MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Regular Meeting of The City Council

February 28, 2023

A Regular City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 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.

Mr. Willis from Emma Jewel Charter Academy provided the invocation and students from Emma Jewel Charter Academy led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. They also provided their School Pledge.

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:

Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Evander Collier, Chief of Police; Lora Howell, Deputy Finance Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Mitch Lawyer, Tech Services Supervisor; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; and Eric Montgomery, Helpdesk Support Tech.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. **Agenda:** Regular Meeting of February 28, 2023. (23-121)

2. **Minutes:** (a) Regular Meeting of December 13, 2022 (23-119)
(b) Regular Meeting of January 24, 2023 (23-122)

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to Amend the Agenda for the Regular meeting of February 28, 2023, by removing Item III.4.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Hearn; Seconded by Mayor Blake, to approve the Minutes for the Regular meeting of December 13, 2022 and January 24, 2023 as written.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Awards and Presentations:

1. Presentation by the Emma Jewel Charter Academy Step Team. (23-142). (Mayor Blake)

The Step Team provided a performance and showed the First-Place trophy that they received for the Cocoa/Rockledge Holiday Parade. Additionally, each student introduced themselves and thanked councilmembers for their support.

2. Proclamation: "Teacher of the Year". (23-137). (Councilmember Koss)

Councilmember Koss presented Ms. Pam Brockmeyer of Cocoa High School with flowers and a Proclamation recognizing her as Brevard Schools Foundation Teacher of the Year. Ms. Brockmeyer thanked the City for their support and noted that passion is why she does what she does.

Mayor Blake pointed out that she is also the coach of the girl's golf team and in 2016 the team had the highest gpa in the state of Florida.

Mayor Blake announced that Ms. Brockmeyer would be presented a Key to the City and would like everyone to return when that presentation is made.

Principal Stewart noted that from a personal standpoint she could not be more grateful for Ms. Brockmeyer. Her passion, community service, etc. cannot be paralleled and that is why she is the Teacher of the Year.

3. Certificates of Recognition to Cocoa High School's Class of 2023 Valedictorian, Jaden Edgecombe and Salutatorian, Angel Parham. (23-138). (Councilmember Goins)

Councilmember Goins spoke on behalf of these students being recognized and felt that today was special because it was about excellence and education.

Both of these students have not only excelled academically but also athletically. Being an athlete is hard enough and adding on academics makes it even harder.

He announced that for the first time in Cocoa High School's history, they have two African American scholars and athletes. He spoke to the students' families and thanked them for their dedication as well and for instilling character in their children as that should always remain the first priority. He stated that as a City they want to make sure these students and families are honored.

Angel Parham was recognized with a Certificate as the Salutatorian for the Class of 2023.

Jaden Edgecombe was recognized with a Certificate as the Valedictorian for the Class of 2023.

The students thanked Councilmember Goins, Council, their families, and others who were in attendance for their support.

Mayor Blake thanked the families for their support as well. He has known all of them for many years and spoke of their greatness. He further noted that no one ever stops learning and these students are the future.

Principal Stewart stated that she could not be prouder of these students as they are exemplary and represent the Senior class so well.

4. ~~Proclamation: Proclaiming the Month of March, 2023 as "Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month." (23-139). (Deputy Mayor Hearn)~~

- **This item was removed from the Agenda.**

IV. Delegations:

Thomas Cole, Emma Jewel Charter Academy, thanked the Council for allowing them to be here tonight and stated that local city government is the purest form of democracy. People will respect what you inspect. Each of the council members are being inspected at every meeting but if he wanted to speak at a higher level of government, he would not be able to, but in local government you can fill out a card and have the attention of council members. He thanked Council for their transparency and of their commitment to the school. He feels that because of them the students can flourish. He further stated that because of them the fruits of their labor are now coming to fruition. When things get dark he asked them to think about the harvest time.

John Verdi, founder of Hey-Blue!, announced that on March 7th from 4-8 p.m. there would be a Design Thinking Workshop at Endeavor Elementary School. He provided handouts and invited all to the event. He explained what the workshop would entail as well as the mini-workshop being held the same night. He noted that this is all to make positive connections with police officers.

At the request of Councilmember Koss, Mr. Verdi spoke about a point system that would be in place for people for participating in the HeyBlue! Program. He explained how points could be earned and what they can be used for. Points can be earned at the upcoming workshop as well.

Councilmember Goins advised that he was on the Cap Team for this organization and was begging people to participate in this event. They are trying to bridge the gap between cops and citizens.

Mr. Verdi requested that if anyone was interested that they rsvp because the max was sixty people.

Deputy Mayor Hearn thanked him for their efforts and that Endeavor was in his district. He asked if there was a digital file that could be shared.

Mayor Blake stated that there are several churches among him tonight and asked him to reach out to them as well.

