



City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

Meeting Minutes - Final Road and Drainage District Governing Body

Tuesday, July 23, 2019

5:01 PM

COMMISSION CHAMBERS

Special Meeting: Methodology & Assessment Public Hearing

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hanks called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Commission.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Christopher Hanks, Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke, Commissioner Pete Emrich and Commissioner Vanessa Carusone

Also Present:

City Manager Peter Lear, City Attorney Amber Slayton, Deputy City Clerk Heather Taylor, Recording Secretary Laura Reed, Police Chief Todd Garrison, Public Works Director Julie Bellia, and Assistant Public Works Director Monica Bramble.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public Comment was held from 5:03 p.m. to 5:35 p.m.

Diane Ennis: road conditions off Veteran's Highway out to King's Highway.

Greg Culy: expressed concern with proposed tax increase.

Mayor Hanks spoke to financial rating of the City and budget savings.

Dan Stendler: expressed concern with proposed tax increase and time of meetings.

Mayor Hanks provided clarification to City Commission monthly meeting times and state statute requirements for proposed resolution.

Craig Beal: expressed concern with proposed tax increase.

Commission provided clarification regarding the delay to the bike path on Tropicair Boulevard.

Ron Hauch: expressed concern with hospital and bike trail, and proposed tax increase.

Susan Hayes: questioned sidewalks being installed prior to culverts and expressed concern with drainage issues on Sumter Boulevard.

Martin Lumpert: expressed concern with proposed tax increase, and drainage.

Natalija Lumpert: Ordinance 85-193 regarding Road and Drainage District, and purpose of creating assessment.

Andrew Dejoy: expressed concern with tax increase.

Mayor Hanks spoke to outside influences that impact the City and State regulations that direct the use of a consultant, and stated he will be holding a Town Hall meeting on August 12, 2019 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars on Trott Circle at 6:00 p.m.

Greg Dillon: expressed concern with proposed tax increase and paying for mowing services that are not being completed.

Cindy Garber: expressed concern with proposed tax increase.

Mayor Hanks explained the budget process.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

**A. [RES. NO.](#)
[2019-R-13](#)**

A Resolution of the City of North Port, Florida, Providing for the Adoption of Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Methodology and Adoption of Assessment Rates; Providing for Findings; Providing for Conflicts; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date

Ms. Taylor read Resolution No. 2019-R-13 into the record by title only.

Mr. Lear introduced the item.

Mayor Hanks stepped away at 5:40 p.m.

Ms. Bellia introduced Morgan Brosch, Patrick Luce from Stantec who provided a presentation including an overview of the study, base and enhancements to roads, clearing drainage ditches of stormwater debris and vegetation, historical modifications with updated rate structures, prior Commission direction, current and proposed assessment structure for roads, drainage and mowing, assessment rate comparison, sample property impact comparison, and responded to Commission questions regarding vacant parcels in Activity Center 6.

Mayor Hanks returned at 5:54 p.m.

Ms. Bramble responded to Commission questions regarding needed services including mowing for all parcels vs. vacant properties.

Ms. Bellia spoke to City Code requirements for grass maintenance and Code changes to include verbiage that allows the property owner leeway during rainy season, difference between right-of-way and swale, jurisdictional wetlands, how assessments are applied equally, the 2010 methodology for ponds & wetlands vs. current drainage, services for enhanced neighborhood mowing six times a year and arterial/collector road mowing eight times a year, criteria to be met based on site inspections for ponds, wetlands have a jurisdictional line based on state map, and stormwater has to have a path of drainage from wetland to waterway based on state requirements.

Vice-Mayor McDowell stepped away at 6:03 p.m. and returned at 6:04 p.m.

Ms. Bellia continued answering Commission questions regarding adopting 50% of the increases vs. total adoption, rate charged must relate to benefit received, current procedure for vacant parcel grass height violations, and the 12-inch maximum height limit for grass.

Commissioner Carusone favored an opt-in program and voiced concerns regarding the methodology.

Ms. Bellia explained an opt-in program requires the methodology to be completely revised.

A motion was made by Commissioner Luke, seconded by Mayor Hanks, to approve Resolution No. 2019-R-13, to be monitored closely for a year to identify any needed changes the following year.

Vice-Mayor McDowell voiced opposition to the motion and concerns regarding the inequalities of assessments for a network of services benefitting the entire City, with quarter acre being charged as one acre, and flaws in the methodology.

Discussion ensued regarding intent of the methodology to bring fairness and equality to the City.

Commissioner Carusone commented on prior Commission direction and spoke to a pay-as-you-go plan, scheduling bi-annually dig outs, scheduled systematic measures for mowing, complexity of Code Enforcement process, expressed concern with the increases overall, and stated she could not support the motion.

Commissioner Emrich spoke to level of service and stated he could not support the methodology due to vacant lots receiving no increase, and current rates with increased level of service would be more easily accepted by citizens.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Hanks and Vice Mayor Luke

No: 3 - Mayor McDowell, Commissioner Emrich and Commissioner Carusone

Mr. Lear spoke to how the vote will affect the City budget.

Ms. Bellia responded to Commission questions regarding whether the City could increase Road and Drainage straight across the board for a certain percentage and spoke to State requiring a methodology study every four years, rehabilitating stormwater drainage per the methodology, and emphasis on being a non-ad valorem assessment.

Mr. Lear noted an across the board rate must be for services provided.

Ms. Bellia stated staff could work with consultant to reduce rates and stay within the methodology.

Mr. Luce stated public notices would not be required for lowering the rate.

Ms. Bellia spoke to bringing results back for first public meeting in September.

Mr. Lear stated a special meeting would be needed in August in order to approve a Road & Drainage budget and replied to Commission questions regarding presenting options.

Ms. Bellia proposed a reduction in the level of service to lower the rates and that the old methodology was based on road work and cannot be used for drainage.

Discussion took place regarding looking at bonding, millage increases, and future increases.

Public Comment

Greg Culy: vacant parcel tax reduction, overall budget cuts, stability of City vs. increasing taxes, and cost drivers to substantiate the increase.

Mr. Lear spoke to the drivers consisting of the new aquatic facility, union contracts, and police body cameras.

Kevin Riley: expressed support of drainage methodology.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Luke, to direct staff to use the same methodology with staff review of budget; to cut the proposed level of service, and come back with lower rates at future meeting to be determined by City Manager between now and September 5, 2019.

Clarification was provided that the intent was not to cut the current drainage level of service, only the proposed level of service increase.

Ms. Bellia commented on utilizing the new methodology and current level of services on vacant lots for mowing, and reviewing potential cuts in additional levels of service.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Hanks adjourned the Road and Drainage District Special Meeting at 7:13 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida
As the Governing Body of the Road and Drainage District

By: _____
Christopher B. Hanks, Mayor

Attest: _____
Heather Taylor, Deputy City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Road and Drainage District Regular Meeting this ____ day of _____, 2019.