

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES

MAY 6, 2010

Vice Mayor Trudy Block called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Block announced that Mayor LaCascia will be a little late.

ROLL CALL

Mayor LaCascia – present (late), Vice Mayor Trudy Block-present, Councilor Adorno-absent, Councilor Blethen-present, Councilor Kimsey-present. Also present were City Manager Carrier and City Clerk Jackson.

At this time Vice Mayor Block advised this workshop will be geared toward a “brainstorming” session; choose topics and prioritize. She then went to each individual Councilor to see what they wanted to discuss.

Councilor Kimsey

Mobile Homes – Councilor Kimsey presented a letter he received from a gentleman regarding an issue he has on a piece of property located on Second Street (Councilor Kimsey read the letter and a copy is attached and part of the minutes). Councilor Kimsey asked why this property could not be used. City Manager Carrier advised this property was purchased knowing it was condemned. Councilor Kimsey then asked why it was condemned. City Manager Carrier explained the property was condemned because it was abandoned and not used for a year; the Code is 90 days. City Manager Carrier also advised the Planning Commission and City Council approved this. A lengthy discussion took place regarding Ordinance 1029 as it pertains to mobile homes, code enforcement, etc. Vice Mayor Block advised the City Manager did not do this; the City Council approved these regulations. More discussion took place between Council regarding Ordinance 1029 and mobile homes, zoning, programs to help the homeowners, lot sizes, land use, areas of town in question pertaining to mobile homes, what happens if the mobile home is damaged/destroyed more than 50%. Discussion went back to the mobile homes that were purchased by the gentleman knowing they were condemned, public notices, public hearings, percentage of how many people live in mobile homes, mobile home rental properties versus mobile homes which are owner occupied, programs to help the elderly and low to moderate income families.

Vice Mayor Block advised the Ordinance was passed by a different Council and what needs to be looked at is the process; she was advised the process would be to send it back to the Planning Commission. City Manager Carrier feels Councilor Kimsey would have a conflict of interest, as it is her understanding Councilor Kimsey has applied to the City to put a mobile home on his property. Councilor Kimsey responded that is not correct, he did not apply to do that. Mayor LaCascia advised if he had known this was to be discussed, he could have brought all of his research materials to the meeting. He had been approached by Councilor Kimsey on this subject matter about two months ago before Councilor Kimsey was ever elected to office; he researched all of the minutes, notices, spoke with Code Enforcement, spoke to the Police Department and pulled those records out, etc. pertaining to this issue. Mayor LaCascia then went through that particular process of making those changes. More discussion took place regarding the mobile home issue as it pertained to code enforcement issues, police issues, economic issues, etc. During discussion concerning the gentleman who bought the two properties, it was again mentioned he bought those two properties with the knowledge these homes were condemned; City Manager Carrier advised the same thing happened to the homes across the street from these two properties; it is a code violation issue and is in the hands of the magistrate. Councilor Kimsey advised he did not know that.

Bankruptcy Issue – City Manager Carrier advised the City Attorney sent a response to her and it will be in your packets for the regular meeting. Mayor LaCascia gave some background information pertaining to the bankruptcy issue; the City cannot escape from its debt; we are in the process of cutting expenses, increasing the revenues and restructuring the debt. City Manager Carrier advised that contrary to what is in the Ledger, the City is not in as bad shape as it is being reported.

City Manager Carrier then briefly discussed the property being purchased from the County – there is some question over the value of property as it stands now; the property in question will not be used for commercial property for quite some time. The City Manager also advised she would be meeting with the County on Tuesday morning and plans to discuss this with them as well; it is a spray field; she also asked the Mayor to attend with her (the Vice Mayor if he cannot attend). Discussion took place regarding cost of repairs the County would have to make to the Mt. Olive System compared to what the City owes them.

Discussion took place regarding a rate increase, budget items, cutting expenses, etc. Mayor LaCascia feels Council is moving in the right direction; things are more transparent in a short while, and we have tried to do that while moving in the right direction. He then discussed the trip he and the City Manager took to Tallahassee, which was very successful. He then advised the City is looking at other avenues, but it would be premature to discuss it at this time.

