

October 15, 2024
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street, Inverness (City Hall) with the following members present:

President Hepfer
Vice President Davis
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Lizanich
Councilman McBride
Mayor Plaisted

Also present were City Manager Williams, City Attorney Batsel, Staff Members, and City Clerk Jackson.

The Invocation was given by Councilman Davis and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Lizanich motioned to accept the Agenda with the addition to Pre-Scheduled Appearances. Seconded by Councilman McBride. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

Cootertober Presentation with City Manager Williams providing a visual presentation of the events to date, including attendance and popularity. He stated that none of this would happen without community partnerships and the community coming together to enjoy family friendly events. He detailed the various events including events at the Valerie Theatre, ROCCS, Spooky Story Time, and the Cooter Carnival, to name a few. Councilwoman Bega has enjoyed several of the events. Mayor Plaisted spoke of his recent article in the newspaper and how Cootertober is good family entertainment. He questioned where are the people who object to Halloween, etc., where are they when Wal-Mart, Target, etc. are promoting with costume sales, etc. Councilwoman Lizanich read a prepared statement noting that the majority of City residents support the events. Her family has greatly enjoyed every event to date. She acknowledged that everyone has an opinion, but she has only heard good things about Cootertober and the City. Council President Hepfer attended the story time and noted how much fun everyone was having. This is a wonderful fun event for families.

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

The following people spoke of concerns regarding negative rumors being circulated and potential negative impact on local business and support for Cootertober events: Timothy Gilbert – Inverness is a father concerns for protecting children being used and noted the events are about the kids and thanked Council for everything they do to have fun family-friendly entertainment. Deborah Spence – Crystal River attended story time and noted the great crowds. Spoke of family, supporting businesses and this weekend demonstrated a Small Town Done Right. Jojo Gregory – Independence Highway spoke of involvement in the events for all, that bring people here from all over. Praised the Belden's and the Twistid Arts Initiative.

Chad Ridge – Lecanto spoke of growing up in New England. He promotes Cootertoher and the City and has worked in various events. Rosemary Nilles – Inverness stated she grew up just fine enjoying Halloween activities, etc. Cootertoher has great events, but it is sad that a local business has been attacked. Keith Pasowicz – Homosassa spoke of Cootertoher and the Nativity. If you don't like – don't come. Darrell Reneau – Cornerstone Church stated he is the pastor of Cornerstone and commended the City for great events such as the National Day of Prayer and how the City opened doors for religious events. He spoke of truth and love and appreciates City deeply. Thanked the Beldens for investing in the children. Samantha Carter – Inverness thanked the City for the commitment to Cootertoher and the vibrancy it brings to the community. Spoke of the great things the Twistid Arts do. Marion Walsh – Hernando stated the children are equal citizens and praised Twistid Arts Initiative. Cassidy Cabral – Inverness spoke of moving here during the pandemic. Spoke of the work done for the City and commended Twistid Arts Initiative for supporting the children and the arts. Spoke of religious freedom and respect. Ben Olson – Inverness spoke of the wonderful job with Cootertoher, even with the hurricane. Spoke of accusations being made without facts and wondered if this was an election year stunt. The Beldens helped make the event successful. Alicia McBratney – Inverness spoke to ethics statement for the upcoming election. She did not see any evil and darkness in story time or any events. Has concerns of candidate for City Council noting the current Council is impressive and represents the whole community. John Comer – Citrus County spoke of the LGBTQ+ community. Josiah Webb – Inverness spoke of a personal friend that has come under criticism. Stated the privilege of working with the Beldens as they gave him his first job and so many opportunities. Thanked all for the effort for events that all can enjoy. Becky Beattie – Hernando is worried about the hate and division and using religious manipulation. This is not who we are. Jacqueline Dixon – Inverness is proud to serve on the Board of the Directors for Twistid Arts Initiative and spoke of the dedication, and wants the City to keep doing what it's doing. The following people spoke against Cootertoher and spoke of the upcoming election: Ray Brown – Citrus County spoke of bringing evil into neighborhoods. Sara Scozzafava – Citrus County stated the Depot is a great job and questioned the person in charge of events. Donna Rummel – Citrus County spoke of things invited into the City. April Wnuk – Hernando noted we should love one another. Spoke of witches, Halloween, etc. and Christmas month. John Labriola - Inverness spoke of particular board appointments if elected to Council. Debbie Wheatley – Inverness gave kudos to City workers for their hard work after the storms. Referenced the ethical campaign form, highlighting certain points on the form and how candidates should be held accountable.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Batsel noted the suggested legal change regarding the agreement for auditor services. He noted how impressed with the positive things about the Twistid Arts Initiative.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 10/01/2024*
 - Recommendation – Approval

