

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION HELD TUESDAY,
AUGUST 27, 2019, 5:00 PM AT THE APALACHICOLA COMMUNITY CENTER.**

PRESENT: Mayor Van W. Johnson, Sr.
Commissioner Jimmy Elliott
Mayor Pro Tem Brenda Ash
Commissioner Mitchell Bartley
Commissioner Anita Grove

Ron Nalley, City Manager
Deborah Guillotte, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Van Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. CITY ATTORNEY SELECTION COMMITTEE

Commissioner Anita Grove suggested John Alber and Bonnie Davis be considered for the City Attorney Selection Committee. After further discussion, it was suggested that, Peter Gallant, Bobby Miller and Commissioner Grove also be appointed to the City Attorney Selection Committee.

Commissioner Brenda Ash made a motion to appoint the following members to the City Attorney Selection Committee: Anita Grove – Chair, John Alber, Bonnie Davis, Peter Gallant and Bobby Miller. Commissioner Jimmy Elliott seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

B. GRANTS DISCUSSION

Mr. Ron Nalley stated that a team of City staff who have experience with grant writing has been formed and began meeting weekly on August 7, 2019. The team includes Ron Nalley, Cindy Clark, Jill Rourke, and Augusta West. The impetus for the formation of this team is the large amount of new grant dollars coming down from hurricane relief programs. There is concern that the City might miss out on funding opportunities without a collaborative, organized team effort. The goals are to identify grant programs that align with City needs, organize a master list of grants and timelines, delegate grant writing duties, and to collaborate on applications. In addition, discussions with other possible grant partners and organizations are taking place in order to determine whether outside grant writing assistance may be needed. A notable challenge for the grant team has been the inability to respond to grant submittal requirements that have a quick turnaround time or deadline and still meet the Commission's requirement of presenting all grants for approval prior to submittal. Mr. Nalley is requesting that the City Commission allow the team the ability to submit grants that align with the City's needs with the understanding that the grant will be presented to the Commission at their next regular meeting. If there are concerns, the Commission can then request that staff withdraw the grant or express its desire to not accept the grant if awarded. The grants that staff typically apply for will require no cash match. Commissioner Ash stated she would like a City Commissioner to be on the grant team. A few citizens then expressed their concern with submitting grants without prior approval from the City Commission.

Following discussion, Commissioner Ash made a motion to allow the grant team including herself, the ability to submit grants that are aligned with the City's needs without prior submittal and approval from the City Commission and to present the grant at the next regular scheduled meeting. Commissioner Mitchell Bartley seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Ash then amended the above motion to include that if there are any concerns that come up, that there will be a special meeting held. Commissioner Bartley seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

C. 2019-2020 ANNUAL BUDGET AND CIP REVIEW

1) Fee Schedule Review – Mr. Nalley reviewed the proposed fee schedule for the 2019-2020 annual budget which highlighted proposed new or increased fees including the gun range, tree removal fees, library service fees, sign permit application fees, zoning compliance fees, sidewalk café use fees and the mobile food truck permit application fee. Other fees were proposed by the City’s building inspection contractor EPCI. Mr. Nalley stated fees at the marinas are still being researched and staff will have a recommendation in the near future. Commissioner Elliott expressed his concern of having individual electric meters at the marinas. Mr. Nalley stated there is a grant coming that will cover a lot of these issues at the marinas.

2) Rate Use Comparison – In his report, Mr. Nalley reviewed how City bills are calculated, stating that about 79% of our customers use less than 5,000 gallons per month and 21% of our customers use over 6,000 gallons per month.

3) Budget Workshop Revisions – Mr. Nalley reviewed the spreadsheet detailing changes made by the Commission during the last budget workshop. It should be noted that in both the general and water/sewer fund, reductions or increases were needed in order to balance the budget. These were not specifically requested by the Commission but recommended by Mr. Nalley to cover the remaining costs associated with the Commission’s proposed revisions.

4) Community Redevelopment Agency - Mr. Nalley gave a brief update on the funding status of the CRA and asked for the Commission’s direction in developing a proposed budget for the organization. Mr. Nalley stated at this time the City owes the CRA \$161,000 and for FY 2019/2020 an estimated amount of \$75,842. Mr. Nalley stated that it has been suggested to suspend payments to the CRA program and that the City would then work with the County through an interlocal agreement to pay back what is owed. This means that during this time the County or the City would not be required to make any future allocations, and that the City would give Augusta West ninety days notice that the City could not fund this position. Mr. Nalley stated staff is still researching some legal and financial questions on how to best resolve this issue. Commissioner Grove suggested suspending the CRA and addressing it again in five years, effective immediately. Mr. Nalley stated that Ms. West has an employment agreement with a ninety day notification requirement and that the notice would coincide with October 1, 2019, which is the new fiscal year. Numerous concerns were expressed by citizens on how to solve this issue. Commissioner Ash requested staff get the pros and cons of all options and the benefits each one would give the City and then the Board can make a decision. Mayor Johnson recommended the same, and suggested also researching reactivating the CRA after suspension of the program.

Commissioner Grove requested that the staff prepare a recommendation for this by the final adoption of the budget on September 24, 2019.

5) Franklin County Request – Mr. Nalley stated the County has requested that the City contribute \$7,000 to the County for a part-time animal control officer. The County feels it is important that the City contribute to this cost due to most of their calls are from within the two municipalities. Mr. Nalley has discussed the issue

with Mr. Moron and the County is willing to split the initial cost over two years. Mr. Nalley stated that the County is dispatching animal control without having one of our officers respond to the call, which our officers

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may be able to handle themselves. Mr. Moron is willing to see how many fewer animal control calls are dispatched as a result of this change.

Mayor Johnson stated that the county collects property taxes from city residents and would like to know what services the City is getting for the current amount of revenue being paid. Mayor Johnson is concerned that the City residents are subsidizing something that we are already contributing towards. Mayor Johnson requested staff research how much the City is paying in taxes to the County and not vote on the issue at this time.

Commissioner Bartley made a motion for staff to research this issue and get more information on what city tax payers get for their county tax dollars. Commissioner Elliott seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

6) County Library Director Position – Mr. Nalley informed the Board that the County has approached the City about the possibility of working with them on their vacant library director position. Mr. Nalley stated there will be further discussion, which may impact the budget. In a response to a question from Commissioner Ash, Mr. Nalley stated that the request is to explore the possibility of using the library director position jointly.

7) Mr. Nalley stated that at their last meeting, the Recreation Committee had a \$65,100 project they wanted included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Nalley wanted to remind the board that this doesn't mean it is automatically funded, and that there are fourteen other projects being proposed at this time. If the Board would like to fund this project, they would need to back out one of the previous fourteen projects to cover the cost of this project. The Recreation Committee also recommended an allocation of funds for the recreation line item, since it has a zero balance. Mayor Johnson then gave a brief history of the \$20,000 that was previously in the recreation fund line item. Mayor Johnson stated that if the City puts money back into the recreation line item, that this should not be used only for the recreation committee but other recreation programs as well.

D. CITY MANAGER EVALUATION

Mr. Nalley stated that the Mayor has summarized the responses from the Commissioners individual evaluation forms. Mayor Johnson gave a brief review of how he calculated the categories to get the scores. Mayor Johnson stated according to the scores, Mr. Nalley overall did an outstanding job and exceeded expectations, with no marks under a score of three. In a response to a question from Mayor Johnson, Mr. Nalley stated that his employment agreement doesn't require a renewal and that it remains in effect until his services are no longer needed by the Commission or he decides to resign.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Commissioner Elliott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm. Commissioner Grove seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Van W. Johnson, Sr., Mayor

Deborah Guillotte, City Clerk