

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
CONVOCATION OF GOVERNMENTS
CITY COUNCIL, SARASOTA, FLORIDA
JANUARY 21, 2022**

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: *(Also times and links are noted for each agenda topic numbered below)*

http://archive-media.granicus.com:443/OnDemand/sarasotacounty/sarasotacounty_32377869-3618-40e4-a16c-c9c7f3897cbc.mp4

ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHERS PRESENT

City of Venice: Council Members: Vice Mayor Nick Pachota, Dr. Joseph Neunder, and Jim Boldt, City Manager Ed Lavallee, Ass't City Manager James Clinch and Fire Chief Frank Giddens

Sarasota Board of County Commissioners: Chairman Alan Maio, Commissioner Christian Ziegler, County Administrator Jonathan Lewis, Deputy Clerk Charlie Maloney

City of Sarasota: Mayor Erik Arroyo, Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch, Commissioner Liz Alpert, City Manager Marlon Brown, Commission Reporter James Johnson

Town of Longboat Key: Mayor Ken Schneier, Commissioner Penny Gold, Town Manager Tom Harmer, Commissioner B.J. Bishop attended the meeting via Zoom

City of North Port: Mayor Pete Emrich, Vice Mayor Barbara Langdon, Commissioner Alice White, Commissioner Debbie McDowell, Commissioner Jill Luke, City Manager Jerome Fletcher, Ass't City Manager Jason Yarborough, City Clerk Heather Taylor attended the meeting electronically.

School Board of Sarasota: Chair Jane Goodwin, Vice Chair Thomas Edwards, Superintendent Brennan Asplen, Board Members: Karen Rose, Shirley Brown, Bridget Ziegler, Administrative Assistant Kathy Tomkins.

I. **WELCOME/PLEDGE/INTRODUCTIONS**

Speaker: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin

SCSB Chair Goodwin welcomed all present noting it was the 14th Convocation being held. She called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions were made.

II. **CONVOCATION GOALS AND AGENDA**

Speaker: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin

Chair Goodwin reviewed agenda items and goals noting enrollment numbers are up and there is a referendum on March 8th. The agenda includes a timeline for each local government to give an update and discuss other business that might come before us.

III. **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - Opened and closed without comment.**

Speaker: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin

IV. **UPDATE ON SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, Sarasota County School Board Acting Planning Director Diane Cominotti and Sarasota School Board Planner Amy Anderson

Diane Cominotti, SCSB Planning Department reported “Working as one for the success of all” is the school district’s vision in the new strategic plan which Dr. Asplund will be presenting later in the agenda. She reported enrollment numbers were up citing the “2021-2022 Forty-day Count” which are benchmark numbers for the year was at 45,302 students, up 2,000 over the prior year.

Amy Anderson, SCSB Planning Department spoke regarding the high residential growth impacts and a need for new schools in the areas affected.

V. **SKILLED TRADES IN SCHOOLS**

Speakers: County Administrator Jonathan Lewis, Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, Sarasota County School Board Executive Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education Dr. Ron DiPillo, City of Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown, and City of North Port Commissioner Barbara Langdon

Dr. Ron DiPillo, SCSB Executive Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education spoke regarding Suncoast Technical College and provided an update on technical education in Sarasota County High Schools. He presented enrollment numbers and reviewed technical education certificate program accreditation. An invitation was given to all for their open house on February 3, 2022 at 5-7pm. Trade areas featured included the tiny home project, a plan for a state of the art fire service training program, a joint aircraft maintenance program possibly in 2023, a reimagined farm property agricultural program, a finance business program, and a culinary arts program with front and back end operations.

VI. **SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, Sarasota County School Superintendent Dr. Brennan Asplen, Town of Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier, City of North Port Commissioner Jill Luke, and Sarasota County School Board Member Shirley Brown

VII. **SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS REFERENDUM**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, Sarasota County Schools Superintendent Dr. Brennan Asplen, and City of Sarasota Mayor Erik Arroyo

Dr. Brennan Asplen, SCSB Superintendent spoke about the strategic plan and upcoming referendum. A two minute video covering the Sarasota County Strategic Plan which was based on the districts core values of belonging, feeling supported, included and secure amongst others and within the environment around you, citizenship, the ability to make wise decisions and be concerned about the community, honesty, living truthfully in your words, actions, and thoughts, respect, seeing good in people and treating them with care, and responsibility to take action and to

understand how our choices affect others, ourselves and the world. Dr. Asplen provided brief detail on the following goals and then opened it up to question and answers regarding school safety and security, operating budget, referendum as it relates to student academics proficiency results, senior student counselors and career centers, capital budget, grants and scholarships.

Goal 1: Personalized learning and accelerate growth for all students.

Goal 2: Foster a healthy supportive learning environment for all students.

Goal 3: Recruit, recognized and retain a premier work force.

Goal 4: Collaborate with and engage school communities to support the achievement of our students.

Goal 5: Efficient and effective operations through fiscal stewardship.

VIII. **TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, and Town of Longboat Key Town Manager Thomas Harmer

Town Manager Harmer reported Longboat Key is not driving the need for any schools, however they understand the benefit of having a strong “A” rated school. He noted they are a built out island with little to no potential for the growth being experienced in other areas of Sarasota County. He stated the US census showed growth of less than 500 people in ten years explaining it isn’t new residents but residents transitioning from seasonal to permanent. He shared impacts of the current real estate market in Longboat as well as projects including a large 30 month redevelopment project for St. Regis and their town center project with includes an outdoor venue, library and multi-purpose community space for life-long learning opportunities.

IX. **CITY OF NORTH PORT**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, City of North Port City Manager Jerome Fletcher, and Sarasota County Schools Assistant Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer Jody Dumas

City Manager Fletcher noted the City of North Port is experiencing significant growth which brings its own challenges. Internally they are working on their goal of being a “Community of Unity”, making sure everyone who resides in North Port knows we recognize and want them there. He asked for an update to the plans for a technical college at North Port and requested traffic signals in front of North Port High School and Heron Creek Middle School.

X. **CITY OF SARASOTA**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, City of Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown, City of Sarasota Mayor Erik Arroyo, and Sarasota County School Board Member Shirley Brown

City Manager Brown spoke regarding the conservation of 261 acres of “central park type” green space, the State of Florida \$10 million sustainability, resiliency and storm water protection grant, attainable and affordable housing, safe pedestrian crossing at East and Bahia Vista at the Circus Arts Conservatory, School Avenue closing as well as all of the improvements associated with the closing from School Avenue through Sarasota High, programs on diversity and racial equity, locating a tennis facility for hosting a US tennis tournament, and Sarasota School Recognition opportunities.

Mayor Arroyo spoke regarding the needs for affordable housing and many strategies and solutions. He noted affordable housing is an important issue that can no longer wait.

XI. **SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, Sarasota County Administrator Jonathan Lewis, and County Chairman Alan Maio

County Administrator Lewis focused on initiatives related to the schools including the regional fire training academy, programs for water and wastewater utilities, the referendum, and infrastructure to support schools.

Chairman Alan Maio spoke in support of the Sarasota school system and gave accolades for the effectiveness of bringing governments together at the convocation. He reported the ground breaking for the regional fire training academy will take place either September or October this year. He noted there are five jurisdictions and the state already contributing money and it has been in the county's budget both last fiscal year and this fiscal year. He noted there are some jurisdictions that are just waiting to see, so he encouraged them to join up, as this facility which is dead center in the County on Knights Trail, is going to be a big deal.

XII. **CITY OF VENICE**

Speakers: Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin, City of Venice City Manager Ed Lavalley, Vice Mayor Nick Pachota, and Sarasota County School Board Member Shirley Brown

City Manager Lavalley extended an invitation for all to visit Venice and noted the new police station, new fire station #1, significant expansion of City Hall, new public works facility, and a beautiful \$11 million dollar renovation of our downtown with a completed road paving project.

He noted their purpose today is to talk about their collaboration with the schools and reported the administration keeps in close touch with the schools in Venice to collaborate in a number of different ways, including the sharing of resources as noted in collaborations below:

- A capital project in which schools expanded the lighting on Bahama Road in front of the high school, the middle school and the performing arts center making it better for not only students but everyone who lives in Venice.
- A re-sodding project at the athletic fields in which the irrigation system failed. The Fire Chief and his team worked closely with school officials to manually irrigate the fields so the sod would not dry out while the irrigation system was being repaired.
- Short notice that the Governor was coming to Venice for a play-off game at the High School. Coordination between school officials, police, and fire to provide a security corridor and protection while the Governor was on site in Venice
- The challenges of the Omnicron variant hampering efforts to celebrate the Venice High School football team with our Champion's Parade.
- Internships with students getting experience in local government including our Utilities Department who is offering a focused internship for high school students for opportunity to learn vocations and professions from GIS management to engineering and other related vocational tasks at the utilities.

- The annual holiday card collaboration in which the City puts on a contest for the area students who submit their design to be featured on the official holiday card sent out all over the City. The student, his family, along with school officials are invited to the City Council meeting where the student receives an award.
- Student government day in which we bring in students, and among other things, we let them run a City Council meeting.

He noted these collaborations allow students the opportunity to see what a career in public service is like. He praised the relationship the City has with the schools.

Vice Mayor Pachota indicated his experience with teaching as an adjunct faculty in the EMS program for the past six years. He shared that he recently had the pleasure of seeing some very familiar faces of students he had taught, now working in Venice when he toured the new fire station. He appreciated the collaborations amongst governments and schools to bring programs and internships into our communities.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Sarasota County School Board Chair Jane Goodwin thanked all in attendance and indicated there would be a School Board meetings in Venice in March and Northport in May respectively. She shared the next Convocation of Governments meeting has been scheduled for January 20, 2023. She thanked the staff of the Suncoast Technical College, the culinary department, and the Sarasota County School District for their assistance with the meeting

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:58 a.m.

Nick Pachota, Vice Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelly Michaels, MMC
Venice City Clerk