

City of Chipley
Council Meeting
Minutes
April 9, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Mr. Kevin Russell, Mayor Pro-Tem
Ms. Cheryl McCall, Council Member

Mrs. Linda Cain, Council Member
Mr. Brett Butler, Council Member

Absent:

Ms. Tracy Andrews, Mayor

Others Present Were:

Mrs. Patrice Tanner, City Administrator
Mr. Michael Richter, Police Lieutenant
Mr. Guy Lane, Public Works Director
Mrs. Tamara Donjuan, Planning/Code Enf. Officer
Mr. Michael Maxwell, CRA Executive Director

Ms. Sherry Snell, City Clerk
Mr. Jimmy Cook, Water Utilities Director
Mr. Hunter Aycok, Fire Chief
Mr. Brock Tate, Recreation Director
Mrs. Michelle Jordan, City Attorney

The data reflected in these proceedings constitute an extrapolation of information elicited from notes, observations, recording tapes, photographs, and/or videotapes. Comments reflected herein are sometimes paraphrased, condensed, and/or have been edited to reflect essential subject matter addressed during the meeting. Parties interested in receiving a verbatim account of the proceedings are responsible for coordinating with the City Administrator and providing their own representative and equipment pursuant to Chapters 119 and 283, Florida Statutes.

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Russell at 5:00 p.m.

B. PRAYER AND PLEDGE

Prayer was given by Council Member Cain and Council Member McCall led the pledge to the American Flag.

C. SWEARING IN

1. W. Brett Butler. Honorable Christopher Patterson did the swearing in of Mr. Brett Butler.

D. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL LIAISONS. Mr. Russell stated this is usually done in October but due to Mr. Butler coming on board he wanted to refresh the list and he has a request from Ms. McCall to switch the Water Utilities Department for the Police Department. Mr. Russell stated the new list is as follows: Mayor Andrews – Administration, External Affairs and Tourist Development Council (TDC); Council Member McCall – Historic Merchants of Chipley, Planning & Zoning and Police; Council Member Linda Cain – Fire and Code Enforcement; Council Member Brett Butler – Industrial Park and Water Utilities; Council Member Kevin Russell – CRA, Public Works/Cemetery and Recreation. Discussion ensued.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No discussion.

F. CITIZENS REQUEST

The City of Chipley welcomes you to this meeting. This is time set aside for the Citizens of Chipley to address the City Council. This is not a question and answer period, it is not a political forum, nor is it a time for personal accusations and derogatory remarks to/about city personnel. If you would like to address the City Council please raise your hand to speak, state your name and address for the record and limit your comments to no more than three (3) minutes per Florida Statute 286.0114. To ask a question via phone; dial *9 and wait to be recognized/unmuted. If you are attending via webinar, there will be an onscreen option to ask a question during the public comment portion of the meeting. Your participation is welcomed and appreciated.

Gabriel Beckworth, 109 Alford Rd, Cottondale, FL. Mr. Beckworth read a letter concerning a Police Department matter. There was no further discussion.

G. PRESENTATIONS

1. **Service Recognition** – Malcolm Nelson. The City Council recognized Reverend Malcolm Nelson for his thirteen (13) years of service on the CRA Board.

H. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Council Meeting – March 12, 2024

A motion was made by Council Member McCall and seconded by Council Member Cain to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

I. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Recreation – Brock Tate. Mr. Tate explained that opening day was last Saturday and the Travel Ball Tournament was on the 16th and all went good for both. Discussion ensued.

City Attorney – Michelle Jordan. Attorney Jordan stated there were no updates. No further discussion.

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) – Michael Maxwell. Mr. Maxwell explained the CRA approved a request to paint the fire hydrants located within the CRA; approved a procedure to send reminder notices to those with loans through the CRA; and approved Deborah Brown, Summer Thomas and Tracey Kent-Bell to attend CRA 101 training. He stated the next CRA meeting will be held Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. Mrs. Tanner stated the CRA Annual Report was included in Mr. Maxwell's report and it has been posted on the website which is a requirement of the Florida Statutes. No further discussion.

Fire Department – Hunter Aycock. Chief Aycock explained it was a quiet month. He stated they have taken care of the hydrants. The new engine will hopefully be here next Tuesday and a ceremony will be held at a later date. Discussion ensued.

