

CITY OF CLEWISTON
Special Commission Meeting
January 31, 2017

The City of Clewiston City Commission held a Special Commission Meeting in the City Hall Commission Chambers Tuesday, January 31, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Mayor Gardner. The audience joined in reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Personnel Present: City Manager Al Perry, Interim City Clerk Mary K. Combass, Finance Director Shari Howell, Police Chief Don Gutshall, Police Lieutenant Aaron Angell, Police Lieutenant Michael Rowan, Loretta Melanson, Utilities Director Danny Williams, Community Development Director Travis Reese, City Engineers Tommy Perry and Scott Jones and City Attorney Gary Brandenburg.

Visitors Present: Tom Waddell, Terry Gardner, Hillary Hyslope and Donnie Hughes.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - none

- 1. Award of Clewiston Police Headquarters Project** – The City advertised for bids for the Clewiston Police Headquarters Project on December 22, 2016. The bids will be opened on January 27, 2017 at 2:00 pm. Staff and City Engineers Tommy Perry and Scott Jones with Johnson-Prewitt & Associates, Inc. will have a recommendation.

Exhibit: Agenda Item Report No. 1

Recommendation: Commission Discretion

City Engineer Tommy Perry addressed the Commission and stated that all bids were competitive and indicates the new Police Headquarters can be built for that cost. He also stated that all references for Florida Star Construction, who submitted the low bid, have been very positive. City Manager Perry said that all bids came in higher than the grant amount and approximately \$100,000 has been spent on the drawings. He also stated there is no extension on the grant at this time but Senator Latvala has instructed Lobbyist Screven Watson to contact FDLE to find a way to place the funds aside to be used next fiscal year. Engineer Perry indicated there could be some cost savings if an extension was granted. Commissioner Roland questioned Gary Hains of Florida Star Construction if local contractors would be used for this project and Mr. Hains stated that he did not object to speaking to any local contractors if they are qualified. There was a brief discussion regarding whether or not there was a need to reduce the project and the cost savings of the project if an extension was granted. Mayor Gardner indicated that she would not be in favor of raising the millage rate and Commissioner Roland stated that he is in favor of raising the millage rate for one year if the cost of this project could not be lowered.

Police Chief Don Gutshall addressed the Commission and stated the City of Clewiston is eligible for a construction grant in the amount \$300,000 from USDA. He explained that USDA will not accept the grant application until an accepted copy of the blueprints of the building that the City intends to build is received by them.

Commissioner Rodriguez left the meeting at 4:18 p.m.

Mr. Hains stated that based on conversations today, with the new design, he feels they would be close to the \$1,600,000 range. He also said if his company begins looking at local subs, the subs may sharpen their pencils. Mayor Gardner stated she is happy that he is going to consider local contractors.

Commissioner Petersen expressed her concern that revisions to the building may affect its functionality. Chief Gutshall stated that the City should keep in mind that we are trying to

construct a building that will last fifty to sixty years into the future. He feels the City should not cut too much now just to get the cost down.

Mayor Gardner asked Attorney Brandenburg what should be kept in mind in awarding the bid today. Attorney Brandenburg stated that the contract can't be awarded at this time if the funds are not available in a general reserve account. He also stated the contract can't be awarded based on raising taxes next year or the assumption of receiving an additional grant. The contract documents and the contractor have to agree the contractor is going to do everything necessary in accordance with the grant to get the grant funds. The City should have the money to pay the contractor when the contractor submits his request for payment. He stated the City can negotiate with the low bidder but if the nature of the project changes, there may be issues with the other bidders.

Commissioner Rodriguez rejoined the meeting via telephone at 4:26 p.m.

Mayor Gardner asked if the meeting could be continued until additional information is available to make a final decision. Attorney Brandenburg said the meeting could be continued as long as the continued meeting is within the thirty day timeframe that the contractor agreed to hold his bid price.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that no one is surprised that the bids came in higher than the grant. He feels the City should consider other costs including furnishing the building inside. He said he is in support of the project but will not support going over the grant amount or raising taxes. Mayor Gardner informed Commissioner Rodriguez that Chief Gutshall had presented an opportunity for additional grant funding up to \$300,000.

Mayor Gardner congratulated Mr. Haines on the article in the Ft. Myers News-Press regarding his company, Florida Star Construction, and asked the City Clerk to email a copy of the article to all Commissioners.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked Mr. Haines if he has built a police station. Mr. Hains stated that he had not but assured the Commission that his company could handle the project. Mayor Gardner informed Commissioner Rodriguez that Engineer Perry had stated that he had checked Florida Star Construction's references and feels they are qualified.

Chief Gutshall questioned how long after a go ahead would it take for the contractor to begin construction. Mr. Hains said it would not be long at all.

Commissioner Atkinson asked what the cost would be to redraw the plans. Mr. Tramonte said because he feels the plans were very thorough and only two addendums were issued, a credit could be given and applied to the cost to redraw the plans.

Mr. Hains stated that he would like to caution the City about redesigning the building. He feels that it may be beneficial to stick with original plans and maybe not finish the second floor. He expressed that he would like to have time to talk to other subs before any changes are made to the building.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that he feels the engineer should redo the drawings at no charge because everyone knew the amount that was budgeted for this project.

Commissioner Petersen made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Atkinson, to continue the discussion regarding this matter to a time certain of February 10, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

2. **Commission Discussion on any City Business** – There was no discussion on any other City Business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – none

COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER - none

COMMENTS FROM THE CITY COMMISSION - none

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Mali Gardner, Mayor

Mary K. Combass, Interim City Clerk