

CITY OF CLEWISTON
Special Commission Meeting
August 1, 2016

The City of Clewiston City Commission held a Special Commission Meeting in the City Hall Commission Chambers Monday, August 1, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Vice Mayor Kristine Petersen.

Commissioner Gardner gave the invocation and the audience joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Present: Vice Mayor Kristine Petersen, Commissioner Mali Gardner, Commissioner Sherida Ridgill and Commissioner Julio Rodriguez. Mayor Phillip Roland attended via telephone.

Personnel Present: City Manager Al Perry, Interim City Clerk Kathy Combass, Finance Director Shari Howell, Recreation Director Lance Ramer and Code Enforcement Officer Debbie McNeil

Visitors Present: None

Vice Mayor Petersen stated this is a Special Commission Meeting, therefore, there is no Consent Agenda. She also stated for the record, Commissioner Gardner, Commissioner Ridgill, Commissioner Rodriguez and herself were present and Mayor Roland is attending via telephone.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions.

- 1. Approval of Documents to be sent to the Hendry County Property Appraiser by August 4, 2016** - The Commission should approve the DR-420/Certification of Taxable Value, which sets the proposed millage rate and tentative budget hearing, DR-420TIF/Tax Increment Adjustment Worksheet, and DR-420MM-P/Maximum Millage Calculation-Preliminary Disclosure before August 4, 2016 for transmittal to the Hendry County Property Appraiser.

Finance Director Shari Howell presented millage rate options and a list of budgeting variables for the Commission to consider when setting the millage rate. There was a general discussion regarding the variables.

Mayor Roland left the meeting at 1:50 pm.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated he does not feel the City should hire another full time Code Enforcement Officer but feels a part time position is needed. He does not feel an additional Police Officer is needed. He will not support raising the taxes to pay for any new positions.

Commissioner Gardner questioned if there were funds in contingency that could be utilized for the roofing repairs at City Hall and painting the John Boy Auditorium building.

Finance Director Howell explained to the Commission there are expenses with grants that are not always planned. Commissioner Gardner suggested Janet Papinaw and Lynne Mila meet with Finance Director Howell to discuss this matter. Finance Director Howell stated she believes there are now more restrictions on grants. She also stated the City is extended ahead of time and then has to wait to get reimbursed.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated if the Hendry County Commission pays the \$236,000 requested, he feels the City should be able to utilize some of those funds for capital projects.

Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve the proposed documents for transmittal to the Hendry County Property Appraiser's Office using the current year millage rate of 6.0314. Vote 4 yeas, 0 nays

Before the vote, Commissioner Ridgill stated her concerns regarding Securian because of the issue last year. Finance Director Howell stated the City is waiting on an update from Securian. She also stated the City has always utilized General Fund Reserves to pay the bill for the Frozen Defined Retirement Benefit. Commissioner Gardner stated she does not want to raise the millage rate. The County Commission and School Board need to help pay their share of the costs for East Rec and those funds should be used to address some of the issues on the list provided by Finance Director Howell and capital improvement projects. She also feels the City employees deserve a pay raise like the School Board. Commissioner Gardner stated she would prefer to go back to the roll back rate but is not able to make that decision in not knowing what the Hendry County Commission or the Hendry County School Board is going to do, so she is in favor of leaving the millage rate the same as it is.

The Commission then voted on the above motion.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated he feels hiring additional positions will not eliminate overtime. Commissioner Ridgill stated the additional dispatcher position is more of a safety issue not an overtime issue.

2. **Commission Discussion on any City Business**

Commissioner Gardner stated she had requested a copy of the City Charter. She stated legal counsel is the Commission's responsibility. She has concerns with having outside counsel. She feels, after talking to staff, the City needs inside counsel or someone closer to home. She would like City Manager Perry to contact the City Manager of Loxahatchee Groves with her fellow commissioners' approval to find out why they went to a different law firm. Commissioner Ridgill stated she has no problem asking City Manager Perry to investigate the matter but does not believe the City can afford inside counsel. Commissioner Gardner stated she does not feel the City is being provided the service it is paying for. She does not feel City staff has the direction and guidance they need in a timely manner. She has had concerns since 2012 and those concerns have not lessened. Commissioner Ridgill requested Finance Director Howell to provide the amount that is paid to legal counsel at the next workshop. Commissioner Rodriguez agreed with Commissioner Gardner. He feels it is time for a change. Commissioner Ridgill stated she feels this item should be included on the August 15, 2016 Commission Meeting Agenda and discussed at the Workshop.

Commissioner Ridgill made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gardner, to authorize the City Manager to make inquiries of cities similar in size, such as Lake Placid, Sebring and Belle Glade, to see who they are using for legal counsel. Vote 4 yeas, 0 nays

PUBLIC COMMENTS - At this time, any person will be allowed to speak on any matter that pertains to City business.

COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER - None

COMMENTS FROM THE CITY COMMISSION – Commissioner Gardner presented a Florida League of Cities handout regarding insurance pools for Finance Director Howell and City Manager Perry to review. There was a general discussion regarding this matter.

Commissioner Rodriguez questioned Code Enforcement Officer McNeil if she applied the law on all the cases when she addressed the items listed in Mr. Cordero's letter. Code Enforcement Officer McNeil stated the law was applied with the help of Director Reese's interpretation. There was a general discussion regarding this matter.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated he feels when alleys are closed, a package defining the costs to move utilities, etc. should be provided. He stated he had discussed this matter with Utilities Director Williams. City Manager Perry stated the City is now providing those costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Phillip Roland, Mayor

Kathy Combass, Interim City Clerk