



City of Venice

401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
www.venicegov.com

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Friday, January 16, 2026

9:00 AM

**Suncoast Technical College Main Campus
4748 Beneva Road, Sarasota, FL**

Convocation of Governments

A Special Meeting of the Venice City Council, Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners, Sarasota County School Board, City of Sarasota Commissioners, Town of Longboat Key Commissioners, and City of North Port Commissioners, was held this date at the Suncoast Technical College Conference Center, 4748 Beneva Road, Sarasota, Florida.

Audio File Download link to full meeting content: [Convocation of Governments Audio](#)

Elected Officials and Others Present

Sarasota County School Board: Chair Bridget Ziegler, Board Members Thomas Edwards, Robin Marinelli, Karen Rose, Liz Barker, Superintendent Terry Connor, Planning Director Diane Cominotti, Chief Operations Officer Dr. Michael Kemp, Executive Director of Facilities Services Jody Dumas, Director of Construction Services Jane Dreger, and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tomkins.

Sarasota County: Chair Ron Cutsinger, Vice Chair Mark Smith, Commissioners Teresa Mast, Tom Knight, Joe Neunder, County Administrator Jonathan Lewis, and Deputy Clerk Charlie Maloney.

City of North Port: Mayor Pete Emerich, Vice Mayor Barbara Langdon, Commissioners Dave Duval, Phil Stokes, Demetrius Petrow, and City Manager Jerome Flecher.

City of Sarasota: Mayor Debbie Trice, Vice Mayor Kathy Kelley Ohlrich, Commissioner Jen Ahern-Koch, Interim City Manager Dave Bullock, and Commission Reporter James Johnson.

City of Venice: Mayor Nick Pachota, Vice Mayor Jim Boldt, Council Members Kevin Engelke, City Manager James Clinch, and Deputy City Clerk Toni Gregory.

Town of Longboat Key: Town Manager Howard Tipton, and Deputy Town Clerk Stephanie Garcia.

I. Welcome/ Pledge/ Introductions

Chair Zeigler called the meeting to order at 9 a.m., the Invocation was provided, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and introductions were made.

II. Convocation Goals and Agenda

Chair Ziegler introduced the agenda for the day.

III. Open to the Public

Steven Martinucci expressed concerns regarding noise at Sarasota County School events, especially at Sarasota High School.

IV. Capital Projects - Update/Highlights

Dr. Michael Kemp, SCS, Chief Operations Officer, Jody Dumas, SCS, Executive Director of Facilities, Diane Cominotti, SCS, Director of Planning, Jane Dreger, SCS, Director of Construction Services

Dr. Kemp introduced the Sarasota County schools team, provided an overview of capital projects including, Skye Ranch School, Wellen Park High School, Garden Elementary Replacement, North Port High HVAC-Science Refresh, Suncoast Technical College (STC) North Port expansion, and responded to member questions regarding the starting number of students being approximately 1,100 and total capacity of 2,070 at Wellen Park High School, the current age of the North Port High School being 25 years-old, and location of the STC expansion being an additional wing at the current campus.

V. Future Focused Strategic Initiative

Terry Connor, SCS, Superintendent

Terry Connor, Superintendent of Sarasota County Schools, presented graduation rate trends, financial landscape at the national, state, and county level, as well as current and emerging fiscal challenges, including declining enrollment, state education funding, increased infrastructure overhead, Florida Empowerment Scholarship impact, The pandemic relief fund creating an artificial financial reality, maintaining competitive compensation, rising costs, new fee imposed on voter-approved referendum and continuing to deliver excellence through the referendum, and the Florida Law on co-location.

VI. City of North Port

A. Jerome Fletcher, City Manager, City of North Port

VII. City of Sarasota

David Bullock, Interim City Manager, City of Sarasota

VIII. Sarasota County Government

Jonathan Lewis, County Administrator, Sarasota County

IX. City of Venice

James Clinch, City Manager, City of Venice

City Manager Clinch spoke on community partnerships, inviting students into city offices, sending teams to the schools, law enforcement partnerships, and continued relationships.

X. Town of Longboat Key

Howard Tipton, Town Manager, Longboat Key

XI. Other Business

Bridget Ziegler, Chair, School Board of Sarasota County

Mayor Nick Pachota commented on the City of Venice’s relationship with Venice High School.

Vice Mayor Barbara Langdon commented on the City of North Port’s youth only advisory board driven by teens, with community partners such as the Star program.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Zeigler thanked Suncoast Technical College culinary arts program and the Sarasota County School district team for their partnership, and announced the next Convocation of Governments is January 15, 2027 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Suncoast Technical College - Main Campus - 4748 Beneva Road, Sarasota, FL

Meeting Adjourned: 10:20 a.m.

Nick Pachota, Mayor

Attest:

Kelly Michaels, MMC
Venice City Clerk