

# City of Port St. Lucie

## City Council / City Staff Retreat

### 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 24, 2022**

**8:30 AM**

**Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso  
Blvd**

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**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 February 24, 2022, at 8:32 AM at Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

**2. Roll Call**

Council Members Present:

Mayor Shannon Martin

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

Councilman Dave Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

(There was nothing heard in this section of the meeting.)

**4. Public to be Heard**

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after the Retreat Business Discussion was completed.)

No one signed up to speak for this section of the Agenda.

**5. Retreat Business**

- 5.a** Quality Education for All Residents: Hear Updates from St. Lucie Public Schools and PSL's Pruitt Campus at Indian River

[2022-190](#)

State College

Mayor Martin added Charter Review Amendment Discussion to the end of the Agenda.

Wayne Gent, Superintendent of St. Lucie County School Board, introduced staff members: Deputy Superintendent Jon Prince, Chief Academic Officer Helen Wild, Chief Operation Officer Terence O’Leary, Chief Information Officer Lydia Martin, and Executive Director of Facilities Marty Sanders.

(Clerk’s Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)

Mr. Gent discussed the graduation rates for St. Lucie Public Schools and the rates at which seniors are currently enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses. He also discussed the various Career and Technical Education Programs currently offered in various St. Lucie County High Schools. Mr. Gent presented the plan for “DDD” a new High School in the Crosstown area with an anticipated opening date of August 2025.

Councilman Bonna asked Superintendent Gent to discuss ways the School Board is addressing the lower reading and math levels due to Covid-19. Superintendent Gent explained they opened summer school programs last year for each school and for all grade levels. He explained that the program would continue for the next two years. Superintendent Gent advised they have additional tutoring programs and special programs to meet the needs of students.

Vice Mayor Caraballo thanked Superintendent Gent for the presentation and congratulated him.

Councilwoman Morgan discussed the reading levels. Superintendent Gent stated the Summer and Tutoring Programs will help with the reading challenges and anticipates volunteers can read with and work with students as they did before.

(Clerk’s Note: A short video was shown at this time)

Mayor Martin thanked Superintendent Gent for his service and stated she was excited to continue to work with Dr. Prince and the entire School Board team.

Andrew Treadwell, Indian River State College Pruitt Campus President, introduced Campus Director, Dr. Beth Amey. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) He presented lower National Community College enrollment rates and the major concerns due to the lower enrollment. Mr. Treadwell discussed the various accolades received by Indian River State College and the cost of tuition for different degree sought at the college. He discussed several new tools currently offered to students such as Adobe Creative Cloud, Bloomberg Finance Lab and Wolfram Research Tools as well as the College's partnership with U.S. Olympic Diving, Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Indiantown Workforce Charter High School. Mr. Treadwell discussed the Eastman Advance Workforce Training Complex and provided the data for Pruitt Campus Fall enrollment count based on zip code. He also spoke about the Indian River State College Veterans Center of Excellence at the Pruitt Campus as well as the School of Nursing Expansion set to start in Fall of 2023. Mr. Treadwell announced the Indian River State College Promise Program that offers tuition free Associate Degrees to all qualifying 2022 Public or Charter High School graduates.

Mayor Martin requested the information for the tuition free program be shared with the public. It was the consensus of the City Council to share Indian River State College's New Tuition Free Promise Program information with the public. Mr. Treadwell offered the City Council a tour of the College facilities and resources.

A recess was called at 9:33 AM, and the meeting resumed at 9:56 AM.

- 5.b** Hear a Presentation from Dr. Kim Delaney: "Lighting the Way to Port St. Lucie's Bright Future"

[2022-193](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)

Dr. Kim DeLaney, Director of Strategic Development and Policy, at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, discussed details regarding the City's past, present, and future. She discussed the City's Strategic Plan and provided data relating to keeping the City's statement to maintain a safe, beautiful, and prosperous City. Dr. DeLaney stated she would be focusing on the beautification aspect of the City's statement and discussed changing the trajectory of the City as it moves forward. She presented Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Planning and discussed The City Beautiful Plan to have the City reintroduce beauty, space, and order. Dr. DeLaney provided the historical background of

Daniel Burnham, an architect and director of the 1893 Chicago World Fair. She discussed the missing pieces such as beauty, space and order that did not exist in Chicago after the city burned down and how Mr. Burnham came up with the first Comprehensive Plan in the Country for the City of Chicago in the 1890s. Dr. DeLaney emphasized the need to have a park within walking distance based on the early results received from the Citizen Survey. She discussed creating a sense of arrival within Port St. Lucie and provided examples in other cities that already have a sense of arrival. Dr. DeLaney presented a few locations within the City where a sense of arrival can be created and discussed creating places of civic pride that provide dignity of public places. She discussed the need for complete streets and ways to improve traffic calming within the City. Dr. DeLaney also commented on street details and how these add value by focusing on lighting and landscaping such as street trees. She explained the importance of street trees as they create a sense of enclosure. Dr. DeLaney discussed defining the public realm in civic and private places such as the roadway dimensions and suggested finding commonalities within all roadways such as sense of enclosure, landscaping, lighting, and signage. She asked for consideration of pedestrian amenities when planning complete streets and suggested on-street parking, pedestrian protection, and sidewalks. Dr. DeLaney also discussed celebrating nature within the City and potentially buying land to conserve nature and provided several examples where the City can restore nature such as canal banks, drainage right-of-ways, rain gardens, and bioswales. Dr. DeLaney suggested a citywide tree planting program as it would restore nature and create bird habitats. She suggested many of these programs could be grant funded and provide an opportunity towards the City Beautiful Plan for Port St. Lucie. Dr. DeLaney gave ways to continue to have the City move forward and gave the Council different ideas to achieve beautification.

Councilman Pickett noted he would like the City to have a large and bold sense of arrival on the interstate like Daytona or PGA in Palm Beach.

Mayor Martin used Palm Bay as an example when discussing a sense of arrival.

Vice Mayor Caraballo requested an analysis for a street tree program that will target the already built sidewalks and evaluate with Public Works and Utilities Departments to ensure protection of the City's

assets and begin to evaluate areas where the City can add enhancements. Heath Stocton, Director of Public Works, advised that due to the measurement constraints placing trees in public right-of-ways would be difficult in areas that are currently getting retrofitted since there are powerlines and sidewalks. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested a community conversation to discuss tree planting on private property.

Mayor Martin discussed initiating a tree planting program along Port St. Lucie Boulevard where additional trees could be planted. Dr. DeLaney suggested that it may require the City to negotiate with the owners as the right-of-way is close on Port St. Lucie Boulevard.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like to see the Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful Committee target the homeowner directly to find out if they will agree to plant a tree on their property. She added she believed they would be more willing to do it if they are personally approached.

It was the consensus of the City Council to initiate a Tree Planting Pilot Program to address street beautification along Port St. Lucie Boulevard.

City Manager Russ Blackburn and Mayor Martin agreed that City signage is old and tired. They suggested updating City signage and City Hall. Mayor Martin suggested providing additional space for the Communications Department.

It was the consensus of the City Council to initiate a City Hall renovation and overall City re-branding to include City signage, logo, and statement.

Teresa Lamar Sarno, Deputy City Manager, advised Council would be hearing more information at the next Council Meeting regarding upcoming plans for the corner of Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Becker Road as well as the corridor study.

Utility Systems Department Plan Summary

(Clerk's Note: A presentation was shown at this time.)

Kevin Matyjaszek, Utility Systems Director, introduced staff members to Council and provided a high impact plan update for the Utility System Department. He reported the team is working towards accreditation for the Utility System Department and discussed septic-to-sewer conversions. Mr. Matyjaszek advised

they continue monitoring main and service line breaks as the number has increased throughout the years based on the City's growth and various contributing factors. He reported on the various priorities for the department and discussed staff needs projections for the year.

Councilman Pickett asked if there was an alternative system to replace the current grinder system, to which Mr. Matyjaszek stated it would be very costly to convert.

Councilwoman Morgan requested an update on septic-to-sewer conversions for the City and County properties bordering waterways and water quality.

The City Manager advised an update on septic-to-sewer and water quality would be given to the Council during the Summer Retreat.

Mayor Martin inquired about the Utility System capacity for the next twenty years, to which Mr. Matyjaszek reported they are currently upgrading West Port. He also discussed the plans for new various utility facilities to keep up with capacity for the new growth in the City.

Jesus Merejo, Chief Assistant City Manager, warned the Council they would likely get requests to provide services from neighbors in the north and south. He advised the City needs to focus on taking care of the City residents before providing services to additional local municipalities.

Councilman Bonna inquired as to how many septic systems exist in the City, to which Mr. Matyjaszek responded there are about 15,000 in the City's service area. Councilman Bonna asked about the lifespan of a septic system, to which Mr. Matyjaszek answered it depended on the usage and maintenance of the system.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed the City having a federal lobbyist. Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo in having a federal advocacy team.

It was the consensus of the City Council to obtain the City Manager's recommendation for a federal advocacy team for the City during the upcoming Summer Retreat.

A recess was called at 11:52 AM, and the meeting resumed at 1:02 PM.

- 5.c** Presentation Regarding Small Business Support from the Florida Small Business Development Center and the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce.

[2022-176](#)

Tom Kindred, Regional Director of the Florida Small Business

Development Center, provided an update and overview of the Small Business Development Center Program at Indian River State College. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) He discussed the impact the pandemic had on businesses and the impact their center had in the local business community. Mr. Kindred reported data for COVID-19 Relief and Recovery and gave an Economic Overview for the City of Port St. Lucie. He explained the historic and projected Small Business trends for the City of Port St. Lucie.

Terissa Aronson, President of the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, provided an overview and update of the Small Business Assistance Program offered by their organization. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Chamber staff provided Council Members with an empty wooden toolbox and various items to highlight the significance of their program. Katherine Cordero, Events Manager for the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, announced the various media partners they use to spread the word regarding their program. Chris Crutchfield discussed the Chamber's plan to host business workshops in the community. Nash Camacho discussed the Chamber's various monthly events and broadcasted shows. (Clerk's Note: A St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce commercial and Size Up Program video was shown at this time.) Margaret Mitchell reported on the Chamber's website and provided metrics on the level of engagement for their new website. The Council thanked Ms. Aronson for her presentation and continued partnership with the City of Port St. Lucie.

Mayor Martin asked for Council Members to paint or decorate their creative vision toolbox for presentation during Day 1 of the Strategic Planning Session.

#### Neighborhood Services Department Plan

Carmen Capezzuto, Director of Neighborhood Services, provided an overview of the Neighborhood Services Department High Impact Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2025. (Clerk's Note: A presentation was shown at this time.) He discussed various departmental priorities they wish to complete for the year. Mr. Capezzuto reported the creation of a new welcome guide for residents and provided staff needs projections for the upcoming year.

Mayor Martin and Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed the need to have proactive reports for neighborhood issues as Senate Bill 60 prevents any complainant to remain anonymous. City Attorney James Stokes reported legal staff was currently researching the language to aid code enforcement with the issue.

**5.d** Solid Waste Update[2022-178](#)

Mr. Carmen Capezzuto reported the time slot was intended for Waste Pro to provide a growth plan update but they declined. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) He discussed the City's growing customer base, service issues, concerns, and reviewed the various tasks they have asked of Waste Pro. Mr. Capezzuto reported on Waste Pro's performance metrics and discussed the various actions the City has taken to improve service. He discussed the City will be deploying employees to collect the yard waste that Waste Pro is unable to pick up in a timely fashion.

Mayor Martin noted that the City's action to deploy its own employees to collect yard waste would not cost the residents tax dollars. The City Manager explained Waste Pro was notified that the City would take action to pick up the yard waste and would be deducting the City's costs from their quarterly bill.

Councilwoman Morgan asked for an explanation of the current yard waste pickup requirement and if Waste Pro is picking up yard waste left in vacant lots, to which Mr. Capezzuto responded in the affirmative, as the yard waste is coming from a paying customer. He explained the reason for the large piles of yard waste was due to an unlimited contract. Mr. Capezzuto stated the City's current code says the debris must be cut to 4-foot lengths and must be 6-inches in diameter or less and neatly stacked. He explained the City never enforced the code and would be returning to those specifications to aid Waste Pro with their manual collection.

Mayor Martin stated the reason yard waste is being placed on empty lots is because Waste Pro fails to pick up the debris in a timely fashion. She added the homeowner was just taking care of their property since their grass may die if the debris is left there for several weeks.

The City Manager asked Mr. Capezzuto to explain the current code requirements, the amount and size of yard waste, and bulky waste. He also asked Mr. Capezzuto to reiterate the Solid Waste Task Force's recommendations. Mr. Capezzuto explained Waste Pro currently has an unlimited contract and there are no limitations for yard waste in the current code. He stated the Solid Waste Task Force's recommendation is for the City to move to 4 cubic yards per week. He explained the current code for bulky and/or construction waste of 2 cubic yards and those specifications match Waste Pro's contract for bulky and



construction waste.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if there was an opportunity to provide customers with a container for easier disposal of their yard waste.

Mayor Martin expressed concern in creating a code and not having proper enforcement.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated it would be difficult to move from unlimited to 4 cubic yards because people have lost their patience with the situation and suggested providing a container or use of bags.

Councilman Pickett agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo and stated he did not support moving to limiting the customer to 4 cubic yards during the Solid Waste Task Force meetings, as each person will have a different interpretation of what 4 cubic yards looks like.

Mr. Capezzuto explained the Solid Waste Task Force would like to change the language for bulky waste items to 3 to 5 pieces and that they plan to come to Council on March 21st with a set of recommendations. He stated one of the recommendations was to modify the City's Solid Waste Ordinance to restrict the ability of landscapers to leave yard waste on the curb after performing a service.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked where small landscaping businesses are currently taking yard waste for disposal, to which Mr. Capezzuto stated they would be required to take them to the landfill or an approved disposal site. She stated she would like to provide a convenience for landscape businesses to dispose their yard waste by utilizing the City's drop off locations

Mayor Martin explained Waste Pro would never be able to keep up with the growth of the City because they have not moved to an automated system that requires less workforce and until they make those changes, they will never be able to keep up with the City of Port St. Lucie.

