

CITY COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, December 21, 2020
7:00 pm

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Elected Officials and Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

Elected Officials Present in Chambers:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

Elected Officials Present Electronically:

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

Staff Present in chambers:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Deputy Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant
Vanessa Cochran, Assistant City Clerk

Staff Present Electronically:

Anthony Neese, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

All persons intending to address the City Commission were duly sworn.

1. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion: Commissioner Varnadore moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the December 21, 2020 Commission Agenda with the removal of Item 4.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The below individuals spoke about the Lincoln Memorial Academy School case.

- Junior Salazar
- Bridget Mendel (via telephone into Zoom Meeting)
- Juanna Phillips (via telephone into Zoom Meeting)
- Commissioner Smith
- Commissioner Jones

City Attorney Barnebey informed the Board that the case is in litigation at the Federal Court and strongly recommended that the Board not make any comments on the case.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes
- b. Legal Bills
- c. Unity and Prayer 2021 Special Event
- d. Proposed three (3) Year Maintenance Agreement with FDOT (M. Rayan)
- e. Resolution 2020-30 SWFWMD Toilet Rebate Program FY21

Motion: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Varnadore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of 3.b for discussion.

3.B LEGAL INVOICES DISCUSSION

Commission Smith questioned, more specifically, the invoice pertaining to Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP. City Attorney Barnebey pointed out that he could only speak on permitted issues and stated that the legal invoice was from an independent attorney's office that investigated a determination on whether or not we discriminated in our actions pertaining to political signs, and whether a hostile workplace environment issue occurred.

Attorney Barnebey explained that once a complaint is received, it is investigated, and it is confidential for the moment.

Mayor Bryant recessed the City Commission Meeting at 7:17 p.m. to allow City Attorney Barnebey to speak with Commissioner Jones.

Mayor Bryant reconvened the City Commission Meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Motion: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Varnadore seconded, and the motion carried 3-2 to approve 3.B Legal Invoices. Commissioners Smith and Jones voted no.

4. CITY OF PALMETTO 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

~~ACTION REQUEST: Motion to approve the City of Palmetto Legislative Priorities.~~

This item was discussed at today's 4:30 p.m. Workshop Meeting, and the Board decided that more information was essential before voting.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

5. TRAFFIC UPDATE

The Pool Project Construction broke ground and is moving forward for completion.

6. PALMETTO POOL UPDATE

None

7. POLICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING UPDATE

Chief Tyler stated that there were no new updates.

COMMENTS:

8. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Mr. Freeman commented that the 2021 Budget Books were placed at the Commissioners' stations. And, he informed the Board that they will receive KnowBe4 emails to take the Security Awareness Training.

Chief Tyler reported that a former Police Officer, Antonio Hernandez, was killed yesterday in a car accident, and he asked everyone to keep Mr. Hernandez's family in their prayers.

Attorney Barnebey announced that an Attorney/Client Session is tentatively scheduled Monday, January 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber, and this meeting will be held under Florida Statutes 286.011 (8). Also, it will last about 1 hour for court case Lincoln Academy vs State of Florida, 8:20-CV-309.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bryant reported that the Palmetto High School drainage issue was repaired, and they sent requests to Architects and engineers to replace several older buildings under water due to the sequences of additional structures being added.

10. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Jones asked if the City could reach out to the school board to inquiry if they could add additional netting to prevent the potential foul balls, at the Palmetto High School Baseball Field, from landing in the 4 way stop intersection at 14th Avenue West and 17th Street West. Mayor Bryant asked Commissioner Jones to send her an email regarding the issue, and she will follow up with the facility's management. Also, Commissioner Jones expressed that he wanted to speak with Mr. Burton, CRA Director, about one of his employee positions. Mayor Bryant replied that she will ask Mr. Burton to speak about it at the next City Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Cornwell wished everyone a Merry Christmas, A Happy New Year, and to stay healthy.

Commissioner Williams stated that the Unity and Prayer 2021 event did not meet the 30 days window for the Board's approval. Mayor Bryant expressed that it was received after the last City Commission Meeting, and she thought that approving it would not be a problem.

Commissioner Smith stated that he asked Mr. Freeman about budget information he has not received and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Mr. Freeman replied that if there was something overlooked, please let him know, and he will provide it to the Commission.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m., and reopened the meeting at 7:40 p.m. for one public comment.

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Mr. Marcus stated that he does not live in Manatee County and resides in Hillsborough County. He requested to distribute a flyer to the Board, and it is a part of the minutes. Mr. Marcus made comments regarding the Lincoln Academy School case.

Attorney Barnebey stated that any criminal concerns should be forwarded to the State Attorney or Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: JANUARY 25, 2021

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK