

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
September 15, 2016**

A special meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, September 15, 2016 at 7:03 p.m.

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

Also Present: City Manager Gary La Venia, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver, City Treasurer Jeannine Michaud-Racine; Police Chief Michael A. Fewless, Deputy Police Chief Dennis Cutter, Assistant Fire Chief Don Gilpin and Firefighter Chris Lewis, Fire Department; Public Works Director Dale Bogle, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., Chief Fewless gave the invocation, and Deputy Police Chief Dennis Cutter led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon Mayor Bell's request, Ms. Coulson called the roll and a quorum was declared present.

3. FISCAL YEAR 2016-17 BUDGET

Mayor Bell gave reasons for the special meeting to address changes in the FY 2016-17 budget.

Ms. Michaud-Racine reviewed the changes after the millage reduction at the September 8, 2016 regular meeting and the taxable values; copies of the documents are filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Ms. Michaud-Racine recalled the city commission's action at its September 8, 2016 regular meeting adopting a tentative millage rate of 3.9863; recognized its preliminary vote at the July 28, 2016 regular meeting on adopting a not to exceed millage rate of 4.731, and motioned her advertisement of same acknowledging that the rate cannot increase on the final adoption when advertised. She explained that she can change the budget and the final documents to reflect the rate of 3.98363 to which, in response to several questions posed, Ms. Geraci-Carver voice her concurrence.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Cheshire expressed his disappointment and embarrassment on the method in which the city commission, including himself, conducted its proceedings, at previous meetings when it considered and acted upon the fire services assessment rate and fire protection and rescue services interlocal agreement with Lake County. He requested that the city commission delay the process with the county for the citizens' review; relayed his

discussions with Ms. Geraci-Carver regarding the approved ILA, and suggested that the city commission appoint a citizens advisory group with decision-making authority in this regard.

After discussion and following Commissioner Cheshire's concerns on the provisions under subsection 4.E., Equipment of the ILA, Ms. Geraci-Carver referred to a September 1, 2016 meeting she had with the county where an estimate was provided and noted the city's current payments to a leasing company for the city fire department's airpacks (MSA SCBA Equipment).

Following further discussion, Commissioner Ranize explained that he anticipated receiving from the Government Services Group Inc. (GSC), consultant retained by the city, the development of its fire services special assessment program with a fire department retaining six firefighters with a hybrid system. He referred to the consensus reached by the city commission at its July 28, 2016 special meeting to implement a fire department hybrid system and conduct a study on the special fire assessment fee which was not carried out by GSC.

After discussion, Commissioner Ranize recognized instances where ordinances have been previously enacted when Waste Management Agreements and Leesburg Gas Franchise Agreements were approved and acknowledged that the city's current code of ordinance, Chapter 31, Fire Department was not reviewed. He voiced his belief that the respective ordinance needs to be rewritten; noted the disservice to the public where the city commission did not allow them a voice, and expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Cheshire.

Subsequent to further discussion, the city commission concurred with keeping the volunteer fire department with the current budget in place and expressed concerns when previous suggestions were made for department heads to provide periodical reports to the city commission.

After extensive discussions and upon Mayor Bell's suggestion, **the city commission agreed, by unanimous consent, to recess its meeting at 7:32 p.m. for the city attorney and city manager to contact Lake County Attorney and Lake County City Manager on the city commission's current position with the fire protection and rescue services interlocal agreement with Lake County to be held in abeyance and reconvened at 7:35 p.m.**

By unanimous consent the city commission approved a five-member Fire Services Advisory Committee, who would be adhering to the Florida Sunshine Law, consisting: of one member from each city commission district (selected by the city commissioners), one business owner whose place of business is located in the city, and a fire chief within Lake County (both selected by the city manager) to provide recommendations to the city commission; utilize the city's board/committee applications for the respective positions, and in accordance to the charter, candidates appointed by the mayor would be approved at a future city commission meeting; said

committee report back to the city commission by the first meeting in January 2017 which would require commission approval if more time is required.

Ms. Geraci-Carver, in response, advised that she will draft a resolution in that regard for be considered on the next agenda and concurred her willingness, in the affirmative to Commissioner Ranize' concept, to conduct an initial Florida Public Records/Sunshine Law Orientation Session before the committee members.

With respect to the fire department staff coverage until January 2017 and in response to Commissioner Lewis' inquiry, Deputy Gilpin addressed his uncertainty of the current volunteer fire department staff numbers based on the city commission's previous action and confirmed the availability of the existing staff presently supporting the fire department.

Following extensive discussions and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with the mayor's recommendation for the city clerk, city treasurer and city manager to attend the Fire Services Advisory Committee meetings with recordings made of its proceedings.**

Mr. La Venia recommended that the city commission make a decision to proceed with the implementation of imposing a fire protection service special assessment to assessed properties in the city and The Villages as soon as possible.

Subsequent discussion ensued and Mayor Bell suggested that the committee would be tasked to provide the figures related to the assessment cost calculations and apportionment funding.

After considerable deliberations and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with Mayor Bell's recommendation for a draft resolution appointing a Fire Services Advisory Committee and the budget unanimously approved at the workshop for 4.732 mills to be considered at the next city commission regular meeting, subject to Lake County Manager's response from individual county commissioners on the city commission's request.** (Note: the Lake County Board of County Commissioners will be holding its regular meeting on September 27, 2016.)

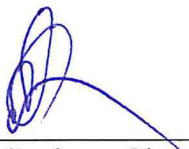
Ms. Geraci-Carver confirmed that she will speak with County Attorney Melanie Marsh on September 16, 2016 regarding the city commission's decision for the ILA to be postponed and report back to the city commission at its next regular meeting.

Mr. La Venia anticipated receiving a telephone call from Mr. David Heath, Lake County Manager, as a result of the voice mail message he left with him earlier -- during the recess portion of this evening's meeting -- conveying the county commissioners response on the abeyance of the ILA.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to address before the city commission at this time, the meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the September 22, 2016 regular meeting.

Signed 

Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed 

Christopher Bell, Mayor