

CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

May 21, 2024

Mayor LaCascia called the meeting to order at 6:12 pm.

Pastor Walter Lawlor, New Life Community Church gave the invocation.

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor LaCascia.

ROLL CALL – Assistant City Manager Sheandolen Dunn

Present: Mayor Joe LaCascia, Commissioner Micheal T. Blethen, Commissioner Charles Nichols, Attorney Kristin Hatcher-Bolin (sub for City Attorney Thomas Cloud) and City Manager Patricia Jackson

Absent: City Attorney Thomas Cloud

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Nichols to approve the **April 16, 2024** (Workshop and Regular City Commission Meeting) and the reports and other items on the Consent Agenda; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Blethen.

Motion carried by Voice Vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Baker (525 Orange Boulevard) – Provided the City Commission with recap of his time at the recent American Planning Association (APA) Conference.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Interview/Choose Commissioner Candidates for District #2 and the At-Large District

During the April 5, 2024 Municipal Election, Polk City candidates Micheal Blethen and Charles Nichols ran unopposed. Prior to that April Election Wayne Harper (At-Large) and Brian Knouff (District #2) vacated their seats. To date, these seats remain vacant.

As a result of the Public Notices being placed on Polk City's website, City Hall Bulletin Board, Polk City's newsletter, as well as the Post Office, Polk City received three (3) letters/emails of interest. The candidates are: Rick Wilson (District #2), Michelle Pettit (At-Large District) and Dean Menendez (At-Large District).

Each candidate was asked to be present for this meeting and prepared for a public interview.

City Commission will approve a candidate to serve on the City Commission for District #2 and the At-Large District.

Dean Menendez

Commissioner Nichols – No questions

Commissioner Blethen – No questions

Mayor LaCascia – addressed an array of negative social media postings from Mr. Menendez and his lack of attention to the information provided to him regarding his most recent desire to become a Commissioner. Not pleased with the negative comments directed at the Commissioners. Not acceptable as you wish to serve on this Commission.

Michelle Pettit

Commissioner Nichols – No questions

Commissioner Blethen – No questions

Mayor LaCascia – Asked Candidate Pettit if she were selected as a Commissioner, which would she prefer to tackle...Economics or Transportation? Candidate Pettit responded Economics would be her choice to challenge.

Rick Wilson

Commissioner Nichols – No questions

Commissioner Blethen – No questions

Mayor LaCascia – No questions

After each candidate shared a little about themselves and addressed questions or concerns from the City Commission, there was a **Motion by Commissioner Nichols to appoint Rick Wilson to serve in District #2; followed by a motion by Mayor LaCascia to appoint Michelle Pettit to serve in the At-Large District.**

Motion carried by Voice Vote.

City Manager Jackson administered the Oath of Office for both Michelle Pettit and Rick Wilson. Afterwards Commissioners Pettit and Wilson took their seats on the dais.

Select Vice Mayor

Per Polk City's Charter (C-7), At the first Regular Meeting in April of each year, the City Commission shall select two (2) of its members to serve as Mayor and Vice Mayor. Commission will elect a replacement Mayor or Vice Mayor if the sitting officer is unable to serve for any reason.

During the April 16, 2024, City Commission Meeting, noting that there are two vacant seats on the Commission, Commissioner Nichols made the recommendation to hold off on selecting a Vice Mayor until the City Commission had a full body.

Mayor LaCascia nominated Commissioner Charles Nichols to serve a one-year term as Vice Mayor; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson.

Motion carried unanimously by Voice Vote.

Select a Commissioner for third check signee with Citizens and Trust

City Manager Jackson discussed per Polk City's Charter (C-7), the Mayor and Vice Mayor shall have primary signatory authority on the city checking account. All checks will require two (2) signatures. If the Mayor or Vice Mayor is not available to sign checks, the first alternate will be a designated Commissioner and the second alternate will be the City Manager.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Rick Wilson was approved by Voice Vote as the third signer on the Citizens and Trust Bank Account for Polk City.

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE 2024-03

Stephanie Von-Pelaske Bush provided discussion as well as a PowerPoint presentation regarding an Ordinance of the City Commission of Polk City, Florida; amending Article 2 – Regulations for Specific Districts, Section 2.04.01, "Zoning District Summary Tables" of the Uniform Land Development Code; changing minimum development standards in Table 5 for the R-1 Single Family Zoning District & reducing the minimum required lot size, lot width and side yard setback requirements within the Polk City Exemption area of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern; repealing all Ordinances in conflict; providing for a Business Impact Estimate, Severability, codification and an effective date.

Second and Final Reading

Attorney Bolin read this Ordinance by title only. Mayor LaCascia opened the Public Hearing.

Paul Holland (338 Crape Myrtle) stated he does not agree with this Ordinance. Would also like to get future notices via email.

Lucretia (Bayberry Drive) not in agreement, wants peace and serenity in Polk City.

Kathy Delp stated there are several homes all over Polk City that are not conforming, so, it is not just about Sandy Pointe.

Bob Baker (525 Orange Boulevard) asked what is the alternative?

Attorney Bolin stated Variances are done on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Forty-three percent (43%) of the lots are currently non-conforming. Not all were annexed.

Mayor LaCascia closed the Public Hearing.

Lengthy discussion ensued.

Motion by Commissioner Nichols to approve Ordinance 2024-03 on Second and Final Reading; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson.

Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Nichols – aye, Commissioner Wilson – aye, Commissioner Pettit – aye, Mayor LaCascia – aye, Commissioner Blethen - nay

Motion carried 4/1.

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE 2024-04

Stephanie Von-Pelasko Bush provided discussion as well as a PowerPoint presentation regarding AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF POLK CITY, FLORIDA; AMENDING ARTICLE 2 – REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC DISTRICTS, SECTION 2.04.01, “ZONING DISTRICT SUMMARY TABLES” OF THE UNIFORM LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; CHANGING MINIMUM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN TABLE 5 FOR THE R-2 SINGLE FAMILY ZONING DISTRICT & REDUCING THE MINIMUM REQUIRED LOT SIZE WITHIN THE POLK CITY EXEMPTION AREA OF THE GREEN SWAMP AREA OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR A BUSINESS IMPACT ESTIMATE, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION AN EFFECTIVE DATE. **Second and Final Reading**

Attorney Bolin read this Ordinance by title only. Mayor LaCascia opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke for or against this Ordinance. Mayor LaCascia closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Nichols to approve Ordinance 2024-04 and Second and Final Reading; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Commissioner Nichols – aye, Commissioner Wilson – aye, Commissioner Pettit – aye, Mayor LaCascia – aye, Commissioner Blethen - nay

Motion carried 4/1.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 2024-05

City Manager Jackson and Mayor LaCascia discussed AN ORDINANCE OF POLK CITY, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF POLK CITY, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE TITLE TO ARTICLE IV, CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF POLK CITY, FLORIDA; CREATING § 2-179, CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO INCREASE CITY COMMISSION FEES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. **First Reading**

Attorney Bolin read this Ordinance by title only. Mayor LaCascia opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke for or against this Ordinance. Mayor LaCascia closed the Public Hearing.

City Manager Jackson discussed the City Commissioners Fee.

Mayor LaCascia stated this increase is only \$6,000 per year. The City won't be hurt by this.

Commissioner Nichols is not in agreement with this increase until the new budget is brought forth and would like to see the staff get a better raise.

Motion by Commissioner Blethen to approve Ordinance 2024-05 on First Reading; this Ordinance was seconded by Mayor LaCascia.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Commissioner Nichols – nay, Commissioner Wilson – aye, Commissioner Pettit – aye, Mayor LaCascia – aye, Commissioner Blethen - aye

Motion carried 4/1.

Polk County Library Cooperative Agreement

City Manager Jackson briefly discussed this Agreement continues the Polk County Library Cooperative, which was formed on October 1, 1997, through an Interlocal Agreement between the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and the thirteen (13) municipalities with Public Libraries in Polk County: Auburndale, Bartow, Dundee, Eagle Lake, Fort Meade, Frostproof, Haines City, Lake Alfred, Lake Wales, Lakeland, Mulberry, Polk City, and Winter Haven. Subsequently, the Agreement has been reviewed and renewed to continue the delivery of seamless countywide public library services.

Membership in the Cooperative gives a Municipal Library access to hundreds of thousands of resources for their patrons, automatic membership in the Tampa Bay Library Consortium (for continuing education and vendor discounts); delivery between libraries, Books by Mail, a State-of-the-Art Library Automation System that includes mobile applications, all e-rate forms filed on your behalf, State and Federal Grants, Professional Development, and so much more!

The terms of the Agreement will be for ten (10) years beginning on October 1, 2024, and unless otherwise indicated, shall automatically renew for additional ten (10) year terms.

Gladys Roberts, Polk County Library Cooperative (PCLC) Director was present and spoke briefly about the importance of the libraries and the need for the Cooperative Agreement.

Staff recommended approval of the Interlocal Agreement between the Polk County Library Cooperative and Polk City.

Motion by Commissioner Nichols to approve the Interlocal Agreement between the Polk County Library Cooperative and Polk City; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Blethen.

Motion carried unanimously by Voice Vote.

CITY MANAGER ITEMS

Continuing Contract with Ardaman & Associates – Craig Fuller spoke regarding the Ardaman and Associates Continuing Services Agreement. A Hydrogeological Study will be \$8,500. They have worked at this particular site before. City Manager Jackson asked for a motion to proceed with this expense. **City Commission approved this item unanimously by Voice Vote.**

Berkley Road – initially advised by Polk County that No Thru Trucks going North and South; however, Polk City was advised that the County only approved No Thru Trucks going North by Resolution. If the City wants to restrict truck traffic going south on Berkley Road, we can ask the County to modify the Resolution.

City Manager Jackson inquired with the City Commission how they would like to see the truck traffic move? North and South, Just North or Just South.

Commissioner Blethen discussed being stuck in traffic in any direction. The signs were placed after the red light. Can the sign be placed before the red light and can the sign be a lot bigger.

Deputy Poindexter stated in 2026 the Middle Schools will be starting at 8am and the High Schools will start at 8:30 am.

Bid for Bar Screen discussed by Craig Fuller – One bid was received in the amount of \$319,500 from Close Construction (Okeechobee, FL). This new Bar Screen will be stainless and larger. All documents that were requested have been received. However, we are awaiting Payment and Performance Bond information.

Motion by Commissioner Nichols to approve Close Construction for the Bar Screen Project in the amount of \$319,500; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson.

Motion carried 4/1.

Commonwealth 5,000-gallon Hydropneumatic Water Tank - had its five-year Engineering Inspection. The overall tank was reported to be in fair operating condition; however, the following issues are to be addressed. We will get a quote to refurbish it, as well as replacing the 5,000-gallon tank. Due to the age of the tank, it needs to be replaced.

Centennial Celebration – Gopher Tortoises have been spotted at the old spray field on SR 33 where the Centennial Celebration is being planned. An evaluation will need to be done to have them removed. This cost is approximately \$14,000 per turtle.

CDBG-In April the Commission voted to approve rescinding the CDBG Grant Application; however, the construction plans need to be finished. Chastain-Skillman submitted Addendum #1 for the revisions to the **Citrus Grove Boulevard**

Plans. As previously discussed, the Geotechnical Report that was conducted, determined there to be no base beneath Citrus Grove Boulevard. Chastain- Skillman recommended a "Full Depth Mix Design" to provide a base first and then resurface. Even though they will have to design the full depth base mix, this will be a fraction of the cost for construction of a conventional base. As a side note, CivilSurv is continuing with the Environmental Assessment.

The cost for the Geotechnical Report Addendum #1 (Professional Engineering and Surveying Services) is \$29,062. City Manager Jackson asked for a motion to approve this expenditure.

Motion by Commissioner Wilson to approve the Geotechnical work in the amount of \$29,062 performed by Chastain Skillman; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Nichols.

Motion carried unanimously by Voice Vote.

Rental at the Activity Center – The Air Condition breaker went bad during a rental. However, the renter still utilized the building; but wants to know if they could get any money back for their "inconvenience". The City Commission sets policy. This will need to be discussed during the next meeting.

CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS - None

COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Commissioner Nichols – resigned from his post as Liaison to the Centennial Committee. Commissioner Rick Wilson volunteered to be the new Liaison.

Commissioner Blethen – Will not be at the July Meeting

Commissioner Pettit – Thanked everyone for the vote of confidence for her becoming a new Polk City Commissioner.


Commissioner Wilson – Happy to be a part of the Polk City Commission.

Mayor LaCascia – Apologized for being tardy for this meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, May 27, 2024 is Memorial Day and the offices will be closed.

ADJOURNMENT – 8:00 pm



Patricia Jackson, City Manager



Joe LaCascia, Mayor