

CITY OF FREEPORT
NOVEMBER 10, 2015 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 10, 2015 Regular Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Russ Barley at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council present: Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Kasey Cuchens, Councilwoman Janice McLean, Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon and Councilwoman Jennifer Laird.

Staff present: City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, City Planner/Deputy Clerk Latilda Hughes-Neel, Parks Director Dana Weiler, City Engineer Anna Hudson, City Engineer Cliff Knauer, Sewer Superintendent Robert Fawcett, and Temp. Staff Accountant Deborah Wimer-Zills.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The Invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III. Recognition of Guests - none

IV. Approval of Past Minutes

- 10/13/15 Workshop (FRSC) Minutes
- 10/13/15 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the 10/13/15 Workshop Minutes and Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

- 10/19/15 Special Council Meeting Minutes (FRSC/Interviews)

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the 10/19/15 Special Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

- 10/22/15 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the 10/22/15 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

- 10/29/15 Special Council Meeting (Personnel Issues)

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Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to approve the 10/29 Special Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

V. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Councilwoman Cuchens added "Utility Director Position."

Councilwoman Laird asked to Table "~~Non-Profit Status for Parks & Recreation~~"

Councilwoman McLean added "Sewer Employee"

Councilman Farris struck "~~Broadband Update~~", and added Employee Christmas Luncheon

Councilwoman Brannon added "USDA/Water Appropriations added to Special Meeting as City Clerk Item VII.A.5

Deputy Clerk/City Planner Hughes-Neel added Water Dept. Expenditures to VII.F.

VI. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the Agenda with the specified Additions and Deletions. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

VII. Staff Reports

A. City Clerk Matters

1. Expenditures (attached)

Deputy Clerk/City Planner Neel presented the expenditures for October. During discussion, Council requested that the city credit card expenditures be itemized in the future.

2. Pay All Bills in Order (Action Requested)

Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to pay all bills in order. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

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3. City Clerk application rankings from Council

Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to interview the following candidates who were determined to meet the qualifications for City Clerk:

Kelly H. Bird
Valerie Broxson
Mark Martin
Carley McMillian
Rebecca Podraza

Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

Councilwoman Cuchens remarked that the Council has to get a hiring process in place.

4. Special Council Meeting for Billing Clerk/Staff Accountant /City Clerk Interviews (Action Requested)

The Council set a Special Council Meeting for Monday, November 16, 2015 at 6:30 for:

City Clerk Interviews
USDA Grants/Water Appropriations
Sewer Employee vacancy

The Council set a Special Council Meeting for Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 6:30 for:

Billing Clerk Interviews
Staff Accountant Interviews

5. USDA/Water Appropriations added to Special Meeting

This item was added to the 11/16 agenda.

B. Staff Accountant Updates

Accountant Wimer-Zills thanked the Council for the opportunity to work with the City. Wimer-Zills asked who she was supposed to report to. City Attorney Adkinson responded that she should take her direction from the Mayor. Wimer-Zills stated that she was focusing on reconciling the city accounts and asked if she should continue. The Council generally assented for her to continue on that project.

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C. Planning & Zoning Dept.

1. 331 Partners / The Preserve Update

City Planner Hughes-Neel stated that the 331 Freeport Partners Group had submitted the first of several applications in their process to develop “The Preserve at Freeport” on the 331 Bypass.

D. Legal Matters - none

E. Engineering

1. Engineering Updates (Information) TAB 7

City Engineer Hudson presented updates:

- Business 331 Upgrades
- Freeport legislative Appropriation Water Projects
- Lift Station Rehabilitation Projects
- Fluffy Landing
- US 331 Utility Relocation Phase B
- Impact Fee Study
- Planning Tasks
- Additional Tasks.

2. Capital Improvements Plan SEPARATE DOCUMENT

City Engineer Knauer presented.

- a. Request for approval of the updated Capital Improvements Program
- b. Request to pursue Land Acquisition Grant

Knauer informed the Council that there are grant opportunities through FDEP to acquire land which can be used for wetland mitigation. Knauer also pointed out properties which could expand city facilities and or be used for mitigation: i) Reese property, ii) Conner property and iii) the American Legion property.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the 2015-2016 Capital Improvements Program as presented and to pursue land acquisition as specified. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

F. Utilities

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1. Water Dept.

a. Water Dept. Expenditures

Councilwoman Cuchens stated that the repairs to Well #2 were going to cost more than the \$16,000 figure given by Water Supervisor Tuggle; the actual figure is \$17,130.00.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the Well #2 repairs at \$17,130.00. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

