

Special Commission Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2021
5:30 pm

Mayor Janice D. Mortimer called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

Members present included Mayor Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent, Commissioner Scott Roberts and Commissioner Shannon Smith. Also present were Director of Operations Scott Anaheim, City Clerk Jimmy Crosby, City Attorney Clay Martin, City Manager Drew Mullins, Deputy Clerk Lisa Terry and Finance Director Tonya Wainwright. Commissioner Wilbur Waters was absent.

Mayor Mortimer asked Mr. Mullins to begin since Attorney Martin was running a few minutes late. Mr. Mullins said Attorney Martin has the information on the RFQs but suggested starting with the presentation for water and wastewater rates and impacts on projects. Mr. Mullins said there are six scenarios for rates and unfortunately a rate increase is going to be necessary. Justin deMello with Woodard & Curran came forward to give the presentation. He said the city is under a consent order with the Department of Environmental Protection for the collection system improvements requiring compliance by January 31, 2023 and for the wastewater treatment facility requiring compliance by December 31, 2024. Mr. deMello said the FDEP has approved grant funding for \$4,000,000 to \$5,300,000 and a loan for up to \$1,300,000. Commissioner Nugent asked why there needs to be a rate increase. Mr. deMello said there needs to be a rate increase to fund the project. Commissioner Smith said the city has been losing money on water for years. Mayor Mortimer said the commission needs to make good decisions to improve services. Mr. Mullins said the city is looking at \$3,000,000 in fines if the consent order is not resolved. He said the proposed increase is \$7.82 for the average customer and could be spread out over 3 years. He said the city needs to move forward to show DEP they are working toward resolving the deficit.

Attorney Martin addressed the auditor selection committee. He said statute wants the committee to have someone with a government accounting background. He said Mr. Mullins reached out to Julee Tinsler who has volunteered to be a member of the committee. Mayor Mortimer asked if a committee is required even if we only have one response. Attorney Martin said the response would still need to be evaluated. Mayor Mortimer asked who would like to serve on the committee. Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Roberts volunteered. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2022-06. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 4-0.

Attorney Martin passed out copies of the RFQ for engineering services for drinking water planning and preliminary design services. He said the RFQ is due on November 12, 2021 and the award date is December 7, 2021. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the RFQ. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed the rankings for the RFQ for CDBG-CV engineering services. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to accept the RFQ from Paul Stressing & Associates. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed the Florida Rural Water Rate Study discussion. He said he is not comfortable with any of the scenarios and would like to tie the water and sewer rates together to eliminate multiple increases. He said he is looking at increasing fees like connection and late fees.

Mr. Mullins addressed Resolution Number 2022-07 calling for adoption of the water and sewer rates. He said the resolution sets a plan in place to show DEP we are moving forward. Mayor Mortimer asked if it will satisfy the November 15, 2021 deadline. Mr. Mullins said it shows the city is serious about moving forward with a rate increase. Attorney Martin read the resolution by title. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to adopt the resolution as read by title. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Mortimer said there is nothing from the clerk on the agenda. Clerk Crosby said he is working closely with Mr. Mullins. Mr. Mullins thanked Clerk Crosby for working so well with his office.

There being no further business, Commissioner Nugent made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm.