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**HIGH SPRINGS
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2024
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 Byran Williams- Present

STAFF PRESENT:

Angela Stone, City Clerk
Scott Walker, City Attorney
Jami Echeverri, Asst. City Clerk
Kevin Mangan, PIO
Antoine Sheppard, Chief of Police
Jason Taylor, Police Sergeant
Antoine Sheppard, Police Chief
Kristyn Adkins, Planning Technician
Thomas Henry, Public Works Director
Allan Alligood, Building Official

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation by Commissioner Byran Williams

Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Weitz requested an amendment to the agenda. To add "Black History Month" Proclamation under Special Presentation

Commissioner Miller motioned to approve the modified agenda.
Vice Mayor Grunder Second.
Motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25 2024, COMMISSION MEETING

Vice Mayor Grunder Motioned to approve the Minutes of the December 11, 2023 Commission Meeting
Commissioner Miller Seconded.
Motioned carried 4-0

(E) SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION BY THE SFHS ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB/MARINE BIOLOGY STUDENTS.

Maureen Shenkman, Natalie Klein, and Jake Greenly gave a presentation of the Santa Fe High School's Environmental Club, and marine science class's educational field trip and all that they learned.

PROCLAMATION: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Attorney Walker read a proclamation celebrating National Black History Month.

Commissioner Miller Motioned to pass the proclamation as read in its entirety.
Vice Mayor Grunder Seconded
Motion Carried 4-0

(F) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Dave Chaudry - is concerned about the increased pricing of solid waste for commercial businesses and would prefer to have a contract independent of the City's.

Bruce Borders - is concerned about a commission candidate who has a prior arrest record. Attended Mr. Dean Davis's funeral and would like an amendment to the Fire Station to add his name to "fire chief".

David Lynch - distributed a newspaper article regarding devices to be installed in vehicles to stop impaired drivers and the cost of drunk drivers to society. Does not approve of the High Springs Brewing Company using the High Springs Name. He spoke of not wanting any large developments

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Janet Evans - requested those on the diocese on their phones during public meetings. She thinks that would entitle them to be inspected for public record. And believes it is disrespectful.

Eva Verner - is concerned about sustainability with global warming and human safety. Would like to see EV parking enforced so that gas vehicles cannot park there.

Linda Jones - reminded the commission there are meeting note requirements for public meetings regarding electronic usage while on the diocese.

COMMISSIONER RESPONSE:

In Response to Dave Chaudry: Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Chaudry if Customer service (WCA) reached out to them as he had submitted a request on his behalf. Attorney Walker advised the commission that independent contracts with a solid waste vendor is not how the city is structured.

In response to Janet Evans Public Comment: Commissioner Williams stated he is a businessman and a family man and will check his phone if a notification arises. Vice Mayor Grunder responded that as a former night shift worker if meetings go long, he has to notify his supervisor that he would be late.

In response to Ms. Eva Verner: Mayor Weitz Duke Energy has attempted to add more EV vehicles to a city parking area and there were too many being required. Also advised it is not an enforceable penalty for gas vehicles to be in EV parking spots.

Chief Antoine Sheppard Offered clarification on enforcing Ms. Verner's concerns.

(H) NEW BUSINESS

2. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON A HIRING FREEZE.

Commissioner Miller discussed his concern over the budget and noted that staff is the largest drain on a budget. He would like to implement a temporary hiring freeze until after a new City Manager has been hired.

Mayor Weitz agreed it would be a good thought to allow the next City Manager to come in and be able to take a look and re-evaluate the staffing and budget.

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Vice Mayor Grunder- is concerned that implementing a hiring freeze would leave the city worse off in the event vital staff resigns or leaves.

Mayor Weitz asked Attorney Walker if it could be possible to implement a hiring freeze with the exception of currently open positions.

Commissioner Williams believes that holding off on filling current positions that are empty has already had a similar effect.

Clerk Stone - we have already begun the selection and interview process for Fire Chief and would like direction for how to proceed if a hiring freeze is implemented.

Commissioner Miller agreed it would not be in the best interest to hold that (Fire Chiefs) position as critical as it is.

Attorney Walker- advised you could simply pause hiring and not post any new positions without implementing a hiring freeze.

Citizen Comment:

Janet Evans - supports the idea of an official freeze.

Staff Henry asked for clarification on what is considered an emergency position for a hiring freeze exemption?

Vice Mayor Grunder and Mayor Weitz both agreed water and sewer could and should both be considered essential and emergent.

Chief Vogel - advised he made a commitment to the city and will be here as long as needed and no need to rush on hiring a fire chief.

Linda Jones - is concerned about terminations as well as hiring. She would like to see a hiatus on terminations until a new city manager can come in and select their own team.

Commissioner Miller motioned to implement a hiring freeze unless there is an emergency.

Motion not seconded motion failed.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT/UPDATE: none at this time.

CITY MANAGER REPORT/UPDATE: not present

Staff Update:

Thomas Henry: AMI is 150 meters from completion. The sewer plant is progressing well. New sidewalks have been installed at Catherine Taylor Park. The Douglas Center daycare has sheet rock and insulation going up and is progressing.

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Clerk Angela Stone: advised the Commission there has been a proposed date of June 6th at 6:30 for a joint county meeting. She advised that qualifying for the Special Election has ended and Mr. Wayne Bloodsworth Jr. and Mr. Chad Howell have both qualified and are running.

COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Miller - Pioneer Days festival is the last Saturday and Sunday of March. Food Vendors are needed.

VICE MAYOR: none

MAYOR:

Asked for an update on the Priest theater. Attorney Walker advised it is under way and that it would hopefully be available for review by the next commission meeting. She is looking forward to a workshop to discuss updating the fleet vehicle lease. She thanked Clerk Stone for her hard work regarding the special election.

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Commissioner Williams motioned to adjourn.
Mayor Weitz adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.