

**FRUITLAND PARK SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 30, 2013**

MEETING STATISTICS. A special meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was conducted in the Commission Chambers of City Hall, 506 West Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida on Thursday, May 30, 2013 beginning at 7:02 p.m

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. Commissioner Gunter delivered the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Cheshire.

ROLL CALL. Mayor Bell asked City Clerk Marie Azzolino, (ACC) to call the roll.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT. Vice Mayor Sharon Kelly, Commissioner John L. Gunter, Jr., Commissioner Chris Cheshire, Commissioner Albert O. Goldberg, Mayor Christopher J. Bell

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS/OTHERS PRESENT. Interim City Manager, Police Chief (PC) Terry Isaacs, Acting City Treasurer (ACT) Susan Parker, Community Development Director (CDD) Charlie Rector, and Acting City Clerk (ACC) Marie Azzolino.

Mayor Bell said we received two more resumes for City Treasurer and City Clerk. Susan Whitiker for City Clerk and Donna Wright for City Treasurer. Mayor Bell called the City of Eustis and spoke to Jim Myers who is Donna's direct hit. He spoke very highly of her and said she was very qualified for the position. She is currently serving in the City of Leesburg as an accountant.

Mayor Bell said we are scheduled to speak to a recruiting firm on the 6<sup>th</sup> but wanted to know if we should have her come in before that for an interview.

(ACC) Marie Azzolino said that Donna Wright is on vacation and won't be back until the 10<sup>th</sup>.

01. Interview with Robert Museus

Robert Museus coming from Wisconsin. Mayor said that he is applying for the position of City Manager. Mr. Museus grew up in Minnesota, went to the University of Minnesota, was in active duty in Germany, was assigned as administrator with the post, got a calling for administration and when returned he enrolled at St. Paul and got his Master's Degree in Administration. I was lucky enough to land a position as City Administrator for a small town in Minnesota. Worked in Flint Michigan and worked with the State highway. I went on to work in Beloit, Wisconsin. We put in a new Fire station and police station. I worked with getting new businesses developed, and housing development.

Commissioner Gunter wanted to know if these projects were all grant related.

Mr. Museus said some were and some weren't.

Mayor Bell asked why he would choose Fruitland Park.

Mr. Museus said he likes the area and he has family in the Highlands, on US 27.

Mayor Bell asked if Mr. Museus Googled us.

He said, Oh yes.

Commissioner Cheshire said what do you know about us?

Mr. Museus said that Fruitland Park is going through some interesting times. I have enough experience that I don't believe half the things I read because they are stretching the truth many times.

Mayor Bell opened up the meeting for questions.

Commissioner Cheshire asked how he thought Mr. Museus feels about the relationship between the City Manager, the Mayor and the Commission.

Mr. Museus said with respect and I think if you don't respect each other and the public, you will either work together or fail apart. He said he is not impressed with titles.

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Commissioner Gunter said he and some of the Commission have been in town almost all their lives and know most of the people and employees in town. How do you feel about employee department heads talking with the board.

Mr. Museus said he wouldn't stop that because at times you have to. I'm an open person and if you have a question I feel you should come to me. Social aspect and work aspect should be separate.

Vice Mayor Kelly said that over the 20 years as Manager what is the most important thing you learned?

Mr. Museus said sometimes you need to sit back and think before you make a quick decision.

Mayor Bell said that everything you see on the internet sometimes is one sided. Can you tell us about Beloit?

Mr. Museus explained that you are talking about the Police Department of Beloit. There were two Chiefs and they did whatever they wanted and there were internal quarrels. None of them were very skilled. Also it was a time when there were open seats on the Commission and you know when that happens the first to go is the Manager.

Vice Mayor Kelly asked how many on their board.

Mr. Museus said five just like a Commission and they are all elected.

Mayor Bell said that there was a video on the internet.

Mr. Museus said that what happened was that the Chief brought in a sergeant with strong administrative skills and some of the other officers were afraid of her. What they were trying to do was to trash her. I thought it unacceptable and I knew who was responsible and gave him a piece of my mind. I would do the same thing today. But if you look at the video it looks very different.

Mayor Bell asked if he was currently working.

Mr. Museus answered no, not at this time.

Mayor Bell asked what do you see in the future for you.

Mr. Museus said I have a son in the ninth grade so I have several years to go and would love to spend them here.

Mayor Bell said that there were several lawsuits against the town where you worked so I guess lawsuits are not new to you.

Mr. Museus said most of the good stuff you don't see and I wish it was a better time when I was there.

Vice Mayor Kelly asked if there attorney just settled.

Mr. Museus said that we knew what was happening but you can't stop a suit.

Vice Mayor Kelly said that you know what you would be up against.

Mr. Museus said I'm hoping things will settle down now.

Commissioner Cheshire wanted to know what he would do the first 30 days on the job.

Mr. Museus said he would walk around, get to know the employees, listen to everyone, take notes about what he saw and try to become very knowledgeable about the budget.

Commissioner Goldberg asked if he had a five or ten year plan.

Mr. Museus yes in operational and capital improvements.

Commissioner Gunter wanted to know if as a City Manager he generated revenue.

Mr. Museus said he had never raised the tax rate in any city he worked. He did not like to raise taxes. There were some changes in some of the cities but they were marginal.

Commissioner Gunter said our tax rate is 4.6.

Mr. Museus said his was 7.5

Commissioner Gunter said that we are in the process of purchasing the electric franchise from Leesburg. Have you ever been involved with something like this?

Mr. Museus said that he would be willing to jump into that process. I was involved in the purchase of water utilities for another city.

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Mr. Museus said as far as utilities goes he is very comfortable with the process.  
Commissioner Kelly said that the City is in the process of considerable growth.  
Mr. Museus said he is familiar with a city's growth and roughly familiar with districts.  
Commissioner Cheshire said that we need someone that can bring the City back as a team.  
Mr. Museus said that you need team work.  
Mayor Bell asked if he thought he should be a leader of if he should follow the thoughts of the Commission.  
Mr. Museus said you need to stand up for the City. If I see a policy change then I would come to you and I will follow policy changes you make. I work for you and I will try to make you look good to the public. I'm open to public and press.  
Commissioner Kelly said we should make it a policy for the City Manager not to close the door.  
Commissioner Cheshire said you have stayed at your jobs for a long time that's pretty good for a City Manager.  
Mr. Museus said most of the jobs were good times.  
Mayor Bell said he has been here around 20 years and most of the times were pretty good times but recently had some not so good times but we hope to get back to those good times.  
Commissioner Kelly does not want to give away our potential electricity and then they take over our sewer.  
Mr. Museus said you need strategy and with the Commission's approval that wouldn't happen.  
Commissioner Kelly wanted to know if he was familiar with the Sunshine Laws of Florida.  
Mr. Museus said that he had some knowledge.  
Commissioner Goldberg said that most of the meetings regarding the electric purchase were at an open meeting anyway. I don't think we can hold a closed meeting for something like that.  
Mr. Museus said it's like buying a house.  
Commissioner Goldger and Commissioner Gunter said that the City of Leesburg is sitting on this right now and we would want the new City Manager to really get involved in this.  
Mayor Bell said that there is a lot of work to do here and we always here that people come here to get ready for retirement.  
Mr. Museus said he is not ready for that, he loves a challenge and that he enjoys the work. I feel that I am a problem solver.  
Commissioner Goldberg said he wondered what his average day would be like, as far as what time he would come in and leave.  
Mr. Museus said that he would put in the time that was necessary. I'd come in and return phone calls and emails, I don't shut my door unless absolutely necessary. And try to make the best use of my time.  
Commissioner Gunter wanted to know how often he would have department head meetings.  
Mr. Museus said that usually he likes to have them the day after a Commission meeting and review the agenda from that meeting.  
Commissioner Gunter wanted to know if he felt that employees and department heads should come to Commission meetings.

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Mr. Museus said that he felt that department heads need to give specific information at a Commission meeting.  
Commissioner Gunter said that there are issues that come up that can be settled that night.  
Mr. Museus said he likes to make all employees feel that they are welcome.  
Mayor Bell said that since you are not employed do you have a start date.

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Mr. Museus he said that it is possible to start in about two weeks.  
Commissioner Kelly wanted to know if his family would be coming also.  
Mr. Museus said that yes, they are a package.  
Mayor Bell wanted to know if the references he supplied are current.  
Mr. Museus said that he had plenty more if needed.  
Mayor Bell asked if he had anything else to say.  
Mr. Museus said he thanked the Commission and taking the time to listen to me.  
Mayor Bell said he appreciated the fact that he came here and they didn't have to do the interview via skype.

