



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
7:00 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
February 9, 2016 Minutes

**I. Meeting Opened**

The February 9, 2016 Regular 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: Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Kasey Cuchens, Councilwoman Janice McLean, Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilwoman Jennifer Laird.

**II.** Staff present: City Clerk Rebecca Podraza, City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Parks Director Dana Weiler, City Accountant Deborah Wimer-Zills and City Engineer Anna Hudson.

**III. Invocation by and Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**IV. Recognition of Guests: None**

**V. Approval of Past Minutes**

- January 28, 2016 Workshop  
*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the January 28, 2016 Workshop Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*
- January 28, 2016 Regular Council Meeting  
*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the January 28, 2016 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

**VI. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda**

**A. Additions:**

1. Parks Director Update-Dana Weiler
2. Lightning Strike Insurance Claims update-City Clerk Podraza
3. Schedule Workshop-City Clerk Podraza
4. Rural Enterprise Zone to be added under Planning-Latilda Hughes-Neel
5. Grants-Councilwoman Cuchens

**B. Deletions:**

1. Remove items 1 & 2 under Russ Barley.

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**VII. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions**

*Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to approve the agenda with specified additions and ~~deletions~~ as presented. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

**VIII. Department of Corrections Warden John Whitehurst**

- Warden Whitehurst with the Department of Corrections approached the podium. He explained to the Council and those present in the audience how the contract between the City and DOC benefits the community at a minimum cost. The 2015 Squad produced 9685 hours of work at a cost value of \$166,669.00 which the city received for a \$57,000 commitment.
- Warden Whitehurst addressed the negative comments that have been made at previous Council Meetings regarding the work crew, specifically at the Sports Complex located near Hammock Bay. The first issue he addressed is the comments about the crew not being present or producing the work that is necessary to maintain the park. State law prohibits the crew from being at the park during the hours that children are present. This limits the time they may spend working at the park.
- Warden Whitehurst addressed the security of having the inmate's working in the community. The inmates who are selected are put through a rigorous screening process. They are reviewed according to their sentence as well as screened by various Officers, the Assistant Warden, Warden Whitehurst and the Chief before they are assigned to a work crew. Warden Whitehurst understands that citizens may not like to see inmates working in the community; however, they are in the park, not in the neighborhood. They are trying to contribute to the community and repay their debt to society. The community benefits by this, with labor at a much reduced cost to the tax payers.
- Attorney Adkinson asked who selects the work that needs to be done for the inmates. Mr. Whitehurst informed the council that this is decided by the city. Warden Whitehurst suggested that it would be best if there were one point of contact. Council discussed the work hours and point of contact that DOC has with the City. It was decided that this would be Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle. Park's Director Weiler will communicate with the Water Supervisor to ensure that the work needed at the Sports Complex is communicated.

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- City Attorney Adkinson informed the Council that he has reviewed the DOC contract and it is ok for Council to approve.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to approve the Department of Corrections Contract. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

**IX. Staff Reports**

**A. City Clerk Matters**

1. **Community Development Block Grant:**
  - Mr. Robert Jones approached the podium and addressed the Council on the following CDBG requirements that need to be put in place by the city:
    - a. Anti-Displacement & Relocation Policy (Amendment)
    - b. CDBG Procurement Policy (Replacement)
    - c. Citizens Participation Plan (Amendment)
    - d. Citizens Complaint (Grievance) Procedure Policy (Amendment)
    - e. Equal Opportunity Employment Policy (New)
    - f. Section 504/ADA Access Policy (New)
    - g. Housing Assistance Plan (Replacement)

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve the Anti-Displacement & Relocation Policy, The CDBG Procurement Policy, The Citizens Participation Plan, The Citizens Complaint (Grievance) Procedure Policy, The Equal Opportunity Employment Policy, the Section 504/ADA Access Policy and the Housing Assistance Plan. Councilmen Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

2. Lightning Insurance Claims for Sports Complex and Wells Update:

City Clerk Podraza updated the Council that the claims were filed with FMIT and that the Lightning Affidavit Forms and receipts are being gathered by the Water Supervisor and the Parks Director to turn in for reimbursement.
3. Schedule Workshop:

Council scheduled the next Personnel Policies and Procedures Workshop for February 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

**B. Staff Accountant**

1. **Current Expenditures were presented. City Accountant had nothing to report.**

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2. Pay all bills in order

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

C. Planning & Zoning Dept.

1. Planning Updates
  - City Planner Hughes-Neel presented and reviewed the Planning Updates Report.
2. Rural Enterprise Zone
  - City Planner Hughes-Neel requested authorization from the Council to research and report back to Council on establishing a local Enterprise Zone Program.

*Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to authorize City Planner Hughes-Neel to research a local Enterprise Zone Program. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

D. Legal Matters

1. First reading of proposed amendment to Ordinance 86-3 City Council Meeting
  - City Attorney Adkinson requested a motion for the first reading and advertise for adoption for the amendment to Ordinance 86-3.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to proceed with the first reading and to advertise for the adoption of the amendment to Ordinance 86-3. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

E. Engineering: None

F. Water Dept.

1. ~~Full Time Meter Reader~~
  - No discussion/No action taken

G. Sewer Dept.: None

H. Parks Dept.

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1. Bids for Monthly Lawn Care Update

- City Clerk Podraza presented the Garland Lawn Care bid reviewed by Shawn Supple during Parks Director Weiler's absence. Parks Director has since returned and concurs that this is a good bid.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Laird made a motion to accept the Garland Lawn Care bid. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

2. Freeport Youth Sports, Inc.

- Monnie Mixon approached the podium. He informed the Council of all the volunteer work they provided during the preparation of the park during 2015 and requested that their fees for 2016 be waived.

*Council Action: Councilwoman McLean made a motion to waive all fees for the Freeport Youth Sports, Inc. for use of the Sports Complex during the 2016 regular season. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

3. Parks Director Update

- Parks Director Weiler approached the podium and reported that there is a scheduled burn of the debris located on the overflow field. It is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup> and February 18<sup>th</sup>.
- A notice is being sent to the community regarding the Spring Soccer League to gauge interest as well as for the Archery Class.

**X. Old Business: None**

**XI. New Business**

A. Mayor Russ Barley

1. ~~Request to change City Clerk Podraza from probationary employee to regular status.~~
2. ~~Request to authorize City Clerk Podraza to be added on all City of Freeport bank account signature cards.~~

B. Councilwoman Brannon

1. Legislative Matters
  - From February 1<sup>st</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Councilwoman Brannon attended the Legislation Action Days to advocate on behalf of the North West Florida League of Cities and the

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Florida League of Cities for Home Rule and to oppose unfunded mandates. State Representatives and State Senators discussed legislative priorities. During the visit Councilwoman Brannon attended several legislative briefings, a legislative luncheon, capital visits and was able to speak with several representatives and senators.

Councilwoman Brannon recommends Council pay attention to Legislative emails and briefings. Just in the past week, 22 pages of legislation priorities and bills have been brought up. This list will be given to City Clerk Podraza for anyone who may be interested in obtaining a copy.

C. Councilwoman Cuchens

1. Water/Sewer Rate Study

- Request Action Plan from each Council Member  
Councilwoman Cuchens requested an action plan from each of the Council Members on the Rate Study so that the City may move forward.

Councilwoman Cuchens reviewed the City of Freeport Loan Schedule report that was prepared for the Council by City Accountant Wimer-Zills.

Council reviewed Resolution 2010-01 and will prepare the proposed changes for the first meeting to be held March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to advertise the consideration of a rate increase for all Water/Sewer customers at the March 8<sup>th</sup> Regular Council meeting. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

2. Safety Training Meetings every Monday

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to begin having weekly Safety Training Meetings every Monday effective the first Monday in March 2016 at 8:00 am. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

3. Chain of Command for Employee issues or concerns

- Councilwoman Cuchens feels there is a great deal of confusion among the staff on who they should take their concerns too. Supervisors need to be brought into the loop and the Council needs to identify who staff should take their concerns too.

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Mayor Barley says it was adopted on November 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 that staff should go to their supervisor and then to the Mayor.

Councilwoman Cuchens stated that the City needs to follow the policies that are set.

4. Earmark the Money for the Hammock Bay HOA to Parks & Rec.
  - Councilwoman Cuchens asked that the money be identified in the accounting system to identify that the money coming in from Hammock Bay be applied to the Parks budget.

Parks Director Weiler approached the podium and reported that she will make budget transfers in the near future to be sure revenue and expenses are correct for the Sports Complex.

Mr. Scott Roessler approached the podium to discuss why the Council continually brings up the light bill at the park. Regardless of how much it costs to turn the lights on and off is part of the Cities job. He inquired where the money has been going for the past eight years.

Council advised Mr. Roessler that they are currently discussing the matter to make the necessary changes and take action to address the concerns of the Hammock Bay owners regarding the revenue the City receives from Hammock Bay.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to create a line item in the City budget that the money received from Hammock Bay is only to be used for the Freeport Regional Sports Complex. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

5. DEO Update
  - Councilwoman Cuchens met with the Department of Economic Opportunity last week. There are many opportunities for the City to go after rural grants. Councilwoman Cuchens will continue to pursue and stay on top of opportunities for the City.
6. Grants
  - Councilwoman Cuchens asked for approval to work with Parks Director Weiler on the DEP Land and Water Fund Program grant. The cycle for this program ends on March 28<sup>th</sup> and can be a maximum of \$200,000.00 dollars.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion for Council to approve her moving*

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*forward in working with Parks Director Weiler on the DEP Land and Water Fund Program Grant. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.*

- Councilwoman Cuchens specifically requested that the City Attorney speak with Walton County about the process they are using to establish a 501c3, in order to be able to apply for grant funds. Attorney Adkinson agreed to look into it.

D. Councilman Farris: None

E. Councilwoman Laird: None

F. Councilwoman McLean

1. Application/Deposit Fee

This item was addressed during the discussion on Water/Sewer Rate Fees under Councilwoman Cuchens.

**XII. Public Comment**

1. Mr. Roessler approached the podium and thanked the Council for passing the motion that was made concerning the money given to the city from Hammock Bay.

**XIII. Adjournment**

Mayor Russ Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. The Mayor gaveled and the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

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