



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
Heather Taylor, Deputy City Clerk

Monday, January 14, 2019

9:00 AM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

Water and Wastewater Expansion

NOTE: This is a draft copy of the minutes of the 1-14-2019 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 9:01 a.m. in City Commission Chambers by Mayor Hanks.

Present: Mayor Hanks; Vice-Mayor McDowell; Commissioners Luke and Emrich, City Manager Lear; City Attorney Slayton; City Clerk Peto; Deputy City Clerk Taylor; Recording Secretary Hale; Police Chief Garrison and Deputy Chief Morales;

Absent: Commissioner Carusone.

The invocation was provided by Mayor Hanks, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by City Attorney Slayton.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – COMMISSION

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Luke, to approve the Agenda. 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:

Public comment was held 9:04 a.m. - 9:07 a.m.
Timothy Doyle: complaints about government.

City Manager Lear noted that staff will contact Mr. Doyle before Thursday.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS:

A. [18-932](#)

Discussion on Utilities Neighborhood Expansion Project U19NEP

City Manager Lear and Public Utilities Director Newkirk gave an overview of the item. Utility Engineer Fehrs provided a PowerPoint presentation. Public Utilities Assistant Director Desrosiers, and Utilities Engineering Division Manager Acosta addressed questions from the Commission.

Discussion ensued: (1) it was explained that the Line Extension Fees paid by the customer will recoup a portion of the surtax funding initially used to pay for the improvements, and because it is not an assessment the costs will not be fully recovered; (2) historically the Capacity and Line Extension Fees were financed by the Utilities Department for the customers and if this is continued a timeframe for reimbursement will need to be reviewed, all other costs are the customers responsibility; (3) to hookup wastewater lines on the property to the City line is estimated at \$1,000 - \$2,000, and water lines are estimated at \$1,000; (4) the pilot program for the water lines cost \$2,000,000, of the 522 parcels 230 have residences and 97 have connected to the system, and that financing was made available; (5) from 2013 only the water analysis survey was completed; (6) it was explained that though sewage breaches are a concern, it is minimal compared to nitrogen and phosphorus issues from having a large number of small lots with septic tanks, even if the septic tanks are in good working condition; (7) Charlotte County does have a septic inspection program, and the Health Department inspects aerobic septic tanks annually; (8) a suggestion was made to have a consultant provide a presentation regarding the use of woodchips as a septic system treatment to remove nitrogen; (9) it was opined that money should be spent on running lines to commercial areas to promote and enhance businesses, and not force residents to participate due to the cost; (10) if the presentation is implemented the project would be completed by 2022; (11) the billing cycle would not start until after the residence is connected; (12) parcels that don't sign up for connection after the first year are charged the base amount, they are not charged for consumption; (13) a vacuum sewer system would cost approximately \$2500 less per lot for construction costs; (14) customers would initially spend approximately \$5,000 for costs related to connecting to the City line; (15) Charlotte County offered a program that had their contractor make the residential connections which allowed the customer to finance the entire amount; (16) it was noted that state statute requires connection to sewer service within 365 days of notice of City infrastructure improvements; (17) new home construction is required to utilize City lines where available, existing homes could be transitioned when the property is sold or a new well or septic system is needed; (18) it was explained that an assessment on property taxes could be utilized for all properties in an area, improved and unimproved, that it would require an additional cost to implement and oversee the assessment, and that staff would need to research this as an option; (19) Floribana residents pay approximately \$185 per month for their improvements, and their costs are subsidized; (20) though the City currently has a gravity sewer system, the engineer will be tasked to determine if gravity or vacuum is the better option; (21) there is some funding from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for septic to sewer projects around Springs; (22) staff has reached out to the City lobbyist to help secure funding for Warm Mineral Springs water and sewer improvements and help with costs for neighborhood expansion.

Commissioner Carusone joined the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Discussion continued: (1) it was explained that water and sewer are connected at the same time, that there currently isn't a method to meter sewer only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Banks: concerns with fixed income and hookup costs.

Michael Caruso: no mandatory hookup unless needed.

David Duval: favors a sewer system.

John Cruz: more options need to be presented.

Ida Grooms: fixed income and cannot pay for this.

Discussion continued: (1) it was noted that it would cost \$3,000,000,000 to build out infrastructure in the City; (2) it was opined that surtax funding should be utilized for this project; (3) it was suggested to have annual septic inspections if the costs are feasible; (4) concern was expressed for the different costs presented today and a suggestion was made that a breakdown of the costs with explanation be provided to the Commission.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Luke, to instruct the City Manager to bring back more information including Commissioner Luke's idea about woodchips, information for starting a septic inspection program, define the fees and the costs associated in today's presentation, find out about grant funding including potential legislation coming before the state, and look at ways of financing, options for assessments or monthly payments, a hybrid option of requiring hookup to the City if their system fails, vacant property hookup required at time of buildup and information to require hookup at transfer of title.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to amend the motion to look at running lines for commercial hookup. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

A vote was taken on the main motion, as amended, to instruct the City Manager to bring back more information including Commissioner Luke's idea about woodchips, information for starting a septic inspection program, define the fees and the costs associated in today's presentation, find out about grant funding including potential legislation coming before the state, and look at ways of financing, options for assessments or monthly payments, a hybrid option of requiring hookup to the City if their system fails, vacant property hookup required at time of buildup, information to require hookup at transfer of title, and to look at running lines for commercial hookup. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

5. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Carusone: nothing to report.

Commissioner Luke: (1) displayed a document of septic tanks located in North Port.

Vice-Mayor McDowell: (1) noted that three Commissioners have septic systems.

Commissioner Emrich: nothing to report.

Mayor Hanks: nothing to report.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:

There were no Administrative and Legal Reports.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Hanks adjourned the North Port City Commission Special Meeting at 10:46 a.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.