

A Regular Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Commission Meeting Room, 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, City Manager Travis Wade, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, (Absent: Commissioner Duncan)

Workshop Meeting opened by Mayor Ash followed by invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Brenda Ash presented an amendment requested to add New Business Item # 2, Approval of Fire House Subs Public Safety Grant.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Motion to adopt the agenda with the amendment made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

AAHM PRESENTATION: African American Museum 95% Completed Documents

A representative presented the 95% completed documents for the African American Museum project. He showed slides comparing the original concept from January 2024 to the current 95% completed plans. The presenter explained changes made to the roof design, floor plans, and overall layout. He described the exterior and interior finishes, including brick and stucco elements. The presentation also covered lighting plans, reception area design, and potential plaza development.

Commissioners provided feedback on the design, with some expressing concern about the red brick elements making the building look dated. The presenter agreed to explore alternative brick colors or reducing the amount of brick to maintain a more contemporary aesthetic while still tying it to the neighboring Holy Family Senior Center.

City Manager Wade noted there was an accelerated timeline for the project, with construction needing to be complete by the end of 2025. He mentioned the possibility of 6-month extensions if needed.

The commission reached a consensus to move forward with finalizing the plans to 100% completion, with the understanding that interior design elements could be decided later with community input.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS: Letter of Support for EWSD Infrastructure Grant Application

City Manager Wade explained that the East Point Water and Sewer Division was applying for a grant and requested a letter of support from the commission.

Motion made by Commissioner Grove to support the letter of support for East Point Water and Sewer, seconded by Commissioner Elliott with Discussion. The motion carried, 4-0.

During discussion, Commissioner Elliott provided additional context about the Team Franklin affordable housing initiative, which involves multiple governmental entities working together. She

clarified that the City of Apalachicola would not be financially obligated or committing any property through this letter of support.

Commissioner George expressed concerns about language in the grant application that suggested the City had pledged to manage property outside city limits. Attorney Hartman advised that the letter of support did not constitute a legal commitment to provide land or money.

NEW BUSINESS: Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant Award Approval

City Manager Wade explained that the city had been awarded a grant for jaws of life equipment from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation. He requested approval to accept the award and proceed with procurement.

Motion made by Commissioner Grove moved for the City of Apalachicola City Commission, on behalf of the City of Apalachicola Volunteer Fire Department, to approve and accept the award from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation for the requested Hurst spreader, cutter, ram and accessories valued up to \$50,000. Commissioner George seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Grant Application Approval Policy (Draft)

City Manager Wade presented a draft grant application approval policy for the commission's consideration. The policy outlined scenarios where city commission approval would be required for grant applications.

Commissioner George expressed concerns about the policy, potentially giving away the commission's authority to set the vision for the city. She argued that the charter does not give the city manager authority to file grant applications without commission approval.

Commissioner Elliott countered that the established City Manager form of government allows for day-to-day operations to be handled by staff, including grant applications. She suggested that commissioners could still stay informed through regular meetings with the grant coordinator.

Discussion Held.

After discussion, the commission was unable to reach a consensus on approving the draft policy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grove to table the matter, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. None opposed. The motion carried 4-0.

The commission agreed to have Commissioner Grove work with Attorney Hartman, City Manager Wade, and the grants coordinator to revise the policy for consideration at the next meeting.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mayor Ash commended the Water and Sewer Department field crew for their exemplary work during Hurricane Idalia. She requested that the Public Works Department provide written mowing and storm drain maintenance schedules. The Mayor also proposed scheduling a visionary retreat for the Commission in January to discuss the city's vision, potential charter updates, and strategic planning. The Commission agreed to hold the retreat on January 4, 2025, at 10:00 AM, with the location to be determined.

Commissioners echoed praise for city staff's storm response efforts. They also discussed the need for additional AED devices in the city and potential funding sources.

Commissioner George raised concerns about the fountain removal at Riverfront Park, noting that some citizens had expressed interest in repairing and maintaining it. She requested cost estimates for repairs and ongoing maintenance.

Commissioner George also addressed issues with live streaming city meetings, requesting that all commission meetings be streamed after significant investment in recording equipment. City Manager Wade agreed to live-stream all meetings going forward.

Commissioner Elliott suggested extending live streaming to committee meetings as well. She also requested that the city implement annual employee evaluations to support merit-based raises.

CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS - Report Attached

City Manager Wade referred to his written report for most items. He highlighted that city employees assisted with recovery efforts in Horseshoe Beach by cooking meals for workers.

Report Included in Agenda Packet

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS –

Report Included in Agenda Packet

ATTORNEY COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Hartman requested that Commissioners review the draft encroachment ordinance and provide feedback. He also presented draft language for cemetery regulations, asking for commissioner input on whether to use specific language banning "haunted" or "paranormal" tours or more general language prohibiting disruptive behavior. The commission agreed to discuss the cemetery regulations at the November meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Elliott moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner George. None opposed. Motion carried 4-0.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Included in Agenda Packet

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. None opposed. Motion carried, 4-0.

Meeting adjourned.

BRENDA ASH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

SHENEIDRA CUMMINGS