

For Your Information

FROM THE CITY MANAGER & STAFF

February 28, 2020

Dates to Remember

March 9, 2020 – Planning & Zoning Board Meeting

March 16, 2020 – City Commission Meeting

March 17, 2020 – Special Magistrate Hearing

March 19, 2020 – Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting

Office of the City Manager:

Citizens, Business Owners & Other Interested Parties:

The City Commission held a called meeting on February 27th as previously announced to consider the selection of an Independent Auditing Firm to conduct the state required annual audit of City financials for the most recent fiscal year ending September 30, 2019 and to continue providing the services for fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

To prepare for the selection of an auditing firm to perform the required services for the City, the Commission had previously appointed a five member Auditor Selection Advisory Committee comprised of four citizens and one member of the Commission. Commissioner Melanie McGahee was designated by the Commission to chair the advisory committee with the other citizen appointees being Mark Deitz, Pepe Lopez, Jeff Smith and Elaine Wood. The Advisory Committee met and assisted city staff in the preparation of a solicitation document in the form of a request for proposals that was advertised in a number of ways and distributed to qualified accounting firms authorized to perform the requested services in Florida and interested in submitting a proposal to provide the City's auditing services. The Committee held a meeting after the proposals were received to evaluate and rank the responses in order of preference based upon the Committee's reviews of several specific criteria included in the request for proposals.

The recommendation of the Committee was presented to the Commission at the February 27th meeting and the Commission unanimously approved a City contract with the accounting firm of Mauldin & Jenkins whose Florida based office is located in Bradenton. The firm has a vast amount of governmental type accounting and other relevant financial services experience in Florida and other southeast states. This will be the first time for the firm to audit the City of Clewiston's financials. The firm received the highest ranking by the advisory committee for their responses to the request for proposals and they offered the lowest cost for providing the services of the four qualified accounting firms that submitted responses. The price quoted for the 2019 audit engagement is below the approved budget amount estimated when the annual budget was adopted in September, 2019.

Upon reviewing the advisory committee's recommendation, Mayor Mali Gardner, on behalf of the entire Commission, expressed the Commission's thanks to Commissioner McGahee and the

four citizen appointees who comprised the committee. At the meeting, I also advised the Commission that the City Finance Department had been working diligently to be the best prepared in recent years to provide the necessary financial information to the selected auditing firm which will allow the firm to meet the required timeframe for audit completion in June, 2020. I congratulated City Finance Director Shari Howell for this achievement and members of the Commission likewise expressed their appreciation and pleasure with the announcement. The extra effort exerted by Director Howell to update financial reporting capabilities will also allow the opportunity for timely financial reporting to the Commission throughout the current fiscal year and into the future on a regular basis and minimize to some degree the pressure on staff at the end of year to prepare for the annual auditing process going forward.

If anyone desires more information, the tabulation of the proposal rankings, evaluation criteria and materials and other information is available on the city's website.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the City of Clewiston,

Randy Martin

Staff Reports

Community Development Director Travis Reese reports:

- A Planning and Zoning Board Meeting will be held on Monday, March 9th at 5:30pm at City Hall. During the meeting, the board will be discussing a US 27 corridor ordinance and potential changes to allow for economic growth and revitalization. The City encourages its citizens to attend and share ideas as it goes through this review process.

Library Director Natasha Hayes reports:

- Over the past two weeks, the Library was accessed for normal operating business and meeting space for the community. There were a total of 31 individual meetings held.
- Library staff provided ready reference assistance to 225 patrons along with daily routine services which included circulation of materials, computer assistance, and programming.
- On February 19th, 20th and 26th, we held Storytime session at 9:30 a.m. There were a total of 48 preschoolers from Discover Day, Little Disciples Preschool and Covenant Academy Preschool. The children also worked in the computer lab on the reading program (i.e., Lexia and abcmouse.com). These programs enhance and contribute to their fluency along with providing hands on practice with computers.
- Lego Club was held on February 19th with a total of 8 participants. Lego Club is held each Thursday from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. The library staff continues to bring in additional Lego kits and building supplies.
- Patrons needing a quiet place to use the computer are welcome to use the computer lab along with the computers located on the main floor of the library.
- The Adult Book Club met on February 24th to discuss How to Walk Away written by Katherine Center, and select the next book – which is the BLOCKBUSTER HIT: Before We Were Yours written by Lisa Wingate. Come and join in on the next discussion scheduled for March 30th at 5:30 p.m.
- Board Game Bonanza was held on February 19, with a total of 4 participants (3 children and 1 adult).

