

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
February 9, 2015

The City Commission met this date regular session in the Commission Chambers. The Invocation was given by Comm. Hamilton after which the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with the following in attendance.

Mayor	:	John B. Arnold, Jr.
Commissioners	:	Heyward H. Strong, Jr.
	:	Kay Hamilton
	:	Joe Morgan
	:	Clark (Tom) Browning
City Clerk	:	Tammy Johnson
City Administrator	:	Carl Scott
Police Chief	:	Joe Hart
City Attorney	:	Hayward Dykes
City Engineer	:	Roy Petrey
Library Director	:	David Weatherford
VBCS General Mngr	:	James Butler
Recorder	:	Beth Millsaps

Others in attendance: (Not inclusive) Amber Elledge (camera), Chrissie Kirila (Bay Beacon), Derek Hoffnung, Joe Cobb, Marion Cassell, Kelly Humphrey (NWFL Daily News)

Mayor Arnold welcomed the audience and stated that the Commission was interested in hearing their thoughts and welcomed any comments. He asked that anyone wanting to make any comments should raise his/her right hand to be recognized and use the microphone at the podium to address the Commission.

- Citizens' Concern Resident Citizens' Concern Non-Resident Added Agenda Items
1. **CITIZENS' CONCERN (non-agenda items) – Resident**
There were no resident comments.
 2. **CITIZENS' CONCERN (non-agenda items) – Non Resident**
There were no non-resident comments.
 1. **NEW ACTION ITEMS – Added Agenda Items**
Mr. Scott requested approval to establish the CDBG grant committee. Comm. Strong said the committee is required as part of the grant qualification. COMM. MORGAN MADE A MOTION TO PLACE ACTION ON AGENDA. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED MOTION WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.
 2. **NEW ACTION ITEMS – Proclamation Dixie Phonics**
Mayor Arnold read a proclamation supporting Dixie phonics as an expansion and development of southern music. COMM. HAMILTON MADE A MOTION TO PASS THE PROCLAMATION. COMM. BROWNING SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.
 3. **NEW ACTION ITEMS – Resolution No. VCA 01-02-09-15 Increase Monthly Cable and Internet Rates**
Mayor Arnold read Resolution No. VCA 01-02-09-15 a resolution of the Valparaiso Cable Authority to increase some monthly rates and provide an effective date. Mayor Arnold asked for an explanation for the increase, some rates had been raised as recently as the first of October of last year. James Butler, General Manager of VBCS, said he did a comparative study of our prices before the increase and Cox Communications presently. Comm. Hamilton said we can't compare to Cox. She said we do not have any cable service that is as small as Cox and we do not have any internet that runs at the high speeds of Cox Communications. Comm. Strong said that our competitor is not Cox Communications but another company. Mr. Butler said he prepared a presentation with our services compared to Cox. Comm. Hamilton said we need to worry about what we are charging people from the beginning, that Valparaiso Cable had the reputation of lower prices in this area but we are getting to the point where that no longer applies. Mr. Dykes advised letting Mr. Butler present the information that he had prepared and then vote on the Resolution to allow for discussion.
Mr. Butler made his presentation also offering for comparison a bill from CenturyLink/Dish Network. He presented the costs for our services along with competitor's prices and our prices are lower on cable and internet, we cannot compete on the phone but our overall monthly services are less. Mr. Butler said although comparisons are made from us to Cox Communications, Cox is not our direct competitor CenturyLink and Dish Network are.
Comm. Strong said when the budget was put together a lot of contracts had not come due, we have been monitoring the situation for the first quarter as of 1 February we are short. He said with the increase we will break even for this year. Comm. Morgan said he is concerned about pricing if we continue to raise rates, it is important to maintain lower prices but also be able to have competitive speed when dealing with the internet. Mayor Arnold said our job is to provide the finest service at the lowest price if we can't compete then take other actions. Comm. Hamilton said one of the largest complaints she hears from the community is the \$10 penalty that
- Proclamation Dixie Phonics
- Resolution No. VCA 01-02-09-15 Increase Monthly Cable & Internet Rates

we charge extra for internet if you do not have cable service that is outside the industry standards. Comm. Strong said that is charged to help pay for the bundle of fiber to the node. He said also one of the reasons for our cable system to be established was to provide security for the homes in Valparaiso. Our home security system goes straight to our police department, one of the reasons we have such a safe community, the system monitors fire protection and theft protection.

COMM. STRONG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. VCA 01-02-09-15, A RESOLUTION OF THE VALPARAISO CABLE AUTHORITY TO INCREASE SOME MONTHLY RATES AND PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE. COMM. BROWNING SECONDED THE MOTION. Mayor Arnold said with the rates continuing to rise maybe we should question if we should stay in the business of communications, we won't be able to meet the needs of our city if our rates continue this way. Comm. Hamilton said our rates continue to go up while others are going down. Comm. Strong said no one provides a better service than we do. Comm. Hamilton said we do have the best service hands down but we don't have the competitive internet speed and cable extras. Comm. Strong said once we upgrade we will be receiving our internet from two sources and we will be able to move at faster speeds. Comm. Hamilton asked if we throttle, Mr. Butler said we do not and we also do not have a monthly cap. Comm. Strong said we had to pass this resolution tonight to stay within the budget. Comm. Morgan said all the Commission members are concerned but we have no option but to raise the rates to meet this year's budget. Mayor Arnold asked what precipitated this increase, what is the reason when prices just increased in October. Mr. Butler said every four years contract renewals have big jump in pricing from the major networks. Comm. Hamilton said what happens in five or ten years when things are completely wireless.

Ms. Marion Cassell, 173 Highland, said she agrees with the Mayor, residents will go for cheaper prices. Comm. Hamilton said this is not meant to be a personal attack on Valparaiso cable, it is wonderful but wonders if it is time to get out of the business, if we aren't servicing the community well. Comm. Strong said he doesn't see what Mayor Arnold and Comm. Hamilton sees, he thinks we are doing the best we can with what we have.

Comm. Hamilton again questions the reason for the non cable subscriber fee. Mr. Butler said we are looking into removing it but have to look at the numbers first. Comm. Browning asked how many citizens' pay it, Mr. Butler said offhand he didn't know. Mayor Arnold asked if there was anyone with the technical and financial expertise who could look at the system and advise what to do. Comm. Hamilton said she sent someone some months back, Mr. Butler said the company representatives that talked to him were wanting to see sell something not advise. Comm. Strong said we respond to our citizens, we have grown due to citizen demands, we could reduce services to reduce rates. Ms. Cassell said to do a survey to see what the people want. Mayor Arnold said can we pass the resolution with the contingent plan to have someone look at what we can do. Comm. Morgan said we could change the motion or do a separate motion. Mr. Dykes said any follow on would have to a separate motion. MAYOR ARNOLD CALLED FOR A VOTE OF RESOLUTION NO. VCA 01-02-09-15, UNANIMOUS VOTE TO APROVE 5 TO 0.

Mayor Arnold said he would like to know what we can do for the future. Comm. Strong said a possible workshop. Mayor Arnold said he would like to have someone with a professional technical advice for the future to see what we can do with the communications business. Comm. Hamilton said to see if we should be in the cable and internet business anymore. She said the business is entirely different than it once was, be smart enough to know if we should stay in it. Comm. Strong said also to keep in mind our security fire system service, which we have been in for over 30 years. Comm. Strong said he will consult with Mr. Bennett and Mr. Webb and see if we can find someone with that capability. He said he would report back to the Commission in March. Comm. Morgan said we should do it after we have increased the internet speeds, digital upgrade complete and cost have been negotiated we can then meet by June.

4. NEW ACTION ITEMS – Resolution No. 03-02-09-15 Remove Surplus Items from Inventory

Mayor Arnold read Resolution No. 03-02-09-15 a resolution to approve sale of surplus equipment from the City of Valparaiso and providing an effective date. Mayor Arnold said this item was requested by Mr. Valandingham, since we purchased a new clam shell, Mr. Valandingham would like approval to see the 2000 GMC Truck, the old clam shell from Sanitation and also a 1990 Ford 445 Tractor from the Street department. COMM. BROWNING MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 03-02-09-15. COMM. STRONG SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0. Mrs. Johnson said she would like to dispose of an old cash register that has been in city hall, probably thirty years can we just throw it away. She said Mr. Weatherford has about eighteen computers that he would like to dispose of. Mayor Arnold said best to get rid of just for salvage.

5. NEW ACTION ITEMS – Property Rezoning

Mayor Arnold said he wanted to make the Commission aware that Ruckel Properties were looking at rezoning the area behind the post office from R1A to C1. Mr. Scott said Ruckel

Resolution
No. 03-02-
09-15
Remove
Surplus
Items

Property
Rezoning

Properties would like to conduct business there but can't as it is presently zoned. Mayor Arnold said there hasn't been an official request as of yet but wanted to make Commission aware of situation.

Appoint
CDBG
Committee

6. NEW ACTION ITEMS – Appoint CDBG Committee

COMM. STRONG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE FOR APPOINTMENT MS. MARION CASSELL, MR. ANTHONY D'QUAILIA, MR. GARY HERRING, MS. ARLENE ALBERTSON, MS. PEARL HEARN AND MR. GUNNER MAYS TO THE CDBG COMMITTEE. COMM. HAMILON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Removal of
City Assets

1. OLD BUSINESS – Removal of City Assets from Inventory

Comm. Morgan said he is working with the auditor to come up with something for us.

Plat I Docks

2. OLD BUSINESS – Plat I Docks

Comm. Morgan said that process was being made on this issue, had received public input and getting with our attorney. He would like a workshop before the next regular Commission meeting and will look to schedule that later.

BP Restore
Act
Projects

3. OLD BUSINESS – BP Restore Act Projects

Comm. Strong said the Commission previously approved four projects, #1 to reline the pipes, #2 pump stations, #3 manholes and #4 storm water. He said he met with Mr. Scott, Mr. Valandingham and Mr. Kelley to look at the three utility projects, we won't get the opportunity to have three approved. Comm. Strong said so with the pump station versus lining versus manholes the focus should be on the pump station for the Restore Act. Comm. Hamilton said once we submit one then later we can put another in but with each submission there will be cost so best to do one project at a time. Comm. Strong said his recommendation is to have Mr. Valandingham and Mr. Kelley write up the pump station projects, Mr. Scott will work the front end for a draft, he said by 20 February have a draft the final package by 23 March. Mayor Arnold asked what pump stations. Comm. Strong said pump stations in Plat I, pump 7 and 9. Comm. Hamilton said she had been told by ORAC they are supportive of as far in describing which project would fit the best, the infiltration into the bayous is a real big deal to ORAC with the lining of the pipes.

Comm. Morgan said we should get one out and then go to the next, we need to start moving, March is the opening to submit.

Comm. Strong said the pump stations is the highest priority to get out, Mr. Scott is looking into the grant writer for the City of Niceville, their person who writes grants for them is doing a great job.

Etc.

4. OLD BUSINESS – Etc.

Comm. Morgan said he spoke with the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and feels it would be a good idea to have their support on the ORAC projects, we could include letters of support from them which would be like having community approval. They have the capability to help with projects that we have that are unfunded for example a living shoreline. Comm. Hamilton said if we did get involved with the grant writer from Niceville she strongly urges we submit for the same grant that Niceville received funding for, it would basically be an extension of the shoreline grant of what has been submitted for Niceville and if is from a different bucket than the ORAC money it is Fish and Wildlife.

TPO/DOT

1. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – TPO/DOT

Comm. Morgan said he didn't have anything new this evening.

Stormwater

2. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Storm water

Comm. Morgan met with Mr. Daryl Bodreaux of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance to discuss Spence Place storm water and a couple of other needed improvements.

Legal
Activities

3. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Legal Activities

Mr. Dykes said he didn't have anything this evening.

Median
Beautifi-
cation
Update

4. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Median Beautification Update

Mr. Petrey said we would be signing the preconstruction contract next week.

Planning
Comm.

5. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Planning Commission Report

Mr. Cobb said the Planning Commission had been discussing rezoning parcels of land and being able to expand business corridor from the bridge to the Eastgate. Comm. Strong said we already have commercial property that is not used, why make more commercial if what we have is not used.

Visioning
Comm.

6. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Visioning Committee Update

Mr. Hoffnung, chair of the Visioning Committee, present the Commission with the committee's strategic plan. Mr. Hoffnung said now that this has been submitted the committee would look further into the future somewhere between five and ten years. Mayor Arnold thanked Mr. Hoffnung for the Committee's hard work and said the report was an excellent report for the future. He also said that should the Committee want to talk to any Commissioner all they

would need to do is ask. Mr. Hoffnung said he appreciates that and the Committee would move forward with the next plan.

7. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Community Liaison Report

Community
Liaison
Report

Comm. Hamilton said she asked for this to be added to the agenda. She is a member of the Chamber, also the representative from the city for the Military Affairs Committee (MAC) and also with her work with the library and those meetings she has reports to bring back to the Commission. Comm. Hamilton said at this time the AARP is assisting in Niceville with tax returns for those over 60 and also low income groups. She said they also have a tutoring program called brain fuse, it provides live help on line for students with their work. Comm. Hamilton said through the MAC they are providing service members with gift cards thanking them for their service. Comm. Browning said as part of the strategic plan from the Visioning Committee it states that by 1 March 2015 a Commission member should also attend the City of Niceville’s Commission meetings. Comm. Hamilton said she attends the Chamber meetings and speaks with Mr. Corbin there and feels this help foster strong ties as the liaison for the community.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS – Minutes

Minutes

COMM. STRONG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 5, 2015. COMM. BROWNING SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.

COMM. BROWNING MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 12, 2015. COMM. HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.

COMM. STRONG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 21, 2015. COMM. BROWNING SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION 5 TO 0.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS – Disbursements

Disburse-
ments

Mayor Arnold said there is a copy of disbursements in the Commissioner’s folder for their review.

ADJOURN

Adjourn

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

John B. Arnold, Jr.
Mayor

Heyward H. Strong, Jr.
Chair, VCA

ATTEST:

Tammy Johnson, CMC
City Clerk

February 9, 2015

The DVD labeled February 9, 2015 contains the audio and video of this meeting and will be kept as a permanent part of these minutes.