

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING
MINUTES
October 15, 2015**

A workshop meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Also Present: City Manager Gary La Venia, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver, City Treasurer, Jeannine Racine Michaud, Police Chief Michael A. Fewless, Fire Chief Michael Laming, Deputy Fire Chief Don Gilpin, Lieutenant Tim Yoder, Fire Department; Community Development Director Charlie Rector, Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Yoder, Public Works Director Dale Bogle, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Bell recognized the presence of Mr. Scott Ty. Hindman, Brown and Brown Insurance, Preferred Training Incentive Program for Safety (TIPS), at this evening's meeting.

Mr. Hindman explained that TIPS recently received notification from the city that a purchase was made for fire protection equipment; referred to the TIPS matching training incentive program application received for matching training and safety incentives, and presented the city with a check for \$5,000 as eligible reimbursement in matching dollars applied towards said purchase.

On behalf of the city commission, Mayor Bell accepted the check with much appreciation.

Mayor Bell indicated the purpose for this evening's workshop is to address the fire department's future plans. He recalled the city commission's previous actions and the forthcoming changes with the city's Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) boundary lines; where the city can incorporate and cannot annex properties that is not contiguous to its boundaries; however, Lake County is available to the city that if it adopts its ISBA, the city would be able to go outside its boundaries as long it remains that ISBA and annex properties that is not contiguous to its present boundaries.

Mayor Bell referred to the county's proposition to the city of an approximate 500-acre property (a type of golf course) along Griffin Road (Lake Eller to the countyline); indicated that the city would need to be part of the ISBA, and noted one of its requirements to utilize the Advance Life Support (ALS) from Basic Life Support. He compared the City of Mascott's Fire Department's initial high costs for service delivery -- recognizing its current growth -- which was subsequently reduced and eventually earmarked towards wages and benefits; recognized the City of Fruitland Park's fire assessment which will collect about 40 percent of said cost. and pointed out the county's proposal to:

- manage the City of Fruitland Park's current fire department or its proposed newly constructed station -- built with the city's collected fire impact fee;
- continue to identify the station as Fruitland Park which would be reflected on the city's vehicles;
- continue to participate in City of Fruitland Park's-approved parades and community events;
- give full employment consideration to the City of Fruitland Park's current firefighters, and
- a price of \$458,000 per annum which would amount to \$171 dollar assessment per residential dwelling unit.

Mayor Bell commended the fire department on their performance and believed that due to the anticipated growth, the city would need to proceed beyond the current service provided by the volunteer fire department staff. He felt that property owners in the proposed ISBA would like to know about the city's plan.

Mayor Bell expressed his preference to eliminate the proposed plan to be offered if the city continues with the volunteer fire department up to October 31, 2016. He addressed the opportunity for the volunteer firefighters to work with the county as it relates to meeting their qualifications and the transitioning into full time positions; the ability for the building department a date to meet with prospective land owners showing that the city commission can work together in this regard.

In response, Commissioner Lewis believed the solution is not to annex noncontiguous property in 2016 as the city still would be non-qualifying according to the county's requirements through FY 2015-2016 and felt that for the foreseeable future, the city continue to work with what it has currently. He commended the city's volunteer fire department's previous recognition of an evaluation by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) ranking of Class 3 Rating in comparison to The Villages Public Safety Department's rating from four to two.

Commissioner Lewis referred to Staffing Proposal 1 submitted by Chief Laming to:

- qualify the fire department to become ALS with a guaranteed paramedic on shift 24 hours a day seven days a week with 48 hours off
- retain three full-time firefighter/paramedic at \$11.21 to \$16.00 an hour as outlined, and
- bring the estimated FY 2015-16 budget to \$136,00 to \$180,000.

A copy of this document is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Commissioner Lewis believed that said proposal would allow the city to remain status quo for 2016 and indicated that he cannot find the cost of approximately \$180,000 to fund ALS through staffing. He referred to the table provided by Ms. Racine Michaud outlining the potential additional revenue from The Villages (Ad Valorem Estimate and Taxes and Franchise Fees Collected), felt such issue ought to be dealt with as ad valorem, and believed that the city ought to plan for needed improvements and upgrades in terms of staffing. such issue ought to be dealt with as ad valorem. (A copy of the respective document is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.)

Mayor Bell recalled the city commission's actions at its April 23, 2015 special meeting to proceed to the next level.

After discussion and recognizing that the city is \$1.5 million short in the budget, Commissioner Lewis and Mr. La Venia indicated that the city would need to pay The Villages \$325,000 and Commissioner Lewis gave reasons why he believed a method of implementation ought to be through the fire assessment fee

After discussion, Commissioner Ranize recalled the previous turmoil in the police department and the city commission's decisions, at that time, to not transfer city services, at no cost to the city, to Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Ranize explained that he is reluctant for the city to pay \$325,000 to The Villages residents (who are paying the same millage rate with full fire protection) as the old City of Fruitland Park residents for a volunteer fire department service. He outlined the county's ISO ranking of Class 6 compared to the city's of Class 3 and the county's favorable impression of the city's equipment where the city will be turning over same to the county as reasons to not transfer to the county.

