

October 12, 2015

The Sopchoppy City Council met in regular session. In attendance were Mayor Martha Evans and Councilpersons, Nathan Lewis, Glen Rudd and Becton Roddenberry. The meeting was opened by saluting the flag and with prayer.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by the Council. Rudd/Lewis, 4/0.

Announcements: A meeting of the Depot Park Committee has been advertised for October 28 at 5:30 p.m.

Citizens Speak:

Angie Nichols spoke regarding an incident with a juvenile attempting to enter the window of her 12 year old daughter's bedroom. The suspect was chased by Mr. Nichols and the Sheriff Dept. was called. The suspect was apprehended hiding in a neighbor's yard. Three other youth (15-16 years old) were observed roaming around the neighborhood in a car about midnight. There have been numerous vehicle burglaries, trespassing issues and problems from these juveniles. Ms. Nichols concern was that even though the juvenile was arrested, he was turned away from the juvenile detention center and sent back home to parents that night. No follow up was made to her.

Keith Anderson indicated that he and his wife had recently witnessed these juveniles breaking into a car across the street from their home. Even though he identified the offenders, nothing was done.

Sheriff Creel spoke to the Council and the residents of the community and assured them that his department is on top of the situation. They have identified 7-8 children as the problem. He stated the real problem to be a "parent problem" declaring "that they do not know where their kids are and they don't care". The Sheriff informed the Council that he normally has one deputy in the South zone and stated that we should call every time we see or hear something. He gave 6 months of statistics for activities they have worked in the South Zone. Stating lack of man power as a Sheriff's Dept. problem having cut 11 positions including road deputies. Sheriff Creel stated what needs to be done is to make parents responsible for the actions of their children. He spoke about curfews and a law that holds parents responsible.

Councilman Nathan Lewis stated that he felt there is a sense of uncertainty and frustration from not receiving a call back to close the circle of an investigation.

Sheriff Creel responded that he runs 4-6 deputies and the deputy working the south zone does a Sopchoppy check per his instructions. He also explained that juvenile justice would not take the juvenile that attempted breaking into the Nichols home because he did not score high enough even though he had recently been charged with breaking and entering. The Sheriff stated that he would be happy to create a data base of email addresses to use to give closure when calls are made and he would instruct that the Clerk receive notices of activities.

The Clerk informed the Council that the City is continuing to have problems in the Park with juveniles. In recent weeks there have been reports of rocks being thrown resulting in a dispute with a camper, a wedding being crashed and juveniles being disrespectful and threatening to the Manager and other guests. One of the juveniles came forward to speak to the Council and shared things that were

happening in the park. The Council requested that a trespass warning be issued to one of the juveniles and informed the others that if anything else occurred they would also be given a trespass warning and not allowed back in the park.

Further discussion ensued on the merits of passing a curfew ordinance but no action was taken.

A second reading and public hearing was held on ORDINANCE 2015-04, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOPCHOPPY, FLORIDA VACATING THE CITY'S INTEREST IN THOSE PORTIONS OF CLERMONT AVENUE LOCATED NORTH OF U.S. HIGHWAY 319, AS SHOWN ON THE MAP OF THE TOWN OF SOPCHOPPY EAST SIDE, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1 OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OF WAKULLA COUNTY FLORIDA. No one from the public sector was in attendance to speak on the adoption of the Ordinance. Nathan Lewis made the motion to adopt Ordinance 2015-04, closing that portion of Clermont Avenue north of U.S. 319, seconded by Becton Roddenberry, passed 4/0.

1st reading and public hearing on ORDINANCE 2015-05, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE GENERAL FUND AND WATER FUND OF THE CITY OF SOPCHOPPY FOR THE 2014-15 OPERATING YEAR. No action.

Dan Cox presented the Council with the current Capital Improvement Plan and asked that they review for changes and/or updates and be ready for first public hearing in November.

Becton Roddenberry informed the Council that he was not pleased with the logo's that have been presented and that he is requesting a specialist in Tallahassee give him a price. Nelle McCall informed the Council that the Worm Gruntin Committee gets a new logo every year and that they set a price they will pay, ask for rough design samples from competing companies and choose a logo at no cost to develop for the set price. Nathan Lewis stated that he would like to reach out to local residents to come up with a logo that is born out of the community.

Glenn Rudd made a motion to approve the financial and adjustment reports as presented, seconded by Nathan Lewis, passed 4/0.

Sopchoppy Volunteer Fire Chief, Dale Rushton announced that the Fire Department completed the ISO fire inspection and he was informed that due to a personnel problem, the city's fire rating will go from a 6/7 to 10. The City does not have enough state certified fire fighters responding to fires. We must provide a minimum of 4 certified fire fighters at each fire. We have six months to correct this action. Chief Rushton is in the process of re-activating members of the department that are state certified firemen.

Glen Rudd made the motion to declare a list of old computers as surplus property and prepare to bid them off, seconded by Nathan Lewis.

Leonard Tartt informed the Council that the 319/98 intersection re-location project has been postponed until May. He also shared that he is in receipt of the 319 conceptual drawings for a widening project from River Road in Leon County to the 319/98 intersection.

The Council voiced the need to block the newly opened section of Dickson Street to thru traffic, staff will address this concern.

Council Items:

Councilman Roddenberry – none

Councilman Lewis – asked to address a recent personnel issue between Councilman Roddenberry and staff. He asked Councilman Roddenberry to speak to the issue and the Councilman refused to do so at that time. Mayor Evans requested that the Clerk share what took place and Clerk stated that she and the Councilman had a phone disagreement over his idea of spending \$100,000 on a bronze statue. After the disagreement, Councilman Roddenberry came to City Hall, requested a personnel policy on employee conduct and the organizational chart and called the clerk into his chambers, informing her he was her boss. The Clerk gave details of this meeting and Councilman Roddenberry added his comments regarding the meeting. Attorney Dan Cox re-iterated to the Council that they are the policy making legislative body of the city and that they hire staff to run the day to day operations of the City. Staff works for the entire Council and one Councilmember does not have the authority to discipline staff. Mayor Evans also stated that the Clerk is hired by the entire Council and that she has successfully worked for many Councilmembers in her 34 years of employment. Councilmembers Lewis and Rudd along with Mayor Evans informed Councilman Roddenberry that they felt he owed the Clerk an apology, which he issued.

Rick Ott spoke from the audience asking if Councilman Roddenberry had, as agreed, issued a public meeting apology to Nelle McCall for the facebook posting that he made back in early Sept. Councilman Roddenberry stated due to a medical emergency, he had missed the September, meeting when the apology was to be made. He informed the Council of a facebook posting he had made criticizing Ms. McCall over an original version of the pledge of allegiance that she has posted at her shop. Ms. McCall stated that Mr. Roddenberry's post's incite hate crimes thru facebook. Councilman Roddenberry then issued the apology to Ms. McCall.

Councilman Rudd asked once again what right a councilmember has to call an employee in of their own accord and reprimand. Attorney Cox replied, NONE, not as a single member, it must be authorized by the entire council.

Leonard Tartt, and Attorney Dan Cox reminded the Council that they should be very careful to abide by the Sunshine Laws and that two Councilmembers cannot talk to each other about any subject or use a spouse to communicate.

Motion by Lewis/Roddenberry to adjourn.