

**TERRILL L. HILL**  
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**MARY LAWSON BROWN**  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**RUFUS J. BOROM**  
COMMISSIONER

**JUSTIN R. CAMPBELL**  
COMMISSIONER

**JAMES NORWOOD, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER



**BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS**  
CITY CLERK

**MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR

**JAMES A. GRIFFITH**  
INTERIM CHIEF OF POLICE

**MICHAEL LAMBERT**  
CHIEF FIRE DEPT

**DONALD E. HOLMES**  
CITY ATTORNEY

*Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.*

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF PALATKA CALLED MEETING**  
March 5, 2015 – 5:30 p.m.

Proceedings of a special called meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015.

**PRESENT:**

Mayor	Terrill L. Hill
Commissioner	Mary Lawson Brown
Commissioner	Rufus Borom
Commissioner	Justin Campbell
Commissioner	James Norwood, Jr.

Also Present: City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matt Reynolds; Interim Police Chief James Griffith; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Planning Director Thad Crowe; Main Street Manager Charles Rudd

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Hill called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the following special meeting call, which was issued on March 2, 2015:

**TO COMMISSIONERS:** **MARY LAWSON BROWN, RUFUS BOROM, JUSTIN CAMPBELL AND JAMES NORWOOD, Jr.:**

You are hereby notified that a Special Called Meeting is hereby called to be held on Thursday, March 5, 2015, commencing at 5:30 p.m. This called meeting will be held at the regular meeting place of the Palatka City Commission at Commission Chambers, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Palatka.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

1. Authorize former City Manager Michael J. Czymbor's Contract Termination payment.
2. Appoint an Interim City Manager.

/s/ Terrill L. Hill  
Terrill L. Hill, MAYOR

The following Commissioners acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special called meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2015.

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Justin Campbell  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Rufus Borom  
COMMISSIONER

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Campbell**

**1. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

116 Kirkland Street, Linda Crider, said she is an urban planner and moved here 8 years ago when she retired from teaching urban planning. The unfortunate market crash created an economic decline everywhere, but Palatka managed to hang on, get grants and move forward. She hopes they can work together as a community to continue the good work that has begun and continue to make the Riverfront Palatka's Riverfront. The work that is on-going there is critical. She worked with Mr. Boynton on the Trails Initiative. She believes Jonathan Griffith should be provided an opportunity to be interim city manager and be given a raise to take on the added responsibility. The Trails system that is based here will have a tremendous affect on the town. It is marching forward and works hand-in-hand with the Bartram Trail efforts and Putnam Blueways & Trails citizen support organization, which she founded.

- 2. RESOLUTION** authorizing payment of termination and severance pay (Aggregate Severance Pay) to former City Manager Michael J. Czymbor per the terms of his Employment Agreement dated July 12, 2012 (terminated on 2/26/15) – Adopt – The Clerk read a resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF TERMINATION AND SEVERANCE PAY (AGGREGATE SEVERANCE PAY) TO FORMER CITY MANAGER MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR PER THE TERMS OF HIS EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WHICH WAS ENTERED INTO ON JULY 12, 2012. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the Resolution as read. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion.

Don Holmes, City Attorney, said the contract with Mr. Czymbor provided for specific terms of a severance. The amounts shown track the terms of the severance. He spoke with Mr. Reynolds about the terms of one particular interpretation of benefits. The salary component is fairly straightforward. The contract calls for a severance package which the City Manager will accept in lieu of taking any action against the City. This contract was the City's attempt to contemplate any issues that may arise in the future. He participated in the writing of the final version of the contract. The terms set forth in the resolution are the terms that are in the contract.

Commissioner Brown asked how this will be funded.

Matt Reynolds, Finance Director, said he has conferred with the Interim Police Chief regarding the funding of this payout. Funds from the unfilled Police Chief's position as well as other unfilled positions will provide enough savings to cover this severance payout. They have a \$62,000 contingency in the budget that could be used towards this, but they have enough additional savings here provided the police chief position stays open for the remainder of this fiscal year.

There being no further discussion or comment, the question was called and a roll-call vote was taken, which yielded the following results: Commissioners Borom, Brown, Campbell, Norwood and Mayor Hill, Yes; Nays, none. The Resolution was declared adopted.

- 3. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CITY MANAGER** - Mayor Hill said they find themselves without a City Manager. Mr. Reynolds has tendered his resignation effective April 15 so they will soon be without a finance director also. He has spoken to Allen Bush, former City Manager, who has a background as a finance director. Mr. Bush has indicated he is willing to accept the position as Interim City Manager. In addition to the Finance Director, there have been some resignations in

the Finance Department. He believes Mr. Bush's experience would be extremely valuable. This would be about sixty days max. His recommendation is to appoint Allen Bush as Interim City Manager to allow him to get the City through an assessment on where the City stands financially, and to help with the search for City Manager.

Commissioner Brown said she concurs on the appointment of Mr. Bush as he is a good financial manager. He talks to the Commission and listens to them. They may have to go three months to find a city manager. She hopes Mr. Reynolds will reconsider leaving the City's employ.

Allen Bush said he came to the City in 1977 as Finance Director and became City Manager in 1981, and acted as Finance Director until another finance director was appointed. Later on they were able to bring additional administrative staff in. There are things he feels could be brought to the attention of the Commission. He always held an "open door" policy.

Mayor Hill said they spoke regarding his compensation during this interim period. They decided on a figure that is significantly less than what he was making when he retired. This comes out to around \$15,000 for a two-month period. This is acceptable for the current budget. If they want to move in another direction sooner, his contract can be terminated at any time. Mr. Bush concurred that these are the terms they discussed.

Commissioner Norwood said he worked with Mr. Bush and they had a good working relationship. When they left on Thursday night he thought they had appointed Matt Reynolds as interim manager. He asked if anything has changed. Mayor Hill said nothing had changed except that they have had two resignations in the finance department since then. They need to bring Mr. Bush in as a consultant. It will relieve some of the tasks that fall on Mr. Reynolds.

Matt Reynolds said he has spoken with Mayor Hill concerning this and in light of his resignation, he believes this is a prudent plan. They have financials due later this month and budget preparation begins in May.

Commissioner Norwood moved to appoint Mr. Bush as Interim City Manager and said if they have an opportunity with any individuals in Putnam County that are qualified, they need to exhaust all of their options. Mayor Hill said he has no problem with Mr. Bush being brought on as a consultant while Mr. Reynolds is the interim. Commissioner Norwood again moved to appoint Allen Bush as Interim City Manager. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. Mayor Hill said if they find themselves outside of the 60 day window they can revisit this situation. Commissioner Campbell asked how quickly they are planning to appoint a new City Manager. Mr. Bush said he will assist with the advertising and search for a new City Manager.

Mr. Reynolds said he planned to remain until the financial statements are completed. He does not want to leave the City in a bind. Fortunately, his new employment opportunity is flexible. It is an ever changing situation. He cares about the City and wants to see it do well. He will examine the situation and determine whether or not he feels comfortable and capable of doing the City Manager's job and will decide whether or not to apply for that position. Commissioner Brown said they need to continue their momentum as there are many things on the table. They need youth and wisdom to pull this off.

There being no further discussion or comment, a roll call vote was taken on the motion, which yielded the following results: Commissioners Borom, Brown, Campbell, Norwood and Mayor Hill, Yes; Nays, none. The motion was declared passed.

**CITY MANAGER SEARCH** – discussion ensued regarding the process of conducting a search for a new city manager. Commissioner Campbell said they need to identify issues surrounding the recent resignations. Time is of the essence. They need the City Manager to begin working on how to address the three potential vacancies, being that one of them is IT Manager. If something is to crash, it will fall on Mr. Reynolds. They need to address how those vacancies will be filled.

Mayor Hill said they need to give direction on salary for Mr. Bush so the City Attorney can draft a contract.

Commissioner Brown said all employees should be pulled in to the Price Martin Center so the Commission can reassure them concerning job safety and security. There have been a lot of rumors. Mayor Hill said he spoke with one of the Finance employees who resigned, who said it is happenstance timing; she said it is what she had been planning for a long time. He spent some time speaking to employees and he has spoken with Department Heads concerning holding a retreat for team-building exercises.

Commissioner Norwood said this commission should be concerned first and foremost about hiring a new city manager. Concerning the search for a new Police Chief, Mayor Hill said the position has not yet been advertised. Commissioner Norwood said they need to start a search for the new police chief. Commissioner Brown said the Police Department seems to be working well. The employees seem to be happier than they were. They need to fund Mr. Czymbor's termination package which means they can't hire a new police chief until October 1. They need to start looking for a city Manager immediately. The search is a lengthy process. Discussion ensued regarding the process of conducting a City Manager search.

Mayor Hill asked that Mr. Bush present a search process to the Commission next week. The clerk was directed to add this item to the March 12<sup>th</sup> Agenda.

After discussion concerning Mr. Bush's salary as interim city manager, Commissioner Campbell moved to pay \$1750 per week starting March 6, 2015 for 8 weeks. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

4. **CITY MANAGER & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS** – There were none.

5. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS.**

Commissioner Brown said she spoke with Congresswoman Brown's office about hosting the Commission at her office so she can meet the new members of the Commission. She will set a date following elections.

Commissioner Brown said Angel Dukes, a resident of Crescent City, is retired from a company that does business with China. They may be interested in sitting down and speaking with the Commission about doing some things in Palatka to help moving the City forward financially. She would like to set a date in April for this.

Commissioner Brown said Orlando has an embassy on the top floor of its City Hall. She would like to secure appointments for the Commission to visit this embassy to discuss possibilities for international trade.

Commissioner Norwood said he would like to see the City move forward on setting an urban service boundary. Individuals who receive services from the City should pay for those services. They need to start those conversations with the County.

Commissioner Norwood said he has had a conversation with Mr. Griffith about the amount of work needed on the Riverfront Park. They need to take care of the Riverfront. They need maintenance on the Riverfront. He does not have the personnel to take care of it like it should be taken care of. They need to look at this. Commissioner Campbell said he has offered to come out and do work himself, as they are doing their best. Mayor Hill said he rode with Mr. Griffith and had a conversation on what they are doing with the Riverfront, and they are doing the best with the least. Commissioner Norwood said he needs extra resources.

Mayor Hill said they have looked at workshop dates. They have looked at holding a joint workshop on the 12<sup>th</sup> with the Chamber, Mr. Theal from Nippers Restaurant, Mr. Lagassee of Boathouse Marina, and the Presbyterian Church. The Chamber indicated they would not be available on the 12<sup>th</sup>. They are available on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup>. There was consensus to set the workshop for the 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Commissioner Borom said as to maintaining infrastructure, it is easy to initiate a project, but you have to look at the total cost of ownership and not over-commit resources. They need to use all available resources to keep Palatka beautiful.

6. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 upon a motion by Commissioner Norwood

ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE CITY COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.105