

From: [Robert E Shaw](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Fwd: City Council meeting 2/25/25 Police Pension
Date: Saturday, February 22, 2025 6:17:47 PM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robert E Shaw** <robsteelers4@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Feb 22, 2025 at 5:13 PM
Subject: Fwd: City Council meeting 2/25/25 Police Pension
To: <citycouncil@venicefl.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robert E Shaw** <robsteelers4@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Feb 22, 2025 at 5:01 PM
Subject: Fwd: City Council meeting 2/25/25 Police Pension
To: watercop203@aol.com <watercop203@aol.com>

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From: **Robert E Shaw** <robsteelers4@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Feb 22, 2025 at 11:35 AM
Subject: City Council meeting 2/25/25 Police Pension
To: <npachota@venicefl.gov>

To Venice City Council

My name is Robert Shaw, I am a retiree of the City of Venice Police Dept. (2008) I served 22 years, from 1985 to 2008. My current address is 6396 Academy Rd. Baxter, TN 38544.

My reason for writing this email is the following: It has just come to my attention that the Venice City council is meeting this Tuesday to discuss numerous items, specifically a Police pension buy out plan. For a little background, Kevin Mcgrath and myself served for almost 15 years together, a good portion of that time I held the position of Chairman. So I have some standing. As a pensioneer, I try to closely monitor any pension activity. As Kevin and I remain close friends, we try to say hello quite often. It has come to my attention that the current agenda addresses a Police pension buyout proposal, and or discussion. Staying abreast of our pension, I believe we are currently funded at over 100% and still receiving our allotment of state funds, 3 to 4 hundred thousand dollars yearly, which is a nice benefit for

both the City and pension. At the current status, I believe the pension costs to the City are next to nothing. I also believe that, should it be necessary, some of those State funds could be negotiated to cover some of those administrative fees. I have also heard that it would be a HUGE expenditure on the Cities part to Farm out the pension to a third party for the lack of a better word.

I spent a good portion of my life and career with the City, and am very proud of my contributions. Many of which I believe have added to the City. As a result the City has treated me VERY fairly over the years and has rewarded me with a pension as a result of my service. A very fair exchange I believe.

As a result of the aforementioned, I firmly hope that the City, and yourself as an elected overseer continues the Police Pension as it has been. Especially as costs now are negligible. Again a very fair exchange for the many honorable years of service.

Sincerely, Robert Shaw C- 931-3003-3009

From: [David Aker](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Pension concerns
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 2:44:11 PM

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Dear Council , I am quite concerned of the city's talk of discontinuing management of our pension. Many of us came to VPD because of the security and strength of the pension plan. We served faithfully and with integrity for twenty plus years working different shifts, missing holiday's, family gatherings and covering various locations after 911.

Now for a financial savings the city wants to walk away. We gave and served with integrity the citizens of this city. We are now asking the city to show their integrity and keep the pensions in house. Respectfully, David Aker VPD 180 retired.

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Ed Camp](#)
To: [Nicholas Pachota](#); [City Council](#)
Cc: [Betty Camp](#); [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Council Agenda #205-0101 Buyout Options for Fire and Police Pensions
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 3:28:13 PM

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Greetings Mayor Nick Paachota and Venice City Council members. My name is Betty Camp, I am a retiree from the Venice Police Department. I proudly served the city and community for 20 years. Prior to working for Venice I worked for the City of Sarasota, Sarasota Police Department for 4 ½ years. I switched departments for several reasons; the citizens and community of Venice appreciated and respected their First Responders and the benefits the city provides such as our pension. I proudly served and as of this day several Venice citizens say we miss seeing you downtown and out in the community.

Both my parents worked for the city of Venice respectfully. My mom worked for the Venice Police Department for 17 yrs as a parking enforcement then transferring to the records department. My Dad also served at The Venice Airport in the maintenance division for over 18 years. So you can see the dedication we had to the city and the citizens of Venice.

I always believed and treated people as I would want to be treated. So in reference to you looking into a buyout for our pension that we worked so hard for and put our lives on the line everyday. I hope you would do the same and highly consider not doing this. I'm sure if you were in our shoes you would feel the same way. The job as a Police Officer is not an easy task. If you move forward with this buyout I feel like we are being disrespected and all our dedication to the city was not worthy, like we were just another number/person.