- On January 27th, we started offering FREE TAX PREPARATION with IRS Certified Volunteers providing income tax assistance. This service is free and open to the public. Please call 863-983-1493 to book your appointment with any staff member.
- Need a place to hold a meeting? What about a computer lab to host your organization's/company's training? The Clewiston Library offers a classroom and computer lab with a total of 16 computers for use. For more information or to secure the room, please stop in or call the library at any time.
- If you have not done so already, please join our Facebook page (Clewiston Public Library) in order to remain up to date on the library's events and programs.
- The library has worked hard to develop a cooperative-wide calendar of activities, which can be found on our website (www.hendrylibraries.org) located under the Calendar of Events section. Here you will find events from all three libraries within the county. This is a great way to see what is upcoming throughout the cooperative as each library hosts different events.
- Upcoming Events: Homework help on Mondays from 4:00 p.m. – 6 p.m., Coloring and Crafts will be held on March 10th at 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Board Game Bonanza will be held on March 18th at 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Black History Month Students of Excellence Awards will be held on February 27th at 5:30 p.m., Clewiston Advisory Board Meeting March 5th at 5 p.m. Additional events, locations and times are provided via the cooperative-wide calendar. Hope to see you all here...

Public Works Director Sean Scheffler reports:

- **If you have any recreational needs or questions, please drop by City Hall from 8:00am to 5:00pm or call 863-983-1484.**
- **Mosquito Control:** Staff started spraying the Golf Course in the evening to push the mosquito population back. The last trap counts were very low; less than fifty in three traps.
- **Grant & Project Updates:**
 - The final walk through for the new “Welcome” signs took place on February 19, 2020.
 - Work on the levee cut off wall has been stopped for a time while inspections and testing of the test portion are performed.
 - The new sidewalks on US27 have a projected construction start date of FY 2022/2023.
 - Staff is seeking ¾ of a mile of sidewalk through a FDOT SRTS grant.
 - The Ventura Avenue Rebuild Project is in design phase and scheduled for 2020 construction. The City's engineer is preparing design plans to accommodate under the road infrastructure before paving begins.
 - Other sidewalk projects included in the Florida DOT 5 year plan are being considered for the design phase. The City is in the process of reviewing priorities for future sidewalk construction and will be developing a 5 year plan for FDOT consideration.
 - After review of the plans for the new Clewiston Commerce Park sign, staff recognized architectural features were needed and is working on the design.
- **Parks Department Activities:**
 - The new picnic tables purchased by the Lions Club have been installed in Civic/Memorial Park.

- A punch list of items that needed to be addressed in the Sports Complex has been taken care of.
- Field maintenance staff have been working on adding clay to infields and base areas as we get ready for the coming softball and baseball season.
- New tennis court organizers and trash receptacles were installed this week.
- The tennis courts behind the Youth Center were soft washed.
- **Street Division Activities:**
 - The right hardware has come in to finish the installation of the beam on the pedestrian guardrail being installed on South Berner Road. Work is scheduled to begin on Monday.
 - Potholes were run this week.
 - New lights illuminating the US Flag in City Park were installed by the Electric crew.
 - All of the palms on US27 have been fertilized and mulched. The irrigation system was checked and all is working well.
 - Staff started mulching the Civic/Memorial Park and will systematically work their way throughout the Festival Grounds.
 - Staff finished washing the tennis courts and started power washing the sidewalks in Civic/Memorial Park.
 - The surveillance system in the Operations Yard is being upgraded with new cameras and gate closers.
 - Outside security lights were repaired on the Firehouse and on Field One in the Sports Complex.
 - Staff spent the best part of a day breaking loose a plugged sewer line on Field One. A large solid object somehow got into the line and caused quite a lot of trouble. All working again.
 - **NOTICE:** The Sugar Festival is around the corner. Thousands of people will be visiting our town. Please take extra care in cleaning up your property. Remove clutter, mow the lawn and power wash your home, driveway and sidewalk. This is the first and lasting impression our visitors will have when the festival is over. Let's all work together to make Clewiston the "Sweetest" and "Cleanest" town in America.

