

Update from City Hall

City Council met on March 5th at 7:00 PM with all members present. The ladies from the Florida Stone Crabbers Assn. presented their report of the very successful Everglades Seafood Festival which grossed \$603,539.49, had expenses of \$415,393.13 for a net Income of \$188,146.36. Additionally, the Friday night food drive resulted in a donation of over 2400 lbs of food and cash donations of \$1589.25 and received a grateful round of applause from Council and the residents present.

Sheriff's Department Sergeant Robert Reuthe reported on the dump truck enforcement & inspection program at US 41 & CR 29 requested by City residents and the Mayor, multiple tickets for violations were issued and at least two trucks were taken out of service after inspection.

Council held second readings of Ordinance 2024-2/golf carts which passed 4-1 and Ordinance 2024-3/sewer moratorium passed by unanimous vote, as I said previously, hopefully for the last time. An Intention to Bid for the concentrate line project was approved unanimously as were contracts for Professional Engineering Surveying Services with CPY Consulting and McFarland-Johnson while the contract for ABB was amended and assigned to LJA Engineering which recently purchased ABB.

We also approved the Updated Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement & Resolution 2024-3 as well as a Proclamation of support for the rehabilitation of the Bank of the Everglades building. Patty Huff from ESHP requested letters of support be sent to Dottie at City Hall and Finance Administrator Tammie Pernas requested letters of community support for the relocation and construction of the new Community Center above the current pavilion at McLeod Park, new City Councilwoman Diana Valdes will be working to gather letters of support and they can be sent to Dottie at City Hall. Those letters of support should be addressed to Congressman Mario Diaz Balart.

Councilman Oglesby inquired about the return of ambulance services currently based at Port of the Islands and the Mayor let attendees know that, upon the completion of installation of smoke detectors, the ambulance should be back within 2-3 weeks. Councilman Pernas reviewed the issues relating to the dredging and location of the transmission pipe which will run across Chokoloskee Bay from the Barron River to the causeway and could create some navigational issues for accessing Sandfly Pass, however the Corps of Engineers has agreed to bury the pipe to create passage to Sandfly, something they don't traditionally do.

The City is preparing to begin the process for the design/build of the new Fire Station/Emergency Operations Center.