

Commission Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2022
6:30 pm

Mayor Janice D. Mortimer said before we begin the official meeting of the Starke City Commission, there will be a time of voluntary prayer. Those willing to do so are asked to stand and Commissioner Roberts will lead us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Mortimer called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

This meeting was the first meeting of the month because the July 5, 2022 meeting was cancelled. Members attending included Mayor Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent and Commissioner Scott Roberts. Also present were City Clerk Jimmy Crosby, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, City Manager Drew Mullins and Attorney Scott Walker. Attorney Clay Martin attended by phone. Police Chief Jeff Johnson, Commissioner Shannon Smith and Commissioner Wilbur Waters were absent.

Mayor Mortimer asked if there were any agenda changes. There were none. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Roberts made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 3-0.

Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of the June 21, 2022 Commission Meeting, Resolution Number 2022-37 designating two representatives to the Florida Municipal Electric Association, Resolution Number 2022-38 designating a primary and an alternate representative to the Florida Municipal Power Agency and the commissioner bill review. Commissioner Roberts made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 3-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for emergency items. There were none.

Mayor Mortimer asked for old business. There was none.

Mayor Mortimer read the statement for citizen requests "The City of Starke welcomes you to this meeting. This time is set aside for our citizens and general public to address the city commission. This is not a question or answer time. It is not a political forum, nor is it a time for personal accusations or derogatory remarks to or about city personnel. If you would like to address the commission, please complete a form, come to the podium when you are called, speak into the microphone and state your name and address for the record. Please also limit your comments to not more than 3 minutes. Your participation is welcomed." There was none.

Mayor Mortimer called for public hearings. Attorney Walker read Ordinance Number 2022-10 providing for dates on which elected officials shall assume office. Attorney Walker recommended passing the ordinance on first reading as read by title. Commissioner Roberts

made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. Commissioner Nugent asked what changes were made. Attorney Martin said it implements the date and time to take office. He said it would be the first meeting after the runoff election. The motion passed 3-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Clerk report. Clerk Crosby addressed the general fund year end projections. He said admin and fire are under budget while police is over but by less than the previous year's budget. He said the transportation trust fund is in good shape. Clerk Crosby said ARA funds are being used for the bucket truck and Orange Street. He asked the commissioners to set a date to meet with Mr. Mullins so he can have a preliminary budget for the August 2nd meeting. Clerk Crosby asked for direction for the ad valorem taxes. He said the commission can go with the same rate as last year of 5.0909, the rolled-back rate of 4.8754, 5.5644 which would require a majority vote of three commissioners or 6.1208 which would require a majority vote of four commissioners. Commissioner Nugent suggested using the 5.0909 current rate. Commissioner Roberts suggested using the 4.8754 rolled back rate. Commissioner Nugent agreed with the rolled back rate. Clerk Crosby said they will budget for the rolled-back rate.

Clerk Crosby addressed the ARA funding. He said the city absorbed the fuel adjustment for October, November and December. He asked if the commission would like to use ARA funds to replenish \$200,000. Commissioner Nugent said people on fixed incomes are asking about paying their bill at the end of the month. Clerk Crosby said tell them to come see him. Mayor Mortimer would like to put \$200,000 of the ARA funding to cover the shortfall. Commissioner Nugent made a motion to take \$200,000 out of the ARA funding to replenish the utility fund. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 3-0. Clerk Crosby said the fuel adjustment charge has doubled. He said it would cost \$200,000 per month to cover that if we go back to the .04555 number for the consumption months of July and August for residential and commercial. Clerk Crosby has asked Attorney Martin if legally they could cut the fuel adjustment for residential only. He said commercial accounts can recover the cost of inflation but residential accounts cannot. Clerk Crosby recommended using .05 for the cap if it is legal. Commissioner Nugent made a motion to cap the fuel adjustment at .05 for the next two months if it's legal. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 3-0.

Clerk Crosby addressed the health insurance cost increase. He said last year the increase was 6.4%. This year it will be an 8% increase which is another \$50,000. Clerk Crosby said it is too late to look for alternatives for this year but they can start working on it for next year. Mayor Mortimer said we need to explore other options.

Clerk Crosby asked for a motion on the software for 2022 and 2023 from the ARA funds. Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the upgrade of the software and training. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 3-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Manager report. Mr. Mullins said the Circle K had a sewer backup from a crushed pipe under Us Highway 301 and the bid was for \$106,000. He said city

staff was able to repair the pipe for \$4,000. Mayor Mortimer congratulated and thanked Mr. Mullins.

Mr. Mullins said there was a lightning storm that took out the electricity to Edwards Road Park, Shrader's Smoker Service and one of the pumps stations at the wastewater treatment plant. He said a year ago a transformer was \$60,000 but now is \$120,000. Mr. Mullins said with Line Crew Supervisor Stevie Warren the repair was made for \$20,000 to \$25,000. He said more things are being done in house.

Mr. Mullins said the city is in non-compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program. He said this could result in the loss of flood insurance for residents. Mr. Mullins said Kevin Powell is working on bringing the city in compliance and they are working on extending the deadline.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the attorney report. Attorney Walker had nothing further. Attorney Martin had nothing further.

Commissioner Roberts said he is happy to be back and he appreciates the patience of the board and the in house savings. He said adding staff to do more in house project should be kept in mind.

Commissioner Nugent said handicap accessibility has not been addressed. Mayor Mortimer said they were working on a plan but it hasn't been acted on. He said he appreciates the fuel stabilization. Commissioner Nugent said Brandon Ludwig did a good job promoting the Splash Bash.

Clerk Crosby said the city has the ability to install irrigation meters. He said the customer can save the sewer charges for watering their yards or filling swimming pools because the water does not go into the sewer system. He said the meters cost around \$800 and suggested offering a one-month promotion for \$400 if the customer has owned their home for more than a year. Clerk Crosby said it would save the city money because it lowers consumption. He asked if the commissioners are interested. They expressed interest. Clerk Crosby suggested putting a survey in the bill to gauge interest. Clerk Crosby asked if he could put the survey out. Mayor Mortimer said yes and asked Clerk Crosby to contact the other commissioners.

Mayor Mortimer echoed Commissioner Nugent's comments about Splash Bash. She said it was a tremendous success and she can't wait until next year.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.