

City Council Meeting - Monday May 4, 2020

On Monday May 4, 2020 the Edgewater City Council held it's first "virtual" meeting where some council members were allowed to attend via videoconferencing. Citizens were permitted to submit comments electronically (E-comments) although the cutoff for comments was a day prior to the meeting. The City Clerk reported that no E-comments were received for this meeting.

Mayor Thomas, who had been absent for the last three meetings, chaired the meeting from a wheelchair. Council members Gary Conroy and Christine Powers were present in council chambers. Councilwomen Kimberly Yaney and Megan O'Keefe participated remotely. Also present in council chambers were the City Clerk, City Manager, City Attorney and various staff members who remained out of sight. Seating for other attendees was limited.

The majority of the meeting time was devoted to reviewing and voting individually on items that were proposed for City Charter amendments.

The council approved the first reading of the following charter amendments:

- Modified language regarding the use of the Consumer Price Index from biannual to annual compensation adjustments for council members
- Added language that requires council members to complete municipal government training subject to funds being available
- Modified limitations on borrowing from .75 percent to 1.00 percent of next taxable value.
- Added language to prohibit a city employee from holding elected office in Edgewater while employed by the City.
- Added language that city manager, city attorney and city clerk can only be hired or terminated by a majority of council votes with at least 3 in favor.
- Added language saying no relative of the city manager shall be employed by the city unless hired prior to the city manager appointment.
- Added language allowing the city council to hold meetings without citizen comments, when an active state of emergency has been declared by either the governor or the president.

The above charter amendments will be submitted for a second reading at the next council meeting and if approved will appear on the ballot in November.

The council rejected charter amendments that stated that the city would always protect the Indian River lagoon and would never allow a bridge spanning the Indian River to be built within Edgewater. The first amendment was rejected as a "feel good" statement that belongs in a resolution not the charter. The second amendment was rejected as

unnecessary since none of the council members foresaw such a bridge being built anytime soon.

The council also rejected a charter amendment that would automatically terminate a council member who missed three regular meetings within a twelve-month period, regardless of reason. The council members want to reserve the right to excuse members when warranted. During this discussion, Mayor Thomas pointed out that he missed February and March meetings due to health issues but only stayed away from the April meeting because he is over 60 years old and felt he would be in violation of the Governors stay-at-home decree.

Finally, the council approved a resolution formally adopting rules and protocols related to Communication Media Technology (CMT) that would permit the council to hold virtual meetings with all members attending remotely. The rules require citizens to be informed on how to submit comments that would be read into the record and how to monitor meetings. These rules will only apply during declared state of emergency.