



City of Freeport

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2020, 6:30 PM
Telephone Conference

Council Members Present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Amanda Green, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilman William "Boots" McCormick, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner

Staff Members Present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Parks Director Charlie Simmons, Planning Director Latilda Neel, Planning Technician Brooke Jackson, Planning Clerk Marge Gay, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Billing Manager Debbie Roberts, City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau, Interim City Clerk Lori Cox

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Mayor Barley in a teleconference meeting.

2. Public Comment

3. Request for Placement on the City Council Agenda

a. Robert Clyburn - Request for a discounted rate for city sewer connection

Resident Robert Clyburn informed the Council that he currently has ongoing major issues with his septic system which limits how often he can flush toilets and take showers. Mr. Clyburn explained that both he and his wife are out of work due to the pandemic and does not have sufficient funds to complete the abandonment of the septic tank and pay for the city sewer capacity fee of \$8,577.57. Mr. Clyburn requested a discounted capacity fee rate of \$4,500 from the Council.

Councilwoman Haffner deferred to City Attorney Clay Adkinson on what options within the policy, if any, Council had to assist.

Adkinson stated that when the new capacity fee ordinance was created, no provisions for waiver or abatements were built in.

Council was sympathetic to Mr. Clyburn's situation but saw no way to provide relief under the capacity fee ordinance in place.

Councilwoman Green suggested that staff reach out to secondary lenders to determine if they would be interested in financing capacity fees for customers.

Moved by: Councilwoman Green

Seconded by: Councilman McCormick

Motion: To research secondary lender financing options to assist customers with the cost of capacity fees.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

- a. Bills Paid
- b. Revenue & Expenditure Report through March 31, 2020
- c. Regular Council Meeting Minutes February 11, 2020
- d. Regular Council Meeting Minutes February 27, 2020

5. Staff Reports

- a. Water - none.
- b. Sewer - none.
- c. Parks

1. Updates

Parks Director and Project Manager Charlie Simmons presented updates on the following:

- The grass at the multi-purpose field is looking good and the focus will now be on field's 1, 2, and 3. Those fields will remain closed for maintenance.
- The screw press is now installed at the sewer plant and the tech will come next week to show everyone how to use it.

d. City Clerk - none.

e. Finance

1. Budget Amendment #4

Finance Officer Sara Bowers presented a budget amendment for the purchase of a new truck for the Water Department, which replaces the recent totaled truck and additional costs for water testing.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Motion: To approve the purchase of the replacement vehicle for the Water Department in the amount of \$29,407.63.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Motion: To approve Budget Amendment #4.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

f. Billing - none.

g. Planning

1. Ships Chandler Phase II Development Project

Planning Director Latilda Neel presented a summary of the Ships Chandler Phase II development project and a copy of the master plan.

Moved by: Councilman McCormick

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Motion: To approve the Ships Chandler Phase II development project.

(Councilwoman Brannon had difficulty with her microphone and was unable to vote)

Ayes (4): Councilwoman Green, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Absent (1): Councilwoman Brannon

Carried (4 to 0)

2. LDC Ordinance - Special Events/2nd Reading

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Motion: To approve second reading of the Special Event, Ordinance 2020-04.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

3. Resolution - Design Guidelines for Freeport Government Complex

Neel presented a draft resolution for design guidelines for buildings added to the Freeport Government Complex. Design guidelines must be compatible with City Hall architecture and landscaping.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman McCormick

Motion: To approve the design guidelines for the Freeport Government Complex, Resolution 2020-05.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

h. Legal - none.

i. Engineering

1. DELETED: Freeport Government Complex Master Plan

2. Updates

City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau presented construction updates on:

- SRF Phase I Wastewater Improvement, the contractors successfully installed the bore under Four Mile Creek.
- Hammock Bay: loose ends are being completed on the lift stations.

- East Bay Loop Water Main Project; construction will start in July.
- SR 20 Jolly Bay Forcemain; North Florida Construction commenced work on Monday.
- Water Tank #5 Rehab; contractor has mobilized and is ready to commence work this coming Monday, which will be in progress till June.
- Wastewater Treatment Facility; still working with DEP on permitting and work is on schedule.

