

# City of Port St. Lucie

## City Council Workshop

### Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

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Thursday, February 19, 2026

8:30 AM

PSL Community Center 2195 SE  
Airoso Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL 34984

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#### **\*Winter Workshop Day 2\***

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Winter Workshop Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL/CITY STAFF of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on February 19, 2026, 8:30 a.m., at the Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.

2. Roll Call

Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Shannon M. Martin

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo

Councilman David Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna, Sr.

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan (Arrived at 10:37 a.m.)

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Martin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

No members of the public signed up to speak during this portion of the Agenda.

5. New Business

Hear the Public Works Department High Impact Plan

(Clerk's Note: This Item was from Day 1 and heard at this time.)

Colt Schwerdt, Public Works Director, provided a summary of the Public Works High Impact Plan. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.) He discussed the various ways the department is implementing the City's Strategic Plan. Director Schwerdt commented on the potential utilization of Project Management Software in the future to improve communication. Mayor Martin inquired whether the software would be external or internal, to which Director Schwerdt advised that they were researching the OpenGov software to streamline their processes. Director Schwerdt expressed excitement over the groundbreaking of the new Public Works facility.

Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned whether the High Impact Plans were made available to the public through the City's website, to which Kate Parmelee, Deputy City Manager, indicated these documents were large and were more so, internal documents. Caroline Sturgis, Director, Office of Management and Budget, advised that the abbreviated version of the High Impact Plans and the Budget Book were available online through the City's Website. Ms. Parmelee suggested that every department includes their High Impact Plan on their department webpage. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that we continue to actively communicate with the public on the value of their tax dollars and savings, as they relate to the performance of the City's High Impact Plan.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked Director Schwerdt when he expected the new Project Management software program to be fully implemented, to which he responded that he would like to have the software established as soon as possible, but noted that the current proposal would take place within four to five months and hoped to be up and running by October. Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated that moving forward it would be helpful to include annual savings as part of the improvements made within the department, to which Director Schwerdt advised that they include the savings aspect within their proposal. He added that they accelerated communication between the departments for CIP and would be meeting bi-weekly. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested utilizing relatable terms to communicate with the public, to which Deputy City Manager Parmelee indicated that they would consider that. Director Schwerdt noted the need to adopt relatable terminology within internal departmental communication.

Mayor Martin complimented the departmental presentation and expressed her excitement to hear about streamlining the department processes. She asked for an updated timeline relating to the upcoming new Public Works facility, to which Director Schwerdt advised that by the end of February, they would be initiating advertising for construction. He stated that the item would likely come before the City Council for approval by the end of June.

**5.a** Hear the BMX Operations Update

[2026-189](#)

Bradley Keen, Parks and Recreation Director, provided an overview of the BMX Operations Update. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.)

Todd Burdick, BMX Track Operational Manager, thanked the City and staff for supporting the BMX Track Project and provided a thorough explanation of the BMX Track updates, Staff Research, Organizational Chart, Proposed Operations Schedule, Proposed Examples of Staff Scheduling, and discussed Potential Revenue Streams such as USA BMX programming, Track rentals, Rental Program, Additional programming &

Special Events, Concessions, Merchandise, and Sponsorships. Manager Burdick explained that Sponsorships were the leading revenue-generating.

Mayor Martin inquired when the sponsorship program would start and asked if the program should be completed so that once the Track is opened, the information is available. Mr. Burdick noted that, based on his experience, there would be several different tiers of sponsorship. Mayor Martin stated she would prefer not to have entities waiting to have the Sponsorship Program in place and requested that full sponsorship packages be provided, to which Mr. Burdick responded that he agreed with Mayor Martin's comments. Mayor Martin inquired if the Sponsorship Program would be ready by the time the Track opens, to which Mr. Burdick responded in the affirmative. Kristina Ciuperger, Assistant City Manager, commented that they were currently working on the Sponsorship Program details to present to the City Manager. Councilman Pickett suggested using Mr. Burdick's previous Track experience to recreate the City's Sponsorship Program. He agreed with Mayor Martin that the Sponsorship Program should be in place before we seek out sponsors for the Track. Director Keen noted the need to focus on the revenue-tight sponsors. Mr. Burdick discussed membership fees, equipment, and various revenue-generating fees.

Mr. Burdick discussed the additional progress made since the date of the video shown. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) He presented the various Track elements that are beyond what he has seen at other BMX Tracks.

Mayor Martin asked about the social media management for the Track, and Communications Director Sarah Prohaska answered that Social Media Manager Maureen Kenyon would handle it. She advised that Ms. Kenyon would work closely with Mr. Burdick and his team.

Mr. Burdick discussed the point-of-sale aspects of the Track and thanked the City Council.

Mayor Martin expressed excitement for the City's BMX Track and asked Mr. Burdick to elaborate on what BMX Programming will take on versus what the City would take on. Mr. Burdick advised that the USA BMX Programming typically would be lighter but noted that he would generate programs as they are needed. Mayor Martin inquired whether Mr. Burdick would be responsible for the day-to-day operations, and if USA BMX wishes to provide tournaments and racing, they would have to coordinate with Mr. Burdick to make it happen to which Mr. Burdick answered in the affirmative. He noted that he has researched some outside Sports

Associations that may potentially be user groups of the Track. Mayor Martin questioned whether Mr. Burdick's team would be responsible for the sales of concessions and rentals, to which Director Keen responded in the affirmative. Mr. Keen explained that, depending on which route they take with the concessions during the RFP (Request for Proposal) process, they may go with a vendor, and they would operate the concession stand, and indicated that Mr. Burdick's staff would operate the rental barn. Assistant City Manager Ciuperger mentioned that Mr. Burdick would also be responsible for providing coaching clinics. Mr. Burdick advised that he would like to have half or all his staff BMX certified coaches to have the ability to have internal coaching.

Mayor Martin asked about the parking concern previously raised by the City Council and inquired about what has been done since then to facilitate enough parking. She asked if the trailer parking issue had been addressed. Director Keen answered that they were in the process of addressing the trailer issue. He explained there was an area within the conceptual master plan that was viewed as a future parking lot at Tradition Regional Park; however, based on Phase 1 of the Tradition Regional Park, that area was not included in development. Director Keen added that they were currently exploring how they could at least get that area stabilized so that it can be used for RVs and trailers, if the program requires that parking to be utilized. Mayor Martin stated that this area needed to happen because they would likely hear complaints relating to the need for additional parking once the Track is open. She expressed disappointment because this issue had not been resolved yet and noted the need to accelerate the resolution of this problem. Assistant City Manager Ciuperger reported that they were in the process of potentially working onsite with someone, and that may be coming before the City Council to get this addressed. She indicated that the goal was to stabilize the area before the opening of the Track. City Manager Merejo explained they heard the City Council relating to their concern for parking and that they were trying to work with the current contractor that was there for Mattamy; however, the City is now having to do it on their own to get this area stabilized before the Track opens. Mr. Burdick noted that the only types of events that would require this type of parking would be state or national events, and based on their schedule, the Track would not be hosting one of those events within the first year of operation. He stated he would not anticipate a major event until 2027.

Councilman Pickett was happy to hear the update relating to the parking issue previously discussed and asked about the placement of cameras based on future BMX events. Mr. Burdick answered that BMX usually brings their own filing crew for their events.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed her experience when she first visited Rock Hill Track in South Carolina and asked Mr. Burdick to explain why he should coach. Mr. Burdick indicated he was a former world BMX champion and noted he was in the Texas BMX Hall of Fame and has been doing this for all his life. Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed the maintenance of the Track and gave kudos to the department and Mr. Burdick. She noted that the City would be running this Track with fewer staff members than those in Rock Hill's Track, to which Mr. Burdick answered it would be a few less staff members. Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated the need to cross-train all Track staff members and agreed with Mayor Martin and Councilman Pickett that the City should have a full Sponsorship Program before the Track opens. She asked that the City Attorney's Office work closely with Mr. Burdick and the Parks and Recreation Department to come up with the Sponsorship Program. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested modeling Rock Hill's Hospitality Tax, Concessions, Ticket Sales, and RV Parking. Mr. Burdick noted Rock Hill's level of hospitality and noted that he would like to foster that at this Track.

City Manager Merejo indicated he has asked Stephen Okiye, Finance Director, to research the Hospitality Tax and provide a presentation to the City Council in the future. He added that he looked forward to a friendly competition in the future.

Vice Mayor Caraballo and Director Keen commented on BMX being a family-oriented sport.

Mayor Martin suggested that the areas of Tradition Regional Park be utilized for more parking, as FPL prohibits use underneath their powerlines. She stressed that this Park should be an adaptive all-wheel park.

A break was called at 10:13 a.m., and the meeting resumed at 10:37 a.m.

(Clerk's Note: Councilwoman Morgan arrived during this portion of the conversation.)

**5.b** Hear the Police Department High Impact Plan

[2026-192](#)

Leo Niemczyk, Chief of Police, provided an overview of the Traffic, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Safety strategy updates and focused on crime statistics. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.)

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if Walmart prosecuted its shoplifters, to which Chief Niemczyk responded in the affirmative if the value was more

than \$25. He advised that they are not prosecuting juveniles.

Mayor Martin and Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed domestic violence and assisting those dealing with mental health crises.

Chief Niemczyk provided an update relating to the Police Training Center and the Real-Time Public Information Center.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee thanked State Representative Overdorf for his support in expanding the Drone First Responder Program.

Mayor Martin inquired about the status of the Pilot Red Light Camera Program, to which Chief Niemczyk answered that the item would come before the City Council by March 2026.

Councilwoman Morgan discussed e-bikes and golf carts. Chief Niemczyk indicated they were proactively enforcing safety, but they were currently outnumbered. Councilwoman Morgan noted the need to be proactive about establishing a City Ordinance.

Mayor Martin spoke regarding the ability to enforce the ordinance, and she suggested a City-wide public Golf Cart safety information session.

Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested the use of temporary motorized pathways.

Councilwoman Morgan suggested partnering with local golf cart vendors and the school district to educate the public on golf cart safety.

**5.c** Hear the Utility Systems High Impact Plan [2026-191](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was not presented based on Council discretion.)

**5.d** Village Green Drive Corridor Revitalization Update [2026-151](#)

Tom Salvador, CIP and Sales Tax Project Group Manager, presented the City Council with Village Green Drive Corridor Revitalization update. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.)

Stef Matthes, Senior Vice President at Culpepper and Terpening Inc., provided an overview of the project history and funding. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.)

Vice Mayor Caraballo gave kudos to the project team for securing grant funding for this project. Deputy City Manager Parmelee added that the grant funding helped reduce the burden on the general funds. Vice Mayor

Caraballo thanked Congressman Mast's office for its support in this project.

Mr. Matthes discussed existing conditions, the three distinct segments, landscape and streetscape for Village Green Drive.

Mr. Matthes engaged the City Council to discuss the roundabout configuration proposed for the Spanish Lakes entrance to improve safety and traffic.

Mayor Martin asked what the difference was between the two roundabout options as it relates to the improvement of truck access to the north industrial area, to which Mr. Matthes explained that the oval roundabout would force trucks to exit and travel south. Mayor Martin expressed support for the peanut roundabout.

Councilman Pickett agreed to support the peanut roundabout.

Councilwoman Morgan stated she was supportive of the peanut roundabout, even though she did not like the name "peanut".

Councilman Bonna voiced support for the peanut roundabout and inquired if there was a reason why these roundabouts are not utilized in South Florida, to which Mr. Matthes indicated these were new concept roundabouts in the United States.

Vice Mayor Caraballo advised that she was in support of the peanut roundabout. She expressed concern over the trucks not driving over the roundabout and suggested an increase in signage for the public to utilize the roundabout properly.

It was the consensus of the City Council to utilize the Peanut Roundabout option for the Roundabout proposed at the Spanish Lakes Entrance to improve and calm traffic.

Mr. Matthes discussed the two options for the on-street parking on the north side of Walton Road to support the Hogpen Slough Boardwalk project.

It was the consensus of the City Council to utilize the Reverse Angle Parking option for on-street parking on the north side of Walton Road to support the Hogpen Slough Boardwalk project.

Councilwoman Morgan inquired if there was an opportunity to create a

buffer between the parking and the sidewalk, to which Mr. Matthes indicated they would provide a wider sidewalk to allow residents to utilize the outside of the sidewalk rather than using the inside of the sidewalk.

Mr. Matthes provided the City Council with an update on Segment 3 to align with the recently announced stadium project and event traffic needs.

It was the consensus of the City Council to approve the Stadium Coordination changes made to Segment 3, to align the recently announced stadium project and event traffic needs, as presented.

Councilwoman Morgan inquired if there was any way to include a buffer between the road and the sidewalk, to which Mr. Matthes explained they were strongly considering a green-paved concrete area adjacent to the roadway as a designated bike lane. She expressed concern over bike accidents on the designated bike lane, to which Mr. Matthes explained they have plans to address it by adding an e-curb that has a sloped face, which is easier for a bicycle to travel upwards or downwards. Mr. Matthes explained that the grass buffer would be difficult to maintain.

Councilman Pickett asked if there would be electrical power in the recreation area, to which Mr. Matthes indicated that the engineering team would provide power to certain areas. He questioned if there was intent to convert the area to a living shoreline, to which Mr. Matthes indicated that they would provide a retaining wall, and based on where that goes, they may be able to place a living shoreline at the bottom. Councilman Pickett and Mayor Martin expressed appreciation for the bioswale.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed speed statistics in Village Green Drive, to which Mr. Matthes indicated they were implementing traffic calming measures by including raised midblock crosswalks and different types of median treatments.

Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed excitement about the bioswale and the improvements at Hogpen Slough. She noted that the improvements would assist in improving the water quality. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if there were plans to retest after the septic-to-sewer conversions, to which Kevin Matyjaszek, Utilities Director, responded in the affirmative and stated there was interest in re-testing the area. He explained they were still discussing how to convert the remaining business from sewer to septic. Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed the need to work toward converting the remaining commercial and residential properties. She asked when the City Council would discuss the Village Green Master Plan as a whole.

Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo and noted that the revitalization was not just the roads. She added that there were issues with older buildings. Mayor Martin commented on the need to focus on the aesthetic of the buildings and what the City can do to incentivize the septic-to-sewer commercial conversions. She stated that there needed to be a broader discussion because it was about the entire CRA and not just one section of the Agency.

Jennifer Davis, Community Redevelopment Agency Director, agreed with Mayor Martin and Vice Mayor Caraballo and noted that the revitalization of Village Green Drive also included everything around it. She explained that it was the plan to continue the revitalization and that they should expect to see items come before the City Council.

Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed fear over the City Council piecemealing over the development of Village Green Drive.

Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo and noted that for a long time, the City Council has heard communication over developer interest, but expressed concern over not knowing what that looked like. She stated she did not need to know every detail but it was important to know the timeline due to the soccer stadium build-out and Request for Proposal for the hotel. Mayor Martin indicated that the focus was not just on the soccer stadium but on the true revitalization of that entire area. She expressed the need to be responsive to the 2020 Master Plan.

Vice Mayor Caraballo noted that the City controls the Walton & One area, but the Village Green Corridor was privately owned. She asked to know if there was a desire to do an overlay of any kind to avoid pressure.

Director Davis stated that she would provide the City Council with a timeline for the implementation and added that the Request for Proposal for the hotel went out this week.

Mayor Martin provided closing statements and thanked Mr. Matthes.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked for electric power at the Boardwalk to be added, to which Mr. Matthes indicated they would make sure there's power at the Boardwalk.

Ms. Davis indicated that they were planning to add restroom facilities.

A lunch break was called at 12:03 p.m., and the meeting resumed at 1:05 p.m.

**5.e** Community Redevelopment Agency Project Updates[2026-181](#)

CRA Director Davis, announced that the following month, they would have the Annual CRA Report, and it would be provided to the City Council during the March 23, 2026, meeting. She provided the City Council with an overview of the CRA Project Updates. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.)

Councilman Pickett inquired if there was any agreement relating to the use of the parking spaces at the Botanical Gardens, to which Director Davis indicated it was always intended to have shared parking for the facilities. She discussed the business hours of the Botanical Gardens.

Director Davis stated they were researching transportation service options, such as a trolley system for the east side. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they needed to complete modeling for weekend traffic. Director Davis and the Council discussed Bridge Plaza and mentioned it would be a learning curve for residents to learn where to park when visiting the Boardwalk. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested using Reverse Slanted Parking along Veterans' Memorial Parkway, to which City Manager Merejo indicated the suggestion would need to be evaluated by a consultant. Director Davis stated they would research the existing right-of-way and what it would allow. Mayor Martin stated the need to research parking needs during the off-season and on season of snowbirds. City Manager Merejo stated that they will likely be surprised with the amount of parking, specifically at Veterans' since that location may be under-utilized. He stated the challenge would be moving people; if they did not wish to walk, then the City would have to implement a trolley system.

Director Davis provided an update on the Port District Branding.

Mayor Martin discussed Bridge Plaza's aesthetic and asked what sort of incentives could be used to update the plaza. Director Davis indicated they were currently at a pivotal moment to pursue projects and invest with the new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue. She explained they would be working with Neighborhood Services there was a commercial façade program they'd like to pursue.

Mayor Martin noted that the opportunity to revitalize the area was now before the restaurant was built and suggested incentives to upgrade Bridge Plaza.

Councilwoman Morgan agreed with Mayor Martin and noted the need to bring a facelift to Bridge Plaza. She requested information relating to Bridge Plaza being up to City Code and, if they were not, bringing them up

to Code. Director Davis stated that they would work with Planning and Zoning to check on the site plan.

Mayor Martin pointed out the aesthetics of the Walgreens across the street after the removal of the "1 Hour Photo" and stated the need to make it look better. Director Davis stated that she would be bringing a brand presentation to the City Council.

Vice Mayor Caraballo advised that there were complaints from businesses within the plaza and indicated that the Code Enforcement had gone to enforce what they could enforce in the plaza. She stated the need to have a whole conversation, not just Bridge Plaza, but the full Revitalization of Port St. Lucie Boulevard, as well as the east side. Vice Mayor Caraballo voiced the need to work with Planning and Zoning on how they plan to deal with these properties. She suggested a thorough City Council presentation relating to the entire revitalization opportunity for Bridge Plaza. Vice Mayor Caraballo noted the need to possibly discuss this with the Planning and Zoning Department and the City Attorney's Office to find out if these areas can provide incentives to be grandfathered in.

Mayor Martin stated there was no way to not work within the confines of the space; these areas are already located.

Mary Savage-Dunham, Planning and Zoning Director, stated that the area had an existing site plan and added that when they were initially approved, the parking ratio was different. She explained that if additional development occurred, the City would have to assess, but confirmed that so far, they could include a retail store.

Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned whether parking would be re-evaluated and if it would meet today's standards if Bridge Plaza were to be rebuilt, to which Director Savage-Dunham answered that it would depend on the details.

Director Davis provided an update on the Southern Grove Corridor. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if a portion of the TIF revenue was returned to the residents, to which Director Davis responded in the affirmative. She expressed the need to communicate that with the residents. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.)

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired how the RFPs were getting the word out, to which Director Davis advised that they were being advertised using OpenGov. She asked how the City knew they were getting the best applicants, if hoteliers did not think of utilizing OpenGov, to which Director

Davis answered that over the years, they've received several calls from hoteliers, and they were advised that a site would be available. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the need to utilize a broker and other ways to communicate information so that the City gets the best proposals.

Mayor Martin asked how the City was marketing the rest of the parcel, to which Director Davis stated it would be the same process, and evaluate each of the tracts. She indicated that they would be marketed by block. Mayor Martin inquired if the blocks would be marketed one at a time or comprehensively. She expressed concern that marketing one block at a time would never get built up. Director Davis stated that they will be phased through and would be a staggered process. She explained there was also a residential product.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed a previous conference she and Director Davis attended. She recalled that during the conference, they met with various companies that develop the commercial component on the first floor and housing on the top. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she believed that could be done and stated she wanted to make sure that when the City goes out for RFP they are going out far and wide, especially for the residential component.

Mayor Martin indicated that the residential aspect was not the focus, but rather the business, and she suggested having a consulting firm to duplicate the RFP process to ensure that the same approach implemented in Southern Grove is carried out in Walton & One.

City Manager Merejo indicated they would come back with a plan and have it presented to the City Council.

Director Davis indicated there was a broker engaged and that the City was at an advantage based on the way the site was developed. She stated it would be easy to change the use between the blocks. Director Davis advised that she bring additional information to the March meeting during the annual report presentation.

**5.f** Hear a Presentation on the Special Events Master Plan  
Update

[2026-196](#)

Nan Krushinski, Special Events Division Director, provided a welcome introduction for Carlos Perez of Perez Planning and Design and Jack Kardys of J Kardys Strategies.

Mr. Kardys provided an overview of the project's purpose, scope, and schedule and discussed the findings to date. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint

was provided at this time.)

Mr. Perez shared the findings from the data collection they completed.

Mayor Martin indicated that they still receive comments about the Christmas light locations throughout the City and limited food options.

Councilman Pickett questioned whether the data showed what type of music was being requested.

Mr. Perez stated that additional stakeholder meetings and surveys would likely be needed to obtain that information. He mentioned they inquired about a VIP experience and how much they'd be willing to pay for an elevated experience. Mr. Perez advised that the residents were comfortable with paying \$25-50 for the VIP experience.

Mayor Martin indicated the issue was that the fee associated with the VIP experience package did not align with covering the costs of a true VIP experience. She stated that residents want the elevated experience, but they did not want the fee associated with it.

Mr. Perez continued discussing the data collected and noted that they asked the public if the City should invest in developing a first-class special events venue, to which the majority of the public responded yes.

Mayor Martin inquired if the data collected included the Citizen Summit event recently held, to which Mr. Perez responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Perez stated they reviewed the Placer AI data for the top 6 City Special Events in the last year.

Councilman Pickett questioned if Placer AI recognized the individual based on the area code, to which Director Krushinski stated that the system would register you as a resident of the area after 30 days of being here, regardless of your area code.

Mr. Perez indicated that they would continue their data collection.

Mayor Martin questioned whether the goal was to come up with a Special Events Master Plan, to which Mr. Perez responded in the affirmative. He confirmed it would be finalized by July 2026.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if the Master Plan was to address what events the City is doing, or whether it was to identify where we are going. Mr.

Perez indicated that it would be to provide the strategies associated with special event, how to implement those strategies, and to investigate potential spaces.

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated that an analysis of what can be held at each of the spaces was critical and asked the question of “what can that venue actually accommodate.” She stated she has received many requests for more farmers’ markets throughout the City, especially in the Torino area.

Mayor Martin indicated it was predictable to expect music and food to be the top wants from the residents; however, the issue has been the high costs associated with music acts. She stated that the issue is that the City often records a net loss with these events.

City Manager Merejo stated that the fee for musical acts may be a component of why the City ends up recording a net loss.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she assumes the public would like to see big music talent coming in, but noted that being a challenge based on the venue spacing limitations of the venue. She stated the need to identify a space in the future to create an indoor venue to respond to the public survey.

Mayor Martin stated she did not see the City being able to produce a large-scale outdoor event based on there being too much residential in proximity. She stated the Council would have to consider providing an indoor space if that would be something they would want to consider in the future.

Councilman Pickett added that one component they can add could be to consider bringing in a musical act to enhance the already produced festival underway. He stated it was senseless to continue to bring music acts if the City continuously records a net loss with these types of events.

Mayor Martin noted it was challenging to compete with Miami, Orlando, West Palm Beach, and Tampa.

Director Krushinski provided the City Council with a Freedom Fest Update. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested an update on all Freedom Fest details when the event is near.

A break was called at 2:16 PM and the meeting resumed at 2:43 PM.

and an Update on The Saints Golf Course

(Clerk's Note: This item was not presented based on Council discretion.)

**5.h** Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Budget Outlook

[2026-047](#)

Caroline Sturgis, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, congratulated the City for its continuation in maintaining the Government Finance Officer Association Distinguished Budget Award Presentation for the 2025-2026 Adoptive Budget. She stated they received three different recognitions for performance measures, strategic goals and strategies, and another one for the budget process.

Mayor Martin thanked and congratulated staff.

Director Sturgis provided an overview of the City's outlook for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 and the General Fund. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.)

Ivy Ladyko, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, provided a high-level overview of key revenue sources, including the half-cent sales tax, stormwater, ad valorem revenue, and utility fees. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.) Deputy Director Ladyko discussed the changes to the mobility fees for Fiscal Year 2027, to which Mayor Martin noted that the decline in fees would impact the amount of money the City can bond for future projects. Deputy Director Ladyko discussed the Building Impact Fee Revenue Trend and the Parks Impact Fee Revenue Trend. Mayor Martin asked the public to take note that the City's collection does not closely cover the costs associated with building new infrastructure and parks. Director Sturgis commented on the high costs of building the new Public Works facility and the new Police Training facility presented the previous day. Director Savage-Dunham reminded the City Council that next year the City will begin the process to update the Parks and Law Enforcement Impact Fees. City Manager Merejo added that there was a notable struggle based on a decrease in revenue and an increase in capital improvement project costs. Chief Assistant City Manager Teresa Lamar Sarno reminded the Council that next year the City would have to renegotiate the interlocal agreement with the County relating to Mobility Fees. She advised that they have initiated one-on-ones with Council Members to start the conversation.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated it was important for the City to recognize that raising impact fees associated with growth is difficult and not popular. She indicated that the City was not charging enough for the associated impact fees.

Mayor Martin pointed out that the Road and Bridge Fund was at a deficit. She noted the need to review the numbers for the Stormwater Fund.

Deputy Director Ladyko concluded her presentation by discussing the Police Impact Fees.

Mayor Martin asked how much a bulletproof vest costs these days, to which Chief Niemczyk stated it was between \$1,000 to \$1,200. Mayor Martin inquired about the costs of a weapon, to which Chief Niemczyk responded that it costs around \$600.

Director Sturgis provided the City Council with a Fiscal Year 2026-2027 summary, new revenue sources, new operating expenditures, and funding gaps. She inquired with the City Council if they had any priorities during the budget presentation that should be considered and asked for City Council direction as it relates to the millage rate remaining the same.

The City Council did not vocalize any additional priorities.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked the City Manager Merejo to find a way to lower the millage rate. She indicated the need to discuss lowering the millage rate by a tenth of a mill and what it would look like in the future, along with a discussion of what projects would be unable to move forward as a result during the July meeting.

Councilman Pickett indicated that what was presented was to be expected. He indicated he would like to see the millage rate lowered and requested a future presentation to the City Council to demonstrate lowering the millage rate by a tenth of a mill.

Councilman Bonna shared that he believed that the City should consider continuing to lower the millage rate. He expressed the need to make decisions based on the current situation.

Councilwoman Morgan indicated the rising costs within the City and the need to adjust the budget. She noted the need to lower the millage rate and would be supportive of continuing the cutting of the millage rate.

Councilwoman Morgan asked for a couple of scenarios to be presented to the City Council.

Mayor Martin expressed concern over the \$500,000 in reserves to be used to cover the Crosstown Debt. She noted that the City will look to find ways to lower the millage rate.

It was the consensus of the City Council that the City Manager find ways to lower the millage rate.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the need to have a video explaining the audit process within the City.

Director Sturgis stated the need to have capital funding and corresponding operating funding.

Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed the need to further communicate with the public regarding the capital funding.

Mayor Martin touched on additional revenue and indicated the City puts it towards projects to reduce the millage rate, add needed staffing, and add money towards debt reduction. She added the need to also add that as a communication point to the public.

City Manager Merejo assured the City Council that he and the team would come back to a balanced budget and would continue to take their priorities into consideration.

Deputy Director Parmelee provided an update on the local business tax.

**5.i** Health Insurance Update

[2026-188](#)

Natalie Cabrera, Human Resources Director, introduced Dustin Kuehn, Senior Benefits Consultant/Vice President for Gehring Group/RSC, who provided an overview of the self-funded health plan that includes claims performance, current industry trends, cost mitigation strategies, local entity benchmark, and a 2026 timeline.

Mr. Kuehn stated they were currently out for RFP negotiations on the medical and prescription coverage.

Mayor Martin asked for the timeline relating to the RFP, to which Mr. Kuehn provided a timeline of expectations.

Mayor Martin inquired about the meaning of the 2023- 2024 surpluses as shown on slide 9, to which Mr. Kuehn indicated they were the premium equivalents, where they are set multiplied by the City's enrollment, and where the expenses were. Mayor Martin asked about the rebate system currently utilized, based on there not being a rebate in the last two years. Director Sturgis explained their process and how they review the actuals based on a fiscal year. Mr. Kuehn indicated that they track the premium

equivalence set by the actuary multiplied by the enrollment. Director Sturgis elaborated on the City's process and explained that last year, there were 1400 employees and budgeted that they would collect X amount of dollars from the 1400 employees; however, she noted that the City normally holds a vacancy rate of 10% to 11%, and during the vacancy, the City does not collect any premiums. She pointed out that there was a gap in the budgeting mechanism. Mayor Martin noted the importance of being transparent.

Mayor Martin requested information regarding the Health Insurance Rebate amount.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if Florida Blue and the Cleveland Clinic had reached an agreement, to which Mr. Kuehn indicated that the negotiations were still pending. Mr. Kuehn noted that they hoped for an agreement in the next few months. She complimented the consulting team for keeping the medical plan costs low. Vice Mayor Caraballo gave kudos to staff for creating incentive programs to keep employees healthy.

Director Cabrera indicated that they had 520 employees participate in the wellness program. Vice Mayor Caraballo noted the need to have a goal to increase participation every year.

Mayor Martin asked if the clinic vendor had initiated the RFP process, to which Director Cabrera responded in the affirmative and noted it started two days ago. She asked if the intent was to keep the clinic's current providers, to which Director Cabrera confirmed that it was the City's goal.

Mayor Martin stated that they concluded today's business and that they would listen to the Parks and Recreation Department's and Saint's Golf Course Update the next day.

**5.j** Hear a Review Regarding the City's Investment Portfolio. [2026-184](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was not presented based on Council discretion.)

**5.k** Provide a Review of the City's Debt Portfolio. [2026-179](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was not presented based on Council discretion.)

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

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Calleigh Nazario, Acting City Clerk

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Daisy Ruiz, Deputy City Clerk