



# City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD  
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

## Meeting Minutes City Commission Special Meeting

### *CITY COMMISSIONERS*

*Christopher B. Hanks, Mayor*  
*Debbie McDowell, Vice-Mayor*  
*Vanessa Carusone, Commissioner*  
*Peter Emrich, Commissioner*  
*Jill Luke, Commissioner*

### *APPOINTED OFFICIALS*

*Peter Lear, City Manager*  
*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*  
*Kathryn Peto, City Clerk*

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Monday, December 17, 2018

1:00 PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

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### DEPUTY CITY CLERK INTERVIEWS

**NOTE: This is a draft copy of the minutes of the 12-17-2018 City Commission Special Meeting, has not been approved by the Commission and is subject to change.**

### CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The North Port City Commission Special Meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. in City Commission Chambers by Mayor Hanks.

Present: Mayor Hanks; Vice-Mayor McDowell; Commissioners Luke and Emrich, City Manager Lear; Assistant City Attorney Golen and City Clerk Peto.

Absent: Commissioner Carusone.

**The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Commission.**

### **1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – COMMISSION**

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

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

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**3. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

City Manager Lear and Human Resources Manager Hope provided an overview and requested that if the Commission has additional questions that they ask each candidate the same question.

The Commission selected the following set of questions to be asked of each candidate:

Vice-Mayor McDowell : (1) describe a specific situation where you may have been challenged with fairness or an ethical issue and how did you resolve that situation; (2) what are you looking for from the City of North Port being your employer; (3) describe something unique about yourself.

Commissioner Luke: (1) how have you kept employees informed of what is going on in the organization and what is the worst communication problem you have experienced; (2) are you a "big picture" or "detailed" type of person and provide an example; (3) describe a time you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions; (4) what do you enjoy about the Deputy Clerk job.

Commissioner Emrich: (1) provide an example of when you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement; (2) describe a highly stressful work situation you have been in, and how did you handle it; (3) describe a time you volunteered to help a co-worker, or took on a new responsibility without being asked.

Mayor Hanks: (1) provide examples from your previous job that demonstrate your willingness to work hard; (2) give an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal, and what was the outcome; (3) what are the most significant changes you have brought about in your organization.

**A. [18-889](#)****Deputy City Clerk Interviews, 1:00 PM -1:30 PM Heather Taylor**

Human Resources Director McDade escorted Deputy Clerk candidate, Heather Taylor, into Chambers to begin her interview.

Subsequent to Ms. Taylor providing brief personal background information and work history, Commissioners asked the questions previously listed. Having completed the interview, Ms. Taylor then left the Chambers.

Recess 1:22 p.m. - 1:26 p.m.

**B. [18-892](#)****Deputy City Clerk Interviews, 1:45 PM - 2:15 PM Rebecca Clifford**

Human Resources Director McDade escorted Deputy Clerk candidate, Rebecca Clifford, into Chambers to begin her interview.

Subsequent to Ms. Clifford providing brief personal background information and work history, Commissioners asked the questions previously listed. Having completed the interview, Ms. Clifford then left the Chambers.

Recess 1:50 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.

**C. [18-893](#)****Deputy City Clerk Interviews, 2:30 PM - 3:00 PM Norman Fitzgerald**

Human Resources Director McDade escorted Deputy Clerk candidate, Norman

Fitzgerald, into Chambers to begin his interview.

Subsequent to Mr. Fitzgerald providing brief personal background information and work history, Commissioners asked the questions previously listed. Having completed the interview, Mr. Fitzgerald then left the Chambers.

Recess 2:09 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**D. [18-894](#)**

**Deputy City Clerk Interviews, 3:15 PM - 3:45 PM Linda Simmons**

Human Resources Director McDade escorted Deputy Clerk candidate, Linda Simmons, into Chambers to begin her interview.

Subsequent to Ms. Simmons providing brief personal background information and work history, Commissioners asked the questions previously listed. Having completed the interview, Ms. Simmons then left the Chambers.

Discussion ensued: (1) the Commission unanimously expressed their first preference for Ms. Taylor and second preference for Ms. Simmons; (2) the candidates background experiences and testing were considered; (3) concern was expressed that Ms. Taylor's minimum compensation requested is higher than the posted salary; (4) the position was budgeted for more than the advertised salary and the Commission has the flexibility to approve a higher wage; (5) it was noted that the beginning pay range is based on someone coming in with little experience and it is reasonable to increase a starting wage based on experience; (6) the position was posted with the following requirements: [a] high-school graduate; [b] college course work; [c] five-years experience; [d] Florida relevant experience; [e] Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) certification designation or the ability to obtain; (7) it was suggested that the Commission consider naming a secondary candidate in the event the first applicant elects to not accept the position; (8) the previous Deputy Clerk's wage was higher than the amount Ms. Taylor is requesting, Ms. Taylor already has certification and is experienced working within the Clerk's office and it was opined that meeting Ms. Taylor's salary request is reasonable; (9) it was noted that the Commission will need to authorize staff to negotiate a contract with Ms. Taylor as a Charter Officer, and then the contract with negotiated terms will be brought back to the Commission for final approval; (10) the template previously vetted by the Commission for the Deputy City Clerk contract will be used for this negotiation.

***A motion was made by Vice- Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Luke, to offer Ms. Heather Taylor the position as Deputy City Clerk at the compensation of \$64,000 a year, and for the City Manager, Human Resources and the City Attorney to work on negotiations and bring back a contract for Commission approval within 30 days or sooner. The motion carried by the following vote, with Commissioner Carusone absent:***

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

***A motion was made by Vice-Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Luke, to offer as a backup the position of Deputy City Clerk to Ms. Linda Simmons at a salary of \$50,000, because she would be required to get her certifications, for the City Manager, City Attorney and Human Resources to start negotiations with her if Ms. Taylor's falls through. The motion carried by the following vote, with Commissioner Carusone absent:***

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

Discussion continued: (1) a suggestion was made to notify the remaining candidates that the position was filled; (2) it was noted that until an agreement is reached, the remaining candidates shouldn't be told the position was awarded to someone else; (3) if neither of the top two candidates are hired for the position it should be re-advertised; (4) staff will follow-up and call the applicants with an explanation of the process. There was no public comment.

***There was a unanimous consensus that all four candidates will be contacted today about the status of the position, and staff will immediately re-advertise the position if a contract is not negotiated with Ms. Taylor or Ms. Simmons.***

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

#### **5. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:**

There were no Commission Communications.

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

There were no Administrative or Legal Reports.

#### **7. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Hanks adjourned the North Port City Commission Special Meeting at 3:15 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher B. Hanks, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathryn Peto, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the City Commission Regular Meeting this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.