



City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

Meeting Minutes City Commission Special Meeting

CITY COMMISSIONERS

Alice White, Mayor

Phil Stokes, Vice Mayor

Pete Emrich, Commissioner

Barbara Langdon, Commissioner

Debbie McDowell, Commissioner

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Jerome Fletcher, City Manager

Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney

Heather Faust, City Clerk

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

1:00 PM

City Commission Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor White called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and provided required notifications regarding conducting a hybrid meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Commissioner Debbie McDowell, Mayor Alice White, Vice Mayor Philip Stokes and Commissioner Barbara Langdon

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Pete Emrich

Also Present:

City Manager Fletcher, City Attorney Slayton, City Clerk Faust, Police Chief Garrison, Deputy Fire Chief Herlihy, and Public Works Project Manager Humphrey

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Chief Garrison.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor White requested a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Vice Mayor Stokes, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried on the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Emrich

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Faust read the following eComment into the record:

Drew Smith: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Melissa Ordiway: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Rick Fermin: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Joe Galewski: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Christian Young: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Lee Giles: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Brandon Ducharme: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Danny Hudson: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Deanna Heminger: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Daniel Hughes: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Chris Church: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Emily Araujo Lawson: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Robin Snider: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.
Anne Woodward: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

In Person:

Brett Straff: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

Commissioner Emrich joined the meeting at 1:13 p.m. and stated he will be attending the hybrid meeting via Communication Media Technology (CMT) due to experiencing a medical condition.

Mayor White requested a motion to approve the use of CMT for a hybrid meeting.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Stokes, seconded by Commissioner Langdon, to accept the use of CMT for a hybrid meeting. The motion carried on the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Emrich, Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

3. GENERAL BUSINESS:

[24-0599](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Relating to Bonding and Other Financing Options from the City's Special Legal Counsel and Financial Advisor; Recommendations for Charter Amendment Language Related to the City's Bonding Authority, Including a Permissive Referendum Option; and Recommendations for How to Move Forward With the North Port Police Department Headquarters Project and Funding.

Mayor White announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item and Steve Miller, Nabors Giblin & Nickerson and Jeremy Niedfeldt, PFM Advisors.

Ms. Slayton introduced Chris Roe, Bryant Miller Olive.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding bonds including differences in funding methodology, bond flexibility and structuring, referendum question language, analysis of bond recommendations, lease to own, market credit capacity, Certificate of Participation (COP), validation proceedings, credit rating/bond rating, current bond ratings, favorable conditions for debt issuance, ten-year call, Charter provision, market moving, funding sources, affordability, ad valorem tax for law enforcement, time frame, COP board sunshine requirements, financial analysis, Charter restrictions/provision, next steps, permissive referendum, economic development strategy, and agenda backup.

Ms. Slayton responded to questions regarding Charter language relative to petitions.

Commission questions and discussion continued regarding funding design, next steps, and cost of referendum question.

There was consensus to conduct public comment at this time, followed by a 10 minute break.

Public Comment:

Ms. Faust read the following comment cards into the record:

Prince Lawson: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

Brenda VanSalsbury: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

John Boswell: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

Tim Snider: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

Joe Galewike: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

Nathan Borntreger: Supports Agenda Item No. 24-0599.

In Person:

Mike Morales: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

Sherriff Kurt Hoffman: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

Bill Gunnin, Chamber of Commerce: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

Sean Burrough, Chamber of Commerce: Expressed support of the Police Department Headquarters.

Recess was taken from 2:56 p.m. until 3:06 p.m.

Mr. Fletcher provided a presentation regarding Police Headquarters timeline including 2019 funding request, study, COVID-19, 2020-2023 funding request, new consultant, Commission directed project approval, land purchase, Charter amendment recommendations, Charter amendment recommended, design completion approval, town hall, bond and funding option discussion, surtax option discussion and design completion recommendation, and joint meeting with Chamber of Commerce, City project needs, Hurricane Ian inspection completion and recovery efforts, Charter amendment, next steps, funding large scale infrastructure needs, design plan completion, economic development study, financial condition analysis, long-term capital improvement plan, construction cost, surrounding municipality borrowing, and borrowing authority.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding addressing revenue issues, timeline for police design, phased approach, delaying project for Charter amendment, impact fee update, funding sources, design completion, strategic approach, costs with interest, referendum questions, August/November referendums, City Manager recommendation, funding options, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) funding.

Mayor White requested a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Vice Mayor Stokes, to direct the City Manager to work with staff to bring back language, in time for the December election for a Charter amendment to allow the city borrowing authority.

Commission discussion took place regarding prior language discussion.

Ms. Slayton spoke to need for clarity.

Commission discussion continued regarding bringing back for first reading.

The motion carried on the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Emrich, Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Vice Mayor Stokes, to direct the City Manager to work with staff to complete an economic development study and financial condition analysis by the end of the calendar year.

Commission discussion took place regarding timeline, cost of study, and study process.

The motion carried on the following vote with Commissioner McDowell dissenting due to not being a benefit to the decision of the Police Department Headquarters.

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Emrich, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

No: 1 - Commissioner McDowell

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, to direct the City Manager to work with staff to prepare a comprehensive long-term Capital Improvement Plan for North Port to encompass all city services including General Government, Fire Rescue District, Road and Drainage District, and Solid Waste District and water and sewer utility services.

Commission discussion took place regarding unfunded capital projects, including needs assessment, analysis process and cost estimate, benefits, and timeline.

The motion carried on the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Emrich, Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, to not pursue permissive referendums as an option for the City at this time.

Commission discussion took place regarding focusing on other items.

The motion carried on the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Emrich, Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding prior design plan direction and design plan process.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Vice Mayor Stokes, to proceed with bond referendum language to be on the November 2024 ballot for the North Port Police Department Headquarters.

Commission discussion took place regarding placing the Charter amendment on the ballot first, concern with both questions being on the ballot, general election requirements, benefit of placing both questions on ballot, and funding.

The motion failed with Vice Mayor Stokes, Commissioner Langdon, Mayor White dissenting.

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Emrich and Commissioner McDowell

No: 3 - Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

A motion was made by Commissioner Langdon, seconded by Vice Mayor Stokes, to rescind the prior direction to place the Police Headquarters bond referendum on the August 2024 ballot. The motion carried on the following vote with Commissioner Emrich dissenting due to belief the question would pass.

Yes: 4 - Commissioner McDowell, Mayor White, Vice Mayor Stokes and Commissioner Langdon

No: 1 - Commissioner Emrich

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Josh Smith: Spoke to need for citizen buy in.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor White adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: _____
Alice White, Mayor

Attest: _____
Heather Faust, City Clerk