

**DeFuniak Springs City Council
Special Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
August 30, 2021
5:00 p.m.**

The following Council members were present: Mayor Bob Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tempore Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Robert McKnight (Seat 2); Councilmember Kevin Crystal (Seat 3); Councilmember Henry D. Ennis (Seat 4), and Councilmember Anthony Vallée (Seat 5). Staff present: City Manager Robert Thompson, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, and City Clerk Maryanne Schrader. Finance Director Debra Gibson was excused.

Mayor Bob Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. stating the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the mobility plan update and the police vehicle purchase budget amendment. He asked Chief Hurley to come forward.

Next, Chief James Hurley said the trucks he initially asked for are no longer on the lot. While he was purchasing the Jeep, he was able to get two vehicles adding that one of the cars is at a lower rate than the State contract. He added the vehicles are a 2020 Dodge Charger and a 2020 Dodge Challenger.

Motion by Councilmember K. Crystal and seconded by Councilmember T. Bierbaum to amend the prior budget amendment to replace the two Silverado trucks and purchase two vehicles using Police impact fees.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember R. McKnight, Aye; Councilmember K. Crystal, Aye; Councilmember H. Ennis, Aye; Councilmember A. Vallée, Aye. Ayes 5, Nays 0. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Campbell went over the mobility plan stating he had received information that the County Planner, Kristen Shell, had been told that the city stated we were not going to be part of the County plan.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson said they cannot force us into the fee structure, but we will need to approve a plan to take to the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). City Attorney Clay Adkinson said the County has until the end of next week to bring the plan forward.

Councilmember A. Vallée explained Council needs to agree to a set of projects to take to the TPO. He added the County does not have a fee structure yet.

Discussion ensued on the timing of taking the list to the TPO. Councilmember A. Vallée stated the County said we could opt out of their plan at any time, but they plan on taking everything to the TPO. He added we would need to be part of the initial step moving forward, and we can advocate for the city directly ourselves. Councilmember A. Vallée said they would need support of all the county, so it would be a downside as we would have to work on our items on our own, if we do not participate.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson mentioned the County staff put together a plan for all the cities in the County, however, they did not talk to the city beforehand. If we want to have a say in the plan, we need to do participate.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said we agreed that we would work together. He recalled that one of the Councilmembers said the mobility plan was too vague. He wants to work with the County, however, we lacked organization with the list that we were provided.

Councilmember K. Crystal stated we can load up the list, but we cannot take anything out.

Councilmember A. Vallée said we agreed that the city manager would put together a comprehensive list.

Cliff Knauer said the list before them is what was sent to them; however, he did not bring the original mobility plan. Cliff Knauer said he presented the County list at the previous workshop, and has brought forward the Council's priority list from the workshop notes.

Mayor Campbell asked if we have suggestions to the new list. Councilmember R. McKnight suggested discussing the ranking to gain a consensus.

City Manager R. Thompson said his understanding is the ranking is a strong word, so he asked Council what should be done first. From looking at the list, he cannot see what is better for the city. We need to know how much it is going to cost, the flow of traffic, and what is going to get us to come to fruition.

Councilmember R. McKnight suggested concentrating on what would be best for economic development, what is best for the people in town, removing bad intersections, adding a second interchange in terms of economic development, and attracting business to the site.

Councilmember A. Vallée mentioned combining the options on the list, as there are multiple items to accomplish the same goal. He added the Complete Streets project is already at the TPO and has had a FDOT study.

Cliff Knauer said none of the projects on the list are funded. The first thing to do is to agree to transmit the list of projects to the County. He advised that the TPO projects are different from the mobility plan list, as they do have to be ranked. In the future if there is a referendum, the projects need to be on the list.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson asked about the TPO list, and C. Knauer said the list and ranking would need to be sent to them, but some items on this list cannot meet the TPO requirements. He said any projects on a state highway, or can reduce traffic on a state highway, or if the project reduces congestion is eligible. He added the Bruce Avenue project would meet all the qualifications.

Councilmember A. Vallée said the long-range planning call is next Wednesday, so the meeting is the following month on the 30th. City Attorney Clay Adkinson mentioned the ranking is related to the TPO.

Discussion ensued on bike paths, striping, multi-modal transportation.

Councilmember A. Vallée mentioned a listing of downtown which included striping and east/west Baldwin Avenue project for biking and pedestrian paths that connect to schools would be TPO projects.

Cliff Knauer said there are a lot of sidewalks that need rehabilitation, as they do not meet ADA. He added Elissa has identified a lot of sidewalks other than Baldwin Avenue that should be part of the mobility plan. Councilmember A. Vallée said city wide implementation and remediation of sidewalks could be added.

Cliff Knauer said if the County gets a sales tax on the referendum and the city is not on the list, the city would not be included, adding we need to get the list to the County.

Cliff Knauer said he will add the sidewalk remediation and rehabilitation to the list to be transmitted to the County. Council agreed on the importance of adding the sidewalk remediation.

Cliff Knauer added the FDOT has stated it is feasible to reduce the number of lanes after the feasibility study on Complete Streets. Councilmember A. Vallée said the Council had agreed to pay \$15,000 and the County had agreed, but we were not charged. He added FDOT has done the initial study, so Complete Streets does not need to be added.

Discussion ensued on the importance of tourist traffic and congestion on US 331, Highway 83, and Highway 90 road improvements.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum suggested adding the three items to the plan, Complete Streets, Highway 90, adding bike paths and the sidewalk rehabilitation.

Councilmember A. Vallée asked how we are going to explain the information to the TPO, and Cliff Knauer said they have maps and exhibits ready, except for the sidewalks. Councilmember A. Vallée was concerned about the big picture items and just wanted expectations clear.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson suggested directing Dewberry to get with Councilmember A. Vallée, so he can bring it to the TPO.

Discussion ensued on properly listing the items in the Mobility Plan.

Councilmember K. Crystal said there is a lack of communication with the County Planning staff and asked Mayor Campbell to draft a statement that states we are willing to participate and do not want to opt-out of the plan.

Motion by Councilmember R. McKnight and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal to request the mayor to provide a strong one-page letter for clarification to the County so there is no misunderstanding on the city's participation in the Mobility Plan.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember R. McKnight, Aye; Councilmember K. Crystal, Aye; Councilmember H. Ennis, Aye; Councilmember A. Vallée, Aye. Ayes 5, Nays 0. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal

to adopt the list and transmit the list to the County to be included in the Mobility Plan with the three additions retitled as Complete Streets to be more descriptive of Highway 90, include city wide sidewalk rehabilitations, and city-wide bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Mayor Campbell voiced concern on the word sidewalk rehabilitations, as it was not descriptive enough.

Motion amended by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal to include the title as repair and construction of sidewalks.

Councilmember A. Vallée asked that the list be entitled as a “Needs List” and include the graphic representation.

Motion amended by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal to entitle the list as a “Needs List” and include the graphic representation.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember R. McKnight, Aye; Councilmember K. Crystal, Aye; Councilmember H. Ennis, Aye; Councilmember A. Vallée, Aye. Ayes 5, Nays 0. All ayes. Motion carried.

The final **motion** for clarity: **Motion** amended by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal to adopt the list and transmit the list to the County to be included in the Mobility Plan with the three additions retitled as Complete Streets to be more descriptive of Highway 90, to include city wide repair and construction of sidewalks, and city-wide bicycle and pedestrian improvements and entitle the list as a “Needs List” and include the graphic representation.

Mayor Campbell directed the focus on the list to the TPO and Council discussed what could be eliminated.

City Manager R. Thompson asked Cliff Knauer to modify the list that is potential TPO projects and what is not and add color-coded items with maps. Councilmember A. Vallée said the actual meeting is on October 20th with the first call on September 8th. Councilmember T. Bierbaum said Council needs to decide tonight.

Discussion ensued on what roads would not meet TPO eligibility, specific criteria on what would qualify and what could be eliminated, traffic flow and widening of roads, as well as alternate routes and connector roads within the city.

After discussion, Councilmember K. Crystal said let the TPO figure out on what we can or cannot do, and City Attorney Clay Adkinson said we could do the lobbying on the backend of it.

City Manager R. Thompson suggested widening US 331 north to four lanes, as it separates the airport scenario, which allows for flow of traffic.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said the bike paths should be included if they connect to a school.

Councilmember A. Vallée said if we do the US 331 alignment, it will free up the Spanish Trail project, adding by taking the heavy traffic off of it, you are gaining a lot. He also suggested integration of Complete Streets to all connectors.

Cliff Knauer stated items need to be for a specific project. Councilmember R. McKnight said the new exit should be added for the economic development opportunity. Councilmember K. Crystal mentioned when Chelco moves its operations, it will increase traffic, so it is a tourist safety issue.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum mentioned traffic lights increase congestion. Councilmember A. Vallée suggested a traffic circle. Cliff Knauer said the \$150,000 signalizations and the widening of Highway 83 and Walton Road are the cost, stating the Council has moved the smaller projects ahead of the \$3 million projects and suggested focusing on the larger projects. He added the smaller projects could be captured in the mobility plan, if the sales tax ever happens.

Councilmember R. McKnight went on to say the second Industrial Park opportunities should be placed on the list, as we need to have more hotel rooms. The project will bring new development.

Mayor Campbell said if we do the alignment on US 331 to I-10, it kicks in six lanes, as you cannot add bike lanes unless there is an alternate route.

Discussion ensued on where to rank the projects. Cliff Knauer said the County has Genesis under contract and said the city could be added instead of placing it on the TPO.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson asked about signal synchronization, as we could piggyback with the County, and Cliff Knauer replied with the increased capacity for traffic flow, he was not sure how it would work with the TPO.

Cliff Knauer recapped that Council combined the items in the listing by collapsing the road items into 1-4, to include Highway 83 widening to 4 lanes with realignment to tie into US 331 South, Highway 83 widening to 4 lanes with realignment to the east side from State line to I-10, US 331 widening to 4 lane from state line through Airport or Country Club to connect to I-10, adding alternate routes, (Coy Burgess is covered in #3), Highway 90 Complete Streets and turn lane would become #5, Bruce Avenue extension moved to #6 and Baldwin overpass #7 and combine the two lights on Walton Road for #8 and the signal synchronization moved to #9. The interchanges can go under numbers 10, and 11.

Motion by Councilmember K. Crystal and seconded by Councilmember H. Ennis to accept the rankings for the TPO that Cliff Knauer has stated.

Mayor Campbell said Cliff Knauer will submit a draft to the Mayor and Council.

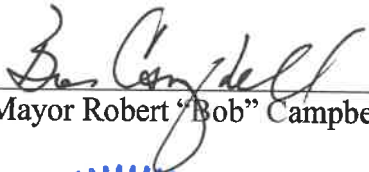
Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember R. McKnight, Aye; Councilmember K. Crystal, Aye; Councilmember H. Ennis, Aye; Councilmember A. Vallée, Aye. Ayes 5, Nays 0. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Campbell said he met with Bernard Johnson and several engineers from Gulf Power, stating they want to put a transmission line in for the route a quarter mile west of the airport, to go down to Highway 90 toward San Destin. Gulf Power wants to place the lines on 90-foot concrete posts where the runway ends. Mayor Campbell said City Manager R. Thompson told them to

place it all underground. Mayor Campbell said we cannot have the two poles at the end of the runway. He suggested an alternate route north of Highway 90, but we need coordination with DOT adding Gulf Power wants to put it in place by 2023. Gulf Power will come back with another option, as they now know the problems.


Mayor Campbell adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Approved:



Mayor Robert "Bob" Campbell

Attest:



Minutes submitted by Maryanne Schrader, City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given

