



MINUTES
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024, 6:00 P.M.
NEPTUNE BEACH CITY HALL
116 FIRST STREET
NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA 32266

Pursuant to proper notice, a Special City Council Meeting of the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach was held on Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at Neptune Beach City Hall, 116 First Street, Neptune Beach, Florida 32266.

Attendance:

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Elaine Brown
Vice Mayor Kerry Chin
Councilor Lauren Key
Councilor Nia Livingston
Councilor Josh Messinger(via CMT)

STAFF:

City Manager Richard Pike
Chief of Police Michael Key
Chief Financial Officer Jaime Hernandez
Parks and Sustainability Director Colin Moore
Community Development Director Heather Whitmore
Chief Information Officer Ricardo Pizarro
Human Resources Coordinator Jillian McCann
City Clerk Catherine Ponson

**Call to Order/Roll
Call**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**City Attorney
Selection**

Mayor Brown stated that the first item would be the new City Attorney selection. The applicant were Ian Brown, Clayton Knowles and the Vose Law Firm.

Vice Mayor Chin commented he appreciated the three applicants who submitted their resumés. They gave a decent choice across the spectrum and allowed Council to think about what they see as a vision of the City moving forward.

Councilor Key expressed that everyone was great but one firm stood out given how they structured their billing regarding special projects.

Councilor Messinger commented there were two standouts, one being local and one being a firm. He looks at where the City would get the best level of service. He also considered if the person passionate about the issues that we will be facing. Our current City Attorney has demonstrated how having someone who is local and lives here pours a little more passion into that role. This is something that has factored into his decision.

Mayor Brown stated that she was impressed with the experience and financial commitment with one of the firms. She liked the attorney from out of town, but thought having to drive so far would be a hindrance

Councilor Livingston remarked that she is ready based on the presentations from the Monday, August 19 meeting. She agreed with Councilor Messinger regarding having someone local, having an investment in the local beaches and wanting to learn.

Mayor Brown explained to Council to write their choice down. Councilor Messinger emailed his selection. The City Clerk and HR Coordinator collected the votes.

Mayor Brown, Vice Mayor Chin and Councilor Key selected the Vose Law Firm. Councilors Livingston and Messinger selected Ian Brown.

Made by Key, seconded by Chin.

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE VOSE LAW FIRM AS NEW CITY ATTORNEY

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: 5 – Key, Livingston, Messinger, Chin, and Brown.

Noes: 0

MOTION CARRIED

FY24-25 Budget FY24-25 Budget. City Manager Richard Pike introduced department heads who gave budget updates.

Mayor and Council. Mr. Pike reported there were no major changes to this budget.

City Manager. Mr. Pike pointed out that in FY23-24, some of the salary had been allocated from the Police Department. That has all been shifted to the City Manager for FY24-25.

Finance. CFO Jaime Hernandez gave an overview of the department. He reported that he hired two employees in FY23 to assist with the workload to bring the department up-to-date. There is also a new payroll software program that should be in place October 1, 2024.

Councilor Key questioned salaries coming from other departments. Mr. Hernandez explained that certain salaries are allocated to other departments for services utilized.

Legal Counsel. Mr. Pike reported the changes to this is an IT expense has been added and legal insurance has been added.

Community Development. Community Development Director Heather Whitmore gave an overview of the department and budget. The Community Development Department is made up of the planning division, building inspection and code enforcement. Some of the highlights for this year was the rewriting of the floodplain ordinance and over 900 construction-related permits were issued.

City Clerk/HR. City Clerk Catherine Ponson reported there were no major changes. She added that she requested funds for her and the HR Coordinator for certifications and continuing education.

Nondepartmental. Mr. Hernandez explained this is for expenses that are associated with the general operation of city government and not allocated to a specific department.

Police Department. Chief of Police Michael Key reviewed his budget which includes animal control, ocean rescue and paid parking. He reviewed some of the accomplishments of FY24. He reported the FY25 budget includes more body cameras, a wellness program, and traffic counters. Animal control and ocean rescue budget remain relatively the same. He commented that Neptune Beach is struggling to stay competitive regarding salaries.

Public Works. Public Works Director Deryle Calhoun reviewed the public works budget. He reviewed projects for public works, stormwater fund, and water and sewer fund.

Councilor Key asked about the amount budgeted for Public Works is \$2.2 million. She commented that this is confusing as it looks like that is the entire amount budgeted.

Mr. Calhoun explained that there are two funds for water and wastewater. There is another fund for stormwater. Public Works is the General Fund. Each fund has its own budget and line items.

Parks and Sustainability. Parks and Sustainability Director Colin Moore reported that this department is new and this is its second year. There are now designated maintenance funds for Jarboe Park. He reviewed the improvements and accomplishments. He announced for FY25 there would be capital funding for the completion of the original master plan for Jarboe Park. This would be for continuing the path along the east side of the pond, putting in permanent parking, and to formalize the multi-purpose field area.

Information Technology. Chief Information Officer Ricardo Pizarro review the IT budget. He gave an update on projects including network and fiber upgrades and surveillance systems.

Council Comments Councilor Livingston commented that she appreciates these presentations, but she wishes we had held them months ago and that we would have started this process earlier. This is a lot of information to take in. Last year, the budget process did not go smoothly. We ran into the same issues this year. We had to have an emergency meeting for the millage rate, and this took away the ability to talk about the projects a little more in depth. We should be having multiple meetings about the budget. There is a way to have more meetings and discussions. She would like to see this process starting earlier next year.

Adjournment There being no further business, the Special Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.


Elaine Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:


Catherine Ponson, CMC
City Clerk

Approved: 09/03/2024