Police Chief Isaac said that Mr. Richardson and Mr. Ranize were outside taking pictures of the bulletin Board and cars in the parking lot.

Police Chief said he called his references and that they all said he was a great guy and a good supervisor. They said nothing negative. Mr. Museus did say that he thought the Police Department was too big for this City and couldn't understand why we had two man shifts. Police Chief Isaacs said that Florida is the number one state for killing officers.

Commissioner Kelley wanted to know if Police Chief Isaacs called everyone on the list.  
Chief Isaacs said no he did not.

Commissioner Cheshire really doesn't want to hire a head hunter but agrees with Commissioner Gunter do we really want to go through what we did before. We need to hire a Recruiting Agency so that they do complete checks and we don't have a problem again.

Chief Isaacs said that Mr. Reed had called Ms. Marie and that he was quite abrupt and said he had spoke to Ms. Diane, he did not use her name, but said he did not want to have anything to do with the City. He said that Mr. Reed said that he would not subject his family to the goings on of the City. He said he had been waiting for Ms. Diane to get back to him.

Commissioner Cheshire said he didn't understand what was really going on in the City. He said he is here and still don't understand what people are saying about the town.  
Commissioner Kelly wanted to know if the resumes are going out to the public.

Police Chief Isaac said that Diane had locked herself in her office for two hours before she left so we really don't know who she talked to and really what she took. I still feel that I will investigate anything that I feel is criminal.

Mayor Bell said that appears that the lawsuits where Mr. Museus worked were against the Police Chief, Full Commission, the board members all retaliated against the employee. The only thing that bothers me is the YouTube.

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Commissioner Cheshire and Commissioner Goldberg feel that they should go with the Recruiting Firm so that certain citizens cannot come back and say the City didn't do background checks properly.

Mayor Bell said that they thought the Recruiting Firm charge around \$20,000 per position. Do we really want to use them for all three positions?

Commissioner Cheshire wanted to know if the League of Cities could help to advertise.

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Commissioner Gunter said we have been really lucky the past twenty years that we have not had many lawsuits until now.

Commissioner Kelly said if we hired Mr. Museus and the public looks up the Youtube video and comes in and says why did you hire him and we say we did all the background checks, you don't think that is good enough.

Mayor Bell said the advantage of a Recruiting Firm would be that they would have checked out everything and he is the best guy for the job. He better be completely clean.

Commissioner Goldberg said we don't need to have people in the community adding fuel to the fire. I feel that Mr. Museus is a good candidate but people will be there to judge.

Charlie Rector, CDD said that the town never had to hire an outside firm before but now he feels we didn't market the City right. Charlie feels we need to take a more aggressive way of hiring.

Commissioner Gunter said if something goes wrong we need to put the blame on someone else not the Commission.

Commissioner Goldberg said you could have a ninety day probation period and terminate at any time.

Commissioner Cheshire wanted to know if we could do a better ad to promote the City.

Commissioner Kelly said it should show that the City is growing and a wonderful place to live and work.

Commissioner Goldberg said Mr. Museus knew what was going on and he still paid his own way to come here and show up to be interviewed. How much do we really want to be attacked by the community.

Mayor Bell said we need to have a Treasurer in by July. What shall we do about Mr. Museus?

Commissioner Gunter said we should put him on hold for a week. If we can hire the Treasurer and the Clerk maybe we can use the head hunters for just the manager's position.

Chief will call the references Mr. Museus gave and report back.

Commissioner said let's talk to the head hunters next week.

Mayor Bell said to advertise for the Clerk's position. Place salary in ad and also say that it is based on experience and qualifications.

June 6<sup>th</sup> the meeting will be with the Recruiting Firms.  
June 13<sup>th</sup> will be a Shade meeting.

Mayor Bell said that while he was at a meeting he got a call from Governor Rick Scott.

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Governor gave Mayor Bell his personal cell and said that it was a great opportunity for the City of Fruitland Park and that he would help in any way possible.

09. ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Cheshire moved to adjourn the special meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.



Christopher J. Bell, Mayor

Attest:

  
Marie A. Azzolino, Acting City Clerk