

**CITY OF PAHOKEE
MINUTES
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, January 8, 2007**

Mayor J. P. Sasser called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. in the 2nd Floor Commission Chambers of City Hall, 171 North Lake Avenue, Pahokee, Florida.

Invocation:

Commissioner Biggs delivered the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Elected Officials:

Mayor J.P. Sasser	Present
Vice Mayor Henry Crawford	Present
Commissioner Allie Biggs	Present
Commissioner Keith Babb	Present
Commissioner Diane Walker	Present

Others in Attendance:

City Manager Lillie Latimore, City Clerk Raquel Diaz, City Attorney Mimi McAndrews, Sergeant at Arms Lt. Ray Alonso, Finance Director Derrek Moore, Diane Walker, Naji Tobias (Belle Glade Sun), Jim Sheehan (Everglades Adventures), Flavy Todd (Todd Realty), M/M Gallo, Ted Roberts (Community Development Director), and Dave Smith

Swearing in of Commissioner Pro Tempore, Diane Walker:

The oath was administered by City Clerk Raquel Diaz. The event was photographed by Naji Tobias of the Sun Newspaper.

Additions, Deletions and Approval of Agenda Items:

1. Remove Resolution 2007-62 from the Consent Agenda.
2. Presentation to Twin Esther Lodge (sp)
3. Representatives from Sago Palms Academy present to address the Commission.
4. Muck City Stars would like to do a presentation.
5. Financial Presentation.

Approval of the Minutes:

Commissioner Biggs moved and Commissioner Babb seconded to approve the minutes of the Commission Meeting of Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting December 11th, 2007.

Consent Agenda:

Departmental Report:

Proclamations:

Presentations:

1. Certificates of Appreciation for the Martin County Sheriff's Office for their assistance during the Palm Beach Sheriff County Deputies funeral.

2. Sago Palms Academy's Mr. Grant spoke of the Academy being part of the Juvenile Justice System and its imminent closing. Mayor Sasser spoke about the City's efforts to prevent that from happening ever since they found out about it happening. The City Manager was in contact with the City's Lobbyist in Tallahassee to start lobbying the legislators. The Mayor spoke to Senator Aronberg while the Senator was with Governor Crist in an airplane and both said they were upset. Also Congressman Alcee Hastings office is up to speed on it. The closing of Sago Palms Academy represents about \$320,000.00 a year to Pahokee. The Mayor went on to detail his plans to prevent the Academy's closing.

3. Muck City Stars –

4. Queen Esther Lodge 61 received a certificate of appreciation thanking them for providing the cooking for the City's Town Hall Meeting.

4.. Finance Presentation (would have been part of press conference presentation). Prior to the presentation, City Manager Latimore read a letter into the record. Dipak Parekh explained why the City adopted quarterly audits of the water utility and Derreck Moore did the Finance Presentation. Graphs and information on the general fund balances, general fund income statements, on-reserve fund balances to the general fund and advances to other funds for 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006; water and sewer fund balances, plus solid waste balances were given to the Commission. At the bottom of the handout are the amounts for 2002-2006, but only the general fund numbers appear. At this point, Mr. Moore went into much detail on the figures in his report. He received a letter from the auditors saying that they will not be able to get into the audit for 2007, until the end of April 2008. In addition, Mr. Moore spoke of the difficulties he's encountered due to the change of software during the transition from 2006 to 2007.

Commissioner Babb questioned Mr. Moore about the current state of the City instead of looking at 2006 and about getting a monthly report. The Commissioner mentioned that every board he belongs to receives a monthly financial report. Mr. Moore said that by next months' commission meeting he hopes to be able to give a financial report. He wanted to be sure that the information he provides is correct. His staff has been at City Hall every Tuesday, Saturday and Friday night and Mr. Moore himself has been here even every holiday trying to make this happen.

Ms. Latimore interjected that the City has not had a financial director since 2002 when Mr. Baumgardner left, and hiring Mr. Moore and consultants to assist has brought them to an AA rating.

Vice Mayor Crawford said that the inability to provide information also means that they are working in the dark and they've had has been excuses.

Mayor Sasser said that all his questions about Finance have always been answered. He has spoken to Mr. Sothan on several occasions and when he was in City Hall on a Sunday afternoon a while back, he ran into the auditor doing his work. Mr. Sothan told the Mayor that the trend was definitely upward, and he was going to the Governor's office to ask for a 3-A rating. The City's financial condition is good enough to go to a higher bond rate.

Mr. Moore spoke of the Cemetery Fund, the Henderson Fund, the Water & Sewer Fund, the Solid Waste Fund, the Marina and he asked for a financial investment policy workshop.

Mr. Parekh made a couple of points, he spoke of the City being under financial watch by the Governor of Florida for many, many years. He feels that the City now has enough impetus to approach the Governor to have our name taken out from that particular distinction. A week and a half ago, an article appeared in the local paper which concerned him because he felt it gave an unfair view of Pahokee. In his opinion we are in a better, more progressive position than we've been in the last 10 years. We have approximately 32-33% of the cash position as far as our General Fund budget or four months of reserve today to handle the City financially. No other city, big or small has that kind of financial reserve in the bank. Pahokee needs strategic reserves, and an investment policy. The picture could be much better if the Water & Sewer account did not have to be supported by General Fund. Mr. Parekh is worried about repercussions to the City when the County turns on the water on March 31st. Forty percent of the water is lost and that is a recipe for disaster. If the trend continues, this City could go bankrupt because of Water & Sewer. The City is trying to combine all three data bases to make sure that everyone in Pahokee pays for their water bills. Mr. Parekh made several suggestions on how the Water & Sewer situation could be improved. He felt that replacing the water pipes might solve a few problems. He also said he was concerned about the Sago Palms situation.

Commissioner Babb said that the infrastructure might be largely responsible for the City's water losses.

Ms. Latimore said she had been reluctant to spend the money in the grants because 100% if the pipes cannot be replaced before the water pressure goes up. She is holding on to infrastructure money to fix what is broken when the pressure comes on. As to replacement cost -- according to Washington, an estimate on how much money would be required just to replace 50% of the linear feet in the City and that part, exceeded \$180,000,000.00 (one hundred and eighty million dollars).

Vice Mayor Crawford mentioned that some of the water shortages may be due to water being stolen, however, if you travel through the City every day you see water everywhere. The pipes need to be fixed and even when he's called City Hall it takes anywhere from 5-7 days to fix the leak and he cited a specific example of something that happened at one of the trailer parks.

Commissioner Walker asked if we have identified where water is being stolen from. She said that the problem should be solved instead of always having to hear about the water theft problem, etc. The City needs to do whatever is necessary to solve the problem definitely to bring closure to this issue.

Mayor Sasser specifically went into everything that has been done to remedy the water loss situation and spoke about South Florida Water management's efforts to improve the schedule for the City getting online. Come March, the water is going to be turned on in increments and over a period of time, they will steadily increase the pressure. When the leaks occur, the grant money that is already in place will be spent to correct those leaks as they pop up.

Resolutions:

Old Business:

1. Regional Water Plant – the main water pump was burned out. South Florida Water Management came in and fixed it. The Mayor would like the City to do some letter of appreciation or something like that, but his main point is that the City of Pahokee is respected in the rest of the State.
2. Middle School – there should be an update on this before the Commission.
3. Regional Hospital is going according to plan.
4. Herbert Hoover Dike – only thing going on is a machine from Japan capable of digging a trench down the middle of the dike and it mixes concrete and dirt, building a solid wall at a rate of 100 feet/day. The City has permission to extend the Marina South to the City limits and North to the City limits.
5. Charter Amendment Committee – the Commission needs an update on that. Per Mimi McAndrews said the intent was to have it on the same ballot in March, but that is going to be impossible – there is no time to do it now. The charter requires that it be done in 2008, so there is eleven months in which to do it, just not in March or you can have a special election.
6. Land swap for Ms. Smith property in Eastlake Village. It was mentioned that the property she was trying to get is not owned by the City. Per Ms. McAndrews, Ms. Smith wanted two non-conforming lots that are side by side and she is working with her to make sure that the City has title to the other lot. Specific information about the lots was discussed by Vice Mayor Crawford, Ms. Latimore and the City Attorney.

New Business:

1. Regular Commission meeting '08 date conflicts:
 - a. January 22nd, following Martin Luther King Day
 - b. May 27th, following Memorial Day
 - c. October 14th, following Columbus Day
 - d. November 11th, move Veteran's Day to November 10th.
2. Press Conference – negative publicity. The Mayor has been making a concerted effort to separate the Cities of Belle Glade and South Bay from the City of Pahokee, because our financial condition is so much better than theirs. He was asked by the County if we accelerate this, will the City of Pahokee be able to financially uphold its end of the bargain and he said yes, we will. The City is going to hold a press conference and to lay our finances down on the table for all the world to see, to show the East Coast that the City of Pahokee has been working doing what it is supposed to do.
3. Mayor's appointment to the vacant seat on the Palm Beach County League of Cities.

Report of the City Manager:

Report of the City Attorney:

Citizens Comments/General Concerns:

Correspondence, Comments and Concerns of the City Commissioners:

(The cassette tape recorder is unavailable past this point due to mechanical failure. The balance of the minutes will be obtained from the DVD taken during the meeting when it is transcribed)

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 P.M.

J.P. Sasser, Mayor

ATTEST: Raquel Diaz, City Clerk