The Police pension has never been an issue for the city and still going strong today. We have a great plan please consider leaving as is.

Unfortunately I'm unable to attend today's meeting on February 23,2025. My husband has Lung Cancer and we have several doctors appointments on this day.

Respuflly submitted Betty A Camp VPD retired #233

From: [Tony Fitzgerald](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Firefighters' Pension Plan – A Call for Thoughtful and Ethical Decision-Making
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 6:43:27 PM

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Tony Fitzgerald - Retired Lieutenant, City of Venice Fire Department

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you not just as a retired firefighter but as someone who dedicated 21 years of my life to serving this city and protecting its citizens. The issue of whether to terminate or continue administering our pension plan is not just a financial decision—it is a moral obligation to those who have risked everything in the line of duty.

For decades, firefighters and police officers have committed themselves selflessly to serving this city, often sacrificing family time, personal safety, and even their health for the greater good. Our pension was not a gift—it was earned through years of sacrifice, sweat, and unwavering dedication. Many of us accepted lower wages compared to private-sector jobs because we believed in the stability and security that a well-managed pension promised.

However, over the years, we have seen shifts in pension policy, rising insurance costs, and changes that have directly impacted the lives of retired and active first responders. Some of my colleagues left city service because of these uncertainties, choosing to move into the Florida Retirement System (FRS) rather than remain in a system where the funding structure became uncertain.

Now, the question is before you:

- Will the city continue to honor its responsibility to those who built their careers here?
- Will you protect the promises made to the men and women who have carried the weight of this city's emergencies on their shoulders?

Key Concerns You Must Consider:

1. The Human Element: This Is Our Future

- Many of us built our lives around this pension, believing it to be a secure foundation for retirement. Any changes that introduce financial instability or reduce benefits will have real and immediate impacts on the families of those who gave everything to this city.
- First responders do not have the luxury of working into their 60s and 70s—many retire with injuries or health issues related to years of high-risk service. Their pensions are their lifeline.

2. The Funding Shortfall & Risk of Termination

- The pension plan for firefighters is currently 76% funded, with a \$29.2 million shortfall if terminated. If this shortfall is not fully covered before termination, retirees could see reduced payouts or a lack of COLA adjustments in the future.
- Moving pensions to an insurance company does not guarantee the same benefits over time—insurance companies structure annuities based on market conditions, not based on the best interest of the retired workforce.

3. Loss of Local Control & Accountability

- If an insurance company takes over, future adjustments or concerns will be out of the city's hands. Pensioners will no longer have a say or advocate for changes if issues arise.
- Keeping the pension under city administration ensures that firefighters and police officers have a voice in their own retirement security.

4. The City's Ethical Obligation

- Firefighters and police officers have kept their promise to this city—we showed up, no matter the danger. We did not hesitate to respond when lives

were on the line, even at great personal risk.

- Now, it is time for the city to keep its promise to us. This is not just about fiscal responsibility; it is about honoring the commitment made to the people who served and sacrificed.

5. A Cautionary Look at Other Municipal Failures

- Across the country, we have seen cities that have made short-sighted pension decisions, leading to devastating consequences for retirees. Some municipalities underfunded payouts, leaving retired first responders struggling after a lifetime of service.

- Venice must ensure that any decision made guarantees stability, not just for today but for decades to come.

My Plea to You: Do the Right Thing

I implore each of you, as city leaders, to think beyond spreadsheets and budget forecasts. Think about the people behind this decision. Think about those of us who have already retired, about those currently serving, and about future firefighters and police officers who will dedicate their lives to this city.

The right path forward is one that protects the pension without risking the financial security of those who have already given their all. If the city truly cannot sustain administration of the pension fund, then any transition must come with firm guarantees that no firefighter or police officer will suffer diminished benefits as a result.

I loved my service to this city. I trained, learned, and gave my all—even on my days off—to be the best firefighter I could be. I now ask you to do the same for us.

Please ensure that this decision is made with fairness, foresight, and an unwavering commitment to those who protected and served this

community.

