



CITY OF FREEPORT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

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

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

City Clerk's Note: Councilman Dickey 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

The invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

3. Recognition of Guests

Mayor Barley welcomed Tim Parsons and Jennifer Green of Liberty Partners.

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Bills
- b. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2022
- c. Regular Council Meeting Minutes – January 10, 2023
- d. Employee Benefits
- e. Revenue & Expenditure Report as of Dec 31, 2022

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f. ADG Conference

5. Public Comment on Consent Agenda

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

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

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

Carried.

7. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to Agenda

1. Councilwoman Haffner – Addition - CIP Workshop

8. Approval of Agenda with Additions

Moved by: Councilman Farris

Seconded by: Councilman Day

To approve the consent agenda addition as presented.

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

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

Carried.

9. Staff Reports

a. Water

b. Sewer

1. Truck Crane Bids

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Wastewater Supervisor Johnson told the Council no bids were received after a formal bid was advertised for a crane truck. He said after reaching out to two companies that he was able to receive one quote. Councilwoman Haffner asked if this equipment was budgeted for, to which he replied, yes, but the amount presented was over budget. Finance Officer Bowers advised she had a conversation with the Wastewater Supervisor Johnson about another piece of equipment that is budgeted for, and he was willing to forego that item and add it to next year's budget to make up for the overage cost of the presented equipment. He confirmed that conversation. Councilwoman Haffner asked what the price difference was, to which Finance Officer Bowers replied approximately \$118,000.00. She explained that the equipment to forego was budgeted at approximately \$400,000.00. Councilwoman Brannon said because the difference was so large that she would like the department to forego the other equipment and add it to the next budget. City Manager Mark explained the presented equipment would be used for a work crew to change out lift station pumps, etc. Wastewater Supervisor Johnson asked the Council for a motion to approve the purchase. He said the company had a crane truck available so there would be no delays. Finance Officer Bowers requested the amount of the purchase, \$243,174.00, to be part of the motion.

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve the purchase of a Crane Truck in the amount of \$243,174.00.

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

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

Carried.

c. Parks

d. City Manager

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City Manager Martin welcomed Tim Parsons and Jennifer Green from Liberty Partners. Liberty Partners provided an appropriations update to the Council. After discussing the update, Tim Parsons asked the Council for permission to submit to the Florida Legislature asking for the remaining amount for the Marquis Way Connector Road Project, to which the entire Council agreed.

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve Liberty Partners sending a request to the Florida Legislature for the remaining amount of the Marquis Way Connector Road project.

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

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

Carried.

Mr. Parsons told the Council they would be in a good position to ask for the full amount, 4.5 million dollars, for the septic-to-sewer project near LaGrange Road, to which Councilman Farris and Councilwoman Haffner agreed. He asked for a motion for approval to submit the request to the Florida Legislature.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve Liberty Partners sending a request to the Florida Legislature for the septic-to-sewer project near LaGrange Road in the amount of \$4.5 million dollars.

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

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

Carried.

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e. City Clerk

f. Finance

g. Billing

h. Planning

1. 1st Reading of Ordinance for B & L of Destin LLC FLU Change/SSA

City Attorney Adkinson swore in Planning Director Hughes-Neel so she could affirm that at the January 10, 2023, Regular Council Meeting they neglected to hold first reading for the B & L of Destin LLC FLU Change/SSA and the B & L of Destin LLC Rezoning after the project change application was approved. Once the mistake was realized, it was added to this Council Meeting to correct. Councilwoman Haffner asked if motions were needed and Planning Director Hughes-Neel said the motions were made at the January 10, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel held first reading:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT, SPECIFICALLY THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP, SPECIFICALLY THE PARCELS IDENTIFIED WITH REFERENCE NUMBERS 24-1S-20-32000-017-0000 AND 19-1S-19-23000-011-0000 CONTAINING 38.8 ACRES MORE OR LESS, FROM CITY FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF RV (RURAL VILLAGE) TO THE CITY'S LDR (LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION.

2. 1st Reading of Ordinance for B & L of Destin LLC Rezoning

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING MAP SERIES INCLUDED BY REFERENCE IN ARTICLE 3 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF FREEPORT, SPECIFICALLY THE PARCELS IDENTIFIED WITH PROPERTY REFERENCE NUMBER 24-1S-20-32000-017-0000 AND 19-1S-19-23000-011-0000 CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 38.8 ACRES MORE OR LESS AND DESCRIBED BY THE LEGAL DESCRIPTION CONTAINED IN SECTION 1 BELOW AMENDING THE ZONING ASSIGNMENT AND ASSIGNING ZONING FROM RURAL VILLAGE TO LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL.

3. Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase 1 Final Plat Approval

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented the Council with the Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase I and asked the Council for a motion to approve noting the final plat would not be released until after the final inspection. She requested the Council to stay after the meeting to sign, if approved.

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Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner
Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve the Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase 1 Final Plat as presented

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

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

Carried.

4. Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase 2 Final Plat Approval

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented the Council with the Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase 2 and asked the Council for a motion to approve noting the final plat would not be released until after the final inspection. She requested the Council to stay after the meeting to sign, if approved.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner
Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve the Magnolia at the Bluffs Phase 2 Final Plat as presented

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

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

Carried.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel gave the Council an update regarding the four-lane project for State Road 20. She said at the last TPO meeting, the five-year plan was discussed and the right-of-way acquisition for the State Road 20 project is set to begin in 2024 and construction will be later. She explained that the project is divided into subphases and the first subphase to be worked on will be 83A east next to city hall eastward to Black Creek Black Boulevard.

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i. Legal

j. Engineering

1. Freeport 1.5 MGD WWTF – Proposed Change Order #2 – temporary generator rental

City Engineer Rouchaleau explained a change order for the wastewater treatment plant was needed to include a temporary generator rental. He said the original generator was ordered 6-8 months ago does not have an arrival date, but it was estimated to be delivered in September 2023. He said the temporary generator rental was needed to keep the project moving forward. He noted the change order was subject to USDA approval. Councilwoman Haffner clarified the amount to be approximately \$125,000.00 and that it was needed because the generator the city ordered has not arrived yet, to which he replied yes. He advised that the amount, if approved, would come from the grant money and not the loan portion for USDA.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Farris

Mayor Barley called for further Council discussion and public comment and there was none.

To approve the Freeport 1.5 MGD WWTF – Proposed Change Order #2 for a temporary generator rental in the amount of \$125,854.08, subject to USDA approval

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

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

Carried.

Councilman Farris asked City Engineer Rouchaleau for an update on the Community Center. City Engineer Rouchaleau said a proposal would be included on the next meeting agenda.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

a. Mayor Barley

b. Councilwoman Brannon

Councilwoman Brannon said at a Walton County Board of Commissioners meeting a few days prior, Commissioner Boots McCormick asked about a southward turn lane at Freeport Elementary School and mentioned a city planned development that would conflict with a new turn lane. She said Commissioner McCormick basically said the city cares more about developments than school kids. She expressed disappointment that Commissioner McCormick did not stay after the Workshop prior to this meeting so she could speak about this. She advised she has spoken with legal and planning and there are other avenues that can be taken in the matter to get the turn lane he wants. She felt Commissioner McCormick owed the Council an apology. Councilwoman Haffner said she spoke with Commissioner McCormick before he left and told him she did not appreciate his comments about Freeport caring more about developments than students, saying that is not the case at all. She asked Planning Director Hughes-Neel to speak on the matter.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel gave details of the development in question noting it is a major development and it is still in technical review and currently has no approvals. She said Walton County Schools and Walton County Public Works are involved in technical review for every project that Freeport has, and she has not received any comments regarding a turn lane as of yet. City Attorney Adkinson asked her if the city has any provisions in the Land Development Code that address the ability to compel the inclusion of infrastructure, turn lanes, etc. that she can require, to which she replied only on a city road, not county. She said the county has jurisdiction and the responsibility of county roads and the road in question, Business 331 is now a county road. City Attorney Adkinson said because of that, the city has a ability to request but not compel, to which she said she cannot compel, she can only request. She said the county give conditions if someone is going to connect to their roadway. City Attorney Adkinson asked if there were any circumstances where the county would not be able to make comments, to which she replied was correct.

Councilman Farris conveyed that the council and staff take safety very seriously and he was unhappy when he heard Commissioner McCormick's comment. He feels no matter who it is that they should gather all the facts before making public comments. He said this makes the Council appear to be doing something wrong when they are not. He agreed with Councilwoman Brannon that he wished Commissioner McCormick had stayed for the meeting, because he feels that he owes the Council an apology.

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- c. Councilman Farris
- d. Councilwoman Haffner

Councilwoman Haffner expressed an interest in having a Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Workshop. After a discussion about dates and times, City Attorney Adkinson said City Manager Martin could setup an agreeable date and time.

- e. Councilman Dickey
- f. Councilman Day

12. Public Comment

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

13. Adjournment

Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by City Clerk Gatewood and approved by the City Council on February 14, 2023.


Russ Barley, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk



