

A Regular Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 4PM at the Apalachicola Community Center, #1 Bay Avenue, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Donna Duncan, Commissioner Despina George, City Attorney Dan Hartman, City Manager Travis Wade, City Clerk Lee Mathes, Chief of Police Bobby Varnes, Finance Director Mark Gerspacher, Planner Bree Robinson, Code Enforcement Officer PJ Erwin

Regular meeting opened by Mayor Ash followed by Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Ash outlined the following agenda amendments:

1. New Business – Add Item Number 7 – Leslie Street Engineering
2. New Business – Add Item Number 8 – Approval of FSF Parade and HWY 98 Closure
3. Unfinished Business – Add Item Number 4 – Reschedule Workshop to Discuss Building Dept.
4. Unfinished Business – Add Item Number 5 – FDOT/M-SCOP Agreement Resolution 2023-04
5. Consent Agenda – Delete P&Z Minutes 7/10/23

Motion to approve agenda with above amendments made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 3 to 0.

Commissioner Duncan joined meeting at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Martha Harris and Patti McCartney spoke supporting Myrtis Wynn for Planning & Zoning Alternate.

RANEY CARRIAGE HOUSE – CHOWDER HOUSE CAFÉ REQUEST

William Schmidt outlined proposal to operate restaurant inside the Carriage House.

Commission addressed concerns including parking, liability insurance, metal shed on property, profit calculation allocation to Raney House, and Historical Society approval.

Caty Greene, representing Historical Society, stated they have not yet voted on the proposal, and they do have concerns.

Mayor Ash recommends to table request at this time until parties involved has addressed concerns, and then come back before Commission seeking approval.

Motion to table request at this time and come back before Commission after involved parties have addressed concerns made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Motion carried 4 to 0.

BRING ME A BOOK LEASE AGREEMENT

Michaelin and David Watts outlined mission for Bring Me A Book and outlined improvements made to City Hall Complex that were for the Children’s Learning Center. David Watts outlined the proposed lease stating BMABF agrees to pay \$100/month for utilities, \$25/month to be used as a maintenance fund for the building and offset the remainder of the balance using the \$41,215.20 that has already been expended to make the building habitual.

Attorney Hartman stated a draft lease has not yet been prepared, but lease would be in standard format. BMABF is asking for \$.25/per square foot instead of the standard \$.29/per square foot and rent to be \$125/month using the \$41,215.20 as credit that have been paid on improvements.

City Manager Wade stated that both Bring Me a Book and Moving Education Institute cannot claim the \$41,215.20 credit, and not every expenditure classifies as an improvement.

Mayor Ash addressed concerns stating that more lease holders are becoming nonprofit organizations and are asking for reduced rental rates.

Commissioner Duncan stated she would like to see a draft lease.

Commissioner George stated that tenants are having to make the space habitual, so the City can’t charge the full rental rate. The City needs to have a standard on how nonprofit organizations are treated regarding leasing City space.

Bonnie Davis stated the credit belongs to Bring Me a Book and not Moving Education Institute.

Commission agreed to authorize Attorney Hartman and City Manager Wade to negotiate lease agreement for Bring Me A Book.

WATER DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

Motion to approve Hartzell Air Movement as a sole source provider to replace the blower motor at the ground storage tank in the amount of \$19,949 and as an emergency purchase approved by City Manager Wade made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Motion carried 4 to 0.

PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEMBER

Motion to appoint Myrtis Wynn as an alternate member to the Planning & Zoning Board made by Commissioner Duncan, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

CAPITAL AREA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY REQUEST

Tim Center requests a one-year extension to use the 6th Street Recreation Center to house the Early Head Start program while Capital Area Community Action Agency looks for a permanent location. Mr. Center stated the plans to move the program to the City Hall Complex failed due to rising costs of renovations that exceeded their budget. Mr. Center stated the plan is to be out of the 6th Street Recreation Center by January but requests a year extension to allow more time to find permanent accommodations if needed.

Motion to extend Capital Area Community Action Agency lease to use 6th Street Recreation Center to house Early Head Start Program for 6 months, with a maximum of 12 months, and come back before the Commission in 6 months to give update on relocation process made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Commission discussed the rental rate for Holy Family while 6th Street Recreation Center is being occupied by Early Head Start.

City Manager Wade stated facility rental rates will be in the fee schedule which will be discussed at the budget workshop.

1ST READING ORDINANCE 2023-03 – SIGN ORDINANCE

Attorney Hartman read Ordinance 2023-03 by title as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENT OF PART II – CODE, SUBPART B – LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 113 – SIGN REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS, METHOD OF COMPUTATION, PROVIDING FOR A PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF SIGN REGULATIONS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS, PROVIDING FOR REGULATION OF MURALS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Commissioner George and Commissioner Grove addressed corrections and recommendations.

Commissioner George recommended to table 1st Reading until corrections can be made and readdress at September meeting.

Motion to table 1st Reading at this time until corrections can be incorporated in ordinance, and readdress at September meeting made by Commissioner George, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 4 to 0.

LESLIE STREET ENGINEERING

Motion to award engineering for Leslie Street Project to Dewberry Engineering made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

APPROVAL OF SEAFOOD FESTIVAL PARADE AND HIGHWAY 98 CLOSURE

Motion to approve Highway 98 be closed for the duration for the Florida Festival Parade to be held on November 4, 2023, with proper permits and detours in place made Commissioner George, seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Motion carried 4 to 0.

MOVING EDUCATION INSTITUTE LEASE APPROVAL

Attorney Hartman review proposed Moving Education Institute lease.

Mayor Ash recommends including financial section in lease where lessee provides financial statements.

Discussion held concerning installation of handicap restrooms and fire alarm system.

Bonnie Davis stated MEI would be happy to provide financial statements.

Motion to approve lease for Moving Education Institute made by Commissioner George, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 4 to 0.

SEAFOOD FESTIVAL LEASE AGREEMENT

Attorney Hartman outlined proposed lease.

Motion to approve Seafood Festival Lease as outlined by Attorney Hartman made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

AVENU INSIGHTS & ANALYTICS, LLC SOFTWARE

Code Enforcement Officer PJ Erwin stated that this software will aid in identifying and monitoring short term rentals.

Finance Director Mark Gerspacher stated there is money left in the planning budget to cover the software cost, and the software maintenance will be included in the 2023-2024 budget.

Ms. Erwin stated the training cost is \$4,000 and hopes it can be completed in this budget year also.

Motion to award 3-year contract to Avenu Insights & Analytics, LLC for identification and monitoring of short-term rentals within the City limits of Apalachicola for a \$4,000 set up fee and an annual fee of \$6,020 that will be incorporated within the 2023-2024 budget, and also approve \$4,000 for training made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

RESCHEDULE WORKSHOP – BUILDING DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION

Motion to set workshop to discuss Building Department processes and procedures for August 23, 2023, at 5PM made by Commissioner George, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 4 to 0.

FDOT/M-SCOP AGREEMENT RESOLUTION 2023-04

City Manager Wade read Resolution 2023-04 in its entirety.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-04 made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

MAYOR & COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Mayor Ash thanked City Manager Wade and Planner Bree Robinson for their work on the Leslie Street Project.

Commission discussed agenda packet distribution deadlines, BOA and P&Z applications, Apalachicola Bay Restoration, and ethics training mandatory attendance.

CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Wade stated he will be speaking at the Florida League of Cities Conference, reminded everyone of the ethics training scheduled for August 15th, updated Commission on HCA renovations and fire hydrant replacement project.

GRANTS COORDINATOR COMMUNICATIONS

Report attached.

FINANCE DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS

Finance Director Mark Gerspacher reminded Commission that the first budget workshop is scheduled for August 16th at 4PM.

Mayor Ash stated she would like current financials.

ATTORNEY COMMUNICATIONS

No report.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve consent agenda with deletion of Planning & Zoning July 10th minutes made by Commissioner George and seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried 4 to 0.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Department reports included in agenda packet.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 4 to 0.

Brenda Ash, Mayor

Lee Mathes, City Clerk

