



# City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD  
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

## Meeting Minutes City Commission Workshop

### *CITY COMMISSIONERS*

*Pete Emrich, Mayor*  
*Barbara Langdon, Vice Mayor*  
*Jill Luke, Commissioner*  
*Debbie McDowell, Commissioner*  
*Alice White, Commissioner*

### *APPOINTED OFFICIALS*

*Jerome Fletcher, City Manager*  
*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*  
*Heather Faust, City Clerk*

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Tuesday, July 19, 2022

9:00 AM

City Commission Chambers

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### City Manager Proposed Budget

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Emrich called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

#### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Mayor Pete Emrich, Vice Mayor Barbara Langdon, Commissioner Jill Luke, Commissioner Debbie McDowell and Commissioner Alice White

#### Also Present

City Manager Jerome Fletcher, City Attorney Amber Slayton, City Clerk Heather Faust, Recording Secretary Amanda Baker, Fire Chief Scott Titus, Police Commander Eric Sineath, Finance Director Kimberly Williams, Budget Administrator Lisa Herrmann, Deputy Fire Chief Nick Herlihy, Neighborhood Development Services Director Alaina Ray, Parks and Recreation Director Sandy Pfundheller, Performance and Accountability Officer Eve Sweeting, Assistant City Manager Julie Bellia, Human Resources Manager Deborah Hope, Risk and Benefits Manager Sandy Knowles, Human Resources Coordinator Yvonne Gibson, Police Captain Scott King, Public Works Director Chuck Speake, Information Technology Director Eric Ryan, Senior Business Administrator Vicki Edwards, Deputy Communications Manager Madison Heid, Economic Development Program Manager Mel Thomas, Assistant City Manager Jason Yarborough, Assistant City Attorney Michael Golen, Utilities Director Nancy Gallinaro, and Assistant Utilities Director Jennifer Derosiers

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Debbie McDowell.

#### 1. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jeffrey Scott: local government operations and good governance.

**2. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

- A. [22-3137](#) Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding the City Manager's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023.

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including FY 2023 proposed all funds budget by pillar, general fund overview and total, budget proposals, and fund balance.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding budget process, gratitude to staff, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) fund, backup material, and budget expansion.

There was no public comment.

- B. [22-3198](#) Fire Department

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals and changes since June workshop.

Chief Titus spoke to the budget proposal, one-on-one meetings with Commission, additional data received, and increase in residence rates.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding tier methodology, building value, and reordering the agenda.

- C. [22-3200](#) Neighborhood Development Services

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including the fund balance, Fire Rescue Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, gratitude to staff, adjustment in fund balance, budget total, increase in permit applications, new software, budget proposals, changes since June workshop, and CIP projects.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding gratitude to staff, revenues received, changing fees for service, staff workloads, implementing a fee study within the Planning and Zoning Department, resource allocations, department morale, Commission support, and the permitting process.

There was no public comment.

**D. [22-3211](#) Parks and Recreation Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, fund balance, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, and Warm Mineral Springs updates.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding gratitude to staff, Aquatic Center rate analysis, increasing the Circle of Honor budget amount, timeline for request for bid (RFB), design and groundbreaking for Circle of Honor, using Surtax funds toward Dallas White Park playground, including the outside donation on the CIP sheet, reallocating funds from Dallas White Park toward Circle of Honor, utilities at Warm Mineral Springs, funding for Boca Chica neighborhood park, Circle of Honor tribute program, keeping Boca Chica neighborhood park in the budget, keeping Dallas White Park playground updated, landscaping at Circle of Honor, phasing Circle of Honor project, impact fees and unencumbered funds in the fund balance, allocating projects into Surtax III, Public-Private Partnership (P3) listings for Dallas White Park, park impact fees being allocated toward Legacy Trail, and cost of material for Circle of Honor.

***There was consensus to add \$375,000 from park impact fees to the Circle of Honor for a total of \$1 million with Commissioner White and Mayor Emrich dissenting.***

Commission discussion continued regarding keeping the \$1 million as a placeholder and developing Circle of Honor in phases.

There was no public comment.

**E. [22-3205](#) Finance Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals and implementing an open government module including department performance web pages.

Ms. Sweeting spoke to the open government module and proof of concept.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding gratitude to staff, user-friendly website, measurable results being made public, and Public Works having a work management system.

There was no public comment.

Recess was taken from 10:24 a.m. until 10:40 a.m.

**F. [22-3204](#) Human Resources Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item, acknowledged Human Resources Director Christine McDade, provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, fund balance, items to discuss including health insurance and salary study, and introduced Shawn Fleming, Senior Benefits Consultant with the Gehring Group.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding insurance increases being in the budget, history of insurance absorption, impact of reducing the insurance absorption to 50%, and current percentage of employee contribution.

Mr. Fleming spoke to the employee contribution percentage increase should the insurance absorption be reduced to 50%.

Commission questions and discussion continued regarding City's ability to continue with 100% absorption and balancing the pay structure.

Mr. Fletcher spoke to the pay study and results from July 11 workshop, possible adjustment timeline, and provided a presentation including private sector vs. public sector pay growth, and change in inflation-adjusted wage and salary costs per hour worked.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding previous salary adjustments, minimum wage increase, reliance of specific industries, calibrating salaries and benefits according to comparable municipalities, cost of living allowance (COLA), annual review of pay study, across the board raises for non-contract employees, budgeting for the pay raise, impact of the millage rate with pay increase and benefit absorption, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)-contracted employee impact, number of employees making less than \$15 per hour, adjusting the increase across the board, "blue collar" vs. "white collar" positions, comparing 2017 pay study to current pay study, continuing City growth, sustainability fund, and hiring range impact of the increase.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jeffrey Scott: Florida Commission on Ethics, compensation study, Commission responsibility, and City Manager conduct.

Commission questions and discussion continued regarding at-minimum wage employees, geographical area of the presented private and public sectors pay growth charts, AFSCME at-maximum wage employees, Utilities employees, adjusting the pay grade scale, number of employees at maximum pay grade after raise, community economic increases, employees being above market, and hiring recommendations from the pay study.

Mr. Fletcher spoke to requested Commission direction for benefits and pay study.

***There was consensus to accept the recommendation of staff for employee benefit study with the city absorbing 8.3% with Commissioner McDowell dissenting.***

***There was consensus to approve a onetime 5% pay increase effective October 1, 2022 with Commissioner McDowell and Mayor Emrich dissenting.***

Ms. Hope responded to Commission questions regarding recommendation #4 for annual review.

Recess was taken from 12:00 p.m. until 12:45 p.m.

**G. [22-3199](#) Police Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, fund balance, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, and new unfunded request.

Commission questions took place regarding forfeiture fund usage and unfunded CIP item.

**H. [22-3201](#) Public Works Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including proposed increase, budget proposals, changes since June workshop, fund balance, and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding Cocoplum waterway dredging and sediment testing, fund balance overage, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) environmental management fund balance, road bond, combining the bridge with Phase 1 of the Price Boulevard widening project, high school stop light project, funding for water control structure 113, implementing the City-wide tree planting program, resurfacing Toledo Blade Boulevard in the road rehabilitation project, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) improvements to the I-75/Toledo Blade interchange, gratitude to staff, replacement of neighborhood trees, Hillsborough Boulevard/Cranberry Boulevard intersection improvement project funding, and increasing the replacement and renewal (R&R) fund for infrastructure program.

There was no public comment.

**I. [22-3210](#) Information Technology Division**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals and changes since June workshop.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding Budget Proposal #2392.

There was no public comment.

**J. [22-3206](#) City Manager & Communications Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals and changes since June workshop.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding the Customer Service Representative position and City Clerk Staff Assistant responsibilities.

There was no public comment.

**K. [22-3212](#) Social Services Division**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item, provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, and requested to remove North Port & Non-Profits United (NP2) from the budget proposals.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding keeping NP2 in the budget as a placeholder and scheduling a joint meeting with Sarasota County.

***There was consensus to have \$25,000 as a placeholder kept in Social Services for a future date of discussion within the Social Service Department.***

There was no public comment.

**L. [22-3203](#) Economic Development Division**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, need for more commercial and economic development, and the importance of the proposed \$2 million investment.

Ms. Thomas expressed gratitude to all during her absence and spoke to vetting and attracting new businesses, inability to acquire sufficient land for commercial development, funding for commercial land, acquiring shovel-ready developments, and reasonable expectations for taxable fair market land.

Mr. Fletcher spoke to funding sources.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding new developments, \$250,000 within the budget being towards preparing shovel-ready land developments, acquiring a 10-acre parcel, rezoning property for industrial purposes, City-owned commercial general (CG) lots, placing an agenda item regarding redefining CG properties, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds being taxpayer money, and reallocating ARPA funds from the Wellen Park government building.

Assistant City Attorney Golen replaced City Attorney Slayton at 2:18 p.m.

Commission questions and discussion continued regarding City-owned commercial land, opening CG properties, Hillsborough Boulevard/Cranberry Boulevard intersection project, and first reading for the Hillsborough Boulevard/Cranberry Boulevard project.

There was no public comment.

Recess was taken from 2:36 p.m. until 2:50 p.m.

**M. [22-3209](#) City Attorney Department**

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation regarding budget total and proposals and changes since June workshop.

There were no Commission questions or discussion.

There was no public comment.

**N.** [22-3207](#) City Clerk Department

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals and changes since June workshop.

There were no Commission questions and discussion.

There was no public comment.

**O.** [22-3208](#) City Commission

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item, provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, and spoke on the Legislative Analyst position.

There were no Commission questions or discussion.

There was no public comment.

**P.** [22-3202](#) Utilities Department

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.

Ms. Gallinaro spoke to the Sustainability Officer position.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding funding the position, position being environmentally based, water conservation and purification, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) fund balance, fund balance analysis, Utilities enterprise fund, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), CIP sheet for the Toledo Blade Boulevard project, and gratitude to staff.

There was no public comment.

**Q.** [22-3213](#) Non-Departmental

Mayor Emrich announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item, provided a presentation including budget total and proposals, changes since June workshop, and spoke to the proposed \$250,000 contingency fund.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding purpose of the contingency fund, current contingency fund balance, and reducing the proposed amount.

*There was consensus to allocate \$150,000 into a discretionary fund for the City Manager and to receive appropriate updates on how funds are being used throughout the year with Commissioner McDowell dissenting.*

Commission discussion continued regarding situations that the Commission contingency fund covers and allocating the difference to the compensation pay study.

There was no public comment.

Commission questions took place regarding the rollback rate using the July numbers.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**4. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Emrich adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pete Emrich, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Heather Faust, City Clerk

These minutes were approved on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.