



City of Freeport

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 25, 2022, 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

Council Members Present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilman Farris, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Bud Day, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner and Councilman Hope

Staff Members Present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, City Clerk Kathie Gatewood, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Planning Technician Samantha Graves, Wastewater Treatment Supervisor Paul Johnson, Parks & Recreation Director Travis Digges, Facility Maintenance Technician Steven Smith, and City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau

City Clerk Note: City Attorney Adkinson attended via telephone.

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Barley in the Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Haffner, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

3. Recognition of Guests

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Bills
- b. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022
- c. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2022
- d. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – July 28, 2022
- e. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2022
- f. Revenue & Expenditure Reports Through July 2022
- g. Memo to the Council – Water and Wastewater Capacity Fees

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5. Public Comment on Consent Agenda

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

7. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

1. Engineering – Remove US 331 North Sewer Expansion Proposed Change Order #2 from the agenda.

8. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions/Changes

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

To approve removing US 331 North Sewer Expansion Proposed Change Order #2 from the agenda.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

9. Staff Reports

a. Water

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b. Sewer

1. Lift Station Quote

Wastewater Treatment Supervisor Paul Johnson directed the Council to four bids before them for a lift station. He recommended the quote from Pump and Process and explained that they offered a 5-year non-prorated warranty that the other companies did not offer.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the purchase of a lift station from Pump & Process in the amount of \$10,936.10 for the Wastewater Department.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

c. Parks

1. Community Garden

Parks Director Digges told the Council he had been approached a while ago by a homeschool group about starting a Community Garden on city property. He said there was a discussion with the Walton County Health Department at one time about them contributing with materials for the gardening boxes. He explained that at the time they did not have a location for a Community Garden but that they now believe they do. He said he worked with Planning Director Hughes-Neel and Dewberry to create a location near the proposed Community Center for a possible Community Garden. Councilwoman Haffner asked who would maintain the garden, to which Parks Director Digges said the homeschool group and anyone else who wanted to. She asked about the Walton County Health Department contributing and he replied that he would be reaching about out to them to see if they could still help with the purchase of materials for the gardening boxes. He said the boxes would be 3-feet by 6-feet by 3-feet in height and he believes it is a good

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fit for the area selected. He suggested the project could be revisited in one year to ensure it was being properly maintained and if it is not, the project could be dissolved. Mayor Barley asked how the garden would be regulated if someone was maintaining it and someone else wanted to participate. Parks Director Digges replied that he did not feel someone should be told no, that if there was space and someone wanted to participate that they could. He said he understood that some gardens are locked but after speaking with Planning Director Hughes-Neel and the Health Department they do not feel that should be done. He noted that if the project becomes popular there is plenty of space there to add more boxes. Councilwoman Haffner showed concern if someone was maintaining an area, and someone came along and took the fruit or vegetables grown that it would upset them. Parks Director Digges agreed and said small signs could be added to the areas saying who maintains a given area otherwise it would be on the honor system. Councilwoman Brannon said she loved the idea of the Community Garden and starting out the project small. She recommended there be set hours and Parks Director Digges agreed. He also added there should be signage for anyone with allergies. Councilwoman Haffner suggested fencing and to lock the area. She said the keys could be checked out during city hall hours.

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment.

Resident John Raymond commented that he thought it was a great idea and asked who would be supplying the liability insurance, to which City Attorney Adkinson replied that the city has general liability insurance. Defuniak Herald reporter Adrienne Walline Campbell mentioned there is a difference between well and potable water, to which Parks Director Digges agreed and said they would create signage, so people knew not to drink the irrigation well water.

To approve the Community Garden as presented.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

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d. City Manager

1. Freeport Library and City Property Lighting

City Manager Martin explained that the lights in the Freeport Library have aged quite a bit and are in need of being replaced. He asked Facility Maintenance Technician Smith to explain the quotes in the meeting package and answer any questions the Council may have. Facility Maintenance Technician Smith told the Council the current lighting is twenty-one years old and ten of the lights are no longer working. He stated the library manager offered to use county employee labor to install new lights. He said there were forty-two lights in all to be replaced and each one would take about one hour to install. Councilman Farris asked if the recommended quote was to remove ballasts to move to LED lights, to which Facility Maintenance Technician Smith said yes.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

Mayor Barley called for public comment there was none.

To approve the purchase of lighting for the Freeport Library and City Properties from City Electric Supply (CES) in the amount of \$2,950.08.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

2. WildStar Networks

City Manager Martin told the Council under tab 11 was a map provided to him by WildStar Networks showing coverage of their service without having access to one of our towers. He said Water Supervisor Tuggle requested not to allow WildStar Networks access to the tower citing concerns over interference with city systems. City Manager Martin explained that WildStar contacted him regarding the exclusion and requested access. He said Henry Martin from WildStar was not present for the meeting. He asked the Council to look at the coverage map and said the area of U.S. 331 and State Road 20 would have a large gap in coverage if access was not granted to the remaining tower. City Attorney Adkinson said unless the city's communication provider can provide proof of potential interference

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there is no reason to exclude tower access. He further said Defuniak Springs, and Paxton are allowing full access to WildStar Networks along with the Walton County Sheriff's Office (WCSO). He said WCSO were willing to give the service a chance and if it did cause interference, it would be removed from their communications system.

Councilman Farris asked if this was the project with Walton County, to which City Manager Martin said yes. Councilman Farris said he thinks the city should give WildStar Networks a chance and Councilman Day agreed. City Attorney Adkinson asked for a motion to include the water tower site in the contract.

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilman Day

Mayor Barley called for public comment.

Resident John Raymond asked what the technology was and if it had to do with cellphones, to which the City Attorney Adkinson explained it was for wireless broadband and not for cellular service.

To include Well 3, Tank 1 in the WildStar Networks contract.

Councilwoman Brannon commented that years ago the Council decided not to put anything on the water towers and now they are, which Councilwoman Haffner agreed. She asked if this would open the door for many other companies to put things on the towers, to which City Attorney Adkinson explained in the past that the city put in place some restrictions that they felt were needed to beat the clock because the state legislature was about to pass a bill and it would assist our ability to handle that with telecommunications providers that could just come and install technology on various things. He said the city ended up putting that forward, but the bill never passed and came to fruition. He explained that what the city addressed were non-performing uses on billboards and the power sites and that in the past the city had denied private cell companies from added technology to water towers and that predates even that most recent issue. Councilwoman Brannon asked if there was anywhere else this technology could go instead and asked if the whole program would fail if the city doesn't allow WildStar Networks to come in and do this. City Attorney Adkinson said the tower in question is for the most densely populated area of Freeport and the most heavily served. He said the Council could say they do not want the technology on that water tower, but WildStar Networks has said access to this tower would fill in a major gap in the map.

Councilman Farris said he believed this was something that benefits the community. Councilman Haffner recalled Water Supervisor Tuggle talked to the Council prior about his concerns and because he is not present at tonight's meeting,

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she requested the item to be tabled until the next regular meeting. She expressed her own concerns about technology being placed on the water towers. Councilwoman Brannon agreed. Councilmen Farris and Day agreed to withdraw the motion and second to table the item. Councilman Farris said he agreed with City Attorney Adkinson that Water Supervisor Tuggle will have to provide documentation that interference with the technology could occur. He also said the Council could agree to go through with the project like the Walton County Sheriff's Office and monitor the activity to see if interference occurs.

City Clerk Note: A roll call vote was not taken.

1. City Manager Vehicle Purchase

City Manager Martin directed the Council to three vehicle quotes in the meeting package for their review. He said his recommendation was Triangle which was the lowest of the three quotes. He asked for a motion to purchase the vehicle.

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

Mayor Barley called for public comment there was none.

To approve the purchase of a city vehicle for City Manager use from Triangle Chevrolet Buick in the amount of \$28,020.50.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

e. City Clerk

1. Regular Council Meeting Dates for November and December

City Clerk Gatewood presented the Council with calendar printouts for November and December for review for a possible change of meeting dates. She explained that November 8, 2022, was general election day and that in December the chambers would be occupied by gifts for the city Christmas Tree Angel program. After a discussion, the Council asked City Clerk Gatewood to see if the Freeport Board Room maintained by Walton County was available for those dates and to bring it back to them for a motion.

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f. Finance

1. City Insurance Renewal Quote for 2022-2023

Finance Officer Bowers presented the Council with the renewal quotes for 2022-2023 from FMIT and asked the Council for a motion to approve the rates. She also presented the Council with rates from PGIT for \$212,337.00, which she said FMIT told her they would match.

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment there was none.

To approve the FMIT city insurance renewal rates for 2022-2023 for \$212,337.00.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

2. Proposal of Employee Benefits Effective 10/1/2022

Finance Officer Bowers presented the Council with a proposal for employee benefit costs which would take effect on October 1, 2022. She asked the Council for a motion to approve the proposal.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

Mayor Barley called for public comment there was none.

To approve the Proposal of Employee Benefits Effective 10/1/2022

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

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Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon: aye
Councilwoman Haffner: aye
Councilman Hope: aye
Councilman Day aye

Carried.

- g. Billing
- h. Planning

1. Final Plat Approval for Verandas Ph 2A-1

Planning Director Hughes-Neel asked the Council for a motion to approve the final plat for Verandas Ph 2A-1. She requested if the approval passed that the Council Members sign the plat immediately after the meeting.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the Final Plat for Verandas Ph 2A-1

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon: aye
Councilwoman Haffner: aye
Councilman Hope: aye
Councilman Day aye

Carried.

- i. Legal

1. COVID-19 Policy

City Attorney Adkinson presented the Council with a COVID-19 Policy Resolution for review. He asked for a motion to approve Resolution to be numbered 2022-05.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner
Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

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To approve Resolution 2022-05 – COVID-19 Policy

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

2. South Walton High School Swim Contract

City Attorney Adkinson told the Council an agreement had been worked out regarding the swim contract and he asked for a motion to authorize the City Manager or Mayor to execute the agreement.

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To authorize the City Manager or Mayor to execute the South Walton High School Swim Contract.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Hope:	aye
Councilman Day	aye

Carried.

j. Engineering

10. Old Business

11. New Business

- b. Councilwoman Brannon
- c. Councilman Farris
- d. Councilwoman Haffner
- e. Councilman Hope

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f. Councilman Day

12. Public Comment

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

13. Adjournment

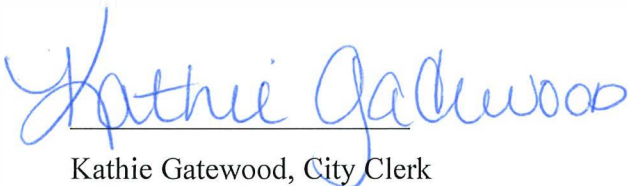
Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by City Clerk Gatewood and approved by the City Council on September 13, 2022.



Russ Barley, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk

