

CITY OF CLEWISTON
Special Commission Meeting
March 25, 2024

The City of Clewiston City Commission held a Special Commission Meeting in the City Hall Commission Chambers Monday, March 25, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Pittman. Mayor Pittman gave the invocation and the audience joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Present: Mayor James Pittman, Vice Mayor Greg Thompson, Commissioner Barbara Edmonds, Commissioner Mali Gardner and Commissioner Hillary Hyslope.

Personnel Present: City Manager Randy Martin, Finance Director Shari Howell, Director of Operations Danny Williams, Police Chief Tom Lewis, Police Commander Dan Brophy, Community Development Director/Fire Chief Travis Reese, Laurie Lindsey, Leslie Almanza, Hope Wojack and City Attorney Dylan Brandenburg.

Visitors Present: Jerry Cochrane, Bob Pastula, Roly Gonzalez, Nanette Badger, James Murray, Janet Taylor and R.L. Carroll.

Additions/Deletions/Changes and Approval of the Agenda – Vice Mayor Thompson requested that an agenda item to reconsider his motion for cause termination made at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting be added to this agenda.

Vice Mayor Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Edmonds, to add an agenda item to this agenda to reconsider the motion for cause termination made at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

Mayor Pittman stated that an additional agenda item to reconsider the motion for cause termination made at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting will be added to this agenda as Agenda Item No. 1 and the current Agenda Item No. 1 will now be Agenda Item No. 2.

Public Comments – Mr. Roly Gonzalez of 305 Via Del Aqua came forward and stated that he would like to know the reason why the recommendation to terminate was made at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting. Mayor Pittman stated that the reason was clear at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting.

1. Reconsideration of the Motion for Cause Termination made at the March 18, 2024 Commission Meeting

Vice Mayor Thompson made a motion to terminate City Manager Randy Martin for no cause and offer an opportunity to him to stay on as a consultant with the length of time to be determined by the new interim city manager.

Commissioner Gardner asked City Attorney Brandenburg if the interim manager could make the decision of the number of days the manager could stay on as a consultant. Attorney Brandenburg stated that he feels that decision would generally be up to the commission but the commission could vest the authority to the interim manager. Commissioner Gardner stated that she would like to have a date certain for the length of time of the consultant and suggested that it be 30 days. Commissioner Hyslope seconded Vice Mayor Thompson's motion on the table for discussion. She stated that her concern is the taxpayers' dollars in paying two people; one to do a job and one to consult on that same job. Commissioner Gardner stated that she feels no more than 30 days is necessary for the transition to address the issues that were brought up at the March 18, 2024 meeting.

Vice Mayor Thompson amended his motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to terminate City Manager Randy Martin for no cause and offer an opportunity to him to stay on as a consultant for 30 days at the discretion of the interim city manager.

Mayor Pittman stated that he feels one reason the issues were not done is because we do not have the staff to do it. He does not know that 30 days will be long enough and suggested that the interim manager be able to extend that with the blessing of the commission. He reminded the Commission that there are many things going on and the budget discussions will be starting soon. He stated that Mr. Martin expressed that he would be interested in staying on as manager until April 1 to finish out the month and clean up items that he has been working on. He could then work with the interim manager for 30 days to May 1 and then give the interim manager an opportunity to extend that another 30 days. Commissioner Gardner stated that she does not feel that allowing Mr. Martin to stay as manager until April 1 is the right decision because of the many items that have not been resolved. She suggested the new interim manager start tonight and consult with Mr. Martin through the process and at the end of 30 days, if necessary, a recommendation for an additional 30 days would need to come back to the commission.

Vice Mayor Thompson amended his motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to terminate City Manager Randy Martin for no cause and offer an opportunity to him to stay on as a consultant for 30 days at the discretion of the interim city manager and at the end of 30 days, a recommendation for an additional 30 days would need to be brought back to the commission.

Commissioner Gardner asked for clarification that the termination would be at will with up to 30 days as a consultant, any longer would have to come back to the commission, but the interim city manager can make the decision before 30 days if everything is concluded before the 30 days. The Commission agreed and Mr. Martin stated that he thinks he understands the motion but wanted to make sure Attorney Brandenburg was satisfied that it is reflected accurately for the record. Attorney Brandenburg stated that he was satisfied with the explanation and suggested if the commission was prepared to vote, that they do so by roll call. Mr. Martin stated that he would like to make a statement after the board acts. Mayor Pittman stated that he was happy to hear the motion for the no cause termination but will not be supporting the motion because he does not support the termination. **He then called for a roll call vote on the motion.**

**Commissioner Gardner – yea
Commissioner Hyslope – yea**

Vice Mayor Thompson – yea

Commissioner Edmonds – yea

Mayor Pittman – nay

The motion passed with 4 votes in favor and 1 against.

Vice Mayor Thompson thanked Mr. Martin for staying on as a consultant and stated that his reconsideration was based on the total weight of Mr. Martin's tenure.

Mr. Martin read his statement regarding his end of service. He stated that it had been his honor to serve Clewiston since July 2019 as city manager. He expressed his appreciation to his wife and family, the citizens, partners to the Clewiston community, past and current city employees, advisory board members and other city officials including the city attorney. He stated that based on the consensus feedback received today, he is convinced that Clewiston today is in a much better place as a local government entity and community than it was in the summer of 2019 due to the collective efforts of the Clewiston team during his tenure. He highlighted achievements made including the stability for city financials, improved employee retention and benefit enhancements, improvements in economic development positioning and completion of substantial progress while securing funding for a significant number of major infrastructure improvements. Next, he thanked the past and present city commissioners that brought him here. He stated that public service is his life's calling and he will walk away with a clear mind and no resentments for anyone and expressed his appreciation for the time he was entrusted with the responsibility.

2. Appointment of Interim City Manager

**Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to make Danny Williams, our Utilities Director, our Interim City Manager.
Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays**

Director Williams agreed to accept the position. Attorney Brandenburg encouraged the commission to discuss the compensation, duration of the position, and if they would like to direct staff to proceed with an RFP process. Commissioner Gardner stated that she would like a recommendation from Finance Director Howell based on her research of what the average salary is for a city manager with experience in a rural area. She feels it is important to do the transition and get through the budget season and discuss the advertising process to fill the city manager position at a later time. Mayor Pittman stated that he feels they should have the salary information at the next meeting on April 15 and have a game plan for advertising because he feels the process is going to take some time. Commissioner Gardner expressed that she feels the focus for the next 30 days should be on the transition. Mayor Pittman stated that the salary information will be provided at the next meeting and then possibly at the May meeting they will have a game plan for the advertisement. Commissioner Edmonds thanked Mr. Martin for all of his help to her as a new commissioner. Mayor Pittman thanked Mr. Martin for his service and stated that he appreciates that the City is better off and knows the city appreciates it.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

James Pittman, Mayor

Mary K. Combass, City Clerk