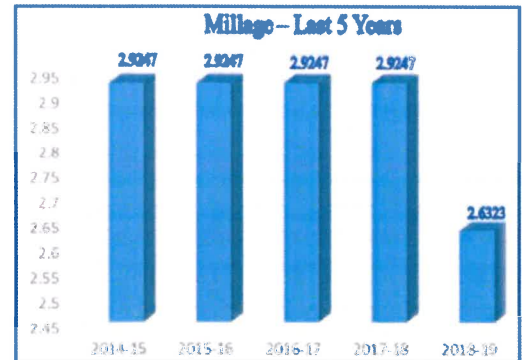


# CITY MANAGER'S CORNER



The DeBary City Council has completed the budget process for fiscal year October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. Since coming onboard in April 2019, I have conducted financial and performance assessments of our organization, evaluated the condition of our community infrastructure, tested our emergency plans and preparedness, and benchmarked with other governments. We have conducted a rigorous strategic planning process, which included many workshops to establish and prioritize our strategic initiatives. Based upon all of the data and information obtained during this process, our new fiscal year budget focuses on three fundamentals, 1) improving organization financial stability, 2) improving community infrastructure and 3) improving organization performance.

**Improving Organization Financial Stability.** Previous Councils have used reserve funds to balance our operating budget. As a result, our reserve balances are at critical levels. For example, last year the Council decided to roll back the millage rate to 2.6323. In order to balance the budget, \$548,000 was taken out of general fund reserves to cover operating expenses. This is not a sustainable practice. On July 12, 2019, I recommended a budget to the Council returning our baseline millage rate to 2.9247, which reverses the negative cash flow trend and sets the foundation to rebuild our reserves to properly protect our residents and community. Based upon our current level of service, our operating budget is very lean. This is evidenced by running a full service city government with just 42 full time employees, which is one-tenth the size of other comparable cities. Our city government has always operated conservatively, keeping overhead costs to a minimum.



**Improving Community Infrastructure.** The City Council made a business decision to accelerate much needed, long awaited stormwater projects, Woodbound Lakes and Valencia Road. The City Council also began addressing the metal stormwater pipe erosion situation in Glen Abbey, Summerhaven and Woodbound Lakes subdivisions. In this newsletter, there is a great article providing information on our current stormwater infrastructure and how it works. Hopefully, it provides a perspective on the great work our City leaders have done over the years to resolve our inherited stormwater issues.

To cover these costs, the City Council voted to set this year's millage rate at 3.5. Even though it is an increase, this rate is still less than half of all other West Volusia municipalities. The portion of the tax increase between 2.9247 and 3.5 is project specific, dedicated this fiscal year to Woodbound Lakes, Valencia Road, and stormwater pipe erosion. As your City Manager, I made a commitment to the City Council and DeBary residents that each year I will present future budgets to the City Council at the baseline rate of 2.9247. Depending on the project specific infrastructure needs each year, the millage rate will adjust from the baseline rate. Because we are not adding overhead and other long term fixed costs, this gives the City Council the ability to be more consistent, predictable and reliable in getting things done.

In addition, the City Council decided to begin resolving the much needed, long awaited DeBary Elementary traffic safety issue. In this budget, the City Council approved the engineering costs to redesign the school entrance. We will be partnering with Volusia County Schools to get this project designed and construction done within the next couple of years.

**Improve Organization Performance.** Since coming aboard in April 2019 as your City Manager, I have been assessing our organization's overall performance. The City Council has approved in this budget internal strategic initiatives to 1) improve communications and customer service and 2) improve our Growth Management processes.

As a fellow DeBary resident, I can tell you this City Council did a fantastic job. During the entire budget process, they were focused on scrutinizing every financial detail, making fact-based decisions and getting things done. It is now my job to execute this budget as the City Council intended. It is an exciting time for our community and organization. I am honored to be a part of it.



Carmen Rosamonda  
City Manager