

ROBERTA M. CORREA
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

TAMMIE McCASKILL
COMMISSIONER

JUSTIN R. CAMPBELL
COMMISSIONER

WILL JONES
COMMISSIONER

RUFUS J. BOROM
COMMISSIONER



TROY BELL, ICMA-CM
MPA, MS-Finance
CITY MANAGER

JANE WEST, ESQ.
CITY ATTORNEY

SUNNI L. KRANTZ, CMC
CITY CLERK

MARCIA G. CARTY, CPA
MS-Taxation
FINANCE DIRECTOR

JASON L. SHAW, SR
CHIEF, POLICE DEPT.

CHRIS TAYLOR
CHIEF, FIRE DEPT

MINUTES CITY OF PALATKA August 8, 2024

The minutes of the proceedings of the regular meeting of the Palatka City Commission held on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 6:00 PM at City Hall, 201 N. 2nd St., Palatka, FL 32177.

1. CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

a. Invocation

The Invocation was led by Chaplain Mulberry.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Campbell.

c. Roll Call

Present:

Commissioner Tammie McCaskill

Commissioner Justin Campbell

Commissioner Will Jones

Commissioner Rufus Borom

Mayor Roberta Correa

Also Present: Troy Bell, City Manager; Jonathan Griffith, Assistant City Manager; Jane West, City Attorney; Sunni Krantz, City Clerk; Marcia Carty, Finance Director; Virginia Jones, HR Generalist; Joe Verrecchio, Public Works Operations Manager; Peter Willott, Public Information Officer; Eddie Cutwright, Community Affairs Director; Chris Taylor, Fire Chief; Jason Shaw, Police Chief; Matt Newcomb, Assistant Police Chief; Rebecca Jones, Fire Administrative Assistant; Darren Denmark, Fire Lieutenant; Sophia Smith, Airport Administrative Assistant; Darren Denmark, Fire Lieutenant; Philip Smith, Fire Captain Yul McNair, Airport Manager; Allegra Kitchens, former City Commissioner; Alonzo Mulberry, City Chaplain (via telecommunications technology); Annie Davis; Sam Deputy, Sarah Cavacini, Palatka Daily News; Allen Sheffield; Regan Blackmer; Riley Blackmer; Annabelle Lamb; Tarsha Givens

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES **Motion to approve Minutes items A - D by Commissioner Campbell. Seconded by Commissioner McCaskill. The Motion Passed unanimously.**

a. July 8, 2024 Special Called Meeting

b. July 9, 2024 Workshop

c. July 11, 2024 Regular Meeting

d. July 12, 2024 Workshop

3. IN THE SPOTLIGHT - EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

a. Employee of the Month - July 2024

Mrs. Jones and Chief Taylor recognized Fire Lt. Darren Denmark for outstanding performance and being a true leader.

b. Fire Department Recognition

Deputy Chief Branford - 20 years of service

Captain Philip Smith - 20 years of service

Chief Taylor recognized Deputy Fire Chief Branford and Fire Captain Philip Smith for 20 years of dedicated service.

c. 2024 Summer Interns Recognition - Kyun Session, Riley Blackmer, Reagan Blackmer, Tommy Robinson, Trenton Williams, Ce'Niqua Edwards, Ja'Niiya Perry, Ralia Phillips, Tyran Wright, Cloi Batts, Brianna Gibbs, E'Niya James, Annabelle Lamb, Keilan McGinnis, Demarien Sutton, Kendall Lowe, Daunte Wilkerson, Tivon Adams

The summer interns were recognized for their service to the City's various departments they served in.

4. CITY MANAGER AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS Commissioner Campbell asked for reports in a method so the public can be informed and asked for a consistent report concerning the American Rescue Plan Act funding to ensure the City spends it by the time it needs to be obligated. Ms. Carty clarified these funds must be obligated by December 2025 and spent by 2026.

