

**FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING
MINUTES
March 17, 2015**

A workshop meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731 on Thursday, March 17, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Also Present: City Manager Gary La Venia, City Treasurer Tannette Gayle, Interim Police Chief Todd English, Lieutenants Dennis Cutter and Beckie Sirolli, Sergeant Erik Luce, Senior Officer Kenny Prater, Police Department; Fire Chief George Fernandez and Tim Yoder, Fire Department; Community Development Director Charlie Rector, Public Works Director Dale Bogle, Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Yoder, Finance Clerk Sue Parker, and City Clerk Esther B. Coulson.

(Commissioner Ray Lewis entered the meeting room as reflected in the minutes of this meeting.)

1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.; gave the invocation, and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. ROLL CALL

After Ms. Coulson called the roll, Mayor Bell declared that a quorum was present.

(Commissioner Lewis entered the meeting room at this time.)

**3. DISCUSSION ITEMS - City of Fruitland Park's Five-Year Plan Presentation -
- Fire Department**

Later in the meeting, Chief Fernandez gave a presentation on the fire department and reviewed his recommendations on funding needs from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP); copies of which are filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Chief Fernandez thanked the city commission for its support on the recent purchase of the breathing air storage system and stated that a company is working with staff on the new system. He cited reasons on the department's needs as follows:

- retain two to four full time fire fighters and the various options to employ an individual to fill the void in the police and fire departments;
- rehabilitate or build a new fire department facility and a new unit;
- note the comparisons of the per fire fee to the city with other municipalities;
- approve a contract on the sale of government vehicles at \$30,000 to \$35,000 to purchase a third vehicle;

Fruitland Park Workshop Minutes

Page 2 of 6

March 17, 2015

- set aside funds for training;
- upgrade the recording system to have closer services to serve the route;
- replace current transportation system at \$26,000, and
- review a generator

Discussions ensued on the 40-hour training course for 25 fire fighters; the requirement to replace 20 to 25 percent of the fire department's equipment throughout the four to five-year span, and the concerns on firefighters spending their own funds to provide services on behalf of the city.

Following further discussion and in response to the suggestion on utilizing police and fire impact fees as a one-time review for CIP items, Mr. La Venia recognized the availability of almost \$1 million, based on the percentage and after build-out, for the construction of a facility. He questioned setting aside same for a new facility or equipment which meets the statutory definition of CIP funds.

After Mr. La Venia acknowledged the city's "sinking funds" for a facility which does not include upgrades to the fire department's kitchen, bays, and exhaust system as well as the police department's holding cell, Chief Fernandez compared other smaller fire stations facilities sizes and staffing.

Chief Fernandez recognized the standard requirements for exhaust systems to which Mr. La Venia addressed the need for gas driven emergency generators for continuous power; whether the city ought to share same with other fire departments and emergency medical service, and add an additional space for a conference department to which Mayor Bell recognized the city's existing plans in this regard.

After discussion, Mr. Rector explained the potential population growth due to The Villages to which Chief Fernandez indicated that the city's fire department will be the responsive agency on CR 466A where there is a need on for fire service on said roadway.

After Commissioner Lewis pointed out the program on fire assessment fees addressed at the 2015 Institute for Elected Municipal Officials training he attended with Commissioner Ranize earlier in the year, Commissioner Ranize referred to the City of Mount Dora's previous approval to implement its fire assessment process.

Commissioner Lewis suggested transparency to the public by reflecting city expenditures from the fire assessment fee which appears to take care of municipal fire departments, questioned attaining same from ad valorem, and recommended obtaining figures from other municipalities.

Fruitland Park Workshop Minutes

Page 3 of 6

March 17, 2015

In addition to Commissioner Lewis' suggestion, Commissioner Gunter referred to the \$46,000 from the list presented to the city commission at its March 16, 2015 regular meeting, and Commissioner Ranize suggested placing the fire assessment on the next agenda.

In response to Mayor Bell's inquiry on \$40,000 or \$50,000 from general funds and not CIP, depending on the size of the area by population, Mr. La Venia explained that he will report back on the costs involved and he agreed to communicate with different organizations to determine the city's size and position.

Mr. La Venia identified, in answer to Mayor Bell's question, the ad valorem and fire assessment as funding sources for the fire department's structure; however, he stated that the city would need to find other funding sources to allocate towards staff increases from eight to five-hour workdays as there is only one person at the fire department who can utilize the vehicle but not perform or provide fire services. He indicated that staff is currently dealing with the Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement negotiations relating to response times for the fire department's services and EMS fees.

Mr. La Venia recognized Lake County Fire Rescue Staffed Station 59 facility within city limits and the rationale in response times when providing fire services in the Spring Lake Road area. He explained that due to the station's proximity, he gave reasons why he believes the requirement for the city to pay \$500 for the response time to be unreasonable; however, from a responsibility and safety perspective it would be irresponsible for Lake County not to respond.

In acknowledging the city's staffing issue, Mr. La Venia addressed the need to find a funding method; addressed the difficulty in funding everything else, and noted the review of ad valorem taxes as a mechanism which can be addressed as a budget discussion. He mentioned the possibility of increasing the fire assessment fee as a dedicated funding source to the fire department to meet the citizens' needs.

In answer to Mayor Bell's question relating staffing issues after the completion of the fire assessment study, Mr. La Venia addressed the need for the city to be prepared to identify what is required and at what level to fund the fire department staffing and proposed the budget for \$100,000.

Following extensive deliberations, and **by unanimous consent, the city commission agreed with basing the budget recommended by staff on the Fire Department's Growth Option Five – start with two stipend based firefighters working 12 hour daily shifts for a fixed stipend augmented with volunteer personnel in evening/night hours proceeding to 24 hours at \$30,000 per year to spread out towards all current firefighters (based under 20% stipend**

Fruitland Park Workshop Minutes

Page 4 of 6

March 17, 2015

laws) – and a determination would be made in the future on uniforms and training for staff.

Mr. La Venia explained that calculation would be made for equipment replacement and funding set aside and accumulated for a period of time for truck or large vehicle replacement.

After discussion, Chief Fernandez identified approximately \$350,000 to \$750,000 to replace the fire engines which includes the prevention pad with a pump and custom chassis.

Following further discussion, and in response to Mr. La Venia's statements on sorting out the fire assessment number for day-to-day and long range CIP equipment, Mayor Bell suggested finding out what the impact fees could be used for.

After discussion on refurbishing the fire department and the installation of an exhaust system and dishwasher and Mayor Bell's determination that staff could present the figures for the city commission's consideration, Mr. La Venia and Chief Fernandez noted that CIP funds could be utilized.

- Code Enforcement

There were no items to address relating to code enforcement at this time.

- Police Department

Earlier in the meeting, Interim Chief English gave an outline on the fiscal responsibility of approximately 46 percent of the budget utilized for the 2015 mid-year budget. He reviewed the police department's budget and gave a status report on the police department's current position recognizing the effect of outside influences and the potential expansion of The Villages residents.

Chief English referred to his meeting with a Sumter County Sheriff's Office Sergeant; reported on his intent to attend a meeting at The Villages on March 18, 2015, and addressed his plan to keep the city commission informed as it relates to law enforcement. He pointed out his meeting with the police department staff on the requirement of law enforcement service due to the potential population growth at The Villages.

Chief English discussed reasons why the police department law enforcement officers' starting pay ought to be increased; addressed the need for two additional full time police officers, and mentioned his plan to present quotes received relating to site security issues.

Chief English relayed his conversations with the city's human resources regarding concerns on health care coverage and conveyed his discussions with the Lake

Fruitland Park Workshop Minutes

Page 5 of 6

March 17, 2015

County Sheriff's Department health care representatives' options on reasonable costs.

Chief English noted that the police department has been operating without an administrative assistant; recognized a volunteer who has devoted her time to alleviate some office responsibilities from the police department's lieutenants, and mentioned his plan to provide figures to the city commission regarding current budgetary needs; thus, acknowledging that the wish list includes existing shot guns that are obsolete.

After lengthy discussions, Chief English, Lieutenants Cutter and Sirolli outlined the procedure for three full time reserve officers paid at a lower rate who are currently training at a full time pace and addressed the opportunity for them to become available as full time law enforcement officers, based on the city's needs.

Following Chief English' depiction of the lieutenants' roles, the city commission recognized his request for an increase in the police officers' base pay rates, two additional full time law enforcement officers, building security issues, administrative assistant, and two new police officers.

Subsequent to extensive deliberations and upon Mayor Bell's suggestion to submit a detailed summarized plan for the 2015 mid-year budget, Mr. La Venia confirmed that staff will review the police department's budget.

After further discussion, Chief English reiterated his plan to meet with a Sumter County's Sheriff's Office sergeant with the city's Lieutenants in attendance; be involved with periodical law enforcement meetings to be held at The Villages, and obtain statistics on The Villages police substation activities.

Mr. Rector described The Villages Community Watch program, indicated that he will be making available the contact information to Chief English, and pointed out the provisions in The Villages neighborhood (Homeowners' Association) agreement on the requirements for supervisory staffing in the office.

- Public Works Department

Mr. La Venia submitted and reviewed the list showing the department of roads and streets to be considered by the city commission at a future meeting; a copy of which is filed with the supplemental papers to the minutes of this meeting.

Mr. La Venia explained that Captain English have made arrangements to provide the LED sign board earmarked for \$15,000 to be donated from the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

Fruitland Park Workshop Minutes

Page 6 of 6

March 17, 2015

After a brief discussion, Mr. La Venia indicated that road projects have already been listed which will be presented before the city commission at its March 19, 2015 workshop.

Mr. La Venia stated that the water and wastewater treatment plant will be addressed in the proposed agreement with the Town of Lady Lake. He described the location and plans to commence work on the installation of connection lines after the agreement is approved and the intent to address water heaters and the asphalt alternative. Mr. La Venia indicated that the pump station on CR 466A is \$785,000; explained that The Villages will be paying \$345,000 for said pump station, and noted the remaining estimate for the line to be installed. In identifying the funding mechanism, he questioned whether funds ought to be borrowed or utilize the legislative grant at once.

Mr. La Venia reported that the Shiloh Street acquisitions and upgrades are almost complete and that irrigation work still remains. He expressed preference to view the asphalt plant.

- **Parks and Recreation - Veterans Park**

Mr. La Venia explained that the Parks and Recreation Department issue will be addressed and anticipated that Ms. Michelle Yoder, Parks and Recreation Director, will be present at the March 19, 2015 workshop.

4. NEXT MEETING

Mayor Bell announced that the March 19, 2015 city commission special meeting will be held at the city commission chambers at 5:30 p.m.

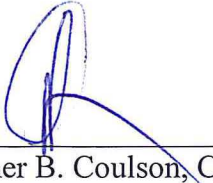
5. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the workshop at this time.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the workshop at this time, on motion made, second and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the June 25, 2015 regular meeting.

Signed  _____
Esther B. Coulson, City Clerk

Signed  _____
Christopher Bell, Mayor