

CITY OF CLEWISTON
Special Commission Meeting
February 10, 2017

The City of Clewiston City Commission held a Special Commission Meeting in the City Hall Commission Chambers Friday, February 10, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m. by Mayor Gardner. State Representative Byron Donalds gave the invocation and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Personnel Present: City Manager Al Perry, Interim City Clerk Mary K. Combass, Finance Director Shari Howell, Police Chief Don Gutshall, Police Lieutenant Aaron Angell, Community Development Director Travis Reese, Public Works Director Sean Scheffler, Utilities Director Danny Williams, Code Enforcement Officer Debbie McNeil, City Engineers Tommy Perry and Scott Jones, City Attorney Gary Brandenburg and Loretta Melanson.

Visitors Present: Jason Tramonte, Art Castellanos, State Representative Byron Donalds and David Torres.

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

- 1. Award of Clewiston Police Headquarters Project (This agenda item was continued at the January 31, 2017 Special Commission Meeting to a time certain of February 10, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.)** – 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.

Mayor Gardner opened the discussion and stated this matter was continued from the January 31, 2017 Special Commission Meeting to a time certain of February 10, 2017 to finalize some issues before a decision could be made by the Commission. City Manager Perry explained a document that has been presented to the Commission includes a breakdown of the total costs for the new police department building reduced by savings from revisions to the new building and personnel changes. He also discussed an offer from First Bank for a 2% loan for the amount of the deficit. He stated that City Attorney Brandenburg feels the City may only need a line of credit loan. Commissioner Petersen expressed her concern with the costs that would be associated with the loan. Attorney Brandenburg stated he did not feel the costs would be anywhere near an amount that was estimated for a prior loan. City Engineer Tommy Perry addressed the Commission and reviewed the suggestions to reduce the cost that were made by the architect and contractor. It was noted the second floor of the building is not suggested to be removed but it would be unfinished.

City Manager Perry stated an extension of time had not been given. He also stated the funds have to be encumbered by June 31, 2017 and the project needs to be complete ninety days after June 31, 2017. David Torres of Florida Star Construction addressed the Commission and discussed the timeline of the project. He stated a contract would need to be signed once the plans are revised. Attorney Brandenburg stated that as long as the contract is prepared and the prices are inserted, the contract can be approved at the February 20, 2017 Commission Meeting even though the final drawings may not be complete at that time. There was a general discussion regarding whether the building should be squared off to save that cost or not. Vice Mayor Atkinson stated he feels that based on the amount that would be saved, he would not square off the front of the building. Attorney Brandenburg clarified the additional costs that are being paid by the City can be paid after June 31, 2017.

Commissioner Petersen expressed her concern with the financial issues that currently impact the City. Vice Mayor Atkinson agreed and noted that the City is currently having problems with the garbage trucks. Commissioner Rodriguez said his concern is the timeline of the project. He stated he had previously felt the Police Department budget should be reduced. Commissioner Petersen noted the crime rate has gone down. Commissioner Rodriguez

stated the new building would not make the community any safer. He feels the employees do need a safe place to work but does not want to spend more than the amount of the grant. He agrees that a new police department building is needed but that he could not approve the project. He stated that he wished the budgeting aspect was handled differently and that there was more time. Vice Mayor Atkinson questioned the amount of the costs for the water line and the low voltage. Engineer Perry stated that his office did the estimate on the cost for the water line and feels confident about that estimate. Chief Gutshall explained that the full magnetic lock system wasn't needed so that cut the low voltage cost. Vice Mayor Atkinson stated that he agrees with Commissioner Rodriguez. Commissioner Roland stated that he did not disagree with Commissioner Rodriguez and Vice Mayor Atkinson. It was also his contention that the project not exceed the grant amount. Mayor Gardner stated she hoped they would have been able to get closer to the grant amount. She feels the Police Department deserves a place to work where they are safe and can represent the law enforcement of this community. She stated a police building is needed but does not feel that it is acceptable at this point. She said she was hoping to have an extension from FDLE but does not see any other option at this time other than to reject all bids and not award a bid for this project.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if there was a possibility to have those funds available next year so that the City could re-apply. He does not feel that the City should give up. Vice Mayor Atkinson stated that he called and left a message for Senator Latvala regarding that possibility. Mayor Gardner stated that Representative Byron Donalds had said that he would like to help the City. She also stated that she feels the City should continue to work with Senator Latvala and Representative Diaz-Balart.

Commissioner Rodriguez made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Atkinson, to reject all bids for the Clewiston Police Headquarters Project where the bids were opened on January 27, 2017. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

PUBLIC COMMENTS – none

COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER - none

COMMENTS FROM THE CITY COMMISSION - none

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Mali Gardner, Mayor

Mary K. Combass, Interim City Clerk