (Chester) are at 20.9% and the others who are on FRS are at 9.85%."*

Vice-Mayor Buddy Snowden indicated that it might be possible to consider bonuses other than pay increases that would continue the cycle. He explained, *"The burden we face is great at this point and it just compounds itself each year that follows."*

City Administrator Findell explained, *"What Buddy is saying is that one of the options (other than giving an increase in hourly rates) that you have is to say – take the hourly rate, what it is now – don't increase the hourly rate but give a flat amount as a bonus this particular year. Then as times change and the economy changes you have the ability to go back and adjust salaries accordingly in the future without having an immediate impact."*

Mayor Duffy indicated that the matter may be addressed during the upcoming budget meetings. *"We know next year the budget is going to be down by \$75,000 to \$80,000."*

City Administrator Don Findell said that the preliminary figures would be coming out on July 1st, 2008.

Commissioner Cooke said that he would like to see Keith (Chester) and the \$4,000 put on the agenda of the next Commission Meeting.

Mayor Duffy asked the Commissioners to look over the pages in their packets carefully

before the next meeting. She suggested that if anyone had a specific agenda item for the next two meetings, they should contact **City Clerk Nancy Wilson**.

Commissioner Alan Cooke stated that he wanted to thank **Commissioner Ann Robbins** for her work on the reports that she provided the Commission.

Commissioner Benton said that he felt it was immoral to give Keith (Chester) the requested raise when there has been a freeze of pay increases for everyone else. He indicated that he felt it would be unfair to the other employees. He suggested that everyone listen to the tapes of the meetings (located at city hall).

Commissioner Robbins asked **Mayor Joan Duffy** when a decision had to be made concerning employee raises.

Mayor Duffy responded that the matter would be on the July 17th, 2008 agenda.

Commissioner Cooke objected and requested that the employee raises be put on the July 3rd, 2008 agenda.

Mayor Duffy indicated that the agenda was already prepared and that it was too late to add it on at this point.

The Workshop Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Lake Helen, Florida was adjourned at approximately 11:15 p.m.

Joan Duffy

Mayor

Pat Chadwick

Recording Secretary