

**ST. PETE BEACH CITY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING**

MINUTES

**Tuesday, January 13, 2009
6:30 p.m.**

THOSE PRESENT:

Vice Mayor Metz
Commissioner Halpern
Commissioner Chaney
Commissioner Leonard

ALSO PRESENT:

City Manager Mike Bonfield
Director of IT, Donald Burkhardt

ABSENT:

Mayor Finnerty

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

AGENDA

- 1. ORDINANCE NO. 2008-49, FINAL READING AND PUBLIC HEARING REVISING ARTICLE II, SECTION 86-31 TERMINOLOGY FROM “SEWER” TO “WASTEWATER” AND ADJUSTING WASTEWATER RATES BY AN OVERALL 30% IN FY 2009, 7.5% IN FY 2010 AND 7.5% IN FY 2011 FOR ALL WASTEWATER CUSTOMERS.**

City Manager Bonfield explained that the City recently received the results of a wastewater rate study conducted by Public Resources Management Group, Inc. (PRMG). The findings were presented to City Commission at their October 28, 2008 meeting, discussed at a Special Workshop on November 11, 2008 and the first reading of Ordinance 2008-49 was approved on December 16, 2008 with the understanding that in addition to the 30% overall rate increase in FY 2009 there will be rate increases of 7.5% in FY 2010 and FY 2011.

Public Works Director Steve Hallock gave an overview of the sewer system, the needed repairs, the rate study and the cost to treat the wastewater. He stated that the City has not raised the rates in over 8 years and has absorbed the costs of operating and maintaining the system by borrowing money from the General Fund to put into the Sewer Fund. He also explained what the additional money from the rate increases would be used for.

Mr. Hallock answered questions from the City Commission.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mr. Robert Urban, 6439 Three Palms Point, expressed his opinion that he felt that the City did not have a plan of action.

Mr. Tom Bennett, Sylvette Condominiums, made several suggestions for the Commission to consider for funding for the sewer system.

Mr. Jim Anderson, 301 41st Avenue, stated that he felt that the sewer fund should pay for the operation and maintenance of the sewer. He thanked the Commission for their work regarding the sewer fund. He was in favor of the rate increase to fund infrastructure for the future.

Corrina Harshaw, 331 South Julia Circle, stated that she was in favor of the rate increase, but felt that there needs to be a specific plan.

Ms. Deborah Schechner, Boca Ciega Isle Drive, stated that she was concerned with the hotels paying their share of the funding for the sewer system as well as low water pressure in her neighborhood.

Vice Mayor Metz closed the audience comments section.

There was a general discussion regarding the dates that the rate increases will occur.

Commissioner Chaney made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2008-49, on Final Reading, An Ordinance of the City of St. Pete Beach, Florida providing for amendment of Subsection (e) of Section 86-31 of the Code of Ordinances of the City, pertaining to Wastewater (Sewer) Use Charges; providing for increased wastewater (sewer) rates providing for severability; providing for repeal of ordinances or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith, to the extent of such conflict; and providing for an effective date; with changes to Section 2, the date is January 1, 2010; Section 3, the date is January 2011, in the Second Whereas Paragraph there is an addition of “based on the no-growth rate model” provided by Public Resources Management Group, Inc. The motion was seconded by

Commissioner Halpern. The motion was approved by a 4-0 roll call vote.

Commissioner Chaney gave a report on the Pinellas County School Board regarding their final vote to close some area schools. She reported that there were many people at the meeting trying to stop the closure of the Gulf Beaches Elementary School. She advised that it was a unanimous vote to close the Gulf Beaches Elementary School, at the end of this school year. She thanked everyone for their support and efforts in trying to save Gulf Beaches School.

2. ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Michael Finnerty

Attest:

Theresa B. McMaster, City Clerk