Planner Hughes-Neel also presented expenditure for the Water Dept.; Hughes-Neel gave the Council a memo from Water Supervisor Tuggle (attached) regarding the process of restocking his parts and supplies for the Water Dept. The total is \$11,046.65, just over Supervisor Tuggle's spending authority.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the restocking of part and supplies for the Water Dept. at a cost of \$11,046.65. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Sewer Dept.

a. FDEP Letter re: WWTP/Robert Fawcett

Superintendent Fawcett presented the Council with information pertaining to a warning letter received from FDEP (attached). Per Fawcett, the City has addressed and re-addressed the issues pertaining to levels. The problems stem from the new EZ program for installing the data; it doesn't load properly; therefore the City got red-tagged. Fawcett presented a summary to the Council outlining the issues and the progress toward resolution.

City Engineer Knauer added information on the WWTP drying beds, that the current beds were not adequate. There is room for two additional drying beds at the south end. Knauer stated that Preble-Rish could design the expansion for approximately \$6,000. The expansion would greatly improve the function of the drying beds.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve Preble-Rish to design the additional two drying beds at the south end for \$6,000. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. 4 ayes (Councilwoman Cuchens stepped out of the room before and during the Council Action). Motion carried.

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G. Parks Dept.

1. New Programming/Supplies to Implement (Action Requested)

Parks Director Weiler announced that the aerating of the FRSC fields would start tomorrow and the over-seeding would start next week. Weiler stated that she needed to announce to the public that the fields would be shut down from November 18th until the work is complete.

Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to allow Weiler to use her discretion in the closing of the fields for repairs and maintenance. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

Weiler requested action by the Council to allow her to begin JNBA basketball for 12 weeks, beginner's archery. She presented the application and hold-harmless waiver for approval. She indicated that the equipment and supplies necessary for the programs would be around \$1500 and she had budgeted monies for the programs.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the programs and the forms. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

~~2. Quotes/Complex Wash-out (Action Requested)~~

3. Supplies needed to repair decking at Marse Landing (Action Requested)

Weiler stated that Marse Landing needed repairs. The damaged planks needed to be removed and replaced. The materials can be obtained from Frank's Cash and Carry. The Council asked Preble-Rish to review the damage.

~~4. Recreational Aide/ name submittal (Information)~~

5. Sod Proposal/Dixie Youth (Information)

Weiler stated that one of the phases of repairs to the Freeport Regional Sports Complex was re-building the infields. Rebuilding the infields would require 40 pallets of sod at an approximate cost of \$200/pallet - \$8,000 plus labor. Weiler stated that if the City can cover materials and equipment, the Dixie Youth (Freeport Youth Sports) has volunteered to do the labor and can complete the work in one weekend. Weiler estimates that the equipment rental will be around \$1500.

Jay Odom came to the podium and stated that Hammock Bay would buy the sod for rebuilding the infields.

Monnie Mixon/ President of Freeport Youth Sports and Brian Brooks/Vice-President

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of Freeport Youth Sports addressed the Council and requested that volunteer work that Dixie Youth would perform is counted toward offsetting their rental fees for the 2017 baseball season.

Councilwoman Cuchens thanked Mixon and Brooks for coming to the Council well in advance of the season to offer the volunteer work to offset their fees; that this was the way the Council wanted to handle these situations. The Council also thanked Jay Odom and his offer for Hammock Bay to purchase the sod needed for the infields. The City's portion of expense will be the equipment rental.

Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to proceed with the sodding of the infields with sod donated by Hammock Bay a, equipment rented by the City and volunteer labor by Freeport Youth Sports and to approve the volunteer hours performed by Freeport Youth Sports (Dixie Youth) to count toward offsetting their field rental fees for the 2017 baseball/softball season. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

6. Request to drain City Pool (Action Requested)

Parks Director Weiler asked to drain the city pool in order to prevent the return of the black algae and turn off the pool mechanical equipment to reduce wear and tear.

Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to drain the pool and turn off the equipment. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

VIII. Old Business-none

IX. New Business

A. Mayor Russ Barley

1. Staff Salary (Discussion/Action)

Mayor Barley requested that all full-time employees making less than \$11.00/hour have their salaries raised to \$11.00 and it made retroactive to October 1, 2015. He stated that four city employees are making less than \$11.00/hour.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to raise the salaries for the four full-time employees making less than \$11.00/hour be raised to \$11.00/hour, retroactive to October 1, 2015. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Shredding of Documents

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Mayor Barley gave quotes he had received regarding shredding documents.

Attorney Adkinson cautioned the Council not to be too hasty in shredding records, that Florida records retention laws have to be observed. Planner Hughes-Neel added that there was a specified process which had to be followed prior to shredding any documents. Hughes-Neel will assist the new City Clerk when hired and work on establishing the proper documentation prior to shredding.

3. Deputy @ Council Meetings (Discussion/Action)

Mayor Barley informed the Council that the Sheriff's Office would be charging \$35/hour per deputy to provide a deputy at City Council meetings.

Council Action: Councilwoman Mclean motioned to pay \$35/hour per deputy to have a Sheriff's Dept. deputy at council meetings. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion; all ayes; motion carried.

4. Fire Fighter Union Project

Mayor Barley stated that Walton County Firefighters Union representative James Stultz has requested permission from the City to hold a boot drive on November 27 at the intersection of US 331 and State Road 20 intersection. The group has already received an okay from the FDOT.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the boot drive on November 27. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Councilwoman Brannon

1. Legislative Matters

Councilwoman Brannon stated that she had been contacted by Representatives Evers and Gaetz with requests that appropriation projects be turned in by December 11, 2015 for Water Appropriations funding. Brannon stated that she had been waiting to work with Preble-Rish on projects in the CIP (Capital Improvements Program). Appropriations projects are required to be shovel-ready. Brannon requested permission to work with Preble-Rish to seek DFEP grants for the Muscogee Water Project in Bruce and possibly bring the project back at the next meeting.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve Councilwoman Brannon the work with Preble-Rish on the Muscogee Water Project. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

2. The Public's Access to Public Records (Discussion/Action)

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Councilwoman Brannon stated that she had talked with the City's webmaster. For an additional \$20/month the City could have a drop-box to download meeting recordings of city meetings.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to pay the additional fee to have the meeting recordings posted on the City website. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

C. Councilwoman Cuchens

1. Utility Director Position

Councilwoman Cuchens stated that she had spoken to the Utility Director candidate and asked why she had decided to decline the position. Employee turnover was one reason, but the primary reason was that the candidate could not obtain affordable health insurance for her husband; a difference of \$500/month. Cuchens stated that the Council needs to be more competitive and offer real benefits.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to re-advertise the Utility Director position. There was no second; the motion died for lack of a second.

Councilman Farris stated that in his opinion, the Council needs to step back from the utility Director position and have some frank talks with the Water and Sewer Supervisors and find out from them what needs to be done.

D. Councilman Farris

~~1. Broadband Information Update (Information) Stricken~~

2. City Signs (Discussion/Action) TAB 9

Councilman Farris presented 3 different styles of city welcome signs. A, B and C.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to replace the four city welcome signs with Option A and permit through FDOT. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Employee Christmas Luncheon

Councilman Farris requested that the City have their Employee Christmas luncheon Wednesday December 9th from 1-2pm in the Community Center. Farris also requested that City Hall be closed for that hour so that all employees can attend.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve closing City Hall from 1-2

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pm on Wednesday December 9th for the City Employee Christmas luncheon to be held in the Community Center. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

E. Councilwoman Laird

1. ~~Non Profit Status for Parks & Recreation (Discussion/Action)~~ Tabled

F. Councilwoman McLean

1. Sewer Employee

Councilwoman McLean stated that a sewer employee would need to be hired to replace Allen Thomas who is retiring. The Council discussed and generally directed the Deputy Clerk to place the Sewer employee on the November 16 Special Council Meeting agenda.

Councilwoman McLean stated that she would like to have a workshop after the first of the year to discuss the utilities and what is to be done.

X. Public Comment

Jay Odom addressed the Council. He stated that a water and sewer utility is a business and gave some history of the evolution of water and sewer in the City. He stated to the Council that growth was coming whether they are ready or not. Odom said that he had made an investment in the infrastructure of Freeport. He stated that the employment pool of the City has not progressed to meet the needs of the City; that tough decisions need to be made now to hire top-notch people to make the transition into the future. Odom encourage the Council to workshop their employee issues.

Ronnie Brannon stated that he didn't see the rush.

Tom Ard reminded the Council that the Veteran's Day ceremony was at 2:00 pm next Wednesday.

Tim Edwards, resident of Hammock Bay and owner of Fudpuckers spoke of the problems he had experienced with the City of Destin when their infrastructure did not keep up with the growth. He stated that the sewer and water utilities need a qualified director; a utility cannot be run by committee.

XI. Adjournment

Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

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FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

Mayor

Council President

ATTEST:

City Clerk

APPROVED