

April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street with the following members present:

President Hepfer  
Vice President Ryan  
Councilwoman Bega  
Councilman McBride  
Councilman Hinkle  
Mayor Plaisted (not Present)

Also present were City Manager DiGiovanni, City Attorney Haag, Asst. City Manager Williams, Finance Director Chiodo, Event Director Skeelee-Hogan, Event Coordinator Austin, and City Clerk Davis.

The Invocation was given by Councilman McBride and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

Council President Hepfer requested a change to agenda to move the Prescheduled Appearances, to precede Open Public Meeting, and under Prescheduled Appearances, move Leadership Citrus Presentation to precede the Audit Report.

**Councilman McBride motioned to approve with the aforementioned changes. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motioned carried.**

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

#### **SCHEDULED APPEARANCES**

**6)a) Festival of the Arts Scholarship Recognitions** – Pati Smith; Jared Lubowiecki; Embeth Nagi representing the Festival of the Arts Committee, noted that this Festival is one of the longest juried events in Citrus County. This is its 44<sup>th</sup> year! One of their fundraising goals is to award scholarships to Citrus County High School students who are furthering their education in the arts. The committee awarded the 2015 scholarships of \$1,500 to 3 recipients – Tawny Barone, Lecanto High School; Jasmine Cora, Crystal River High School; Neer Patel, Lecanto High School.

**6)c) Leadership Citrus Class of 2015 – Cemetery Project Presentation** – Elizabeth Atkinson, Project Chairman for the Oakridge Cemetery Project, addressed City Council, presenting them with a report of the Inventory survey of over 7,000 burials. She introduced those involved with the project to include individuals from the Leadership Class, Historical Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

**6)b) Audit Report – Kelly Leary, McDirmit Davis & Company, LLC.** This is the first year they have done our audit, and stated it was a pleasure working with City Manager and staff, and very good internal controls. The city received an unmodified opinion, which mean they found no problems and no noncompliance issues. She spoke to the Management Letter, with two recommendations; 1) The Finance Director needs to achieve 8hrs of continued education relating to investments, and it is understood that requirements will be met for the 2015 year. 2) It is recommended that the City maintain signed copies of contract agreements, as one contract could not be located during this audit. The missing contract amount was under threshold for requiring competitive bids, and was not a compliance issue, but this is a recommendation. She suggested that the Council read pages 6-7 of the Management Discussion and Analysis which compares the current year to prior year. In 2014, the city had an increase in net assets, and 66% of the net position of the city is invested in capital assets, ie; buildings, road, etc. There is about 32% in unrestricted net position, which is available to pay vendors, liability, etc. Debt increased almost \$500,000 due to payment on the SRF Loan and Capital Lease. General fund met all compliance requirements for the budget, and revenues were under budget by \$180,000 and expenditures were under budget by about \$880,000. She spoke to the Whispering Pines Park (WPP) special review fund had an increase of \$86,000 as expenditures were less that what was budgeted. City intends to submit this document to GFOA next year to try to receive a Certificate of Achievement, but cannot present the WPP as a special revenue fund, as it no longer meets the requirement. Overall, she stated that the City is in great shape. Kelly Lear spoke to the status of the City’s Reserves and felt the City Reserves were healthy and management is doing good job using them when needed.

**Attorney Haag noted that we must have the Open Public Meeting prior to voting on this issue.**

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING**

None

**(Audit Report – CONTINUED)**

**Councilman Hinkle motioned to vote to accept the Financial Statements, Supplementary Information and Independent Auditor Reports for year ending September 30, 2014, and authorize that documents are forwarded with related paperwork to the Office of the State Auditor General. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. The motion carried unanimously.**

**MAYOR’S LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

None

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

None

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Councilwoman Bega motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. The motion carried.**

- a) Bill Listing\*
  - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 04/09/15; 04/28/15; & 05/05/15\*
  - Recommendation – Approval

### **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

**10)a) Valerie Theatre Mission & Vision Statement** was addressed by City Manager DiGiovanni who explained that this Mission and Vision Statement was developed to better define the purpose, form and function of the Theatre. We wish to present a broad schedule of classic, foreign and independent films, performing arts and entertainment events, as well as educational, civic and social events that are appropriate for the size of the theatre, and respectful of its environment and reputation. He spoke to the focus groups which were active prior to formulating plans for the Theatre and centered around culture. The building, design, the addition of the plaza, and grandeur of the marquee defines The Valerie to be a Cultural Hallmark for the City of Inverness and Citrus County.

No formal action is necessary.

Councilman Ryan complimented the overall project.

Councilman McBride stated how this Theatre was a true gem and will benefit the community. This is a compliment to City Administration, the Construction Company, and his fellow council members who stood strong when not everyone was happy with this project. It has had our full support from the beginning.

**10)b) Valerie Theatre Public Purpose – Resolution** – City Manager DiGiovanni spoke to the Grant Opening Event of May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, which will represent a historic moment in downtown Inverness and Citrus County. Our goal is for this to be as special as the ribbon cutting held for the Inverness Government Center. A Resolution has been created to enable the expenditure of funds to support the event. The purchase of food services is crucial to the event’s activity and the availability of soft beverages. Importantly noted was that alcoholic beverages (beer & wine) have been donated and will not be purchased with public funds.

**Councilman Ryan motioned to have the clerk read Resolution 2015-06 by title only. Seconded by Councilman Hinkle. The motion carried.**

#### RESOLUTION 2015 - 06

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR THE DESIGNATION OF PUBLIC PURPOSE EXPENDITURES FOR CATERING AND ANCILLARY EVENT SERVICES, AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS AND PROVIDING FOR THE SERVICE AND CONSUMPTION OF FOOD, SOFT AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR THE RETURN OF THE VALERIE THEATRE BLACK TIE GALA OPENING TO BE HELD AT THE VALERIE THEATRE CULTURAL CENTER AND PLAZA AREA ON MAY 30, 2015.

**Councilwoman Bega motioned to adopt Resolution 2015-06, by roll call vote. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilwoman Bega, yes; Councilman McBride, yes; Councilman Hinkle, yes; Councilman Ryan, yes; President Hepfer, yes. The motion carried unanimously.**

**10)c) Valerie Theatre – Building Maintenance & Operation – Council Contingency**  
City Manager DiGiovanni explained that the Theatre project will conclude this month and when developing the current operation and maintenance budget it was not possible to anticipate the capital necessary to operate the building and plaza. We still must gain experience with the building and grounds and there is a four-month duration which will require some additional funds. We do not expect to spend the full amount, however using a conservative approach, we anticipate a \$50,000 appropriation will more than cover the remainder the fiscal year.

**Councilman Hinkle motioned to approve the transfer and use of allocated Council Contingency Funds in the amount of \$50,000 to the Valerie Theatre. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. The motion carried unanimously.**

**10)d) 2016 Inverness Big Bass Classic – Fee Resolution** - City Manager DiGiovanni spoke of last year's Bass Classic which was a tremendous success. This is the definition of Tourism and we are planning a 2016 event, which should be more spectacular than the first one. It was noted that this was to establish the fee for next year's event.

Councilwoman Bega recused herself from voting on this issue, due to her relationship with a sponsor of the event.

**Councilman Ryan motioned to have the Clerk read Resolution 2015-07 by title only. Seconded by Councilman Hinkle. The motion carried.**

#### **RESOLUTION 2015-07**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, FLORIDA ESTABLISHING A FISHING TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION FEE AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**Councilman Hinkle motioned to adopt Resolution 2015-07, by roll call vote. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilman McBride, yes; Councilman Hinkle, yes; Councilman Ryan, yes; President Hepfer, yes. The motion carried.**

**10)e) Fire Services Workshop** - City Manager DiGiovanni spoke to the Workshop for Fire Services, held on May 14<sup>th</sup>, which dealt with facts, and proved to be beneficial. He stated that the matter is open for discussion this evening to address additional questions that may have developed since the workshop and to express further thoughts on the matter. He spoke of the beneficial information that was provided by City of Dunnellon Fire Chief Campfield.

Councilman Hinkle noted he received a phone call from Sheriff Jeff Dawsy stating they wish to work with us and get a contract with the City. The City was gathering facts. Councilman Hinkle advised the Sheriff that he would advise Council that he would like a representative from the County to make a presentation about their thoughts on the subject.

Council President Hepfer stated she would like Sheriff Dawsy to come and speak directly to Council. What is being considered is a major undertaking. She wants more information than we've been given.

City Manager reminded everyone that the Sheriff is the Fire Chief. Statutorily the Sheriff is to provide police protection. The County Administrator made it clear that any arrangement is between City of Inverness and County Government. The bottom line is, the best decision is the long term one and we need to be clear to ourselves and the community. Cost and structure of special funding source is the only additional information that staff can provide.

Councilman McBride interprets the line drawn in the sand, as we can take the MSBU or not. He questioned if the voter anticipated tax would be through a written agreement with the County.

City Attorney Haag stated the City would have to have a written agreement with the County to turn over funds from the real property being taxed within the City. Attorney Haag spoke of the fluctuation with the MSBU and millage rates. Many legal issues that he feels the County hasn't thought through. They cannot legally wash their hands of this fire district and keep everything they have acquired.

Councilman McBride hypothetically stated that if we get money from County (\$250,000) and add our money of \$100,000 - \$250,000 that has more appeal to him than the MSBU. He spoke to the financials provided from Dunnellon, and of the ability to assess people at a true value of their facility minus the land and that is something more equitable. He stated that he was leaning toward doing our own Fire Dept.

City Attorney Haag senses that Council does not want to be a part of the MSBU, due to lack of control of what the County would do with the MSBU. Whether the City operates your own department or enter into contract with County, by contract you will know what the city residents are responsible for in dollars and cents. He questioned if we are talking about fire protection and/or ambulance services?

Councilwoman Bega thinks the City would have no control over what our citizens and businesses would pay if we do the MSBU. The last workshop showed how we could do it and more at much less cost.

Councilman Ryan spoke of giving the County an open check if we bought into this. The continuation of the 1974 Tax would benefit us all. The original MSBU was on fire services & the proposed MSBU involves ambulance service. Positive things we have heard, was Dunnellon offering to assist us in training and volunteers recruitment. City of Inverness shouldn't buy into the MSBU – Inverness warrants its own fire department. He spoke of the control we would have and that there would be no expansion and budgetary increases without our knowledge.

Councilman Hinkle stated in his opinion we have alternate ways to fund our fire dept. If we turn over fire services to county we lose control. Council wants to do what's best for Inverness.

City Manager stated there is talk of an MSTU and how the voter initiated tax is capped at one mill and that an MSTU can go up to 10 mills. They were structured to be used in Counties.

City Attorney Haag indicated the City cannot be forced to be in an MSBU or MSTU. It would be good to know what Crystal River's budget is for their fire Department compared to what the County is paid from the City.

Councilwoman Bega asked that an additional workshop be presented by Special Attorney Lawson with more detailed information.

Councilman Hinkle questioned how much we were paying to the Sheriff's Department and it was noted that we pay just short of \$750 k which is on top of what you are taxed which totals about \$1.8 million.

City Manager advise that a decision needs to be made by June 20<sup>th</sup>, which would be the meeting of June 16<sup>th</sup>, and once a decision is made things will fall in place. He noted that we will set up for Mr. Oliver to be at the next meeting of City Council.

**10f) Historic Courthouse War Monuments** - City Manager DiGiovanni referenced attachments and that the County has decided to leave the War Memorial Monuments at their current location. The unilateral sudden shift by the Board of County Commission is perplexing and leaves the work of a volunteer committee in abeyance. He noted documents in the agenda packet, news articles, with City Clerk Davis reading from a particular article, and displayed a video from a recent County Commission meeting, with Commissioner Ron Kitchen speaking to the War Memorials and the nine-point agreement. He emphasized that the City needs to continue to move forward, find ways to continue completing projects, to make improvements to the town, to do things that help the businesses.

**10g) Other – None**

#### **COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS**

Councilwoman Bega is disappointed the monuments are not being relocated, and feels we are coming along on the fire services issue.

Councilman McBride spoke to the Hernando Citrus MPO meeting today and that US 41 N is still a high priority.

Councilman Hinkle wants what is best for our city, and spoke to Sophia Diaz-Fonseca and her interest in history and historical ways. He encouraged the County Commission to reconsider the monument issue. He spoke to upcoming graduations at the local high schools.

Councilman Ryan agrees with the movement of the monuments and making them accessible to the veterans. Fire issue, the more information we get the better and will move forward with whatever is beneficial for Inverness. He spoke of presenting a proclamation at the Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony this week.

Council President Hepfer noted we only do what is good for the City. She is excited about the Valerie Theatre, but disappointed with war memorial situation.

#### **CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA**

George Gouldbourn – Huntinglodge Dr. stated he doesn't want Council to give County a blank check regarding the fire services.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:27pm.**

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City Clerk

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Council President