

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION SPECIAL  
MEETING MINUTES  
August 2, 2018**

A special meeting of the City of Fruitland City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, August 2, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor John L. Gunter, Jr., Commissioners Christopher Bell, Ray Lewis, and Rick Ranize.

**Also Present:** City Manager Gary La Venia; City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver; City Treasurer Jeannine Racine; District One Commissioner-Elect Patrick DeGrave; District Two Candidate Fred Collins; Police Chief Michael Fewless, Captain Erik Luce; Interim Fire Chief Don Gilpin, Deputy Chief Tim Yoder and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

**1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Captain Luce gave the invocation and Chief Fewless led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**2. ROLL CALL**

After Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and requested that Ms. Coulson call the roll, where a quorum was declared present, he announced the decorum for this evening's meeting.

**3. SCHOOL SAFETY**

Mr. La Venia recalled the discussions held at the July 25, 2018 special meeting identifying the funding source for a school resource officer (SRO) and relayed his comments identifying the number of officers in the proposed FY 2018-19 budget which would adequately cover the cost for said officer.

Vice Mayor Gunter gave comparisons of other local governments' provision of SROs; questioned the city's delivery of same and relayed the approach by residents in The Villages of Fruitland Park recognizing the number of retired law enforcement officers who would be willing to work part time.

In response Chief Fewless addressed the need for the SRO to be at the school for nine months out of the year. In recognizing the current vacant law enforcement position, he outlined his standards when retaining officers, mentioned the SRO's duties and addressed the police department's requirements. However, he addressed his willingness to meet with Fruitland Park Elementary School Principal Ms. Tammy Langley to discuss the SRO's assignments, the school's provisions and the SRO's expectations.

In recognizing that the city does not have reserves or the funds to retain an SRO, Commissioner Lewis suggested that Mr. La Venia be directed to utilize an existing law enforcement officer, as management of risk, from the budget

Commissioner Ranize described reasons why the current law enforcement officers could not be used and suggested utilizing the available police department vehicle for the SRO's use for one year. He noted that based on the outcome of the passage of the referendum for the 2019 tax, more funds to make up the difference can be anticipated. Commissioner Ranize identified the 2009 blue Dodge Charger Pursuit police vehicle which could be used by the SRO.

After discussion, Mayor Cheshire pointed out the city commission's consensus at its July 25, 2018 special meeting to identify in its FY 2018-19 budget the funding of the SRO at Fruitland Park Elementary School.

Following further discussion, Chief Fewless confirmed, in the affirmative to Mayor Cheshire's inquiry, that with the \$40,000 allocated in the FY 2018-19 budget, the 2.25 law enforcement officers and the use of the Dodge Charger, an SRO would be feasible.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Ranize and seconded by Commissioner Lewis that the city commission proceed in accepting the Lake County School District Superintendent's request and authorize the additional funding in the FY 2018-19 budget earmarked for the School Resource Officer at Fruitland Park Elementary School.**

In answer to Vice Mayor Gunter's statements recognizing the need for a law enforcement officer for the months leading up to October 1, 2018, Mr. La Venia confirmed that funding is available.

Chief Fewless acknowledged the limited budget, the need to train the SRO after August 13, 2018, and that an officer would be available prior to the commencement of school.

Following further discussion, Mayor Cheshire recalled the city commission's request at its January 10, 2013 regular meeting – the aftermath of the December 14, 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting – on the cost to place an officer at the Fruitland Park Elementary school for the remainder of the year, if one was not placed by the county. He recognized that the individual was not an SRO; thus, he believed, at this time, that the SRO would not need to be fully trained as someone else is available for a time.

**Mayor Cheshire requested that the city clerk call the roll on the motion and it was declared unanimously carried.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

After Ms. Manijeh Badiozamani, The Villages of Fruitland Park resident, voiced her support of the city commission's efforts for the community and following her suggestion on the expectations of the SRO prior to hiring, Mayor Cheshire alluded to Chief Fewless' earlier remarks on his plan to meet with Ms. Langley.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to come before the city commission.

**6. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

**(a) Commissioner Ranize**

Commissioner Ranize stated that he had no comments at this time.

**(b) Commissioner Lewis**

Commissioner Lewis commended the city commission on the method which worked.

**(c) Commissioner Bell**

Commissioner Bell addressed the potential of reviewing least expensive options with other governmental entities in 2019.

**(d) Vice Mayor Gunter, Jr.**

Vice Mayor Gunter stated that he has no comments at this time.

**7. MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

Mayor Cheshire had no comments to address at this time.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

On motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the September 27, 2018 meeting.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Cheshire, Mayor