



City of Freeport
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
7:00 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall
March 8, 2016 Minutes

I. Meeting Opened

The March 8, 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, and Councilwoman Jennifer Laird.

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

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 Mr. Patrick Pilcher, Walton County Property Appraiser.

Mayor Barley introduced Ms. Daniel and Mr. Mount with the West Florida Regional Planning Council.

IV. Approval of Past Minutes

- February 25, 2016 Workshop

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the February 25, 2016 Workshop minutes as presented. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

V. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

- A. Additions
 - 1. Payroll reporting issues
- B. Deletions
 - 1. Bids for small digger

VI. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions

No action taken

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No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



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VII. Staff Reports

A. City Clerk Matters

1. North West Florida Regional Planning Council

- Rural Business Development Grant Presentation
Clerk Podraza opened the floor to Mr. Mount & Ms. Daniel. Mr. Austin Mount, Executive Director for the West Florida Regional Planning Council approached the podium. He explained about the grant programs they offer and the project they would like to invite the City of Freeport to participate in. He thanked the Council for allowing Councilwoman Cuchens for serving on the Board of Directors. She has been very dedicated to the organization and to the Transportation Planning Organization.

Kate Daniel, Planning manager approached the Podium and explained further about the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Economic Development Action Plan. The first request from our city would be to appoint a steering committee of 5 to 8 people to be appointed by the Council. Then there would be a 12 month process that would consist of the following:

- a. Needs assessment
 - b. Developing projects & strategies
 - c. Resource Identification for funding
- A letter of commitment is needed from the City of Freeport agreeing to participate in the program. The North West Florida Regional Planning Council will send the letter to be presented as an action item at the next Regular Council Meeting on March 24th.

B. Rate Study

1. Clerk Podraza introduced Mr. Bob Mearns with the Florida Rural Water Association. Mr. Mearns approached the podium and gave a brief summary of the Florida Rural Water Association and the Rate Study he has presented to the council on two previous occasions.

Mr. Mearns explained how the City is not creating reserves. The City is using the reserves and this will be a problem in 3 to 4 years. To correct the issue we must raise the rates. The City has not had a rate increase since 2008.

A Power Point Presentation consisting of three slides showing three average consumption accounts for water and sewer were presented. The slides compared the current rates with

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calculations of what they would be after the first year of the rate increase. It was discussed by the Council and decided that this was not enough information to provide a clear understanding of the rate increase over the three year period.

Councilwoman Brannon asked Mr. Mearns if he is a licensed engineer. Mr. Mearns responded that he is not.

A copy of a 3 Year Residential Rate Comparison table was presented to all in attendance from Mr. Mearns January 12, 2016 presentation.

Mr. Mearns explained that the rate increase will accomplish several things:

- Cover Expenses
- Cover Debt
- Create reserves

Councilwoman Brannon does not feel the City should raise rates inside or outside the city based on this rate study for the following reasons:

- The study was not performed by a licensed engineer.
- It is not a signed and sealed rate study.
- The North Bay system should have been a separate study because it is on a separate system purchased with a Rural Development Loan.
- North Bay Rates were set based on the Rural Development Loan so if they are reduced there may be ramifications with the terms of the loan.
- The number used in the rate study from the City's Capital Improvement Plan was incorrect.
- On top of the proposed rate increase in the study, an additional 1.57% increase would be added each year, set forth by the Public Service Commission which would continue after the 3 year increase was complete.
- A water audit needs to be done.
- The Study did not give the projected revenue for years 1, 2 & 3.
- Members of the Institute & Government as well as the League of Cities reported that water and sewer rates are generally only used for the operating expenses and reserves for future capital improvements and debt that are only for water and sewer infrastructure. The total amount of debt the city is currently carrying is not all water and sewer related.

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- The Presentation is not fully vetted on the numbers and Councilwoman Brannon recommends hiring our City Engineering firm to do a study that is signed and sealed to ensure the numbers are correct. The cost of the study would be \$15,000.00.

Councilwoman McLean commented that all of the debt the city currently carries is water and sewer related other than the loan for the City Hall building.

Councilwoman McLean added that a rate study was conducted by the City Engineering Firm in 2010 and the city borrowed a million dollars after that in 2012 for the water system at North Bay.

Councilwoman Cuchens advised that Mr. Mearns would be happy to sit with Councilwoman Brannon to go over some of the details for clarification on some of the numbers.

Councilman Farris asked Mr. Mearns how many cities he has conducted studies for. Mr. Mearns answered around fifty cities. Councilman Farris asked if Defuniak was one of those cities and did they adopt the rate increase. Mr. Mearns answered yes he did and yes they did adopt the rate increase.

