

Commission Meeting Minutes
August 2, 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 I 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. Members attending included Mayor Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent, Commissioner Scott Roberts, Commissioner Shannon Smith and Commissioner Wilbur Waters. Also present were City Clerk Jimmy Crosby, CPA Jim Farrell, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, Finance Director James Hughes, Police Chief Jeff Johnson, Attorney Clay Martin, City Manager Drew Mullins and Fire Chief Gary Wise.

Mayor Mortimer asked if there were any agenda changes. Clerk Crosby asked to add presentation of checks from the Northeast Florida League of Cities after the consent agenda. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the agenda changes. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Waters. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Waters made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of the July 19, 2022 Commission Meeting, the Bradford Cowboys boot drive and the commissioner bill review. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked Reverend Larry Thornton of Calvary Temple Church of God Youth Group, Executive Director Cindy DeValario of Communities in Schools and Executive Officers Robert Banks, Alica McMillian, Glenda Ruise and Sherry Williams for the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County to come forward. Mayor Mortimer asked the commissioners to come forward. She said Commissioner Nugent is the President of the Northeast Florida League of Cities. Commissioner Nugent presented the checks. He said the Northeast Florida League of Cities likes to support local communities.

Mayor Mortimer asked Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley to come forward. Mr. Hartley addressed the traffic flow at Bradford Middle School. He said the map in front of the commissioners shows the parent pickup line. Mr. Hartley asked for permission to close Orange Street at the entrance to Bradford Middle School for forty minutes when school gets out. He said a couple of weeks into the school year when things are moving smoothly it will probably only need to be closed for ten minutes or so. Mr. Hartley said the buses will have to turn left and the parents will have to turn right. He said he will also have a Student Resource Officer by

at the student parking lot. Mr. Hartley said the student will have to turn left on to Washington Street. Mayor Mortimer asked how long the officer will be there. Mr. Hartley said all year. Commissioner Nugent asked about flashing lights. Chief Johnson said there is one at the track shack. Mr. Hartley said there is one at Washington Street. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the map as presented by Mr. Hartley. Commissioner Waters made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts Commissioner Smith asked if this would be in the morning too. Mr. Hartley said no. Commissioner Waters asked if it would affect emergency vehicles. Chief Johnson and Chief Wise said they can get through. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Hartley said he has been working for two years to bring the Boys and Girls Club to Bradford County. He said children need some place to go after school. Mr. Hartley said the Boys and Girls Club requires a dedicated site. He said Southside Elementary School could be that site once the new school opens but the building across the street is one thing they can't have. Mayor Mortimer said the board shares concern and the desire to tear the building down. Commissioner Roberts asked if it could be cleaned up and boarded up now. Attorney Martin said they have a pathway to keep the grounds mowed but cannot move forward with boarding and sealing it. He said it is structurally sound so there is no basis to tear it down. Mr. Hartley asked if there was a way to purchase the property. Attorney Martin said if it was condemned the city could take eminent domain. He said the school board may be able to do it. Mayor Mortimer suggested a joint effort. Clerk Crosby asked if it could be reinspected since it has been a year. Chief Wise said he has no objection to going back to get a warrant to reinspect it. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion. Commissioner Nugent made a motion to see if it is structurally sound. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. Mayor Mortimer asked that it be done as soon as possible. The motion passed 5-0.

