

CITY OF CLEWISTON
Regular Commission Meeting
December 18, 2023

The Clewiston City Commission held its Regular Commission meeting in the City Hall Commission Chambers Monday, December 18, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m. by Mayor James Pittman. Mayor Pittman gave the invocation and the audience joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Present: Mayor James Pittman, Vice Mayor Greg Thompson, Commissioner Barbara Edmonds, Commissioner Mali Gardner and Commissioner Hillary Hyslope.

Personnel Present: City Manager Randy Martin, Police Chief Thomas Lewis, Director of Operations Danny Williams, IT Administrator Justin Lucas, and City Attorney Dylan Brandenburg.

Visitors Present: Terry Gardner, Mike Moore and Jerry Cochrane

Additions/Deletions/Changes and Approval of the Agenda – Manager Martin suggested adding Agenda Item 1B to the agenda regarding the Ventura Streetscape project as discussed at today’s workshop held preceding this regular meeting. He also wanted to recognize Chief Lewis during the City Manager’s report for an update on the gaming arcade business activity and suggested pulling Agenda Item F from the Consent Agenda to be voted on separately to avoid the appearance of a Commission member conflict of interest.

Public Comments – Mike Moore commented on his concern with the lighting after dark at a nice event he attended at the park across from the youth center, and he expressed his concern about the need to find a way to slow trucks down at the intersection of Berner Road and US Highway 27. Director of Operations Danny Williams advised that new lighting has been purchased to be used at events held in the parks including specifically events such as those cited by Mr. Moore. Unfortunately, the equipment arrived after the referenced event was held due to shipping delays.

1. Consent Agenda

- A. *City Commission Workshop Minutes – January 30, 2023*
- B. *City Commission Workshop Minutes – March 6, 2023*
- C. *City Commission Workshop Minutes – May 22, 2023*
- D. *City Commission Meeting Minutes – November 20, 2023*
- E. *2024 Regular Commission Meeting and Tentative Workshop Schedule*
- F. *Resolution No. 2023-124 – Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension (Area B locations) with Cross Training Ministries, Inc.*
- G. *Resolution No. 2023-125 – Satisfaction of Cortez Deferred Payment Loan Agreement*
- H. *Resolution No. 2023-126 – LOSOM Water Coalition Letter*
- I. *Resolution No. 2023-127 – Declaration of Surplus Equipment*

Mayor Pittman stated that Item F is pulled from the Consent Agenda to be voted on separately.

Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Item F. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

Mayor Pittman stated that he will abstain from voting on Item F to avoid a conflict of interest as a member of his family manages Cross Training Ministries.

Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to approve Item F. Vote 4 yeas, 0 nays (Mayor Pittman abstained from voting.)

- 1B. Ventura Streetscape/Resurfacing Project Design** – Mayor Pittman stated that this topic was discussed at today’s workshop and explained that the City received federal and state grant funding to improve Ventura Avenue from its intersections with Deane Duff to WC Owen Avenue. Several concept drawings were presented to the Commission at the workshop and the consensus of the Commission was Concept B after discussion of options. Once the

plan is approved, it will allow the engineers to move forward with next steps to pursue design. Manager Martin confirmed that Refined Concept B was in line with the FDOT recommendation for the US 27 highway corridor vision plan that included considerations for this section of Ventura Avenue.

Commissioner Hyslope made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gardner, to approve Refined Concept B Alternative with the items that were discussed for the purpose of the City being able to initiate next steps and communicate with private landowners and business owners in the affected area, etc. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

RESOLUTIONS

2. **Resolution No. 2023-128** – Resolution No. 2023-128 approves State of Florida Department of Transportation Memorandum of Agreement No. BEG61, FM No. 432744-1-78-08, for maintenance and operation of lighting on the State Highway System and authorizes the Mayor to execute said agreement on behalf of the City.

Mayor Pittman read Resolution No. 2023-128 by title.

Vice Mayor Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Edmonds, to approve Resolution No. 2023-128. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

3. **Resolution No. 2023-129** – Resolution No. 2023-129 approves the award of the Roofing Material and Services Proposal to Space Age Roof Tech for the Harry T. Vaughn Library Roof Project.

Mayor Pittman read Resolution No. 2023-129 by title and stated that this project was a budgeted item and came in under budget.

Commissioner Hyslope made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Thompson, to approve Resolution No. 2023-129. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

4. **Resolution No. 2023-130** - Resolution No. 2023-130 approves the lease agreement with National Traffic Solution, Inc. for the non-exclusive use of the premises known as 205 W. Ventura Avenue.

City Attorney Brandenburg recommended approval of the lease agreement with a modification to the renewal clause in Section 2.3. Mayor Pittman read Resolution No. 2023-130 by title. Manager Martin confirmed that the lease does not include the garage area of the building. Attorney Brandenburg stated that specification could be made part of the other change.

Vice Mayor Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Edmonds, to approve Resolution No. 2023-130 subject to the recommended changes. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

MISCELLANEOUS ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. **Old Business** – Commissioner Gardner stated that after conversation at today’s workshop and the emails the Commission has been receiving, she feels another workshop should be scheduled for January regarding recreation. Manager Martin stated the next Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services Advisory Board Meeting was scheduled for January 18, 2024 and the City Commission’s next meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2024 with a workshop that same day at 3:00 p.m. By consensus, another Commission workshop was scheduled for January 16, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.
6. **Departmental Monthly Activity Reports** – There were no comments regarding the departmental monthly activity reports.

7. **Comments from City Manager** – “State of the City” Update – Before commenting on his “State of the City” report, Manager Martin asked Chief Lewis to give an update on activity since notices were sent recently by the department to four local arcade/gaming locations regarding illegal activities and enforcement of state and local laws and regulations at arcade/gaming centers. Chief Lewis reported on the current permanent and temporary closures of three of the four gaming centers. He did not want to publicly share information on the plan for addressing the remaining open arcade at this time. Attorney Brandenburg stated that the City’s ordinances could be modified if desired. He explained that in consideration of the new legislative land development preemption, the Commission could look at the City’s zoning and decide where they might want to allow actual arcades in the future. Manager Martin mentioned that arcades are not allowed in the current U.S. 27 Corridor ordinance but they are currently allowed in the general zoning classification.

Manager Martin next commented on the “State of the City” report distributed to the Commission at this meeting and said it would go out to the public tomorrow. He reviewed some highlights of the detailed report. The Commission thanked Manager Martin for the work he has done.

8. **Comments from City Attorney** – Attorney Brandenburg reported that he is still working on the parks ordinance and explained that he is also in the process of putting together a separate ordinance that would include the process for a trespass order because the trespass order process would apply to all city property. He hoped to have both ordinances for consideration at the January commission meeting. He then reminded the Commission of the annual requirement for each of them to complete the state required 4 hour ethics training and mentioned that they are now required to electronically file a form 6 instead of the form 1 by July. He then wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. In response to Commissioner Gardner’s request for an update on the lien letters, Attorney Brandenburg stated that he and Manager Martin are compiling a list of what is outstanding and he will be putting together a letter to go out in January. He stated that he felt it would be best to offer a reduction before moving forward to the foreclosure process.
9. **Comments from the City Commission** – The Commissioners each wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and congratulated Manager Martin for his “State of the City” report and all the work that had been accomplished. Commissioner Gardner announced for the public that a workshop was scheduled for January 16, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. on recreation and January 22, 2024 at 3:00 to discuss the county’s impact fees and CRA redevelopment. She then asked for an update on the Golf Course irrigation project. Manager Martin stated that the project is progressing nicely and confirmed that everything was on schedule. He noted that he had hoped to have the final financing document for Commission approval at tonight’s meeting but the required bank documents were not yet ready. Mayor Pittman stated that he had talked to the Recreation Director about the dark areas at the Christmas tree lighting event and believed that it would be resolved with the new equipment. He then mentioned that the City’s ordinance that restricts heavy trucks from using certain roads in the city should be enforced and requested staff to continue to educate and provide information to the businesses that operate heavy trucks. Mayor Gardner asked for a copy of that ordinance. Director Williams then elaborated on his earlier comment that a new portable light tower which came in right after the referenced event had been purchased for use at public events. In testing and its initial uses, the new equipment worked well. He also stated that some of the big truck owners have been told which routes they should take after a culvert crossing issue was identified that created the need to close the crossing location until repairs can be made. He then advised that \$35,000 in grant funding was received for the watershed project which will help develop a master plan so that the City can pursue funding for repairs and replacements of culverts and drainage infrastructure.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gardner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hyslope, to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Vote 5 yeas, 0 nays

James Pittman, Mayor

Mary K. Combass, City Clerk