
COMMISSIONERS:

DeLoris Roberts, Mayor
John Martin, Vice Mayor
Eleanor Randall
Patricia Bouie
Michael E. Rutledge, Sr.

CITY MANAGER:

Chad M. Shryock, City Manager
Donna R. Mayes, City Clerk

CITY ATTORNEY:

Steve Lee

**MINUTES
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING (CONTINUED)
JANUARY 14, 2009**

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Roberts called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., continuing with the January 6th Regular Commission Meeting. Full Commission was present; Staff present was City Manager Shryock, City Clerk Mayes, and City Attorney Lee.

- 1. Invocation – Commissioner Randall**
- 2. Pledge – Vice Mayor Martin**

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved to amend the agenda of January 6th Regular Commission Meeting adding F.5. Advisory Panel Recommendations and Nite Owl Software Recommendations

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Randall

Vote – 5-0

C. REGULAR AGENDA

1. Advisory Panel Recommendations

Discussion on “Take home vehicles” and the contracts that include the vehicles. Vice Mayor Martin recounted that the City Manager’s vehicle was negotiated in lieu of a cash raise. The vehicles do give an impression of perks; need to revisit the issue and possibly renegotiate the contracts for City Manager and the Police Chief. City Manager Shryock pointed out that the vehicle log books were already in practice. Attorney Lee informed that both parties must agree to amend the contract or cannot do it. Mr. Shryock addressed the Chief of Police vehicle stating it was for the protection of the City so he would not go anywhere else but stay with the city. After discussion and finding no written policy on take home vehicles, the Commission decided one should be place.

Moved to direct the City Manager to draft a proposed policy including all City Vehicles, their use of them and to provide the Board with sample policies from other communities and the time he has proposals that a workshop be called by the Mayor to discuss policies and implement them accordingly

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Bouie

Vote – 5-0

Mayor Roberts commented that number 3 took care of items 7&8.

Discussion on item #4 Freeze all capital outlay purchases, which is normal procedure according to City Manager Shryock. The Board was in agreement of no purchase over \$1,000 unless an emergency or approved by the Commission.

Moved to freeze all capital outlay purchases over \$1,000 unless Commission agrees for the remainder of this fiscal year

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Rutledge

Vote – 5-0

Item #5, Implement a hiring freeze. Mr. Harry Carter, Chairman of the Advisory Panel related that to cut the budget, unless there is a position open that no can fill, do not replace if someone leaves.

Moved to implement hiring freeze unless approved by the City Commission for the remainder of the fiscal year unless other action is taken by the Commission

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Randall

Vote – 5-0

Item #6, Cut travel and training for Staff and Commission. Ms. Ellen Vause of the Advisory Panel recommended delaying except for those certificates that must be maintained. Mayor Roberts interjected that there is mandatory training and committees that the Board covers but this has been cut back already.

Item #9, Research for alternative to the City Planner Position, which City Manager Shryock informed the City was using students as paid Intern Planners from the University. This would average out to about the same as paying the Regional Planning Council. Commissioners Bouie and Rutledge questioned Mr. Shryock on how much the planner was paid. He was not sure but thought it not much over minimum wage. Commissioner Rutledge stated that on the letterhead page that he had it stated \$11.00 an hour, but Mr. Shryock said no that was wrong. LaKesha McGruder, the Accounting Clerk who was in the audience, confirmed that the \$11.00 figure was correct pay for an Intern Planner. There was discussion on using a planner case by case. Attorney Lee advised there had been a lot of planning in the past couple of years but it might slow down some with the economy like it is. Mayor Roberts asked Mr. Eugene Herring if he would look for any programs that might be available where students from the University would work through volunteer programs, to which he agreed. Chip George interjected the Planner job was a complicated one. Vice Mayor Martin voiced he personally thought the City was getting a pretty good deal. Commissioner Bouie pointed out her issue was the pay rate.

Item #2, Curtail the operations of the Recreation Department spending and staffing. The Advisory Panel recommendation was to revisit a volunteer Director and staff while assigning city worker additional duties. Chip George the City's Financial Consultant, expressed the city would still have utilities to pay, the revenues would suffer and it would have an economic effect on the City and the businesses. Commissioner Rutledge asked Mr. George if he would have recommended the city taking on a Police, Fire and Recreation Department at the same time, to which Chip replied no he, would not. City Manager Shryock informed the Board that the Recreation Director was brought on board last January after the YMCA bowed out. Commissioner Rutledge commented he was in favor of putting the director on hourly wage, that he was not needed all the time. Mr. Shryock explained that was an option but would pay more and pay over time. Vice Mayor Martin reiterated that the County got out of the Recreation business and stopped paying the YMCA, so they stopped their services to the City. He would be in favor if it could be done with volunteers but it would be the wrong direction to go to eliminate the Recreation Director. The City has gotten more grant money for recreation than anything; only as a last resort would he vote to kill recreation.

Glen Cameron read his statement addressing his favoritism for the Recreation and the Police Department; also his understanding of the rate increases and his support of Chip's recommendations.

Heather Surrency spoke in support of Jay, the Recreation Director and announced the meeting at the School Board on January 20th @6:00 p.m. in support of the Hawthorne Schools staying open. Ms. Vause proposed a challenge to the Recreation Department to come back with a plan to stop the losses and pay their way. Mayor Roberts voiced she would like Commissioner Rutledge to get involved and see if the department could reorganize and report back.

Item #1, Dissolve the Police Department. The Advisory Panel's recommendation was to enter into the MSTU and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office provide law enforcement inside the city. Ray Daniel of the Advisory Panel sees a greater presence of the ASO. He does not believe writing tickets can balance out the deficit. He stated that salaries were reviewed and he saw an 8.3% increase to which Vice Mayor Martin exclaimed was not approved only a 2.5%. Commissioner Bouie's comment was the deeper into the budget the more they realize how much is wrong and it is time to make decisions; there is too much mismanagement. City Manager Shryock stated he did a 2.5% increase except for himself which was nothing. Chip did the calculations and got the 2.5% also, stating that sometimes there are three pay periods in a month. Mr. Daniels related he got the rates from Mr. Carlton who got them from the City. Chip explained that overtime and vacation plays into these rates on certain pay periods. After conferring with Mr. George, Mr. Daniels admitted to not having the proper documentation only having a four week pay period and apologized for the error. Chip's recommendation was to expand the Police Department, although he stated it would have been different had there been no Police Department but the department was created cheaper than any town he knew of. It can be made revenue neutral as they can see by example to the city north. This can be done by tickets and the red light cameras furthermore the city will be better off to have their own department which can be paid for by people passing through. Attorney Lee pointed out to join the County MSTU would mean allowing them to add another layer of tax.

Chief Donadio elaborated on the take home vehicle for one of his Officer, stating this was part of the offer to get a highly qualified person. Chief Donadio emphasized that he wanted the department to be more than just traffic and by expanding they could address prostitution, drugs and burglaries. He knew they would be part time in the beginning but did not expect to stay this way. Chief Donadio related to the Board that he patrols the city and stops to talk with the citizens and children every day. Discussion on operational plan to vamp up the department or dissolve the Police Department. Attorney Lee advised they have no obligation to join the MSTU if they do dissolve.

Moved to direct City Staff to come back at the next scheduled meeting to present Commission on policy of how to ramp up Police Department 24/7 and meeting called at the discretion of the Mayor

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Randall

Discussion – Mayor Roberts discussed having the Sheriff come with information and having a joint session on the 3rd of February. Mrs. Donadio commented they needed to make a decision and consider the stress it is taking on the Officer's lives to keep this in limbo.

Vote – 2-3 Nay Votes - Mayor Roberts, Commissioner's Bouie and Rutledge - Motion failed

Moved to dissolve the Police Department and not enter into the County MSTU

Motion – Commissioner Rutledge

Second – Bouie

Discussion – Vice Mayor Martin stated he is in favoring of ramping up the department and does not intend to support this motion, questioning what will be done with the equipment.

Attorney Lee advised they were free to do with as they choose or call and see if the County that donated it would like it back.

Citizen and Business Owner, Tim Logan voiced his disappointment stating he tried to be a community builder but after seeing what happened here he may not want to support a city like this.

Vote – 3-2 Nay Votes – Vice Mayor Martin and Commissioner Randall – Motion Passed

Chief Donadio asked about the time frame and cut-off date. City Manager Shryock related the motion worded it was dissolved, came in having a job now they do not.

Moved to give 30 days with paid vacation and sick time for processing

Motion – Commissioner Rutledge

Second – Commissioner Bouie

Discussion – Vice Mayor Martin voiced his concern if they are working during this period it could put the officers in a dangerous situation when people know they have been terminated and morale would be low. They will also need to look for other jobs.

Chief Donadio expressed his appreciation for all Hawthorne had done for him in allowing him to attend the Police Academy. He explained his plans to consolidate the equipment stating his intent to offer to give back the police equipment but if they do not want it Chief Donadio said he would like to give the lion share of it to the Chief of the Waldo Police Department who helped him in getting the Hawthorne Department up and running. Who also worked night and day training the officers to do what they are doing now. The Chief assured this had been a positive experience regardless of the out come.

Commissioner Rutledge amended his motion to say that the Police Department be dissolved with 30 day severance package including accrued vacation and sick time.

Commissioner Bouie seconded

Attorney Lee clarified that the motion included accrued vacation and sick plus pay for 30 days

Vote – 5-0

Mayor Roberts stated they would cover the Fire Department at the next meeting.

F. REGULAR AGENDA

1. Ordinance 2009-05 increasing utility rates

The new Rate chart was discussed with Mr. George explaining that when the Waste Hauler increased their rates the city failed to increase theirs and have not been covering their cost. It was suggested to wait on passing the ordinance and have a special meeting giving time to look over the new rate chart. Attorney Lee advised that the ordinance seals with water & sewer rates and references attached exhibits, which needs to be prepared prior to adopting an ordinance on a rate structure for first reading. A meeting was scheduled for 6:30 on Monday, the 26th to discuss this issue.

Moved to ask City Staff to examine the video monitoring of dangerous intersections with red light cameras and hiring outside law enforcement agencies

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Rutledge

Mayor Roberts voiced with the hour being so late, she did not want any more motions or discussion; just dismiss this meeting.

Motion died with no vote taken.

Moved to table this issue until later

Motion – Commissioner Bouie

Second – Commissioner Randall

Vote – 3-2 Nays - Vice Mayor Martin & Commissioner Rutledge

D. ADJOURN

Moved to adjourn this January 14, 2009 continued Regular Meeting from January 6th of the Hawthorne City Commission at 12:00 Midnight

Motion – Vice Mayor Martin

Second – Commissioner Rutledge

Vote – 5-0

These Minutes of the January 14th Continued Regular Meeting are submitted for Commission approval.

Donna R. Mayes, CMC
City Clerk

DeLoris Roberts, Mayor