

A Workshop Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on April 30, 2025 at 4:00 PM at the Commission Meeting Room located at 74 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, City Manager Michael Brillhart City Planner Bree Robinson, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, Attorney Hartman

Commissioner Donna Duncan-absent

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash followed by invocation and pledge of allegiance.

### **Agenda Adoption**

A motion was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried, 5-0.

### **Public Comment**

Here and none.

### **Stewardship Funding Discussion and Capital Improvement Ranking**

Manager Brillhart presented the draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which combined capital improvement projects identified over the last few years (2022-2024) with Stewardship Act projects (highlighted in gray) for which the city is seeking legislative funding. He explained this was an initial discussion of the draft plan, which would likely take about two months to finalize before bringing it forward as an attachment to an ordinance or resolution during the budget process.

Mr. Brillhart noted that projects in the first year (2025-2026) would be identified as part of the annual budget, while remaining years would include projects needing funding from legislative appropriations, grants, or local funding. Some cost numbers would need adjustment as they were from 2023 through last year, and some projects were still in the design phase. Updated figures would likely be available by the end of June.

The Mayor informed the Commission that the budget would likely not be approved by the end of the legislative session and would probably go through a callback process. The city was still in line for either \$2.5 million or \$5 million in Stewardship Act funding, depending

on how the process worked out. The Mayor asked for the Commission's input on top priorities for funding.

Mr. Brillhart explained that the House of Representatives budget bill had identified \$2.5 million for the Apalachicola Stewardship Act, while the Senate bill included \$5 million. Due to significant differences in the overall total budget, negotiations would likely continue over the next month, with the budget component discussion probably occurring in June.

Bree provided an update on the fire hydrant replacement project, noting that of the 215 hydrants, approximately 110 remained to be replaced. The city received funding for half of those, leaving about 55 still needing replacement at a cost of approximately \$300,000-\$350,000, rather than the \$2 million shown on the draft.

City Attorney Hartman discussed the Denton Cove Lift Station repair, noting that the city was currently in litigation with the Denton Cove developers with mediation scheduled for May. He explained that the original plan called for the city to contribute \$30,000 and the developer to provide up to \$100,000, but those figures were from 3-4 years ago and costs had increased. He suggested budgeting more than the \$30,000 listed to help resolve the situation and address the critical needs.

The Mayor asked whether the Commission should prioritize wastewater projects over water department projects. Mr. Brillhart agreed that wastewater was critical due to regulatory compliance issues, while Bree noted that several new commercial developments were creating additional burden on the lift stations, potentially leading to capacity issues.

Discussion held.

The Commission discussed the lift station rehabilitation as being a high priority, particularly because failures could lead to significant problems. The spray field project was also noted as important, though Bree mentioned they had received partial funding (\$130,000) through an appropriation and had been able to purchase spray heads, solar panels, batteries, pumps, and other equipment. She was seeking approval to use the remaining funds for road repairs, valve replacements, and a ROFA communication system, which would address most of the spray field needs.

Bree also provided an update on the wastewater treatment plant project, explaining that the \$18 million from DEP would cover Phase 1, making the plant operational and addressing the highest priorities. She noted that Phase 2 would likely receive funding from

DEP in the fall through Florida Resilience, as DEP was aware of the city's situation and seemed sympathetic.

Commissioner Elliott and Commissioner George expressed support for prioritizing lift station rehabilitation, followed by water plant electronic upgrades due to its relatively low cost. Commissioner Drye suggested prioritizing wastewater projects first, followed by water projects, with the septic-to-sewer conversion moved to the bottom of the list due to its high cost.

For non-Stewardship Act CIP projects, Mr. Brillhart noted that the storm water inflow and infiltration study would be valuable, though Bree confirmed it was already funded through an appropriation and was underway with Dewberry Engineers. She mentioned that once the study was complete, it would likely identify a new set of projects that would need to be addressed.

The Commission discussed the collection line replacement/repair project, which Bree explained was estimated at \$10 million and would be a Phase 2 byproduct of the inflow and infiltration study.

The Commission directed staff to prioritize wastewater projects for Stewardship Act funding, particularly lift station rehabilitation, followed by water department projects. Mr. Brillhart confirmed he would adjust the schedule over the next month, working with staff to review and cost-adjust the non-stewardship capital projects, with the goal of bringing back a staff draft in June. He would also work with state officials regarding the Stewardship Act priorities as adopted by the Commission.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried, 4-0.

**Meeting adjourned.**

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**Brenda Ash, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

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**Sheneidra Cummings, City Clerk**