Sincerely,

Tony Fitzgerald

Retired Lieutenant, City of Venice Fire Department

Direct Mobile: 941-809-5150

From: bigbad218@aol.com
To: [Nicholas Pachota](#)
Cc: [City Council](#); [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Council Agenda #25-0101 Buyout Options for Fire and Police Pensions
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 6:55:31 PM

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Greeting Mayor Nick Pachota and City Council members,

My name is Bill Masters. I am writing this email in reference to the notification I received regarding the City Councils meeting for this Tuesday, February 25th, 2025, in which the council will be discussing options for Police and Fire pensions (#25-0101).

I started my career with the Venice Police Department in 1992. After completing 22 years of service with the Venice Police Department I choose to retire with a pension plan that I count on. The police pension plan has and is beneficial for the men and woman who worked hard for the citizens of the City of Venice. Our police pension plan is 102% vested and has demonstrated its stability. The police pension should be left as is and allow it to continue to provide the security it was designed for to the men and women who have put their lives on the line each and every day.

On behalf of myself and my fellow brothers and sisters in blue who have retired, we would like for you to reconsider any plans to change or terminate our existing police pension plan. Any changes to our current pension plan would have a negative impact on ourselves and our families.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend this meeting as I reside out of state.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Masters (Retired VPD #218)

From: [Phil Phillips](#)
To: [Nicholas Pachota](#)
Cc: [City Council](#); [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Council Agenda #25-0101 Buyout Options for Fire and Police Pensions
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 11:36:17 AM

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Greetings, to the honorable City of Venice Mayor Nick Pachota and Venice City Council members. My name is Phil Phillips, I am a retiree from the City of Venice Police Department. I started with the City of Venice in the Purchasing Department in 1988 and transferred to the City Police Department as a Patrol Officer in 1991 until April 30, 2012. I served the City fatefully during my employment for all of my years. The reason for my longevity as the City was a long term stable employer and the retirement plan was of high standards for my future after retirement. The actions being investigated today within the City certainly makes me concerned.

My reason for writing this email is for the following reasons: I was informed that the City Council after a strategic planning meeting who directed the Finance Department to do a study to investigate a plan to consider a buyout of Police and Fire pensions. This idea is very disturbing to all of the Police pension participants as this economy is very unstable and unclear for future financial decisions. The City when I hired on was my choice due to the stability of the retirement plan. Our Police pension is fully vested at over 102% which is a valuable tool in your decision to not selling our pension out to an outside source. *I feel your plan to move forward and terminate the plans will be nothing more than a slap in the face to our retirees who so fatefully served and relied on your support and administration skills managing our plan. I am also aware in the event your group decides not to sell our plan would give us the support we have expected from day one.*

I am not able to attend the meeting since I am located in Michigan and since there was not enough lead time for me to arrive and will not be able to give any public comments. I have spent many years in the employment of the City and would hope you find this email in the the best interests of our pension plan. And also in the best interest of the City retirees that are on the plan who have served fatefully. I would hope and wish the City to continue being the overseer of our Pension Plan since we are still are seen as a past employee not an ID number as we would be if our plan was sold off. Please consider this request as it is very important for your group to make a wise and long term decision.

Sincerely, Phil R Phillips VPD retired #203

From: [David Smyth](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Police Officers Pension
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 1:48:30 PM

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I am a retired Venice Police Officer (June 18, 1979 - July 31, 2013). I was just informed that on Tuesday February 25, 2025 the Venice City Council will be discussing the possibility of selling the Police Officers Pension to a private insurance company. I will be out of the country on a long-planned trip on that date and unable to attend or view the council meeting.

I would like to have my opposition to selling the Pension that I spent 34 years earning. We as Police Officers, paid our share into the Pension with the understanding that the City would keep their end of the understanding (that the Pension would be secure and guaranteed by the City of Venice in return for our years of service and dedication to the City). Please respect Your retired Police Officers and continue to maintain and fully fund our Pension that we all worked so hard to earn.

I request this be made and official record for the City Council meeting on February 25 ,2005.

Respectfully,

David A. Smyth

Proud retired member of The City of Venice, Florida Police Department

From: [Ruth Terry](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Nicholas Pachota](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Venice Police Pension
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2025 5:57:09 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential sale or buyout of the City of Venice Police Pension.

I began my service as an Officer at the Venice Police Department on November 18, 2002. Upon hiring, I entered into a contract with the City and swore an Oath to Serve and Protect. A key component of this contract was the promise of retirement with the City of Venice Pension upon reaching the required years of vested service. I fulfilled my obligation and vested in the pension after 10 years of service.

