DeFuniak Springs City Council
Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
January 27, 2025

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bob Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Bob Campbell; Mayor Pro-Tempore Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Josh Sconiers (Seat 2); Councilmember Amy Heavilin (Seat 3); Councilmember Glen Harrison (Seat 4); Councilmember Anthony Vallée (Seat 5).

Absent:

Also, present were City Manager Koby Townsend, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Finance Director Steven Rausch, and City Clerk Rafael Ali.

Mayor Campbell recognized Mack Campbell-Work who recently passed away.

2. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Additions/Deletions to the Consent Agenda
B. Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Heavilin; the motion passed without objection.

C. City Clerk R. Ali
1. January 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Harrison asked for the minutes to be revised regarding Mr. Harrison doing a "cleanup".

3. REGULAR AGENDA
A. Additions/Deletions to the Regular Agenda
B. Approval of the Regular Agenda

A motion was made to add 3c3 Sun Lighting and Electric Purpose Right Away Access and Lift Station Improvements, 3c6 Jacobs Bi-monthly report and 3c7 Airport Terminal Update by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Heavilin; the motion passed without objection.

C. City Manager K. Townsend
1. Life Enrichment Senior Center

Mr. Townsend stated that at the last meeting the council wanted him to do some fact-finding and come back to the council.

Mr. Townsend stated that since then he has spoken to the county administrator, the executive director of Tri County, and reached out to the Tri County CFO.

Mr. Townsend stated that the mayor and he were approached by the Council on Aging.

Mr. Townsend stated that he reached out to the county CFO but has not heard anything back.

Mr. Townsend stated that in FY22 the Senior Center ran in the black by $4,200, but in FY23 the Senior Center was in the red by $3,000, and in FY24 it was $7,700 in the red, which was associated with personnel cost increases.

Mr. Vallee stated that he wants to make a correction on the items listed in the red.

Mr. Vallee stated that he does not want to make it look like they are losing money.

Mr. Townsend stated that the Senior Center budgeted $15,000 in membership dues and $60,000 in program grants, which come from the county and the city.

Mr. Townsend stated that looking at the cost of the Senior Center, 88% of the cost is personnel.

Mr. Townsend stated that personnel costs will have to change.

Mr. Townsend stated that the current rate of pay for the manager at the Senior Center is $18.00 an hour, and the current rate for the assistant is $13.00 an hour, which will have to change to $15.00.

Mr. Townsend stated that the city can expect an increase in personnel services costs of $18,206, which is an estimate.

Mrs. Heavilin asked about the assets that the Senior Center has.

Mr. Townsend stated that Tri County will not take assets related to the Senior Center.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if we have a list of what those assets are.

Mr. Townsend stated that the CFO has not provided those to him yet.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that personnel costs will increase every year.

Mr. Townsend stated that he has a meeting with the Council on Aging, and they expressed interest in assuming the operation of the center.

The Mayor asked Alsha Bracken, director of the Emerald Coast Council on Aging, to come up to the podium.

Mrs. Bracken presented on why they should be made responsible for the Senior Center.

Mrs. Bracken stated that she is passionate about the senior community.

Mrs. Bracken stated that they have the administrative support to take care of the seniors.

Mrs. Bracken stated that they have the resources to move forward with the seniors of DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

Mrs. Bracken stated that there is testimony from seniors who have become self-sufficient.

Mayor Campbell asked if they can handle the financial side of the operation.

Mrs. Bracken answered yes.

Mrs. Bracken stated that she would hire Susan Bakalo tomorrow if they take over this.

Mayor Campbell stated that they will open the floor for questions from the council.

Mr. Sconiers asked the public where they would want this to go.

The public answered, "The City."

Mr. Vallee stated that he appreciates someone stepping up and making that offer, and that they have options.

Mr. Vallee stated that taking care of our seniors and our people is what makes us a city.

Mr. Vallee stated that if there is an issue with the Senior Center, the public will know to go to the city to resolve it.

Mr. Vallee thanked Mrs. Bracken for what she does in the community.

Mrs. Heavilin thanked Mrs. Bracken for what she does.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that she knows that Mrs. Bracken will find a solution.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that her problem is that these aren't core services that our seniors need.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that she is concerned with the critical needs of the city and where we are now.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that she has concerns about taking over the Senior Center because costs will continue to increase.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that they just had a meeting with the CRA to try and get some of that funding.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that we should really consider what the Emerald Coast is asking for.

Mrs. Heavilin added that it seems like they will be keeping everything the same and not asking for additional funding from the city.

The public stated that it is not correct.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that there are still a lot of questions that need to be answered.

Charles Greene stated that inflation happens at the Senior Center, and that $30,000 is going to have to increase.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that she would like the council to encourage potential solutions to keep the funding.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that she is willing to help with starting a new nonprofit.

