



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED SESSION
Held in City Hall Chambers 1600 Nela Avenue

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 * 5:45 pm
MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Mayor Fouraker called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm, and the Clerk confirmed quorum. Also present were Interim City Manager Grimm, Attorney Langley, Public Works Director Phil Price, and Clerk Heidi Peacock.

2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Comm Smith, District 6

Comm Smith gave the invocation and led the Pledge to the flag.

3. Citizen's Comments

Mayor Fouraker opened for citizen comments.

Alex Fernandez, 1618 Swann Avenue, shared his concerns about the noise from music and car racing at the business on the corner of Orange Avenue during the early morning hours. He noted that he is afraid to call because of retaliation. Mayor Fouraker gave the resident a non-emergency number to call if the problems continued. Mayor Fouraker noted that all calls to the County provide important data that can lead to enforcement and change.

4. New Business

a. Discussion and Action on City Manager Employment Contract

Mayor Fouraker opened for discussion on the City Manager Employment Contract.

Comm Carugno shared his frustration with the City's process of finalizing the contract before offering employment to a candidate. The current candidate was not one of his first picks due to his tenure of only 2-3 years in prior cities. He would have preferred to have the Council review and develop a contract as a group. He disagrees with the following benefits:

- 6-month primary residence requirement
- the delay for employment in January 2024
- initial salary of \$140,000 and increase to \$165,00 upon residency
- Retirement of 18.5 higher than any other administrative staff

Comm Carugno stated he was against the current contract. He excused himself from the meeting and did not appreciate being interrupted during his comments.

For clarification, Mayor Fouraker said residency is required per Section 4.07 of the Code. He reminded the Council that they waived that criterion for the previous City Manager since there were no homes reasonable for his family then. He further noted that the Council had motioned him to negotiate the contract with the applicant, which is what is now for Council discussion.

Comm Shuck said it's important to clarify for the residents that the Council motioned to have the negotiations consist of the Mayor, Attorney, and Colin Baenziger. He shared his concern with the starting salary and the prorated payout upon residency.

Comm Holihan spoke on the one-time payment for moving expenses and said it should be a cost for reimbursement of up to \$20,000. He further noted that the retirement should be equal to administrative staff.

Comm Partin and Comm Smith recommended the contract date in Section 5 from June 1 to July 1. He further noted that the retirement contribution should be 16% with a starting point of \$140,000 due to experience.

Comm Gold said he would like the Council to direct staff to bring forward salaries comparable to surrounding cities with the same size and tax base.

After further discussion, Comm Smith moved to offer the contract to Mr. Rudometkin with the following changes,

- change the date from June 1 to July 1
- change the retirement to 16% with the negotiated salary

Comm Holihan seconded the motion with the change to the salary back to what was budgeted at \$165,000. Comm Smith agreed.

Upon roll call, the motion failed with Comm Partin, Comm Shuck, and Comm Gold, nay 3:3. Comm Carugno was not present for the vote.

Comm Partin moved to offer the contract to Mr. Rudometkin with the following changes,

- change the date from June 1 to July 1
- change the retirement to 16%
- salary starting at \$140,000 with a max of \$155,000 upon residency

Comm Smith seconded the motion, which passed upon roll call 4:2 with Comm Shuck and Comm Gold, nay. Comm Carugno was not present for the vote.

b. Swear-In Jason Carson, District 4 Commissioner

Mayor Fouraker swore in Jason Carson as Commissioner of District 4.

5. Adjournment