Debra Dukes, Cocoa resident, thanked Mr. Cole for his statement as well as staff for all they do and spoke about a special event that was held in respect to their

trailblazers. She further mentioned upcoming events and advised that the Cocoa Police Department would be in attendance as their goal is to build bridges between all of the resources. Talent would also be displayed in local community centers. There are many great icons in the City and they want to highlight them.

Dawn Turner, Cocoa resident, purchased her home in Diamond Square fifteen years ago and had always felt that it was a dark street. When she got home yesterday it was lit up and she was very thankful. She wanted to thank the City.

Victoria Jones, Cocoa resident, called for accountability after there were issues with Officer Johnson, of which she explained in detail. She further provided more information as to other things that have happened to the officer. She believes that the issues should not longer go unaddressed. She asked that an official investigation be done on the matter.

Councilmember Goins advised that what she was referring to was a situation that took place at the District 3 Chief's Watch meeting. Some of the attendees took the meeting as an opportunity to slander, be aggressive and even sometimes racist in nature. When officers are being followed it becomes unprofessional. No officer should ever have to look behind them and wonder if they are being followed just to do a job. She is doing the job because the Chief gave her that job.

Councilmember Goins asked that everyone back off of the police officers and support them. He further asked Councilmembers that when something is going on in their district that they be mindful of staff. As a Council or staff, they do not mind accountability but he noted they would also (council and staff) not be threatened or harmed because they are doing their job.

Mayor Blake asked that people pray for the City. It is imperative.

Councilmember Dyal pointed out that Copper the Hound was named by students at various schools in the City and when Copper retires he belongs to the City. He feels that Officer Johnson is doing a great job. This needs to stop because the dog is a part of the City and he is a service dog trained to interact with people in the City.

Deputy Mayor Hearn stated that this has been going on for several months and has snowballed into other things. He echoed Councilmember Goins' sentiments and asked all to pay attention. He stressed that as a Council they will continue to push forward.

Chief Collier advised that the issue with Officer Johnson was being looked into.

Mayor Blake mentioned the vehicle that goes around the community with the Chief's face, his photo and the City Manager's photo on it. He agreed that things are escalating but also believes that prayer changes things.

Councilmember Koss was not aware of the incident involving Officer Johnson and stated that there are a number of people out there who are passionate about specific issues but a movement of scorch and burn has evolved. Others have attached to this thinking that the coalition can bring something down. Challenges cannot be raised because they are leveraged by those people. It is currently impossible to function. There are good things happening and there are a lot of good things of which need to be built on. The other stuff going on is not effective.

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to extend Delegations.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Gloria Weatherspoon, Cocoa resident, agreed with Ms. Jones' remarks and introduced herself. She is a potential resident who does research about where she may want to reside. She thanked the police officers for the work that they do as well as Councilmember Goins for his help. There are a lot of great things happening in Cocoa and Officer Johnson is a great officer that they do not want to lose. Ms. Weathersppon stated she would continue to be involved in the community and mentioned an event this past Saturday where they served lunch to the police officers.

Cheyenne Livingston, Cocoa resident, was in attendance last month to ask for help with an assessment of $8,000 that he along with several others were being charged. He thanked Mayor Blake, Deputy Mayor Hearn, Councilmember Goins, and Chief Collier because out of nine people who the special assessment was placed upon, six were helped. They no longer have to come up with the money and it was a great help and deeply appreciated. In closing, he noted that Deputy Mayor Hearn came to his home and sat and spoke with him. This boosted the morale of the elderly and disabled who thought they were going to lose their homes.

Deputy Mayor Hearn shared that this was emotional for him because many things are done off of the dias. All of those that were helped were disabled or veterans. All of the lies, slander and other stuff going on takes away from them being able to do things like this which is helping citizens. All of the council members have families and other commitments and it is hard. He believed that these actions need to be recognized. This is just one story and they will continue to have those with issues but Council will continue to fight for the people of Cocoa.

V. Consent Agenda:

(A) General Consent Items:

1. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY23 Budget BAF#23-045-A, Recognizing the Revenue for the Arbor Mitigation Fund and Assigning Budget as the Match for the Forestry Grant - Tree Installation at various City Parks, Properties, and rights-of-way. Authorize the City Manager to issue the related Purchase Orders. (23-100). (Public Works Director)

2. Award Bid No. B-23-04-COC, Viera Pump Station Chlorination Improvements, Project No. WS21VP to L7 Construction, Inc. of Sanford, Florida, in the Amount of $833,700; To Approve a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Approve Change Orders in an amount not to exceed $83,370 (10% of the contract amount), for a total cost of $917,070; To Approve a Resolution Amending the FY2023 Budget, BAF# 23-044-PT; To Authorize the City Manager to execute the Contract. (23-98). (Utilities Director)

(B) Multi-Year Contracts:

3. Approve the Participation in a Multi-Year Cooperative Purchase Agreement with Trane of Maitland, Florida to Maintain and Provide Repair Services for the HVAC Systems the Dyal WTP Operates Utilizing the Racine County, Wisconsin, OMNIA Partners/Trane Contract #3341 effective September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2027 with an Option to Renew the Contract for One (1) Additional Five (5) Year Period; To Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Service Agreement/Contract, Amendments, and Purchase Orders for each Fiscal Year. (23-79). (Utilities Director)

4. Approve a Piggyback Agreement with DMD Consultants, Inc. for Servicing, Abrasive Blasting, Painting, and Inspection of a Select Number of Hydrants

Utilizing the JEA Contract No. 189884 Effective June, 2020 through June, 2025; To Authorize the City Manager to Execute Any Annual Renewal Amendments Under the Original Contract. (23-94). (Utilities Director)

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to approve the Consent agenda.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. Public Hearings:

None.

VII. Council Business:

None.

VIII. City Business:

None.

Multi-Year Contracts:

None.

IX. Informational Agenda:

1. FY 2023 Budget Adjustment Report. (23-123). (Finance Director)

2. Data showing the relation between the estimated and actual income and expenses to date. (23-124). (Finance Director)

3. Approved change orders to construction contracts that the City Council has authorized the City Manager, by resolution, to approve in excess of the City Manager's spending authority. (23-125). (Finance Director)

4. Cumulative purchase approvals over $35,000 and under $50,000 for period 10/01/2022 to 1/31/2023. (23-99). (Finance Director)

5. City Council Bi-Weekly Report (February 1-23, 2023). (23-151). (City Manager)

X. Reports:

Mr. Walsh reminded everyone about the disinfection change starting on March 3rd. Water customers may notice a change in the taste of the water but he assured everyone it is safe to drink.

Chief Lamm spoke about the National Flood Insurance Program through FEMA and provided a brief background in regards to what it entails. He presented the City with a plaque because the City was recognized by them for having undertaken a series of meaningful activities to protect its citizens from losses caused by flooding and for having significantly exceeded the requirements for NFIP participation and floodplain management.

City Manager Whitten mentioned legislative priorities and that the list was forwarded to them earlier in the day. The same list was provided at the Workshop on February 23rd with the exception of #9.

Mayor Blake asked that the three of them attending Legislative Action Days in Tallahassee each take three priorities. He asked that the three they choose be conveyed to the City Manager and City Clerk, as well as the City Attorney if needed, so they would all know which ones each will be well versed on.

Councilmember Dyal thanked staff for all of the hard work they do.

Councilmember Goins spoke about the Seniors at Lunch Program at the Joe Lee Smith Center and stated it was from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. He urged everyone who could to take part in the program.

He showed photos of events that he has attended throughout the month, such as the Black History Program at Emma Jewel, the Black History Program at the Church of God, and the Black History Program at Faith Temple in Rockledge. He also showed photos from earlier in the day where he read to students at Suntree Elementary School, and reiterated his statements from earlier in the meeting about supporting the blue.

He voiced his appreciation for the Chief, Staff, and Council.

Lastly, he would like to bring back information regarding the small lots in the Diamond Square area that may be unbuildable due to size. City Manager Whitten advised that is a topic on a workshop agenda.

Councilmember Koss spoke about District 4 being the educational center of Cocoa, as it contains Eastern Florida State College, the Florida Solar Energy Center, Cocoa High School and Brevard Adult and Community Education. It is also a recreational hub. In her experience, cities with some sort of collegiate influence enhances cultural life as well. She reiterated that there are a lot of diverse cultural opportunities available.

Deputy Mayor Hearn showed photos of events that have gone on in District 2 including the Hilltop Cemetery cleanup, Mardi Paws in the Park, and Matthews Hope who hosted a food truck festival.

He spoke about the previous workshop and was glad to see things being done and for upcoming projects. Lastly, he attended a virtual meeting last night and it was the first meeting of the Young Elected Officials meetings throughout the state of Florida. He heard some great ideas and looked forward to bringing that information to Council.

Councilmember Goins presented Mayor Blake a plaque that was presented at a recent program recognizing him as a Brevard County Black History Hero for 2023. He is the first black Mayor in the City and he spoke of his appreciation for him and all that he does. Mayor Blake thanked Pastor Ferguson and his staff for the honor.

Mayor Blake mentioned that he and the City Manager met with Capt. John Murray and a few others from the Port and they spoke about the correlation between the Port and the City of Cocoa. He stressed that the City needs press and it is imperative that Brightline come to our City.

Mayor Blake showed photos of events he has attended over the past few weeks such as Mardi Gras, several Black History events, one of which recognized himself and his father, Dick Blake; the Emma Jewel Charter Academy acknowledgement of Alvin Blackmon Sr., Mardi Paws in the Park, Vaya Space event, Community Literacy Night at Cocoa High School and participating as a guest chef at Emma Jewel Charter Academy.

He thanked staff and wished all a good night.

XI. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Councilmember Goins, to adjourn the Regular meeting of February 28, 2023.**

AYES: **Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss**

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Carie Shealy, MMC, City Clerk