

**MINUTES
CITY OF FORT MEADE
REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

A Regular Meeting of the Fort Meade City Commission was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 6:00 P.M. at the City Hall Commission Chambers, 8 West Broadway Street, Fort Meade, Florida.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Watts.

2. ROLL CALL:

Mayor	James Watts	Present
Vice Mayor	Richard Cochrane	Present
Commissioner	Samuel Berrien	Present
Commissioner	Petrina McCutchen	Present
Commissioner	Robert Elliott	Present

Staff Present

City Manager	Danielle Judd	Present
City Attorney	Tom Cloud	Present
Deputy City Clerk	Melissa Cannon	Present
Public Works Director	Jackie Cannon	Present
Finance Director	Breanna Smith	Absent
CMHP Office Manager	Pat Wickersheim	Present
Human Resource Director	Beisy Hernandez	Present
Community Center Director	Tory Dewdney	Present
Electric Director	Jan Bagnall	Present

Also, present PCSO Sergeant Warren Burgess.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Watts led the invocation. Mayor Watts led the pledge to the flag.

4. ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS

A. Add item 9.H.

Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Berrien to add item 9.H. to the agenda.

Motion to add item 9.H. to the agenda passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

5. PRESENTATIONS/AWARDS/REPORTS

A. Introduction of Electric Director, Mr. Jan Bagnall. - *Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd introduced Mr. Jan Bagnall as the City's new Electric Director. Ms. Judd gave an overview of his background and welcomed Mr. Bagnall to the City.

B. Introduction of Community Center Assistant, Ms. Herlinda Resendez – *Tory Dewdney*

Mr. Dewdney introduced Ms. Herlinda Resendez as the City's new Community Center Aide. Mr. Dewdney gave an overview of her background and welcomed Ms. Resendez to the City.

C. Recognition of Firefighter Retiree, Mr. Mike Coulter. – *Beisy Hernandez, Fire Chief Roc Eiland*

Fire Chief, Roc Eiland along with Assistant Chief, Dorrell Nelson presented Mr. Mike Coulter with a plaque in appreciation of his 19 years of service with the City of Fort Meade Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Eiland gave an overview of his tenure and thanked Mr. Coulter for his service.

The City Commission thanked Mr. Coulter for his years of service to the City.

D. Recognition of Firefighter Years of Service, Mr. Ray Acuff. – *Beisy Hernandez, Fire Chief Roc Eiland*

Fire Chief Eiland, along with Assistant Chief, Nelson presented Mr. Ray Acuff with a plaque in appreciation of his 52 years of service with the City of Fort Meade Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Eiland gave an overview of his tenure and thanked Mr. Acuff for his service.

Volunteer Firefighter and grandson to Mr. Acuff, Jordan Whatley gave a speak of his grandfather's service to the Fort Meade Fire Department and the inspiration he provided.

The City Commission thanked Mr. Acuff for his years of service to the City.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

City Commission approval of the Minutes of January 30, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting. – *Melissa Cannon*

Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Berrien to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting.

Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 30, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

7. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Citizen comments for items not on the agenda (3-minute maximum length).

Ms. April Morales, FMMSHS Band Booster President, 401 N. Church Ave. Fort Meade, FL. stated that she was advised that she cannot hang flyers for fund raisers in downtown businesses and requested the city reconsider, stating this is the best way to notify citizens of activities and fundraisers in Fort Meade. Ms. Judd stated this has to do with the downtown code enforcement items and will be presented at the February 25, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting.

Mr. Lorenzo McCutchen, 100 SE Dr. MLK St., Fort Meade, FL. thanked Commissioner Berrien for attending the LIEF festival stating it was a great turnout. Mr. McCutchen invited the commission to attend a presentation to honor great people of Fort Meade called the Distinguished 8 on February 21, 2020.

Mr. McCutchen stated that the ditches on South 9th Street need to be maintained. Mr. Eiland stated that the property was in Polk County. Ms. Judd stated the county would be contacted and asked to keep the property maintained. Commissioner Berrien stated he would like to move towards annexation of the property.

Ms. Paulette Hughes, 1019 2nd St., Fort Meade, FL. stated she would like to see the flyers be allowed as this is how she is notified of events.

Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, 513 N. Hendry Ave., Fort Meade, FL. stated he would like to see information on recycling be sent to residents. Mr. O'Donnell stated that he would like to see regulations imposed for vehicles and trailers on Halloween night.

8. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None.

9. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Consent Agenda Concept. – *Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd introduced the concept of a consent agenda and how it works.

There was discussion of the consent agenda being used in the past.

Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Cochrane to reinstate the consent agenda.

Motion to reinstate the consent agenda passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

B. Approval of New Job Description - Assistant Public Works Director. – *Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd gave an overview of the job description stating this position would replace two positions; the Water/Sewer Senior Systems Operator and the Streets/Stormwater Supervisor that have both remained vacant since last fiscal year and are currently being tasked to the Public Works Director. Ms. Judd stated she is working towards succession planning and having more employees trained instead of one person being tasked with all these responsibilities.

