

City Commission Meeting
March 7, 2023
6:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Alan Johnson, Mayor
Chris Graus, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 1
Mark Grill, Commissioner, District 2
Ward Friszolowski, Commissioner, District 3
Melinda Pletcher, Commissioner, District 4

STAFF PRESENT:

Alex Rey, City Manager
Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney
Amber LaRowe, City Clerk
Vince Tenaglia, Assistant City Manager
Mike Clarke, Public Works Director

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

City Manager Rey added a presentation after the approval of the Agenda.

An emergency repair to pump station 2 was added as 4.b.; this information was provided to the Commission ahead of the meeting. A copy of this addition is made a part of the record.

Motion: Commissioner Grill moved, Commissioner Friszolowski seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the March 7, 2023, City Commission Agenda as amended.

Presentation to Commissioner Melinda Pletcher (added)

City Manager Rey stated that staff prepared a video to thank Commissioner Pletcher for her 10 years of dedicated service to the City. A copy of the video is made a part of the record.

2. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Resident Deborah Schechner commented on recent comments made to the newspaper on items that may come before the Commission for approval and opined that this could be seen as a violation of the Sunshine Law. She also commented on the texting of cell phones by the Commission during meetings. Additionally, she requested information about the conditional use application for the unpaved parking lot to be used by the Plaza Beach hotelier.

Resident Mike Bomar commented on electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and opined that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fuel vehicles; those with EVs should have to pay to "fill up". He mentioned last week's discussion by the Commission on undergrounding and requested that funding for this project be revisited.

Resident Laura Trivison shared a video from a business owner regarding issues with his a-frame sign that was recently removed due to being in violation. He commented that after his sign was removed, the Mayor showed up and placed his sign in the exact location and that was not a violation. A copy of this video is made a part of the record. Ms. Trivison opined that this is a double standard and expected answers.

The Mayor commented on several of his signs that have been removed for being in violation and does not believe there is any favoritism being shown.

3. CONSENT

- a. Request authorization of expenditures of \$81,184.31 under the continuing engineering services contract with Halff Associates, Inc. for 36th Avenue Eastern Terminus Seawall Repair Design.
- b. Emergency Sewer Line Pint Repair at Boca Ciega Drive & 75th Avenue due to damage caused by PSTA's Contractor.

Motion: Commissioner Pletcher moved, Vice Mayor Graus seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the March 7, 2023 Consent Agenda as presented by the City Manager.

4. RESOLUTIONS

a. **Resolution 2023-01: Wastewater Asset Management Plan**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, IMPLEMENTING AN ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO PROMOTE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Vince Tenaglia, Assistant City Manager, spoke about the Plan that is a part of the agenda. He stated that this plan's requirements are established per the Administrative Code and are intended to identify the costs and schedule for rehabilitating each asset in the wastewater operation. City staff worked together on the financial aspects of the Plan and the wastewater operation was analyzed to develop a long-term financial model. He noted that if this Plan is acceptable to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the City will save approximately \$130,000 in interest expenses over the life of the loan.

Motion: Commissioner Friszolowski moved, Commissioner Pletcher seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2023-01.

b. **Emergency Repairs to Pump Station 2 (added)**

A copy of the agenda memorandum and agreement is made a part of the record.

Mike Clarke, Public Works Director, explained that a wet well drop pipe has partially dislodged from the wall of the wet well at pump station 2 located at the east corner of the intersection of Gulf Boulevard and 55th Avenue. Due to this, the City requested an emergency repair quote from TLC Diversified to do the repairs; the quote provided is \$40,635.50. Staff is including a \$5,000 contingency to cover any unforeseen issues that may arise. The City can piggyback on the agreement that TLC Diversified has with Pinellas County because the scope of work is within that contract.

Motion: Commissioner Pletcher moved, Commissioner Grill seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to authorize the expenditure in the amount of \$45,635.50 to TLC Diversified, Inc. for emergency repairs at pump station 2, and approve the services agreement to authorize the City Manager to execute the original contract for lift station rehabilitation.

