

**City of Freeport**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
7:00 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
June 3, 2019 Minutes

**I. Meeting Opened**

The June 3, 2019 Special Council Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Russ Barley. The meeting was held in City 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

Staff present: Clerk Assistant Lori Cox, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson Sr., Utility Billing Manager Debbie Roberts, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, and Planning Technician Brook Jackson, Finance Assistant Joyce Sunday.

**II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

The Invocation was given by Councilwoman Haffner, followed by the pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**III. Heather Ellis – Termination Appeal**

Mayor Barley explained the purpose of the meeting was to hear an appeal from former employee, Heather Ellis whom had been terminated by the City Council. Ellis had sent her appeal to the Mayor, Council and City Attorney via email on May 16, 2019. Attorney Adkinson requested the email be a part of the record.

Heather Ellis approached the podium and addressed the Council. Ellis presented a packet of information and documents in support of her claim.

- Ellis stated she did have authorization for billing corrections referring to specific documentation within her packet.
- Councilwoman Haffner pointed out that the referenced December 2018 adjustments were signed off on in January 2019, after the adjustments were made.
- Councilwoman Haffner recalled an email from June 2018 stating that no adjustments were to be made prior to approval. The meeting was paused for retrieval and presentation of the email.
- Ellis continued pleading her case by distinguishing a difference between an “adjustment” and a “correction” referring to her documentation. Ellis claimed that ADG, the billing software company, told her to handle adjustments as corrections in a particular manner. She also claimed that she did not receive the proper training on the billing system.
- Councilwoman Haffner reiterated that any type of account modification, adjustments or corrections require prior approval.
- Ellis’s closing arguments resulted in requests for; public record to state she did not make adjustments, termination was without cause, and to reinstate employment. Ellis stated she believed that the Billing Clerks were unjustly terminated due to racism.
- Mayor Barley pointed out that her termination was not just for adjustments but for errors made on a daily basis. Barley informed her that a file containing work orders from November had recently been discovered in her desk that she did not complete.

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- Council discussion ensued and concluded with all account modifications require prior approval.

*Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to deny the appeal. Councilman McCormick seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

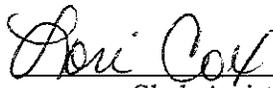
**IV. Adjournment**

Mayor Barley adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

  
Mayor

ATTEST

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk Assistant

Approved