

Proceedings of a special meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2000.

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Smith  
 Commissioner Hernan Azula  
 Commissioner Ish Edwards  
 Commissioner James Norwood, Jr.

ABSENT: Commissioner Mary Lawson Brown

Also Present: City Manager Allen R. Bush, City Attorney Edward E. Hedstrom, City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers, Finance Director Ruby M. Williams, Planning Director Adam Mengel, Police Lt. Robin Edwards, Fire Chief Rudy Howard, Main Street Manager Debbie Banks, Parks Supt. Jeff Norton, Acting Water, Sewer & Streets Supt. Sam Willis.

Mayor Smith opened the meeting and read the following call:

July 12, 2000

TO MESSRS.: MARY LAWSON BROWN, HERNAN AZULA, ISH EDWARDS,  
 AND JAMES NORWOOD, JR.

You are hereby notified that a special meeting of the City Commission is called to be held at the regular meeting place of the City Commission at City Hall, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, in the City of Palatka, at 4:00 p.m. Friday, July 14, 2000.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Set the tentative property tax millage rate for the 2000/2001 budget year
2. Amend the 1999/2000 budget
3. Accept a donation of matching funds for the riverfront bulkhead project
4. Accept a recommendation of bid on financing for three police vehicles
5. Adopt a resolution adopting language to be used in requesting bids for Kay Larkin Airport project, which is intended to maximize opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
6. Place an ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances to include indoor pistol ranges as a conditional use in C-3 zoned districts on first reading

/s/ Tim Smith  
 MAYOR

We acknowledge receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special meeting this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2000.

/s/ Hernan Azula  
 COMMISSIONER

/s/ Ish Edwards  
 COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
 COMMISSIONER

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
 COMMISSIONER

TRIM CALENDAR – SET TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE – Mr. Bush made a recommendation to tentatively adopt the rolled-back millage rate of 6.907. Commissioner Edwards moved to adopt a tentative millage rate of 6.907 for the 2000-2001 TRIM Calendar. Commissioner Azula seconded the motion.

Gene Caputo, 1308 President Street, Downtown Palatka, said services are being requested from the City, but the City always says it does not have enough funds to provide those services. Government takes a lot of criticism for not trying to roll back taxes, but while that is a good gesture on behalf of the citizens, it does not help the community. He said if it is not too late, please do not roll back the taxes, and certainly no more after this year. Palatka needs additional budget funding. Mr. Bush said the Commission discussed this in detail during the budget workshop. The City is realizing

new revenues through new construction on ad valorem taxes every year. If the millage is left at the same rate as last year, the City would only realize an additional \$31,000, which would not even pay for a police officer. The idea is to bring the rate down low enough to give people an incentive to come into the City, and the goal is to get enough revenue from growth to more than make up for any rolled back rate. The City is not taking that much from the budget through rolling back the rate; ad valorem taxes are still increasing. Mayor Smith said the City's millage was too high, which created a whole other set of difficulties. People had no incentive to come into the City. Getting the rate into the 6 mills range is much more attractive and people now have good reason to come in and take city utilities. Next year there will be a significant increase in revenue due to all the new construction going on. To answer the question, Mr. Bush said he would like to see it come down a little further, but 6 mills is much more acceptable than almost 10 mills. Mr. Caputo said the community needs to meet the challenges of growth. Mr. Bush said he and Commissioner Norwood have spoken about Downtown Palatka's law enforcement needs, and they plan to come back to them with something. Mr. Caputo said many of the lights downtown are not working, and the lights in the parking lot behind his building are out, and have been for some time. It would help if they were working. Mr. Bush said they should notify the City or FPL if those lights are out; the City pays for those lights whether they are on or not. Mr. Caputo said he would. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unopposed.

AMENDMENT TO 1999/2000 BUDGET – Mrs. Williams said these are bookkeeping items on transfers, mostly to do with grants. Commissioner Norwood moved to approve the 1999/2000 budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Azula seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

RIVERFRONT BULKHEAD PROJECT – Anne Jones and Debbie Banks presented a check for \$10,000 on behalf of Downtown Palatka and Blue Crab Festival to Jeff Norton and Mayor Smith for matching funds on the riverfront bulkhead project. Mayor Smith thanked them on behalf of the City Commission, and said their partnership is a good one.

POLICE VEHICLE FINANCING – Commissioner Norwood moved to accept staff recommendation to award the bid for financing three police cars to SunTrust Bank, North Florida, for \$68,175, for two years, at a fixed rate of 5.5%, and \$200 closing costs. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

RESOLUTION – The Clerk read a resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF POLICE CARS AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO EXECUTE AND ATTEST ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF PALATKA IN ORDER TO EFFECTUATE THE LOAN ON THE PURCHASE OF THE CARS. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the Resolution as read. Commissioner Azula seconded the motion. The results of a roll-call vote are as follows: Commissioners Azula, Edwards, Norwood, and Mayor Smith, Yes; Nays, none. The Resolution was declared adopted.

RESOLUTION – The Clerk read a resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, PROVIDING THAT INVITATIONS TO BID ON KAY LARKIN AIRPORT'S CONSTRUCTION AND/OR ENGINEERING AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACTS INCLUDE NOTICE OF THE CITY OF PALATKA'S POLICY TO MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION BY DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the Resolution as read. Commissioner Azula seconded the motion. The results of a roll-call vote are as follows: Commissioners Azula, Edwards, Norwood, and Mayor Smith, Yes; Nays, none. The Resolution was declared adopted.

ORDINANCE – The Clerk read an ordinance entitled AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 94-150(e) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING INDOOR PISTOL AND RIFLE RANGES AS A CONDITIONAL USE IN C-3 ZONED DISTRICTS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. Commissioner Edwards moved to adopt the ordinance as read.

Commissioner Norwood seconded the motion, saying the PD has concerns about this pistol range, and have their own pistol range in a more urban area. Although he supports free enterprise, he does not believe downtown Palatka is the place for target practice and discharge of firearms. There is an ordinance on the books which prohibits the discharge of firearms inside the city limits. If the zoning is amended, it will open up downtown for anyone who wants to bring in a pistol range. There is enough of a problem with all the bars and such. Commissioner Azula said last year they denied a conditional use for a day care center due to traffic concerns, among others, including that this was not the direction they wanted to go with downtown. If they don't allow a child care center, it does not seem right to allow a pistol range. He understands the safety rules customers are supposed to follow, but they cannot predict what rules customers will follow and which ones they won't. This should not be in downtown. He has received many calls against it. Mayor Smith said he read the comments from the Planning Board, which voted unanimously to pass this ordinance, and he gives that much weight. The concern over the day care center was with traffic -- small children being picked up and dropped off on the street. During the Planning Board hearings, there was a large contingent of people opposed to the day care. On this issue, no one came to the Planning Board hearings to dispute this change.

Danny Buchanan, owner, River City Gold & Guns, 708 St. Johns Avenue said he has been in the firearms business for 14 years. He purchased the former Palatka Bakery, located next to his business, with the intent to remodel it into a pistol range. It is a safe, secure environment for people to practice shooting their firearms. People bring guns in and out of his pawn shop on a daily basis, so if the concern is with people bringing guns in and out of a downtown business, they shouldn't allow pawn shops in downtown. He is an NRA member. He attended a technical seminar on piston ranges in April, which the Palatka PD did not send anyone to attend. The PD's outdoor range is going to have a problem with lead contamination and bullet containment. There are bullets on the other side of their burm due to ricochets. He has proposed a 20' wide x 60' long, 6-lane, secure indoor pistol range. It has a metal escalator backstop which curves. When the non-toxic copper-plated 'powder' bullets strike it, they turn to powder. It is a safe, secure environment. There are ranges in every surrounding large city and some smaller cities. The ordinance on firing firearms inside the city limit refers to unsecured outside locations or into a residence. This will provide a secure environment for people to learn to use firearms and practice their firearms. He and his sons go to Micanopy every Wednesday so he can teach them how to use their firearms. It is his individual right to own a firearm. In 14 years he has never had a gun-related incident in or outside his store, and he sells and receives guns for pawn every day. People use firearms for illegal and immoral purposes every day. Shooters will not be running up and down the street. He does not sell cheap guns for use in hold-ups. His customers are sportsmen. If they have no where to practice, they will go to the woods and shoot at a paper plate tacked onto a tree. Those bullets go wherever. He has never seen a gun fight at a gun show or a gun shop. You rarely hear about robberies at gun shops. He plans to teach the NRA certified courses. The closest gun range is an unsupervised outdoor range in Salt Springs with no facilities. This will help him evolve his business and stay in business. He has studied doing this for years. His ventilation system will exhaust hospital-quality air into the environment. Copper is a non-toxic substance. Children who know how to use guns will be less likely to misuse guns. All his customers will go through a range-orientation program and rules will be clearly posted. He is being very proactive. Law enforcement will have a place to shoot. Right now the Sheriff's Dept. has no place to shoot. He learned about the problems the Palatka PD will have with their range at the seminar he attended. He can have as many guns as he wants in his gun shop, as can Wal-Mart, and their employees know nothing about the guns they sell. He has permission from SunTrust Bank for use of their parking lot for parking. His busiest hours will be from 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. He will offer a large range of safety programs. Shooting is a very popular sport. He runs a very clean, professional business. This will be a family environment where women will be comfortable. If he can't expand his business, he may leave, which will leave a big hole there. Businesses are not coming in in droves. He does not want to leave. They will never have a problem with a gun range he runs.

Mr. Bush asked what people walking across the street from the gun range will hear. Mr. Buchanan said it will be no louder than the sound of a staple gun. They have taken many

soundproofing measures. The gentleman who opened up a coffee shop next to the building expressed concern about his customers spilling their coffee upon hearing gun shots; he plans to put up a concrete-filled, foam-insulated wall on his side. He will put as much insulation into the ceiling as he can. The baffles will deflect the sound and bullets back into the range. His business is on the other side. Mayor Smith asked what would happen if he abandons his pawn business and a new tenant moves into that business. Mr. Buchanan said the pistol range will only do well with a companion gun business, and vice-versa. The better one business does, the better the other will do. Mayor Smith asked if people will be allowed to bring their own ammo in. Mr. Buchanan said no. They will take ammo that is not theirs in trade for their ammo. Mayor Smith asked if civilians can use the police range; Lt. Edwards said they have civilian gun safety courses. Mayor Smith said it is useful to have someone to give gun safety courses. There is a need for this. A lot of guns are sold in this area. Mr. Buchanan said there are four NRA-certified instructors in town who want to use his range for their classes. He has a list of over 500 people willing to purchase memberships at his range. All guns transported from vehicles to his range must be unloaded and encased. He will not tolerate people breaking the rules. People now will stop their cars in the middle of St. Johns Avenue, grab guns out of their trunks, and run into his store without even parking. Commission Azula called the question. The results of a roll-call vote are as follows: Commissioners Azula, Edwards and Mayor Smith, Yes; Commissioner Norwood, Nay. The ordinance was placed on first reading.

MILLENIUM CLOCK TOWER – Mr. Bush said the committee is at the point that they are ready to order the clock tower from Verdin Clock Tower. Although this does not involve city funds, on behalf of the Committee he is requesting use of an area at the center entrance which lines up with the gazebo, 30' off the fence, at the Riverfront Park in order to erect the Clock Tower, and authorization to place the concrete pad on which the clock will sit. Commissioner Azula moved to approve the site for the Millenium Clock Tower. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Commissioner Norwood asked where that fits in with the proposed overpass. Mr. Bush said public opinion ran strongly against an overpass, so plans have reverted back to an underpass. Commissioner Norwood said the Presbyterian Church already has a 4-faced clock. Mr. Bush said that is a smaller tower. This proposed clock tower is 40' high, and is not visible from the bridge. They are trying to put something there that people will identify with Palatka. The Presbyterian Clock Tower does not have the same impact. This has been well received by the community, although there has been some opposition from a smaller faction from the Presbyterian Church. Commissioner Azula asked how it will affect future development of that area. Mayor Smith said the property is deed restricted for public use only. This clock tower fulfills that restriction. On the overpass, where people are used to seeing open space, if the Zirkelbach development happens, there will be a 3-story building next to the Audio Shop. If you also build an overpass, that will further restrict a view of the river until you get to the bridge, which people object to. Commissioner Norwood said there are safety concerns with any overpass; he called the question. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unopposed.

Ms. Driggers informed the Commissioner that there are three openings on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Appointment to this board requires County residency and voter registration. People wishing to apply can pick up applications from her office.

Mayor Smith asked how they are coming with TRIM calendar requirements. Mr. Bush said the budget hearings are set for the second and fourth Thursdays in September. Ms. Driggers said on Monday they will have the paperwork to the County offices notifying them of the dates. Today's meeting satisfied the first TRIM calendar deadline.

Mayor Smith reminded pension board members of the meeting on July 31 at 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.