

May 21, 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
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Lizanich
Councilman McBride
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

Councilman McBride motioned to accept the Agenda with the removal of item 5)a). Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Karen Esty thanked City Manager Williams for the budget overview at the last meeting and referenced the Citrus County Sheriff's Office. Questioned the sidewalk on Independence Highway with City Manager noting he met with Hernando/Citrus MPO Director Esposito and discussed the funding cycle would push the sidewalk to the next cycle.

Debbie Wheatley agreed that the budget overview was very organized and not boring. Thanked everyone for all they do.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Hartley spoke of a recent letter from a law firm regarding an injury on the 44W boat ramp. Will keep Council updated.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 05/07/2024*
 - Recommendation – Approval

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

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) Enhanced Law Enforcement Service Agreement – 10/1/24 to 9/30/25* with City Manager Williams stating the City of Inverness continues to maintain excellent and highly effective relations with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) through the Interagency Agreement. The Sheriff provides a full complement of law enforcement services. Statistically, crime indicators are favorable and low. The proposed agreement is structured to continue the program through September 30, 2025 with costs to maintain the current staffing/level of service of \$1,310,059 which represents an 2.37% increase from the current year. Most of the increase would be due to benefit/salary adjustments. Representatives from the CCSO were present to address any questions or concerns of the Council and Mayor. Sheriff Prendergast spoke of the teamwork with the City and strong relationships with City businesses. He noted the great resources that are in the Community Resource Officers (CROs) with Deputy Goodman's leadership and Deputy Ruby's connection with the community. He spoke of the meaning of the upcoming Memorial Day holiday and the many veterans working for the CCSO. Noted the support from the City and community make a positive legacy here in Citrus County. Spoke of the budget for frontline defense as they are here to serve. Thanked everyone for Backing the Blue. Councilman McBride stated the CCSO is always welcome at the City and supports the enhanced services 110%. Spoke of how the CROs understand the community and are a great reflection on the Sheriff's Office. This request is a great deal for the community. Councilwoman Lizanich asked Sheriff to define the enhanced agreement and the benefits to the City, as well as how the appropriation is allotted within the Sheriff's Office. Stated last year's increase was 18.28%. City Manager Williams spoke of the levels of service, the dedicated CROs, road patrol, etc. Sheriff Prendergast provided examples without the enhanced service and how Inverness would be just another patrol zone. These are challenging times. Calls and responses would take longer as they are under manned by 1.3 deputies per 1,000 citizens. Proactive work through the agreement. Spoke of the cost to run a municipal police service compared to contracting the CCSO. Noted calls are responded by dedicated law enforcement and if needed, others from the County are there to assist. Saving a citizen's life is why there is so much support. Spoke of the various costs incurred with worker's comp, health benefits, FRS, etc. and that approx. 80% of every dollar goes to salaries and benefits each year. Mayor Plaisted spoke of changing from the Inverness Police Department to the Sheriff's Office many years ago, which has developed into an outstanding program and partnership. Noted that many take for granted the comfort in our area and he is grateful that the CCSO takes care of our community. Sheriff Prendergast noted that Col. Vitt was a former IPD who transferred to the CCSO at that time and has since served this County for three decades. Noted Lt. Fischer's faithful dedication as well. Councilwoman Bega appreciated and thanked the Sheriff for so much work on this budget to request only a 2.37% increase. President Hepfer spoke of the partnership and this minimal increase shows a great return on investment. **Councilman McBride motioned to support and approve the agreement with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office for Enhanced Law Enforcement Services through September 30, 2025 based on the presented costs and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement and letter. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.**

10)b) School Traffic Control Services Agreement – FY24/25* with City Manager Williams stating the City recognizes the importance of student safety and the fact state level funding reductions caused the local School System to seek assistance at certain traffic crossings. In 2011, the City approved an agreement to provide funding for certain Crossing Guard locations in keeping with Florida Statutes. The proposed agreement is structured for the City of Inverness to fund Crossing Guards at a cost of \$23,093.55 (0.28% decrease from previous year), which is allocated in the budget, and be applied during School Year 2024-25, for students making their way (walking and/or cycling) to school facilities at the following traffic locations: (Hwy 41/44) Main Street & Line Avenue and Ella Avenue & Turner Camp Road. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the Inter-Agency Agreement for School Crossing Guards for the 2024/25 school year and authorize the Council President to execute the document. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)c) FDOT Right-of-Way Donation – US 41N* with City Manager Williams stating in continuation of the US 41N widening project, FDOT is moving forward with the necessary right of way (ROW) acquisitions for the segment between the Highway 41N bridge over the State Trail and N Sportsman's Point. The City has been actively involved with FDOT during the current project phase as it relates to its impact on the City Utilities and Whispering Pines Park. FDOT has requested a perpetual easement over a small portion of City-owned property of approximately 705 square feet needed for drainage improvements within the next phase of road widening. Public Works Director Dilmore provided a PowerPoint overview. **Councilman McBride motioned to have the Clerk read Resolution FDOT Resolution by Title only. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.**

RESOLUTION 2024 – 07 FDOT

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, FLORIDA, CONVEYING A PERPETUAL EASEMENT OVER SAID LANDS AS REQUIRED FOR DRAINAGE PURPOSES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Councilman Davis motioned to adopt Resolution 2024-07 FDOT for permanent easement and authorize the Council President to execute the FDOT donation of property/permanent easement form by rollcall. Seconded by Council woman Lizanich. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilwoman Bega, yes; Councilman Davis, yes; Councilman McBride, yes; Councilwoman Lizanich, yes; President Hepfer, yes. The motion carried.

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

- Septic to Sewer 44 West – Public Work Director Dilmore provided status as near completion and on budget. Spoke of 60-day extension request by contractor. City Manager noted the project has been well manager.
- Tower Lights – Parks & Rec Director Worley stated the lights are up and running, has different colors, finalizing different programs for themes.
- Small Town Saturday Night – Parks & Rec Director Worley noted June 1 from 5:00pm – 9:00pm with the Caribbean Chillers, a Jimmy Buffett tribute band.

- Other included City Manager Williams noting the upcoming budget workshop and a lot of activities going on this summer.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Councilwoman Bega requested a discussion regarding upcoming TDC contribution to City events, more time has been spent on response, and noted recent comments made at the TDC meeting.

President Hepfer spoke of attending the TDC meeting where they approved the City's request, the BOCC is the hold up. A copy of an agenda memorandum D.4. from a recent TDC meeting and the inferring of "double dipping" if someone requested TDC funding for an event that would be held in Inverness. Offensive comments were made during that meeting. City Manager Williams noted that the City is ahead of times and how anxiety, either intended or unintended, is being created for those requesting funds for events. There is no need for the City to push the agreement if there are Councilmembers uncomfortable in the partnership. Advise to pause and send a list of City events if they want to be involved. The process was explained, and the City does not have to have this funding. Spoke of budget process. Let the TDC/BOCC come to the City if they wish to be involved. Council consensus was put the Interlocal agreement on hold and send a letter.

Mayor Plaisted stated he is grateful for a great City, overcoming obstacles with a positive attitude. Wonderful place to be.

Councilman McBride stated it is a pleasure to serve the City on the Council.

Councilwoman Lizanich attended the First Responders luncheon in Crystal River.

Councilman Davis stated he is glad to be here and represent the City. Attended an MPO training this past weekend and was very informative.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President