

**MINUTES
CITY OF FORT MEADE
REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

A Regular Meeting of the Fort Meade City Commission was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 6:00 P.M. via Zoom Virtual Meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Mayor Watts.

2. ROLL CALL:

Mayor	James Watts	Present
Vice Mayor	Richard Cochran	Present
Commissioner	Samuel Berrien	Absent*
Commissioner	Petrina McCutchen	Present
Commissioner	Robert Elliott	Present

*Arrived at 6:17 PM

Staff Present

City Manager	Danielle Judd	Present
City Attorney	Tom Cloud	Present
Deputy City Clerk	Melissa Cannon	Present
Finance Director	Breanna Smith	Present
Public Works Director	Jackie Cannon	Present
Fire Chief	Roc Eiland	Present
CMHP Manager	Pat Wickersheim	Present
Library Director	Jacqueline Rose	Present
HR Director	Beisy Hernandez	Present
Community Center	Tory Dewdney	Present

Also, present PCSO Sgt. 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

5. PRESENTATIONS/AWARDS/REPORTS

6. PUBLIC FORUM:

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

Ms. Sharith Grace, 709 N Hendry Avenue, wanted to comment on the topic of the fire department and was asked by the Mayor to comment during that item on the agenda.

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

8. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Extension of Agreement for Furnishing and Using Reuse Water. – *Thomas A. Cloud*

Attorney Cloud gave an overview of the one-year extension agreement for furnishing and using reuse water with Mosaic.

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

Motion to approve consent agenda passed by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

9. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Fire Department – Service Level and Funding – *Fire Chief Eiland, Danielle J. Judd*

Ms. Judd provided the current Fire budget report, calls sheets for the month of April and payroll reports.

Chief Eiland stated that for many years the Fire Department was funded through the general fund. When the fire assessment was imposed, the general fund was supposed to offset the fire budget. Mr. Eiland stated that they are down from 25 personnel to 12 personnel currently and does not understand how they are still overbudget.

Commissioner Elliott asked why the fire department run calls outside the city limits and Chief Eiland stated it was for mutual aid but if the commission does not want them to run mutual aid, they can direct him in writing.

Commissioner McCutchen asked if personnel were scheduled or do all firefighters run all calls. Chief Eiland stated that all personnel can respond to all calls. Commissioner McCutchen recommended scheduling personnel for response and have the other personnel on standby if needed to keep cost down.

Commissioner McCutchen asked Chief Eiland if he was opposed to a third-party with fire expertise to help with training to work out the logistics, schedule personnel and find ways to be more productive.

Vice Mayor Cochrane asked about increasing the fire assessment to offset some of the costs and help with equipment.

Commissioner Elliott stated he agreed with a third-party consultant and understands the discussion for increasing the fire assessment but cannot support the increase without knowing the department is running efficiently. Commissioner Berrien stated he thinks the firefighters do a phenomenal job. Commissioner Berrien stated he feels scheduling personnel would be more feasible if there were more personnel to choose from. Commissioner Berrien stated that standards need to be set for the fire department. Commissioner Berrien stated the bottom line is resources and manpower. Commissioner Berrien stated that his vision of the city is not outsourcing any other services.

Chief Eiland stated he was working with another fire department that has 26 personnel and a budget of \$273,000, funded from the fire assessment.

Commissioner McCutchen stated the commission needs to set some goals and expectations and will need to see information on the personnel needed, the time it takes and standby personnel.

Commissioner Berrien asked Chief Eiland who the other fire department was, who he was working with, what their budget was and how it was funded and how they fund their equipment. Chief Eiland stated he had a phone conversation with Frostproof Fire Chief to set up a meeting to discuss how they operate and will report back to the commission. Chief Eiland stated that their budget was \$273,000 funded by the fire assessment and equipment is funded from the same fire assessment.

Commissioner Elliott stated that Frostproof also has paid personnel. Commissioner Elliott asked Chief Eiland if a third party comes in and can give some additional insight and ideas would that be something he would be interested in because the fire department needs to be part of the city and not an entity by itself.

It was discussed and agreed that Chief Eiland be part of the process and selection of the entire process of a third-party review of fire services with a list of everything that needs to be addressed.

After much discussion, Motion Commissioner Cochrane to have an independent consultant to come in and work with the Fire Department and bring a report back in June.

Commissioner McCutchen stated she wanted to reiterate that since Chief Eiland is working with another Fire Chief that operates with a similar budget with more personnel, what needs to be worked out is scheduling, there needs to be a way to schedule individuals to not exhaust the budget so there will be funds to purchase equipment. Commissioner McCutchen

stated that an outside consultant may be beneficial but initially what we can ask of the Chief is to work on the scheduling.

Mayor Watts stated he would like to see Frostproof's Fire budget and how their department is running.

Commissioner Elliott added that hopefully an outside consultant can get a head of how many should be staff and how to properly maintain a budget.

Motion to have an independent consultant to come in and work with the Fire Department and bring a report back in June passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Ms. Judd asked if the directive could be to the Fire Chief that the analysis from Frostproof be done within 30 days and simultaneous to that the fire chief figure out what the criteria is and bring back as an agenda item by the first meeting in June. Ms. Judd stated a timeline to the fire chief should be set if it is desired to consider increasing the assessment.

Chief Eiland stated he will make it happen. Chief Eiland stated he would call the State Fire Marshall in the morning to see if they could send someone to help.

Commissioner Berrien asked Chief Eiland if the department has ever been under investigation for any financial issues of the State with running calls with un-trained personnel. Chief Eiland stated that they were not under investigation rather on February 7th, he received a call from the State and had to verify in an email that the uncertified firefighters were not running calls.

Ms. Judd stated she was not aware of any allegations and just asked that any such incidents should be reported to Human Resources going forward.

Commissioner Elliott asked Chief Eiland if there is ever a repeat occurrence like this that the City Manager and City Commission be notified immediately.

Vice Mayor Cochrane asked Chief Eiland if personnel were hired through city hall. Chief Eiland stated that when an applicant applies, a fire meeting is called like they have always done, once that is approved the applicant is sent to HR.

Ms. Judd stated that the only thing done through city hall is a drug-screen and asked Chief Eiland if backgrounds have been conducted before approving the applicant. Chief Eiland stated that a background and a physical are done.

There was much discussion of who has or lack of files for personnel. Ms. Hernandez stated she was recreating all the files.

Commissioner Berrien asked for this process, how soon will the packets be ready to begin on those files and what are the requirements for how often backgrounds need to be done. Ms. Hernandez stated she will have the packets ready soon and will verify the backgrounds.

Ms. Judd requested that the original documents for the employment application, backgrounds, physicals, drug screening and pension be kept with HR at city hall for all fire personnel.

Sharith Grace stated about the fire calls and cutting personnel or scheduling, how can you manage that when minutes mean saving lives.

- B. First Reading Ordinance 20-10 Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Franchise Agreement. – *Thomas A. Cloud***
City Attorney Cloud read the title to Ordinance 20-10 on 1st Reading.

Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Berrien to approve Ordinance 20-10 on 1st Reading with 2nd Reading on May 26, 2020.

Motion to approve Ordinance 20-10 on 1st Reading with 2nd Reading on May 26, 2020 passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

10. CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS:

Attorney Cloud stated any changes made to non ad-valorem assessments will be done through the budget process and should be complete by September 15th of each year.

Attorney Cloud stated the next PRWC meeting will be presented in a face to face meeting with limited seating of about 50 people of the 115 invited.

11. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

Ms. Judd gave breakdown of the items purchased and displayed for the 2020 Senior Graduates and stated there will be a Parade of Seniors on May 20, 2020.

Ms. Judd stated with the COVID funding for agencies there will be several interlocal agreements coming forward including HELP of Fort Meade and United Way.

Ms. Judd stated she is working with Republic and the City Attorney to finalize the contract for the May 26th meeting.

Ms. Judd stated that the report from the Fire Chief needed to be done by June to be considered for an increase in the fire assessment if desired.

12. CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS:

- A. Commissioner McCutchen stated that the COVID testing went well with 39 residents in line and 13 tested.

Commissioner McCutchen stated that citizens have reached out about lack of maintenance at Morrison Cemetery.

Commissioner McCutchen received a complaint about flooding at the church on SE 3rd St. and Lanier Ave. by the handicap ramp and at SE 4th St. and Lanier Ave at a residence.

- B. Commissioner Berrien thanked Ms. Judd for the floral arrangements sent for his family's loss.

Commissioner Berrien stated as they were laying his family member to rest in Morrison Cemetery, he too noticed the lack of maintenance and asked why the headstones are being sprayed instead of mowed, stating there was dead grass all around them.

Commissioner Berrien stated that he spoke with Ms. Judd to request an additional cleanup day in the contract with Republic Services.

- C. Vice Mayor Cochrane thanked Mr. Cloud for his work with Mosaic.

Vice Mayor Cochrane asked about a timeline for the study with an independent consultant of the fire department. Ms. Judd stated the request for the Fire Chief should be that the Frostproof report could be complete in 30 days. The outside review, possibly July before the budget is released.

Vice Mayor Cochrane relayed his support and loyalty to the Fire Department.

- D. Commissioner Elliott stated that the Senior Banners look good and that was a great idea.

Commissioner Elliott stated that the old BioSolids building was in disrepair and needs to be addressed. Ms. Judd stated that code enforcement has already been there, and it is underway.

- E. Mayor Watts stated he supports the Fire Department and appreciates Chief Eiland.

- F. Vice Mayor Cochrane asked about the bank property. Ms. Judd stated she has not had a chance to put an offer together but has reached out to the bank.

Ms. Judd asked Commissioner McCutchen if she wanted to pursue her request to inquire about the old Napa building property. Commissioner McCutchen stated that would be a wise pursuit. No objections from the Commission.

13. **STAFF REPORTS**

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, Motion Commissioner Elliott, second Commissioner Cochrane to adjourn the Regular Commission meeting of May 12, 2020 at 8:14 PM.

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

ATTEST:



Melissa Cannon, Deputy City Clerk



James Watts, Mayor