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**CITY OF FREEPORT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

May 25, 2023, 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

Council Members Present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilman Bud Day, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner, Councilman Tracey Dickey, and Councilman Eddie Farris

Staff Members Present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Manager Mark Martin, City Clerk Kathie Gatewood, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Parks Director Travis Digges, Wastewater Supervisor Paul Johnson, City Engineer Cliff Knauer, and Billing Supervisor Rebecca King

City Clerk Note: Councilwoman Brannon was absent with notice.

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

Councilman Farris gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited.

3. Recognition of Guests

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Bills
- b. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – April 27, 2023
- c. Budget Amendment #3
- d. Revenue & Expenditure Reports through April 2023

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: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

City Clerk Gatewood requested the motion to be amended because the consent agenda had the incorrect date for the Regular Council Meeting

Minutes. The date should be for May 9, 2023.

City Attorney Adkinson advised to amend the motion and both Councilwoman Haffner and Councilman Farris agreed to amend it to the following:

To approve the consent agenda with the corrected date change to the minutes.

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

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

7. Consideration of Additions and Deletions to Agenda

1. Councilwoman Haffner – Addition - Park Parking
2. Finance Officer – Addition – USDA Loan Resolution
3. City Manager – Addition – Bear Creek Bridge Walton County Interlocal Agreement
4. Mayor – Addition – Letter of Thanks from Alcoholics Anonymous
5. Mayor – Addition – Aquatic Center – Okaloosa/Walton County
6. Councilman Farris – Addition - Freeport Little League Plaque

8. Approval of Agenda with Additions and Deletions

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the agenda additions as proposed.

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

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

9. Audit Report

Adam Nelson with Warren Averett Accounting summarized and explained the Audit Report to the Council. The report said the city received the highest level of assurance from Warren Averett.

City Clerk Note: A copy of the above-mentioned audit report can be found on the city website under Finance and is also available to view in the City Clerk's Office.

10. Staff Reports

- a. Water
- b. Sewer
- c. Parks
- d. City Manager

1. Bear Creek Bridge Interlocal Agreement

City Manager Martin asked for Council approval of the amendment to accept funding and construction of the bridge, once approved it would be sent to Walton County. He said the amendment was looked over by Finance Officer Bowers and City Attorney Adkinson. City Attorney Adkinson told the Council it was approved as to form.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve Amendment No. 1 of the Bear Creek Bridge Walton County Interlocal Agreement as presented.

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

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

e. City Clerk

f. Finance

1. USDA Loan Resolution – WWTP Expansion 1.5 to 2.0 MDG

Finance Office Bowers told the Council the city closed on the above-mentioned bond and USDA provided the USDA Loan Resolution before them. City Attorney Adkinson approved it as to form, noting his corrections were in place.

Finance Officer Bowers asked the Council of the Resolution to be numbered 2023-04.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilman Dickey

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve USDA Loan Resolution 2023-04 as presented.

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

- Councilwoman Haffner aye
- Councilman Day: aye
- Councilman Farris: aye
- Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

g. Billing

h. Planning

1. Living History Park

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented the Council with a list of people for consideration to make-up a fact-finding working group for the Living History Park. She asked for approval for the following people:

- 1. Property Donator: Rita Poff
- 2. Freeport Community Activist: Charlie Simmons
- 3. City Planning Staff/Grit & Grace Rep.: Latilda Hughes-Neel
- 4. City Parks Staff: Travis Digges
- 5. City Engineering Staff: Cliff Knauer

Councilwoman Haffner asked if the working group would dissolve once the fact-finding was complete, to which Planning Director Hughes-Neel replied yes.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilman Day

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the presented Living History Park Working Group.

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

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

2. NatureView Developer’s Agreement Amendment

Planning Director Hughes-Neel recalled the development agreement with Jay Odom for the above-mentioned project. She explained Mr. Odom, at that time, would be financially responsible for the project perimeters, but during the design phase the project as become much larger and exceeds his responsibility. In speaking with Mr. Odom, he suggested the city could bid out the project and oversee it, and he would pay his portion and the city would pay their portion, which would simplify everything. She told the Council staff recommends this suggestion and asked for a motion to approve the amendment as presented. City Attorney Adkinson said he did not oppose the amendment and recommended to ask for public comment prior to a vote. Mayor Barley asked for public comment and there was none. City Attorney Adkinson asked the Planning Director and City Manager for input, to which Planning Director Hughes-Neel stated this was a logical, common-sense way to resolve the issue, and City Manager Martin agreed. City Attorney Adkinson asked the Council for a motion to adopt.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To adopt and enter into the Amended NatureView Developers Agreement and otherwise deviate and waiver from any policies that would be contrary thereto.

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

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

3. Public Art Initiative – Anchor Project

Planning Director Hughes-Neel said while her staff was working on public art projects to be presented later in the year, they were approached by Christ the King Catholic Church with a beautification project in line with one of their projects. She invited Tracy Louthain of Christ the King to present the Anchor Project to the Council. The project would create art to beautify the city and unite the community.

The anchor art would be cast iron and cost approximately \$1,000-\$1,500 each inclusive of transportation and installation. There would be different levels of sponsorship for the project. Councilman Farris loved the project. Planning Director Hughes-Neel asked permission to work with Tracy and bring information back to the Council. Developer Jay Odom loved the project and said The Jay Odom Group would like to sponsor a few of the pieces.

i. Legal

j. Engineering

11. Old Business

12. New Business

a. Mayor Barley

1. Letter of thanks from AA.

Mayor Barley read a letter of thanks from the Troublemakers Alcoholics Anonymous group for city support throughout the years allowing the meetings and group business to happen through renting the Old City Hall to them.

2. Aquatic Center

Mayor Barley told the Council he was approached by the Niceville Mayor regarding an Aquatic Center that Okaloosa and Walton County would partner to consider. He said they all the elements except funding. He asked the Council if they would like them to come before them to explain more about the project. City Attorney Adkinson said there was no harm in them coming to present the project to the Council but they will have to work with Liberty Partners and the City Manager if anything comes of the project. It was decided that a separate meeting be scheduled and Mayor Barley would come back to a meeting with dates to chose from.

b. Councilwoman Brannon

c. Councilman Farris

Councilman Farris said on closing day of the Freeport Little League season that they presented the city with a plaque of thanks for their continued support.

d. Councilwoman Haffner

1. Park Parking

Councilwoman Haffner broached the subject of parking in the Regional Sports Complex during a softball tournament. There was a discussion surrounding the event; however, no action was taken.

- e. Councilman Dickey
- f. Councilman Day

13. Public Comment

Mayor Barley called for public comment.

Developer Jay Odom commented favorably about the Anchor Project and pledged to sponsor a few of them once the project is implemented.

14. Adjournment

With no other business, Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn at 7:14 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by City Clerk Gatewood and approved by the City Council on June 13, 2023.

ATTEST:



Russ Barley, Mayor



Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk

