

**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**  
March 26, 2015

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 26<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: Interim City Manager Allen R. Bush; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matt Reynolds; Interim Police Chief James Griffith; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Main Street Manager Charles Rudd; Airport Manager John Youell

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Hill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The Reverend Eddie Stith, Pastor; First Assembly of God

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – 03/05/15 and 03/12/15 meetings – Commissioner Brown moved to adopt the minutes as read. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

**1. PUBLIC RECOGNITION/PRESENTATIONS**

**EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE** - Don Hanna, 2020 Country Club Terrace, Putnam Ministerial Association, said Easter Sunrise Service will be held at the Palatka Riverfront Park on Easter Sunday. The service will begin at 7:30 a.m., and will conclude by 8:00 a.m.

**PROCLAMATION** – Mayor's Day of Recognition - April 7, 2015 – Lisa Valukevitch, Communities in Schools, was present to receive the proclamation, which was read and issued by Mayor Hill.

**NATIONAL WALKING DAY** – Gaye Esperson, Greenways & Trails, said April 1 is National Walking Day. They want people to walk the trails with them at 5:30 p.m. starting at west end of the trail across from the Latin Italian Grille. This will be a two mile walk. Mayor Hill has been invited to be their "celebrity walker." Mayor Hill said they are extending the challenge to all employees of the City of Palatka and all area students. This is being done to promote health and wellness. The Commission is also invited to participate in this.

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION** - Mayor's Reception Volunteers – Betty "BJ" Johns, Camille Watson and Rose Bellamy were present to receive certificates of recognition which were read and presented by Mayor Hill. The Clerk said these ladies are responsible for the beautiful decorations and flower arrangements that adorn the Mayor's Reception. Rose Bellamy has been doing this for more than 10 years. BJ Johns has been part of the team for six years. This is Camille Watson's first year taking the lead on flower arrangements. These ladies do all this as volunteers and their talents make the reception the grand event that it is.

**MAYOR'S RECEPTION SPONSOR RECOGNITION** - Waste Pro USA - Daniel Carle, Putnam County Division Manager, was present to accept a plaque thanking Waste Pro for its sponsorship of the 2015 Mayor Reception.

**RESOLUTION** supporting Putnam County Better Place 1-cent Surtax – Adopt – Mayor Hill read a resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING THE CONTINUATION OF THE PUTNAM COUNTY BETTER PLACE PLAN 1-CENT INFRASTRUCTURE SURTAX in its entirety. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the resolution as read. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously and without opposition. Karl Flagg, former Mayor and Chairman of the Putnam County Board of County Commissioners, was present to accept the Resolution on behalf of the BOCC. Mayor Flagg commended citizens of the County in being patient in recognizing that Putnam County has experienced an extreme, extended economic downturn as a result of the 2008 Recession. Putnam and all five of the municipalities have relied heavily on revenues from this surtax for critical infrastructure improvements. This is the fairest tax possible. There have been many quality of life improvements made possible through this tax. The facts will speak for themselves.

A video presentation explaining the Plan and improvements made since its inception was shown. Mayor Hill said voters are being asked to renew the 1-cent sales surtax through the ballot referendum on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Citizens were urged to go to the polls and vote yes to renew the Putnam County Better Place Plan.

**STUDENT OF THE MONTH – March, 2015** – Vice Mayor Brown joined Mayor Hill in presenting certificates to the following students in recognition of academic excellence, leadership, citizenship and attendance at their respective schools:

Garrett Seyler	Browning-Pearce Elementary
John L. & Javon L. Williams	C. L. Overturf, Jr. 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Center
Malachi Perry	Children's Reading Center Charter School
Jerrell McCloud	E. H. Miller School
Julian Rose	James A. Long Elementary School
Jayde Boss	Jenkins Middle School (December Honoree)
Savanna Wilkinson	Kelley Smith Elementary School
Emma Murrow	Mellon Elementary School
D'hani Allen	Moseley Elementary School
Brent Matheny	Palatka High School
Bryan Valle	Peniel Baptist Academy
Walker Mills	Putnam Academy of Arts & Sciences
Rayeanne Streets	Putnam EDGE High School

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Allegra Kitchens, 1027 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, said she wishes to make a formal protest of the placement of four-way stop signs at the intersection of St. Johns Avenue at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. St. Johns Avenue has historically been a thoroughfare and when the signs popped up two years ago, they were removed because of the confusion they created. Crews were supposed to have painted over the white lines on St. Johns Avenue two years ago. She asks that these stop signs be removed.

Askew Vickers, 207 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, stated there is no accountability in the City or County for tax money collected. There are only 3 counties in the State of Florida that don't have a surtax. He asked who is checking to be sure the Better Place money is spent properly. Mr. Bush said there is a 15-member committee in place which oversees all expenditures. A Better Place Plan budget is submitted and adopted each year, and the money is spent on the designated project(s) in the budget. Commissioner Brown said it is spent on grant matches. They couldn't have done things that they have done without these funds. Mr. Reynolds said the money is accounted for separately in the budget which shows the funds spent for this year and two prior years to the dollar. These documents are available for public view on the City's website. Mr. Bush invited Mr. Vickers to meet with him to view the expenditures.

Dana Jones, Putnam County Chamber, 1100 Reid Street, spoke of the impact of large events on Palatka and Putnam County. She distributed a hand-out concerning the money those bring into the community (filed). She said at this time they have elected officials and planning professionals from all over North Florida taking part in the final two days of a four-day economic development/regional planning workshop being held at Crystal Cove Marina.

J. Normand Jutras, 412 Mulholland Park, said the City was almost dead in its tracks for 40 years. Nothing was moving forward. Things are moving forward quickly now and he hopes this Commission will keep things moving forward.

Jacob Spells, 5019 Crill Avenue, asked what the City's ties are to the golf course, and asked why they can't have a satellite library in Palatka. He asked why there is money being spent for the golf course and asked if the swimming pool there is open to all children.

Mayor Hill said the golf course is funded by the City at a certain level. It has made significant improvements under the management of Bobby Weed. Golf Courses aren't making money across the country. They are moving forward with recreation workshops and need citizen input there, and invited him to attend those. They will have dialogue on moving forward with programs at area parks to provide enrichment and education.

Mr. Spells said the City has a satellite Police Station on the Northside and he believes it would be better used as a library. His late wife used to run a mobile library out of the trunk of her car. Reading skills are critical. Commissioner Brown said the County took over the library system and noted his late wife was on the Putnam County Library Board for many years. Members of the Commission are involved with a mentoring program for young men. In the past she has asked him to sit down with them to discuss a volunteer library. They all need to work together to make positive changes. The pool at the golf course is a privately owned pool. It is not on golf course property. The City does not fund it in any way.

### 3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. **Adopt Resolution No. 2015-11-19** authorizing the City Manager and City Clerk to execute and attest Change Order No. 1 with Scherer Construction of North Florida, LLC in the amount of \$24,953.45 for hangar improvements at the Palatka Municipal Airport (100% grant funded)
- b. **Grant waiver of Class B Application Deadline** and grant permission to exceed allowable noise levels for Special Events Permit No. 15-22; Easter Sunrise Service, April 5, 2015 from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. – Central Putnam Ministerial Association; Kirby Kennedy, DO, Applicant
- c. **Approve request items for Special Events Permit No. 15-17 – Easter Egg Hunt, April 5, 2015** from 12 noon to 6 p.m. – One Direction Car Wash/Gregory Napier, Applicant
  1. Grant waiver of Class B Special Event Application Deadline (60 days prior to event)
  2. Grant permission to exceed allowable noise levels throughout duration of event

3. Street closure of S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street between Crill Avenue and Diana Drive
- d. **Approve request items for Special Events Permit No. 15-03 – Hospice Bass Tournament – April 25, 2015 from 3 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Mike Oglesbee, Applicant**
  1. Grant permission to exceed allowable noise levels throughout duration of event
  2. Grant permission to sell/consume alcoholic beverages throughout duration of event
  3. Street closure of Memorial Parkway from Reid Street to S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- e. **Grant permission for consumption of alcoholic beverages within the Palatka Riverfront Park for Special Events Permit #15-19, 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mug Race Party, May 1, 2015 from 12 noon to 12 midnight – consumption area between the Memorial Bridge & the Boat House Marina, 329 River Street (as shown on site plan) – Palatka Yacht Club, David Girardin, Applicant**
- f. **Authorize closure of certain streets to vehicular traffic for Special Events Permit No. 15-12 – 5K Fun Run, May 9, 2015 from 5:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. – Putnam County School District; Nikki Hawthorne, Applicant**
- g. **Approve closure of City Boat Ramp between 5 p.m. from May 15, 2015 through 7 p.m. Saturday, May 16, 2015, and grant permission to exceed allowable noise levels for Special Events Permit No. 15-18 – Annual Wolfsons Children’s Hospital Bass Tournament – May 14 – 15, 2015 – Paul Hamilton, Applicant**

Commissioner Norwood asked to pull Item 3(e) for discussion. Commissioner Campbell moved to pass all other items on the Consent Agenda as proposed. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

- 3(e). **Grant permission for consumption of alcoholic beverages within the Palatka Riverfront Park for Special Events Permit #15-19, 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mug Race Party, May 1, 2015 from 12 noon to 12 midnight – consumption area between the Memorial Bridge & the Boathouse Marina, 329 River Street (as shown on site plan) – Palatka Yacht Club, David Girardin, Applicant - Charles Rudd, Main Street Manager, was present to speak for Mr. Crowe, Special Events Coordinator. Commissioner Norwood said they’ve only allowed specific areas for alcohol consumption in the past. This year they are doing it all the way to the Boathouse Marina. Mr. Rudd said for the past three years it has been allowed the entire Riverfront Park.**

David Girardin, Palatka Yacht Club representative, said the sailors will be spread out over the entire length of the park all the way to the Boathouse Marina and they want to be able to walk from the Boathouse Marina to their boats with a beverage. This has been the practice for the past three years. There have been no incidents.

Interim Police Chief James Griffith said they have had no incidents during the Mug Race. Alcoholic beverages are sold in a specific location and the area of circulation is limited. For the past three years the sailors and guests have been able to roam freely throughout the park so visiting sailors can go from their boat to the Marina.

Commissioner Campbell moved to grant the requested items for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mug Race Party Permit on May 1 as requested. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. A roll call vote was requested and taken, which yielded the following results: Commissioners Borom, Brown and Campbell, yes; Commissioner Norwood and Mayor Hill, no. The motion was declared passed on a margin of three in favor, opposed by Commissioner Norwood and Mayor Hill.

4. **RESOLUTION** adopting an Affirmative Action Plan in connection with the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant FFY 2013 – Adopt- The Clerk read a Resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA ADOPTING A POLICY RELATING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF SMALL, WOMEN OWNED AND MINORITY BUSINESSES FOR USE IN ADMINISTERING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BLOCK GRANTS; ADOPTING A POLICY RELATING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF MINORITIES BY THE CITY OF PALATKA; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; DEFINING AN ACTION PLAN; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the resolution as read. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which was passed with all members of the Commission voting in the affirmative. The resolution was declared adopted.

5. **RESOLUTION** authorizing the execution of a Grant Administration Contract with Fred Fox & Associates in the amount of \$50,000 for CDBG Project No. 15DB-OJ-04-64-02-C04 for Phase IV Riverfront Park Improvements – Adopt – The Clerk read a Resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO EXECUTE AND ATTEST A GRANT ADMINISTRATION CONTRACT WITH FRED FOX & ASSOCIATES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 FOR CDBG PROJECT NO. 15DB-OJ-04-64-02-C04 FOR RIVERFRONT PARK IMPROVEMENTS. Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the Resolution as read. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion. There being no discussion or comment, a roll-call vote was taken, which yielded the following results: Commissioner Borom, Brown, Campbell, Norwood and Mayor Hill, yes; Nays, none. The Resolution was declared adopted.
6. **REQUEST** to reactivate and sponsor Palatka Fire Explorers Post #536 – Fire Chief Mike Lambert said the Fire Department sponsored this Post for 12 years and ceased to do so 9 years ago. This program has four specific goals, which include participation in leadership, community service, social interaction and outdoor activities, and to gain practical experience in the fire service. There are many former explorers in local fire and safety careers at this time. They average fifteen explorers per year in the Program. There is no cost; this is self supporting and self-sustaining. They will fund this through fire prevention funds. There are several age groups involved from 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates and older. There is a 5-member executive board who oversee the program.

Commissioner Brown moved to approve the request to reactivate and sponsor Palatka Fire Explorers Post #536. Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion. Mayor Hill said as a teenager he witnessed the program in action. It builds capable young men. It is associated with Boy Scouts of America. He applauds the Fire Department for its insight in developing the youth of the community. There being no further discussion, the vote was taken and the motion passed unopposed.

7. **DISCUSSION** of plans for a restaurant in connection with the Water Taxi Operation and Ship's Store at the Palatka Riverfront Park – Mayor Hill said he's had an opportunity this week to speak with people in the community who own and operate restaurants as well as Mr. Lagassee and others in the community. There are a lot of things that bear investigation in connection with this project. Mr. Griffith is absent today and he is the person to answer those questions. The workshop held on the 16<sup>th</sup> was very informative.

Jeff Rawls, 1100 Carr Street, said he wrote a letter asking the commission to cease any activity on this project until a workshop can be held on the RFP itself (filed). The proposal first put forward by Boathouse Marina has changed significantly. As a general contractor he can't low-ball a bid and then change it to a higher bid once it's been awarded to him. The City changed the scope of the bid considerably. His response to the RFP said the boats would be a losing proposition as they were outlined in the RFP. The Boathouse Marina said it was a money-making venture and stated they could make money with it and a smaller restaurant. He used a consultant help him put his proposal together. At some point it became a money-losing venture. Instead of changing everything to benefit the Boathouse Marina, they should have put the RFP back out. They were not given the opportunity to consider making a proposal to operate pontoon boats, which is now one of the proposed boats. The City has only negotiated with one group.

There was negotiation with Boathouse Marina before the RFP went out. They were told this by both Mr. Czymbor and Jonathan Griffith. They had a meeting with these gentlemen and were told at that meeting that the City didn't realize anyone else was interested in provided a fuel farm and at that point they decided to put it out for an RFP. After the RFP was awarded to Boathouse Marina, the scope was changed all around. He was not afforded the opportunity to propose a 150-seat restaurant. He discovered yesterday that over \$300,000 was spent on one pontoon boat. He wants to know why Mr. Czymbor received a proposal for a pontoon boat before the change order was considered by the Commission.

Commissioner Brown said they had a viable operator for the boats at one time. They got grants for the boats. They have spent 20 years on this project. Mr. Rawls said the boats that are now going to be delivered are not the boats that were described in the RFP. His group said those boats would never work. This is why the City has now gone to one large boat and one pontoon boat. The RFP required that the boats follow a regimented schedule. That has now changed. They responded based upon what the City asked for.

Scott Lagassee, 135 Middlepoint Lane, East Palatka, said they can talk about this for hours. This is the culmination of a year and a half of due diligence on his part. The City is not a professional in the boat and marina operation and that is what the City is looking for. They need to develop infrastructure to grow the downtown and bring in a viable long-term existing business that makes sense for everyone. He hired consultants and a CPA to help develop a pro-forma and guide changes in the program criteria in order to develop a business plan that could work. The only dialogue between him and the City prior to the RFP was regarding a public-private partnership on doing the fuel farm. Two weeks later the City took the conversation off the table, telling him it was because someone else was interested in bidding the project. The City then put out the RFP. He has been open throughout the entire process. As for the boats, the City asked respondents to "make it work." At this time there is no demand for people to go back and forth to Welaka; the operator has to generate enough revenue to make it work. Boat #1 is viable; he was involved in the engine sizing. The money had already been paid to the builder on Boat #2. They designed the best possible pontoon boat to make the design work. He went to multiple meetings, including FDOT meetings in Jacksonville, to negotiate changes to the requirements of the grant to make it work. Trips to Welaka are now on an "on-demand" status. The trips will be more local. If there is a need to go to Welaka and enough tickets are sold for the trip they will make the trip. He has thousands of emails and other correspondence on this and he will open those to anyone who wishes to view them.

Allison Curry, PA, Upchurch, Bailey & Upchurch, Attorneys, St. Augustine, Attorney for Boathouse Marina, said it is important to clarify some of these objections. The City issued a request for proposals (RFP), not an invitation to bid. The RFP contemplates asking for a concept, a proposal based upon narrowing down candidates. Once the candidates have been narrowed down, you move forward with one candidate. The RFP contains many general terms. It specifically states many documents were included for information and work on the boats could change. The "concession" doesn't mean hotdog stand. This is clear in the documents. It states the City would take into account any proposal offered. This is a concept of which there are a lot of moving parts. Even the pricing structure is a general term. Mr. Lagassee's proposal included a restaurant, the size of which has evolved to a larger restaurant based upon consultant input. The time for objections is not two years after the fact. This is an RFP process and was done exactly as an RFP process is expected to go. They have put a lot of money and time into this.

Mayor Hill said they are getting closer to a point at which they will have all the information necessary to make an educated decision on moving forward. He wants to work with the City Attorney to bring a report back to the next meeting. After discussion, Commissioner Campbell

moved to table the item to a time certain of April 9<sup>th</sup> to allow time to develop the necessary report. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

Commissioner Brown said they have had three city managers who have dealt with the boats; there have been two city managers since Mr. Bush left seven years ago. If they don't get those boats operational, the City will have to repay a lot of grant money.

#### **8. CITY MANAGER & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**Report on Status of Riverfront Development Projects** – Mr. Bush said a report is included in the agenda listing the status of various projects, some of which the City is not in control of, such as Hampton Inn and River Center. Each project includes a brief update. There have been no issues and unforeseen delays with their projects except for the one under discussion tonight. Mayor Hill noted the floating docks have been installed. Commissioner Brown said at least one dock should be reserved for those who fish.

#### **9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Norwood said he sees a lot of leaves in the road which block the storm drains. They want to be sure the drains are cleared of leaves to avoid flooding during rainstorms. Mr. Bush said the street sweeper is not running efficiently. The Streets Superintendent said his crews clean the leaves off the storm drains on a regular basis and during rain events.

Mayor Hill said they have scheduled a Palatka Pride clean up on May 9 on St. Johns Avenue beginning at the Riverfront and going west. Commissioner Norwood said a business owner has made a substantial investment in his property on St. Johns Avenue. The City needs to edge and landscape its right of way around that area to keep it looking uniform. It is one of the City's main thoroughfares.

Commissioner Borom said they need to take care of City properties and be sure people check storm drains on a regular basis. He has seen a lot of improvement in leaves through clean-ups.

Commissioner Brown said they attended Legislative Action Day in Tallahassee and she was glad to make rounds with other commissioners. They were well received by the legislative delegation. The new Commission members made a good impression on the legislative delegation. They have held 13 meetings since January 5<sup>th</sup>. They are working on making the City better. They need everyone to work together to help the City make a difference. They need time.

Commissioner Brown asked members of the Commission to check their calendars and contact the Clerk with an acceptable date to schedule a meeting with proposed members of the Business Incubator Board.

Commissioner Brown said she will be out of town on April 23<sup>rd</sup> on League business and will miss that meeting and workshop.

Commissioner Campbell said he's received several calls from individuals about the gate that was removed Fred Green Park on Main Street. One of the fence poles is down. This creates a health and liability hazard. The park is supposed to be a safe haven for children. With the gate being removed, there is concern with children running into the street. The park is not being used as often as it should be due to the safety concern. The fence needs to be repaired. Mayor Hill said the City is working on that. One part of the park is being used more for dog walking and they are looking at putting in a dog run there.

Commissioner Campbell said he wanted to repeat something Commissioner Brown said at a prior meeting. They don't want to be known as a dying city, they need to be known as a What's Happening city. They are in a season of transition which means growing pains. They will make the City a better place. They are dedicated to making Palatka a "What's Happening" City.

Mayor Hill said the Commission is taking their time making decisions in order to let everyone be heard. He doesn't want to make a hasty decision based on time constraints. They need to make decisions that are good for Palatka. They aren't going to make everyone happy, but they can do what's best for the community. The Commission as a whole has been doing a good job of listening to citizens.

Mayor Hill said he visited with Regional Council Leadership Academy, whose members have been in town touring the City. Judging from the reaction from these visitors, Palatka hasn't done a great job in advertising its history. One of the participants remarked that he's come through the community on several occasions but has never seen anything that made him want to detour off the main highway, and was amazed at what he had been missing. As a community they need to do a better job of publicizing the history of the community. People need to be encouraged to get off the main highways and see the community. They need to clean up their city and are encouraging everyone to "sweep around their own front door." They want people to clean up their neighborhoods and beautify Palatka so visitors will get off the main highway.

10. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. by Commissioner Brown.

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