Unfortunately, over the years, several benefits promised in the contract have been stripped away, including healthcare coverage and paid sick time upon retirement. Now, the City is considering selling off the very Pension that supports all retired law enforcement officers.

The fact that our police pension is fully vested at over 102% demonstrates its stability and financial health. This should be a strong factor in separating the police and fire pensions, leaving the police pension as is, and allowing it to continue providing the security it was designed for, especially in these uncertain economic times.

On behalf of myself and my fellow retirees, I implore you to reconsider any plans to terminate or alter the existing police pension plan. After our many years of combined faithful service to the City of Venice, please consider the significant impact such a decision would have on our daily livelihoods and well-being.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth Terry
Retired Venice Police Officer #279
Nov 2002 - Sep 2022

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Ruth Terry
panther1349@gmail.com
"Be Kind"

From: [Ron Solanes](#)
To: [Nicholas Pachota](#)
Cc: [City Council](#); [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Police Pension
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:55:03 AM

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Good morning Mayor Pechota hope all is well with you and your family. You probably don't remember me, Lt. Ron Solanes, but I served the city of Venice and its citizens from 4/79 to 11/2011. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to loyally serve and I remember you as one of our explorers, a group that totally supported.

I've been told that the city is considering transferring the management of our pension to an outside agency and that is something that I, as well as all other pensioners, totally oppose. That outside agency is not going to have the benefit of the history and loyalty that currently exists between our city government and our retired police officers.

I respectfully request that you support us and not allow this to move forward.

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Robert C. Dodd Jr.
218 Buck Creek Road
Highlands, North Carolina 28741

Robert Clifford Dodd Jr.

218 Buck Creek Road
Highlands, North Carolina 28741
Cell: (828) 332-7344
Fax: (828) 524-6029
rcdaec@gmail.com
.....

February 24, 2025

Mayor Nick Pachota, and
The Council of the
City of Venice
401 W. Venice Avenue
Venice, Florida 34285

Dear Mayor Pachota, and City Council,

My name is Robert Dodd, #136 Retired of the Venice Police Department. I joined the Department on July 14, 1980 and served 22 years, ending in retirement in 2002. I was born and raised in Sarasota, Florida and at the age of 29 I chose to join the police force.

At the time of my hire, I was eager to gain access to stable employment, and one of the larger deciding factors was that the City of Venice offered a retirement plan that would give me security in my elder years. Consequently, I accepted the responsibility that the City gave me to serve and protect the community to the best of my ability.

Amid ups and downs, long hours, fatigue and dangerous incidents, I managed to complete my service with no blemish to my reputation, no inference of mistreatment of arrestees, and never an incident of lethal force on any citizen or suspect. I received many commendations, which are still of record, one such from the Mothers Against Drunk Driving for highest DUI Arrests, and finally Officer of the Year accorded by the Sons of the American Revolution.

I am proud of my service, and I gave the best years of my life to your City in exchange for the privilege of a secure retirement. I am now 73 going 74 years of age and based upon my experience I can tell you that the Venice Police Officer Retirement Fund has been a reliable and well administrated benefit to me and my fellow retirees.

It is a matter of record that the Police Pension has a funded Ratio of 104% and does not present a liability to the City of Venice. I believe that the

actuarial report of the Police Pension fund will corroborate that fact. Based upon this fact and the advice of our Pension Board, I believe that the initiative to divest our plan is a very bad idea.

The trust and the bond that the City of Venice committed to us upon hiring cannot be transferred to a 3rd party without forfeiting supportive administrative funding from the State of Florida. And we as individuals will be at the mercy of an insurance company that has no historic or administrative duty to us, especially in the event that they mismanage our assets or otherwise go bankrupt.

I am a full-time resident of North Carolina and am unable to attend this meeting. Therefore, I urge you Mayor, and your fellow councilors to oppose the move to divest our pension fund. There is no compelling reason to do so, and to quote the old adage "if it ain't broke don't fix it." And in truth, there is no evidence that the Police Pension fund presents a liability to the municipality. Therefore, I respectfully urge you, Mayor and the City Council, to reject the initiative to divest our Pension Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Clifford Dodd Jr. #136
Venice Police Department, Retired