5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Policy

At the Commission's direction, City Manager Rey reviewed the current program and policies as well as what other governmental entities are doing regarding EV charging stations. The City has charging stations located at City Hall, Pass-A-Grille, the Library, and the Community Center. The City Hall location is used to charge the City EV fleet and has recently been designated as "City Official Use Only." He researched other municipalities and found 14 that offer EV charging, with only one of those that charge fees. Mr. Rey stated that the EV chargers at the Library and the Community Center can be outfitted to charge fees to customers; however, the City Hall location and the Pass-A-Grille location are older technology and do not have that capability.

The Mayor questioned if the City could turn the charging stations on and off so that they are on only when needed for charging the City vehicles.

Commissioner Grill discussed his conversations with residents noting that all but one he talked with stated that they do not feel that taxpayers should pay for people to "gas" up their cars. He recognized that the City is only expending approximately \$6,000 annually on charging but opined that this may increase over time. He also stated that charging stations are wide open for any person to use, resident or not, and does not believe that the City can make these free to only residents.

Commissioner Pletcher shared her thoughts stating that she appreciates that the EV charging stations are free so that it encourages more people to go green and fewer emissions. She would prefer that this be evaluated during budget seasons so that way the City can monitor the expense over time and act as they increase.

Commissioner Friszolowski suggested that the City charge at the stations that are newer where they are equipped with that technology and make the other stations for City vehicle use only.

Vice Mayor Graus stated that he feels people who use the EV chargers, especially here at City Hall, will get out, walk around, and patronize the businesses as their cars are charging; this is a win-win.

Mayor Johnson opined that Duke should install more chargers and they can take care of the cost.

In regard to Freebee, Mr. Rey stated that the City is in discussions and will be bringing a report back on the topic of charging at the City's expense.

Resident Julie Fuller commented on EV chargers stating that the City should not be providing free "fuel". She also commented on the undergrounding discussion from last week and would like the City to reconsider funding this initiative for the residents.

Resident Mike Bomar commented on the EV chargers echoing the comments made by Ms. Fuller. He stated that chargers are taking up parking spaces because only EVs can park in certain locations so that they can charge. He also questioned if these chargers could be outfitted to charge golf carts.

Resident Laura Travison likes having EV chargers but recommends that people who need to use them pay their share. She also commented on the undergrounding and would like to see the City head in that direction.

The consensus of the Commission was to have the charging stations at the Library and Community Center charge a fee for charging with the other two stations for City use only.

Mr. Rey will send an email that summarizes this and articulates the approach that will be taken; follow up

information will be provided regarding the Freebee discussion.

6. CITY CLERK, CITY MANAGER, CITY ATTORNEY, AND CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk—reminded the Commission that the next meeting, March 28th, begins at 4:00 p.m. with a joint workshop between the City Commission and the Planning Board. The 6:00 p.m. meeting will have the swearing-in of the elected officials.

She thanked Commissioner Pletcher for her years of service and has enjoyed working with her. Mrs. LaRowe will miss having a female on the Commission.

Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney—thanked Commissioner Pletcher for her years of service and has enjoyed working with her, she will be missed.

Vice Mayor Graus—shared his sentiments about serving with Commissioner Pletcher, it is because of her passion and drive that he got into serving on the Commission.

Commissioner Grill—discussed the recently implemented “adopt-a-drain” program. Encouraged citizens to go out and get their gear from Public Works so they can help clean storm drains. He reiterated that this is not the City using residents in place of employees “doing their job”, instead, it is to assist the crew with the approximately 800 storm drains in the City. He was recently interviewed by Bay News 9 about this program, which will be aired on Thursday morning.

He reminded residents that the City is electronic now with parking permits -- there are no longer any beach ball passes. Resident permits are free; however, they must register online.

He thanked Commissioner Pletcher for her time on the Commission and for getting him started in serving in the City. He appreciates her dedication to the City and all the things she was able to accomplish.

Commissioner Friszolowski—would like to see the City see what they can do with the funding for undergrounding because the expense is going to be very large.

He thanked Commissioner Pletcher for all the years that she has dedicated to serving the City.

Mayor Johnson—thanked Commissioner Pletcher for her service.

Commissioner Pletcher—expressed her gratefulness for serving with such wonderful people and knows that Chris Marone will do a good job in this seat.

Her one remark is that she hopes the City can make a way to underground the utilities as this will help with power outages.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: MARCH 28, 2023

AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK

ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR