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**HIGH SPRINGS
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 28, 2023
CITY HALL**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Weitz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL CITY COMMISSION:

Mayor Katherine Weitz – Present
Vice Mayor Tristan Grunder – Present
Commissioner Andrew Miller- Present
Commissioner Steve Tapanes – Present
Commissioner Byran Williams – Absent (prior notice given)

STAFF PRESENT:

Angela Stone, City Clerk
Scott Walker, City Attorney
Jami Echeverri, Asst. City Clerk
Kevin Mangan, PIO
Antoine Sheppard, Chief of Police
Diane Wilson, Finance Director
Thomas Henry, Public Works Director
Kevin Pearson, Fire Captain
Mike Vogel, Interim Fire Chief
Allan Alligood, Building Official

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation by Josh Jiminez

Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Miller questioned why the Budget Audit report was not included in this agenda. Staff Wilson advised that the City Manager had requested one on one meetings to review this prior to a commission meeting presentation.

**Motion Vice Mayor Grunder to approve the agenda as presented.
Commissioner Tapanes Second.
Motion carried 4-0.**

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: Consent Agenda was not prepared in time passed until the December 14th, 2023 meeting.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS: None

(F) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON FY 2024 RATES:

Resolution 2023-U, Resolution 2023-V Resolution 2023-W were all read by their titles only by Attorney Walker.

WATER – Resolution 2023-U

SEWER – Resolution 2023-V

SOLID WASTE – Resolution 2023-W

Commissioner Tapanes asked for clarification on several public works facilities. He asked would a CPI increase be enough to help.

Staff Wilson advised that it up to the commission's discretion and she would support their decision.

Commissioner Grunder asked for a more definitive reply on if CPI is enough. Staff Wilson advised no, but it would be a start and give time to see how AMI assists and spending affects the budget between now and the first of the year.

Commissioner Tapanes advised he would be comfortable with that and it would allow more time to review the data.

Staff Wilson questioned would they like to act on the Solid Waste rates.

Commissioner Tapanes asked Attorney Walker if it would be possible to terminate the contract with Waste Pro.

Attorney Walker advised no, it is inadvisable to do so and if you go out to bid you could end up with a less favorable rate than currently charged. There are very few providers for this service and as such options are very limited. At the time the contract with GLF was terminated rates had increased and were reflected in Waste Pro's contract.

Commissioner Tapanes – if the company fails to provide service can the contract be terminated?

Attorney Walker advised yes and that was the case with GFL.

Commissioner Grunder commented that at the end of the day, it was not Waste Pro that was responsible for the confusion it was ultimately the responsibility of the commission to vet this

contract and Waste Pro has done a great job with the services. It would have a negative professional impact with future solid waste agreements.

Commissioner Miller asked if it would be possible to increase certain tiers for the Water rate fees for residential vs commercial.

Staff Wilson explained how the different accounts and fees functioned and why the fees were broken down as they currently are.

Attorney Walker advised the commission on the ordinance process and section 180 of Florida Statutes that rate increases have to be included with the citizen's/customer's utility bill. Both of which take time to plan and execute properly and legally.

Staff Wilson advised that the City had a resolution in place that allows for a CPI increase without going before the commission.

Clerk Stone advised that in 2002 an Ordinance was passed that permits High Springs to increase utility rates by resolution and as such would eliminate the need for multiple readings. Commissioner Tapanes advised his recommendation would be to do CPI for water and sewage and increase Solid Waste rates to at least match even with what the City is billed for by the Solid Waste service provider.

Public Comment:

Kathy Griner – why was the \$350,000 not included in the contract? She asked for further explanation on why the Solid Waste fee was misconstrued.

Mayor Weitz - advised that the commission was not sent all of the information regarding the fees and pricing at the time the agenda was sent to them.

Lanier Smith – has a dumpster for the Lion's club that is contracted directly through the contractor. He was here for the meeting where the contract was terminated with GFL and completely understands why. He is happy with the service Waste Pro provides and their customer service.

Brad Riddle – commended the Mayor and Vice Mayor on accepting the responsibility and thinks the commission will do well to turn things around for the city.

Commissioner Tapanes motioned to increase the water increase by the CPI and sent out in the next bill effective in January. 5.7% \$1.51 per 5000 kgal of water to \$11.56 for customers Tier one \$3.12, Tier 2 \$3.52, tier 3 \$3.83, tier 4 \$4.15.

Vice Mayor Grunder seconded.

Motion passes 4-0

Commissioner Tapanes motioned to Raise wastewater rates by CPI 5.7% - to 44.05 for residential and 57.29 for commercial for the first 5,000 gallons

Vice Mayor Grunder Seconded.

Motion carried 4-0

Commissioner Tapanes questioned if the contract is renegotiated, and rates go back down can we then lower them for the citizens.

Staff Wilson advised yes, we can absolutely.

Commissioner Tapanes motioned to increase the solid waste rates as presented. (Per presentation new rate is \$27.75 for residential and \$36.10 for commercial)
Vice Mayor Grunder seconded.
Motion carries 4-0

(G) CITIZEN REQUESTS AND COMMENTS – FOR ISSUES NOT ON AGENDA (PLEASE STATE NAME FOR THE RECORD – LIMIT COMMENTS TO 5 MINUTES)

Lanier Smith – announced Santa Claus would be at the Lion's Club tomorrow evening. As well as the tree lighting announced.
Kelly Barber – wanted to thank the City Manager and thinks she did the best she could and would like for her to reconsider.

COMMISSIONER RESPONSE

Mayor Weitz thanked Mr. Barber for his comment and agreed the City Manager has a difficult job.

(H) NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON APPOINTING A MEMBER TO THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION.

Vice Mayor Grunder motioned to appoint Mayor Weitz to the MTPO.
Commissioner Miller seconded.
Motion carried 4-0

DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON FY 2022/2023 BUDGET AMENDMENT

Attorney Walker read ordinance 2023-17 by title only.
Staff Wilson advised the commission on the budget amendment and explained the process to them. She gave a brief presentation reviewing the changes.

Attorney Walker left the chambers at 8:32 and returned at 8:34pm.

Vice Mayor Grunder Motioned to approve Ordinance 2023-17 the fy 22/23 budget amendment.
Commissioner Tapanes Seconded
Mayor Weitz – yes
Vice Mayor Grunder – yes
Commissioner Miller – Yes
Commissioner Tapanes - Yes
Motion carried 4-0

Mayor Weitz called for a 5-minute recess at 8:40.

Mayor Weitz called the commission back to order and Resumed at 8:47.

DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON PRIEST THEATER.

Joe Hoffman with Hoffman Construction gave an explanation of what he believes would need to be done to bring the building up to basic safety standards. He advised this is strictly to shore up the roof for safety reasons not a cosmetic renovation.

Allan Alligood – would like to reach out to the City of Alachua to provide plan review and inspections as it is a conflict for him to perform these services (current property owner and City of High Springs Building Official)

Janet Alligood – advised in the appropriations grant there is verbiage for what the facility can be used as. She recommends a board be created of citizens who would oversee and advise on the usage and appearance of the Priest Theater. She elaborated on everything they have done to try and revive the facility and what she would like to see happen.

Ben Anderson – spoke in support of the Priest Theater. He believes the community will support the project and help see it happen.

Kelly Barber – as a representative of the Heart of High Springs he advised the commission that their nonprofit is researching ways to assist in the improvement. He also stated The Heart of High Springs is interesting in purchasing the Priest Theater and actively looking into ways to make this happen.

Amaris Spina – gave a speech on the history and community impact of the facility and spoke in support of saving the Priest Theater.

Michael Shields – A board member of the Heart of High Springs, spoke in support of the Priest Theater.

Hanna Wynn – former interested buyer and member of the community spoke in support of the Priest Theater and would like to be a part of the process.

Vice Mayor Grunder motioned to accept the appropriations grant and move forward with the purchase of the property and create a board of qualified individuals to oversee the project which should include one City staff member.

Commissioner Miller seconded.

Motion passes 4-0

DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALACHUA COUNTY AND THE CITY OF HIGH SPRINGS FOR FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES.

Interim Fire Chief Mike Vogel gave an explanation of the purpose and scope of the presented agreement.

Alachua County Fire Chief Harold Theus advised that if approved the agreement would go to the County in December for their approval.

Vice Mayor Grunder motioned to approve the interlocal agreement between Alachua County and the City of High Springs for fire prevention services and training.
Commissioner Miller seconded.
Motion carried 4-0

DISCUSS CONSIDER AND ACT ON PROPOSED ADVERTISEMENT FOR CITY MANAGER INCLUDING COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS.

Mayor Weitz explained the agenda item and its process. She presented a few potential options for if an interim City Manager would be needed.

Attorney Walker advised that in talks with the City of Newberry, they would potentially assist if needed.

The Commission discussed with Clerk Stone possible salary options, benefits, and other options.

Vice Mayor Grunder stated he would like to advertise and post the listing for at least 45 days. Sue Weller when you advertise for city manager require they live in the city limits, and other various requirements.

Mayor Weitz agreed that the salary range should increase to \$100,000-120,000; permit a car allowance, as well as a relocation fee to get the best applicant pool possible.

Commissioner Miller Motioned to approve the ad with the changes Mayor Weitz requested.

Commissioner Tapanes Seconded
Motion Carried 4-0

DISCUSS PLACING AN RFQ OR RFP FOR CITY ATTORNEY SERVICES.

Mayor Weitz gave an overview of the agenda item.

Commissioner Grunder Advised he doesn't believe now is the right time to pursue this potential item

Commissioner Miller – believes this could be the right direction.

Commissioner Tapanes – agrees with the Vice Mayor that now is not the time, but they are hard decisions. This is not about firing the attorney's services it's about searching for better rates.

Attorney Walker – believes this has been a beneficial relationship and advised the commission that the attorney position is a little different and more complicated from 'normal' staffing and should be taken into consideration. He also agrees with Vice Mayor Grunder that regardless this is not the time to present this.

Commissioner Tapanes believes it would be best to postpone this until after the holidays and see what a potential new City Manager may have.

Commissioner Tapanes motioned to table the discussion until a later date.
Vice Mayor Grunder seconded.
Motion carried 3-1 Commissioner Miller opposing.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT/UPDATE

Invited the commission to their Ethics training December 6th

CITY MANAGER REPORT/UPDATE: NOT PRESENT

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Commissioner Miller – Chamber Tree Lighting December 2nd, Dec 9th is the Christmas Parade, a light display at the Civic Center for the holidays. He requested a status on Catherine Taylor Park daycare update.

Allan Alligood advised all permitting and plans have been approved and is simply waiting for the contractor to pick them up.

Commissioner Tapanes – knows raising the rates was tough but believes working together we can make this right.

Vice Mayor Grunder – volleyball girls won their championship.

Mayor Weitz – thanked those that stayed and invited everyone to the upcoming Christmas events. She advised staff that we would get through this, and we will move forward.

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Commissioner Tapanes motioned to adjourn.

Mayor Weitz adjourned the meeting at 10:30pm.