

**MINUTES**  
**CITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 9, 2024**  
**7:00 P.M.**

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor  
Tamara Cornwell, Vice- Mayor, Commissioner-at-Large 2  
Sunshine Joiner, Commissioner, Ward 2  
Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1  
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1  
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

**STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney  
Jim Freeman, City Clerk  
Edward Johnson, Interim CRA Director  
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director  
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police  
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk  
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant  
Kelsey Kappler, GIS Analyst  
Cheryl Miller, Finance Director  
Jenny Silverio, CRA Administrative & Compliance Coordinator

**STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:**

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Joiner gave the prayer for tonight's meeting.

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

2. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

**MOTION:**

**Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the September 9, 2024 City Commission Agenda.**

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3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Phil Baker spoke on his disagreement with the unsolicited proposals.

Rod Griffin spoke on his disagreement with the Stadler proposal due to the removal of boat trailer parking.

Elaine Johnson spoke on her disagreement with the Stadler proposal due to the removal of boat trailer parking and other promised elements.

Jessica Jordan spoke on her disagreement with the Stadler proposal due to the removal of boat trailer parking.

Lynn Meyer spoke on her disagreement with the Stadler proposal due to the removal of boat trailer parking.

Ralph Humana spoke on his disagreement with the Stadler proposal due to the removal of boat trailer parking. He liked the Gray proposal.

Millie Abreau and Alexis Monroe spoke on offering affordable housing initiatives.

Betty Sailes Rhoades spoke on the apartment housing (Bel Aire) on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Tracey Washington spoke on the death of her son, Breonte Johnson-Davis and the need for a mental health program. She also spoke on the apartments that Ms. Rhoades had referenced.

Susie Trudeau, employee at Public Works and Annie Armstrong, former employee, made formal complaints for how they were being treated at Public Works. Mr. Barnebey assured them this will be investigated.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes: 08/12/2024

b. Agreement for the Collection of Educational Facility Impact Fees

c. City Legal Invoices

d. Resolution 2024-27: Manatee County Fair Association

e. Appointment of Rowena Young-Gopie as Palmetto Community Redevelopment Agency Director and Modification of Contract Between Edward Johnson, Community Solutions, Inc. and the CRA

f. City of Palmetto Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Replacement Initiative

**MOTION:**                      **Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve items 4a. and 4c. from the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.**

Commissioner Cornwell pulled item 4b. for discussion, questioning the fees.

**MOTION:**                      **Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve item 4b.**

Commissioner Smith questioned item 4d. and asked Mr. Barnebey what type of resolution it was. Mr. Barnebey responded that this is only supporting the potential improvements at the fairgrounds.

**MOTION:**                      **Commissioner Smith moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve item 4d.**

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Commissioner Cornwell pulled item 4e. for discussion. This item caught her by surprise. Her assumption was that Mr. Johnson would stay on as Interim CRA Director until January. She was very concerned about this. Mayor Bryant explained that they need a permanent CRA director and the importance of keeping Mr. Johnson onboard as a contracted Assistant CRA Director until January. There needs to be a strict continuity. Mr. Johnson spoke on this item. It was discussed that he would try to find the right person for this position. He believed Ms. Young-Gopie is a wonderful fit. Mr. Johnson was committed to helping the Mayor find a permanent CRA Director before he left. Mayor Bryant reiterated her ability to appoint a Department Head only goes until the organizational meeting in January.

Rowena Young-Gopie gave a brief history of herself. Commissioner Cornwell expressed her frustration with not knowing any of this was coming. Mayor Bryant reiterated that they all received her resume and application with the Agenda. Commissioner Jones thought they should modify the contract to keep Mr. Johnson as the consultant. Mayor Bryant clarified that he would remain a consultant as the Assistant CRA Director. Commissioner Smith was sorry she was put in this position. He noted that it was possible for the new Mayor to let her go in January. He believed this put her in a bad position. Commissioner Williams spoke on the fact that at any time during Mr. Johnson's Interim CRA Director contract, the Mayor could appoint a permanent CRA Director.

### **MAIN MOTION:**

**Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Rowena Young-Gopie as CRA Director for a term ending at the organizational meeting in January 2025 and approve the attached independent contractor agreement between Edward Johnson, Community Solutions inc. and the CRA to serve as a consultant. Commissioner Williams seconded.**

Commissioner Cornwell questioned Ms. Gopie's salary. Commissioner Jones clarified Mr. Johnson's contracted salary. Mr. Johnson stated that he would agree to keep his current monthly rate.

*Mayor Bryant recessed the meeting at 7:51 pm.*

*Mayor Bryant reconvened the meeting at 7:56 pm.*

Mayor Bryant spoke on the salary study that was incorporated in the budget. She noted that she will go to the Governor if anyone attacks the new Department Head or any City employee. The salary for Ms. Gopie will be \$101,000. Mr. Freeman and Ms. Miller confirmed this is within the current budget.

Commissioner Smith questioned the salary that was budgeted. He opined that Ms. Gopie needed to be paid more money than that. Mayor Bryant reiterated that this figure came from the salary study. Mr. Barnebey emphasized that this was not an appropriate discussion in a public forum.

