



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY**

**NEW PORT RICHEY CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**5919 MAIN STREET, NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA**

**April 1, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

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**ORDER OF**  
**BUSINESS**

1. Call to Order – Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Chopper Davis at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance were Deputy Mayor Kelly Mothershead, Councilman Matt Murphy, Councilman Peter Altman and Councilman Bertell Butler, IV.

Also in attendance were City Manager Debbie L. Manns, City Attorney Timothy Driscoll, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Finance Director Crystal Dunn, Fire Chief Chris Fitch, Public Works Director Robert Rivera, Police Chief Bob Kochen, Library Director Andi Figart, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Kevin Trapp, Community and Development Director Dale Hall, Technology Solutions Director Leanne Mahadeo, and Human Resources Director Arnel Wetzell.

2 Pledge of Allegiance

3 Moment of Silence

4 Approval of March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion made by Bertell Butler and seconded by Kelly Mothershead. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

5 Swearing-In of New Police Officer Joseph Kirby

6 Proclamation - Florida Loquat Day

7 Proclamation - Pasco Animal Hospital's 20th Anniversary

8 Proclamation - Water Conservation Month (By Title Only)

9 Proclamation - Donate Life Month (By Title Only)

10 Presentation by New Port Richey Main Street, Inc.

Kim Brust provided an update on the activities of New Port Richey Main Street.

11 Vox Pop for Items Not Listed on the Agenda or Listed on Consent Agenda

City Attorney Driscoll read aloud the rules governing Vox Pop. Mayor Davis then opened the floor for public comment. The following people came forward to speak regarding the Schwettman Education Center:

- Mary Beth Isaacson, 8805 Forest Lake Dr., PR
- Beva Stevenson Karay, 5719 Lafayette St., NPR
- Donna Jensen, 5922 Wyoming Ave., NPR
- George Romagnoli, 6235 Florida Ave., NPR

The following people also came forward to speak:

- Laurie Baker, 5853 Lafayette St., NPR spoke regarding Chasco funding.
- Carla Cash, 5751 Rio Dr., NPR spoke regarding the sidewalk situation on Rio Drive

With no one else coming forward for public comment, Mayor Davis closed Vox Pop.

- a Speakers must identify themselves prior to speaking by stating their name and full address for the record. Speakers shall address the City Council as a whole and refrain from addressing individual members of the City Council or the City staff. Speakers shall afford the utmost courtesy to the City Council, to City employees, and to the public, and shall refrain at all times, from rude and derogatory remarks, reflections as to integrity, abusive comments, and statements as to motives and personalities.

12 Consent Agenda

Motion was made to accept the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Matt Murphy and seconded by Kelly Mothershead. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

- a Cultural Affairs Committee Minutes - January 15, 2025
- b Library Advisory Board Minutes - January 27, 2025
- c Purchases/Payments for City Council Approval

13 Public Reading of Ordinances

- a First Reading, Ordinance 2025-2325: Authorizing the Issuance of Non-Ad Valorem Revenue Notes

City Attorney Driscoll read the proposed ordinance by title only. City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated the purpose of this agenda item was to conduct a first reading of an ordinance that would authorize the issuance of the Non-Ad Valorem Revenue Notes, Series 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$9,000,000. These revenue notes will be used to finance the costs of various capital improvements and the acquisition of real property located at 7631 US Hwy 19, New Port Richey, Florida, formally known as River Side Inn and for the Railroad Square Project. She then introduced Finance Director Crystal Dunn who made a presentation to Council. She stated on October 1, 2024, the City entered into a purchase agreement with Sun Coast Motels, Inc. for the purchase of the real property located at 7631 US Hwy 19, New Port Richey, with a purchase price of \$5,500,000. The subject property is located on the west side of US Highway 19 on the southwesterly bank of the Cotee River.

Additional financing of \$3,500,000 will be used for costs related to various capital improvement

projects. The largest of those projects are the improvements to Railroad Road Square Phase 1, as laid out and set forth in the FY 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan, in the amount of \$3,240,000.

Obligations of the Issuer to be designated as the "City of New Port Richey, Florida Non-Ad Valorem Revenue Note, Series 2025", in the aggregate principal amount of not to exceed \$9,000,000, are hereby authorized to be issued. The Note shall be issued for the purposes of (a) financing the costs of the Projects, and (b) paying costs and expenses of issuing the Note. City Manager Manns stated that bids for the note are due tomorrow and the second hearing will take place on April 15th.

Upon opening the floor to public comment, the following people came forward:

- Laurie Baker, 5853 Lafayette St., NPR came forward to ask them to speak louder.

With no one else coming forward Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Councilman Altman stated should the purchase of this note to be approved by the City then the missing part is that the City Council will loan or advance this money to the CRA. He wanted to make sure this was clear. He then spoke about previous funding for the Railroad Square Project. Councilman Butler stated he liked the connection to Schwettman. Deputy Mayor Mothershead stated this project will be very important for the city. Councilman Murphy stated this is a big piece of the puzzle along the west side of US19. Motion was made to approve the ordinance upon its first reading.

Motion made by Pete Altman and seconded by Bertell Butler. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

- b Second Reading, Ordinance No. 2025-2316: Repealing ORD 2024-2305 Moratorium for Leisure Lane/Van Doren Avenue

City Attorney Driscoll read the proposed ordinance by title only. City Manager Manns introduced Development Director Dale Hall who then presented the item to Council. He stated the purpose of this agenda item is to conduct a second and final reading of an ordinance which would repeal Ordinance No. 2024-2305 that established a moratorium on building permits for annexed property along Leisure Lane and Van Doren Drive. On November 19, 2024, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2024-2305, which established a 180-day moratorium on building permits for recently annexed land along Leisure Lane and Van Doren Drive. The moratorium was established in order for staff to have sufficient time to prepare the required land use amendment and rezoning. These efforts have now been completed with the establishment of the R4 designation therefore the moratorium is no longer necessary. Upon opening the floor to public comment, no one came forward therefore Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. City Attorney Driscoll spoke regarding a typo regarding the ordinance number. Motion was made to approve the ordinance upon its second and final reading with the correction from Ordinance No. 2024-2306 to the correct number 2024-2305.

Motion made by Bertell Butler and seconded by Kelly Mothershead. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

- c Second Reading, Ordinance No. 2025-2320: Amending Section 10.06 of the City Charter RE: Corporate Boundaries

City Attorney Driscoll read the proposed ordinance by title only. City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated the purpose of this agenda item is to conduct a second and final reading of an ordinance related to amending Section 10.06 of the City Charter pertaining to the boundaries of the city and providing for revised city boundaries to include the newly annexed area around Southgate Shopping Center, Leisure Lane and Van Doren Avenue. She stated the updated legal description is attached as Exhibit A and shall replace Exhibit A of Ordinance No. 2024-2287 which was adopted in April 2024. Upon opening the floor to public comment, no one came forward therefore Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Motion was made to approve the ordinance upon its second and final reading.

Motion made by Kelly Mothershead and seconded by Pete Altman. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes:

14 Business Items

a Board Re-Appointment: Marcia Mihall, Library Advisory Board

City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated that the purpose of this agenda item was to approve the re-appointment of Marcia Mihall to the Library Advisory Board. She stated Ms. Mihall has been a member of the Library Advisory Board since 2017. Her current term expired on June 5, 2024 therefore she has submitted her application seeking re-appointment to the board. If approved, Ms. Mihall's term will be for three years and will be up for renewal on April 1, 2028. Upon opening the floor to public comment, Ronald Becker came forward to speak in support of this re-appointment. With no one else coming forward Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Motion was made to approve the item as presented.

Motion made by Kelly Mothershead and seconded by Bertell Butler. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

b Authorizing the Execution of FY24 Audit Engagement Letters

City Manager Manns introduced Finance Director Crystal Dunn who then presented the item to Council. She stated that the purpose of this agenda item was to authorize execution of the FY24 Audit Engagement Letters with Mauldin & Jenkins. She stated on December 7, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution 2022-03 Establishing an Auditor Selection Committee and a Committee Chair, in accordance with Florida Statute 218.391. The resolution states that the Committee shall have the primary purpose of assisting the City Council in the selection of an auditor to conduct the City's annual financial audit. The committee consisted of all five (5) current City Council members with the Mayor appointed as the Chair of the Committee. On February 15, 2022, the City Council awarded RFP No. 2022-001, Independent Audit Services, to Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC for three (3) audit years (FY2021-FY2023) with engagement letters for audit services executed each fiscal year. Additionally, Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC is part of the State's master services agreement, Department of Management Services Contract No. 84111600-20-1 Financial and Performance Audits with an effective period of March 01, 2021 through February 28, 2027, for services including financial statement audits and audits of segments of financial statements. She stated to prevent further delays, staff recommends that City Council authorize execution of the Mauldin & Jenkins engagement letters for audit services related to fiscal year ended September 30, 2024 utilizing the pricing structure as presented in the Department of Management Services Contract No. 84111600-20-1. The piggyback process is allowed for under the current City purchasing guidelines. City Manager Manns stated the cost for this item would be \$50,100 and an additional \$5,400 for each single audit to be performed. Upon opening the floor to public comment, no one came forward therefore Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Motion was made to approve the item as presented.

Motion made by Pete Altman and seconded by Matt Murphy. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

c Request Approval of Pasco County Unmanned Systems Task Force Agreement

City Manager Manns introduced Police Chief Robert Kochen who then presented the item to Council. He stated that the purpose of this agenda item was to approve the Pasco County Unmanned Systems Task Force Agreement with the Sheriff's Office to enhance our department's operational capabilities with unmanned systems and/or drones. The Florida Mutual Aid Act authorizes law enforcement agencies to enter into agreements for voluntary cooperation and assistance with public safety initiatives. The purpose of this agreement is for our department to join and pool our drone capabilities with the Pasco County Sheriff's Office Unmanned Systems Task Force, to be utilized for the following:

- Emergency response,
- Public Safety operations such as parades, events, missing and/or endangered persons,
- Law Enforcement and Fire Rescue operations,

- Search and Rescue operations,
- Other Public Safety operations as mutually agreed upon by the parties.

The Sheriff's Office has a highly advanced, well equipped, and professionally operated Unmanned Systems Task Force. By joining this task force, our department will greatly enhance our drone capabilities by gaining access to cutting-edge technology, expert training, improved operational coordination, and enhanced resources. Upon opening the floor to public comment, no one came forward therefore Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Motion was made to approve the item as presented.

Motion made by Bertell Butler and seconded by Kelly Mothershead. The Motion Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Altman, Butler, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy

d Memorandum of Agreement w/United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency

City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated that the purpose of this agenda item was to approve the 287(g) Task Force Agreement between the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency and the New Port Richey Police Department. She then introduced Police Chief Robert Kochen who then presented the item to Council. He stated the State of Florida recently passed a series of immigration laws that require all Florida Sheriffs and Chief Correctional Officers of the State to enter into the 287(g) Task Force Agreement with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. Moreover, Florida Law now requires all local communities to cooperate with federal immigration officials with their efforts to enforce the immigration laws of the United States. To comply with the spirit of Florida's Immigration Laws and to fully cooperate with United States Immigration Officials, Florida municipalities statewide are entering into the 287(g) Task Force Agreement. Currently all the Sheriffs have entered into the task force agreement and many municipalities across the Tampa Bay region are entering into the task force agreement. This agreement will allow selected and trained New Port Richey Police Officers, and selected Pasco County Sheriff's Office Deputies, to detain and arrest (subject to Federal proceedings) any criminal illegal aliens or any illegal alien(s) that we come across in our community. The agreement also outlines other powers that trained New Port Richey Police Officers will have as it pertains to illegal immigrants in our community. The Pasco County Sheriff's Office is using a countywide database for all agencies on the consolidated CAD/RMS system to access information on violent criminal aliens in our area or jurisdiction. This agreement will enhance the New Port Richey Police Department's ability to assist the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency's enforcement of Federal law and will ensure that we are complying with Florida's Immigration Laws. Upon opening the floor to public comment, no one came forward therefore Mayor Davis returned the floor to Council. Councilman Butler stated the MOA has no State basis for us to enter into this agreement. He then shared spoke regarding the Fourth Amendment, us being compelled to do the work of the Federal government, and the data sharing component. He stated whoever makes the motion to add that the City Manager and Police Chief work to make sure accountability and transparency standards are attached to the agreement. City Attorney Driscoll stated what he recommends based on State law is to approve the item as presented and if there is any additional information they want the City Manager or Police Chief to provide to be as a separate vote at a separate time. He would not put any conditions on the approval at this time. He stated the Attorney General made it clear that there would be enforcement actions against communities that do not adopt this and support this and one of those remedies which Councilman Butler referred to is removal from office and the Governor does has broad authority to do this as well as fines. He stated the Statute provides that all Sheriffs enter into this agreement due to the correctional institutions. He stated we do not have the authority to override State Statutes. He stated the City is expected to do its "best effort" according to this issue. Motion was made to approve the item as presented.

Motion made by Kelly Mothershead and seconded by Matt Murphy. The Motion Passed. 4-1. Ayes: Altman, Davis, Mothershead, Murphy Nays: Butler

15 Communications

Councilman Altman spoke regarding the Bill Miller dance night last night at the Chasco Fiesta. He

stated he is grateful we are honoring the Native American people. He also spoke regarding the kid zone. He also spoke regarding the kids Science Museum. He also spoke about Congressman Bilirakis and the Senior Community Center. He stated we have not given direction to the City Manager regarding the project. He stated there would be no operating cost to the city. Councilman Altman spoke regarding the costs for Chasco and in-kind services. He spoke about the crowds at Railroad Square. He spoke regarding the comments made by Ms. Cash regarding the Rio Drive sidewalks. He also spoke about Schwettman. Councilman Altman also spoke regarding the City's financial situation. Councilman Murphy stated the parade last Saturday was great. He did get the PPT for the Pasco County traffic analysis and he will pass it along to the rest of Council. He also spoke regarding Schwettman. Councilman Butler also spoke regarding Schwettman and an Interlocal Agreement. Councilman Altman and Butler then held a discussion regarding this matter. Deputy Mayor Mothershead read her thoughts on her journey over the last three years. Mayor Davis thanked Deputy Mayor Mothershead for her service. He also spoke regarding Schwettman. City Attorney Driscoll and City Manager Manns also thanked Deputy Mayor Mothershead for her service.

16 Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, upon proper motion, the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Judy Meyers, MMC, City Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Initialed: \_\_\_\_\_