The City Manager provided an updated that an employee inquiry has held a level of validity that needed inquiry. He has selected a firm that has made public records requests. Within the next 2 weeks they will be conducting interviews. The retainer of the firm is a not-to-exceed amount of \$10,000. The agreement requires notice if they are approaching \$5,000. The Florida Ethics Committee has also been contacted.

a. Utility Assistance Presentation (ARPA Funds) - Christall Azcarate and Marcia Carty

Ms. Carty addressed the Commission to provide an overview of the Azcarate Group and the City of Palatka's administration of the Utility Assistance Grant. Ms. Carty thanked Ms. Azcarate and her daughter for partnering with the City.

b. June 30, 2024 Quarterly Financial Report

Ms. Carty presented the quarter-ending financial report. Revenues were over 35 million and expenditures over 28 million. Ms. Carty advised our reserve rate is about 19% and advised she will research further to apply the correct base. Commissioner Jones spoke regarding the need to spend the Tax Increment funds. Ms. Carty advised the Community Redevelopment Agency, which oversees those funds will meet on Monday. Mr. Bell advised the Commission has been emailed a check register, which Commissioner Borom asked for this on a monthly basis.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

a. **Public Comments** - (Speakers limited to three minutes - no action taken on items)

The floor was opened to public comment.

Vicki Duke 105 Carriage Terr., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke of concern regarding road resurfacing on St. Johns

Avenue from 8th Street down to where it stopped.

Tarsha Givens 225 Stilwell Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke of having a flat tire and expressed concern of providing her address. She spoke of submitting a request to be placed on the agenda so the Commission can take action. She spoke of code of ethics, conflict of interest, personal gain, and Brownsfields. She spoke regarding concerns of the personal business of the Assistant City Manager.

Sherri Scroggins 1609 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke regarding concerns of the repaving of St. Johns Avenue and the detour presently there and spoke of her business being effected. She asked for signage pertaining to the business being opened.

Sam Deputy 917 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - thanked the City road crew for working on St. Johns Avenue. He also spoke regarding the eloquence of Commissioner McCaskill.

Hearing no further requests to comment, the floor was closed to public comment.

b. Commission and Staff Response

Mr. Bell responded to Ms. Scroggins, that is a County project and spoke with the business owner prior to today. He has reached out to the County regarding signage. Commissioner Campbell recommended the City place signage. Mr. Bell spoke regarding the work on St. Johns Avenue highlights areas that still need attention.

Commissioner Campbell advised Ms. Givens he provided a letter to Mr. Bell. Mr. Bell advised the letter was circulated in other areas.

6. CONSENT AGENDA The Commission desired to discuss the following items: item I (Commissioner Jones), items E and J (Commissioner Borom).

Motion to approve items excluding E, I, and J by Commissioner Campbell. Seconded by Commissioner McCaskill. The Motion Passed unanimously.

- a. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-157 rebranding the City of Palatka Platt Drew Wastewater Treatment Facility to the "City of Palatka Platt Drew Reclamation Facility".
- b. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-165 authorizing utilization of the Florida Sherriffs Association contract No. FSA 23-VEL-31 / FSA 23-VEH-21 for the purchase of a 2024 Ford F250 and a Ford F150 trucks for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Water Treatment Plant
- c. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-144 authorizing the Palatka Police Department to accept the 100% funded FDLE JAG C grant in the amount of \$6,275 for the purchase of Street Crimes Unit technology.
- d. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-155 authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement for the acceptance of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement SAFE Grant in the amount of \$60,000 (100% grant funded)
- e. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-158 adopting the Florida Department of Transportation Urban Area Boundary Map to determine the proper functional classification and urban boundary designations within the Department's Roadway Characteristics Inventory system.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE 2020 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION ADJUSTED URBAN AREA BOUNDARY FOR PALATKA URBAN AREA, FLORIDA, AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA, PREPARED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Mr. Griffith advised this map is redone every 10 years, and will help FDOT allocate funding based upon service

levels. He advised this is strictly for the Department of Transportation.

The floor was opened to public comment. Hearing none, the floor was closed to public comment.

Motion to approve by Commissioner Campbell. Seconded by Commissioner Borom. The Motion Passed unanimously.

