

**VERNON MYERS**  
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**MARY LAWSON BROWN**  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**ALLEGRA KITCHENS**  
COMMISSIONER

**PHIL LEARY**  
COMMISSIONER

**JAMES NORWOOD, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER



**MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR**  
CITY MANAGER

**BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS**  
CITY CLERK

**MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR

**GARY S. GETCHELL**  
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 WORKSHOP**  
January 23, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a Workshop meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2014 commencing at 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Vernon Myers	Mayor
Mary Lawson Brown	Commissioner
Allegra Kitchens	Commissioner
Phil Leary	Commissioner
James Norwood, Jr.	Commissioner

Also Present: City Manager Michael J. Czymbor; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Police Chief Gary Getchell; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Planning Director Thad Crowe, Public Works Supervisor Ed Chandler, WTP Superintendent Melvin Register, Projects Manager Jonathan Griffith, and Main Street Manager Charles Rudd

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and read the following workshop meeting Call, which was issued on January 16, 2014

**TO COMMISSIONERS:** **MARY LAWSON BROWN, ALLEGRA KITCHENS, PHIL LEARY AND JAMES NORWOOD, Jr.:**

You are hereby notified that a Workshop Meeting of the Palatka City Commission is called to be held on Thursday, January 23, 2014, at the regular meeting place of the Palatka City Commission, Palatka City Hall, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Palatka, Florida, to commence at 5:00 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the following:

1. Status report for the 2013 City of Palatka Priorities & Goals, and
2. Proposed 2014 City of Palatka Priorities & Goals.

*Isl Vernon Myers*

Vernon Myers, MAYOR

The following commissioners acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a workshop meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2013.

**201 N. 2ND STREET • PALATKA, FLORIDA 32177**

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Phil Leary  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Allegra Kitchens  
COMMISSIONER

**INVOCATION** – Commissioner James Norwood

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Commissioner Phil Leary

**2013 GOALS AND PRIORITIES** - Mr. Czymbor said two of the most important things the elected officials do are approve the budget and set the goals and priorities. First, they will discuss 2013 priorities. He has provided a list of those compared with the accomplishments. This was accomplished by multiple people working collectively to accomplish great things. He acknowledged everyone's efforts. In addition to focusing on those projects, everyone works daily to provide quality customer service.

1. Rebuilding & stabilizing the City's financial integrity – they did a number of things, some big, some small. They focused on increasing the general fund reserved fund balance. They are up to 8.21%; they need to be up to the 20%-plus mark; they have made significant progress
2. They were successful in refinancing prior debt, which created considerable savings. Frank George Apartments, Golf and Airport loans were refinanced at a considerable savings.
3. Bond rating – when you solicit debt, you receive a bond rating. The City's bond rating was decreased from A+ to A, but that is still good. They are heading in the right direction, and anticipate maintaining that A rating.
4. Red light camera safety program – this is all about safety. They use the proceeds to pay for training, material and vehicles for the PD. This is a good thing.
5. Health Insurance, property & casualty – they did get a good reduction on property, casualty and workers comp. Deductible was lowered from \$25,000 per claim to zero; last year they spent \$73,000 on claims; this year that figure will be greatly reduced.

Mayor Myers said he is very impressed with results, and especially the significant increase in the general fund reserve. He commended staff on working towards meeting these goals.

Mr. Czymbor continued his report on the following goals and priorities for 2013. Reference working on the 100 Block and riverfront property redevelopment, they have signed purchase agreements with the developers and are working towards completion on those projects, which will add over \$5 million to the City's taxable property value and 13 employees. Once the infrastructure improvements are completed on the park/docks, they have a dock operator that will assume a lot of the cost of those services, which will minimize cost as well as market assets. In the regular meeting following this meeting, Mr. Griffith will provide a schedule for those improvements.

As to developments on the downtown commercial corridor and airport, they had a very successful meeting with the FDOT Secretary and contingent, and they have had very positive feedback on their working relationship with the County from this contingent. They received 100% funding on new T-hangars and other improvements at the Airport.

Main Street and the Small Business Development Center focused efforts on business recruitment and retention; the efforts provided the following results: 14 new businesses with 35 new employees have opened downtown. Mr. Rudd gets much credit for this. They are seeing results.

As for the Georgia Pacific wetlands education center, they are full speed ahead on that. The building will be constructed and dedicated in late 2014/early 2015.

In working with the Chamber of Commerce, the City developed a promotional brochure so that tourists can see what the City has to offer. This was fully financed by the Chamber.

As to re-engineering the City's organizational structure, there is a list of items provided in the report. The City has been a good steward of public funds; they have reduced 15 full time positions and hired part-time positions to replace those. Most of this decrease was by attrition. Commissioner Brown said they are trying to increase jobs, not decrease them, and need to do their part to create full-time jobs. Mr. Czymbor said streamlining operations with parks and cemeteries has produced significant results. They have streamlined procedures and reduced costs.

The Police Department has stepped up and assumed Code Enforcement responsibilities. Additional officers have been trained to manage code enforcement related cases.

They solicited an operator for a food and beverage manager and feel confident they will receive the USDA grant to make those improvements. The Provider's contract was up in December, and they are negotiating that renewal. They will receive a net benefit from this arrangement. The Golf Course food & beverage operation was at "break even" for the year.

Commissioner Norwood asked if they are checking with local funeral homes to determine if the staff is meeting their needs. Mr. Czymbor said in spring of 2013 they held a meeting with funeral home directors letting them know of upcoming changes, which now have been made. They are arranging another meeting for this spring to get feedback on those services.

Mr. Czymbor continued, saying as for social media presence, they are making upgrades to the website which will be much more interactive. The contract has been awarded and the website is in progress. They have limited functionality with the current website, although they have made some improvements.

As to the Agenda Management process, the City researched and deployed new agenda management software – Novus Agenda Management. The software allows for better collaboration and workflow in the creation and publication of the agenda process.

Commissioner Leary asked, regarding Parks and Recreation, if the City has looked at privatizing those services. They need to use a minimal number of employees to get the job done; plus, they have one of the highest millage rates in the State. Other communities have been successful in this. Mr. Czymbor said they can add privatizing of cemetery, sanitation and parks to the goals should the Commission approve this.

Commissioner Brown said when they did their Empowerment Zone application they looked at what should be privatized. There are certain things they need to keep control of to operate in the best interest of the citizens. There are some things they have a responsibility to maintain in-house. Regarding cemeteries, Mayor Myers said there isn't much money to be had in the cemetery business. You have perpetual care responsibilities. Commissioner Brown said sometimes it's not about the money; the City is here to take care of people. They need to keep burials affordable. Keeping things affordable is part of taking care of people. Mayor Myers said cemeteries are difficult to privatize as private cemeteries need to make money.

Mr. Czymbor said some departments already use social media such as Facebook; the Police Department is large on this. The Airport Facebook page needs to be expanded. They have an opportunity to network all outbuildings into the City's network. Commissioner Brown said the League's president; this year has adopted communications and technology as his priority. The League has information on this.

**2014 GOALS AND PRIORITIES** - Mr. Czymbor said he brainstormed with department heads on new goals. The list was distributed (filed). They want to discuss these topics in a broad sense. The list contains 15 goals; the Commission can add more now or later. He hopes they will look at them, circle their top 5 priorities, and turn them in. They will compile that list, expand the goals and put objectives to them, and assign those tasks.

1. Continue to improve the City's financial positions by vigilance in exploring all potential revenue and opportunities and feasible expenditure reductions and building fund reserves.
2. Complete economic revitalization/redevelopment of Riverfront – complete infrastructure projects, work with developers of the Hampton Inn and 100 Block, and complete the G-P Wetlands/environmental center by early next year.
3. Strengthen and enhance property maintenance standards and codes – complete a review of property maintenance standards and consider merits of adopting ordinances related to property upkeep and code.
4. Promote diversified housing opportunities and options – identify the types of developments they want to attract.
5. Develop community partnership to deal with the homeless population within the community by developing a task force made up of community partners together with an effective and comprehensive law enforcement strategy.
6. Address water system infrastructure deficiencies – The City has around 108 miles of water main in the distribution system; the City should be taking a more proactive approach to replacing outdated pipe by identifying money and resources available to make those improvements.
7. Develop and implement a growth and expansion plan for the City to get rid of enclaves; this involves putting a plan together to annex in conjunction with the City. The plan includes an analysis of current parcels and areas that could be annexed.
8. More opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation between City, County and other government agencies to enhance service delivery – this includes identifying duplication of services and opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation to deliver services.
9. Expand reclaimed/reuse water system to other parts of the City – the City may be forced to involuntarily expand this system to meet discharge requirements. The City is currently working with SJRWMD to expand its reuse system. Commissioner Leary said along with replacing potable water lines, they should look at installing reuse lines, also. People would hook up to those lines to save cost of watering lawns. They also need to approach GP about their use of reuse water. Commissioner Norwood said GP has already looked at this option.
10. Develop a plan to improve functionality and aesthetics of major transportation corridors in the City. This improvement would include a portion of US 17/Reid Street. This would take a significant amount of buy-in and financing. This is a long-range plan, but is something they need to establish now.
11. Establish citizen's academy to foster involvement and engagement in our local government. Many cities offer/provide a citizens academy to educate, inform and engage its population about city services and functions.
12. Cultivate new partnerships to promote economic redevelopment of all areas of the City – this expands on the concept of redeveloping the Riverfront to other areas of the City – using that model to engage public and private property owners to develop their property
13. Develop technology master plan to provide enhanced level at a lower overall cost – there are a lot of moving parts involved with replacement of outdated technology. They will look at work processes and all the technology people use to perform their job duties to consolidate processes and streamline processes. Commissioner Norwood suggested also looking at ergonomics.

14. Conduct an extensive analysis and operational study of airport, golf course and utility enterprise funds to determine optimal operation and management of each fund – this is a study of each service structure to determine if they are providing the best service and the best price.
15. Develop public safety management plan to deal with changing demands for service, economic redevelopment and changing growth & population – determine the cost and benefits of offering increased service, for example, ambulance service. Mr. Czymbor said this offers potential alternative new/enhanced public services and the cost of benefits of offering these services. As to an MOU on ambulance services with the County, Chief Lambert said they do have one. They have to go to the County, get a certificate of need, which allows them to operate under their own Charter. The City provides a lot of basic life support but doesn't receive reimbursement for those services. Commissioner Leary said he is concerned about double taxation issues; their citizens pay county taxes for ambulance service. They aren't going to get people to come here and build \$500,000 homes and pay over 9 mills when they can go to Fleming Island and pay around 6 mills. Discussion ensued on the variety of services that could be provided, and socioeconomic means of the citizens to pay for these services. Commissioner Kitchens said when the County took over ambulance services, they kept an ambulance at the Downtown fire station, but that was moved to the Sheriff's office. Palatka's Fire Department arrives a good five or ten minutes prior to the ambulance. They should look at asking the County to station an ambulance at the Downtown fire station. Chief Lambert said if the City stations an ambulance at the Fire Department it will provide more manpower to meet other Fire Department needs. Commissioner Brown said they need to provide these services in order to take care of their citizens. Commissioner Leary said privatization of police/fire, sanitation, water/sewer, and looking at tax rates would accomplish many of those things.

**CONCLUSION** - Mr. Czymbor distributed a Potential Priorities Package and said they should circle their top five priorities, turn them in during the next week, and they will agenda this for February 13<sup>th</sup> City Commission meeting.

Mayor Myers said he's very impressed with the presentation and with goals accomplished, and commends Mr. Czymbor for his professionalism and what he's brought to City Government, together with the department heads.

**ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the Workshop meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Kitchens.