Commissioner Ranize addressed the need for the fire department to become fulltime; suggested that the city implement a plan if the decision is to have an in-house fire department (similar to the police department), and when the budget allows remain as volunteer staff and as the ad valorem income increases, utilize that fund and direct the fire chief to retain build a fire department over the next three to four years (with the city

keeping up with the benefits). Commissioner Ranize believes that the city's citizens deserve the same service as The Villages residents.

After Commissioner Cheshire referred to former Deputy Police/Fire Chief David Borst's suggestion to for the city to implement a hybrid system, Commissioner Ranize voiced his concurrence as it would save costs in staffing and Mayor Bell, also in agreement noted the earlier concept he shared with former Fire Chief Steve Whittaker.

Following extensive deliberations regarding current response times and staff issues relating to full time volunteer fire department staff, Deputy Chief Yoder addressed staff coverage and response times and noted that call volumes have slowed down due to the ISBA as the fire department vehicles have not yet been installed with the Automated Vehicle Locators.

Vice Mayor Gunter noted the need for the volunteer fire department staff to eventually become full time.

After discussion, Vice Mayor Cheshire suggested that the city commission consider the review of a special assessment.

After considerable discussion, Ms. Geraci-Carver explained that she will review the agreement with The Villages to find out if funds from the fire assessment would pay \$325 to them.

After recognizing the previous problems in the fire department, Commissioner Cheshire commended Chief Laming, Deputy Chief Gilpin and Lieutenant Tim Yoder for their current leadership and addressed the need to review the special fire assessment.

By unanimous consent, the city commission accepted Mayor Bell's recommendation in recognizing the volunteer fire department's performance, to keep them at this point and direct the city manager and community development director to negotiate the Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement where the city would not annex non contiguous property until the fire department is certified in Advanced Life Support.

Following further discussion and after Ms. Geraci-Carver responded to Commissioner Cheshire's question that the city is waiting for the judge to sign the order granting unopposed motion to close the common fund (police and fire lawsuit) for approximately \$113,000, he indicated that said funds would be adequate to allow the volunteer fire department to become ALS certified.

Chief Laming described the one-time \$32,000 fee to become ALS certified; the process Lake Emergency Medical Services utilizes; the ability for Lake EMS -- based on the city commission's direction at this evening's meeting -- to provide equipment at no cost and the opportunity for the fire department to receive authorization to proceed from other leading medical personnel to proceed. He mentioned the interest of paramedic personnel

to volunteer at the fire department as well as the volunteer staff complimenting same and outlined the method in which that could be implemented.

Commissioner Lewis stated that he believed the city would have startup funds for \$32,000; however, no funds appropriated towards fire department staffing are available in the FY 2015-16 budget which can be reviewed during midyear to determine funding coming in.

After considerable discussions, Chief Laming referred to the fire department's ongoing policy of responding to service outside city limits.

In referring to the county's proposal on its participation at city approved parades and community events outlined earlier by Mayor Bell, he concurred with Lieutenant Yoder's comparison on the city's volunteer fire department's involvement with the county's fire rescue, Lake EMS, and the county sheriff's department as well as their expected hourly compensation rate.

By unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with Mayor Bell that the City of Fruitland Park volunteer fire department will remain at status quo; future adjustments in funding would be considered during the FY 2015-16 budget process, and the concept on how to proceed with the fire department's structure -- based on the outcome of negotiations by the city manager on the Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement, the goal of achieving Advanced Life Support, or maintaining a hybrid fire department will be reviewed by the city commission at a future meeting.

Following further discussions and in response to an inquiry posed by Vice Mayor Gunter, Mr. La Venia addressed the intent to present before the city commission a draft resolution for consideration; provide Government Services Group projected costs and for GSC to produce to the city commission at a future meeting scenarios on the fire services assessment.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Sale of Surplus Items

Mr. La Venia addressed the need to advertise for the sale the surplus items (shown on the attached list) to take place on November 7, 2015; a copy of which is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

In response to Vice Mayor Gunter's question, Ms. Coulson addressed the plan to meet with Mr. Rector to advertise the surplus items with, The Public Group-Public Surplus, the firm that the city is currently using.

After much discussion and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with the city manager's recommendation to proceed with the sale of surplus equipment as described (on the attached document) that are no longer being used by the city.**

- b. Senior Social - New Life Presbyterian Church Building Use Agreement**
Mayor Bell referred to the building use agreement with New Life Presbyterian Church on the use of its fellowship hall for the purpose of senior socials.

In response, Ms. Geraci-Carver indicated that she reviewed the agreement and recommended the deletion of paragraph seven and suggested that the city forward paragraph six to the insurance company to ensure that said language is in order before receiving the certificate of insurance.

Ms. Yoder answered in the affirmative to Mayor Bell's inquiry that the agreement will be reviewed by the New Life Presbyterian Church's board.

After much discussion and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed to accept the agreement between the City of Fruitland Park, subject to the city attorney's recommendations to remove section seven and modify the language under paragraph six. contingent upon the New Life Presbyterian Church's agreement, prior to final city commission approval.**

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the city commission at this time, on motion made, second and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the August 11, 2016 regular meeting.



Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk



Christopher Bell, Mayor