- f. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-148 awarding ITB 2024-06 and execution of a contract for the Madison Street Water Main Replacement project to DB Civil Construction, LLC in amount not to exceed \$499,890 (100% grant funded).
- g. ADOPT RESOLUTIONS to approve policies on excessive force and 504 ADA for CDBG funded projects
- i) ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-166 to approve the policies on Handicap Accessibility Self Evaluation Plan, Transition Plan for Handicap Accessibility and Section 504 Grievance procedures for adoption as a requirement for all Community Development Block Grant funded projects.
- ii) ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-156 to approve the policy on Excessive Force for adoption as a requirement for all CDBG funded projects.
- h. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-149 awarding RFP 2024-11 Turf Maintenance to Mullis Lawn Maintenance of Palatka, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$63,000.
- i. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-150 awarding ITB 2024-12 City of Palatka Restroom Construction, Hank Bryan Park to ER Rooter, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$73,000.

Mr. Verrechio advised the intent is to award a contract to ER Rooter to construct a bathroom at Hank Bryan Park in the amount of \$73,000. Commissioner Jones expressed this project had been capped at \$50,000 and expressed concern the proposed amount is too high. He also expressed concern of desiring a picture of what we are getting. Mr. Griffith advised bids for design and construction came in over \$100,000. The County then engineered the design of the bathroom for the City and construction was put back out for bid. This is the bid for construction. Mr. Griffith advised we have in excess of \$73,000 in the budget.

Motion to bring back to the September 12th meeting with a rendering by Commissioner Jones. Second by Commissioner Borom. Motion passed unanimously.

- j. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-151 authorizing a \$13,442 budget amendment for FY 2023-2024 for Golf Course Contract Capital Improvement Projects

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, AMENDING THE FY 2023-24 BUDGET TO FUND THE GOLF COURSE CONTRACT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS; AND PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS

Ms. Carty addressed the Commission. She has met with the Golf Course Franchise Manager. They have had unforeseen additional irrigation expenses. The profit-sharing franchise has earned more revenue than the City budgeted. This additional revenue covers the additional expenses. She explained this item is providing us funds in accord with the profit sharing agreement with the intent of using the funds to improve the irrigation at the Golf Course.

The floor was opened to public comment. Hearing none, the floor was closed to public comment.

Motion to approve by Commissioner McCaskill. Seconded by Commissioner Borom. The Motion Passed unanimously.

- k. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-159 granting a special events permit to the Community Affairs Department for Riverfront Trivia Night to be held August 30, 2024
- l. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-163 granting a special events permit to the Community Affairs Department for Reggae theme Night to be held on August 23, 2024.
- m. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-161 granting a special events permit to Main Street Palatka for the Datil Fest: Datil Pepper Culinary celebration to be held October 26, 2024.
- n. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-162 granting a special events permit to Palatka Jr/Sr High school for Palatka Jr/Sr High Homecoming parade event to be held September 12, 2024.

7. RECESS - 10 MINUTES - PRIOR TO REGULAR BUSINESS OR AT 7:30 PM No recess was taken.

8. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-R-164 authorizing an agreement with St. Johns Housing Partnership for administration of the City's affordable housing renovation program and adoption of the program document.

Mr. Griffith presented a proposed Affordable Housing program document and proposed contract with St. Johns Housing Partnership to administer the program. He highlighted program document, including target area where applicants would get additional points. He spoke regarding income limits and project budgets. The term of the agreement would be a 3-years. St. Johns Housing Partnership's compensation is reflected in the contract.

Bill Lazare from St. Johns Housing Partnership advised the program will probably roll out in October after approval from the Housing and Urban Development. He spoke regarding putting out bids to local contractors and spoke of the known task to eliminate blight. Mr. Lazare expressed funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development is income based depending on family size. He expressed when the program goes live, it will be over subscribed based upon past experience of the City. Mr. Lazare estimated this program will assist 50 - 60 households. Mr. Bell expressed a home's roof would have to be fixed on the front end if the total amount expended is over \$20,000.

