



# 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*

*Jason Yarborough, Acting City Manager*

*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*

*Heather Taylor, City Clerk*

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Thursday, September 3, 2020

5:01 PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

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### Public Budget Hearing

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 5:01 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

Acting City Manager Jason Yarborough, City Attorney Amber Slayton, Assistant City Manager Cari Branco, City Clerk Heather Taylor, Police Chief Todd Garrison, Fire Chief Scott Titus, Finance Director Kimberly Ferrell, Budget Administrator Lisa Herrmann, Human Resources Director Christine McDate, Risk & Benefits Manager Sandy Knowles, Public Works Director Julie Bellia, Engineering Division Manager Gerardo Traverso, Neighborhood Development Services Director Frank Miles, Code enforcement Division Manager Kevin Raducci, Parks & Recreation Director Sandy Pfundheller, Social Services Manager Janet Carrillo, Information Technology Manager Eric Ryan, and Information Technology Business Administrator Vicki Edwards.

Ms. Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Discussion took place regarding combining budget and millage rate items and taking motions for each item.

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

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

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Greg Culey: Concern regarding Commission lack of response to email and concern with employee raises.

### **3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

#### **ORDINANCE: First Reading**

**[ORD. NO.  
2020-30](#)**

An Ordinance of the City of North Port, Florida, Providing for Certification and Adoption of an Ad Valorem Millage Rate for the 2020-21 Fiscal Year; Providing for Levying and Assessment; Providing for Severability; Providing for Conflicts; and Providing for an Effective Date.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to combine Ordinance No. 2020-30 and Ordinance No. 2020-31 for discussion only. The motion carried on the following vote:***

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

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to read Ordinance No. 2020-30 and Ordinance No. 2020-31 by title only. The motion carried on the following vote:***

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

Ms. Taylor read Ordinance No. 2020-30 was read into the record by title and section 2.01 and Ordinance No. 2020-31 was read by title only.

Mr. Yarborough introduced the items.

Ms. Ferrell provided information on both ordinance including commission direction, increase, prior hearings, exhibits, and responded to questions regarding fund balance accountability, funding to go back into fund balance at end of the year, contingency fund requirements, and estimated amount over 2.5% to return to fund balance.

Chief Garrison responded to questions regarding need for forensic examiner position, specialty pay decrease, need for additional crime analyst position, rental leases for Benderson project, and vacancy reduction rate.

Public Comment:

Paul Kahl: misconceptions regarding West Villages of Responsible Government and concern with the City's ability to stay fiscally sustainable.

Phil Stokes: concern with use of reserve funds and budget increases

Ms. Ferrell spoke to proposed merit and COLA increases.

Discussion took place regarding previous budget meeting discussion regarding decreases.

Ms. Taylor read the following public comment into the record:

Edie Driest: need for Natural Resource Department

Discussion ensued regarding City Manager decrease in professional services, unfunding city facilities protective measures, social service reduction in children's services, AV

conference and video equipment upgrade, virtual licenses, repair and maintenance of park restroom, reducing positions in Parks and Recreation, number of year round and seasonal employees, summer camp being revenue neutral, self insurance fund increase, Code Enforcement Officer positions, savings for reduction to four officers, City Clerk administrative service specialist positions, possibility of eliminating and clarification on housing and life skills specialist position, staff providing cost savings for reducing the sidewalk to 6 feet asphalt versus concrete from Van Camp Street to Toledo Blade Boulevard including the sidewalk on Tropicare Boulevard and keeping the engineered designed bridge, importance of maintaining plan and proposed usage, clarification on developed sidewalks and trails, impact of being proactive versus reactive within Code Enforcement, Clerk's Office removal of staff assistant 1 position savings, removing funding for gazebo and landscaping in the CIP, and page 53 of CIP sheet reflecting the Myakkahatchee Creek Land Acquisition which did not include the purchase of Jessamine Street.

***There was consensus to have staff update the expenditure for Jessamine Street on the CIP sheet E15MCC.***

Recess was taken from 6:56 p.m. until 7:10 p.m.

Mayor McDowell noted those present.

Ms. Hermann provided clarification that on page 53 of CIP the Jessamine Street property is included and no action is required on the previous consensus.

Staff replied to additional questions regarding removing staff assistant II position in HR, Economic Development Corporation agreement funding, holiday ornaments funding by citizen initiative, Department of Transportation holiday ornament regulations, additional budget priority removals and proposed removals for discussion, bomb tech travel and training separation in appropriate budget lines, school resource officer training conference, reducing and clarifying IT funds for storage area network (SAN) replacement, technology support services, IT security platform upgrades, and social services IT upgrades, methodology for department input on budget reductions, removing four new camera's at the Community Education Center and adding them to the priority list, operational needs for Social Services Suite 2, and health insurance reserves.

***There was a consensus to reduce funding for one Code Enforcement Officer in the Fiscal Year 20-21 budget.***

Addressing a question, Ms. Taylor noted that prior to 2020, the administrative services specialist duties was efficiently handled by one staff member, staff assistant 1 is a lower staff position, and requested one position be kept in the budget.

***There was a consensus to remove one administrative service specialist and keep the staff assistant 1 position in the City Clerks office.***

***There was a consensus to remove the Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation agreement funding.***

Discussion ensued regarding health self insurance reserve funding.

There was a request for a consensus to remove the staff assistant II from Human Resources at a cost of \$71,800.00 which failed.

***There was a consensus to leave the self insured funding as presented.***

***There was a consensus for staff to provide a memorandum to the Commission regarding the self insured funding and expenditures.***

***There was a consensus to remove \$63,540.00 for tech support services budget proposal 1585.***

***There was a consensus to add back \$28,830.00 for the police forensic examiner budget proposal 1633.***

***There was a consensus to add back \$43,480.00 for the police crime analyst position budget priority number 4.***

There was a request for consensus to remove housing and life skill position in social Services for \$56,400.00 which failed.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed real estate acquisition consultant duties, current City Attorney land acquisition duties for the Price Boulevard widening, and hourly rate for current real estate acquisition consultant working at Commission direction.

***There was a consensus to remove the real estate acquisition consultant position for a cost of \$15,000.00.***

Discussion continued regarding added cost of \$720.00 for challenge coins.

***There was a consensus to remove the \$720.00 funding for challenge coins.***

Discussion continued regarding clarification on the interactive growth model. and activity center overlay.

***There was a consensus to remove the interactive growth model for \$75,000.00 and add to priority list.***

Discussion continued regarding clarification, purpose, benefit and procurement process for the activity center overlay consultant.

There was a request for a consensus to remove activity center overlay for \$ 150,00.00 and add to priority list which failed.

Discussion continued regarding the archeologist position duties as a sustainability coordinator, and the development of a Natural Resource Department.

***There was a consensus to remove the archeologist position for a cost of \$51,780.00 and add to priority list.***

***There was a consensus to keep the family service operational needs at a cost of \$6,000.00.***

Discussion continued regarding the Social Services IT service upgrades costs and needs, and keeping the staff assistant I and removing one administrative service specialist in the City Clerk's office for a savings of \$20,310.00.

Ms. Hermann provided reduction amount of \$284,340.00 which would be an additional .0573 decrease in the millage rate leaving a new millage rate of new 3.7667.

***There was a consensus to keep the Social Services IT service upgrades as presented.***

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Hanks, to continue Ordinance No. 2020-30 for second reading on September 17, 2020 adjusting the millage rate to reflect 3.7667. The motion carried on the following vote:***

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

**B.** [ORD. NO. 2020-31](#)

An Ordinance of the City of North Port, Florida, Adopting a Non-district Budget for the Fiscal Year Beginning October 1, 2020 and Ending on September 30, 2021; Adopting the Capital Improvement Budget and Program; Prescribing the Term, Conditions, and Provisions with Respect to the Items of Appropriation and Their Payment; Providing for Supplemental Appropriations and Re-appropriations; Providing for Conflicts; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke to continue Ordinance No. 2020-31 for second reading on September 17, 2020 changing the consensus that were agreed upon.***

Discussion ensued regarding the budget reduction adjustments totaling \$397,650.00 and budget addition adjustments totaling \$113,310.00 for a budget reduction of \$284,340.00, and the police vacancy rate of \$293,000.00 for four vacant positions.

Chief Garrison spoke to holding the police vacancies to two positions equating to \$150,000.00.

Discussion continued regarding adding \$150,000.00 back into the budget to adjust for the police vacancy rate and utilizing the fund balance for that amount, and removal of the Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) membership fee.

Mayor McDowell stated she did not recognize the above motion because it went right into discussion.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to continue Ordinance No. 2020-31 for second reading on September 17, 2020 changing the budget with the adjustments of consensus made tonight, utilizing \$150,000.00 from the sustainability fund for two officers in the police department and being able to fund the EDC from the sustainability fund when the agreement is signed by everyone.***

Discussion ensued regarding the need for a budget amendment when the EDC is funded, and reducing the police vacancy rate amount.

***Vice Mayor Luke withdrew her motion.***

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to continue Ordinance No. 2020-31 to the September 17, 2020 Commission meeting for final reading making the adjustments as given by consensus.***

***A motion was made by Commissioner Carusone, to amend the main motion to add \$150,000.00 back into the budget in reference to the police vacancy allocations utilizing the sustainability fund. The motion failed due to lack of second.***

Discussion ensued regarding clarification on adding back into the budget the \$150,000.00 for police the vacancy rate and clarification on the unnecessary mention of the sustainability fund in the motion. .

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Mayor McDowell, to amend the main motion to add \$150,000.00 back into the budget from the sustainability fund to be utilized for the police vacancy rate. The motion to amend carried on the***

*following vote:*

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

*The main motion as amended carried on the following vote:*

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

Mayor McDowell passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Luke.

***A motion was made by Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to place on the next agenda, subsequent to the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) agreement being finalized by all entities, a budget amendment to pay for the agreement. The motion carried as follows:***

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

Vice Mayor Luke passed the gavel back to Mayor McDowell.

**RESOLUTION:**

**C. [RES. NO. 2020-R-28](#)**

A Resolution of the City of North Port, Florida, Approving Assessment Rolls for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 for the Floribanna and Sumter Gardens Assessment Areas Established Pursuant to Ordinance No. 2000-25, Directing that the Assessment Rolls be Certified to the Sarasota County Tax Collector, and Establishing the Lien Associated Therewith; Providing for Conflicts; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date.

Ms. Taylor read the resolution by title only.

Mr. Yarborough introduced the item.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to approve Resolution No. 2020-R-28. The motion carried on the following vote:***

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

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

Mayor McDowell spoke to the Mayor's Feed the Hungry document which needs a signature reflecting that North Port wants to participate in the program.

***There was a consensus for Mayor McDowell to sign the Mayor's Feed the Hungry document.***

**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 9:55 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.