Councilor Blethen

Councilor Blethen advised we need to make sure we are getting feed back; make sure things are communicated to everyone. Discussion followed regarding the possible savings that FGUA is proposing to the City, which includes a rate increase. Discussion also took place regarding the number of customers and connections on the Mt. Olive System. Councilor Blethen would like to see correct facts published. At this time City Manager Carrier discussed the “Council Corner” whereby Vice Mayor Block will be putting questions and answers on line; these are some of the items that can go on there. City Manager Carrier asked Council to review what was sent to them for any changes or additional items.

Discussion then continued regarding the number of customers Polk City has (sewer and water). Councilor Blethen wants to make sure the right information is out before Tuesday; get an honest number and take everything as a whole—some are County connections. City Manager Carrier asked if Councilor Blethen is asking for the total connections; she advised we had 1,653 active accounts for the month of April. She further mentioned when staff talks about accounts, they are referring to active accounts. Active customers change on a monthly basis. Discussion continued regarding customers on the Mt. Olive System compared to how many customers are going to the temporary plant, and how it relates to the debt on that particular plant. Councilor Blethen asked how a piece of property that belongs to the citizens of Polk County can be sold another City. Discussion followed regarding the spray fields and the agreement between Polk County and Polk City regarding the Mt. Olive System.

Vice Mayor Block commented once FGUA submits their proposal at Tuesday’s meeting we will be able to compare apples to apples. City Manager Carrier advised this process has been a good exercise for staff; it makes them take a hard look at all that takes place. Some discussion followed regarding FGUA and operations of the utilities.

Brief discussion took place regarding “Council Corner”; if you have any questions, please email them to her so that she can get them included. This will be updated on a monthly basis.

After further discussion, Mayor LaCascia commented if we agree we are moving in the right direction, the bankruptcy issue would be the last step; however, we are not looking at bankruptcy at this moment. Councilor Blethen feels if we can show we are getting out of the red, he would agree to that. Some discussion took place regarding the memorandum from the City Attorney, as well as impact fees owed to the County and working out a plan. Mayor LaCascia feels it should be the last resort. Vice Mayor Block commented this is distracting and giving people the wrong idea; she doesn’t think we should consider bankruptcy at this time. City Manager Carrier advised Attorney Anthony will tell the Council what he

will do before the bankruptcy court. More discussion took place regarding the bankruptcy issue.

Brief discussion took place regarding the impact fees owed to Polk County; they are going to have to be paid.

Vice Mayor Block advised once information is received from FGUA another workshop will take place to go over the information they submit. At this time Vice Mayor Block advised in order to ask the residents of Polk City for additional money, she would like to look at the budget to ensure there are no other options.

Mayor LaCascia advised he is attending Water School – we're setting on all of the water and everybody wants something from us. Other cities are also having problems. Mayor LaCascia commented he looks at it as a glass half full with opportunities to explore; there are people who want to help us. Councilor Kimsey advised we have to live within our means. Councilor Blethen mentioned the possibility of annexations that may be available.

City Manager Carrier then briefly discussed the budget; she welcomes Council to look at individual line items; however, Council does not have line item authority.

Mayor LaCascia then brought up the Charter and how it relates to Council and getting information. He found the way to resolve this is if Council has a question or needs information, send an email to the person you want to ask a question and copy it to the City Clerk, who works for Council, and she will put together the information and get it to you. Discussion took place regarding City Council and the Charter regarding interfering in day to day activities, directing staff, and asking questions. Councilor Blethen brought up when he was watching the work crew changing out a meter and questioned something; however, he will send an email to Gene Kniffin with his question. City Manager Carrier advised if it involves sending an email to an employee, she would like to be copied on it. Councilor Kimsey advised he asked Smirna to make copies before the meeting, but will go to the City Manager or City Clerk in the future. City Manager Carrier then advised Council employees are worried about things they are hearing.

Vice Mayor Block asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Mr. Joe Duncan, 408 Rosewood Lane, asked about the \$11 figure that was used regarding rates; Councilor Blethen advised he just used that as an example – picked that number out of the air. Mr. Duncan mentioned we have to live within our means. Brief discussion took place regarding water and sewer revenue funds and where they can be used.

Mr. Harrison, Mt. Olive Shores North, asked what was meant by the number of meters and if City got rid of Mt. Olive. It was explained that if the System was

turned back over to the County, then those accounts in Mt. Olive Shores (South) would be back under the County's control.

Mayor Kimsey made a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Mayor LaCascia. The workshop was adjourned.

Patricia R. Jackson, City Clerk

Trudy Block, Vice Mayor