



Joint City-County Commission Meeting Minutes May 22, 2017

Mayor Gib Coerper

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown

Commissioner Ben Boukari, Jr.

Commissioner Robert Wilford

Commissioner Gary Hardacre

Chair Ken Cornell

Vice Chair Lee Pinkoson

Commissioner Mike Byerly

Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut IV

Commissioner Lee Pinkoson

City Manager Traci L. Gresham

City Attorney Marian Rush

The City Commission conducted a
Joint City-County Commission Meeting
At 6:00 PM
to address the item(s) below.

Meeting Date: May 22, 2017

Meeting Location: James A. Lewis Commission Chambers

The Regular Commission Meeting will follow Adjournment of the Joint City-County Meeting. CITIZENS PRESENT: William Burger, Douglas Hancock, Ross Woodridge, Vida May Waters STAFF ATTENDING: Rob Bonetti, Adam Boukari, Jesse Sanduski, Chad Scott, LeAnne Williams, Cap Wilson, Kathy Winburn

Joint City-County Commission Meeting

Notice given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes. In order to appeal any decision made at this meeting, you will need a verbatim record of the proceedings. It will be your responsibility to ensure such a record is made.

CALL TO ORDER

Led by Mayor Gib Coerper.

INVOCATION

Led by Pastor Doug Felton, First Baptist Church of Alachua.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Coerper.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Ken Cornell asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Mike Byerly moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Robert Hutchinson.

Chair Cornell opened the floor for public comment.

Tamara Robbins requested that two items be added to the agenda.

1. Discussion on what is allowed at the County Park on U.S. 441, and on improvements that can be made to the park.
2. Update on the Alachua County League of Cities regarding protocols and determination of their public meeting status.

Commissioner Hutchinson suggested that the rules of the park be referred to staff. He stated that the one to answer the question regarding the Alachua County League of Cities is not present.

County Manager Dr. Lee A. Niblock recommended that the park rules be sent back to the city and present it to the public. He confirms that the person to answer questions about the Alachua County League of Cities is not at the meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson stated that during the commissioner's comments he will make recommendations for the two items.

Passed by unanimous consent.

Mayor Coerper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Ben Boukari, Jr moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Vice Mayor Shirley Greene Brown.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for public comment

There were no comments.

Passed by unanimous consent.

WELCOME

I. AGENDA

A. Fire Protection Services

Fire Chief Bill Northcutt introduced the item and provided the staff report.

Mayor Coerper asked the commissioners for questions or comments.

There were no comments.

Eric Van Malsen, representative from Stantec Consulting, provided the presentation.

Commissioner Byerly clarified that this meeting is taking place at all of the municipalities, and there is not yet a consensus among the commissioners to move forward yet. He expressed his concerns regarding the rates. He asked for clarification regarding the presentation. Fire Chief Northcutt provided clarification.

Commissioner Byerly commented on “regressive taxation”, and asked if the City of Alachua pays for its fire service through a property tax levy. Assistant City Manager Adam Boukari informed the commissioners that the City of Alachua pays for the service through the General Fund, which is made up of many taxes, including an ad valorem tax.

Chair Cornell expressed that to have everyone pay something is a fair approach, since everyone gets the protection, and some citizens have never participated. He stated that, under the two-tiered approach, this one is as least regressive as possible.

Fire Chief Northcutt stated that they will recommend a Hardship Assistance Program.

Chair Cornell asked the city commissioners to comment on if they were in favor of addressing the exemption of places of worship, non-profits, and hardship.

Mayor Coerper asked the commissioners for questions or comments.

Commissioner Wilford agreed with exempting non-profits, but expressed his concern that some churches have ministries that make profit, and they are not taxed on the profit.

Commissioner Lee Pinkoson stated that the County Commission has discussed church buildings being used for services would still be exempt, but where there is a school, daycare, etc., they may not be exempt.

Commissioner Boukari said that consideration should be made to having churches and non-profits be assessed because they will be covered by the fire department. He then asked what the cost of the City of Alachua is for fire service. Fire Chief Northcutt stated that it is \$922,000, which comes from the current cost estimates based on the operation of a fire station and the proportional amount of responses that are made within the City of Alachua.

Commissioner Boukari asked, if the City of Alachua opts into the MSBU, will the station then be built near the Turkey Creek area. Chair Cornell requested that Fire Chief Northcutt communicate what the Master Plan says and then what the board’s desires are in regards to opting into the MSBU. Fire Chief Northcutt requested that the County Manager speak to this question. County Manager Niblock stated that the board will have to decide at what time they want to engage in additional construction and additional relocation of fire apparatus. He stated that the board must base this decision on the funding source and the adoption of the fire assessment fee.

Chair Cornell referred to a handout from the Fire Chief, and asked for clarification. Fire Chief Northcutt explained that how far away a fire station is from your home determines your insurance rates, and that Turkey

Creek would benefit from having a station near the area, in terms of lowering the insurance rates. He then stated that the board had put the station for Turkey Creek to a 5 year implementation plan and then to a 10 year implementation plan.

Chair Cornell addressed Commissioner Boukari's concerns by stating that, although there isn't a consensus from the board as to when the station will be built, the board will need to look into it and would like for the City Commissioners to voice their opinions.

Commissioner Boukari remarked that opting in does not mean that the station will be built. He referred to Commissioner Byerly's statements that the county board hasn't voted on MSBU, and asked why staff would work on something that didn't have board consensus. Fire Chief Northcutt stated that the board gave them direction to move forward with what it would look like. Tommy Crosby, Assistant County Manager for Budget and Fiscal Services, stated that the board passed a motion this year to direct staff to include the assessment in the budget process, and they are building around that motion at this time.

Commissioner Pinkoson commented that a key consideration for the board in this process has been the cities who are already financially stressed.

Commissioner Wilford voiced his concern that citizens, who are currently under served, will be paying a higher rate for three to five years without benefit. He asked if putting up a modular building would be an option for the station. Fire Chief Northcutt stated that there is about a \$900,000 in apparatus cost for a station, about \$1,000,000 for the staff, and the ongoing cost is about \$1,600,000.

Mayor Coerper stated that the City of Gainesville helps with the Turkey Creek area. He asked if this will be extended for another year. Fire Chief Northcutt stated that, if the Alachua County departed from the agreement with the City of Gainesville, there is a 365 day cancellation.

Mayor Coerper asked how many new stations are in the master plan. Fire Chief Northcutt stated that five stations are planned.

Mayor Coerper commented that it is his hope that the County Commission will build the station soon as it has already been 13 years in the planning stage.

Assistant City Manager Boukari commented on the additional station improving response time in the City of Alachua. He spoke about the cost of fire protection service as it currently stands and the future cost breakdown. He stated that the additional station is critical to the consideration of the proposed changes.

Mayor Coerper asked the commission for questions or comments.

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown thanked Assistant City Manager Boukari for his comments. She asked for the commissioners to consider the master plan to construct a new station. She spoke of her support for the churches to remain tax exempt.

Commissioner Wilford clarified his comments regarding churches to mean only arms of the church that should be considered for-profit.

Commissioner Boukari thanked the county staff and County Manager Niblock and the county commissioners for coming to discuss this subject.

Commissioner Gary Hardacre spoke of the cost of each plan, and stated that the MSBU plan seems to be the best option. He stated that he has a problem with "giving up authority" over this issue to somebody else. He expressed his concern with raising the millage rate if the City goes with a different plan. He stated that it is

imperative that the City of Alachua get the new station from the county.

Mayor Coerper spoke of the insurance savings for those who would benefit from the new station and that the City could possibly lower the millage rate.

Commissioner Boukari said that to delay this action would only cost the City more in the future.

Commissioner Byerly asked what are the total number of units that would be assessed, county wide.

Mr. Van Malsen informed the commission that 50,187 total parcels would be assessed, with approximately 2,000 parcels being businesses and 38,000 being residences.

Commissioner Byerly asked if, at Thursday's meeting, Mr. Van Malsen could inform the commissioners regarding how many of the residences would be considered low income. Mr. Van Malsen stated that he would have the information for Thursday's meeting.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Tamara Robbins thanked Commissioner Boukari for his statements regarding churches. She stated that since a church gets the fire coverage, they should help pay for the cost. She stated that if the low income homes are going to begin paying into the tax system for fire service, then churches need to be considered as well. She asked for clarification regarding vacant agricultural properties. She questioned if the City of Alachua is paying its total cost for fire service currently or is "someone else" paying the balance. She suggested that the City build the fire station if the County can't get it done.

Noble Craig objected to the lack of information / handouts for this meeting. Chair Cornell stated that after the meeting, Mr. Van Malsen could get him the information on his parcel.

Bud Calderwood asked questions about the kind of fire trucks that are in the City of Alachua, about the ISO rating, about the "revenue neutral" statements, regarding the MSBU and the County's ad valorem millage, and, if the new station is built, will the old stations stay.

Bill Burger expressed his support of "new service" and "everyone paying".

Chair Cornell asked for Mr. Van Malsen to answer some of the questions. He stated that, regarding the county millage, they would get rid of the MSTU, and lower the rate.

Mr. Van Malsen stated that, to the agricultural exemption question, the law states that, if a parcel has a structure like a barn, that can be taxed, but if it is vacant, they are exempt. He then clarified the "revenue neutral" statements.

Chair Cornell commented that the State does not allow the County to assess for brush fires.

Fire Chief Northcutt stated that Station 21 is equipped the same as all other stations in the county. He stated that the cost the City of Alachua pays is the contractual rate that the County has with the City. He stated that there are other expenses that do not come from this tax source, and he has identified those expenses to present a total cost for the City of Alachua.

Bud Calderwood clarified his statements.

II. COMMISSION GENERAL AND INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to refer to County Manager Niblock the issue of what are the allowable activities in the county park, and to write a memo back to the City Commission and County Commission, with a copy to Tamara Robins; seconded by Commissioner Byerly.

Chair Cornell opened the floor for comments.

There were no comments.

Passed by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved for the county attorney to provide an update on the current status on the update of the Alachua County League of Cities, and to provide that information to all of the Mayors, the County Commission, and Tamara Robbins; seconded by Commissioner Pinkoson.

Chair Cornell opened the floor for comments.

Chair Cornell asked County Manager Niblock if the attorney has already completed this memo. County Manager Niblock stated that they have the results, but that they haven't finalized it yet.

Passed by unanimous consent.

Chair Cornell thanked the city commissioners.

Mayor Coerper thanked the county commissioners for coming to the meeting.

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Ms. Robbins stated that this was a very productive meeting. She stated that the City Commission Meetings should be live streaming.

(Please Limit to 3 Minutes.Any citizen who did not speak during the Citizen Comments period at the beginning of the meeting may do so at this time.)

IV. ADJOURN

Chair Cornell adjourned the meeting.

City Commission Meeting
