

A Special Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on June 4, 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 Donna Duncan, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, City Manager Michael Brillhart, Finance Director Lee Mathes, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, Police Chief Bobby Varnes

### **Agenda Adoption**

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

### **Public Comment**

Lynn Wilder commented.  
Russell Turner commented.  
Kung Li commented.  
Virginia Crevie commented.  
Cathy Buell commented.  
Frenchie Haynes commented.

### **Discussion: Southern Environmental Solutions**

A representative from Southern Environmental Solutions addressed the Commission regarding the mold testing conducted at city hall. He explained that based on his review of the testing done by another company, the methods appeared to be within industry standards and the lab was accredited. He noted that all areas tested showed the presence of mold, with none coming back acceptable.

When asked directly by Commissioner Grove if he would work in the offices, he responded that he would not, and recommended vacating as soon as possible for health reasons based on the totality of circumstances.

He explained that his company had offered stabilization equipment at no cost to help with the situation, but emphasized this would not fully correct the issue. He stated that remediation would be "untenably expensive" and likely not fully successful.

Commissioner Duncan asked about the current treatment measures, and the representative clarified they were for stabilization only, not remediation, describing it as a "band-aid" rather than a solution.

Further discussion held.

## **Unfinished Business: City Hall Relocation**

### Moving Education Institute

City Attorney Hartman explained that after discussions with Frenchie Haynes and Ms. Webb of Moving Education Institute, they proposed relocating the camp to the Sixth Street Recreation Center for the final two weeks of their program starting June 30th.

A Motion to authorize the use of the Sixth Street Recreation Center by Moving Education Inc. through July 15, 2025, from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM was made by Commissioner Duncan, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

### Food Pantry

Mr. Brillhart recommended offering one of the field house units for the food pantry. Laurie Switzer with the Food Pantry expressed gratitude for the offer and requested to view the space to ensure it would accommodate their needs.

A Motion to approve the food pantry moving into the field house was made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

### Fitness Center Proposal

Kung Lee presented the details of the MOU proposal that would allow the fitness center to remain as tenants. The key elements included:

1. Physical sequestration of the fitness center area from the rest of the building, noting that the structure was originally a separate building with a cinder block wall up to the roof line.
2. Electricity and water arrangements, with the fitness center's rent covering electrical costs.
3. Insurance provisions allowing the city to drop hazard insurance while the fitness center maintains liability insurance.

4. Liability releases for members acknowledging mold presence.
5. Regular monitoring and remediation plans.

Extensive discussion followed regarding the proposal. Attorney Hartman expressed concerns about the waiver's effectiveness without proper remediation and certification that the area is safe. He noted particular concern about the fact that minors use the facility and parents cannot legally waive negligence claims for their children.

Rhett Butler from the water department raised serious concerns about methane gas hazards from dry P-traps in abandoned portions of the building, explaining the deadly nature of methane gas and the specialized equipment needed to detect it.

After lengthy deliberation about certification requirements, potential liability issues, and the practical challenges of maintaining the building safely, the Commission decided more work was needed on the MOU.

Motion by Commissioner Elliott to approve the MOU was withdrawn (with Commissioner George rescinding the second) in favor of continued discussions.

The Commission scheduled a follow-up meeting for June 17, 2025, at 4:00 PM to revisit the fitness center proposal after Attorney Hartman and the fitness center representatives work on addressing the concerns raised.

#### City Hall Relocation Decision

Commissioner Elliott moved to formally approve the relocation of city hall to 1 Bay Avenue.

A motion to relocate city hall to 1 Bay Avenue in Apalachicola, Florida 32320 by June 30th in accordance with the 60-day notice was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Motion carried, 4-1, with Commissioner George opposed.

Commissioner George objected to the motion, citing concerns about insufficient notice for this agenda item according to the Commission's rules of procedure. Attorney Hartman advised that while the notice was not perfect, it was in substantive compliance with the rules, and the Commission could proceed with the vote.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Duncan, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried, 5-0.

**Meeting adjourned.**

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**Brenda Ash, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

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**Sheneidra Cummings, City Clerk**