

Regular City Commission Meeting (Tuesday, March 19, 2024)

Generated by Hayden Page on Thursday, April 11, 2024

A. MEETING OPENER

Procedural: 1. Call to Order - Roll Call, Opening Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Stegall called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

In Attendance:

City Commission - Commissioner Redman, Commissioner Huggins, Vice Mayor Hendrix, Mayor Stegall
City Staff - City Attorney Maines, City Manager Hayes, Finance Director Mecusker, Accounts Payable Clerk Page, Administrative Assistant Evernden

Absent - Commissioner Sirmones

Opening Prayer was led by Commissioner Redman.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Stegall.

Action: 2. Approval of The Agenda Format

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the agenda format.

Motion to approve the agenda format was made by Commissioner Huggins. Motion seconded by Commissioner Redman. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Information: 1. Public Comments (mix-up with presentation by Hospice of Florida and FFA Ag Issues Team presentations combined into public comments)

1. Fred Sirmones, Jr.

Mr. Sirmones addressed the board regarding the possible use of the Community Center for Jukka's summer youth programs that have been planned.

Mr. Sirmones explains that the summer programs are for ages 7-18 years old.

Mr. Sirmones states that the summer programs would benefit the children in the community.

Mr. Sirmones explains that along with arts and crafts, they will have fishing training for the children as well.

Mr. Sirmones explains to the board that the Union County Schools Director of Food Services has offered to provide meals to the youth center.

Mr. Sirmones explains to the board that the deadline to submit the applications is April 1, so there is need for an immediate answer from the board.

Mr. Sirmones thanks the board for their time and consideration for this request.

2. Robert Driggers, 250 NW 3rd St

Mr. Driggers is here on behalf of the Union County Historical Society, and is accompanied by Mr. Tim Whitehead and Pam Whitehead, who currently own the property that is the location of the historic Union County Jail, a staple of the community.

Mr. Whitehead hands out a flyer to each of the board members.

Mr. Driggers explains the history behind the property as well as the jail.

Mr. Driggers stated that the Whitehead Family wishes to donate the property to the City as a piece of historical importance.

Mr. Driggers referenced that a CRA grant might be available to apply for the beautification of the jail, and Vice Mayor Hendrix referenced the CRA district.

Mr. Mecusker explained that the current situation is that the CRA district stops just shy of the property that houses the jail, and that in order to apply for a grant that is approximately \$400,000, the CRA district would have to be expanded by decision of the City Commission.

Mr. Whitehead explains the reasoning for wishing to donate the property.

Vice Mayor Hendrix deferred to the approach by deferring to City Attorney Maines.

Mr. Maines explained that research will have to be done, and he will confer with the City Manager and be in touch regarding this matter.

The City Commission thanks Tim and Pam Whitehead and Mr. Driggers for their time and presentation.

Mr. Riherd from the historical society stated that the historical society has agreed to pay for the appraisal and paperwork associated with this project.

Discussion, Information: 2. Presentation by Codie Carter at Hospice of Florida

Mr. Tom from the Hospice of Florida is here this evening with members of the staff of the hospice organization.

Mr. Tom explains that the hospice organization is attempting to extend their reach to include Union County and Lake Butler for hospice and palliative care.

Mr. Tom explains that in order to apply for the ability to provide care, a letter of support from the board would be needed.

City Attorney Maines explained to Hospice of Florida staff that there are competing hospice organizations that will compete for this community to provide that service.

Vice Mayor Hendrix confirmed that hospice care and this service is no cost to the families in need of this service, and Mr. Tom confirmed that.

Hospice of Florida thanks the board for their time, and the privilege to speak.

Discussion: 3. Lake Butler FFA Ag Issues Team Presenting 2024 Farm Bill

The Lake Butler FFA Ag Issues Team presented to the City Commission the 2024 Farm Bill that discusses the issues regarding Food Waste.

The presentation well presented by FFA Agriculture Issues team and covered a variety of information of the food waste in the community.

The City Commission thanks the FFA Agriculture Issues team for their presentation.

Public Comments (continued):

Faith Williams, 530 SW 1st Street

- Addresses her issue which is regarding the 14th Amendment regarding the ability to travel.
- Explains to the board that she is of the opinion that her 14th Amendment is being violated.
- Explained that the practice of a law enforcement officer prohibiting the right to travel is violating the 14th Amendment.
- Stated that she invokes her 14th Amendment right to drive the city streets without having a driver's license.

Mayor Stegall banged the gavel and closed the floor for public comments.

C. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER

Action: 1. Consent Agenda

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the consent agenda in one motion.

Vice Mayor Hendrix provides accommodation to Hayden Whitehead for taking the initiative to post the dogs in the city's animal control shelter on his personal Facebook page, in successful attempt of adopting out the shelter dogs.

Vice Mayor Hendrix also provides accommodation to Michael Mallard on the transitional period for the new playground equipment.

Motion to approve the consent agenda in one motion was made by Commissioner Redman. Motion seconded by Commissioner Huggins. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Action, Procedural: 2. First Reading of Ordinance No. 2024-01

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-01 to be read by title only.

Mr. Maines explains the specifics regarding this ordinance, explaining that at the previous meeting, the development company was present and discussed the ability to sell packaged alcohol within a certain distance to a church and school property.

This resolution is to modify the distance requirement of the current ordinance which is 335 feet.

Vice Mayor Hendrix wanted to clarify that the ordinance modification is not affecting the church, but the school.

Motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-01 to be read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Title only read by City Attorney Maines. Motion seconded by Commissioner Redman. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Action, Discussion: 3. Resolution No. 2024-02

Recommended Action: Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-02 for the FDOT SCOP Grant to be read by title only.

Vice Mayor Hendrix explained the FDOT SCOP grant specifics, and that it was received by Mittauer and Associates in 2021, and it has had to be extended due to delays caused by Mittauer and Associates and has been pushed back to 2026.

Vice Mayor Hendrix stated that she is gathering information regarding all the city's grants as well as the invoices associated with Mittauer & Associates.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-02 for the FDOT SCOP Grant to be read by title only was made by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Title only read by City Attorney Maines. Motion seconded by Commissioner Redman. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Vice Mayor Hendrix explained to the board regarding the issues with grant funding and that the former City Manager and Mayor stated that the City does not have the money for some of these projects.

Vice Mayor Hendrix provided information to the board explaining that the City is paying for multiple loans and involved with several grants.

Mayor Stegall explained that he had authorized Vice Mayor Hendrix to act as the board's liaison between Mittauer and the City for this process.

Vice Mayor Hendrix and City Manager Hayes explained that there is a meeting scheduled for this upcoming Monday at 9:30am with Mittauer and at 1:30pm with Fred Fox Enterprises.

D. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Discussion, Information: 1. City Manager's Report March 2024

City Manager Hayes addressed the topics of discussion located on her report.

Selling the property at 9422 SW SR 121:

-Explained that the building is now vacant, and that the money used in attempts to finish it were ARPA dollars that were inappropriately spent by prior administration.

-Recommends selling the property.

-The board collectively agrees to authorize the City Manager to proceed with preparing a proposal to put the property on the market for sale.

-The board collectively agrees to also place the money from the sale of the account to be put into a restricted fund for board-approval expenses only.

Discussion on increasing the rental price for Community Center and Townsend Green Building:

-Explains that there is a need to increase the rental price, after reviewing the current city rental rates that are extremely low.

-Recommends increasing the rental rates to comparable surrounding cities and counties.

-Wishes to review the special exception regarding staff renting the building and clarifying the exceptions for staff rental.

-The board collectively authorizes the City Manager to prepare a proposal for increasing the rates and establishing the fair rental prices for staff and local offices to be presented at the May meeting.

Discussion of Union Depot - Showers and sleeping overnight:

-Addressed the Union Depot building, and that there had been discussion about showers being installed as well as cots being dropped off for them to use in severe weather events, and that transitioning the Union Depot building to be accommodating to hikers is underway.

Permission to sell 2021 Chevy Silverado 1500LT:

Motion to authorize the City Manager to sell the 2021 Chevy Silverado 1500 and for the funds to be put in a restricted account to be used by the board only was made by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Motion seconded by Commissioner Redman. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Motion to declare the 2021 Chevy Silverado 1500 as surplus was made by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Motion seconded by Commissioner Redman. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Permission to use board-restricted funds to purchase handicap swings for Fletcher Myers Park and Westside Park:

-Vice Mayor Hendrix explained that there is additional funding available from the Union County Health Department grant that can be used for the purchase of the referenced swings.

The board provides approval to City Manager Hayes to purchase the two swings for the two parks.

Purchasing of all gas and diesel at Union Beverage:

-Stated that after speaking with Commissioner Huggins regarding fuel costs, she researched the various gas stations and made the decision to begin using Union Beverage to purchase all city fuel at a discounted rate.

E. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Action, Reports: 1. Financial Report for period October 1, 2023, through February 29, 2024

Recommended Action: Motion to approve financial report for period October 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024.

Accounts Payable Clerk Hayden Page presented the Financial Report to the board on behalf of the Finance Department.

Finance Director Dave Mecusker explains to the board the issue surrounding solid waste rates for commercial customers.

Mr. Mecusker explained that when the budget was prepared, the solid waste commercial rates were not increased.

Mr. Mecusker explained that with the recent renewal with GFL, the company increased the commercial rates 40%.

Mr. Mecusker explained that the request is to increase the city rates by 15%.

The board requested the City Manager and Finance Director to prepare a proposal for the next meeting with options regarding the increase to commercial rates only, with guidance from City Attorney Maines.

Motion to approve financial report for period October 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024, was made by Commissioner Redman. Motion seconded by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

F. REPORT OF CITY ATTORNEY

Discussion: 1. REPORT OF JOHN E MAINES IV, CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney Maines addressed the previous rule that was enacted by the former City Manager that employees were not allowed to speak to City Commissioners.

Mr. Maines met with Commissioner Redman and after discussing this matter, he stated that it is important to address the actuality to this matter.

Mr. Maines explained that there are no restrictions regarding the communication between City employees and City Commissioners.

Mr. Maines also explained that any employee with issues regarding personnel, or issues with operations, the issue needs to be addressed to the City Manager first, and to follow the appropriate chain of command to avoid confusion, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation.

G. COMMENTS OR REMARKS BY COMMISSION

Discussion: 1. COMMENTS OR REMARKS BY COMMISSION

Commissioner Redman- Farm Share fed 205 families, and all be well and the next Farmshare is the 2nd Saturday of April.

Commissioner Huggins- Thanks the board and Mr. Maines for the open line of communication, and states that everyone on the board is here for the citizens and appreciates the ability to work as a team.

Vice Mayor Hendrix- Also thanks Mr. Maines, and referenced the historical preservation board, and stated that this matter can be discussed further at the next meeting.

Mayor Stegall- Thanks to Kim for the great work done in her first two months, thanks Vice Mayor Hendrix for her unstoppable efforts with Mittauer issue, and thanks to City Attorney Maines, as well as Michael Mallard for their hard work in Public Works.

City Manager Hayes requested to say thank you to Mr. Mecusker, Elaine, Hayden, and the newest employee Michelle, and thanks the people who work together as a team everyday, and she is incredibly grateful for the hard work and stress everyone has endured.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Action: 1. Adjourn

Recommended Action: Motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Redman. Motion seconded by Vice Mayor Hendrix. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.