

City of Freeport  
May 11, 2015 Workshop Minutes

I. Meeting Opened

The workshop was opened by Mayor Russ Barley at 6:00 p.m.

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

Staff present: City Clerk Gary Mattison, City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel and Parks Director Dana Weiler.

II. Invocation & Pledge

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

III. 2015-2016 Strategic Plan Vision & Goals-Draft

City Clerk Mattison opened by reporting to the Council that he had reviewed the agenda with the City Attorney, who had elected not to attend. The City Attorney will be present at the regular council meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

City Clerk Mattison, with assistance from Parks Director Weiler, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the draft Strategic Plan Vision Statement and draft strategic goals. Some grammar and spelling adjustments were made.

City Clerk Mattison presented a draft addition to the existing City of Freeport Seal; dark blue tabs at top, bottom and sides with each of the Strategic Plan with masthead words (Service-Respect-Trust-Stewardship) in white. City Planner Hughes-Neel suggested that the dark blue tabs be expanded to a dark blue circle framing the existing logo with the four masthead words top, bottom and sides. Hughes-Neel suggested that the font format curve with the arc of the circle. Mayor Barley commented that he would like to see it with the circle frame format. City Clerk Mattison said they would work on it and bring it back.

IV. Personnel Policies Manual-Draft Update

City Clerk Mattison stated that the personnel policies revisions were underway.

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Potential Technology Upgrades Available-Sensus Watering System Meters/  
Customer Service/Staffing Solutions Discussion

City Clerk Mattison: technology upgrades are needed for the City of Freeport North Bay Water System: Sensus System Meters. Mattison explained that the computerized technology of the meters would line up water pumped to water sold. Mattison further explained that going to the new meters would provide much better usage tracking and less truck use expense (fuel and maintenance).

City Clerk Mattison: the cost of one meter excluding installation is \$260. The City has spent \$200,000 on these meters with the original plan that city personnel would install the meters as time permits. Time has not permitted and the installations are moving slowly. The Council needs to consider having the meters installed by the company professionals to save time and money. This would also improve customer service because the customer could see visually when they use the water they are paying for.

Councilwoman Cuchens: does the contractor do an accuracy reading during installation?

City Clerk Mattison: the reading is radio transmitted immediately.

Councilman Farris: how old are the meters in storage?

City Clerk Mattison: 3-4 months old. By not replacing the employee who recently left, that salary/benefits/truck staying out of operation could provide a savings that could go toward paying the company professional to do meter installation.

Councilwoman McLean: it needs to be done before the big development comes in. It will be a savings in the long run to hire a contractor to do the installation.

City Clerk Mattison noted that in his research of billing departments, the cities he reviewed work their billing staff 5 days a week, 8 hours a day; it doesn't work to have 10-hour days.

City Clerk Mattison discussed the proposed Utility Supervisor position. The position would be over the utility departments: water/sewer/roads.

Councilwoman Cuchens: what is the timeframe exactly?

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City Clerk Mattison: in front of the meter installation.

City Planner Hughes-Neel: budget workshops would be starting soon.

City Clerk Mattison: Ideally, the position would be written into the 2015-2016 Budget.

City Clerk Mattison listed some of the expenses the Council needed to be aware of when writing their budgets:

- \$1,000,000 Meter Installation
- \$200,000 Sensus Meters Purchased
- \$150,000 Community Center Renovation (planned)
- \$149,000 Fire Assessment Estimate
- \$50,000 Impact Fees
- \$325,000 Lift Station repairs
- \$40,000 Pool repairs/upgrades
- \$50,000 Fluffy Landing Sewer Upgrade
- \$100,000 Sewer Payment to Walton County

City Clerk Mattison also noted that the Council wouldn't be spending \$508,000 on the fire dept. budget this year.

Councilwoman McLean: those impact fees should be used on the lift stations because the whole system is impacted.

City Clerk Mattison: Larry keeps the water loss under 10%; the Town of Pace has 29% water loss.

Councilwoman Cuchens: the water rates have to be adjusted; they've been the same for years.

Councilwoman McLean: Rural Development won't loan us money until we raise our rates.

City Clerk Mattison: we might look at having a third party review the functions of the city clerk, the bookkeeper and the city planner to make recommendations.

Councilwoman McLean: the bookkeeper doesn't supervise anyone anymore.

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Councilwoman Cuchens suggested the Council consider re-arranging the seating in the Council Chambers so that staff sits at tables on either end of the dais.

Councilwoman Cuchens: when will these items be brought to the Council for action?

Councilman Farris: we need to move on these things instead of talking about them.

City Clerk Mattison: staff is trying to make the agenda more user friendly for the Council; give more explanation, i.e. Action Item, Information Only, etc. Like to bring new things to you as a first reading to gain comments/concerns from the Council and bring it back as a final item/2<sup>nd</sup> reading after.

Councilwoman Cuchens: the utility solutions are going to take a long time.

Councilwoman McLean: it will take some time to find a qualified Utility Supervisor.

Councilwoman Cuchens: please move these items forward to the council meetings so the Council can act on them.

Councilwoman McLean: bring it as a proposal.

Councilwoman Cuchens: we have to prepare for the budgets; these things cost money.

City Clerk Mattison: this concludes the planned discussion.

V. Meeting Adjourned

Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.