MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Regular Meeting of The City Council

March 8, 2022

A Regular City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

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

Ms. Anita Gibson provided the invocation and Ms. Alicia Phillips led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

A moment of silence was held for the Ukraine.

The City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Lavander Hearn	Deputy Mayor
	Rip Dyal	Councilmember
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Carie Shealy	City Clerk

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Pat Dovale, Police Commander; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Rob Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; Samantha Senger, Assistant to the City Manager/PIO; Erik Montgomery, Helpdesk Support Tech, and Sam Shaller, Fire Inspector.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. **Agenda:** Regular Meeting of March 8, 2022. (22-122)

2. **Minutes:** N/A

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to approve the Agenda as presented for the Regular meeting of March 8, 2022.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Awards and Presentations:

1. Presentation of Plaque to City Council by Cocoa Youth Athletics League. (22-128). (Cocoa Youth Athletic League)

Ms. Alicia Phillips with Cocoa Youth Athletic League presented a plaque to City Council and staff in appreciation for the support to the League throughout the last three years. The children are excelling and to give back to the kids that they serve is much appreciated and they look forward to a continued partnership. They hope for around four hundred kids this next year.

Mayor Blake thanked her and noted it all starts with leadership and they are celebrating the positive accomplishments of the League. He further thanked Councilmember Goins and Deputy Mayor Hearn for their involvement as coaches as well.

Ms. Phillips announced on April 2nd they will be hosting a tournament that will bring in teams from all over Florida. It starts at 7:30 a.m. and goes until 5 p.m.

2. Proclamation: Proclaiming the Month of March, 2022 as: "International Women's Day". (22-123). (Councilmember Koss)

Councilmember Koss read the proclamation into the record.

3. Proclamation: Proclaiming the Month of March, 2022 as "Women's History Month." (22-124). (Councilmember Koss)

Councilmember Koss read the proclamation into the record.

IV. Delegations:

Kevin Bond, Cocoa, spoke about the Cocoa Conservation Area and the benefits to having trails for cross-country events. He has competed for nine years and currently runs at the collegiate level. He feels that if they were improved more teams, people, and schools would utilize them.

Jill Bond, Cocoa, announced that she had sent Council a last minute email regarding the trails and stated that she coaches both cross-country and tennis. The opportunity for a unique trail in this area would benefit runners, walkers, and school age children. She further added that the conservation area would be educational for children to be able to experience nature. There are ways to be collaborative if they want to be.

Tara Gabor, Cocoa resident of District 3, stated that on Friday the new Cocoa Newsletter arrived in her inbox. She looked forward to seeing the agenda and format for citizen participation at the upcoming strategic planning workshop. As the newsletter is a good venue she hoped the City makes it clear to all citizens that they are welcome to participate.

Judy McCluney, Cocoa resident, statement presented by Kristin Lortie. She read a statement into the record by Judy McCluney[1].

Linda Dolphin, Cocoa resident, statement presented by Kristin Lortie. She read a statement into the record by Linda Dolphin[2].

Kristin Lortie, Cocoa resident, moderator of the Cocoa Cares Facebook Group, spoke about the strategic planning workshop on Tuesday, March 15th and voiced her support for participation in the upcoming event. She mentioned the previous Strategic Plan and pointed out that the first objective encourages citizen participation. She further noted that priorities in the plan were selected by employees and not citizens, and that the objective of citizen participation was ranked as #8. She announced that citizen priorities that were compiled by Cocoa Cares will be posted on its Facebook page and she looked forward to participating in the event next week.

Steve Murphy, District 3, mentioned that he previously spoke about the City's debt and spoke with Mayor Blake. He provided his issues with the budget, one of which

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1 EXHIBIT A: Statement of Judy McCluney read by K. Lortie
2 EXHIBIT B: Statement of L.Dolphin read by K. Lortie

is the planned fire and stormwater assessments as well as the water/sewer increases for next year. He noted that city residents pay more than non-city residents pay. Additionally, last years' salary increases will have an effect on pension plans and the financial analysis does not address fire or police costs. He would like to see the City come up with a definition or report where the City Manager would provide a quarterly review with updated information and debt so that they can work on reducing that through time.

Mayor Blake spoke about the audit that the City went through and pointed out that we are transparent. He wanted to make that clear.

