

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

I Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Russ Barley called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Council Members present: Mayor Barley and Council members Ray Jackson, Janice McLean, Elizabeth Brannon and Jennifer Laird.

II Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilman Jackson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III Recognition of Elected NWFLC President Elizabeth Brannon

Mayor Barley introduced Councilwoman Brannon as the newly elected President of the Northwest Florida League of Cities. The audience honored her with a round of applause.

IV Approval of Past Minutes – RCM 3/11/14 & 4/24/14

Board Action: *Councilwoman McLean motioned to approve the minutes as presented for the March 11, 2014 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and the April 24, 2014 Regular Council Meeting Minutes. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

V Staff Reports

A. Planning Department

1. Public Hearing: 1st Reading of 2013-LSA-02 Adoption Ordinance

City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel presented the draft ordinance and appended revisions to the Freeport Comprehensive Plan.

Board Action: *Councilwoman McLean motioned to approve the 1st Reading of the draft ordinance to adopt 2013 LSA-02 and advertise same for adoption. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

2. Letter from Governor Rick Scott – affirming Re-Appportionment of the Okaloosa Walton TPO

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

Planner Hughes-Neel presented this item to the Council for information; no action needed.

B. Legal Matters

City Attorney Clayton Adkinson presented the 5-year lease agreement renewal with CHELCO for use of City Hall offices.

Board Action: *Councilman Jackson motioned to authorize Mayor Barley to sign the lease renewal agreement. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

C. Fire Department Report

Fire Chief Chad Harrell presented the April Fire Dept. report for the Council's information.

Councilwoman McLean announced that firefighter applicant Bradley Blackerby had the highest score of the interviews conducted by the Council in the earlier Special Council Meeting.

Board Action: *Councilwoman McLean motioned to hire Bradley Blackerby as firefighter. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

D. Parks Department Report

No report was given.

Councilman Jackson remarked that a flag football tournament was held at the Freeport Regional Sports Complex the Saturday before (May 10) and that participants attended from all over the Southeast. Councilman Jackson noted that there was a big turnout.

E. Engineers Report

City Engineer Anna Hudson/Preble-Rish gave a staff report of the following items:

- The 5-Year Consumptive Use Report is due; Preble-Rish was able to get an extension on the due date.
- The Water & Sewer Service Model is still being developed by Preble-Rish with the assistance of Robert and Larry.
- Preble-Rish is conducting several planning reviews and monitoring code compliance situations.

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

1. Marse Landing/50' Flag-pole for Freeport Working Waterfront Flag

City Engineer Cliff Knauer/Preble-Rish, with assistance from Hughes-Neel displayed the Freeport Working Waterfronts Community Flag which was donated by Preble-Rish for the Working Waterfronts designation ceremony. Knauer explained that a flag pole was borrowed for the dedication ceremony but no flag pole had been purchased. The Council requested that Knauer get some price quotes for a 50' flag-pole and bring them to the Council at the next meeting (under Old Business).

Knauer gave an update on several city projects:

- Marse Landing Park Phase II: In order to proceed with Phase II, the City will need about 10 acres of mitigation land. There are wetlands on-site on the east side of the park, but not enough. The 6-acre property just south and adjacent to Marina Village, which the City has been in process of re-acquiring (the property reverted back to the Division of Land Management when the City didn't develop it) for approximately 5 years, could be developed for passive recreation and the property put into a conservation easement. It is part of the same watershed, so it meets state guidelines for mitigation.

Hughes-Neel updated the Board regarding the process thus far in re-acquiring the property.

Mayor Barley commented that he had written a letter of support for the re-acquisition, but the process appeared to be moving very slowly.

- Knauer informed the Board of a request by the contractor (Skanska) building the new 331 Bridge to buy water from the City for the purpose of mixing concrete. The company will be 2-3 million gallons for this purpose, over a 6-7 month period. Knauer asserted that the City already has a hydrant meter schedule in place in the Water Dept.

Board Action: *Councilman Jackson motioned to allow the Water Dept. to use the current hydrant meter schedule to provide Skanska with a temporary hydrant meter service. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

VI Old Business

A. Rental Schedule (for review/revision)

Planner Hughes-Neel presented the current lease agreement for city meeting facilities, for the purpose of considering a reduction in fee structure for re-occurring rentals. The Council instructed Hughes-Neel to bring the rental agreement back to the Council at the next meeting (under Old Business)

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

B. Stormwater/Manholes at Cross Creek Estates update

Planner Hughes-Neel updated the Council on the status of the recently issued stormwater permit obtained by Halifax to correct on-going stormwater issues from the original stormwater design by others. Hughes-Neel commented that she had met with Halifax earlier in the day; the pre-construction meeting has been held. The target date to begin construction of the newly permitted stormwater facility and repair/replace damaged manholes in June 1, 2014. The target completion date, barring weather complications, is July 1, 2014.

