

City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
6:30 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall
May 23, 2019 Minutes

I. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Mayor Russ Barley. The meeting was held in Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council members present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Amanda Green, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner, and Councilman William "Boots" McCormick.

City Staff present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Clerk Assistant Lori Cox, City Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Planning Technician Brooke Jackson, Parks Director Charlie Simmons, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Finance Assistant Joyce Sunday, Utility Billing Manager Debbie Roberts, and City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau.

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

Mayor Barley introduced Clay King the Mayor of Samson, Alabama. Mayor King thanked Councilwoman Brannon for attending the Tuesday Council meeting in Samson. He provided an open invitation to anyone wanting to attend a Council Meeting in Samson.

IV. Request for Placement on the City Council Agenda

1. Fisherman's Cove Marina
 - Request a no wake zone inside or outside submersible land lease

Zac Bryant requested assistance from the Council to have No-Wake Zone signs placed at the Fisherman's Cove Marina.

Attorney Adkinson instructed Bryant to get with Elissa Pettis at Dewberry on the paperwork and that he (Adkinson) will assist him with getting the signs.

2. Jeff Goldberg/Walton County Emergency Management
 - FEMA G402 Class

Mr. Goldberg invited Council to attend the June 17, 2019 FEMA Class, "The Role of Senior Officials during a Disaster".

 - Mr. Goldberg advised there will also be a Hurricane Preparedness Town Hall on June 13, 2019 from 5:30-7:00 PM. Meeting will be held in the Freeport Boardroom at the Business Park and is open to the Public.

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V. Public Comment on Consent Agenda

Councilwoman Brannon pointed out an error in the date of the meeting minutes from May 14, 2019. The Clerk Assistant will correct the minutes.

VI. Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Revenue and Expenditures as of April 30, 2019
2. Bills Paid
3. Council Workshop Minutes May 6, 2019
4. Special Council Meeting Minutes May 6, 2019
5. Regular Council Meeting Minutes May ~~23~~14, 2019

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with correction to item #5 noted by Brannon. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

VII. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Additions

Latilda Neel: Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code Amendment

Mayor Barley: Pay Rate for New Hires under Old Business

Councilwoman Green: City Clerk.

Deletions

Legal: Existing Inventories of prepaid Connection “Tap” and Impact Fees Resolution

City Attorney, Clay Adkinson advised that this will be brought back on the June 11th, 2019 meeting as “Resolutions” due to the complexity of Tap and Impact Fees.

VIII. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the Agenda with the specified Additions and Deletions as presented. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

IX. Staff Reports

A. Engineering

1. WWTP Upgrade Engineer/Owner Updates
 - Engineer, Alex Rouchaleau updated Council that the WWTP agreement has been submitted and is currently under review by USDA.
 - Engineer Rouchaleau is currently working on the provisions to the PER and getting ready to submit to USDA.
 - City Attorney Adkinson advised Council that USDA reached out to him to follow up on the agreement process. USDA gave a tentative turnaround time of 3-4 weeks.
 - Adkinson advised that he will be bringing Council a Resolution related to the bonds for

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R&D which is currently under review in his office and he will present it at a June Meeting.

2. SRF Phase I Updates

- Rouchaleau had a Pre-Construction meeting with the Contractor on May 17th. representatives from Hammock Bay HOA and SRF/Rural Water were in attendance. Rouchaleau presented a work schedule timeline to Council. Crew 1 will start in Hammock Bay at Earl Godwin Rd. and work east. Crew 2 will start on lift stations.
- Rouchaleau advised that he will provide weekly updates to Council as time goes on.

B. Water- none.

C. Sewer- none.

D. Parks

1. Pool

- Parks Director, Charlie Simmons brought back Pool Fees from the May 14, 2019 Regular Council Meeting.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to approve the proposed Pool fees. Councilwoman Green seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

2. Park Rental Fees

- Parks Director, Simmons brought back Park Rental Fees from the May 14, 2019 Regular Council Meeting. Rates were in comparison to other surroundings fields.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to approve the proposed Freeport Sports Complex fees. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

3. Park Updates

- Parks Director Simmons updated Council that the piers for the “Spyder” playground equipment was complete.
- A portion of sidewalk on Blueberry Rd. was replaced.
- New concrete and drainage systems has been replaced at the pool.
- Parks department is using the best pre and post emergents as well as fertilizers on the ball fields.

E. Billing

1. Billing Updates

- Estimated Bills - Utility Billing Manager, Debbie Roberts updated Council on estimated bill issues. Roberts announced the billing system had been fixed by Finance Officer, Sara Bowers to prevent estimated bills in the future.
- Follow up to 731 Waterview Cove – Roberts announced that customer had not

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disconnected irrigation from the City water system.

Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle went to the residence 14 days after letter from Council was sent to the customer to verify the disconnect. Tuggle advised Council that the Customer had not cut piping nor capped off irrigation but rather disabled the system by cutting wires.

- Council discussion ensued about the principal/requirement of physical disconnect.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to disconnect water service at 731 Waterview Cove due to Customer being in violation of Letters sent by Council requiring disconnection from the City Water System. Councilman McCormick seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

- Robo Calls & Water Disconnects - Billing Manager Roberts requested re-doing the robo calls and continue disconnects due to a misprint of the disconnect date on bills and not all customers initially receiving robo calls.
- Council discussion ensued on how to best reach goal of consistent billing.