### **SECONDARY MOTION:**

**Commissioner Jones moved to adjust Ms. Gopie's salary to match the other department heads, Commissioner Smith seconded, and the motion failed 2-3 (Commissioners Joiner, Cornwell, and Williams voted nay)**

**MAIN MOTION:**                   **The motion carried 3-2 (Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Cornwell voted nay).**

Item 4f. was pulled for discussion by Commissioner Cornwell. Mr. Rayan highlighted the item, which was detailed in the agenda. Commissioner Cornwell questioned the areas of the City they would be concentrating on. Mr. Rayan answered it would be throughout the City. Commissioner Williams asked if this was a 50/50 match. Mr. Rayan answered yes, with \$1,000,000 max for sanitary sewer infrastructure.

**MOTION:**                       **Commissioner Cornwell moved to approve item 4f, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.**

5.     PUBLIC HEARING- TENTATIVE MILLAGE AND TENTATIVE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET (J.FREEMAN)

***Mayor Byrant opened the public hearing to discuss the tentative millage rate and tentative FY 2025 budget at 8:13 pm. She discussed the following items:***

- The percentage increase/decrease in proposed tentative millage over rolled back rate.
- The specific purposes for which the ad valorem revenues are being increased/decreased.
- The proposed tentative budget.

***Mayor Bryant closed the Public Hearing after Public Comment at 8:15 pm.***

**a) RESOLUTION 2024-21: FY 2025 TENTATIVE MILLAGE (Resolution was read in its entirety)**

**MOTION:**                       **Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2024-21. (TIME OF VOTE 8:16 pm)**

**b) RESOLUTION 2024-22: FY 2025 TENTATIVE BUDGET (Resolution was read in its entirety)**

**MOTION:**                       **Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2024-22. (TIME OF VOTE 8:18 pm)**

***Mayor Bryant recessed the City Commission Meeting to open the September 9, 2024 CRA Board Meeting at 8:18 pm.***

*Mayor Bryant reconvened the City Commission Meeting at 9:17 pm.*

6. UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS- DIRECTION FROM COMMISSION

Staff asked for direction from Commission regarding the three unsolicited proposals that were presented at the September 9, 2024, Workshop.

**MOTION:**                    **Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Smith seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to move forward with the unsolicited proposal from ReEnvision Palmetto, LLC and instruct staff to proceed in a manner consistent with the options provided under 255.065, Fla. Stat.**

**MOTION:**                    **Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to defer moving forward with the unsolicited proposal from Stadler Development.**

Mr. Freeman and Mr. Barnebey emphasized that this would authorize staff to move forward with discussions only with Gray Property Group. This would not approve conceptualls. They also need to clarify the coastal high hazard regulations before any plans can be approved.

Nick Gray spoke that he didn't have any objection to deferring, if needed. He understood if they approve moving forward, it is not a final approval.

**MOTION:**                    **Commissioner Williams moved to approve moving forward with the unsolicited proposal from Gray Property Group and instruct staff to proceed in a manner consistent with the options provided under 255.065, Fla. Stat, Commissioner Joiner seconded.**

Mr. Rayan questioned Mr. Barnebey about their pre-application meeting with Nick Gray, relative to combining both projects. Mr. Barnebey thought it would be helpful to them to discuss potential issues, particularly regarding density. It is up to staff how they want to conduct that meeting.

Commissioner Cornwell didn't agree with moving forward if there are issues that can't be resolved regarding the deed on the property. She believed there is a restriction on the deed for that property. Mr. Barnebey agreed with her concerns. Gray Property Group's attorney will do further investigation.

**The motion failed 2-3 (Commissioners Smith, Cornwell, and Jones voted nay).**

**MOTION: Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to defer moving forward with the unsolicited proposal from Gray Property Group.**

The Commissioners wanted to have further individual discussions with the developer.

Commissioner Williams wanted a copy of the deed between 600 investment and the City.

Penny Johnston spoke regarding Mr. Gray reaching out to all the Commissioners and trying to schedule time to meet with them before this meeting. She also reached out to each of them. She asked if the Commissioners were going to follow through with meeting with the developer this time.

Commissioner Jones was waiting to come in tonight to listen to everyone before he met with any of the developers. He is available Thursday of this week. Commissioner Smith said he never heard from Ms. Johnston. Ms. Johnston reiterated that she left messages for him.

**COMMENTS:**

**7. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS**

Mr. Freeman reminded everyone that this Thursday, 9/12/24 at 6:00 pm there would be an informational community workshop for the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant. This is open to all City residents, not just the CRA.

Mr. Rayan shared that last year the Commission authorized City staff to work with the engineers for the wastewater treatment plant expansion. Staff will be meeting tomorrow to go over the options. Also, they will be meeting with the engineers and Department Heads on Wednesday to discuss the findings. A final report will be prepared for the Workshop on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. They are also going to discuss their preliminary findings on the reuse water.

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8. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported the following:

- She will be speaking at the 9/11 ceremony on Wednesday morning.
- She will be advocating at the School Board Meeting tomorrow to have a school named after Frankie Howze.
- Commissioner Smith still needs to do his cyber security training.

9. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Cornwell stated that she would forward an email she received regarding a petroleum tank to Mr. Rayan. She then questioned the manhole popping up on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She knew they have been working to fix this issue, but she wanted them to continue to seek a solution. She noted that they have come a long way on the flooding issues. Palmetto didn't flood as severely as other areas during Hurricane Debby.

She discussed the financial impact of bringing on the new CRA Director.

Mrs. Bailey will send out the pictures of the apartments, which were received during public comment to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Williams shared that on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> the Florida League of Cities and Manasota League of Cities would be holding a public forum at the Double Tree by Hilton at 1:00 pm for local candidates.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 9:56 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: NOVEMBER 18, 2024

***JAMES R. FREEMAN***

JAMES R. FREEMAN

CITY CLERK