Commissioner Berrien stated that one of the most important responsibilities, the electric department, has already been lifted from the Public Works Director so what justifies not using one of the other positions. Commissioner Berrien stated he feels like the city is moving in a direction of being top heavy and he wants to avoid that at all costs so why not fill the current positions and promote within. Commissioner Berrien stated instead of creating these high paying positions we should be moving in the direction he thinks the city should be moving in and that is to make the fire department work. Some of these funds should go to the fire department.

Commissioner McCutchen asked how long the positions were vacant and if they were pursued. Ms. Judd stated the both positions have been vacant over 6 months and have continuously been advertised.

Ms. Judd stated that she is not trying to create something top heavy and each of these utilities require different reporting levels and requirements and need someone to manage them. Ms. Judd stated she is not creating another director spot; she is merging two supervisory position into one which will be a working supervisor.

Mayor Watts stated that the city has operated short staffed working positions “out of class” for many years. Mayor Watts stated he agrees that we need to start getting staff trained in these positions with the proper salaries to run this city the best we can.

Mr. Dorrell Nelson, 206 Adams St., Fort Meade, FL. wanted to reiterate on a comment that was made stating that this is a real Fire Department with real Firefighters.

After much discussion, Motion Commissioner Cochrane, second Commissioner Elliott to approve the new job description for Assistant Public Works Director.

Motion to approve the new job description for Assistant Public Works Director passed by a vote of 3-2 with Commissioner Berrien and Commissioner McCutchen opposed.

C. Agreement with Career Source Polk: Youth Work Experience Program. – *Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd stated that this program provides the opportunity to serve as a work site where a student can obtain employment. The salaries are paid for by Career Source Polk and the City will need to provide meaningful employment opportunities, safe workspace and supervision.

Motion Commissioner McCutchen, second Commissioner Elliott to authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement with Career Source Polk covering the period of March 1, 2020 – February 28, 2022.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement with Career Source Polk covering the period of March 1, 2020 – February 28, 2022 passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

- D. Recreation & Parks Facility Reservation, Use and License Agreement Forms – *Danielle J. Judd, Tory Dewdney***

Ms. Judd presented the updated recreation forms for approval.

Commissioner Berrien questioned the verbiage of #9, page 2 “Director of Parks or Director of Recreation”. Ms. Judd stated that staff will correct the verbiage in the documents. Discussion ensued.

Motion Commissioner Cochrane, second Commissioner Elliott to approve the revised Facility Reservation, Use, and License Agreements for City Recreational Facilities with necessary corrections to be effective immediately.

Motion to approve the revised Facility Reservation, Use, and License Agreements for City Recreational Facilities with necessary corrections to be effective immediately passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

- E. Extension of Lease Agreement: Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. Fellowship Dining. – *Danielle J. Judd***

Ms. Judd presented a 2-year extension of the current lease agreement for fellowship dining at the Community Center.

Motion Commissioner Cochrane, second Commissioner Berrien to authorize the Mayor to execute the Extension to Lease Agreement with Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. covering the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022, for fellowship dining at the Community Center.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to execute the Extension to Lease Agreement with Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. covering the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022, for fellowship dining at the Community Center passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

- F. Ratification of the agreement to secure completion of municipal road and landscape improvements with Valmont Newmark, Inc. – *Melissa Cannon***

Ms. Cannon presented the executed agreement with Valmont Newmark, Inc. for ratification that was presented at the December 10, 2019 regular Commission Meeting.

Motion Commissioner Cochrane, second Commissioner Elliott to accept the executed agreement for ratification by the City Commission to secure completion of municipal road and landscape improvements with Valmont Newmark, Inc., as presented.

Motion to accept the executed agreement for ratification by the City Commission to secure completion of municipal road and landscape improvements with Valmont Newmark, Inc., as presented passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

G. Florida Municipal Power Agency (FMPA) Board Representative. – *Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd stated that with the recruitment of the new Electric Director the assignment of the FMPA Board Member should be transitioned from former City Manager Fred Hilliard to Mr. Jan Bagnall.

Motion Commissioner McCutchen, second Commissioner Berrien to authorize the Mayor to send a letter to FMPA in a form similar thereto to the 2019 letter to designate Mr. Jan Bagnall as our representative.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to send a letter to FMPA in a form similar thereto to the 2019 letter to designate Mr. Jan Bagnall as our representative passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

H. Request for Qualifications (RFQ) #20-05 Folding Wall Partitions for Community Center. *Danielle J. Judd, Tory Dewdney*

Ms. Judd stated that as a request from the last CRA meeting, she has presented a formal RFQ for the replacement of the folding wall partitions at the Community Center.

