

City of Port St. Lucie

Special City Council

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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Monday, September 25, 2023

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall

Budget Hearing *Meeting to follow the 5:30 PM CRA Meeting*

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on September 25, 2023, at 6:02 PM, at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie 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 noted the Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the preceding meeting.

4. Public to be Heard

Mayor Martin opened Public to be Heard. There being no comments, she closed Public to be Heard.

5. Second Reading of Ordinances, Public Hearings

5.a Ordinance 23-54, Public Hearing, An Ordinance Adopting the Budget Ordinance for the Fiscal Year (FY) October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024; Providing an Effective Date.

[2023-756](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 5b.)

The City Clerk read Ordinance 23-54 aloud by title only.

Caroline Sturgis, Director of OMB, entered the PowerPoint presentation provided in Item 5b into the record for Item 5a.

Mayor Martin opened the Public Hearing. There being no comments, she closed the Public Hearing.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to approve Ordinance 23-54. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

- 5.b** Ordinance 23-55, Public Hearing, An Ordinance Adopting the Ad Valorem Millage Rate for the Fiscal Year (FY) October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024; Providing an Effective Date.

[2023-755](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard prior to Item 5a.)

The City Clerk read Ordinance 23-55 aloud by title only.

Caroline Sturgis, Director of OMB, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Budget for FY 2023-24 and adoption by the City Council. She noted this was the second of two required public hearings. She stated the City Council will be asked to adopt the millage rate of 5.2 and FY 2023-24 Budget of \$709,326,449 by ordinance. Ms. Sturgis reviewed the objectives achieved, history of the City's millage rate, and property values & taxes. She also provided an example of the TRIM Notice, discussed the St. Lucie property tax bill, explained the City's solid waste fee, and reviewed the capital projects for FY 2024.

At this time, Ms. Sturgis read the required Truth in Millage (TRIM) statement into the record.

Mayor Martin opened the Public Hearing:

1. Debra Swanson expressed her disappointment and opposition to the current tax structure, millage rate, and spending being proposed.

There being no further comments, Mayor Martin closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Bonna commented on the millage rate and how the City has reduced it again this year. He also spoke to Port St. Lucie taxes compared to the County and other cities.

Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed her concerns regarding the public comments heard at the September 11, 2023, Council meetings and read through a list of recent infrastructure improvement projects, services and events that have utilized and saved City tax dollars. She suggested that the City aggressively share these highlights with the public, so they understand where their money is being spent.

Councilman Pickett addressed the garbage issue. He clarified and explained that Waste Pro told the City they were not going to continue to service Port St. Lucie, so the City had to seek a new provider which cost more. He stated he believes the City should put the question of twice a week pick-up on the ballot, and have the people vote as to whether they want to pay for it.

Councilwoman Morgan commented on how everything has increased in price and how some families only need trash service once a week. She recommended the public get involved sooner and show the City where it can make some budget cuts, as they are all for reducing the millage rate.

Councilman Bonna spoke to the recent solid waste comments. He stated he was for putting the question on the next regular ballot, because it is up to the residents to choose the best fit. He explained the City did not want to charge everyone an extra \$120, when those who have more garbage can purchase an extra container for \$72.

Mayor Martin commented on the efforts it took by all involved to request bids and negotiate a contract in a short period of time. She indicated other cities have had to change their solid waste contracts and service structures. She stated she was for a referendum and putting it out to the voters. However, it will cost at least 30% to 40% more for twice a week service and take a year to implement, so it would be cheaper and quicker to purchase a second container. Mayor Martin also discussed the City's growth and the cost to maintain or increase the level of service to keep the City safe, clean, and beautiful. She stated Council's priority has been to incrementally lower the millage rate every year, while still meeting the demands of their growing City.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to approve the largest tax reduction of any of Florida's twenty largest cities and further reduce their taxes by approving Ordinance 23-55. Vice Mayor Caraballo seconded the motion. Mayor Martin clarified this ordinance adopts the Ad Valorem Millage Rate for FY October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Sally Walsh, City Clerk

Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk