

Commission Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2022
6:00 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 6:00 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, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, Police Chief Jeff Johnson, Attorney Clay Martin and City Manager Drew Mullins.

Mayor Mortimer asked if there were any agenda changes. Mr. Mullins asked to add 11.E. addendum to collection system phase 1. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of the August 15, 2022 Workshop, the minutes of the August 16, 2022 Commission Meeting, the minutes of the August 22, 2022 Special Commission Meeting and the commissioner bill review. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for emergency items. There were none.

Mayor Mortimer said the next item is the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County request for funds for the RJE Gymnasium from ARA funding. She asked Alica McMillian to come forward. Mrs. McMillian introduced herself as the President of the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County and stated its address as 1080 North Pine Street in Starke Florida. Sherry Williams introduced herself as Secretary. Glenda Ruise introduced herself as Vice President. Robert Banks introduced himself as Treasurer. Mrs. McMillian said they are here to ask for support of their gymnasium. She said the Concerned Citizens have been in existence since 1976 when the school was closed and they were integrated into Bradford High School. Mrs. McMillian said they have had their 501c3 since 1979. She said the structure they are here for tonight was built in 1961. She said it has only had one major renovation since 1961 in 1983 when the city applied for a CDBG housing grant which replaced the roof, the floor and the heater. Mrs. McMillian said that institution has never had air. She said they have the youth and young adult basketball league there, town hall meetings for the City of Starke, the Bradford County Commission, the School Board and any other organization that wishes to use the building as a meeting place. Mrs. McMillian said it has been a voting precinct for the City of Starke, a food distribution site

for the True Vine Ministry. She said it was once a hurricane shelter for Northeast Florida as well as housing the Summer and After School programs. Mrs. McMillian said in 2011 when the City of Starke closed its recreation department the RJE Gymnasium held the basketball, summer day camp, after school programs and the senior citizen club. She said the roof is in such bad shape that they had to close it this January. Mrs. McMillian said the Bradford County School Superintendent and board members have allowed them to continue the youth basketball program. Mayor Mortimer asked where it is being held. Mrs. McMillian said at Bradford Middle School. She said they want to renovate the gym and they thank you for everything you have done in the past and for applying for the CDBG COVID grant and they know the denial has been appealed. Mrs. McMillian said they went before the Bradford County Commissioners on May 29, 2022 and they approved giving them \$500,000 of their ARA money. She said that is not enough. The building needs a new roof, central heat and air, a new floor, ADA compliant rest room facilities and hardening for hurricanes. They are asking for \$200,000 if the appeal is denied. Mrs. McMillian said they have raised \$41,000 through fund raising and they want to make the building a beacon light for the community. Mayor Mortimer thanked Mrs. McMillian for sharing the history of the rich foundation of the RJE Gymnasium in Bradford County. She said it goes without saying that she supports the request if the grant is denied on the appeal. Mayor Mortimer said the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County picked up the ball when the city gave up recreation all those years ago. She said the youth would not have had the recreational services, the after-school program is second to none and the summer program provides an immeasurable service. Mayor Mortimer commended the Concerned Citizens for working on a shoestring budget with volunteers. She asked Commissioner Smith if he had any questions or comments. Commissioner Smith said not at this time, but it is definitely something they want to look at. Mayor Mortimer asked Commissioner Roberts. Commissioner Roberts asked if he heard correctly that they can complete the project with this money. Mrs. McMillian said yes. Mayor Mortimer asked Commissioner Waters. Commissioner Roberts said with the 2.7 million dollars they received they are only setting aside 10 percent of that. Commissioner Waters asked if this money has been earmarked for anything. Mayor Mortimer said not that she is aware of. Clerk Crosby said there is about \$817,000 that has not been earmarked for anything at this point. Commissioner Waters said that is all he has at this point. He said he has always been in support of the Concerned Citizens. Commissioner Smith asked if that is for both checks. Clerk Crosby said that is for year two. He said the year one check has been committed all but \$314. Commissioner Nugent said he thinks they do wonderful things but he wants to know how much funds the city has because he would like to give something to the Boy Scouts because their building looks pretty rundown and we need to take care of the toddlers too. He said he would like to see somewhere the Girl Scouts could go for programs too. He said he has no issue with the \$200,000 but he would like to give to a couple of organizations. He asked if they are looking at intercom systems or scoreboards. Mrs. McMillian said they have a pretty much up-to-date scoreboard but are looking at electric and plumbing and all that. She said if you are looking for a place for the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts they will house them. Commissioner Nugent said he thinks the screens that come down would look really nice. Mayor Mortimer said she has voiced her support and was going to ask about any other organization that might need a place to get in touch with the Concerned Citizens. She said if the Boy or Girl Scouts or any other organization makes a request that they will look at that as well. Mayor

Mortimer asked what the wishes of the board are regarding the request from the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County to allocate \$200,000 of the ARA funds to the RJE Gym if the appeal for the grant that the city was denied is upheld that they will allocate that money. Commissioner Waters asked if that can be voted on being that it was just brought up. Mayor Mortimer said yes. It is on the agenda. Attorney Martin said with this being out of next year's funds giving that you are in the process of approving next year's budget and have already done first reading that it would be premature to vote on this until the budget is read on second reading. He said the alternative would be to go back and redo the hearing and have the City Manager and City Clerk amend what they submitted for their budget to include this allocation for this organization. Clerk Crosby asked if it could be amended at the second reading. Attorney Martin said it cannot. Commissioner Roberts said he understands that but asked if there was anyway to approve it tonight contingent on approval of the budget. Attorney Martin said doing a contingent approval is probably legally permissible but it would be against his better judgement. Commissioner Nugent said if they can't approve it tonight he would love to support them as best as they can. Mayor Mortimer asked what is the timeline and recommendation to be on good legal ground to move forward with the request. Attorney Martin said if the budget is approved this could be an item for the next agenda but the expenditure would not be until the next fiscal year. Mayor Mortimer said her understanding is that it would be next fiscal year. Commissioner Waters said he did not want to throw a curveball but he wants it done the right way. The Concerned Citizens agreed. Mayor Mortimer asked if she can get a consensus of the board. Attorney Martin said the board can weigh in on it. Mayor Mortimer asked Commissioner Smith if he supports the request. Commissioner Smith said he does but he would like to do it in a workshop first and talk about what to do with the rest of the money. He said other groups might want to come in too. Mayor Mortimer asked if Commissioner Roberts supports the request. Commissioner Roberts said he supports it. Commissioner Waters said he agrees with Commissioner Smith but he supports it. Mayor Mortimer asked Commissioner Nugent. Commissioner Nugent said he agrees with the workshop so they could do one amendment and help as many as they can. Mayor Mortimer asked how having three commissioners who want to have a workshop would affect the budget approval. Attorney Martin said he does not think it does. He said at the next meeting they would have the second reading for approval of the budget and have the workshop within the regular meeting at 5:45 pm. Mayor Mortimer asked if that is satisfactory with the board. Commissioner Smith said yes. Commissioner Robert said yes. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to hold the workshop on expending the remaining ARA funds within the regular meeting at 5:45 pm. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

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 no citizen participation.

Mayor Mortimer called for public hearings. Attorney Martin read the title of Ordinance Number 2022-11 Police Officers’ Retirement System amount of retirement benefits. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Ordinance Number 2022-11. It was seconded by Commissioner Waters. The motion passed 5-0.

Attorney Martin read the title of Ordinance Number 2022-12 establishing the schedule of rates and charges pertaining to distribution and consumption of natural gas. He said there is an error in the title so it needs to be readvertised for the first meeting in October. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Ordinance Number 2202-12. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Attorney Martin read the title of Ordinance Number 2022-13 providing for uniform compensation of City Commissioners. Mayor Mortimer asked the wishes of the board. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Ordinance Number 2022-13. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Clerk report. Clerk Crosby addressed the RFP for Software with ranking sheets. He recommended contract negotiations with ADG. Commissioner Smith made a motion for contract negotiations with ADG but if those negotiations fail to negotiate with the second firm. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer asked for the City Manager report. Mr. Mullins addressed Resolution Number 2022-43 appointing a codes enforcement special magistrate. He said it will extend the contract with Laura Gapske until 2023. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Waters. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed Resolution Number 2022-44 adoption of an amendment to the WCA agreement concerning increased fuel costs. He recommended approval. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed the bid responses and evaluation for the wastewater treatment plant project. He introduced Kelly Saikkonen from Woodard & Curran. Mrs. Saikkonen said two bids were received one from PWC Joint Venture for \$23,361,150 and one from Sawcross Contractors and Engineers for \$26,924,806. She said Woodard & Curran has reviewed the bids, references, insurance and the USDA checklist is due Friday. Mrs. Saikkonen said they need a letter from the city stating which bidder they are going to proceed with. Attorney Martin said the appropriate motion would be to award the bid to PWC contingent on the USDA loan and allow signatures. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed Resolution Number 2022-45 amendment to local counsel services agreement for the wastewater treatment plant. Attorney Martin said the cost for title insurance adds \$55,000 to the legal services. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2022-45. It was seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mullins addressed Resolution Number 2022-46 addendum to the agreement with Woodard & Curran for administrative services. Mayor Mortimer entertained a motion to approve Resolution Number 2022-46. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Mortimer called for the Police Chief report. Chief Johnson gave an update on the Police Department roof. He said the original bid was not able to be met. Chief Johnson said the attorney is putting together an RFP for approval at the next meeting. Mayor Mortimer asked how the building is holding up with all the rain. Chief Johnson said he has spoken to Sheriff Gordon Smith and is prepared if things have to be moved.

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

Commissioner Smith said Mr. Mullins is addressing drainage issues. He said the state needs to mow State Road 16.

Commissioner Roberts had nothing further.

Commissioner Waters said a ladder was blocking a drain. He said if there is any money left the city needs a Gradeall. He asked Mr. Mullins to bring the board up to date on Harbor Freight. Mr. Mullins said they have turned in a site plan.

Commissioner Nugent asked if anyone is going to the Northeast Florida League of Cities Dinner. Clerk Crosby said to let him know tonight or make your own RSVP.

Mayor Mortimer congratulated Commissioner Nugent on his re-election.

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm.