



# 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*  
*Pete Emrich, Commissioner*  
*Vanessa Carusone, Commissioner*

**APPOINTED OFFICIALS**  
*Peter Lear, City Manager*  
*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*  
*Heather Taylor, City Clerk*

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Thursday, November 5, 2020

1:00 PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

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### Amended to Remove Announcements

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 4 - Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke, Commissioner Vanessa Carusone and Commissioner Pete Emrich

#### Also Present:

City Manager Peter Lear, City Attorney Amber Slayton, City Clerk Heather Taylor, Recording Secretary Ida Goodman, Human Resources Director Christine McDade, Finance Director Kimberly Ferrell, Parks & Recreation Director Sandy Pfundheller, Fire Chief Scott Titus and Deputy Police Chief Chris Morales.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Lear.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

#### 3. WELCOME OF NEW EMPLOYEES:

[20-2810](#)

Welcome New Employees

Ms. McDade introduced the new employees in Neighborhood Development Services.

#### **4. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

[20-2862](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding November 14, 2020 Swearing-In Alternate Options to Allow for Social Distancing

Ms. Taylor introduced the item.

Discussion ensued regarding options to rope off every other row in Chambers, providing refreshments in room 244, refreshment options including coffee and donuts, and holding the ceremony at the George Mullen Activity Center or the Morgan Family Community Center.

Chief Titus responded to Commission questions regarding Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) social distancing guidelines and stated he would research further.

Ms. Slayton spoke to the Governor's Executive Order regarding social distancing guidelines.

Chief Titus agreed to provide the Commission with the current Governor's Executive Order regarding COVID-19 guidelines.

Discussion continued regarding families sitting together and citizens practicing social distancing.

***There was a consensus to open seating so families and friends can sit together.***

***There was a consensus for families sitting together with friends and City staff/directors giving family and friends priority for seating.***

***There was a consensus to provide refreshments of coffee, orange juice and donuts.***

[20-2865](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Compensation for the Acting City Manager

Mr. Lear requested the Commission address item 20-2867 prior to 20-2865.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to hear item 20-2867 prior to item 20-2865. The motion carried by the following vote:***

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

[20-2867](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Interim City Manager Hiring Process

Mr. Lear introduced the item and requested clarification on prior direction regarding hiring an Interim City Manager, appointing an Interim City Manager from the Assistant City Managers, and appointing Julie Bellia as the Acting City Manager.

Discussion ensued regarding a timeframe for the Acting City Manager, process of appointing an Interim City Manager, procedure for searching and hiring a City Manager, recommending Julie Bellia as the Acting City Manager, International City Manager Association (ICMA) and Florida League of Cities as a resource for hiring a City Manager,

the new Commission determining the process for appointing an Interim and new City Manager, appointing current Assistant City Managers as an Interim City Manager, hiring an outside Interim City Manager vs. in-house, and delaying the hiring process until the new Commission is seated.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to delay the hiring process for an Interim City Manager until after the new Commission is seated. The motion carried by the following vote:***

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

[20-2865](#)

### Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Compensation for the Acting City Manager

Mr. Lear introduced the item.

Discussion ensued regarding an out of title pay vs. interim pay policy for directors and managers, previous pay scale for Interim City Manager and previous methodology for determining the pay scale between acting City Manager and Interim City Manager, pay increase for non-charter positions and the previous assignment of Mr. Yarborough not getting a pay increase while Acting City Manager, Assistant City Manager job duties, three month pay adjustment for Acting City Manager and timeline of Ms. Bellia as Acting City Manager, qualifications of Ms. Bellia to be Acting City Manager and previous history of covering City Manager duties, determination of pay range for Acting City Manager, and proposed car allowance.

Ms. Ferrell clarified the car allowance and pay increase for an Acting City Manager.

Discussion continued regarding Ms. Bellia's current salary vs. possible Acting City Manager salary, compensating Assistant Public Works Manager for taking over duties of Public Works Director, and adding 5% increase of current salary for Ms. Bellia as Acting City Manager.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to give an increase to Julie Bellia when taking over as Acting City Manager on November 14, 2020 with a 5% salary increase. The motion carried by the following vote:***

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

Mayor McDowell passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Luke.

***A motion was made by Mayor McDowell, seconded by Vice Mayor Luke, for no car allowance to be paid to Ms. Bellia during the duration of her service as Acting City Manager. The motion carried by the following vote:***

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

Vice Mayor Luke passed the gavel back to Mayor McDowell.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to compensate Assistant City Manager Yarborough for Acting City Manager service comparable to the \$140,000.00 City Manager figure.***

Discussion ensued regarding pay of Assistant City Manager Yarborough prior to Acting City Manager and time as Acting City Manager, and 5% increase versus increase based

on \$140,000.00 figure.

Commissioner Emrich stated he did not support the motion noting that Ms. Bellia should be afforded the same salary increase as Assistant City Manager Yarborough when appointed as Acting City Manager.

***The motion carried by the following vote:***

**Yes:** 3 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke and Commissioner Carusone

**No:** 1 - Commissioner Emrich

## **7. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioner Emrich had nothing to report.

Commissioner Carusone requested clarification on the Poinsettia Parade route.

Ms Pfundheller provided clarification on the Poinsettia Parade route and this year's event while adhering to the CDC guidelines.

Discussion ensued regarding the Poinsettia Parade event, possible number of participants, social distancing for viewing the parade, parade participants disembarking areas, promoting the Poinsettia Parade event, and road closures.

Vice Mayor Luke noted she had a discussion with City Manager Lear regarding City Hall security cameras, and vandalism at Narramore Sports Complex.

Ms. Pfundheller noted there are no cameras planned for Narramore Sports Complex, the cost for security cameras, and issues with lighting being Sarasota County's responsibility.

***There was a consensus to bring back the cost of additional security measures for the girls softball fields at Narramore Sports Complex with a budget amendment if needed.***

Vice Mayor Luke continued, providing a Florida League of Cities summary regarding water qualities as a priority and provided an update on the Community Activity Resources for Everyone (C.A.R.E.S.) Program through the County and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

Mayor McDowell spoke to the memo regarding bridge repair to North Port Boulevard and the Cocoplum waterway using a formal review process.

Discussion ensued regarding notifying the Commission when an approved project is changed to another project, the bridge rehabilitation priority list, budget presentations regarding proposed projects, and maintenance issues vs. rehabilitation issues.

## **8. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:**

There were no Administrative and Legal Reports.

Recess was taken from 2:56 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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

[20-2742](#) Present Advisory Board Certificates of Appreciation to Laura Pucci for Serving on the Art Advisory Board and Morgan Scott for serving on the North Port Youth Council.

*The Commission presented the Certificates of Appreciation.*

[20-2850](#) Recognition of City of North Port and The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County’s Bronze Rank from the International Economic Development Council’s Excellence in Economic Development Awards

*The Commission presented the Recognition.*

[20-2859](#) Proclaim Wednesday, November 11, 2020 Veteran’s Day

Commissioner Emrich presented the proclamation recognizing Veteran's Day to City staff who are veterans.

*The Commission presented this proclamation.*

[20-2860](#) Proclaim November 2020 as Men’s Health Awareness Month

*The Commission presented this Proclamation.*

[20-2861](#) Proclaim November 15th-2st, 2020 National Geographic Information System Day

*The Commission presented this Proclamation.*

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

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

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Giselle "Jill" E. Luke, Mayor

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

Minutes approved at the Commission Regular Meeting this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.