

On Monday, December 3, 2018 at 5:00 p.m., the City of Wauchula Commission met for its regular scheduled workshop in the Commission Chambers at 225 East Main Street, Suite 105, Wauchula.

**Nadaskay called the workshop to order.**

Commissioners present were Mayor Pro-Tem Neda Cobb, Mayor Keith Nadaskay, Kenneth Lambert and Gary Smith. Commissioner Russell Smith was absent.

Also present were City Manager Terry Atchley, Assistant City Manager Olivia Minshew, City Attorney Thomas Cloud, Finance Director Sandee Braxton, Chief John Eason and City Clerk Holly Smith.

**Board Appointments**

Atchley explained the proposed Board appointments to the Commission. The names which are highlighted have agreed to serve another term. On the Airport Advisory Board there is a name, Mike Wilkinson, he submitted an application with the desire to serve on the Board. Trez Vining has resigned from the Airport Advisory Board. Atchley asked the Commission to look over the appointments and consider them at next week's meeting.

**Updates on City Projects**

Minshew addressed the Commission and stated she would be giving them updates on three City projects.

1. Townsend Street Project – Project is fully funded through FDOT and has started with design. The project will put curb and gutter along Townsend Street from Florida Avenue to Southbound Highway 17. There will be storm pipe on the north side of Townsend going from Highway 17 South to Heard Bridge Road, where a stormwater retention pond will be constructed. Resurfacing will be on Townsend from Florida Avenue to Highway 17 South and resurfacing will pick back up from Highway 17 North to Heard Bridge Road. The section of Townsend between Highway 17 north and south will not be resurfaced since it will be not be disturbed by the construction.
2. Green Street Project – Project is fully funded through Legislative appropriations. This is the stormwater conveyance that runs west to east on the north side of Green Street and is going from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to just east of Griffin Road, running alongside the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Construction began November 12<sup>th</sup>. Construction should be complete in May with final punch out and invoicing in June 2019.
3. Runway Rehabilitation Project – The runway has been completely rehabbed as well as all the lights. The lights have passed inspection from FAA and the airport is ready for night time operation. The night lights have been turned off the past two years because they were out of alignment. Permanent marking is scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup> and the runway will be closed for a few days.

**Update on Polk Regional Water Cooperative**

Atchley discussed the needs and challenges the City of Wauchula and Hardee County face every day in regards to water. Last week, Cloud, Minshew and I met with some representatives from the Bartow area in regards to the Polk Regional Water Cooperative. Atchley stated we wanted to bring this information to you to start some discussion and dialogue to see if we are able to get some direction from you on how the City needs to proceed into the future. Atchley turned the discussion over to Cloud. Cloud addressed the Commission and stated there is a water shortage, why do I say that, because every City I represent in Central Florida is located in something called SWUCA, the Southern Water Use Caution Area. Cloud stated because you are located in SWUCA, every time you renew your water use permit they reduce the usage and that is what they did with the last renewal. Cloud stated they will reduce it again in five years. Cloud asked if anyone had looked at alternative water resources. He stated the Peace River will be the City of

Wauchula's alternative water resources. Cloud stated he was once told Wauchula was like a sandwich and I would say that analogy holds true for water. The people up river from you have banded together and formed a cooperative, which is a political subdivision within the State of Florida, in order to plan for and develop alternative water supply sources. One of those projects is going to be the Peace River. The people to the south of you, which is Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and Desoto, already have one and it is called the Peace River Regional Water Treatment Plant. It is fixing to get the right to pull a couple of hundred million gallons of water on a peak in order to store in the ground or in surface reservoirs to provide water to all the people on the coast. At one time Hardee County was a member of the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, they joined when it was initially formed in 1982 and quit in 1984. My guess is they could not see any benefit from it. Cloud stated what happened in the late 80's, early 90's, a company by the name of General Development Cooperation went bankrupt; to reorganize and get out of bankruptcy, they sold their utilities; they owned the Peace River Water Plant. They sold it to Charlotte County who by contract conveyed it to Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority. And it has been the lone major water utility that is pulling water out of the river. I found out today there is approximately 82 million gallons worth of agriculture uses that are coming out of that river.

Cloud stated he attended a meeting in Tampa today and the lawsuit settlement is progressing well and in the process of working through this suit, the opportunity presented itself for Wauchula to become a part of this entity. Why would you do that? Cloud stated because if you do not do that the water resources that we might have available for future generations of people who live here will be developed by someone else and if you get any of that water at all it will be at an exorbitant price. What we found out is that greater amounts, volumes, of water can be harvested safely from the Peace River without harming the recreational uses that are so important to this community, if that withdrawal point is located somewhere here. The further south they go with the withdrawal points the more water they can safely harvest because it is draining a bigger drainage basin. They also treat the upper Peace River different from the lower Peace River. These are things we did not know before we went into this lawsuit. Polk County is not going to come down here without the consent of the people who are here. They have suggested it might be beneficial for us to join the Cooperative so we get a seat at the table. So what does that entail? It entails initially one agreement and maybe two. The first agreement would be to sign into the formation agreement. I have supplied a slew of documents to Atchley and Minshew. It does not cost you much of anything to become a member of the Cooperative, it will because we are outside of Polk County, requiring all Polk County entities to agree for us to join the entity. The slightly tougher question will be whether we enter into the initial implementation agreement. Every one of these major regional water entities in Florida involves a multi step process that goes from formation to creation of water. I wish it was just one step but it is not. The first thing you enter into is called an implementation agreement and right now they have identified five projects, three of them they are working on, and currently they are not working on the Peace River project but they want to change that. If we joined it would help them in many ways and I believe it would help us because it would give us a seat at the table, however we are not in a position to join it yet but we could be in a position to join. We would sit down with them and enter into the formation agreement and then we would work out the terms of joining the implementation agreement. I would recommend to the City that they also get some type of engineering ground water hydrology advisor on board now in order to help us figure out what would be the best possible terms for this agreement. We need to have somebody figure out how much of this we really need, how much of this does the community need because I believe that our role here could be the facilitator throughout Hardee County. For us to join it does not require the County or the other two cities to join. It may be far down the road that they find it beneficial for them to join. If no one from this area gets involved I believe an opportunity is going to be missed that is going to be hurtful to everyone in this County. There is going to be a water shortage and getting additional water that will be sufficient for water

supply for the people who live here is going to be more expensive. There is no other way to sugar coat that because to develop some of these sources is not going to be easy. It is going to require planning, engineering and some complex agreements in order to put the financing in place to make it possible to do this. We have the initial framework and if you want to get water from it you join, you do not have to buy water from it, but if you are going to get water from it you will end up entering into an implementation agreement. You can drop off the train at any step along the way. Cloud encouraged anyone who had questions now or in the future to ask him. Cloud stated there is strength in numbers.

Atchley added this is long term planning. Lambert stated he was glad to see us at this point and this is not new. He added the battle for water in the State of Florida has been going on for many years. It is interior counties verses the coastal counties at macro level. When you get to the micro level it becomes much more complex. Lambert stated we need to study this further and it is a highly political issue. Atchley stated what we are going to do is continue to move forward and analyze it and continue communication with the Polk County Regional Water Cooperative to educate ourselves and bring additional information and recommendations back to you. Nadaskay stated this is a lot of information to process.

Atchley announced the Grand Opening of the new Save-a-Lot was December 6<sup>th</sup> at 10am and the Commission had been invited to attend.

Atchley announced the Crews Park Project grant application we submitted to the Mosaic Foundation had been awarded in the amount of \$105,000.

Atchley informed the Commission that Commissioner R. Smith was absent due to the passing of his mother.

**With no further business to discuss, Nadaskay adjourned the Workshop at 5:39 p.m.**

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Mayor Richard K. Nadaskay, Jr.

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City Clerk Holly Smith