Councilwoman Brannon presented the Defuniak report and would like to see that same type of report prepared for the City of Freeport.

Council requested Mr. Mearns to prepare a report similar to the one he prepared for Defuniak Springs for the City of Freeport. Mr. Mearns agreed to prepare the report and will have it ready for the April 12th Regular Council Meeting. City Engineer Cliff Knauer agreed to review the report at no cost to the City of Freeport prior to the April 12th Regular Council Meeting.

Council Action: Councilman Farris requested that the Rate Study discussion be continued to the April 12th Regular Council meeting. Councilwoman Cuchens seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

Staff Accountant

1. Current Payroll Expenditures
2. Payroll reporting issues

- City Accountant Wimer-Zills approached the podium to request council approval

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to install QuickBooks on the City PC. This would enable her to perform checks and balances for payroll issues and other reporting that she is having issues producing on the current software the city uses.

Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion for the City Accountant to download QuickBooks in order to perform checks and balances with the current city accounting software. Jennifer Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Pay all bills in order

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

- Staff Accountant Wimer-Zills approached the podium to ask the Council if they would prefer to review the bills before they are paid rather than after. Council discussed.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion for the City Accountant to present bills twice a month at Regular Council Meetings in order for Council to review prior to payment. Jennifer Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Planning & Zoning Dept.

1. City Planner Hughes-Neel reviewed the Planning Updates Report.

C. Legal Matters

1. Second reading of the proposed amendment to Meeting Times Ordinance 86-3.

Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to commence with the second reading and adopt amendment of Meeting Times Ordinance 2016-02. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Adopt Changing Council Meeting Times Resolution 2016-01.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to adopt the Resolution for Council Meeting Times 2016-01. Councilwoman Laird seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

E. Engineering: None

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D. Water Dept.

1. A Water Line Tie-In is needed at Blue Ridge Parkway near the new Publix. The price is 18,500.00. H&T will conduct the work for the City.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens made a motion to approve the Tie-In from Blue Ridge to Publix for \$18,500.00 to be installed by H&T. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

E. Sewer Dept.: None

F. Parks Dept.:

1. Presentation of Silver Sneaker Program
 - This item was tabled until another time
2. Program Updates-Parks & Recreation Calendar
 - Parks Director Weiler reviewed and discussed the Parks & Recreation Calendar
3. Pool
 - Council discussed cost of draining and acid washing the pool.

Council Action: Councilwoman Laird made a motion to approve \$5,000.00 to drain and acid wash the pool. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

4. Request to advertise for pool employees

Council Action: Councilwoman Laird made a motion to approve permission for Parks Director Weiler to advertisement for two Life Guards and four Pool Attendants. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

VIII. Old Business:

Council Action: Councilwoman Laird made a motion to allow Parks Director Weiler to pursue any funding sources available for the Paddle Trail/Paddle Launch System for Four Mile Creek, Lafayette Creek or Marse Landing. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

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IX. New Business

A. Mayor Russ Barley

1. ADA Access for City Hall Front Lobby Entrance

Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to approve the Quotation to install ADA Compliant Access to City Hall by Stanley Access Technologies, in the amount of \$4,379.00 with the finish color deduction of \$450.00 being at the discretion of the Mayor. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Mayor Barley gave an update on the Community Center renovations. The outside painting is almost complete and the Town Planters has started the landscaping and that should be done by Thursday, March 10th.

B. Councilwoman Brannon

1. Legislative Matters

- There are two Legislative Actions taking place in Tallahassee this week. The first is the Fracking Bill which has been buried and will not be taking place at this time in Florida. The second is a new scaled down tax package. Refer to the League of Cities website for updates.

C. Councilwoman Cuchens

1. Councilwoman Cuchens advised the Council that she will be attending the DEO Ready, Rural Economic Development Program meeting in Chattahoochee the week of March 14th.

D. Councilman Farris

1. Cost of storage rental fee at Portland Self Storage

Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to approve a 10X10 non-climate control storage room at \$85.00 per month to be rented for temporary storage of City records at the Portland Self Storage Facility. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

E. Councilwoman Laird: None

F. Councilwoman McLean: None

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X. Public Comment

1. Mr. Curry approached the podium at this time to Thank Councilwoman Laird for putting them in touch with the St. Joe Foundation in regards to grants. They were awarded \$4,000.00 for their Football program this year.

XI. Adjournment

Mayor Russ Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. The Mayor gavelled and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

Mayor

Council President

ATTEST:

City Clerk

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