Council Action: Councilwoman Green motioned to approve Robo Calls on Friday May 24, 2019 Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to approve the Disconnects to Continue on May 28, 2019. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes, (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

F. City Clerk- none.

G. Finance Department- none.

H. Planning & Zoning Dept.

1. Planning & Zoning Updates

- Speed Sign/Hammock Trail West - Planning Director, Latilda Hughes-Neel presented updates to Council on the speed sign missing in Hammock Bay. Neel had contacted the HOA and the sign has been replaced.
- Neel reached out to County Public Works for additional speed signs on West Bay Loop.
- Library Expansion Update- Conceptual plan is moving forward and the plan will be part of the City's Facility Master Plan.
- Barrier Free Park- Acquisition and planning for park is moving forward.
- Annexation Initiative- Mailing list has been prepared and Legal is drafting a letter to be mailed to property owners.

2. Addition: Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code Amendment

- Neel discussed an upcoming Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Land Development

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Code Amendment coming up for review/approval. Neel committed to providing the Council with an outline of changes covered in the Comp Plan Amendment/LDC.

Council Action: Councilman McCormick motioned for discussion. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. Discussion ensued between Council and Neel. Council directed Neel to bring back an outline for review at the next Council Meeting June 11th, 2019. Councilman McCormick withdraws motion. Councilman Farris withdraws his second motion.

I. Legal Matters

1. ~~Deletion: Existing Inventories of prepaid Connection "Tap" and Impact Fees Resolution~~
2. Request for Appeal of Termination
 - Attorney, Clay Adkinson informed Council that a Request for Appeal of Termination had been filed. He recommended that Mayor Barley set a Special Council Meeting to hear appeal.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to delete the section in the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual allowing Appeal by an Employee terminated by City Council. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

X. Old Business

1. City Manager Ordinance Discussion
 - City Attorney, Clay Adkinson advised Council that Mr. Buzz Eddy with the Florida League of Cities will be at the June 11th Regular Council Meeting. Discussion ensued between Council and Adkinson regarding Sec. 2-44- Qualifications, Sec. 2-43 – Residence, and Sec. 2-46- Repeal of Division for the City Manager position. Attorney Adkinson will make Council's revisions and start the advertisement process for Second Reading and Adoption of the City Manager Ordinance.
2. Strategic Plan - Department Organizational Development Worksheets
 - Planning Director, Latilda Hughes-Neel and other department head staff informed Council that the deadline for Strategic Plan submission was May 31, 2019 and would need the appropriate amount of time to complete.
 - Councilwoman Haffner had noted that the years reflected on the Strategic Plan Cover Sheet needed to be corrected as well as Councilwoman Haffner's and Councilman Farris's seat numbers be corrected.
3. Addition: Pay Rate for New Hires
 - Mayor, Russ Barley advised Council that there was some confusion on new hire starting pay rates stemming from the March 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Discussion ensued regarding Council's original intent that the pay increases were for specific employees noted on TAB 5 within the March 12, 2019 meeting packet and was not for new hires.
 - Attorney Adkinson advised to have the minutes corrected to reflect the motion that was

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made by Council in the March 12th meeting. New hires are not to be hired at \$14hr as current minutes state.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to correct the March 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes with addition to attachment TAB 5 outlining specific Employees named for pay increases from the March 12, 2019 Meeting. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

4. Letter from Beasley Allen Law Firm
 - City Attorney, Clay Adkinson announced that Beasley Allen Law Firm was assisting the City on a former punitive damage claim with BP. Attorney Adkinson advised the claim had been closed because the City did not meet the Standard Local Government requirements of owning waterfront Property as described.

XI. New Business

A. Mayor Russ Barley- none.

B. Councilwoman Brannon

1. Streets & Roads

- Councilwoman Brannon and City Attorney Adkinson met with the County Administrator to discuss Streets and Roads Maintenance. Adkinson advised Council that the City and County will be working together to determine the specifics of "maintenance" defined by County and what streets and roads would be covered under the interlocal agreement.

C. Councilman Farris- none.

D. Councilwoman Green

1. City Clerk

- Councilwoman Green expressed a lack of confidence in City Clerk, Becky Podraza stemming from pay rate issues, minutes being interpreted versus verbatim as to what had actually been said at the March 12, 2019 meeting. The error led to 4 new hires starting at an incorrect pay rate that was not approved.
- Council discussion ensued about previous mistakes, lack of confidence in the City Clerk and the financial impact over the new hire starting pay rate error.

Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to terminate City Clerk Podraza. Councilwoman Green seconded the motion. All ayes; (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

- Council discussion ensued on covering City Clerk's duties. Clerk Assistant Lori Cox was directed to perform the major duties temporarily.
- Attorney Adkinson suggested a core/critical functions list be identified by the Clerk

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Assistant and brought back to Council at the next meeting so Council could determine how to move forward.

- Adkinson also directed Mayor Barley to provide the City Clerk with notification of termination effective May 23, 2019.
- Finance Officer, Sara Bowers expressed to Council that three Check Signers would be necessary to carry on City Business.

Council Action: Councilman Farris motioned for the Clerk Assistant, Lori Cox to be the third Check Signer on the City Checking Accounts. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes; (Green, Brannon, Farris, McCormick, Haffner); motion carried.

- E. Councilwoman Haffner- none.
- F. Councilman McCormick- none.

XII. Public Comment

- Keith Kelly approached the podium, introduced himself to Council as the New Youth Football President due to Dan Curry stepping down. Mr. Kelly thanked Councilman McCormick and Parks Director Simmons for work they have done maintaining the fields at Hammock Bay. Mr. Kelly extended help as needed in the future and thanked Council for everything they have done in the past.

XIII. Adjournment

Mayor Barley adjourned the meeting at 8:14 PM.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL



Mayor

ATTEST



Clerk Assistant