



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, Interim City Clerk

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

10:30 AM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

EMERGENCY MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.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, City Attorney Amber Slayton, Interim City Clerk Heather Taylor, Deputy Fire Chief Joseph McCord, and Police Chief Todd Garrison

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Deborah Hope.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

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

3. UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Mr. Lear provided an update to include purpose of passing the State of Local Emergency ordinance, City provisions due to recommended changes, provisions to allow for electronic public comment, provided resource guide, and possible resolution for electronic meetings.

Ms. Slayton spoke to draft resolutions to allow for electronic and/or virtual meetings, prior issue presented regarding physical quorum requirements, Attorney General opinion not addressing a pandemic, and other municipalities petitioning the Governor to allow for virtual attendance.

Discussion took place regarding resolution being specific to emergency purposes, reinstatement of state of local emergency, financial aspect ability to aid business and homeowners, enacting provisions as needed, authority to cancel advisory board meetings, assistance for citizens, grant funding utilization to assist with utility billing, provision to pay 80 hours of wages, rate forgiveness, qualifications for individuals and/or businesses, and criteria for virtual meetings.

Mr. Lear provided an update on City closures and cancelations and abilities to waive fees for City services.

Discussion continued regarding economic impact, chain of command if the City Manager not able to fulfill his duties, curfew discussion, drop-ins at the Morgan and Mullen Center, and impact on Planning and Zoning Advisory Board and upcoming petitions.

Ms. Slayton spoke to quasi-judicial boards and option to allow virtual meetings.

Discussion ensued regarding technological access to all board members and delivering hard copies of board packets.

Ms. Slayton spoke to creating a way to hold a meeting on high priority items and code not addressing virtual attendance.

Discussion continued regarding supporting the United Way Relief Fund, high risk board members, meals for school age children, open dialogue with local non-profits, link on social media for communications for non-profits, and closures of bars and restaurant restrictions.

Public Comment:

Justin Willis: restrictions and support to local governments, closures and restrictions, and limiting gatherings

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

[ORD. NO.
2020-18](#)

An Emergency Ordinance of the City of North Port, Florida, Declaring a State of Local Emergency Caused by the Threat Posed by the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Granting the City Manager or Designee the Authority to Take Actions in Accordance with Florida Statutes Section 252.38(3)(A), and Suspending Standard Procedures and Formalities for those Matters Identified in Florida Statutes Section 252.38(3)(A)5, Including but not Limited to the Procurement of Goods and

Services Necessary to Address the Declared Emergency; Providing for Findings; Providing for Conflicts; Providing for Severability; Providing an Effective Date; and Providing for Duration

Ms. Taylor read the Ordinance in its entirety.

Ms. Slayton spoke to recommended changes to Ordinance 2020-18, adding Section 2.04 allowing the City Manager to extend the state of local emergency and replied to Commission questions regarding statistics included in the Ordinance.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Hanks, to approve Ordinance No. 2020-18 as presented, adding the language of Section 2.04 giving the City Manager or designee the capabilities to extend the State of Emergency in seven-day increments.

Ms. Slayton responded to Commission questions regarding duration of the Ordinance.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Carusone, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to charge staff in addition within legal authority, as determined by the City Attorney, during State of Emergency to suspend all scheduled in-person City board meetings, suspend all late fees for Utility bills and fees associated with bulk pick up, to allow the City to advertise any known available services on website or other means, and to work with school board to allow for added locations, if necessary, to distribute free meals, as well as any other volunteer groups as needed.

Discussion followed regarding broad scope of the motion.

Mr. Lear suggested not limiting meals to lunch and breakfast.

The motion maker and seconder were agreeable to the change.

Discussion continued regarding Planning and Zoning Advisory Board (PZAB) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) allowance of virtual meetings, suspending advisory boards with the exception of PZAB or ZBA, broad intent of motion to allow the City Manager to determine whether to cancel or allow virtual meetings.

Mr. Lear spoke to only holding mission-essential meetings virtually.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

6. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor McDowell expressed thanks to City Manager, Charter Officers, and staff for their efforts during this time.

There were no other Commission communications to report.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:

There were no administrative or legal reports.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.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.