Mr. Lazare advised the program draft says the expenses are not to exceed \$40,000 per project, however, the City Manager can approve going to \$50,000. Commissioner Borom expressed concern the Commission had asked the program be capped at \$40,000. Consensus of the Commission was to cap the program at \$40,000 per house.

Motion to approve by Commisioner Borom. Second by Commisisoner Campbell. The motion was rescinded by Commisisoner Borom and consent was granted by the second.

Motion to with the correction that each instance is not to exceed \$40,000 by Commissioner Borom. Seconded by Commissioner Campbell. The Motion Passed unanimously.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Amending Future Land Use Map and Rezoning Parcels: 09-10-26-0213-0000-0010, 09-10-26-0213-0000-0020 and 09-10-26-0213-0000-0030 located on Kelley Smith School Road

Mr. Bell advised this item has been removed. Mr. Aghemo advised there is a written request to postpone the item. No motion was made.

- i) ADOPT Ordinance 2024-07 amending the future land use map of 09-10-26-0213-0000-0010, 09-10-26-0213-0000-0020 and 09-10-26-0213-0000-0030 from City of Palatka Commercial (COM) to City of Palatka Residential Low (RL) - first reading continued from July 11, 2024, continued from June 13, 2024
- ii) Ordinance 2024-08 amending the zoning map of 09-10-26-0213-0000-0010, 09-10-26-0213-0000-0020 and 09-10-26-0213-0000-0030 from City of Palatka General Commercial (C-1) to City of Palatka Residential, Single-Family (R-1) - first reading continued from July 11, 2024, continued from June 13, 2024

b. ADOPT ORDINANCE 2024-09 establishing procedures for quasi-judicial proceedings - 2nd reading
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, CREATING MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 54-1 THROUGH 54-6, ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS.

Ms. West presented this Ordinance for second reading. Previously, rezonings were not considered quasi-judicial proceedings. Ms. West advised this Ordinance would provide a clear process for quasi-judicial proceedings including rezonings and appeals.

The floor was opened to public hearing. Upon hearing nothing further, the floor was closed to public hearing.

Ms. West advised quasi-judicial proceedings are loosely based on the Florida Rules of Evidence. Commissioners Jones and Borom expressed the need to meet with the City Attorney before the Ordinance is enacted.

Motion to approve by Commissioner McCaskill. Seconded by Commissioner Campbell. Motion Failed Yes 1, No 4, with Mayor Correa consenting.

Motion to push it to September 12 meeting by Commissioner McCaskill. Seconded by Commissioner Jones. Motion Passed Yes 4, No 1, with Mayor Correa dissenting.

10. EMERGENCY ITEM

- a. Discussion/Direction Resolution 2024-R-153 authorizing the execution of a retainer agreement with the firm Sniffen & Spellman, P.A. for investigative services and amending the FY 2023-2024 budget accordingly.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A RETENTION AGREEMENT WITH SNIFFEN & SPELLMAN, P.A. FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN EMPLOYMENT INVESTIGATION; AMENDING THE FY 2023-24 BUDGET; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS

Commissioner McCaskill expressed she reached out to the Florida Commission on Ethics. They cannot receive the case unless they receive a referral from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, State Attorney, or the Governor.. She reached out to the Florida City and County Manager's Association's Senior Advisors who advised they do not assist with related issues. Commissioner McCaskill advised the Equal Opportunity Commission would not take the matter as they handle matters from employees directly. Commissioner McCaskill contacted Eryn Russell at the Florida League of Cities, who advised our attorney can call their attorney. Ms. West responded she reached out to the Florida League of Cities' attorney and was advised they cannot assist in this matter. Ms. West also advised the Commission cannot compel the employees to file a Complaint with the Commission on Ethics.

Commissioner McCaskill advised she reached out to the Sniffen & Spellman. Originally, they did not expect the investigation to exceed \$30,000. However, now that the City is not pressed for time, it is possible that the investigation will not exceed \$10,000. When we were pressed for time, the investigator thought the investigation would take three attorneys. Commissioner McCaskill advised the investigation would take 10 weeks with one investigator.

