



City of Crescent City

3 North Summit Street
Crescent City, Florida 32112-2599

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MINUTES City Commission Regular Meeting

January 14, 2021 - 6:00 p.m.

Present. Mayor Michele Myers; Commissioner Cindy Burton; Commissioner Harry Banks; Commissioner Lisa Kane DeVitto; Commissioner Judy West; Michael Esposito, City Manager; Jay Asbury, City Attorney.

The regular meeting of the City Commission was held January 14, 2021 at City Hall. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Michele Myers.

Additions, Deletions, and Modifications to the Agenda. Commissioner Kane DeVitto requested an Agenda addition of COVID-19 safety precautions for City Hall, staff and meetings along with HVAC improvements for discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Banks, second by Commissioner West, to add discussion regarding COVID-19 safety precautions as requested. Motion passed - all ayes.

Commissioner Kane DeVitto requested discussion of the potential closing of Miller Middle School and Middleton Burney School. Michael Esposito responded that he will present an update during his report.

Commissioner Kane DeVitto requested an Agenda addition for discussion on future workshops, outstanding issues, priority planning, prioritizing issues, Code Enforcement, CRA and Economic Development.

Motion by Commissioner Kane DeVitto, second by Commissioner West, to add an Agenda item to discuss priorities for upcoming meetings and workshops. Motion passed - all ayes.

Commissioner Kane DeVitto requested an Agenda addition for discussion on conducting an evaluation of City Manager Michael Esposito. Commissioner Kane DeVitto distributed an example evaluation form as a starting point.

Motion by Commissioner Burton, second by Commissioner West, to compile a list of objectives submitted by all Commissioners and review the duties of the City Manager based on his contract and City Charter for an evaluation at the end of the fiscal year. Second and Motion were withdrawn.

Motion by Commissioner Kane DeVitto, second by Commissioner West, to add an Agenda item to discuss the best way to prepare for a City Manager evaluation as a constructive and planning process. Motion passed - all ayes.

Announcements by the Chair. Mayor Myers reported that Putnam County is waiting for additional COVID-19 vaccines and will be setting appointments as soon as possible.

There were no Public Comments received via email not pertaining to listed Agenda topics.

Recognitions, Proclamations and Presentations.

Proclamation 21-01 Arbor Day. Mayor Myers read the Proclamation aloud. Commissioner Kane DeVitto announced that the City will be participating in an Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, January 23rd, 11:00a.m., at the Crescent City Woman's Club, 604 Summit Street.

Motion by Commissioner Banks, second by Commissioner West, to accept and approve Proclamation 21-01. Motion passed - all ayes.

Consent Agenda. Approval of Minutes. Mayor Myers asked for any corrections or changes to the minutes of the City Commission Meeting of December 10, 2020. There being none, motion was made by Commissioner Kane DeVitto, second by Commissioner West, to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion passed - all ayes.

General Business.

Law Enforcement Update Discussion. Michael Esposito introduced Attorney Susan Erdelyi from Marks and Grey who has represented Crescent City in the past. Attorney Erdelyi reviewed the history of issues in the CCPD and common problems that continue to resurface with Chiefs and insufficient staff. She further spoke of the challenges of small departments regarding recruiting, retaining, discipline matters, investigations and keeping up with technology and equipment. The issue of liability over and above insurance was also discussed.

Public Comment received via email and read aloud:

Elaine Nord Bodaar, 200 Central Avenue (see attached)

Michael Esposito discussed the ongoing issues of CCPD certifications. The Sheriff's Office and FDLE were solicited to review the files and evaluate current certifications. As of today, a report has not been received.

Discussion followed regarding minimum staffing required to operate the CCPD, Sheriff's Department requirement to provide law enforcement to the City, dedicated coverage to the City with a Sheriff's Department law enforcement contract and timing of possible contract negotiations and any ordinances required. It was confirmed by City Attorney Jay Asbury that an ordinance requires two readings with the second being consideration for adoption. The second reading must be advertised a minimum of 10 days prior to the meeting and can be a Special Meeting called for that purpose. Also discussed were questions regarding the possible cost of re-establishing the CCPD and pension plan cost implications.

Motion by Commissioner West, second by Commissioner Banks, to instruct Attorney Jay Asbury to draft an ordinance to dissolve the Crescent City Police Department. Roll call vote – motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Kane DeVitto as the dissenting vote.

Motion by Commissioner West, second by Commissioner Banks, to instruct Attorney Jay Asbury and City Manager Michael Esposito to negotiate a law enforcement services contract to provide full coverage to Crescent City by the Putnam County Sheriff's Department and could include specific officers for Crescent City, current CCPD officers be given priority and the cruisers will include the Crescent City logo. Roll call vote – all ayes.

Motion by Commissioner West, second by Commissioner Burton to authorize Michael Esposito to explore a salary range and job description for a full-time City Clerk. Mr. Esposito will also review the budget for affordability and report to the Commission next month. Motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1.

A discussion regarding possible severance package for CCPD personnel was tabled until next month.

Commission Procedures Discussion. Michael Esposito asked for direction and suggestions from the Commissioners to formulate future discussion. Discussion followed.

Public Hearings. There were no Public Hearings this month.

City Manager Reports and Comments. Michael Esposito reported that Putnam County School District has announced a 10 year plan. Miller Middle School will be closing after the current school year and moving the 6th thru 8th grades to Crescent City High School. The Central Avenue paving project Construction services bids were due on January 12, 2021 and will be presented next month.

City Attorney Reports and Comments. There was no report this month.

Police Department Report. Colonel Wells reported that during the last 30 days within the City there were 176 Law Enforcement activity events, 75 of which were deputy initiated and 14 requiring follow up investigations.. A written Code Enforcement report was presented to the Commission.

City Commission Reports and Comments. COVID-19 procedures in City Hall including mandatory masks, upgrades to the HVAC system and possible addition of UV lighting. Also discussed was in-person versus ZOOM meetings and protocols.

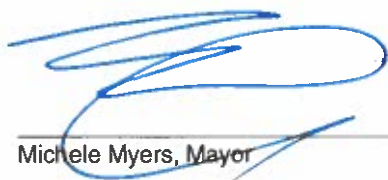
The Finance Director and Redevelopment Coordinator positions continue to be advertised and remain open. A City Clerk position is being researched.

A workshop to discuss the Magistrate system for Code Enforcement was scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2001 at 1:00 p.m. with limited seating in City Hall and on ZOOM.

A workshop to discuss Priorities, Goals and the CRA was scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2001 at 1:00 p.m. with limited seating in City Hall and on ZOOM.

There being no further business and no other visitor or citizen communication, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

APPROVED this 11th day of February, 2021.


Michele Myers, Mayor
Michael Esposito, City Manager

Deborah Wazowicz

From: e nord [stottybodaar@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 14, 2021 9:02 AM
To: PublicComments@crescentcity-fl.com
Subject: Police Department

Flag Status: Flagged

On January 6, 2021 I sent the email which appears below to all commissioners and the city attorney and the administrative secretary. I am resending it now to the newly stipulated email for inclusion in the minutes of the meeting because I want to be sure it is seen and acknowledged. Additionally I would like again say, with the climate of unrest and deceit growing in this country, it is imperative that we at least maintain the idea that we have some police presence in the city. Thank you.

Email sent on 1/6/2021.....

I have been in Crescent City since 1982 and live currently at 200 Central Avenue. My business Curiosity Shoppe is currently closed due to Covid 19 to stop the spread. For almost 40 years I have stayed in this city and tried my best to keep Central Avenue a business district. Now with all but a few East Central Avenue businesses closed, we have to face the reality that we will no longer have a police presence as well.

So it seems the mindset for the town commission is to destroy the little business possibilities we still have and destabilize the area even more by defunding the police department.

While living on Central Avenue all these years when my neighbors or myself have needed police help, calls were usually answered in less than 10 minutes. You expect the public to believe that an underfunded county sheriffs office will be able to answer these calls in the same manner? Never going to happen. While the Putnam County Sheriffs office is a great organization, they cannot do it all.

Realize you are about to hand over a significant portion of the City of Crescent City budget to support a county department. Will you maintain oversight on that money.....will you be able to dictate the number of officers on duty? Besides that, where is the proof that any of the police officers are not up to speed on their certifications. There has been long enough time for you to produce the results of your investigations and make it public. The lack of transparency by the commissioners at this point is very suspicious.

May you folks have the foresight to realize that your own political persuasions and possible future political goals have nothing to do with what the people need and want. People want business growth and safe streets and public places which encourage visitors as well as residents to reside here. Honest folks are going to shy away from a place where there is no police department, while for the dishonest you are about to create a safe haven. We are on the edge of the county making it easy for criminals to disappear into the abyss.

Don't think the political climate of the country will not spill out to small places like Crescent City. Palatka had its own demonstrations last year and it can come here too. At least we have a chance of a semblance of law and order if we have a police department on site. No police department is perfect as we see across the nation, but we at least need to have one.

It is a shame that only Commissioner Devitto came out for the rally to save our police department on Saturday along with the former mayor and another former candidate for city commission.

While I was too far away to attend, in my mind this shows our newly elected officials have an agenda of their own and are not hesitating to initiate it, quite quickly I might add.

The national political agenda is coming home to roost.

Sincerely,

Elaine Nord Bodaar
200 Central Avenue
Crescent City, Florida 32112

CC: Deborah Wazowicz; J.D. Asbury

I am copying this email to both the city attorney and the administrative secretary in hopes that it can be included in the next commission meeting minutes or read out as my 2 minutes worth. Thank you.