Councilman McBride motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) Audit Selection Committee – Bid Evaluations and Award* with City Manager Williams stating the Agreement for audit services is expiring, and a Request for Proposal (RFP) for submittals from firms was let. Finance Director Koter provided an analysis of the responding firms: Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC, Bradenton FL; McDirmit Davis, LLC, Orlando FL; and Purvis, Gray and Company, LLP, Ocala FL. She advised that Mauldin & Jenkins was the lowest and best and fits the needs of the City. The proposals were submitted to the Audit Selection Committee for review and evaluation and concluded Mauldin & Jenkins. The firm has over 100 years of experience and has made the governmental sector their primary focus, servicing over 700 governmental entities across the Southeast. The agreement's initial term is for audit services of three (3) fiscal years, beginning with the audit of Fiscal Year 2024, with the City reserving the right to extend the contract for two (2) additional one (1) fiscal year term(s). The total cost of auditing services for the initial three fiscal year audits is \$122,500. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to accept the proposal by Mauldin & Jenkins LLC, as best and authorize the Council President to execute the contract with changes noted by City Attorney. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)b) Florida Senior Games* with City Manager Williams stating the Senior Games first started in Sanford, Florida in 1974. In 1988, the State of Florida appointed a committee to investigate the status of the Senior Games movement in the state and determine its course to follow. Over the years, the Senior Games has continued to grow and bring together this particular age group. In 2023, there were over 3,000 athletes competing in the games. The Senior Games encourage and promotes healthy lifestyles for Florida Seniors, provides Florida Seniors with the opportunity to compete at the local, state, and national levels, as well as provides all senior citizens of Florida with an affordable and quality multi-sport festival they can call their own. In February 2025, the City of Inverness has an opportunity to host a series qualifier Senior Games to compete at the State level with the cost of approx. \$5,000 which would be offset by grants and entry fees. The City of Inverness would partner with the local Department of Health, as well as other local businesses to be able to host such an event. The events would take place at Liberty Park, Wallace Brooks Park, Whispering Pines Park, along with other locations, in order to host events such as bowling, archery, and golf. Parks Director Worley spoke of the history of the games and the events involved. Councilman McBride noted this fits the demographics of our City. Councilman Davis questioned the types and number of events with Director Worley comparing the events and ceremony to Olympic-ish. **Councilman McBride motioned to approve the City of Inverness hosting the 2025 Florida Senior Games Series Qualifier in February and authorize the City Manager to execute any documents to proceed. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.**

g) Project/Program Updates (Verbal)

- Hurricane Milton impacts to the City and County was discussed. The City is paying approx. \$100,000 for debris cleanup from the curbs in the City.
- Whispering Pines Park slideshow of the effects of the storm. Hope to reopen by the weekend.

- Florida Assistance to Firefighters Grant Award of approx. \$20,000 for additional bunker gear.
- Small Town Saturday Night with Director Worley noting this weekend concert by Twysted Vyne and the next will be November 9 with Crossfire Creek band.
- Veteran's Day Parade with Dep. Ruby explaining the changes to the parade route. The roads involved will close at 9:30am and the parade starts at 10:00am. This will be followed by the 11th hour ceremony at the historic Courthouse.
- Other with City Manager Williams stating he has lived here for 20 years, being a part of the community, raising his son here, this is a welcoming community.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Mayor Plaisted stated he has been an elected official since 1999, and this is the greatest City he has ever lived in and the way we conduct business. Twistid Arts is an outstanding partner.

Councilman McBride attended the October 3 Hernando/Citrus MPO meeting where the approved the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, to include finalization of 41N.

Councilwoman Bega noticed neighbors helping neighbors after the storms. Noted she had been on Council for 14 years, lived in Inverness 50 years, and Inverness as open minded.

Councilwoman Lizanich noted to keep those affected by the hurricanes in our thoughts and prayers. Will be attending the Citrus County Community Charitable Foundation (CCCCF) meeting on October 23 and will have a report for the next Council meeting. Stated what an amazing partner Twistid Arts Initiative is with the City and praised their dedication and time given to the community. Thanked all who spoke this evening.

Councilman Davis stated that the entire Council loves the City and strive to leave it better then they found it. Spoke of living here 70 years and the many changes, he is blessed and proud.

Council President Hepfer praised the Beldens and the story time was a wonderful event. Spoke of the production at the Valerie this past weekend. Spoke of meeting a couple of visitors to Inverness during the ROCCS event. Noted Council strives to do what is best for the majority.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Karen Esty stated it was nice to see families have a good time at the Cooter Carnival and Belden's have made a big effort for Cootertober to be a success.

Jojo Gregory Spoke of leaders, Beldens and how civilized the City Council meetings are.

Josiah Webb spoke of Twistid Arts Initiative, getting local businesses involved, etc.

Emily Seer supported Twistid Arts Initiative and the Beldens as an outreach to everyone. Proud of how welcoming the City is.

Alicia McBratney stated the City did a great job after the storm and spoke of election concerns.

Meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President