

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 7, 2010

Vice Mayor Trudy Block called the workshop to order at 6:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Joe LaCascia, Vice Mayor Trudy Block, Councilor Nancy Adorno, Councilor Mike Blethen, Councilor Don Kimsey-absent, and City Clerk Patricia Jackson

Review of Agenda for September 14 City Council Meeting

Vice Mayor Block advised she would like to go out of order so that the Finance Director, Pam Lawson, can leave. Vice Mayor Block then went over the agenda as follows:

New Business E(4) Approval of Utility Billing Bad Debt Write-Offs – Vice Mayor Block read from the summary sheet; we are requesting approval to write off utility bad debts in the amount of \$2,764.17 from accounts that have left been unpaid since prior to February 2010. Councilor Blethen asked if we know why they have not been paid. He was advised these are utility accounts that have moved and had their deposits applied, but not paid. Mayor LaCascia asked if this something we normally do every six months. After brief discussion, it was a consensus to move this to the consent agenda.

Presentations and/or Recognitions – Letter from TLC Family Church

Public Hearings – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant – Vice Mayor Block advised there were inconsistencies in the ad for the first public hearing, and we will need to have another public hearing, which will not affect the grant application for \$650,000.

New Business E(2) Resolution 2010-04, a Resolution approving the execution of an intergovernmental maintenance agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation – this is a renewal of the agreement Polk City currently has; the City is reimbursed by FDOT for mowing, litter removal and edging and sweeping of State right-of-way in the amount of \$17,941.88. It was a consensus to move this to the consent agenda.

New Business E (3) Approval of Fiscal Year 2009 Audit – the Audit was presented to Council on August 17, 2010, and now we need to approve it. Mayor LaCascia asked this item be left on the regular agenda. The audit will also be placed on the website.

New Business E(5) Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson Engagement letter—Put on hold indefinitely the Future Capital Assessment Program – Mayor LaCascia gave

background information on how he opened the dialog with NGN regarding restructuring the City's debt during the time Council felt we were in a financial emergency crisis, and thought there may have to be an assessment. Vice Mayor Block has been successful in restructuring some of the city's debt and the City don't need to move forward with an assessment at this time. Vice Mayor Block advised she called NGN and asked them to put this on hold indefinitely; NGN advised they would put this on hold, and they would not charge the City anything. Vice Mayor Block advised they were very understanding. Councilor Blethen asked if there was any way we could possibly use them down the road. Vice Mayor Block advised she spoke with them while she was at the Florida League of Cities Conference, and there are other things they can assist us with.

New Business E (6) Moratorium on City Impact Fees – Mayor LaCascia advised he would like to see a moratorium on City Impact Fees to possibly stimulate construction, which would be similar to what Polk County is currently doing. He would like to put a possible six month to a year hold on impact fees for general government facilities, police, fire rescue, parks and recreation. The Mayor has spoken to several developers and asked if it would help them, and they advised it would. Mayor LaCascia then went over some possible construction figures for October 2010 through February 2011. Mayor LaCascia advised the County placed a six month moratorium; he advised commercial developers say it is good for residential, but commercial developers would need more than six months. Mayor LaCascia advised he would have something more definitive on the 14th; however it appears the County is looking to place a one year moratorium on impact fees. Mayor LaCascia has some of the information he has requested, but is still waiting on another proposal. Councilor Adorno asked if there was any history whereby this was done in the past.

City Manager Items – Vice Mayor Block advised citizens are asking what she has done. Vice Mayor Block has put together a letter of what the city was faced with since April, and the things that were done. She advised there were cuts made, a special assessment was looked at but is not needed, the proposed millage rate of 9.6547 was cut to 8.6547, she hopes rates can be reduced as soon as we can; something had to be done immediately because we did not know what was going on when first came into office, started negotiating loans, when start realizing savings it can put into decreasing utility rates and propose bringing police back. She asked that it be read over and if anyone has suggestions or questions, to please let her know. Vice Mayor Block advised one of the next things she wants to get done is putting questions and answers on the website.

City Clerk Items – City Clerk Jackson advised we need more Planning Commission members.

Council Member Items – Councilor Blethen – Councilor Blethen asked about shutting down the Mt. Olive System. Vice Mayor Block advised the City is looking at what would be the most cost effective thing to regarding shutting it down and moving the wastewater to the Cardinal Hill Plant. Vice Mayor Block advised there is grant money available through DEP, and she will be looking into that. Councilor Blethen asked in the

long-term that would impact the sewer rates. Vice Mayor Block advised there would be a savings of approximately \$140,000 per year if the Mt. Olive System was shut down and transferred to the Cardinal Hill Plant. Mayor LaCascia asked if there would be anyone at the meeting to discuss this; Vice Mayor Block advised we are not at that point yet.

Vice Mayor Block advised we hired a new Utility Director on an emergency basis through FGUA; he is licensed in water and sewer. She advised he has found a lot of things that has not been done; however, not anything that is a safety issue or health hazard. Councilor Blethen asked if he was hands-on; Vice Mayor Block advised he is, and he would at the meeting next Tuesday to discuss the state of the utilities. Vice Mayor Block advised he is on a week by week contract until a decision is made. Councilor Blethen asked if any real numbers will be forthcoming.

Public Comments/Request

Lisa Shifflett, 234 Bayberry Drive, asked what the current city debt is; she was advised the debt is \$10.4 million, but the City is still working on negotiating. The City is still in the process of working with the County on the spray field loan (interest rate/loan).

Paula Roddenberry, 220 Sunshine, thanked the Mayor and Vice Mayor for what they are doing. She knows the volume of hours they have put in to figure out “this mess” and she appreciate it (it is stressful). Ms. Roddenberry then discussed the petition going around town to unincorporated the City and become County. At this point she doesn’t know where she stands and is still looking for answers. She advised she called the County regarding the property tax bill and it is not just a matter of subtracting the city’s portion from ones tax bill; she went over some of those figures. Paula then went over some of the history regarding when Polk City was incorporated. She knows Polk City has fallen on bad times, but she hopes it can be fixed and worked out.

Paula then asked a couple of questions: 1) has the City signed an agreement or contract with FGUA. Vice Mayor Block advised no, the only thing that has been signed is for the Utility Director on week by week basis. 2) Has the City sold the vehicles being used in water and sewer; Vice Mayor Block advised they have not been sold. 3) Is the State here, or have they been here to do Audits. Vice Mayor Block advised the Auditor General has written letters regarding the 2007 and 2008 Audit; the City has responded in writing to their questions and it is currently under review; however, it has not been determined if we are in a financial crisis. 4) Is there a possibility that City Council and Officials from Polk County can set up a meeting here so the city residents can find answers; Mayor LaCascia advised the answers we are looking for is going to be subject of the September 15 County meeting, but it can be requested. Paula doesn’t want the utilities to be given away; Vice Mayor Block advised we have good water and good plants, and we needed to deal with debt – we have good utilities. Paula invited citizens to come ask questions and bring suggestions. Mayor LaCascia advised Council has been asking for people to come to meetings; he has no problems with what the citizens are doing. Brief discussion followed regarding the debt issue. Paula then gave a brief overview of the Polk City Police Department and Sheriff’s Office.

Al Schneider, 775 Teaberry Trail, asked about the moratorium and the construction numbers. Mayor LaCascia advised he has asked for a proposal from the developers.

Councilor Adorno advised citizens can call during the day with questions, and someone can get back to them (if they cannot make the meetings).

Paula Roddenberry advised there are times when you call city hall and cannot get in touch with anyone. Vice Mayor Block will check into this.

Mayor LaCascia briefly discussed the moratorium on impact fees and forecasting.

There being no further business, the workshop adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Patricia R. Jackson, City Clerk

Joe LaCascia, Mayor