

**City of Port St. Lucie**  
**City Council / City Staff Workshop**  
**Meeting Minutes**

121 SW Port St. Lucie  
Blvd.  
Port St. Lucie, Florida  
34984

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor

Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, District IV  
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I  
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II  
Anthony Bonna, Councilman, District III

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**Thursday, February 23, 2023**

**8:30 AM**

**Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso  
Blvd**

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**1. Meeting Called to Order**

A Special Workshop of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on February 23, 2023, at 8:38 AM, at the Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

**2. Roll Call**

Council Members Present:

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor  
Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor  
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman  
Dave Pickett, Councilman  
Anthony Bonna, Councilman

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Martin lead the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. Public to be Heard**

Mayor Martin called on those who signed up to speak:

1. Diane Goldberg, 6470 NW Volucia Drive, spoke in favor of the retention ponds having living shorelines, spoke against rezoning the agricultural properties to residential, and suggested swapping land with the state for the Stormwater Treatment Areas to improve water quality.

Mayor Martin stated that staff will be revisiting the projects to maximize funds and

provide the best options. She explained development rights were given upon annexation of the land in the southwest area.

## 5. Workshop Business

### 5.a Smart & Connected City: Hear an Update from St. Lucie Public Schools and Indian River State College

[2023-179](#)

Dr. Jon Prince, Superintendent of St. Lucie Public Schools, spoke about his childhood, why he became a teacher, and his responsibilities as Superintendent. He presented a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed the mission and guiding principles of the St. Lucie Public Schools, the district rankings, as well as the graduate rankings and rates. He noted the awards and recognitions received by the St. Lucie Public Schools, in addition to discussing future growth and revitalization. He presented the design of the new "DDD" High School, showed a brief video of the site, and highlighted the programs to be offered.

Dr. Prince responded to Council's questions and comments regarding bus drivers and routes, reading scores, and the lack of socialization and communication. Councilwoman Morgan reminded the bus drivers that all City streets are now 25 mph and Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that Dr. Prince meet with Chief Bolduc to strategize on the bus stops and keeping people from parking on private property.

Andrew Treadwell, President Indian River State College (IRSC) Pruitt Campus, provided a PowerPoint presentation and noted the decrease in college enrollment and the increase in student loan debt nationwide. He presented the mission of IRSC, student enrollment and demographics, and recent fiscal accomplishments and partnerships. He discussed and presented conceptual photos of the USA Diving International Complex, Baseball/Softball Complex, Nursing Expansion, Indiantown Charter High School, and Eastmen Advanced Workforce Training Complex.

Mayor Martin stated she was excited for the skilled trades and that everyone should know about these training programs. Mr. Treadwell indicated they could use some promotional help. Mr. Treadwell also stated "The Promise" initiative has been successful but any promotion by the City would help get the message out. Mayor Martin indicated the City could assist via its media platforms.

Mr. Treadwell responded to Council's questions and comments

regarding student selection, getting students to work with their hands, and expanding the campus. Mr. Treadwell indicated IRSC is considering some large tracts of land near its main campus. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the City has a limited amount of land in Southern Grove and suggested that Mr. Treadwell have a discussion with City Manager Merejo.

Mr. Treadwell concluded his presentation by discussing what was on the horizon for Indian River State College and inviting Council to take a tour of the campus. Council thanked Mr. Treadwell for his presentation and for what IRSC is doing for the community.

(Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin called a break at 10:21 AM and the workshop resumed at 10:48 AM.)

At this time, Heath Stocton, Director of Public Works, provided a Powerpoint presentation on the Public Works Department High Impact Plan. (Clerk's Note: This presentation was originally scheduled for February 22, 2023.) Mr. Stocton reviewed the department's goals and related priorities, discussed their current beautification projects, and spoke to the status of Anthony Sansone Sr. Drive and Tom Mackie Boulevard. He noted staff successfully negotiated a traffic signal agreement with Mattamy, which includes each party's responsibilities for intersections along Village Parkway and Becker Road. Mr. Stocton stated the Hogpen Slough Boardwalk Trail is currently under design and unfunded for construction but grant opportunities are optimistic. He indicated they were still seeking grant funding for the Village Green Drive Corridor, which is the top ranked project on the Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) complete street list.