Mr. Bierbaum requested that they have a conversation with the council, then open it up to the public.

Mr. Harrison stated that this is a new concept to the city.

Mrs. Bracken stated that there are three Senior Centers.

Mr. Harrison stated that he would like the Senior Center to continue to improve.

Mr. Harrison stated that if the city takes this over, the costs will continue to grow.

Mr. Harrison asked if Mrs. Bracken's organization takes it over, they will expand the opportunities for seniors.

Mrs. Bracken answered yes.

Mrs. Bracken stated that she does not gain anything from having additional people join the center.

Mr. Harrison asked if they need additional square footage for staff.

Mrs. Bracken answered no.

Mrs. Bracken stated that she wants to continue to provide multiple services to the seniors.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if Susan would be in charge of running the program the way she has done it for years.

Mrs. Bracken agreed.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if Mrs. Bracken has the space to accommodate the seniors.

Mrs. Bracken stated that she currently has enough space.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he agrees with Mr. Vallee's analysis.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he remembers having a lively discussion about the extra programs that they support.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that the city needs to support our seniors.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that seeing people here tonight, there seems to be a lot of support for taking it over.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that they are the government that influences the people the most, and he believes it is critical to have programs that their citizens can access.

Mr. Sconiers asked if they have identified sources in their funding that can fill these gaps.

Mr. Townsend stated that they had some unanticipated revenues that can offset these expenses.

A motion was made to have the City take over the management of the Senior Center by Councilmember Sconiers and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed without objection.

JB Hillard, a citizen of DeFuniak Springs, Florida, explained what the Life Enrichment Center does and the history behind its operation.

Mr. Hillard also explained why the two organizations cannot be merged into one.

Kyle Tez, the Business Manager at the Council on Aging, stated that they can change the business model if needed to manage it properly.

Mr. Tez expressed his belief that the Council on Aging has what is necessary to run the Senior Center.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he does not doubt how much the Council on Aging cares.

Mr. Sconiers also stated that they are here to represent the people.

Rickard Scott, a citizen of DeFuniak Springs, stated that it seems to him that the Council does not want to take control.

Mrs. Bakalo stated that membership fees have not increased; they are still $60.00.

Mrs. Bakalo also stated that they had excess funds. She mentioned that there was $9,000 she could not spend due to being terminated.

Mrs. Bakalo expressed that she is trying to increase membership at the Senior Center.

Mrs. Bakalo thanked the Council on Aging for their proposal, but mentioned that it seems like the members don't want them to take over the Senior Center.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if it would be possible to change the motion to have this taken out of the special revenue fund.

Mr. Adkinson stated that this is something the finance director and city manager can do outside the motion, as long as the council is okay with it.

There were no objections from the council.

Mr. Townsend stated that the expenses are balanced.

Mr. Townsend made it clear that this will be a department of the city and will operate under him and the council.

Mr. Townsend also stated that the interlocal agreements need to be updated.

Mr. Sconiers asked if this could be placed on the agenda for tomorrow.

Mr. Townsend said he would try.

Mr. Harrison stated that Susan Bakalo has done a wonderful job with the Senior Center.

Mr. Harrison emphasized that discussing these issues is their job.

Mr. Harrison also pointed out that whoever becomes the director will have to go through the city's hiring process.

Mr. Adkinson confirmed that anyone is welcome to apply.

Mr. Adkinson reiterated that anyone seeking to work for the city must go through the hiring process.

Mr. Vallee asked if they could move forward with creating this position tonight.

Mr. Adkinson stated that the council needs to ensure that this is the direction they want to go.

Mr. Bierbaum expressed support for staff evaluating the special revenue funds and bringing back an analysis or report to the council.

Mr. Hillard stated that this matter cannot proceed until the county is on board.

2. Walton County Tourist Development Council Appointment

Mr. Townsend stated that the Council decided to vote on this once all members of the city council are present. ,

Mr. Vallee stated that we need to have a conversation about what we, as a community, want from the tourist development tax we have in place.

Mr. Vallee expressed the opinion that we should have a separate economy for the beach.

Mr. Vallee stated that we need to ask our community what they want out of tourism here.

Mr. Vallee explained the importance of having someone on the board.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that during his time at the TTDC, he saw DeFuniak Springs as an alternative to the beach when people wanted to get away from the traffic and hustle.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that we can offer something different than the beach.

Mr. Bierbaum explained that people love our town.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he was happy to see the Chautauqua Center added to the strategic plan.

A motion was made to nominate Councilmember Sconiers to the TDC by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed without objection.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he felt bad about the County taking back our TDC Board nomination.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he views us as one team.

Mr. Harrison stated that he is in favor of moving forward with the request, but emphasized that we need to be respected by the BCC.

Mr. Harrison stated that there needs to be mutual respect between both parties.

Mr. Harrison stated that we are serving the people of the city.

3. Sun Lighting and Electric on the purpose right away access and lift station improvements

Mayor Campbell explained Mr. Mote's proposal to the city council.

Mayor Campbell stated that Mr. Mote attended the previous city council meeting.

Mayor Campbell stated that Mr. Mote wants access off of Sloths.

Mayor Campbell mentioned that the issue with that is there is a lift station in the area.

Mayor Campbell stated that Mr. Mote will pay for all the labor and materials.

Mayor Campbell stated that the improvements will cost him about $45,000.

Mayor Campbell stated that this will provide better access to the lift station.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that there was a tractor-trailer attempting to go west, and traffic was backed up.

Mr. Sconiers stated that he believes it could possibly alleviate the traffic congestion.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he has actually been to that lift station.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he remembers when someone cleared the lot, back when he was a teenager.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that as a city, we should encourage this kind of behavior.

Mr. Bierbaum explained that a building could be added, and it would be taxable.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that he believes it's a win to partner with them.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that allowing them access will, in his opinion, alleviate traffic.

Mr. Mote stated that the gear currently at the lift station is extremely hard to come by.

Mr. Mote stated that he currently has the equipment in stock because it is hard to get.

A motion was made to direct staff to proceed with working with Sun Lighting and Electric on the purpose right away access and lift station improvements by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Sconiers; the motion passed with Councilmember Vallee and Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

3. Request Easement from the WCBCC for East Side Airport Access

Mr. Townsend presented on Request Easement from the WCBCC for East Side Airport Access.

A motion was made to approve the request for an Easement from the WCBCC for East Side Airport Access by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed with Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

4. Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Environmental Assessment Amendment #1

Mr. Townsend presented on Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Environmental Assessment Amendment #1.

A motion was made go approve the Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Environmental Assessment Amendment #1 by Councilmember Vallee and seconded by Councilmember Bierbaum; the motion passed with Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

5. Notice-To-Proceed to Garver Engineers for Design of Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Project

Mr. Townend presented on Notice-To-Proceed to Garver Engineers for Design of Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Project.

A motion was made to approve the Notice-To-Proceed to Garver Engineers for Design of Runway 9/27 Expansion & Widening Project by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed with Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

A motion was made to direct staff to develop a ground lease program and proceed with the development of the hanger pads that are directly south of the current hangers on the north south runway and to develop an economic study by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed with Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

5. Jacobs Bi-Monthly update

Mr. Monroe, a representative from Jacobs, asked the council why they had not received his bi-monthly updates.

Mr. Townsend stated that updates for August, September, October, and November had been provided to the council.

Mr. Townsend mentioned that it is Jacobs' responsibility to ensure their items are added to the agenda.

Mr. Monroe stated that he had sent Mr. Townsend an email.

Mr. Townsend responded that staff must be notified to add items to the agenda.

Mr. Monroe mentioned that the main project he has been working on is the city's SCADA system and then provided his update.

Mr. Bierbaum asked about Lift Station 2 and whether it had been a case of vandalism.

Mr. Bierbaum inquired if there was a police report.

Mr. Monroe confirmed that there is.

Mr. Monroe stated that Chief Hurley came out and investigated.

Mr. Bierbaum responded, "That's not what he told me."

Mr. Bierbaum asked if it was not the policy to install check valves on pressured lines in case hoses like this break.

Mr. Bierbaum explained that other places in the county have a practice of adding check valves to prevent sewage from being injected back into the system.

Mr. Bierbaum asked if it is Jacobs' policy to add a check valve on a force main.

Mr. Monroe stated that the force main is not under their contract.

Mr. Bierbaum remarked that Jacobs maintains the pumps.

Mr. Bierbaum explained that when the city has an issue, it's not Jacobs' problem, but the city's problem.

Mr. Vallee asked if he had sent the hoses back to the manufacturer for an opinion.

Mr. Monroe confirmed that he has the hoses in his bay and is waiting for the police report.

Mr. Vallee asked if there was a warranty for the hoses.

Mr. Vallee stated that if it is vandalism, he would like to know; if not, he would like to get input from an expert.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that from the pictures he saw, it looks like dry rot.

Mr. Vallee stated that he would like to know which issue they are dealing with in this case.

Mr. Sconiers mentioned that they have had this issue in the past with vandalism.

Mr. Hurley stated that he is not an expert on this subject.

Mr. Hurley recommended bringing in an expert to assess the situation and advise on what needs to be done.

Mr. Sconiers asked why they haven't turned the hoses over to Mr. Hurley.

Mr. Hurley replied, "The chain of custody is out the window."

Mr. Sconiers stated that he is curious why DEP hasn't called them back.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that these facilities are not being managed properly.

Mr. Bierbaum mentioned that the county installs check valves on force mains to prevent sewage spills if a hose breaks.

Mr. Bierbaum said that when the city has trouble with DEP, Jacobs leaves them "high and dry."

Mrs. Heavilin asked if they should add a fence around the facility.

Mr. Hurley stated that all the facilities should have a fence.

Mr. Sconiers asked what happens now, considering they found Jacobs in breach of contract.

Mr. Adkinson stated that he wants to avoid discussing this further due to possible litigation that may result.

6. Airport Terminal Update

Cliff Knauer provided an update on the airport terminal.

Mr. Knauer stated that the project is progressing very well.

Mr. Bierbaum asked about the expected completion date.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if there had been any issues.

Mr. Knauer replied that the plumbing had to be redone.

Mr. Knauer emphasized that they want to ensure there are no issues once the project is handed over.

Mr. Knauer also mentioned that the floors turned out amazing.

Mr. Jimmy stated that there have been significant delays.

Mr. Jimmy stated that they are very close to being completed.

Mr. Jimmy mentioned that they ran into an issue with the plumbing contractor and had to make repairs to the plumbing.

Mr. Vallee asked if this will be done by Valentine's Day.

Mr. Jimmy stated, Possibly.

Mr. Jimmy stated that additional managers have been brought to the site.

Mr. Jimmy expressed his appreciation for everyone's help with this project.

Mr. Jimmy wants to make sure they turn over something that the city will be proud of.

Mr. Jimmy stated that he will soon be conducting walk-through inspections.

4. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES
A. Code Review and Land Use Committee
1. 2nd Reading - Chapter 14 Nuisances and Hazards or Insanitary Conditions

Mr. Adkinson presented on 2nd Reading - Chapter 14 Nuisances and Hazards or Insanitary Conditions.

A motion was made to hold 2nd Reading - Chapter 14 Nuisances and Hazards or Insanitary Conditions by Councilmember Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Vallee; the motion passed without objection.

5. REQUEST TO BE ON THE AGENDA

6. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mrs. Henderson, a representative of Forward Defuniak, stated that she attended the table talk held by the city manager, which was a great opportunity for citizens to ask questions.

7. CITY ATTORNEY
A. Well #10 Property (Portion) Sell Update & Direction

Mr. Adkinson presented an update on the Well #10 Property Portion Sale and direction.

Mr. Adkinson stated that the actual purchase price of the property was...

Mr. Adkinson stated that the purchase price would be $111,887.64, plus $4,000 for doc stamps and recording costs.

A motion was made to approve selling the property to Mr. Hall for $111,887.64 plus $4,000 and have the buyer pay the doc stamps and the recording cost by Councilmember

Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember Valle; the motion passed with Councilmember Heavilin voting nay.

Mrs. Heavilin stated that we should aim for a profit on this property.

Mr. Vallee asked if it wasn't part of the original agreement that the property was going to be sold back to them for the original price.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if this was done verbally.

Mr. Adkinson stated that there is nothing in writing, and if the council doesn't want to proceed, you don't have to.

Mr. Adkinson stated that if the property is not sold to the Halls, there will need to be sealed bids for the property.

Mr. Adkinson added that he is comfortable with this being a legitimate transaction because we are returning the property to the original party.

Mr. Harrison asked where the $7,000 figure came from.

Mr. Adkinson stated that Mr. Hall proposed that original price by the acre.

Mr. Hall stated that a lot of the property is wetlands.

Mr. Hall stated that it is a fair price for wetlands.

Mr. Adkinson stated that he will consult with his attorney and get a closing document set up.

8. LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

9. EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

Mr. Townsend thanked staff for their efforts during the winter storm.

Mr. Townsend stated that the table talk went well and he received great input.

Mr. Townsend mentioned that annexation was a topic that came up.

Mr. Adkinson stated that there will be a tax burden for people who are annexed into the city.

Mr. Adkinson explained that there are also savings associated with people's water bills.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that Councilmember McKnight was an advocate for annexation.

Mrs. Henderson stated that we should market it.

10. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Vallee thanked Mr. Townsend for the table talk event.

Mr. Vallee stated that he hopes everyone was safe during the winter storm.

Mr. Sconiers thanked the council for the appointment to the TDC.

Mr. Sconiers asked Mr. Adkinson for an update on the RFQ for the effluent line.

Mr. Adkinson stated that they are working on finalizing the template form and expect to go live with it within the week.

Mr. Harrison thanked Mack Campbell-Work for everything he did for the community and for him.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned 7:25 PM.

Approved:

Bob Campbell, Mayor

THE CITY OF DEFUNIAK SPRINGS
CORPORATE
SEAL
1901

ATTEST:

Minutes taken by Rafael Ali
City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given