

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Meeting
Monday, August 9, 2021

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, August 9, 2021 at 3:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Tracy Upchurch, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Tracy Upchurch, Mayor/City Commissioner
Nancy Sikes-Kline, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner
Roxanne Horvath, City Commissioner
John Valdes, City Commissioner
Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner

John Regan, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services
David Birchim, Director, Planning and Building
Reuben Franklin, Director, Public Works
Todd Grant, Director, Utilities
Melissa Wissel, Communications Manager
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief
Carlos Aviles, Fire Chief
Laura Morse, Recording Secretary

2. General Public Comments

Mayor Upchurch advised if time permitted, there would be an opportunity for the public to speak when the meeting ended.

Public comment was opened, and the Commission heard from the following members of the public:

- Martha Mickler
- Ron Mickler
- Nancy Pellicer

Public comment was closed.

3. Discussion of the Utility and Public Works Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Projects.

Todd Grant, Director, Utilities, noted the following regarding Public Works and Utilities CIP projects:

- Reuben Franklin, Director, Public Works, was vital in the Utilities CIP, and ensured the engineering component, design, and review went well
- Public Works' staff collaborated to address the CIP Plan which changed in its public presentation and internal handling, was addressed numerous times throughout the year, and addressed two main issues:
 - Emergencies requiring a Plan task replacement
 - County and FDOT utilities were within another's right-of-way, which were incorporated into CIP readjustments

- When an agency had two or three unexpected projects, it affected how the CIP was addressed and modified, and staff consistently confronted the topic to ensure the best was accomplished

Mr. Grant previewed the Key Updates to the CIP, which included the Lift Stations, Resilience Program, West Augustine Sewer and Upcoming Plans and Projects.¹ He introduced Stephen Slaughter, Engineering Manager.

Mr. Slaughter reviewed the 13 FEMA Lift Stations damaged during Hurricane Matthew and flooded during Hurricane Irma. He added the following:

- Lift Station 6 would be started that week
- Lift Station 4 would be started in the next few weeks
- Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan at Lift Station 24 required adjustment but had been resolved
- Construction for all 13 Lift Stations and the Arricola Avenue Force Main should be finalized the end of February 2023
- Lift Station 24 construction would continue through end of November 2023

At the suggestion of Mayor Upchurch, Mr. Slaughter acknowledged that signage at the lift stations would be reviewed for better public notification as to whether the project was for resiliency or FEMA. He introduced Jessica Beach, Chief Resilience Officer.

Ms. Beach reviewed the Resilience Program updates which included vision and structure based on Policy, Planning, Project Implementation, Funding, and Education and Outreach. She elaborated on the following during her presentation:

- Building Code Task Force goal to review lot grading plan for better comprehension of drainage impacts of single family lots under construction

¹ Included with original Commission packet

- University of Florida (UF) Septic Tank Sea Level Rise Study was 100% grant funded through the State
- South Davis Shores flooding issue analyzed with community input and project funding opportunity
- Project implementation was complex and time consuming from permitting to construction phase and for obtaining project funding
- Lift Stations funded through FEMA program
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funded through FEMA, different ways to get projects funded
- Lake Maria Sanchez project:
 - Pump station design at 90%
 - Flood wall component challenging since working with private property owners with 60% design plan
 - Addressed storm drainage improvements around City Hall at 60% design
 - Complications with touching infrastructure that prompted touching more infrastructure
 - Estimated six to eight months out with securing design and going to permitting
- 43 tide check valves installed City-wide to address tidal flooding which created leaking in certain storm pipes and required money to fix which was located in the 'Stormwater operating' CIP for Fiscal Year 2022 totaling \$529,202
- HMGP funding for Avenida Menendez flood barrier would close gaps in seawall structure
- Largest FEMA funding source was the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Program
- Worked with consultant to navigate the FEMA Public Assistance Program forms to maximize funding after disasters and assist residents with Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)
- Planned to bring funding opportunity from Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Grant Improvement Plan to the Commission on August 23rd

- City contracted with Quality Engineering who acted as liaison between FEMA and residents to ensure applications to elevate homes were processed correctly
- Cost Share study through Army Corps of Engineers was a structured federal program:
 - \$3 million / three-year program which City would be responsible for \$1.5 million
 - Had advantages, but challenges were timing, funding authorizations, in-depth matrixes, benefit to cost ratios non-historic aspect
 - City would have input and community involvement
 - Would not know until end of 2021 if funding allotted

Commissioner Blonder applauded City staff for their behind-the-scenes efforts to implement these programs. She stated the opportunity for citizens to utilize the resources brought forward by the City would be very productive.

Commissioner Blonder commented that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), who emphasized causes of climate change and community adaptation, released their sixth assessment which was the first since 2013. She stated the City should fine tune planning documents for projects related to the topic. She concluded the City had a responsibility to reduce greenhouse gases, it continued to contribute to the problem, and there were limited amounts of time to lessen production of carbon dioxide.

In response to Mayor Upchurch's concern on the duration of the projects, Ms. Beach stated that time was the challenge. She noted the Army Corps study was three years with high level concepts, the large projects took years for funding and design, and FEMA needed to change from the top down; therefore, the only other option was for the City to solely fund projects since they were so expensive.

John Regan, City Manager, reminded the Commission about the nor-easter in September 2020 which caused events not seen in his forty years of dealing with stormwater; therefore, the shift to get homeowners to connect with FEMA became an important prioritization to stop flooding. He added the projects took time and only protected against small hurricanes and storms.

Commissioner Valdes indicated that climate change and ocean rise fell back on the individual to lift their houses, and since long-term projects took so much time, ways to fund individual efforts were necessary.

Commissioner Horvath stated long range adaptive measures should require an additional foot or two on seawalls.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline said the topic of teaching people to elevate their homes was discussed five years ago, she was pleased to see the education effort, and would support revisiting the adaptation plan to improve or revise it.

Mayor Upchurch thanked Ms. Beach for her leadership and expertise.

Mr. Slaughter reviewed the West Augustine septic to sewer program and the following was discussed with the Commission:

- 57 had been converted and eight were identified for conversion
- West 5th Street was the latest completed which abandoned 25 existing septic tanks
- City was identifying systems that could tie into existing sewer; however, there was a limit to their measures
- West Augustine Sewer improvements had a combination of \$250,000 annually from three separate funding sources deposited by the City since 2013, plus State appropriations, plus grants
- Process for obtaining funding from Tallahassee was tedious since only

small amounts of money could be obtained for the projects

- Gravity fed sewers were distance compromised before pipes would breach ground, then a lift station was required with a master plan to break up the area into sub-basins
- Funding was always \$250,000 annually, and when amount went to \$5 million that was with knowledge that a Master Plan was in place
- Based on results of Master Plan, would do larger sections based on location of the lift stations without being street specific since all of West Augustine needed to be captured
- Master Plan required updating, and a legislative priority for the Commission was an appropriation for \$35 million to get the entire West Augustine in one allocation, which would take many years to build
- Capacity existed for build out of West Augustine to the City Wastewater Treatment Plant
- One project was inflow and infiltration (INI) elimination which would eliminate water volume
- Pipes were being slip lined at a cost of \$500,000 annually
- Clarity of the CIP report would be enhanced to show more detail

Mr. Slaughter reviewed the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Overall Status Summary which included paving projects.

Mr. Franklin stated the chart showed all the different projects and stages of development. He requested Commission input for anything that may have been missed. He stated extensive resident outreach was done and the meeting presentation represented the community's needs.

Mr. Slaughter advised Mayor Upchurch, as per his request, that the Sevilla project anticipated final design and construction to begin next fiscal year FY 2022.

In response to Mayor Upchurch's request regarding the Tolomato lot, Mr. Franklin stated it was part of the Downtown Improvement District Project, Spanish Street would be constructed first since there were limited affects to businesses, permits and the design plan were in hand, it was ready to go out for bid, and they just needed the funding.

Mr. Regan advised that the project was in the budget.

4. Financial Analysis / Review of City-Wide Capital Improvement Projections.

Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services, reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan by Project and by Funding Source.² He noted the list alphabetically displayed those projects slated for borrowing, big ticket items requiring the issuance of debt, and items that could require future borrowing in addition to the West Augustine septic to sewer. He stated the intent was to move the process forward to May 2022 and discuss the CIP alongside revenues, so the budget office would be aware of the capital improvement needs, which allowed the financial team more flexibility when crafting the operating budget. He indicated the intent to continue forward with a complete budget book which represented each project on a single page with total dollar amounts and all funding sources, since many of the projects had multiple funding sources across the funds.

Mayor Upchurch advised Mr. Simpson the Commission was in full support of the budget book and supported measures to make his job more efficient.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline stated the CIP was on the website. She requested to be kept apprised of projects to know what was new, improved, changed, added or dropped which assisted her job with the big picture. She indicated Mr. Simpson's presentation

² Included with original Commission packet

was wonderful, City staff in both Public Works and Utilities was energetic and encouraging, and she was inspired to work with the community with the ability to provide answers on how they could personally be more resilient in their homes.

5. Discussion of Projects Involving Potential Future Borrowing.

Mr. Simpson reviewed the topic with Item 4.

Mayor Upchurch opened public comment and the Commission heard from the following member of the public:

- Mattie Harms

Public comment was closed.

Commissioner Valdes stated grass roots methods should be used to encourage people in the City to reduce the carbon footprint, such as solar panel use.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline stated bicycles and walking should be encouraged, and continued public education was a critical component to the future.

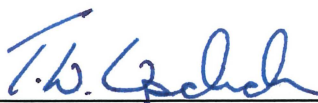
Mr. Regan suggested that FPL provide a presentation to the Commission regarding the aggregate generation and solar. He was amiable to Commissioner Horvath's earlier comments and assured her the short-and-long-term picture was being analyzed to address all fronts.

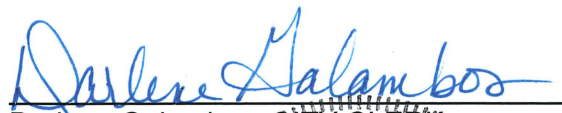
Mayor Upchurch expressed his appreciation for City staff and noted these were important steps.

6. Adjourn.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:31 P.M.³

³ Transcribed by Laura Morse


Tracy Upchurch, MAYOR


Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK

