



# City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD  
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

## Meeting Minutes - Final City Commission Workshop

### *CITY COMMISSIONERS*

*Linda M. Yates, Mayor*  
*Vanessa Carusone, Vice-Mayor*  
*Christopher B. Hanks, Commissioner*  
*Debbie McDowell, Commissioner*

### *APPOINTED OFFICIALS*

*Jonathan R. Lewis, City Manager*  
*Mark Moriarty, City Attorney*  
*Patsy Adkins, City Clerk*  
*Kathryn Peto, Deputy City Clerk*

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Monday, March 6, 2017

1:00 PM

CITY HALL ROOM 244

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### **Assumptions, Projections and Priorities Workshop**

### **MINUTES APPROVED AT THE 04-11-2017 MEETING.**

#### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The North Port City Commission Workshop Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. in Training Room 244 by Mayor Yates.

Present: Mayor Yates; Vice-Mayor Carusone; Commissioners Hanks and McDowell; City Manager Lewis; Assistant City Manager Schult; City Attorney Moriarty; City Clerk Adkins; Recording Secretary Hale and Police Chief Vespia.

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

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – COMMISSION**

- A. [17-0896](#) Presentation and Discussion on 2018 Budget Assumptions, Projections and Priorities

City Manager Lewis introduced Finance Director Lear who presented an overview of the meeting and a PowerPoint outline concerning the preliminary budget projections and possible Service Level Adjustments (SLA) requested by the Commission.

Discussion ensued: (1) following a question, City Manager Lewis stated that the millage in 2016 was 3.5974 and the Commission reduced the millage for 2017 at the Budget Hearing to 3.47; (2) the preliminary property values are received on June 1, 2017, and will include the roll-back rate; (3) the Finance Department is projecting a 5% increase in property values; (4) revenues the City receives due to taxes was received, such as Property Taxes, Communication Services Tax, etc.; (5) following questions, Finance Director Lear stated: [a] that the City Arborist is paid 100% out of the Tree Fund and Building Fund monies can only be used for personnel, operating costs, and capital outlay and must be tied to building; [b] the unemployment data specific to North Port was requested every year, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics only provides that demographic information by county; [c] a breakdown of permits for homes generally in

the City vs West Villages can be provided; [d] the number of homes sold is received from the Sarasota Association of Realtors and is based on a county-wide total; [e] the Local Business Tax was revised from a \$25 cap to a final determination of \$75 to \$88 pending a final determination by the State Legislature; [f] the Utility Fund is not included in the General Funds and is an enterprise fund within the Utility Department and those revenues were not included in the PowerPoint review; [g] the Utility Service Tax, Communication Service Tax, Local Business Tax, Electric Franchise Fee, Half Cent Sales Tax, and the Municipal Revenue Sharing all go into the General Fund and pay for General Fund expenditures and only the Local Business Tax is restricted to Economic Development; [h] staff will provide a list of the additional City expenditures and additional revenues starting from October 1, 2016 to date; (6) concern was expressed and discussion ensued regarding the connection between level of service expectations by residents, adequate staffing to accommodate those expectations and employee compensation; (7) following the discussion City Manager Lewis stated that the City has advertised to do a Compensation Study focusing on General Employees and Union Employees; (8) a timeline for the Compensation Study will be provided to the Commission; (9) clarification was provided that the City owns the Rights-of-way on City roads and Florida Power & Light pays a fee for placing their lines and poles in that area, then typically, FPL passes that Franchise Fee on to their customers; (10) the 97% ad valorem collection rate is the same as last year's amount and the majority of the other 3% are those who take advantage of paying early.

#### COMMISSION DIRECTION

Questions and discussion ensued: (1) by City Policy, the General Fund is mandated to have a 15-25% buffer and the Districts each have 20-25%; (2) the Capital Acquisition Fund does not have a Fund Balance Policy. Money is saved over time, to pay for the usage of equipment so that when it wears out, funding is available for replacements; (3) a spreadsheet lists the information for every piece of rolling stock; (4) the Fiscal Sustainability Policy allows the Commission to designate an additional 10% in each of the four Funds, in anticipation of an economic downturn; (5) it was noted, as long as the City has a Sustainability Policy, the bond agencies will not downgrade the City's bond rating; (6) it was stated for the record, that there was a Policy years ago, written or unwritten, establishing that no funds were spent over a certain percentage; (7) the rating agencies review the Policy to determine if the City has the flexibility in the Fund Balance to weather another economic storm; (8) it was stated that it doesn't make sense to have two fund balance policies without differentiating the purpose for each; (9) after a concern, City Manager Lewis explained: [a] that the City's Fund Balance Policy states that there must be a plan for any amount over 25% of the Budget; [b] the former Commission directed staff to provide a Economic Stabilization Fund to address that issue; [c] writing the Stability Fund to include things the Commission deems appropriate will not negatively affect the bond rating; (10) the purpose of the Stability Fund is to protect the City against reducing services and raising taxes and fees at one time; (11) a suggestion was made to add a component to the Fund Balance and the Stabilization Policy that once the maximum amounts specified are reached, the surplus is paid back to the taxpayers, and concern was expressed regarding raising the millage rate to add levels of service when there is excess in the Fund Balance Policy and the Stabilization Policy funds; (12) when funds are needed for unbudgeted major repairs, etc., a Budget Amendment is made and funds are taken from the Reserve Fund from the Fund Balance; (13) on an annual basis, the Commission will determine how much goes into the Stabilization Fund and can build up the fund over several years; (14) following a question, City Manager Lewis stated that staff will bring a plan in this year's Budget to reduce the Building Fund amount because it is very restricted funding.

Discussion ensued regarding percentages that should be assigned to the Fund Balance and the Stabilization Fund, followed by discussion regarding setting the millage rate. It was decided that the Fund Balance shall remain at 25%, which is \$8,452,010 in the

General Fund.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to fund the Economic Stabilization Fund this year, from the Projected "Available" fund Balance, using 3% of each Fund Balance except the Building Fund; with the remaining 8% as discretionary; and evaluating it again next year.***

***There was a consensus to direct staff for the next Budget Meeting, to add the Stabilization Policy Fund amounts in each Fund column. It was also requested to add the balance of the Capital Acquisition Fund.***

Recess 3:32 p.m. - 3:54 p.m.

**A. [17-0896](#)**

**Presentation and Discussion on 2018 Budget Assumptions, Projections and Priorities**

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) starting the millage rate at 3.477 and any additional services will have a millage attached to them; (2) it was suggested to list the budget items and allow staff to place them in the department or fund where they need to go; (3) more mowing is needed, canal drainage, sidewalks--especially along Tropicair Boulevard; (4) more street lights, especially at school bus stops; (5) calming-device signage; (6) following a concern, City Manager Lewis stated: [a] that sidewalks are normally designed one year and constructed the next year; [b] if the Commission gives the parameters of the project, staff will work on pricing and thereafter, the Commission can decide what are the natural breaks in the sidewalk system; (6) a map of sidewalk projects for the next three years will be provided to the Commission; (7) the sidewalks already designed should continue to move forward.

***There was a consensus to base the Millage at the current rate of 3.4770, and each additional item requested will have a millage fraction affiliated with it.***

***There was a consensus to direct staff to add sidewalks, in addition to what is already designed and programmed. City Manager Lewis can create a Service Level Adjustment (SLA) for the design and construction of a sidewalk from Toledo Blade Boulevard to Van Camp Street on Tropicair Boulevard; and work out pricing so that the Commission can determine how to break the project out.***

***There was a consensus to increase the mowing and drainage cycles.***

Discussion continued regarding: (1) staff will provide a map to the Commission regarding the drainage maintenance; (2) increasing streetlights; (3) moveable solar lighting was suggested; (4) when the City installs light poles, they are from Florida Power & Light; (5) options to enhance residential streetlights including flexibility that when school bus stops move, the light can move with them.

***There was a consensus to prioritize street lights in school zones and staff will provide options through an SLA to enhance residential streetlights including flexibility so that when school bus stops move, the light can move with them.***

Discussion continued, and a cost comparison was requested between outsourcing and in-house landscape maintenance, including Road & Drainage as well as City maintenance facilities.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to perform a cost analysis for the City's***

***landscaping services and mowing between in-house and outsourcing the work. This falls under the category of functions to be analyzed for alternative service providers.***

Discussion continued regarding: (1) a need was noticed for portapotties on the City's blueways; (2) the facility should be open from sunrise to sunset; (3) Marina Park currently has no restroom facilities; (4) the canal weirs are not designed for kayak/canoe entrances and exits.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to draft an SLA as a CIP project, addressing restroom deficiencies along the blueways.***

Discussion continued regarding: (1) ability to use the North Port website to advertise community service group events; (2) the entity must be a 501(c)(3); (3) a City policy is needed and the City Manager will identify whether there is a budgetary implication to allow the access; (4) it was reported that Public Information Officer Taylor is working on an overhaul to the City's website; (5) there is a policy regarding use of the City's website; (6) it was suggested that a means to induce traffic-calming is needed near City parks; (7) revisiting restroom facilities at City parks, it was reported that the facility at the Paw Park cost \$175,000 and already had access to City water and sewer; (8) it was suggested to review City-park restroom facilities with the option of providing some portable potties.

***There was a consensus to add City parks to the review of restroom needs.***

***There was a consensus to create an SLA for traffic calming devices near City parks.***

Discussion continued regarding a suggestion to reinstate the Youth Advisory Board with internships in City Departments.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to create an SLA for department youth internships and to re-instate the Youth Advisory Board.***

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) Fire Department call boxes; (2) more way-finding signs for City Government buildings and parks.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to create an SLA to add Fire Department call boxes for the front and back of the Fire Department buildings, and directional signage from the main road for City property and services.***

Discussion continued regarding: (1) Resource Officers for elementary schools; (2) City Manager Lewis explained that School Resource Officers (SROs) are funded 50% from the Sarasota County School Board and 50% from the City of North Port; (3) it was suggested to reduce the cost by floating an SRO between two or three schools.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to look into bringing back School Resource Officers at the elementary schools.***

Discussion ensued concerning purchasing a drone for City planning and a policy pertaining to its use.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to explore purchasing a drone for City use, including a policy for its use.***

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) finding a way to provide public records requests online; (2) it was stated that City Clerk Adkins and the Information Technology Department are lining up demonstrations from public records request management companies but cautioned that not everything will be available online due to confidentiality issues (police records, Human Resources etc.); (3) Ordinances and Resolutions are already available online; (4) following a question, City Clerk Adkins will check into other municipal public records programs which also provide a list on the website of the requester and the subject matter.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to create an SLA to continue moving forward to advance the City's technology regarding making it easier for citizens to access online records, database and management, including email.***

Discussion continued pertaining to: (1) the Price Boulevard discussion is scheduled for the March 28, 2017 Commission Meeting; (2) plans for the maintenance and/or replacement of the YMCA pool at Dallas White Park; (3) following a question, City Manager Lewis stated that \$2.2 million was put in last year's budget to install an eight-lane community pool at the Dallas White location, but was subsequently modified; (4) there may be an opportunity in the next year concerning the North Port YMCA building and pool, if the YMCA assumes maintenance and operation of the pool at the Venice Sky Academy; (5) it was stated that 50-meter pool/aquatic center at the Morgan Center was to replace the YMCA pool and keep it operating until the Morgan Center pool is open; (6) concern was expressed that after the pool at Butler Park is constructed, North Port still needs a long-term plan to replace the present pool at Dallas White Park for a second community pool, with its location to be determined; (7) following a brief discussion, City Manager Lewis clarified that: [a] the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast funds programs and only offered help with what the City is already fixing as it related to youth swimming; [b] funding for the pump was offered by the Foundation if the pool was going to close down but the Commission decided not to close it down.

***There was a consensus to have further discussion regarding the future pool, the current pool, and the Sky Academy.***

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) following a request, City Manager Lewis stated that IT and the City Clerk's Office is working on providing audio/video access to Advisory Board meetings and to Commission Workshops; (2) expanding the budget to accommodate for these extra meetings; (3) the IT Department is working on updating the audio/visual components in City Chambers, including new television sets.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to create an SLA pertaining to the audio/visual streaming access to Advisory Board meetings and Commission Workshops.***

Discussion ensued concerning: (1) clarification was provided that the Deer Prairie Creek connector bridge was part of the Myakka Forest long-term plan in 2008 but was eliminated at some point; (2) following a comment, City Manager Lewis stated that staff can perform the budgetary aspect, but pending a Commission decision to become part of that venture, the City needs to create, from a policy perspective, advocacy with all the entities involved in the project; (3) funding for the project should include parties that have a shared interest in the bridge--Sarasota County, Florida State, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

***There was a consensus to make the Connector Bridge over Deer Prairie Creek a CIP priority for the coming Fiscal Year.***

Discussion ensued pertaining to other alternatives for east-west corridors in addition to Price Boulevard.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to bring an SLA regarding a City-wide, overall study for traffic congestion mitigation, including the Price Boulevard corridor.***

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) the concept of North Port Government and You, which is a way to simplify the public's understanding of City Government, including virtual tours and how-to videos.

***There was a consensus to move forward with a City web-based program, provisionally called North Port Government and You, which helps residents navigate, search, and/or learn about City Government, including virtual tours and how-to videos.***

Discussion ensued concerning a suggestion to create an ATV park, possibly in the east portion of the City. Clarification was provided that the City-owned acreage consists of different parcels.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to prepare an SLA regarding the creation of an ATV park, manned by the City.***

Discussion ensued concerning adding an Environmental Specialist who would help protect native wildlife and environmental issues.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to do an SLA for an Environmental Specialist who has expertise in native wildlife and environmental.***

Discussion ensued regarding: (1) subsequent to a question, Assistant City Manager Schult stated that the Tree Fund Ordinance was changed to address funding a position and the equipment to operate the position.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to bring back an SLA that takes the Arborist and all accessories associated with the Arborist, out of the Tree Fund.***

It was requested to create a page on the City's website that provides a public searchable database for service providers by category.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to bring back a report pertaining to creating a searchable database for the business tax receipts and the contractor licenses by category, including an SLA if there is a budgetary impact.***

Discussion ensued regarding re-establishing Town Hall meetings again.

***There was a consensus to direct staff to bring back an SLA regarding holding interactive Town Hall Meetings.***

In the interest of time, Mayor Yates will present her list of budget recommendations at the next meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Yates adjourned the North Port City Commission Workshop Meeting at 6:11 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda M. Yates, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Patsy C. Adkins, MMC, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the City Commission Regular Meeting this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.