Code Enforcement – Tamara Donjuan. Mrs. Donjuan explained it was pretty busy. She stated she went through Ward 3 & 4 and put 138 stickers on trash cans that were left by the road. Mr. Russell asked about the property on Holley Avenue. Mrs. Donjuan stated it was still in litigation. Mrs. Cain asked if we knew anything about the old Dairy Dip. Mrs. Tanner stated she had talked with Tyler Graybel, Terramore Development, who is the developer for Dollar General. He stated it amounts to what the City will do and the costs associated with the property for Dollar General. The costs

would include possible purchase of the property, survey, plat, sidewalks, and demolition. Mrs. Tanner stated that Mr. Graybel asked if the City would be willing to pay for the demo. She stated she would approach the Council and see, but also let him know it will take us 90 days to get to the point of getting a contract in place to do that. Mr. Graybel told her it sounded like it would be more beneficial for Dollar General to go ahead and take care of it. Mrs. Tanner stated she explained the City will be putting sidewalks from the school board property to N Railroad Avenue to keep people safe walking to Dollar General. She said he was positive and said he would reach out to them to see what they are willing to do and let her know hopefully within a few days. Mr. Butler asked for a spreadsheet of the various costs associated with the property. Mrs. Tanner stated she would get those figures for the Council to review. Discussion ensued.

Stephanie Lee, 653 Bennett Drive, and Linda Davis, 990 Brickyard Road, spoke on a code enforcement issue. Mrs. Lee stated a code enforcement notice was put on a house on 7th Street. The fence she tagged has been there over a year and a half. The letter states the Code Enforcement Officer wants the fence down. During the year and a half why did it take so long. Mrs. Tanner stated the house is located at 618 9th Street. Mrs. Lee stated they are in agreeance that the vehicle sitting there needs to be removed, but the fence had been there for so long. Mr. Butler asked if a permit was applied for on the fence. Mrs. Lee stated her brother who lived there didn't know he needed a permit. Mrs. Tanner stated the fence was close to 6' tall in front of the house. Mr. Russell asked what the code violation was on the fence. Mrs. Donjuan stated there was no permit and the fence is too high. Mrs. McCall asked if we knew when it was put there. Mrs. Tanner stated it was not there in 2022 and speaking with Mrs. Donjuan about it that it was in the last six months. Mrs. Davis said one of her sons was living there and he had put it up over a year ago. Mr. Russell stated the fence could stay as long as they get a permit and the fence is lowered. Mrs. Cain asked how much it needed to be lowered. Mrs. Donjuan stated it cannot be over 4 feet. Mrs. Lee stated they would lower it to satisfy everyone, but was concerned about the length of time it's been up. Mrs. Tanner stated since she became City Administrator on January 8th, she has been riding around with Mrs. Donjuan finding things that are in violation and getting them addressed. We have been trying to get things cleaned up. The biggest issue is communication from what I am seeing in the past few months. When a letter is sent to a homeowner there is no response which forces Mrs. Donjuan to go to the next step. This is what happened here and also with the property across the road. Mr. Russell stated we are working on our communication as well. Ms. McCall stated we have a City Administrator now who is willing to do new things, so hopefully that will get better. Mrs. Lee stated they would need time to lower the fence. Mrs. Donjuan stated she has them set up for a hearing where they usually give them additional time. Mr. Russell stated to let them know at the hearing that this issue was brought to Council. Mrs. Davis asked for 30 days to get this corrected. Mrs. Donjuan stated that would be fine. Discussion ensued.

Planning & Zoning – Tamara Donjuan. Mrs. Donjuan explained it has been pretty active. Mr. Russell stated it was good to see growth in the city. No further discussion.

Police Department – Michael Richter. Lieutenant Richter explained it was a busy month and went over the month's offense numbers. He stated Chief Thompson was out on leave. He gave updates on several police issues, stated the Easter Egg Hunt went well, and discussed staff schedule changes. Discussion ensued.

Public Works – Guy Lane. Mr. Lane explained amnesty is this month and the dumpsters have already been dumped once. He stated that his crews will be cleaning outfall in ditches, curbs and gutters from April to August. Discussion ensued.

Water Utilities – Jimmy Cook. Mr. Cook explained it was a pretty busy month. He stated there was over six inches of rain for the month. Discussion ensued.

Finance – Patrice Tanner. Mrs. Tanner explained she is continuing to work on the audit which is to be completed by June 30th. I am continuing that process along with my new duties. Once we get

someone hired which will hopefully be within the next 30 days, then we can move forward and hire someone for the Project Manager and Finance Specialist. Once we get someone in those positions, things will become a lot smoother.

Administration – Patrice Tanner. Mrs. Tanner explained the following project updates: We are going to try to post ongoing pictures of projects. The Mongoven Building - this is five percent complete, we did have issues with rodents that we are working on; Chipley Stormwater Drainage Study – We received an extension until November 12, 2024 and the project is ongoing; Chipley WW Effluent Disposal Project – there are one or two spray heads that they are finalizing and we did have an issue with the wet weather pond at the treatment plant. They are having to come out and do some work on that, then it will be complete; Public Works Building Solar Panel Project – they started yesterday and it will be a week-long project. It is possible it might be complete this Friday and we will post pictures once they lay some panels; Council Chambers Audio/Visual/Livestream Upgrade – we are still working on the screens and the ability to increase the size; Shivers Park & Gilmore Park Projects – we have no word from FRDAP yet; Historical Society Museum – this is ongoing, Baker Design Build has a draft plan completed. Heather and Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Dale Cox reviewed everything and sent the recommendations to Baker Design Build who will review the changes. Once that plan is finalized they will bring it to Council for approval; Chipley Peach Street Lift Station Improvements – this is still in the environmental review phase which will hopefully be completed very soon; 2023 PHMSA Infrastructure Grant – This was not funded for the natural gas main and service line replacement which was in the amount of \$677,130.00. We will reapply and hope to get it funded; Voluntary Annexation Project – It has been almost 31 days, then those two ordinances will get recorded at the Clerk’s office and will be submitted to the FL Department of Commerce and those will be finalized; Website Redesign – we are moving forward to be complete by July 2024 as well as the performance management program that we are shooting for June 1st; Jim Trawick Park – there were renovations done to the bathrooms at the fields which were in bad shape. They look much better now and we have had positive feedback on that. We are getting ready to set a date on the bushes to be moved from City Hall to the cemetery; ID Cards – Sherry is working on these and should have them completed by the end of April or mid-May.

K. AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Resolution No. 24-20** - Excessive Use of Force Policy. Mrs. Tanner explained this resolution will approve a policy prohibiting the use of excessive force by local law enforcement agencies within its jurisdiction against any individuals engaged in nonviolent civil rights demonstrations; or fails to adopt and enforce a policy of enforcing applicable state and local laws against physically barring entrance to or exit from a facility or location which is the subject of nonviolent civil rights demonstrations within its jurisdiction. This new policy will add that specifically and we will be covered for all of our grants. I have spoken with Lieutenant Richter and he is good with that information being included. No further discussion.

A motion was made by Council Member McCall and seconded by Council Member Butler to approve Resolution No. 24-20. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **Resolution No. 24-21** – Florida Department of Commerce Agreement Amendment One. Mrs. Tanner explained this resolution will approve Amendment One to the Florida Department of Commerce Agreement No. D0190 updating information on the Florida Department of Commerce name change from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to Florida Department of Commerce, the Agreement Period which will be extended to November 11, 2024, and includes E-Verify which is the process we already utilize to verify employees before they are hired. No further discussion.

A motion was made by Council Member Cain and seconded by Council Member McCall to

approve Resolution No. 24-21. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Resolution No. 24-22** – FDEP State Revolving Fund Loan Program – Drinking Water Facilities Plan. Mrs. Tanner explained this resolution will approve the submission of a FDEP State Revolving Fund Loan Program Application for a Drinking Water Facilities Plan. The State Revolving Fund loan priority list designates Project No. DW67014 as eligible for available funding. The total cost for the Facilities Plan to be prepared is \$100,000. This project is funded 50%/50% loan and grant. This Facilities Plan will include a listing of projects that need to be done in the city and will be required to apply for funding through the FDEP SRF Program. FDEP is now allowing us to prepare one facilities plan for water which will list multiple projects that we need to do in the next 5-10 years and those will all be included in this facilities plan so we will not have to do a plan every time we have a project if we are looking for SRF funding. No further discussion.

A motion was made by Council Member McCall and seconded by Council Member Butler to approve Resolution No. 24-22. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Special Event Application** – Watermelon Festival Parade. Mrs. Tanner explained this event will be held on Saturday, June 22, 2024 starting at 10:00 a.m. The Police Department along with the Public Works and the Fire Department, are presenting a new parade route due to the future closing of and safety issue at the Dalton Street railroad crossing. Lieutenant Richter explained with the closing of the Dalton Street railroad crossing, it presented an issue because the parade returned that way. He explained the new route would stage at Jim Trawick Park and along N Railroad Avenue which would be closed from 2nd Street to Jim Trawick Park. The parade would then go South on 2nd Street then go East on SR 90, turn North on SR 77, then turn West on Church Street, then go North on 3rd Street to Watts Avenue and around the school board office back to 2nd Street by the old high school to allow an area for the school children to watch before returning to Railroad Avenue. The previous staging area will be for people to park in and walkers to wait in to join the parade as it lines up along Railroad Avenue. Mr. Russell asked if we have a PR plan in place. Mrs. Tanner stated we would get it out there. Lieutenant Richter stated FDOT places signs as well as the City showing the detours for the parade. Mr. Russell stated this new route will be permanent. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Council Member Cain and seconded by Council Member McCall to approve the Special Event Application for the Watermelon Festival Parade. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Council Member Butler and seconded by Council Member McCall to approve the new official parade route. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Verizon Contract** – GPS Systems. Mrs. Tanner explained this will approve a contract with Verizon for a GPS system for city vehicles. Verizon was the company with the best prices as well as the most positive references. Most of the entities that we contacted are using Verizon and are extremely satisfied with them. We can utilize them by using the General Services Administrative Cooperative Purchasing Program due to our purchasing policy allowing that. There are 52 vehicles and one tractor that is located at the sprayfield. The total cost per month will be \$837.85. It was going to cost \$106.80 per unit to install, but they guarantee that it's a simple process so we are going to pay them to install 10 units with someone from the departments there to watch the process so we can install the remainder of the systems. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Council Member McCall and seconded by Council Member Butler to approve the contract with Verizon for the GPS. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Public Education** – Lead and Copper. Mrs. Tanner explained this is a Public Education requirement from FDEP. The City completed its triennial Lead & Copper test in September 2023.

Five of the twenty houses tested were above the action level for DEP compliance. The City tested the original twenty houses plus twenty more in March of 2024. All forty houses tested below the exceedance threshold. To eliminate lead in the drinking water, the City will complete a lead service line inventory in the 2024 year. The City will also replace any lead or copper service lines found. The City will continue to test for lead above and beyond what the DEP requires. This additional testing will continue until we get two consecutive acceptable rounds of tests within a twelve (12) month period.

Mr. Lane stated that we test every three years and this year five houses were above the action level for compliance which triggered the Public Education requirement. We tested in March and will test again in August. If the levels are down, the Public Education will be completed. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Council Member Cain and seconded by Council Member Butler to approve the Lead and Copper Public Education Notice. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Speeding on City Streets** – Discussion. Mrs. Tanner explained that Ms. McCall requested a discussion about speeding on city streets due to the high volume of speeding within the city. I know this has been an ongoing issue but I think there are some specific issues. Ms. McCall stated it seems to be the same people headed to work and we don't have the man power from a police standpoint to do anything about it and asked what were our options or permanent things that we can do. She mentioned speed humps that will slow traffic down. Mrs. Tanner stated we have a speed hump policy in place that I can send out for you to review and see if changes need to be made. Mr. Russell stated you would end up having to do all the streets and we have potholes that need to be fixed instead. Mr. Butler stated he has mentioned issues at the neighborhood watch meetings and made a sign-up sheet with very little interest. Ms. McCall stated the beach traffic leaves SR 77 onto the side streets causing issues. Ms. McCall stated we need to contact FDOT to address the issues. Mr. Russell asked if we could reach out to Secretary Gainer and see if he would attend a council meeting. Mrs. Tanner mentioned she understands the concerns because it's a problem all over the city. What we have done is use counters and went through the speed hump policy procedure to see if we need the speed humps or other speed control devices in place. The counters always tell us the speeding is not happening to the extent that we think it is. Ms. McCall stated the placement of the sign or counter has to be in the right place. We don't have the ability to do a proper study, the counters are not a study. Mrs. Tanner stated they show you all the speeds, not just the average. They are able to determine how many people are actually speeding. Lieutenant Richter stated the only way to accomplish that is with two counters on each end of the street based on what you are saying. He added they will move the counter to the middle of the street. He stated there are staffing issues at the Police Department. Mr. Russell asked if Lieutenant Richter could get a list of how many police it would take to adequately staff the city. He added that he knows we can't afford it but we have to plan. Lieutenant Richter stated he could get a list for the Council. Mrs. Tanner stated we are trying for the two patrol positions this year. Mr. Russell stated at one time CRA could help fund the salary of a police officer that was primarily focused in the CRA district. Mrs. Tanner stated they are getting more money now but they have a limited budget. They have been very good at getting the money spent on grants for downtown businesses and residents. A patrol position I am guessing \$60-65,000 per year, you are looking at depending on hours, maybe 20 out of an 80 hour pay period, so 25% of that salary. It would need to be consistent and is that something the CRA Board and the City Council would want to do. It's a great idea, but something to think about is the figures need to be put down and looked at. Mr. Russell stated from a long term point we need to budget and get one patrolman hired every two years. He asked if every department could give a wish list for things that would make their job easier. Mrs. Tanner stated last year everyone's wish list was included. The police department did show two officers and that they do include things they need and some wants. I think that every department has needs and one of the biggest things now is filling positions that we have open. We have four positions right now that are open and trying to fill. We just cannot get them filled, a few are not entry level. That's an issue for everyone, not just Chipley. Mrs. Tanner stated we

have a very high level of service which is a great thing, but it costs money. Mr. Russell stated he would like to see us put as much effort in getting help as we do in buying new vehicles. Discussion ensued.

8. **US DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Application Results** – Metric Consulting. Mrs. Suzanne Settoon, Metric Consulting, gave an update on the US DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant. The application was submitted on September 28, 2023 titled Uniting Communities of Chipley Through Equitable Access and Mobility for \$6,201,098.21. The application consisted of construction activities involving mobilization, creating shared lanes, stripping paths, installing signage, safe side paths, bike share facilities, parking upgrades, intersection improvements, and sharrows installations. There was an announcement on March 13, 2024 from US DOT that Chipley's application was not funded. She stated Mrs. Tanner has requested a debriefing that we will participate in next week. Mrs. Settoon stated the applications approved were very large dollar projects. There were 687 applications submitted with only 132 approved. She stated the application could be repurposed into other grant opportunities throughout the year. The application can be tweaked and resubmitted on your behalf. Mr. Russell asked what that would cost us. Mrs. Settoon stated as far as tweaking we will take care of that for the most part, I don't expect any additional charge. Mr. Russell stated he is interested to see why it wasn't funded and why they funded two large projects. Mrs. Settoon stated it could be because it was just the first year for the grant. She stated we may want to adapt to add more funding. Ms. McCall asked if sidewalks could be added. Discussion ensued.
9. **Ordinance No. 983 (First Reading)** – Amendment to the Future Land Use Map. No discussion.

A motion was made by Council Member McCall and seconded by Council Member Butler to table Ordinance No. 983 until next month. The motion passed unanimously.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Tanner stated the Downtown Redevelopment Meeting "Let's Talk Downtown Chipley Redevelopment" for the \$50,000 grant that we hired Arnold Fisher to handle for us has the first public meeting this Thursday, April 11th at 5 pm. This will be a public meeting and since more than one council member wants to attend, we noticed it as a council meeting and it's also something council will be voting on in the future. It has been noticed properly, so anyone that would like to attend will be able to. Mr. Russell stated the biggest thing is to make sure people understand this is about the downtown redevelopment and this is their chance to have their opinions heard. Mrs. Tanner stated Heather and Mr. Maxwell have been working on distributing the flyer and it is posted on social media. Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Malloy, citizen, stated she does community outreach and some of the streets toward Wausau are dirt and there are a lot of crevices that tear up your vehicle. Mr. Russell stated it depends on if it's a city road, the city is responsible and if it's a county road, the county is responsible. He stated if it's close to Wausau it would be in the county. No further discussion.

There was no other business.

M. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Pro-Tem Russell at 7:11 p.m.

Attest:

Tracy L. Andrews, Mayor

Sherry Snell,
City Clerk