

December 17, 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, with the following members present:

President Hepfer
Vice President Davis – *Absent*
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Lizanich
Councilman Craig
Mayor Plaisted

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

The Invocation was given by Mayor Plaisted and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Bega motioned to accept the Agenda with removal of the Cooter Kudo and an updated FEMA memo. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

4a) Employee Service Awards were presented by Mayor Plaisted to the following City employees: Debra Schramm – 10 years; Ron Hodges – 15 years; Paula Carnevale – 20 years; and Joey Johnston – 20 years. Sheila Hennessey – 10 years and Josh Smith – 5 years were unable to attend.

4b) Light Up Liberty – Pole Decoration Award Winners with Parks & Rec Director Worley announcing the winners for the lamppost contest. Winners were 1st Place Most Creative – J.M. Gibson Mechanical; 1st Place Most Festive – Rotary of Inverness; and 1st Place People's Choice – Inverness Tornados; 2nd Place Most Creative – HNR Gunworks; 2nd Place Most Festive – Peddler's Post; and 2nd Place People's Choice – Citrus Home Finders.

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Karen Esty spoke in favor of the legislative priorities and spoke of her reappointment to the Hernando/Citrus MPO CAC committee for her 11 years, as well as 11 years serving on the Inverness Planning & Zoning Committee.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 12/03/2024*
 - Recommendation – Approval

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

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) Citrus County Sheriff's Office Quarterly Report with Lt. Fischer providing a PowerPoint presentation with details of the 3rd quarter report regarding tracked crimes, calls for service, arrests, traffic accidents, event involvement, CRO highlights, etc. Lt. Fischer provided details of certain crimes and arrests. Deputy Ruby provided highlights involving the Community Resource Officers. He also thanked Public Works, and all involved with the Christmas Parade.

10)b) City of Inverness 2025 Legislative Priorities* with City Manager Williams stating annually we have the opportunity to present the Local Legislative Delegation the City's points of interest and concern for consideration by the State Legislature. Though many of the points continue to be a focus year to year, we specifically seek cooperative funding and support for an RV Campground at Whispering Pines Park and the development of Railroad Street. Once there is a scheduled date and time for the local delegation, the Council and the Mayor will be made aware of their interest and attendance. Additionally, staff will work with our lobbyist and other local governmental entities for any opportunities for a unified approach to specific projects and initiatives. Councilwoman Lizanich thought the RV park as a great idea and spoke of Railroad Street and traffic issues. Mayor Plaisted agreed that there is more traffic off Turner Camp Road and Ella St. Railroad Street is a necessity. Councilwoman Bega agreed with the issues of traffic flow on Turner Camp and spoke of Pasco County receiving Federal funding for roads. Councilman Craig stated the trail is less important but stated the West Inverness Trail Connector would provide traffic relief. Spoke of various grant funding sources. City Manager Williams suggested Council pull back the Trail and focus on Railroad Street and the RV park at Whispering Pines Park. President Hepfer suggested funding from TDC with the trail and RV park. **Council consensus to add their support to the letter with the noted changes and move forward with the signature of the Mayor.**

10)c) FY 2025-2026 Budget Development Schedule* with City Manager Williams stating the enclosed budget development schedule is structured to support the work necessary to build, discuss and adopt the upcoming Fiscal 2025-26 City-Wide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Budget. Similar to prior years, this budget planning and development cycle will be established to align with dates of regularly scheduled Council meetings. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to confirm the Budget Development Schedule for Fiscal Cycle 2025-26. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)d) FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Application for Radios* with City Manager Williams stating the City has been the opportunity to apply for the FEMA's Fiscal Year 2025 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) that opened on November 12, 2024, and closes December 20, 2024. This Grant Program is one of three that constitute the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) focus on enhancing the safety of the firefighters and therefore the public with respect to fire and

fire-related hazards, and provides financial assistance directly to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations, and State Fire Training Academies for critical training and equipment. This grant would replace the current radios in the amount of \$192,744.00, to purchase 12 complete portable radios with mics, batteries, and charging units along with 4 mobile units for the vehicles. This grant has a 5% match which would have a cost of \$9637.20 to the city. Fire Chief Bessler provided details of the application process and updated Council that the application has been completed for submission.

10)e) Citrus Plant Standby Generator* with City Manager Williams stating the City's Public Works Department has leveraged the Florida Sheriffs' Association Cooperative Purchase Program (FSACPP) to garner pricing for a 200 KW replacement standby generator at the Citrus Booster Plant. Using the FSACPP Bid# FSA23.0.-EQU21.0 Item #151, we have obtained a favorable price of \$79,845.00 to include removal of the existing generator and all controls, and installation of the new generator. The expected current lead time for the generator is 30–32 weeks. Public Works Director Pell spoke of plans for the replacement, and this was funded in the CIP budget. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the purchase of the 200 KW generator and installation using the Florida Sheriff's Association Cooperative Purchase Program at a price of \$79,845.00. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)f) Vehicle Purchase – Parks & Recreation* with City Manager Williams stating the City would like to purchase a vehicle using the local company Nick Nicholas Ford, who has been able to offer competitive state government pricing and offer quick delivery times. Currently, the Parks & Recreation Department is using a 2007 Jeep Laredo that is at the end of its useful lifespan, and would like to purchase a 2024 Ford Ranger truck, in the amount of \$35,000, to replace the Jeep. The truck will be used for events, hauling, set up, and removal tasks and other tasks that require or benefit from a four-door vehicle. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the purchase of a new 2024 Ford Ranger Truck in the amount of \$35,000 through Nick Nicholas Ford using pricing similar to approved state level continual purchasing contracts. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10) g) Project/Program Updates (*Verbal*)

- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!! This is a Small Town Done Right and the embodiment of Christmas and the holidays. Thanked City staff, CCSO, and volunteers for amazing Christmas parade. Spoke of the iconic Christmas tree on the Historic Courthouse lawn.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Councilman Craig attended the recent MPO meeting and spoke of their 5-year work program. US 41 widening funding has been moved to 2027, and the Inverness Airport design was added. Congratulated the Light Up Liberty winners. Merry Christmas to everyone.

Councilwoman Lizanich wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thankful for all that has been accomplished with this amazing team. Attended the recent CCCCCF meeting.

Councilwoman Bega thanked all for support all year long and is grateful to the City staff. It is an honor to work with everyone. Wished everyone good holidays.

Mayor Plaisted spoke of a Christmas card he received from Marilyn Jordan referencing the return of the nativity scene. Thanked the Belden's for Cootertoher and donating the nativity. Detailed the iconic Christmas tree at the Historic Courthouse and creating "Christmas County". Spoke of Gary Schramm, the building of the tree. Noted a Facebook comment of the description of the Christmas tree and hates to see negativity. Wished everyone Merry Christmas.

Council President Hepfer stated she has spoken to people that are still talking about Cootertoher. People loved Light Up Liberty and all events. Inverness is the Small Town Done Right and an amazing place to be. Everyone have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Paul Hertensen wished everyone a Hapy New Year and Merry Christmas and he feels blessed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President