



City of Freeport

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2022, 9:00 AM

Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

Council Members Present: Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilman Mark Martin, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner, Councilman Tripp Hope

Staff Members Present: City Manager Charlie Simmons, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, City Clerk Kathie Gatewood, and Billing Supervisor Lourdes Johnson. Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Wastewater Treatment Supervisor Paul Johnson, Parks & Recreation Director Travis Digges, Planning Technician Samantha Graves, and City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau.

City Clerk's Note: Mayor Barley and Councilwoman Brannon were absent with notice.

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Council President Farris 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

Council President Farris welcomed Walton County Commissioner Mike Barker, Liberty Partners Jennifer Green, and Tim Parsons.

He also welcomed City of Freeport employees Frank Grant (wastewater), Gary Thomas (water) and Jennifer Duke (water) and thanked them for their years of service to the city and presented them with a certificate.

4. Consent Agenda

a. Bills

5. Public Comment on Consent Agenda

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

Councilman Farris: aye

Councilwoman Haffner: aye

Councilman Martin: aye

Councilman Hope aye

Carried.

7. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

1. City Manager - Network System Administrator

8. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions

Moved by: Councilman Martin

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

To approve the Agenda with the specified additions as presented.

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

Councilman Farris: aye

Councilwoman Haffner: aye

Councilman Martin: aye

Councilman Hope aye

Carried.

9. Staff Reports

a. Water

b. Sewer

1. Sewer & Water Generator Maintenance Contract

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City Manager Simmons asked to remove this item due to the Wastewater Treatment Supervisor not being able to attend due to an emergency.

c. Parks

1. Updates

Parks & Recreation Director Digges told the Council the retention pond for the Barrier-Free Park was complete. He also let them know the Freeport Disc Golf Classic would be held on May 14.

2. Regional Sports Complex – Security Cameras

Parks and Recreation Director Digges requested to purchase unbudgeted security cameras for the Sports Complex due to the high activity of vandalism that has occurred over the last few months. Councilman Farris asked how much the cameras would be and if Parks had it in their budget and Finance Officer Bowers said there was grant match money in their budget, so yes, they do. Parks and Recreation Director Digges said the security cameras would be approximately \$27,000 and the Walton County Sheriff's Office would be monitoring the area, which Councilman Hope said he appreciated.

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

To approve the purchase of unbudgeted security cameras for the Sports Complex.

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

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Martin:	aye
Councilman Hope	aye

Carried.

d. City Manager

1. City Progress Report 2018-2022

City Manager Simmons thanked City Clerk Gatewood for putting the report together. He said he had been thinking of putting a report together for a long time

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to show the residents everything that has accomplished. He said he also wanted the City Council to see all the hard work they put into steering the city on the right path for growth. He presented the City Council with the report and went through each page.

City Clerk's Note: A digital copy of the report can be found on the City Website under the Mayor and Council tab or by contacting the City Clerk's Office.

e. City Clerk

1. FACC Summer Academy Attendance Approval

City Clerk Gatewood asked the Council for approval to attend the FACC Summer Academy in Orlando, Florida.

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

Moved by: Council

Seconded by: Council

To approve the City Clerk Gatewood to attend the June 19-22 FACC Summer Academy Conference in Orlando, Florida.

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

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Martin:	aye
Councilman Hope	aye

Carried.

2. Network System Administrator

City Clerk Gatewood informed the Council that the contracted IT Consultants had given the city a 30-day notice. She said staff would like to hire an in-house IT staff member. She explained that SLE98, the current IT consultants, told staff a Network System Administrator is the job position title needed. She explained if the perfect candidate was found with everything the city was looking for, this position would pay around \$85,000 a year. If someone with less experience and certifications were found, they could be hired with the understanding that they would be expected to achieve certifications during their employment to achieve the knowledge the city needs. She stated having an in-house staff member

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would speed up response time which has been an on-going issue.

City Clerk Gatewood asked the Council for a motion to approve hiring an in-house Network System Administrator.

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

Moved by: Councilman Martin

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

To approve hiring an in-house Network System Administrator.

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

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Martin:	aye
Councilman Hope	aye

Carried.

f. Finance

1. Budget Amendment – purchase of four additional bypass pumps

Finance Officer Bowers asked the Council for a motion to approve the proposed budget amendment for four additional bypass pumps.

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Hope

To approve the proposed budget amendment to purchase four additional bypass pumps.

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

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Martin:	aye
Councilman Hope	aye

Carried.

g. Billing

h. Planning

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i. Legal

City Clerk's Note: from 9:32am through 9:37am City Clerk Gatewood left the meeting due to illness and Planning Director Hughes-Neel recorded the actions of the Council for the Engineering portion of the agenda.

j. Engineering

1. Proposed CO for US 331 N Sewer project – upsizing bypass pumps

City Engineer Rouchaleau asked the Council for a motion to approve the proposal to upsize the US 331 N Sewer Project bypass pumps which will increase the cost by \$146,814.

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Martin

To approve the project change order to upsize the bypass pumps for the US 331 N Sewer Project.

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

Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Haffner:	aye
Councilman Martin:	aye
Councilman Hope	aye

Carried.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

1. Liberty Partners - 2022 Legislative Session brief overview

Jennifer Green and Tim Parsons of Liberty Partners gave the Council a legislative update.

2. City Manager Simmons told the Council when he started creating the City Progress Report, he had not realized that four years had gone by. He recalled how he was a Freeport Council Member then the Parks and Recreation Director and finally the City Manager. He gave thanks to the Mayor, the Council Members and all of the employees. He asked that the Council help him find his replacement, that life is about chapters and his with Freeport was nearing the end.

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He showed great appreciation for his time with the city and said he would miss it very much. The Council and Staff thanked him for all his hard work and agreed to starting the process of finding the right replacement.

- a. Mayor Russ Barley
- b. Councilwoman Brannon
- c. Councilman Farris
- d. Councilwoman Haffner
- e. Councilman Hope
- f. Councilman Martin


12. Public Comment

Council President Farris called for public comment and there was none.

13. Adjournment


Council President Farris motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Minutes were prepared by City Clerk Gatewood and approved by the City Council on May 26, 2022.



Russ Barley, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk