

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
CONVOCAION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CITY COUNCIL, SARASOTA, FLORIDA

JANUARY 15, 2021

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 and via Zoom.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHERS PRESENT**

The following officials were present: City of Venice Council Member Nick Pachota and City Manager Ed Lavallee, (in person) Vice Mayor Rich Cautero and Council Member Mitzie Fiedler, City Attorney Kelly Fernandez, and City Clerk Lori Stelzer (virtually); Sarasota Board of County Commissioners Chair Al Maio, County Administrator Jonathan Lewis and Deputy Clerk Charlie Maloney (in person), Commissioners Michael Moran, Ron Custinger and Christian Ziegler, (virtually); City of Sarasota Mayor Hagen Brody and Interim City Manager Marlon Brown (in person), and Commissioners Jen Ahern-Koch, Liz Alpert, and Kyle Battie, Assistant City Manager John Lege, City Auditor and Clerk Shayla Griggs and Commission Reporter James Johnson (virtually); Town of Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier and Town Manager Tom Harmer, Deputy Town Clerk Savannah Cobb and Town Attorney Maggie Mooney (virtually); City of North Port Mayor Jill Luke, Vice Mayor Pete Emrich and Interim City Manager Jason Yarborough (in person), Commissioners Debbie McDowell and Barbara Langdon, City Clerk Heather Taylor and City Attorney Amber Slayton (virtually); School Board of Sarasota County Chair Shirley Brown, Vice Chair Jane Goodwin, and Superintendent Brennan Asplen, Chief Operating Officer Jody Dumas, and Administrative Assistant Kathy Tomkins (in person), and Board Members Bridget Ziegler, Karen Rose and Tom Edwards (virtually).

**I. WELCOME/PLEDGE/INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions were made.

**II. CONVOCAION GOALS AND AGENDA**

Ms. Brown reviewed agenda items and goals.

**III. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Michael McLaughlin, 1045 N. Cypress Point Dr., Venice, spoke on members biking or taking public transportation to today's meeting and the future for such infrastructure.

#### **IV. UPDATE ON SCSB ENROLLMENT AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Micki Ryan, SCSB Planning Department, gave a history on the planning of local government with the school district, and noted enrollment numbers.

Diane Cominotti, SCSB Planning Department, spoke to school capacity in north county, central county, and south county. She reported on capacities and potential school sites for the district and Ms. Ryan reported on capital improvement planning.

#### **V. COVID-19 UPDATE - SARASOTA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Chuck Henry, director, Sarasota Department of Health, provided an update on COVID-19, including case numbers, positivity rate, daily new cases, importance of hand washing and sanitization, testing sites, types of tests, vaccine distribution challenges, his appreciation for the offers to assist with distribution, shortage of vaccines, prioritizations, and efforts to minimize effects on the school district staff and employees. Discussion followed on challenges with teachers over age 65 and veterans unable to get vaccinated. Mr. Henry clarified that priority levels are from the governor's executive order and the Veterans Administration is administering vaccines at their location.

#### **VI. YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

Debra Giacalone, SCSB Director of Student Support Services, spoke on youth mental health, including statistics, economic impact, budget allocation, mental health allocation plan, and providing a continuum of support and services. Discussion followed on the county's efforts on this topic and Teen Court.

#### **VII. SURTAX UPDATE**

Jonathan Lewis, Sarasota County Administrator, provided an update on the infrastructure surtax, including collection and expenditure restrictions, history of the surtax, funded and completed projects, referendum planning, presentations, signage at active project sites, website portal, 2021 focus on project list development, importance of business support, community engagement, and public education.

#### **VIII. TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY: TOM HARMER, TOWN MANAGER**

Mr. Harmer noted Longboat Key's support for schools and having limited activity for growth, low number of students in the system, unusual property tax decrease, redevelopments in process, underground utilities, and other planned capital improvements.

#### **IX. CITY OF NORTH PORT: JASON YARBOROUGH, INTERIM CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Yarborough spoke on growth in North Port and the pandemic's effect on online learning, the need for internet capacity, traffic light at the high school and considering alternative graduation plans for this year.

**X. CITY OF SARASOTA: MARLON BROWN, INTERIM CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Brown asked for an update on School Avenue and Mr. Dumas responded with details of the agreement with City of Sarasota and project progress.

Mr. Brown spoke on roundabout construction and working with the school board regarding impacts to traffic, and looking at providing WiFi to lower income areas. Mayor Brody discussed the Legacy Trail expansion and possible student usage for access to schools, and the affordable housing project.

**XI. SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT: JONATHAN LEWIS, ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Lewis spoke on completing a segment of the Myrtle Project, review of school crossings, and pursuing a partnership for a regional fire training academy. Mr. Lewis provided information on the status of hurricane shelters and Mr. Dumas reported that modifications are being made to North Port High School, and Gulf Gate and Taylor Ranch Elementary Schools, with expected completion by the end of June.

**XII. CITY OF VENICE: ED LAVALLEE, CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Lavallee thanked Mr. Pachota for his service during the COVID-19 pandemic and spoke on service deliveries, virtual meetings, asked for a briefing on the online learning models, and opportunities for local government to learn and assist the school board, holding a forum in the future, and engaging students to assist the elderly to register for vaccines. He reported on the annual Student Government Day and offered an internship opportunity in the city's utility department.

Superintendent Asplen thanked everyone for attending and working together.

**XIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Brown noted the cities may contact the school board if they would like a presentation at one of their board meetings.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

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Ron Feinsod, Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Clerk