Mr. Stocton provided an update on the Port St. Lucie Boulevard South project with plans for completion in December 2023. He stated the next phase from Alcantarra to Paar is on DOT's 5-year work plan for funding in fiscal year 2025, which starts in July 2024. He noted that DOT will be restarting its reimbursement program now that funding is available. He indicated the last phase from Paar to Becker is theoretically unfunded on the 5-year work plan; however, there is verbal confirmation from the TPO that it is funded in fiscal year 2028, which would begin in July 2027. He said if Council chooses to fund the project for reimbursement, at an estimated \$30 million, the project could be accelerated to begin construction in late 2025.

Mayor Martin stated it would be great to accelerate the last phase of Port St. Lucie Boulevard and use the money coming from Midway Road, as it will be taken off the TPO project list, in concert with the \$11 million they have earmarked and set aside. She expressed it would be best to get this done sooner rather than later because of the traffic.

City Manager Merejo indicated he spoke with Peter Buchwald, Executive Director, TPO, who stated the request needs to be submitted before the end of December 2023. City Manager Merejo stated he would meet with Mr. Stocton and Mr. Buchwald to make sure they are on the same page. Mr. Stocton indicated he would review the list in July for any other projects that could be submitted for funding and the Summer Workshop might be the time to have another conversation.

Mayor Martin expressed her frustration with the County and the TPO funding. Ms. Parmelee inquired if the Mayor was looking for a long range transportation planning funding conversation with Peter Buchwald and a presentation at the Summer Workshop, which would give staff their roadmap for funding opportunities. Mr. Stocton suggested combining the TPO list with the mobility plan discussed yesterday. Mayor Martin stated it would be great to have that list with an in-depth conversation. Ms. Parmelee recommended the list include the TPO funding, the mobility funding, and other grant funding,

Vice Mayor Caraballo wanted the City to be prepared for future funding and suggested plugging in the projects, designs, studies, etc., for 20 to 30 years into the future for a long range CIP. City Manager Merejo stated that St. Lucie West Boulevard was the top priority for funding and will be on the list. Mr. Stocton indicated they already have a comprehensive list of roadways requiring funding in five years.

Mr. Stocton provided the status of other projects the department is working on. He noted the estimated commencement date for Phase 3 of Floresta Drive is September 2024. He also discussed dredging, water quality improvements, stormwater infrastructure, and the swale rework program.

Mr. Stocton stated they were having good success with recruiting highly educated, trained, and experienced employees to key leadership roles. Mayor Martin stated that it shows, as the talent on the team is outstanding. Mr. Stocton reviewed and discussed staff projections and equipment, at this time.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the frequency of pressure cleaning/sealing sidewalks. Mr. Stocton stated it was site specific depending on the area, but it would be nice to have a schedule. Mayor Martin stated this and other efforts should be more proactive in order to maintain the levels of service as the City grows, which is her goal for the organization over the next four years.

Councilwoman Morgan stated the Crosstown overpass at I-95 needs to be cleaned. Mr. Stocton stated it was owned and maintained by the DOT, but they will inquire with DOT and TPO about cleaning all overpasses/bridges.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about illegal dumping. Mr. Stocton stated they focus on the commercial areas, as the Solid Waste team works the residential aspect. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked the City Manager to budget for a clam truck or any equipment needed for the collection of illegal dumping and also suggested signage.

Vice Mayor Caraballo requested the total amount for the construction of and match for Hogpen Slough, to which Mr. Stocton stated he would get that information. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she was good with accelerating the last phase of Port St. Lucie Boulevard.

Mr. Stocton indicated that last year the City received \$6.5 - \$7 million in impact fees and they are looking at \$12 million in mobility fees this year. Mayor Martin stated they should be capturing all of the funds coming to them to address all of their infrastructure needs going forward. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the Interlocal Agreement will need to be done again in four years, so they need to continue providing an equitable share back to the residents.

City Manager Merejo stated he has never been a supporter of selling property. He said when it comes to transportation long term, they need to do a visioning plan on what the City will look like in 100 years and start securing those locations/right-of-ways. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested having a discussion at the Strategic Planning Session on quality infrastructure and long-term comprehensive planning for transportation in the future. Mr. Parmelee stated that might be a good breakout conversation to have, as Dr. DeLaney's knowledge would be helpful and suggested Council discuss this in their interviews with Dr. DeLaney.

**5.b** Hear the Police Department High Impact Plan and Staffing Update

[2023-221](#)

Chief John Bolduc presented a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed the High Impact Plan for the Port St. Lucie Police Department. He noted they received 160,000 calls for service and issued 51,000 traffic citations last year.

Chief Bolduc discussed the implementation of District 5. He recommended another 5-year plan to determine how many officers will be needed as time progresses and District 5 is built out. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she supported rolling into another plan, as they need to hire more officers and continue to grow their Police Department.

Councilman Picket asked if District 5 had five officers and if it was fully implemented. Chief Bolduc indicated the original plan was to have 24 officers, 6 sergeants, and 1 lieutenant, and currently there are 12 officers in District 5. Mayor Martin stated these officers were borrowed from District 3, to which Chief Bolduc explained there were vacancies throughout the organization. He stated they needed to continue analyzing their calls for service to determine how many officers in total will be needed in the future. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested that Planning, Public Works, and the Police Department be in communication regarding future plans, etc.

Chief Bolduc provided the status of the Police Training Facility. Council and staff discussed whether the facility should be two or three floors. City Manager Merejo stated he would look at the foundation and budget for a possible third floor without delaying the project.

Chief Bolduc discussed the 25 MPH initiative, various education initiatives, and the slight decrease in traffic crashes.

Chief Bolduc reviewed the staff projections for the Police Department. He indicated there are 17 openings and that 16 officers will be ready for those positions. Mayor Martin stated they have not been proactive enough in recruiting officers and questioned the number of officers depicted in the graph versus the budget book. Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated that Dr. Moore with IRSC had them focus on workforce training, manufacturing, and industrial, and suggested having them assist with the recruitment of officers.

Council discussed and inquired how the \$400,000 was utilized. Chief

Bolduc stated it was to be used for additional FTE's and agreed they need a better plan. He indicated they have placed ads in newspapers and magazines but a majority of the \$400,000 remains. Council discussed the current challenges with recruiting police officers and offered some suggestions, but stated the City should not be at the bottom of the Officer to Population Ratios list.

Chief Bolduc reviewed the education, age range, years of service, and demographics of the sworn officers in the department, noting that 14 officers are in the DROP program and it cost \$196,739 to hire an officer with a vehicle. He explained the hiring issues hurt the organization as there is a low relief factor for injuries, sickness, etc. He indicated they would need a total of 315 officers to get the department to a ratio of 1.4, which would be 27 new officers at \$3.4 million. He stated it would take \$26.7 million without vehicles and \$41 million with vehicles to get to the average. Chief Bolduc asked the Council if they wanted more recruiters and if they wanted to enhance their ratio number, so that he can present a plan for the growth of the department. Mayor Martin indicated the direction from Council to provide both was given at their October meeting and is what they should have been discussing today.

Council voiced their comments and concerns at this time. Councilman Bonna stated his goal is to make sure they have a plan in the immediate future to fill every vacancy for every allocated position. He said they need a long term plan to figure out how to chip away at the ratio, keep up with the growth, and make things a little better each year.

Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested approving two recruiters today and requested a plan on how they were going to reach the 1.4 ratio and how the \$400,000 will be utilized.

Mayor Martin expressed her concerns with losing leaders who have been with the City for a long time, as it goes to the morale and stability of the organization. She noted that five people will be leaving in 2025 according to the DROP sheet.

City Manager Merejo stated he would meet with Chief Bolduc regarding recruiters, the numbers, and a plan. He indicated he has started interviewing commanders and his goal within the next 30 to 60 days will be to decide if they will be looking inside or outside the organization for their next Chief of Police. He stated they have a great team of officers and they want to keep that relationship with the community in place.

He said they will come back with a plan.

Chief Bolduc presented the ad that was placed in the New York Post. Council suggested placing ads on Facebook and social media platforms for police officers, using fewer words in the ad, and leaving out the salary.

Mayor Martin stated she wanted to see a more robust plan with recruitment and recalled the suggestion of going to military bases. She said they need to streamline the hiring process and get the right balance. She inquired about the number of turnovers and asked why they were losing seasoned officers and SWAT team members.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the morale in the department and asked for ideas on how to improve it. Mayor Martin stated that morale would be increased by hiring and promoting more officers. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested an internal survey of the Police Department, so they can target their strategies based upon the need. Sarah Prohaska stated her department could assist with the survey.

(Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin called for a lunch break at 1:00 PM and the workshop resumed at 2:06 PM.)

**5.c** Hear the Utility Systems Department High Impact Plan

[2023-204](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was presented and discussed after item 5.d.)

Kevin Matyjaszek, Director of Utilities, discussed the success of succession planning within the Utilities Department and the status of achieving accreditation and improving the water treatment facilities. He presented a PowerPoint presentation on the High Impact Plan for FY 22/23 - 26/27 for Utilities and commented on the transition issues with the new billing software. He reviewed the septic to sewer conversions for the last five years, projected capital improvement projects for the next ten years, as well as this year's priorities. He also discussed future staff training and resident education.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the wells within the City, capacity for septic to sewer conversions and fee options, and the County's funding and plan for conversions. Mr. Matyjaszek discussed the monitoring and testing of wells in addition to grant funding and staffing available for conversions. City Manager Merejo indicated he had met with the County regarding a shared agreement for St. James and building a lift station, but the County did not have the funds at the time.



Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested sending a letter mentioning the utilization of ARPA funding for the urban service line extension. City Manager Merejo stated he will be meeting with the County Administrator and they will discuss same.

Councilwoman Morgan noted the pockets in the City, such as Hidden River who would love to be hooked up and the pocket of commercial off US-1 on the water, and suggested partnering with the County. Mayor Martin mentioned the new development off Becker Road. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that these pockets be included in the conversation.

Council and staff discussed leaching issues with the old and new septic systems. City Manager Merejo stated he was just advised that 13,889 septic tanks still exist, and if they were to convert 500 tanks per year, it would take 27 years to complete. City Manager Merejo noted the City of Port St. Lucie was probably the largest in the nation with the most septic tank conversions, which is quite an accomplishment.

Mr. Matyjaszek concluded his presentation discussing water quality and supply as well as staff projections. Council and staff discussed the septic to sewer conversions in more detail, progress of the hot spot grant program, and other funding sources and opportunities for residents.

Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned the 1.5% rate increase, to which City Manager Merejo explained the increase was recommended by the consultant and based on projects.

(Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin called a break at 3:53 PM and the workshop resumed at 4:09 PM.)

**5.d** Office of Solid Waste Update

[2023-196](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was presented and discussed before item 5.c.)

Mariana Feldpausch, Director of Solid Waste, provided a Powerpoint presentation on the new Office of Solid Waste, noting there are 85,073 residential units equating to 1,190,171 stops monthly. She reviewed the organizational chart as well as the responsibilities of the department. She discussed the complaints/requests and exclusive queuing for solid waste as well as the City's drop-off site at Cameo, including improvements and enforcement. She spoke to education on bulk waste, community meetings, and public events attended, stating

there has been enforcement through education and the tagging process. Ms. Feldpausch indicated the next steps are the budget, Disposal Interlocal Agreement, and capital improvements to the Cameo drop-off site. She reviewed the staff projections at this time.

Joseph Sandora, Senior General Manager with FCC, stated the contract with the City was signed in April 2022 and collection efforts started in July 2022. He said FCC has purchased 72 trucks, designed routes, purchased property, setup the office/shop, and hired and trained 100 employees. He discussed the decrease in complaints and the compliments received. Mayor Martin stated it has been a great transition due to the hard work by City staff and FCC.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the Cameo drop-off site. Council supported keeping Cameo as a drop-off site for bulk waste. Mayor Martin requested options and a plan on what the drop-off site should look like in the future. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that Ms. Feldpausch have one-on-one meetings with Council, to which Ms. Feldpausch agreed after she visits other sites in Florida. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she believes they need an actual building with infrastructure to keep the area beautiful, safe, and clean, as she does not want trash dumped there. Ms. Feldpausch suggested scheduling a tour of the Solid Waste Authority facilities for a great example.

Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned if there was an option for contractors to pay for drop-off usage, in an effort to stop the illegal dumping. Mr. Sandora stated there are several options with one being a roll-off container at the contractor's facility.

Councilwoman Morgan questioned whether the City wanted to get into the landfill business, as the contractors know to take their debris to the landfill. Ms. Feldpausch stated the education needs to expand to contractors as well. City Manager Merejo suggested mounting cameras at the sites where the illegal dumping is occurring. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the number of illegal dumping cases, to which Ms. Feldpausch stated she would have to get that information.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she was in favor of having a commercial code inspector and asked about commercial collection, to which Mr. Sandora stated that illegal dumping into the dumpsters continues and they have received some requests for lock bars.

Mayor Martin questioned how the Solid Waste Code Specialists would be structured in the organization, to which Teresa Lamar-Sarno stated they will clarify as to who does what. Mayor Martin requested that they monitor the contractual versus full-time employee situation.

**5.e** Southwestern Annexation Development Status Update [2023-199](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item will be presented at the Governmental Finance Corporation meeting on February 27, 2023.)

**5.f** Conservation Land Management Plan [2023-186](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was presented and discussed after item 5.c.)

Mary Savage-Dunham, Director of Planning and Zoning, provided a Powerpoint presentation and background on the eight conservation lands in the City of Port St. Lucie.

Stephen Mayer, Planner, Planning and Zoning, presented the summaries and opportunities for land parcels A through H. He discussed potential property improvements, recommended activities, and the 5-Year Property Management Action Plan. He also reviewed the fiscal considerations and staff recommendations.

Mayor Martin inquired as to where the initial deposit of \$925,000 was coming from, to which Ms. Savage-Dunham explained it was Council's discretion, as staff has estimated there is enough money in the Conservation Fund to begin year one of invasive species management. She noted the Tree Fund can only be used for planting. She explained they could move forward with the plan or break it into prioritized phases. Mayor Martin stated she was not willing to commit the General Fund to this project but requested prioritizing the projects and other funds. City Manager Merejo suggested reviewing the priority list at the end of each year and committing any surplus funds to the projects.

Kate Parmelee explained the land acquisition funds available and the potential for the future, as residents are wanting to experience more nature. Ms. Savage-Dunham stated if the goal is to manage and acquire, they will have to reevaluate their current funds.

Vice Mayor Caraballo commented on land for the ATV and remote airplane enthusiasts. She suggested working with Parks & Recreation and Public Works on keeping the trail system network as natural as possible, funding, education via conservation groups, stormwater management, etc. Council and staff discussed the removal of invasive

species and exotics from these parcels. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like the prioritization based on how quickly they can achieve site access, state and federal funding, stormwater and parks, trail access, etc., along with the associated dollar amounts.

Ms. Parmelee suggested that signage for these parcels be included in the initial budget, to make residents aware of the City's conservation efforts, to which Mayor Martin agreed.

**5.g** Hear the Communications Department High Impact Plan [2023-205](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item will be presented on February 24, 2023, at the City Council/City Staff Winter Workshop.)

**6. Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the workshop was adjourned for the day at 4:44 PM.

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Bryan Pankhurst, Acting City Clerk

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Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk