

City of Freeport
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, Corrected
August 7, 2014

I. Meeting Called to Order

The August 7, 2014 Special Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Russ Barley at 6:00 p.m.

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

Staff present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel, Fire Chief Chad Harrell, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Fire Captain Tom Palmer, Johnny McCormick, James Bird, Wanda Bird, Donna Hinson, Stacy Ward, Jennifer Douglas.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. New Business

A. 4-day Work Week

Councilwoman McLean presented a proposal to establish a 4-day work week for City Employees with hours from 6:30-5:00 and a ½-hour lunch break. City Hall would remain open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. She explained the process and the savings to employees on travel to work and the benefit of having a 3-day weekend.

Wanda Bird asked questions about how the 4 days worked would be assigned.

Councilwoman Cuchens suggested having a trial period. Attorney Adkinson cautioned the Council not to make the switch too arduous on the employees.

The Council asked who was agreeable to a 4-day work-week

Planner Hughes-Neel stated that she was not opposed to a 4-day work week for the departments which have adequate staff to cover the split; however, in her case, she has no one to trade off with and no one can do her job in her absence. She stated that it would better serve the City for her to be available during the hours City Hall is open. Additionally, she has a child still in school that cannot be dropped off before 7am and she has school activities to contend with.

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Water Supervisor Tuggle said he had one employee, Brendan Day, who is in the same boat as Hughes-Neel with child obligations and another employee who doesn't like the idea.

Wanda Bird spoke for Stacy Ward, who works in the Water & Sewer Billing Dept. and has a child with disabilities. Ward said she was willing to try the new schedule.

Attorney Adkinson suggested exempting certain administrative staff, such as the City Planner and the City Clerk and the Bookkeeper from the 4-day schedule. They could maintain the 5-day workweek with an hour-long lunch break

Board Action: Motion by Councilwoman McLean to establish a 6-month trial of the 4-day work week; exempting the City Planner and the City Clerk, who will follow the 5-day work-week schedule (8-hour days 8am-5pm/1-hour lunch). The council will review in 6-months and determine whether or not to continue. The trial period will begin September 1; council review can take place any time necessary. Any employee(s) who have difficulties can inform their supervisor or any member of the Council. The motion was seconded by Councilman Farris. The vote was 5:0; motion carried.

B. Accrual of Leave

Councilwoman McLean put forward the idea of switching from annual leave/sick leave to PT Personal Time. The Council discussed the matter then determined to let Councilwoman Brannon and Attorney Adkinson contact the League of Cities for options on having the Personnel Policies reviewed and updated, including leave time options.

C. Proposal from Computer Companies

Councilwoman McLean presented 3 quotes she had obtained to upgrade the City's server and computer equipment.

The Council discussed the various problems staff was having with existing equipment.

Per Jennifer Douglas, the Water & Sewer Billing Dept. systems crash frequently and they cannot perform updates because the passcodes are held by I Fix Computers. Councilwoman McLean noted that the City doesn't have a contract with I Fix Computers.

Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett noted that the company was monitoring the City's computers from a remote location; they could access city information at any time.

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Hughes-Neel stated that her system capacity was far too small for the GIS programs she uses in her work; one piece of equipment was partially broken and out of warranty and she requires a laptop for use in various meetings and conferences she attends.

Attorney Adkinson suggested that equipment quotes was putting the cart before the horse; that what the City really needs is an in-house IT Support Technician/IT Purchasing Agent, who could then provide on-going technical support, evaluate the city's system and acquire the best prices for the equipment the City needs. Adkinson suggested that the City do an RFQ for an in-house IT Support Specialist/IT Purchasing Agent.

Board Action: Motion by Councilwoman McLean to advertise an RFQ for an in-house IT Support Specialist/IT Purchasing Agent. Second to motion by Councilman Farris. All ayes; motion carried.

D. \$Purchase Amount for Mayor

Councilwoman McLean stated that the Mayor should have a spending limit for purchases which do not come before the Council. There was much discussion by the audience about an appropriate amount, the kind of expenditures that could be made, and the spending amounts approved for dept. heads in the City. Attorney Adkinson suggested that with a spending limit, the Mayor could provide a monthly expenditure report to Council so they can see what is being spent.

Board Action: Motion by Councilwoman Laird to establish a \$5,000 spending limit for the Mayor. Second to motion by Councilwoman McLean. All ayes; motion carried.

E. Water & Sewer Billing Department

1. Replace deposit with non-refundable fee
2. \$25 to turn on - \$25 to turn off or \$30-\$30?

Councilwoman McLean explained the current process for having service turned on and off. She suggested replacing the deposit with a \$25-\$30 fee to turn the service on or off.

Councilwoman Brannon suggested that they look at this during budget time.

F. Set date(s) for budget workshops

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The Board set the following dates/times for Budget Workshops:

Thursday, August 21, 2014 at 6:30 pm.

Monday, August 25, 2014 at 6:30 pm.

IV. Adjournment

Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Councilwoman McLean. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

APPROVED:

MAYOR

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

ATTEST

CITY CLERK