



**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 22, 2003 AT 6:00 P.M.**  
**CITY HALL, 116 FIRST STREET**  
**NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA**

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Pursuant to proper notice a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach was held September 22, 2003, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 116 First Street, Neptune Beach, Florida.

Attendance

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Richard A. Brown  
Vice Mayor James Gilbert  
Councilor Harriet Pruette  
Councilor Larry Shealy  
Councilor John Weldon

ABSENT:

City Attorney Christopher White

STAFF:

Interim City Manager & Public Safety Director William Brandt  
Interim Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Lisa Volpe, CMC  
Director of Finance Steve Ramsey  
Director of Public Services Leon Smith

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Ord. No. 2003-13

ORDINANCE NO. 2003-13, FINAL READ AND PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA, ADOPTING FINAL MILLAGE RATES AND LEVYING AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2003, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2004; SETTING FORTH CERTAIN INFORMATION REGARDING "ROLLED BACK RATES"; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO ADJUST THE ADOPTED MILLAGE RATES IN THE EVENT OF CHANGES IN THE ASSESSMENT ROLL AND TAXABLE VALUE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Brown read Ordinance No. 2003-13 by title only and opened the public hearing.

Lynda Padrta, 1113 First Street, thanked the council for keeping to a strict budget.

There being no further comments from the public the public hearing was closed.

Moved by Gilbert, seconded by Pruette.

Motion: **TO PASS ORDINANCE NO. 2003-13 ON FINAL READ.**

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: 5 – Gilbert, Pruette, Shealy, Weldon, Brown  
Noes: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Ord. No. 2003-14

ORDINANCE NO. 2003-14, FIRST READ AND PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A FINAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2003, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2004, PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Brown read Ordinance No. 2003-14, by title only and opened the public hearing.

Lynda Padrta, 1113 First Street, thanked the council for keeping to a strict budget.

There being no further comments from the public the public hearing was closed.

Moved by Pruette, seconded by Gilbert.

Motion: **TO PASS ORDINANCE NO. 2003-14, ON FINAL READ.**

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: 5 – Gilbert, Pruette, Shealy, Weldon, Brown  
Noes: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Volkert & Associates

VOLKERT & ASSOCIATES: Director of Public Services Leon Smith gave his recommendation that the consultants should study the area east of Third Street for \$3500 before paving began. Discussion ensued about the paving project such as which streets are to be milled.

Consensus: **TO CONTRACT WITH VOLKERT AND ASSOCIATES FOR AN EAST OF THIRD STREET STUDY FOR \$3500.**

The Mercer Group Inc.

THE MERCER GROUP INC.: Mayor Brown introduced Tom Feijo, Senior Vice President for The Mercer Group.

Tom Freijo went over the process his company would go through to help the city find a city manager. First, he would meet with council members separately to discuss what they are looking for in a city manager, what difficulties the city is facing, what issues will they be facing as city manager and a salary range. After meeting with the council he would advertise in publications and contact managers he knew would fit Neptune Beach. He would pick the best 12 to 18 and have the council pick the top eight to ten candidates to interview. He would do extensive background searches and bring back five or six finalists to interview. The background search includes speaking with department heads and elected officials they have worked with along with internet newspaper searches and more. The interviews would be conducted with the council as a group along as one on one. They would meet with department heads, have a tour of the city, and have a social with the public to meet them. Selection would be made soon after and the candidate would only be given 48 to 72 hours to respond to the offer.

Mayor Brown questioned how a consensus could be facilitated if more than one candidate was on the top of the council's list. Mr. Freijo responded it was up to the council to make that final decision on their first and second choice.

Councilor Weldon asked to be assured that advertising and detailed analysis would be completed. Mr. Freijo stated that all advertisements would be copied to the city along with detailed reports on who was spoken to about each candidate and what they said. He commented he knew a lot of managers and may ask certain people to apply if they were a good fit. Councilor Weldon asked for a comparison of the Mercer Group and the Range Riders. Mr. Freijo stated he felt his company was more in depth than the Range Rider services.

Vice Mayor Gilbert questioned how long the company was in business; if candidates paid a fee; and what the not to exceed fee included. Mr Freijo stated the company has been around for 25 years and in its current form since 1990. He has worked for them for three years. Candidates do not pay any fee. He explained that the expense fee covered such things as advertising and his travel. Any travel by the candidate would be paid directly by the city.

Mr. Freijo emphasized the time line and doing a thorough search the first time not to let good candidates get away. He was ready to get started immediately, which would allow a city manager to start working in January.

Councilor Shealy felt with his background in the private sector that hiring an executive search firm would be in the best interest of the city.

Councilor Pruette asked if the consultant reviewed the city's code. Mr. Friejo stated it is one of the pieces of information he reviewed.

Councilor Weldon asked what mistakes the city should try to avoid in this process. Mr. Freijo stated the first thing to do is hire someone you trust to do the search. Following the time line was very important to keep qualified candidates interested. Giving a person a timely offer after the interviews was necessary to make for a smooth transition. Salary expectations need to be clear at the beginning of the process. He stated if one or two candidates turn the position down you may have to start the process all over again and this stops qualified candidates from applying. You should not speak to the city the manager is presently working for until they are one of the finalists.

Mayor Brown thanked Tom Freijo for an informative presentation. Councilor Weldon felt it was best to allow someone who specializes in these matters to help the city find a city manager.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

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Richard A. Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lisa Volpe, CMC, City Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_