



City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Commission Special Meeting

CITY COMMISSIONERS

Debbie McDowell, Mayor

Jill Luke, Vice Mayor

Christopher Hanks, Commissioner

Pete Emrich, Commissioner

Vanessa Carusone, Commissioner

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Peter Lear, City Manager

Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney

Heather Taylor, City Clerk

Thursday, October 1, 2020

1:00 PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke, Commissioner Christopher Hanks, Commissioner Vanessa Carusone and Commissioner Pete Emrich

Also Present:

City Manager Peter Lear, Attorney Amber Slayton, City Clerk Heather Taylor, Recording Secretary Susan Hale, Human Resource Director Christine McDade, Police Chief Todd Garrison, Deputy Police Chief Chris Morales.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Department Telecommunications Center Manager Misty Elmore.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks and Commissioner Emrich

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Carusone

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kristen Denton: lack of internet service.

Mayor McDowell responded and City Manager's office will contact the individual.

Mr. Lear spoke to difficulty of providing internet throughout the City.

3. WELCOME OF NEW EMPLOYEES:

A. [20-2706](#) Welcome New Employees

Ms. McDade introduced the newest employees.

Commissioner Carusone arrived at 1:11 p.m.

4. PRESENTATIONS: TIME LIMIT OF 15 MINUTES

A. [20-2697](#) Police Department Presentation

Chief Garrison provided a presentation including accomplishments, staff overview, City comparisons, safety comparison, crime rate report/averages/ranking and department crime statistics.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS:

A. [20-2509](#) Discussion and Direction Regarding the City of North Port 2021 State and Federal Legislative Priorities

Mr. Lear introduced the item.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Allain Hale: utilities extension at the Sumter Boulevard/I-75 interchange, and opposes extending Toledo Blade Boulevard to Walton Ranch.

Discussion ensued regarding State Priorities including removing direction for Vice Mayor Luke to work with City Attorney concerning Senator Gruter's bill, and adding online sales tax to the priority list.

There was consensus to rescind prior direction for City Attorney and Vice Mayor Luke to work together regarding Senator Gruter's Bill regarding online sales tax.

There was consensus to add the support of sales tax on web-based sales that are not taxed otherwise to State Legislative Priorities.

Mr. Lear spoke to placing certain items on the Federal Legislative Priorities list.

Discussion continued regarding reinstating home rule being a top priority, advocating removing unfunded mandates, creating a shorter and more specific list, high speed internet access for all, removing tax-supported hospital districts, improvement and expansion for public safety, date for annual meeting with State and Federal elected officials, scheduling another "priorities" conversation after the general election, and municipal 911 services.

Ms. Slayton spoke to statute language regarding 911 service funding.

Mr. Lear clarified 911 funding at the state level, and options to request funds from the county or legislative changes at the state level.

Discussion continued regarding requesting changes to 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) being added to the list, placing items on Florida League of Cities agendas, and providing a temporary in-house priority brochure for the county meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Carusone, seconded by Vice Mayor Luke, to approve the following State Legislative Priorities: 1) reinstate home rule powers; 2) help fund high-speed internet access for all; 3) remove tax-supported hospital districts; 4) infrastructure improvements and expansion for public safety; 5) support sales tax on web-based sales; and 6) request changes to 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) legislation. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

Discussion took place regarding Federal Priorities including moving internet to first priority, supporting faster Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recovery and incorporating COVID-19 recovery, adding shared sales tax between states, veterans and citizen mental health, infrastructure, medical marijuana, and criminal reform.

A motion was made by Commissioner Carusone, seconded by Vice Mayor Luke, to approve the following Federal Legislative Priorities: 1) City supports internet access to all; 2) shared sales tax between states; 3) veterans and citizens support of mental health care; 4) faster FEMA/COVID-19 recovery; 5) infrastructure; 6) medical marijuana reclassification; and 7) criminal reform. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

There was no public comment.

8. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Hanks had nothing to report.

Vice Mayor Luke attended a virtual Women in Business meeting, and voiced concern pertaining to a reduced level of service for animal control, and educating the public on Sarasota County's changes.

Discussion ensued regarding animal control services.

Chief Garrison spoke to the change in animal control services county-wide and the policy being common state-wide, relationship with animal control, and traps available from the police department to citizens.

Commissioner Carusone had nothing to report.

Commissioner Emrich had nothing to report.

Mayor McDowell expressed accolades to the Economic Development for hosting Women in Business Conference.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:

City Manager Lear had nothing to report.

City Attorney Slayton had nothing to report.

City Clerk Taylor had nothing to report.

Recess was held from 2:09 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- Present:** 3 - Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke and Commissioner Christopher Hanks
- Absent:** 2 - Commissioner Vanessa Carusone and Commissioner Pete Emrich

6. PROCLAMATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS: TIME CERTAIN AT 4:00 P.M.

- B.** [20-2724](#) Proclaim October as Cyber Awareness Month Presented to the IT Department
The Commission presented this proclamation.
- C.** [20-2723](#) Proclaim October 4 through 10, 2020 as Fire Prevention Week in the City of North Port, Presented to Fire Prevention Personnel and North Port Fire Rescue District Staff
The Commission presented this proclamation.
- A.** [20-2612](#) Proclaim October 2020 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month
The Commission presented this proclamation.
- D.** [20-2637](#) Present Advisory Board Certificates of Appreciation to David Iannotti for Serving on the Beautification & Tree/Scenic Highway Committee, Eve Sweeting for Serving on the Charter Review Advisory Board, Melanie Breuer for Serving on the Charter Review Advisory Board and Mason Thull for Serving on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
The Commission presented this proclamation.
- E.** [20-2679](#) Present Certificate of Appreciation to Nita Hester for Twenty-Nine and a Half Years of Service to the City of North Port
The Commission presented this proclamation.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Lear spoke to reinstating the fire alarm battery replacement program.

There was no public comment.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: _____
Debbie McDowell, Mayor

Attest: _____
Heather Taylor, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Commission Regular Meeting this ____ day of _____, 2020.