It was the consensus of the City Council to have at least two waste haulers for the City and initiate conversations with solid waste vendors before the Waste Pro contract expires.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired what would be the legal allowability for the City to go out for request for proposals for the service, to which Mr.

Stokes stated he did not believe there was a restriction as to when the City would be able to start the request for proposal process. Mr. Capezzuto added it may be too early to start the process as the contract does not expire until September 30, 2025.

A recess was called at 3:03 PM, and the meeting resumed at 3:17 PM.

#### **Communications Department Update**

Sarah Prohaska, Communications Director, thanked the Council for addressing the need for additional space for their department and provided an overview of the department's priorities. (Clerk's Note: A presentation was shown at this time.) She discussed the need of an overall Citywide re-branding.

Mayor Martin stated she was in favor of the re-branding. It was the consensus of the City Council to undergo a Citywide re-branding.

Ms. Prohaska discussed the needs for a Brand Strategist to assist with marketing campaigns and graphic tasks for annual reports, welcome guides, and other long-term projects. She spoke regarding initiating a pilot program to replace the current street banner in at least one location to try out a digital banner. Ms. Prohaska discussed the website contract renewal and the utilization of subsites for various departments and facilities in the City.

Councilwoman Morgan agreed with the City need for re-branding and looking into digitalized banners.

Councilman Bonna discussed the need to allow residents to choose more than one option as to which platform they use to receive City information the most in future community surveys and inquired if that was possible, to which Ms. Parmelee responded in the affirmative and mentioned the Council customizes and approves the questions for the survey every November.

Councilman Pickett inquired about additional details for the digital banners, to which Avi Monina, Digital Media Production Coordinator, explained the digital banner would be like the current banner at the MIDFLORIDA Event Center but on a smaller scale and with possible measurements of 4 by 8 feet. Councilman Pickett inquired as to the placement of the first banner, to which Ms. Prohaska stated she preferred Floresta Drive and Port St. Lucie Boulevard. Councilman Pickett agreed with Ms. Prohaska on the location and mentioned that was the most logical location for the pilot program to start.

It was the consensus of the City Council to initiate a pilot program for digital banners throughout the City.

Mayor Martin discussed needing assistance with creating content on social media as she would like to continue to get information out on the regular basis but is unable to do it herself due to time constraints. Ms. Prohaska stated she needs a writer/editor for the communications department.

Vice Mayor Caraballo noted the need to look at the Council Office as its own department and potentially explore the idea to have an editor that works exclusively for the Council Office.

#### **MIDFlorida Event Center Update**

##### **MIDFlorida Update**

Linda McCarthy, Civic Center Director, provided an overview of the department's customer service rating and occupancy rate for the MIDFLORIDA Event Center. (Clerk's Note: A presentation was shown at this time.) She discussed the various priorities for the department for the year.

Councilman Pickett announced the major musical acts for the upcoming ZAM festival at the MIDFLORIDA Event Center.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed the possibility of the City coming up with a pass that provides a bite size portion at food establishments. Ms. McCarthy stated they plan on doing something similar at the upcoming Beer, Wine and Spirits Festival.

Ms. McCarthy discussed the various cultural event partnerships within the community.

#### **5.e Charter Amendment Discussion**

[2022-231](#)

City Attorney James Stokes discussed items that required charter review to align with Florida law.

It was the consensus of the City Council to approve the Charter Review for Section 3.09- Vacancies, Section 5.04- Elections, Section 3.10 Council Meeting Procedures, Section 3.11- Municipal Committees, Section 9.10- Publications of Ordinances, and Article XII- Planning and Zoning.

Mayor Martin requested additional information pertaining to the need for a City Auditor as discussed in Article IX- Powers of the City - Section 9.05 Investigations. She would like to know what this position does on the day-to-day basis before she agrees to the position.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like this topic to be discussed by the Charter Review Committee.

Councilwoman Morgan stated she would like to have the public’s input for this position.

It was the consensus of the Council to discuss the City Auditor position at a different time.

Mr. Stokes stated he would return to Council for approval of ballot language. Mayor Martin requested for Mr. Stokes to have one-on-ones with Council Members to discuss the ballot language prior to bringing the item back during a Council meeting.

Mayor Martin asked the audience if there was anyone present for public to be heard. No one from the public responded.

**6. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:42 PM.

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Sally Walsh, City Clerk

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Daisy Ruiz, Deputy City Clerk