

MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
July 12, 2021

The City Commission met this date in regular session in the Commission Chambers. Mayor Smith gave the Invocation. Mayor Smith recited the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance.

Mayor	:	Hubert B. Smith
Commissioners	:	Catherine Hamilton
	:	Christine Wasdin
	:	Edward Crosby
	:	Jay Denney
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
City Administrator	:	Carl Scott
Police Chief	:	Joe Hart
City Attorney	:	Hayward Dykes
City Engineer	:	Beth Brant
Fire Chief	:	Tommy Mayville
Public Works Director	:	Nathan Kelley (camera)
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in attendance: (Not inclusive) Clark (Tom) Browning, Mike Griffith (Bay Beacon), Les Chambers, Brandon Wilson

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**COMM. CROSBY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JULY 12, 2021, AS SUBMITTED. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

**1. CITIZENS' CONCERNS (non-agenda items) Resident**

No resident concerns this evening.

**2. CITIZENS' CONCERNS (Non-Agenda Items) Non-Resident**

No non-resident concerns this evening.

**1. ACTION ITEMS – Added Agenda Items**

Mayor Smith said that there were a few items to be added to the agenda this evening. The Okaloosa Gas easement from Mr. Scott, joint resolution discussion from Mr. Dykes and the DOC work squad that he asked to be added. **COMM. DENNEY MADE A MOTION TO ADD THESE ITEMS TO THE AGENDA. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

Mr. Dykes said the joint resolution would be a resolution between Valparaiso, Niceville, Destin, Ft. Walton Beach, Mary Esther, Town of Shalimar, Town of Cinco Bayou, basically Okaloosa County. He said it would be an extension of the TDD, tourist development district, to include all Okaloosa County to ask for bed tax money. Mr. Dykes said he just wanted to mention it this evening and see what is best for Valparaiso, he knows that some other cities are reviewing.

1 Mayor Smith said the handout the Commission was given this evening is the DOC Work Squad  
2 contract. Mayor Smith said the work squad was taken away due to staffing issues in the prisons and  
3 COVID, the contract is being reinstated, contract is the same as previous years. Mayor Smith said he  
4 talked to the warden regarding the time we had paid for that we did not have the work squad and the  
5 warden assured him that they would either pay us for the time that was lost or credit the new contract.

6 Mr. Scott said that Okaloosa Gas had requested an easement for the entire Lincoln Park and we  
7 rejected it. He said they came back with a more specific request for an easement for the generator at  
8 the lift station at the park. Mr. Scott said it is a 15-foot wide easement, standard language and should be  
9 approved. **COMM. WASDIN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EASEMENT FOR**

10 **OKALOOSA GAS AS PRESENTED. COMM. DENNEY SECONDED THE MOTION,**  
11 **WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

12 **2. ACTION ITEMS – Special Exemption 294 S. Bayshore**

13 Mr. Scott said the recommendation from the Planning Comm. was to allow the special  
14 exception to our right of way to build a fence 30' from the existing fence, this won't impede our vision  
15 triangle. **COMM. CROSBY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EXEMPTION**  
16 **AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMM. FOR 294 S. BAYSHORE DRIVE.**  
17 **COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS**  
18 **VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

19 **3. ACTION ITEMS – FLOC Voting Delegate**

20 Mayor Smith said the Florida League of Cities Annual Conference will be held August 12 -14,  
21 2021 at the World Center Marriot in Orlando. Mayor Smith said in previous years' Commission  
22 Wasdin has been our voting delegate. **MAYOR SMITH MADE A MOTION FOR COMM.**  
23 **WASDIN TO BE THE FLOC VOTING DELEGATE. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE**  
24 **MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

25 **4. ACTION ITEMS – Compensation & Benefit Study**

26 Mayor Smith said this was requested to be placed on the agenda by Mr. Nathan Kelley, our  
27 public works director, he asked Mrs. Johnson to speak on it. Mrs. Johnson said what she knows is that  
28 by October of this year the minimum wage will be raised to \$10 an hour and it will go up a dollar each  
29 year until it reaches \$15. Mayor Smith said in reviewing the proposal he saw the cost would be  
30 \$18,500. Comm. Hamilton said she thinks that is excessive, Mayor Smith agreed. Mr. Kelley said  
31 \$18,500 does sound like a lot but our payroll is around \$43,000 a week, look at the importance of the  
32 study that will help map out the next five years. Mayor Smith said it seems expensive but knowing it  
33 is a 5-year outlook for \$18,500 doesn't seem as excessive in the grand scheme of things. Mr. Kelley

1 said in September the minimum wage will increase to \$10 an hour, we have employees that only make  
2 \$9.70 now. Comm. Hamilton said so we need this company to tell us we need to raise our wages, we  
3 already know that we need to raise salaries, we will look at that in the budget. Mr. Kelley said more  
4 than just telling us where wages should be, job descriptions, talk to some employees as to what they  
5 do. Mr. Kelley said he knows it sounds juvenile, but it is beneficial. Comm. Hamilton said what is the  
6 benefit, a lot of our employees, in a city our size, cross trained. Mr. Kelley said he thinks it is  
7 important to know your specific job requirements. Mrs. Johnson said it would also help us to look at  
8 our benefits package to see if we should change and our retirement as the city pays 9% for each  
9 employee. Mr. Dykes said salary comparison, looking at how to overcome some of the issues, other  
10 cities have seen this to be beneficial. Comm. Denney said the study will look at what we have and  
11 help to compare what other cities offer. Chief Hart said he was just given this information today, but  
12 he believes the more information you have the better decisions you can make. Comm. Hamilton asked  
13 if we had any references from this company? Mr. Dykes said the proposal lists several, City of Ft.  
14 Walton Beach does it often. Ms. Brant said even with a nonprofit, only 25 employees, we are just  
15 getting started with this type of study. Mayor Smith asked what if an employee who is designated a  
16 heavy equipment operator is needed to use a weed eater what do you do then? Mr. Kelley said he  
17 wrote all the Public Works job descriptions and on line #5 it states all other duties as assigned.

18 **COMM. DENNEY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE \$18,500 TO CODY & ASSOCIATES,**  
19 **INC. FOR A COMPREHENSIVE CLASSIFICATION, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**  
20 **STUDY FOR THE CITY. COMM. CROSBY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED**  
21 **BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

22 **5. ACTION ITEMS – Synovus Bank Building**

23 Comm. Wasdin asked for this to be on the agenda. She said she would like for the city to look  
24 at the bank building to see about moving all the city offices to that building. Comm. Wasdin said it is  
25 a beautiful building with a lot of room, we've discussed expanding the library, police department as we  
26 start to look at the budget because she believes the bank building would have some options. Mayor  
27 Smith said it has been sold. Mr. Scott said it has but the new owner is willing to discuss it. Mayor  
28 Smith said we need to find out what amount of money we would be looking at, to see what renovation  
29 costs will be. Mr. Scott said if the Commission has interest in the building, we should reach out to the  
30 owner. He said that building would have a lot of advantages and it would also free up the city  
31 buildings we have to turn them into some other type of business. Mr. Scott suggests Comm. Wasdin  
32 reach out to the new owner and at least have the discussion.

33 **6. ACTION ITEMS – City Charter Revised (2014)**

1 Comm. Hamilton asked this topic to be placed on the agenda. She said in looking at how much  
2 the city has grown thought it might be time to revisit this issue. Comm. Hamilton said about eight or  
3 nine years ago we had looked into changing the form of government. She said this would be a full-  
4 time employee who would be the person who would have day to day oversight. Comm. Hamilton said  
5 99% of governments have done away with the Commission form of government. Mayor Smith said  
6 we would need a referendum. Mr. Dykes said to change the form of government would have to go to  
7 the community for a vote. Mr. Dykes said he believes this idea was on a ballot a few years ago and  
8 failed. Comm. Hamilton said it didn't fail by much. Mr. Dykes said if the Commission wishes to do  
9 this, we would have to put in an ordinance to submit to the Supervisor of Elections in a timely manner  
10 so it could be put on the ballot. Comm. Hamilton said she had wanted to put it out there to see what  
11 the Commission thought, maybe discuss, and see about going on the ballot for next year. A brief  
12 discussion followed. The Commission will look at in further detail.

13 **1. OLD BUSINESS – Tom's Bayou Bridge Utilities Update**

14 Comm. Hamilton said nothing to report.

15 **2. OLD BUSINESS – Ordinance No. 711 Commercial Corridor**

16 Mrs. Johnson said she does have proof of publication from the Northwest Florida Daily news  
17 that this ordinance was in the paper on July 2, 2021. Mayor Smith read the ordinance, **AN**  
18 **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO AMENDING CHAPTER 224, ARTICLE IV**  
19 **BY ADDING A COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR (C-C) ZONING DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF**  
20 **VALPARAISO CODE OF ORDINANCES AND PROVIDING FOR (1) FINDINGS, (2)**  
21 **REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES, (3) SEVERABILITY AND (4) AN EFFECTIVE**  
22 **DATE. COMM. CROSBY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 711**  
23 **COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR AS WRITTEN. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE**  
24 **MOTION WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

25 **3. OLD BUSINESS – Property Foreclosure Update**

26 Mr. Dykes said he has a meeting tomorrow with the attorney ad litem. He is hopeful that we  
27 can move forward toward a summary judgement.

28 **4. OLD BUSINESS – Okaloosa League of Cities Dinner Meeting Thursday, July 22**

29 Mayor Smith said this is the Okaloosa League of Cities dinner meeting that will be held in Ft.  
30 Walton Beach and asked that the Commission let Mrs. Johnson know if you will be attending by  
31 Wednesday, July 22.

32 **1. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – TPO/DOT**

33 Comm. Wasdin said nothing to report this evening.

2. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Stormwater

Mr. Scott said nothing to report.

3. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Community Liaison Report

4. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Regional Sewer Update

Mr. Denney said things are working ok.

5. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Planning Commission Update

Mr. Scott said we've discussed this earlier. Mr. Browning said the Planning Commission will be having a comprehensive plan and vision workshop on July 20 at 6PM, the public is welcome to attend.

6. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Department Updates

Mrs. Johnson said she wanted to remind everyone to make sure they have turned in their financial disclosure form.

7. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS** - Disbursements

**COMM. HAMILTON MADE A MOTION TO PAY THE BILLS AS OUTLINED IN THE MONTHLY FINANCIALS. COMM. CROSBY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.**

8. **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS** – Schedule Budget Workshops

Mrs. Johnson said we need to have the ad valorem rate into the county by August 4<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Johnson said she asked for the Commissioners in the last meeting to let her know when they were available, and she only heard from one of the Commissioners. Comm. Wasdin asked how many times do we need to meet?

Mrs. Johnson said two meetings, one for capital items and the second for O/M. She said this number is generally high. Mr. Dykes said you set a ceiling and then work down to the actual number you send out in the tax notice. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the 1<sup>st</sup> budget workshop on July 26<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> budget meeting on August 2<sup>nd</sup> both will be at 6 PM.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

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Hubert B. Smith  
Mayor

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Catherine Hamilton  
Chair, VCA

1 ATTEST:  
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Tammy Johnson, CMC

5 City Clerk  
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8 \*\*\*A recording of the July 12, 2021, Commission meeting will be kept on the City's secure file  
9 server as a permanent part of these minutes.\*\*\*  
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