Motion Commissioner Cochrane, second Commissioner Berrien to approve the RFQ 20-05.

Motion to approve the RFQ 20-05 passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

10. CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS:

Attorney Cloud stated that he feels the Impact Fee Bill, that would have impacts on municipalities, has stalled.

Attorney Cloud stated that the FBI has opened an investigation on the proposed sale of JEA.

Attorney Cloud stated that there was a bill to prohibit the City's ability to use the electric revenue as a transfer to the general fund and that bill is no longer.

11. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

Ms. Judd stated that the City has received the FDEP Loan Offer Letter and it will be presented to the Commission at the next meeting.

Ms. Judd stated she will have a presentation on February 25, 2020 at the Commission meeting on the State of the City.

Ms. Judd stated staff will be presenting an RFP for Engineer Services for rotating contractors.

Ms. Judd presented pictures and a brief explanation of some of the code concerns in the Historic Downtown area. The City also has some code issues that need to be addressed. Code Enforcement will do a presentation of the Historic Downtown code issues at the February 25, 2020 Commission meeting.

12. CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS:

A. Commissioner McCutchen – None

B. Commissioner Berrien stated that he has already received calls regarding the Historic Downtown code enforcement.

Commissioner Berrien stated that regarding the Fire Department, with the retirement of the two firefighters there are only 12 volunteer firefighters left. In response to this, what are the actions being taken to improve the number of firefighters?

Commissioner Berrien stated he has received several calls regarding the following:

What is the policy and procedure for submitting a grievance? What if the subject of the grievance is against the City Manager what is the policy and procedure?

What steps are we taking to ensure employees needs are met, that they can express their concerns without fear of retaliation and to improve morale?

Commissioner Berrien stated the reason why he has a strong stance against these high paid positions is because there is a history of changing positions and making up titles. There needs to be a clear hierarchy of who supervises who and training to make employees aware of their rights.

Ms. Hernandez stated that she just conducted employee training and spoke with each employee to let them know her door is always open, and they can talk to her in confidence even if it is about Ms. Judd.

Ms. Judd stated the procedure to file a grievance against the city manager is through HR then it is sent to the city commission to handle. Ms. Judd stated that she is unsure what this is about or where this came from, and she is very upset. Ms. Judd stated that she has worked very hard for this City for the past year, she had an event for all employees in December where she spent thousands of her own dollars to ensure it was successful, she is working on doing an annual employee picnic, she completed a salary survey where every employee received a raise within six months of her employment.

Ms. Judd stated she cannot fix the problems at the Fire Department until five (5) commissioners direct her to do so since her hands have been tied.

Ms. Judd stated if someone has a grievance with her, they can talk to HR directly. Ms. Judd stated in all her career, she has never had a statement like that made to her and she is very upset, stating she has bent over backwards to improve morale of the employees and their work conditions.

Ms. Judd stated that her evaluation is coming up and if her services are not what this community needs, the commission needs to let her know.

Commissioner Berrien stated that when he is asked a question and does not know the answer, he needs to ask the question.

- C. Vice Mayor Cochrane stated that he is tickled with the direction the City is going, stating we have sat on things for years and the fact that they are now moving forward is a blessing.

Vice Mayor Cochrane stated he would like to see the City sponsor a lecture series on the history of Fort Meade stating that he would like to present a program and invite historians like Mr. Canter Brown or Mr. Tom Tart. Attorney Cloud stated he would like to sponsor this event as this City is the oldest continuing city in Florida.

Vice Mayor Cochrane asked about the social media comments about the Peace River Park slide. Ms. Judd stated staff was aware and has blocked off that section until the repairs can be completed.

Vice Mayor Cochrane asked for an update on Hurricane Irma reimbursements. Ms. Judd stated the city has only received about \$1,300 so far and FEMA representatives have been meeting with finance. Ms. Judd will present an update at the next meeting.

- D. Commissioner Elliott – None

- E. Mayor Watts stated he would like to have more discussion on the downtown flyers.

Mayor Watts commended Ms. Judd stating she is doing a wonderful job and he has seen more done for the employees this past year than has been done in the past 20 years.

Ms. Judd stated that there is work being done at Patterson Park and it is planned to be completed by the end of March.

13. STAFF REPORTS

Building Dept. – *Melissa Cannon*
Code Enforcement – *Marvin Haynes*
Library – *Jacqueline Rose*
Sheriff's Office – *Jennifer Crews*
City Mobile Home Park – *Pat Wickersheim*
Electric Dept. – *Jackie Cannon*
Water/Wastewater – *Jackie Cannon*
Streets Dept. – *Jackie Cannon*

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Cochrane to adjourn the Regular Commission meeting of February 11, 2020 at 8:14 PM.

Motion to adjourn passed by unanimous vote of 5-0.

ATTEST:



Melissa Cannon, Deputy City Clerk



James Watts, Mayor