

**City of Freeport**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
February 3, 2015

I. Meeting Called to Order

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

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

Staff present: City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel, City Clerk Gary Mattison, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Engineers Anna Hudson and Cliff Knauer.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilman Eddie Farris followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III. Consideration of Incentive Package for Project TARGET

Mayor Barley recognized several special guests in the audience: County Commissioner District 2 Cecilia Jones, County Commissioner District 1 Bill Chapman and County Commissioner District 3 and BCC Chairman Bill Imfeld.

Mayor Barley called on EDA Director Steve Jaeger and asked that he introduce his group.

Mr. Jaeger introduced Jay Odom, Crystal Beach Development and local developer of Hammock Bay; Lino Maldonado, Vice President of Operations for Wyndham Vacation Rentals (ResortQuest), and Larry Sassano of Florida's Great Northwest. Jaeger presented a memo addressed to the Board Members of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance (attached) summarizing the position of Project TARGET in terms and conditions. Jaeger announced that the Walton County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) had voted to gift the required 8 acres needed for Project TARGET. Jaeger stated that Lino Maldonado and Jay Odom brought the project to the EDA. Project TARGET has been thoroughly checked out and researched; it performs metal injection molding technological manufacturing which provides parts for firearms, automobile parts, aviation and aerospace technology. The company has a large customer base in the United States and Mexico and prefers to locate in the southern United States. The competition for the business location is San Antonio Texas and McAllen, Texas. A specific advantage Florida has is the general local proximity of local after-market services, i.e. machinists, heat finishers, etc. Jaeger also presented an Economic Impact Analysis with the facts and figures pertaining to Project TARGET (attached).

Jaeger asked Lino Maldonado to address the Council.

Maldonado gave history of the company's principals; the owners and their counsel have

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been clients for many years. Maldonado stated that he does not have a financial interest in Project TARGET. When he found out that they were looking for a site in the US for relocation, he asked them to consider Florida for their relocation. Maldonado is an appointed member of the Governor's Consortium for Economic Development. He also contacted Jay Odom as a stakeholder in the area to help get them here. Maldonado stated that the company is Number # 1 in the world in liquid injection metal molding. They create components for electronics, firearms and many other applications. The company would create 330 jobs over a 5-year period. They would have a 10 million-dollar production on Day #1.

Larry Sassano with Florida Great Northwest appeared before the Council. Sassano stated that his organization serves 16 counties and has averaged assistance to 40 projects. Sassano stressed to the City Council that this was a unique situation logistically because it involves one county and one city. The created jobs would be very important to the region and to Florida has a whole with Enterprise Florida. He stated emphatically that the county and city need to ante up to compete with Texas.

Jay Odom, President of Crystal Beach Development and developer of Hammock Bay appeared before the Council. Odom stated that he has no financial interest in Project TARGET. He stated that location of Project TARGET in Freeport will benefit other businesses already in place in Freeport. He stated that the County had adopted a 0-100% tax abatement ordinance based on economic development and job creation. He asked the City Council what they could do to help.

Planner Hughes-Neel passed out the City's Incentive Package to the audience and proponents.

Jaeger appeared before the Council with follow-up. Jaeger stated that all offers have to be in and bundled and sent to Enterprise Florida by Friday, February 6th. He stated that Enterprise Florida was developing an offer that includes refunds of certain corporation expenses, direct cash grants and financing of training with a value of approximately 1.4 million.

**Council Discussion:**

Councilwoman Brannon asked about locally created jobs, environmental impacts and sewer/water capacity. Odom stated that the vast majority of the jobs created would be filled by locals. City Engineer Knauer stated that the City has sewer /water capacity for the project. Councilwoman Brannon questioned the rate study which was explained by City Attorney Adkinson; they would have to establish a "public purpose"; there would be no precedence as review criteria would be spelled out. Adkinson also stated that since the City had turned over their Fire Dept. to the County, the fire impact fee resolution would have to be repealed.

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Councilwoman Cuchens asked Jaeger if the City has provided what he needs for the Enterprise Florida package. Jaeger stated that the City had provided what he had requested. Jaeger stated that he did not personally write each component of the incentive package; it was his job to bundle them together and send them to Enterprise Florida.

County Commission Chair Imfeld appeared before the Council and stated that the Board of County Commissioners is strongly in favor of all efforts to retain Project TARGET in Walton County.

Councilwoman Brannon asked Attorney Adkinson if they approved the Incentive Package, would taxes be abated forever or for a specific time limit. Adkinson stated that they would be abated as provided in the Florida Statutes.

Council Action:

Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the City of Freeport Incentive Package prepared by staff to be forwarded to the EDA for inclusion in the EDA Benefit Package for Project TARGET, which will be forwarded to Enterprise Florida. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

IV. Adjournment

Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned by 8:10 p.m.