Golf Course Director Robbie Rush reports:

- Get all information of what's going on at Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- Get on our E-mail list by going to the City of Clewiston website www.clewiston-fl.gov. Go to the golf course division and at the bottom of the page you can sign-up on Constant Contact and get all Clewiston Golf Course information.
- The Clewiston Women's Golf Association conducted their Annual Women's Invitational on February 18, 2020. The theme this year was Shake Rattle and Roll. All the pictures and results are posted on the Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- The 2020 Clewiston Sugar Festival Glow Ball Tournament is scheduled for Friday night, March 6, 2020. Sign-up is in the golf shop.
- The Clewiston Women's Golf Association's 11th Annual Rally for the Cure Mixed Scramble is scheduled for February 29, 2020.
- The Clewiston Golf Course Couples Championship is scheduled for Sunday, March 1, 2020. If interested in playing, call 863-983-1448 or sign up in the golf shop.

- The LaBelle V.F.W. Tournament is scheduled for March 14, 2020. If interested in playing, call 863-983-1448.
- Golf Shop Hours are 7:15am-5:00pm. The first tee time is 7:30am.
- Golf Carts must be in by 5:45pm.
- Walking is permitted all day at the golf course now. Tee time is a must.
- For more information, call the golf shop at 863-983-1448.

Utilities Director Danny Williams reports:

- **Electric Crew Activities**
 - repaired street lights;
 - removed vegetation from power lines;
 - installed underground primary in front of Sonny's Barbeque Restaurant;
 - removed old cross arms and hardware from fire-damaged feeder pole;
 - installed raptor guard on pole on El Paso Ave;
 - repaired 4 pole top pin insulators on Arkansas Avenue;
 - ran one new service to residence;
 - removed old service to abandon residence;
 - installed new lights on Sugarland Highway for flags in city park.
- **Water Sewer Crew Activities**
 - repaired two water line breaks;
 - serviced Master Lift Station;
 - located underground utilities in preparation for borings;
 - serviced lift station at ballfields;
 - replaced five water meters.
- **Customer Service Department**
 - We offer several bill paying options; please visit or call the office at 983-1454 if you'd like to learn more!
 - **Please remember to register with CodeRed (Reverse 911).** This system allows us to contact you in case of an emergency or with other informational announcements. You may register by clicking on the CodeRed link at the bottom of the City's website page www.clewiston-fl.gov. You may update your information at any time through the same link.
 - If you are considering replacing your air conditioner or insulation, remember the City offers a **rebate program** for those items. Most local contractors participate in the program and can give you information. You can also visit our website at www.clewiston-fl.gov or call our office.
 - **Don't forget to sign up for your meter based surge protection!** Visit our office today.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF UTILITY PAYMENT SCAMS: Scam artists are calling Utility customers posing as employees of Clewiston Utilities and threatening disconnection of services if payment is not made immediately. Please be aware:

- 1) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER request you to purchase money cards or gift cards to pay your account over the phone.**

- 2) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER contact our customers on the weekend and threaten disconnection of services.**
- 3) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER speak to our customers in a threatening tone.**

If you feel you have been a victim of this scam, please contact Clewiston Utilities to verify the call or the Clewiston Police Department and file a report.