VII New Business

A. Scott Seidler/Water Bill at 157 Andy Drive

Mr. Seidler appeared in person before the Council. He described the residence at 157 Andy Drive as bank repossession. The leak was discovered during the remodel of the residence, but not before a water bill of \$3,469.91 (as of April) was issued. He asked for relief.

Board Action: Councilman Jackson motioned to grant relief on 1/2 of the bill. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.

B. Fee Waiver Request/Jennifer Adams – Panhandle Area Educational Consortium for July 31/August 14/September 4/October 2/November 6 8am-Noon in FCC

Hughes-Neel explained that this is the Child Find Pre-K Screening Service which is provided free of charge to area families.

Board Action: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to grant the waiver of rental fees for Child Find for the schedule listed above. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council for from the public. The motion carried 4:0.

C. Legislative Update: Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon

- Councilwoman Brannon noted the need for the region and the City to set their legislative priorities early so that the legislators could be well informed. Councilwoman Brannon also noted that the “big push” in the Legislature seemed to be environmental issues.
- Councilwoman Brannon announced that the Northwest Florida League of Cities Quarterly Meeting & Dinner would be in Freeport July 17th and that she would need everyone’s help to make the event a success.

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

1. Transportation Symposium May 29-30/TPO-TCC Member Hughes-Neel

Councilwoman Brannon stated that she was contacted by the Northwest Florida Regional Planning Council and that they recommended that Hughes-Neel also attend the Transportation Symposium, as she is Freeport's representative on the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The TCC functions in the same manner at the City's Planning Board; to review and make recommendations to the TPO.

Board Action: *Councilwoman Brannon motioned to send Hughes-Neel to the Transportation Symposium May 29-30. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

- Councilwoman Brannon stated that she was very concerned about the east Bay Loop/Highway 20 intersection and was advocating in Tallahassee that some intersection improvements be made as part of the current work being done on that segment of Highway 20. She needs photographs of the congestion at that intersection within 2 weeks.

VIII Council Business Not on Agenda

Councilwoman McLean presented information regarding write-offs for water and sewer accounts, council minutes where the council approved hiring a collection firm and a proposal from Credit Business Services to collect on accounts 90 days past due.

Councilwoman McLean provided the following figures:

- Total accounts 120 days past due: \$59, 190.85. Figure distorts accounts receivable of \$223,524.61. Figure would be less due to phase agreements outstanding totaling around \$3000. There may be others not in this group.
- Council minutes from February 24, 2011 show approval to write off \$34,039.12. Actual amount written off was \$25,869.07. Council approved contacting a collection agency to collect past due accounts. No record of a collection agency being contacted.
- Credit Bureau Services, a branch of the Credit Bureau, has access to better records than the City in terms of finding customers and notifying them of past-due accounts. Other cities have used them with good success.

Councilwoman McLean recommended the following action:

- Write off accounts over 120 days past due.

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

- Have City Attorney review proposal from collection agency; enter into a contract with a collection agency.
- Use the monthly bills to notify customer that accounts over 90 days past due will be turned over to a collection agency

Attorney Adkinson stated that he had reviewed the collection agreement provided by Credit Bureau Services and saw no issues with entering into the agreement.

Board Action: *Councilwoman Laird motioned to write off accounts over 120 days past due. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

Board Action: *Councilwoman Laird motioned to use monthly bills to notify customers that accounts over 90 days past due will be turned over to a collection agency. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion from the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

Board Action: *Councilwoman Laird motioned to authorize the Mayor to sign the collection agreement with Credit Bureau Services. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion by the Council or the public. The motion carried 4:0.*

IX Public Comment

- Freddie R. Head asked the Council to grant relief on a water bill he received at 291 Pitts Bay Shire Drive due to a leak on his line while he was away receiving physical rehabilitation. The Council advised him to get placed on the agenda for the following meeting (under New Business).
- Tim Ard offered to get quotes from the company that assisted with flag-poles for the Veteran's memorial (re: Item V.E.1 above) prior to the next meeting.

X Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Barley at 7:52 pm.

APPROVED:

Mayor

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2014

Council President

ATTEST

City Clerk

APPROVED