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 Martin addressed Ordinance Number 2022-11 Police Officers' Retirement System amount of retirement benefits. Attorney Martin read the ordinance by title. Chief Johnson said Pension Attorney Ron Cohen said this needs to be cleared up. Commissioner Waters made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-11 on first reading. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Clerk report. Clerk Crosby addressed disconnects. He said it has been a hot summer with high bills. Clerk Crosby recommended suspending disconnects for customers with bills under \$300 so they can spread the high bills into October and November when bills are historically lower. His second recommendation is to offer 30% off for customers who want irrigation meters. It will save customers money on sewer bills because the water does not go into the sewer. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Manager report. Kevin Smith with Green for Life came forward to address the request for a garbage service increase. He said he appreciates the opportunity to speak to the commission. He is asking to amend the contract to include a temporary fuel surcharge of 10%. He said if rates go back down they will adjust the rates back down. Attorney Martin asked if they will come back with a contract. Mr. Smith said yes. Clerk Crosby said the cost will be \$674 per week. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion. Commissioner Nugent made a motion to approve the increase. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed the budget. He said the budget is balanced and built on historical data, traditional activity and sound projections. Mr. Mullins said just because the money is budgeted it does not mean we have to spend it. He said there is an 8% increase in health insurance and a 6% increase in FMIT insurance. Mr. Mullins said there is an 8% increase in overall costs. He said they are anticipating a consent order for tank insufficiency so we will need a tank management program. He said there is \$600,000 in the utility fund for capital outlay. Mr. Mullins recommended a portion of compensation be used to create competitive pay. He suggested an 8% COLA and 2% to reward exceptional workers. Mr. Mullins said the budget must be voted on at the September 6, 2022 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Smith would like to set a workshop for next week. Mayor Mortimer said the Florida Leagues of Cities conference is next week. Mayor Mortimer said she would like to begin the budget process the first of the year. Commissioner Nugent suggested a workshop on a Monday. Mayor Mortimer suggested August 15, 2022. The commission agreed. Commissioner Waters said he is fine with the 8% increase but thinks the 2% should come back before the board. Commissioner Nugent said they use to do it that way. Mayor Mortimer said she trusts that the City Clerk and City Manager are not going to do something contrary to the board. Commissioner Roberts said he does not want to micromanage. Commissioner Waters said he wants to know where the 2% is going to go. Clerk Crosby said he thinks making pay increases public does more harm than good. Commissioner Nugent said there needs to be checks and balances. Mayor Mortimer suggested 5:30 pm for the time for the workshop. Commissioner Smith said he would like to have the department heads at the meeting. The commission agreed to a workshop on August 15, 2022 at 5:30 pm. Mr. Mullins reviewed the highlights of the budget. Chief Wise said the Fire Station needs some work. Commissioner Smith suggested he get with Mr. Mullins on that.

Mayor Mortimer called for the Police Chief report. Chief Johnson said the Police Department roofing bid came back at \$79,000 more than the previous bid. He said that would eliminate

replacement of the generator. Mayor Mortimer asked if they need a generator. Chief Johnson said the one they have still runs. Commissioner Smith asked about going back out for bids. Chief Johnson said they can do that. Attorney Martin said he would like to look at the procurement process used previously and see if there is something they could use. Mayor Mortimer asked for the wishes of the board. They agreed to put it out for bid. Chief Johnson said the Traffic Safety Team won the division last year and they won the State Championship this year. Mayor Mortimer congratulated the Police Department.

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

Commissioner Smith asked for a new organization chart for both sides.

Commissioner Roberts had nothing further.

Commissioner Waters asked about the sprayfield. Mr. Mullins said he wants to get a property appraisal done to see what they can charge for rent. Mayor Mortimer said the sprayfield comes up every few months. Commission Waters suggested having it on the next agenda.

Commissioner Waters asked if Mr. Mullins had heard anything about the overpass being four inches too long. Mr. Mullins said he has not heard anything about it.

Mr. Mullins said they are working on the safety rails at the splashpad.

Commissioner Nugent asked Mr. Mullins to consider the pads for the utility poles. He asked for a good contract for the lease of the sprayfield. He said they have been burned every time by the tenants.

Mayor Mortimer said she would like the board to consider spending some of the \$817,000 in ARPA funds for a building at Thomas Street Park. She said the liability has grown tremendously. Commissioner Smith said the Brooker School has a bunch of portable buildings. He suggested partnering with the school board. Mayor Mortimer said the building that is there now came from the school board.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.