V. Consent Agenda:

(A) General Consent Items:

1. Approve a Change Order in the amount of $17,870.48 to the Purchase Order issued to VA Paving, Inc. for additional road paving related to the Annual Street Paving Program. (22-135). (Public Works Director)

2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Utility Work by Highway Contractor Agreement between the City of Cocoa and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); To Authorize the City Manager to Accept the Official Cost Estimate and Payment Terms per Section 3.b of the Utility Work by Highway Contractor Agreement. (22-91). (Utilities Director)

(B) Multi-Year Contracts:

None.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve the Consent agenda.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. Public Hearings:

1. Approval of the second reading of Ordinance 02-2022 regarding updates to the Special Events Ordinance. (22-97). (Assistant to the CM/PIO)

Attorney Garganese read Ordinance No. 02-2022 into the record, by title only as follows. He advised this is the second and final reading of the ordinance and no changes have been made since first reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 02-2022

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COCOA, BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA; AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION, ARTICLE XI OF THE CITY CODE RELATING SPECIAL EVENTS; PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF PRIOR INCONSISTENT ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS, INCORPORATION INTO THE CODE, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Senger noted this is second reading and she explained the revision being made to Tier 1 and Tier 2 events.

Mayor Blake opened the hearing to the public. There being no response, the public portion of the hearing was closed.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to approve Ordinance No. 02-2022 on Second and Final reading.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VII. Council Business:

1. Approve Resolution No. 2022-021, amending the meeting frequency of the Police Community Relations Advisory Board; and to Consider the Appointment of Mr. Demetrius Thomas as the Mayor's appointee. (Administrative Services Director) (21-125). (Administrative Services Director)

Ms. Gemmati advised that an attempt to hold a meeting on February 24th was made but there was no quorum. She also noted that Mr. Wash has been contacted several times by the City Clerk's office but they have not received a response as to whether or not he wished to remain on the board. All other members responded.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to approve the item.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VIII. City Business:

1. Approval of Resolution No. 2022-022 adopting a revised Master Fee Schedule for City Facility Rentals, Special Events and Parades. (22-99). (Assistant to the CM/PIO)

Ms. Senger explained that the first change was just approved by the approval of Ordinance No. 02-2022. She further explained the change in the price for public safety personal and why those fees needed to be updated.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve the item.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Multi-Year Contracts:

None.

IX. Informational Agenda:

None.

X. Reports:

Gregg Stoll, 2203 Salem Drive, Cocoa, provided an update from the SCTPO/CAC meeting that was held on March 7th. He provided information on grants that were received and advised that they are keeping an eye out for improvement projects on SR 524. Lastly, he spoke briefly about bus stops and that SCAT or 321 Transit will have ridership counts from the information technology system so they will be able to see usage and know where funding needs to go.

Ms. Bowman reported that the kiosk on the building is up and running and there were twenty-one payments made yesterday during lunch hours when Customer Service is closed. They are still working out a few issues and will put information out on social media when everything is worked out.

Ms. Senger announced that they started an E-Newsletter that will go out the last Friday of every month. It is through subscription and they are still continuing with the quarterly newsletter as well.

Chief Lamm provided an update on Covid and shared that a lot of the CDC guidance has changed. Protective measures are now being done through a grading system which is coming from hospitals. If they to go high-level protective measures precautions will be taken; however, they are continuing to see a downward trend of positive cases and upward trend of vaccinations.

Mayor Blake commended Chief Lamm and Commander Dovale for the fire that happened a few days ago. He thanked them and citizens for stepping up and helping those in need.

Chief Lamm added that there were forty-eight displaced residents and all but one has returned home. They have continued to be in contact with the manager to ensure that everyone had somewhere to stay. Mayor Blake reiterated his thanks.

City Manager Whitten piggybacked on their statements and shared that Chief Lamm had already worked out the opening of the Civic Center in the event they needed it for shelter for those who the Red Cross could not accommodate, before he had even conversed with him. Staff takes a lot of abuse but these are the moments that make you proud. He further pointed out that the City was prepared to put them in hotel rooms if needed. This was all worked out before he was provided an update.

City Manager Whitten added that during the last pay cycle the city was transitioning from SunTrust to Truist and some issues were encountered. Finance already had a process in place for those employees who needed an advance and provided hard checks to them.

He further spoke about an email that came in from citizen Henry Preston regarding Utilities employees' Billy Cudlipp, Jeff Burton, Austin Tanner, Ron Cavallo, David Hudec, and Bill Losee. Mr. Preston acknowledged their work ethic and thanked them for the quick response time and professionalism in responding to a water issue that he had. City Manager Whitten thanked them for taking the time to help citizens.

Mayor Blake thanked the employees as well and reiterated his belief in all of the staff.

Lastly, City Manager Whitten mentioned the conversation regarding the City's debt that arose earlier and clarified that the City has very little debt. He clarified what the debt was and that in terms of transparency they approve a CIP each year and Stantec provides a financial model.[3] In addition, they received an investment report, a revenue sufficiency report and an analysis on water and wastewater revenues.[4] He would send City Council a report on Ms. Dolphin's request and that it was originally brought forward as an audited fund balance request. He further explained that this comes up once a year as a CAFR and when she was notified about that she then requested a spreadsheet. He wanted to clarify that.

Mr. Smith announced that Dixon Blvd. would be closed starting Friday, April 3rd and it would be a full closure. It would also be closed on April 18th for the full day as well. After that it would be Highland Avenue but that date is a little further out.

City Manager Whitten stated that he, Mr. Smith and Ms. Essing sat down with the TPO staff in regards to the SR 524 stop. They walked through strategy with them.

Mayor Blake felt that the City Manager and Staff were like the undertakers and he believed in everyone, including employees and citizens.

Councilmember Koss shared that she had a Zoom meeting and it was something new, as she was trying to make it easier for citizens to attend. There were about sixteen people on the call and they came up with some great ideas. She advised she had been speaking with the City Manager on strategic planning since he came on board. She believes in it and feels a plan is needed too.[5]

She voiced her excitement for the monthly newsletter and noted that she had been asking for bi-weekly report.[6] She would like a bulleted list as she is being asked about things that she should have known about. The weekly report to Council is a tool that other municipalities are doing weekly.

In closing, she thanked everyone for their attendance at the Zoom meeting and community meetings and for all of their input. She would do her best on Tuesday to incorporate that.

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3 Councilmember Goins left the meeting at 7:01 p.m.
4 Councilmember Goins returned at 7:02 p.m.
5 Mayor Blake left the meeting at 7:07 p.m.
6 Mayor Blake returned at 7:10 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Hearn attended an event on Merritt Island where they restored an apartment complex and thought it was a really good event. It was good to see how people are willing to come in and invest in our communities.

He mentioned his Mayor's Fitness Walk Event at Bracco Pond. A few citizens attended and they were able to get an outlook at the potential for Bracco Pond in years to come.

Deputy Mayor Hearn advised that the Brevard Heritage Council was having a walking tour through Cocoa Village on March 19th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. and he was looking forward to rescheduling the tour of Matthews Hope Ministries. He could not attend the one previously scheduled.

He thanked staff for doing what they do and ended with noting his attendance at the ribbon cutting for the new police substation at Provost Park.

Councilmember Dyal shared a story about the Utilities department and the exceptional work they did on Parapet Drive. They did a wonderful job fixing the sidewalk. He thanked Commander Dovale for the crime watch meeting in Coventry and feels they always get great information at those meetings.

He thought Mardi Gras was a lot of fun and the antique fire truck will be on display April 2nd at the car show. He thanked staff as well for all that they do and he enjoyed the dedication as well of the new police substation.

Lastly, Councilmember Dyal provided a report on the Mardi Paws event and noted it was a great event as well and they raised money for the Humane Society on Cox Road.

City Manager Whitten mentioned the meeting of the Framework Group and that they are having a meeting this Thursday night regarding the redevelopment of the old Bank of America building. He clarified it is their meeting and not a City meeting.

He further mentioned bi-weekly reports and there are cities who have a lot more staff and there is always something that will be missed. He has talked to staff about the information that they could provide and wants to ensure that it would not interfere with their daily work. Additionally, nothing has changed about workshops other than the narrative that a small group of folks are presenting that information. The format will still consist of strategic planning. The Council has not sat down as a Council and said that these are our strategic issues to present. He provided

information on the format of the workshop and just because a few individuals say something is not happening does not make it not factual.

He provided all of the public input opportunities that citizens will have at the workshop and pointed out Titusville's plan is only one page and the City's is one hundred. There will be plenty of opportunities for citizen input. He shared all of the upcoming meetings in regards to strategic planning and budget as well.

The upcoming workshop was also highlighted in the new electronic newsletter.

City Manager Whitten stated that we have had a large amount of requests in addition to doing what we do on a daily basis. He reiterated that the Framework Group meeting was not a city meeting and staff would continue to have a dialogue on a meaningful product that would provide updates to council.

Councilmember Goins mentioned that the Joe Lee Smith pool was closed all summer due to the lack of life guards. They are offering a lifeguard class on April 1-3, 2022 and the class costs $253. They are paying lifeguards $13.50 per hour. He asked if it would be possible to offer two sponsorships from the City and two from Diamond Square CRA. The total would be $506 for each approved the sponsorships.

* **CONSENSUS AMONG COUNCIL TO BRING THIS ITEM BACK AS AN AGENDA ITEM.**

Councilmember Goins spoke about affordable housing and that people are moving out of Cocoa in order to find places to live. He felt that they need to address zoning issues and that there is a need for multi-use or mixed-use inside of Diamond Square.

He mentioned the Mayor's Challenge Event held this past weekend where they did a trash pickup. He thanked Ms. Senger and Ms. Horst for posting the notices regarding the cleanup.

Councilmember Goins asked if there was an update from the job fair and stated many people were unaware of it but happy that it was done. Ms. Gemmati advised that they partnered with CareerSource Brevard and focused heavily on Cocoa employers and had a few outside employers as well. There were about twenty eight employers. Feedback was received and it was requested that it be done later

in the afternoon as there were only about fifty attendees and more time was needed to promote it. Councilmember Goins thanked all for being there.

Mayor Blake thanked all of Council and staff. He spoke of his attendance at the Jack and Jill of America were presentations were done at the Kennedy Space Center. He further mentioned the Black History Month Event at Emma Jewel Charter Academy where Ms. Alberta Wilson was acknowledged for her accomplishments.

He attended the Brevard Homeless Coalition this weekend and it is a universal issue that needs to be addressed.

Mayor Blake thanked Sams Club who donated hand sanitizer to various organizations and stated that this Thursday he would be in Winter Garden for the Matthew Hope Ministries Tour.

He thanked Ms. Pagliarini for the Firehouse Kick Off event this Thursday and attended the homegoing celebration for Mr. Willie Wright, a Monroe High School graduate and legend.

In closing, Mayor Blake asked to keep the Ukraine in your prayers ad to buy local, spend local, and keep it local.

XI. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to adjourn the Regular meeting of March 8, 2022.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Michael C. Blake

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

City of Cocoa CORPORATE SEAL FLORIDA

Carie Shealy, MMC, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A: Statement of Judy McCluney read by K. Lortie

Gmail

Kristin Lortie <cocoacarescitizens@gmail.com

tatement for Council meeting of 3-8-22

message

udy McCluney <judymccluney@gmail.com> Mon, Mar 7, 2022 at 9:31 PM
o: Kristin Lortie <cocoacarescitizens@gmail.com>

My statement for you to read at the meeting:

What do we love about Cocoa? What do we enjoy and cherish? I bet the top answers will be nature and less crowding. Places you can walk, jog, or watch egrets fly. And now we can add another way to enjoy a real natural Florida experience. It's called the Cocoa Conservation Area. We have it because in 2003 Cocoa applied for and got a sizable grant from the Florida Community Trust. It was to be used to purchase land between Range Road near Cocoa High School across to S.R. 524 for conservation. So Cocoa purchased that land, and signed the contract to care and maintain the area as a native Florida plant and animal preserve. The agreement includes keeping out invasive species, using controlled burns, and trail maintenance. In return for these reasonable costs Cocoa gets an amazing place. See it for yourself. A good way to do that is to take a guided tour. You can find out when one is being given by going to the site of the Cocoa Cares Facebook Group. They are a group of citizens who support sharing ideas to improve Cocoa, and citizen participation in government. This project, which they and many others support, is a major asset. I urge the City of Cocoa to meet its commitment for the Cocoa Conservation area, including appropriate spending for it in the upcoming priorities and budgeting meetings. Thanks.

Judy McCluney

(My address is 1908 Manor Dr., Cocoa 32922)

EXHIBIT B: Statement of L. Dolphin read by K. Lortie

Gmail

Kristin Lortie <kristin.lortie@gmail.com

tatement

nessage

ldolphin@dolphinins.com <ldolphin@dolphinins.com> Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 2:02 P
o: Kristin Lortie <kristin.lortie@gmail.com>

Thank you council members for your public service. At times, I am certain it seems thankless.

However, today, I am asking you to make your job just a a little bit harder, by asking you to allow more citizen participation in city spending decisions. I know it is hard to listen to disparate voices but I believe that Cocoa will be the better for it.

First, please solicit tax payer participation in the upcoming planning session scheduled for 3/15.

Second, please direct the city manager by email to respond to my emails and freedom of information requests so that I can be prepared with the type of fiscal information that I need to be a valued participant. I have been waiting for weeks for a response to my request for current fund balances and statuses of spending on approved capital projects. I have not received a response from Ms Shealy, Ms Bowman or Mr Whitten. Last week I sent a spreadsheet of exactly what I was looking for in case there was any confusion and have yet to receive an acknowledgement of the email.

My third request today is that you endorse the Cocoa Cares Platform for increasing citizen engagement and actively respond to their ideas. The more Cocoa citizen voices are solicited, the more inclusive and representative our city can become.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Linda Dolphin
2100 Indian River Dr
Cocoa FL 32922
954-270-1979

Sent from my iPhone