Councilwoman Green asked if communication with the County Commissioners on the library project had been established to ensure that it coincides with the Freeport Government Master Plan project.

Simmons stated that he has spoken to a couple of the County Commissioners but will reach out to the rest of them beginning tomorrow.

6. Old Business

a. ADDITION: City Manager Hiring Process

City Manager Hiring Process was added to the Agenda from the Tuesday, April 21st Special Meeting so that the Council members could submit a list of their top candidates after reviewing resumes and discuss at this meeting.

Councilwoman Green and Councilman McCormick requested more time to review resumes to ensure that their selections were the best choices and will submit their top candidates next Wednesday.

Adkinson suggested for Council consideration to extend a telephone interview to any candidate that was considered top candidates. Interim City Clerk Lori Cox and Mayor Barley to generate a list of every name that appeared in the ranking and then coordinate telephone interview dates with Council.

Adkinson's suggestion was well received by all Council Members.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Motion: To direct staff to compile list of top candidates through the Mayor and to coordinate telephonic interview; special meeting dates with the Council.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

7. New Business

a. Mayor Russ Barley

b. Councilwoman Brannon

c. Councilman Farris

1. Council on Aging

Councilman Farris stated that he has been on the board for the Council on Aging for many years and has plans to step down effective April 24, 2020. He invited the rest of Council, or anyone else in Freeport to express their interest in assuming this position.

d. Councilwoman Green

1. City Dumpsters

Councilwoman Green referred to the 5 dumpsters the City purchased for code violations and noted that the City currently does not have any guidelines for the Planning Department to follow in regard to the length of time and how many dumpsters residents can request.

Neel requested to work with Councilwoman Green to create a city dumpster policy to bring back for Council approval.

Council consensus was for Neel and Councilwoman Green to work together on a draft dumpster policy.

Council Action: None.

2. Hiring

Councilwoman Green proposed to the Council to go ahead and advertise for the City Clerk position, fill it, and then consider a Deputy Clerk position afterwards as opposed to hiring a temp for 6 months. Councilwoman Green's discussions with Cox alerted her to the fact that if anything were to happen to Cox, no one would be able to do her job.

Council consensus was to bring back an updated job description at the next meeting for approval to advertise.

Moved by: Councilwoman Green

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Motion: For staff to bring back an updated City Clerk job description at the next meeting for Council approval to advertise and to not fill any vacancies in the Clerk's office temporary or otherwise until further discussion is held.

Ayes (5): Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Farris, Councilman McCormick, and Councilwoman Haffner

Carried (5 to 0)

3. Emergency Measures

Councilwoman Green sought direction from the board on emergency measures currently in place as to if they should be addressed or wait until the next meeting.

Adkinson informed the board that the Governor's emergency measure will continue to be in effect until May 1, 2020. His recommendation to Council was to not take action at the moment and to wait for the Governor's actions that will be coming out within the next few days.

Simmons requested that Council discuss options for city parks openings in preparation for County park announcements to be made next Tuesday.

Councilwoman Green said that Parks Director Simmons would like to open the parks slowly, and initially only open them during hours that can be monitored.

Council consensus was to follow Simmons plan.

Councilwoman Green felt that City Hall should remain closed to the public for the time being, Council and staff agreed.

Adkinson announced that the Walton County Sheriff's office is providing masks free of charge and will deliver them to Walton County residents who need them.

Councilwoman Green reminded everyone that Blood One will be at Hammock Bay on April 25th; appointments should be made in advance to give blood for safety reasons. Blood is in short supply right now and this is a great and easy way to give blood.

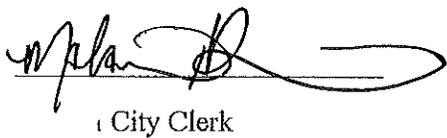
- e. Councilwoman Haffner
- f. Councilman McCormick

8. Adjourment

Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.



Mayor



City Clerk

