

Special Commission Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2023
5:30 pm

Mayor Scott Roberts 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 Nugent will lead us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Roberts called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Members attending included Mayor Scott Roberts, Commissioner Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent, Commissioner Andy Redding and Commissioner Shannon Smith. Also present were Executive Assistant Cathy Bradley, City Clerk Jimmy Crosby, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, Attorney Clay Martin and City Manager Drew Mullins.

Mayor Roberts asked if there were any agenda changes. Mr. Mullins asked to add item 10 engineering services rankings. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. It was seconded by Commissioner Redding. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the North Florida Elite Boot Drive April 22, 2023 at State Road 100 and US Highway 301. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the consent agenda. It was seconded by Commissioner Redding. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts asked for emergency items. There were none.

Mayor Roberts 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 three minutes. Your participation is welcomed." There was no citizen participation.

Clerk Crosby said the room is set up so the screens can be seen during Mr. Mullins' presentation. He said Ordinance Number 0420 states that the City Manager prepares and submits an annual budget to the City Commission for consideration and that the City Clerk shall provide the City Manager with all such financial reports, records and accountings as the City Clerk would otherwise be required to provide the City Commission or which may otherwise be required by the City Manager to properly fulfill his or her job duties as set forth herein. Clerk

Crosby said he provides projections for the budget. He said he and the City Manager have worked well through the process. He thanked James Hughes and Jim Farrell for the work they have put in, for keeping proper accounting practices and maintaining the reserve fund at 20%. Clerk Crosby said the assumptions that are built into the budget are pay increases of 5%, performance and competitive pay at 5%, an employee insurance increase of 15%, a liability insurance increase of 7%, retirement increases each of 5%, an increase of water and sewer rates of 5%, capital outlay projects over 4 years of \$7.25 million and an increase for other expenses and materials of 5%. With that being said Clerk Crosby asked Mayor Roberts if he could turn it over to the City Manager. Mr. Mullins said costs are soaring, the fleet is aging as well as the infrastructure, there are non-competitive salaries for critical positions, there is no real capital improvement plan and there are large transfers to the general fund. Commissioner Smith asked about last year's transfers. Clerk Crosby said about \$890,000 was transferred out of utilities and \$150,000 out of reserves. Mr. Mullins outlined information on the aging fleet. He said the infrastructure has been neglected for 20 years and they are operating on a patch-as-you-go not a forward-thinking plan. Mr. Mullins said GRU gave a 17% increase. Commissioner Mortimer asked how many employees we lost. Mr. Mullins said 3 and we are losing employees who we have paid to train. He said the water and wastewater extensions will cost \$1.7 million per mile. He said the cost of transformers has increased 40 to 50%. Commissioner Nugent asked if we have a 3 or a 5-year plan. Mr. Mullins said we have a plan as you go. He said Woodard & Curran is doing a sewer study. Mr. Mullins said we can go status quo or get serious about rate increases to use for capital outlay. He said the first year would cost \$1.25 million for vehicles, lines, transformers and other expenses, the second year would be \$1.5 million. Mr. Mullins said 7 of our lift stations only have 1 working pump. He said 2023 revenues will be \$14 million with a net income of \$1 million. He said 2024 revenues will be \$19.5 million with \$19 million in expenditures. Mr. Mullins said FMPA did a mapping of the electrical system. Commissioner Mortimer said at no cost. Mr. Mullins said at no cost. He said they are a valuable resource. Mr. Mullins asked for questions. Commissioner Redding asked how many miles of water and sewer lines need to be replaced. Mr. Mullins said the system is 8 miles but not all need replacement. Commissioner Nugent suggested applying for grants to make improvements. Commissioner Smith said we have to stop spending enterprise funds on general expenses. Mayor Roberts commended Mr. Mullins on the presentation. Commissioner Smith asked if employees can be trained to rebuild transformers. Mr. Mullins said FMPA trains member's employees to rebuild transformers. Mayor Roberts said he appreciates the forecast and it paints the picture for what needs to be done going forward. Commissioner Mortimer said she appreciates this level of detail that they have not had in the past. Mr. Mullins said Clerk Crosby and his staff have done a great job. He said if any commissioner would like to go into more detail on any of the numbers they can come and see staff members. Clerk Crosby said any feedback from the commission would be helpful so we know what direction to go in. Commissioner Smith said we need to take

this step to move forward. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the direction and the numbers. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0. Mayor Roberts said he appreciates the work from James Hughes and Jim Farrell.

Commissioner Nugent wants to spend as little as possible and keep track of what has been spent. He would like to develop the Badcock property because the retention pond is in place. Mayor Roberts asked Commissioner Nugent to get with Mr. Mullins and get it on the agenda.

Commissioner Mortimer said last week the Florida League of Cities hosted Legislative Action Days where She and Clerk Crosby met with legislators about some good funding opportunities. She said they were also able to meet with the Department of Economic Opportunity and thank them for the CDBG-CV funding. Commissioner Mortimer said the DEO was very complimentary about our staff and the job they did with the appeal. Commissioner Mortimer expressed her condolences to Mayor Roberts for the loss of his father.

Commissioner Redding had nothing further.

Commissioner Smith had nothing further.

Mayor Roberts thanked Mr. Mullins, Clerk Crosby and their staff for the work on the budget. Mayor Roberts said the next Special Commission Meeting and Workshop is May 9, 2023 at 5:30 pm. Commissioner Mortimer said Commissioner Nugent was also at Legislative Action Days but they were not together. She said Rural Counties Day is April 25th and 26th.

Mayor Roberts asked Mr. Mullins to address the ranking sheets. Mr. Mullins said there were 6 respondents and he would like to enter into negotiations with all 6. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

There being no further discussion Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Smith made a motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.