Commissioner Campbell spoke regarding the need for Ms. Erdelyi to not handle this matter. If we need an attorney, Commissioner Campbell recommended Commissioner McCaskill know and another attorney be selected. The consensus of the Commission agreed.

The floor was opened to public comment:

Allegra Kitchens 1027 S 12th St., Palatka, FL 32177 - expressed the investigation, if only to find criminal accusations, should be dropped as Mr. Bell is not a criminal

Richard Weeks 103 Riverside Blvd., East Palatka, FL 32177 - expressed this matter can be handled internally.

Tarsha Givens 225 Stilwell Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke in opposition to the investigation and in support of the inquiry into the Assistant City Manager. She spoke regarding the departure of an employee.

Kay Dubin 1322 Kirby St., Palatka, FL 32177 - expressed apologies need to be made on both sides. She expressed the City Manager needed to apologize to the public and staff regarding the removal of a tracking device from the vehicle assigned to the City Manager.

Sam Deputy 917 Carr St., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke of concern of the amount of employees who have left the City and the brain drain that leaves with them. He encouraged the Commission to make a decision.

Hearing no further requests to comment, the floor was closed to public comment.

Commission discussion commenced. Commissioner McCaskill and the Mayor spoke regarding public comment in person. Mayor Correa spoke regarding hiring a firm to handle the matter. Commissioner Borom expressed support of the matter if there is no one else that can assist. Commissioner McCaskill spoke regarding the need to be fair to Mr. Bell as well as the employees.

Commissioner Campbell expressed the Commission cannot delegate to staff what they should do. He expressed the need to protect those that have come to them. Commissioner Campbell advised following the investigation, the City Manager would be better able to serve the employees.

Commissioner Borom spoke regarding the need to strengthen the employee relation policies. Mayor Correa expressed concern of the employee atmosphere.

Commissioner Borom spoke regarding having a layer of someone to report to other than the Manager for those employees who feel uncomfortable. Ms. West advised she spoke with 2 attorneys at the Florida League of Cities who advised they do not offer that service. They referred the City to Sniffen & Spellman. Commissioner Jones expressed the Commission has the ability to identify issues and get someone to mediate to make a different workplace. He spoke regarding the need to understand culture and diversity and the possibility of bringing in an outside mediator.

Commissioners Campbell and Borom spoke regarding the past team building session. Commissioner Campbell spoke regarding bringing in William Whitson's firm that handled the team building session or one of the other vendors that responded when a vendor was selected at that time. Commissioner Jones expressed the need to diversify the person who conducts the session

Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve going after the investigative services to include bringing in a mediator to conduct regular business and be a liaison between the City Manager and staff, and also bringing someone that can conduct human diversity training or retreat. Second by Commissioner Borom. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion continued. Commissioner Campbell disagreed to using our facilities for a retreat. Commissioner Jones indicated this matter is not to exceed \$10,000.

11. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS Commissioner McCaskill advised the "Cuzins" are doing a backpack giveaway at one of the City's facilities tomorrow. She would like to pay for a science demonstration with her special event funds.

Motion to add an emergency item to allow Mr. Steve Wilson to do a science demonstration by Commissioner McCaskill. Seconded by Commissioner Campbell. The Motion Passed unanimously.

Motion to allow the vendor to be used by Commissioner Campbell. Seconded by Commissioner McCaskill. Motion Passed unanimously.

Commissioner Campbell advised the Commission has to be mindful of what is put out in the atmosphere as the media may make it appear the Commission as dysfunctional and to be mindful of the employees. Commissioner Borom expressed if someone is in the room they understand what is happening. Mr. Bell spoke regarding removal of his GPS device was not him being dishonest. Mayor Correa expressed the need to temper comments.

12. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn at 8:36 PM by Commissioner Jones. Seconded by Commissioner Borom. The Motion Passed unanimously.

NOTICES: ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE CITY COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, AT THE APPLICANT'S EXPENSE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.0105

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING ACCOMMODATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 329-0100 AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS.