



City of Venice

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

Meeting Minutes City Council

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

9:00 AM

Council Chambers and Virtual

Budget Workshop

Instructions on How to Watch and/or Participate in the Meeting

[21-5090](#)

Instructions on How to Watch and/or Participate in the Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Feinsod called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Ron Feinsod, Vice Mayor Richard Cautero, Council Member Helen Moore, Council Member Nick Pachota, Dr. Joseph Neunder, Council Member Brian Kelly and Dr. Margaret Fiedler

ALSO PRESENT

City Attorney Kelly Fernandez, City Clerk Lori Stelzer, City Manager Ed Lavallee, Administrative Coordinator Mercedes Barcia, Fire Chief Shawn Carvey, Deputy Fire Chief Frank Giddens, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division Chief Nathan McManus, Administrative Battalion Chief Craig Runck, Police Chief Tom Mattmuller, Captain Charles Thorpe, Utilities Director Javier Vargas, Administrative Coordinator Stacy McKenzie-Grant, Finance Director Linda Senne, Controller Joseph Welch, Development Services Director Jeff Shrum, Building Official Greg Schneider, Director of Public Works and Asset Management James Clinch, Fleet and Facilities Manager Travis Hout, Solid Waste and Recycling Superintendent Bob Moroni, Airport Director Mark Cervasio, City Engineer Kathleen Weeden, Information Technology Director Christophe St. Luce, Director of Human Resources Alan Bullock, Historical Resources Manager Harry Klinkhamer.

In person: Mayor Feinsod, Mr. Cautero, Dr. Fiedler, Mr. Pachota, Ms. Moore and Dr. Neunder

Via video conference: Mr. Kelly

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Feinsod led the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. INTRODUCTION BY CITY MANAGER ED LAVALLEE

Mr. Lavellee provided an introduction and spoke to city goals, overall budget, capital projects, operating expenses, and expanding the workforce.

II. PRESENTATIONS

[21-5091](#)

City Wide - Finance Director Linda Senne

Ms. Senne thanked staff for their work on the budget and commented on total appropriations for the city, new special revenue fund, reorganization of the development services department, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), economic impact of COVID-19, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds received, purchasing a mobile command unit, rate increases for the mobile home park, solid waste and stormwater rates, revenue projections, personnel, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and fleet replacement fund.

[21-5092](#)

General Fund - Finance Director Linda Senne

Ms. Senne spoke to millage rate, property tax rates and values, reserves, additional public works staff for parks, capital funding, fleet depreciation, fire and police pension plans, property and liability insurance premiums, ten percent increase in Florida Power and Light (FPL), pay increases, and responded to council regarding projected half-cent sales tax increase, departments decreasing carbon footprint and energy use, the department that uses the most electricity, and electric vehicles for fleet replacement.

Mr. Clinch spoke on partnering with FPL for installation of electric charging stations and "Electrify your Fleet" pilot program, transportation and energy think tank, focusing on city fleet and infrastructure, and adding electric vehicles.

Discussion followed regarding millage rate, revenue from new construction, and employee headcount to include total number prior to the recession.

[21-5093](#)

Airport - Director Mark Cervasio

Mr. Cervasio spoke on budget surplus, upcoming projects, using CARES Act grant for operating expenses, applying for a construction grant for Taxiway E, increase in general aviation and fuel flow, reserves, and responded to council questions regarding travel and training costs, and mobile home rates.

Ms. Senne responded to council questions on special pay expenses.

Mr. Cervasio responded to council questions on the status of the Circus property hotel.

[21-5094](#)

Utilities - Director Javier Vargas

Mr. Vargas commented on water and sewer rate increases, operational expenses, ten percent increase in FPL, water distribution and sewer collection system repairs, and responded to council questions regarding septic tank connections, northeast booster station project funding, plans to implement solar system, timeframe to pay off solar system, residents taking advantage of free septic tank inspections, using CARES Act funds for septic tanks, utility connection range and number of septic tanks within range.

[21-5095](#)

One Cent Sales Tax - Finance Director Linda Senne

Ms. Senne commented on projected revenue and 2022 referendum for continuation of surtax.

Vice Mayor Cautioner inquired on the Venice Community Center (VCC) to include the facility's market value.

Mr. Clinch spoke on the VCC's condition, maintenance costs, building structure, and responded to council questions regarding upcoming significant expenses.

Discussion followed on funding for the Old Betsy display building project.

Dr. Fiedler suggested to increase the budget placeholder from \$90,000 to \$155,000 in FY22.

Dr. Neunder left the dais at 10:16 a.m.

Discussion ensued regarding city's commitment to project and securing donations.

Dr. Neunder returned to the dais at 10:18 a.m.

Mr. Lavallee agreed to write a letter to donors on the city's commitment to the project.

Mr. Clinch reviewed options for renovating council chambers, and responded to council questions regarding improving energy efficiency and technology, and upgrading windows.

Discussion followed on dais configuration and purchasing new chairs.

Mr. Lavallee spoke on Lord Higel House and inquired if council is interested in providing support to finish the project.

Mr. Clinch provided a status update on the Lord Higel House project.

Discussion followed regarding the Lord Higel House parking lot, council's interest in supporting project, staff providing council with information on project costs and timeline, and knowing post construction plan.

There was consensus for staff to make a presentation to council on the Lord Higel House and include project expenses.

Recess was taken at 10:37 a.m. until 10:51 a.m.

[21-5096](#)

Police - Chief Tom Mattmuller

Discussion took place on staff pursuing with dais modifications and adding a police officer station.

Chief Mattmuller commented on budget increases and accomplishing goals.

Captain Thorpe spoke on the department's mission, divisions, goals and objectives, community involvement, staffing adjustments, using data analysis, collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, and responded to council questions regarding the department's long term plan to accommodate the city's growth, areas where technology can be of assistance, future training needs, conclusion of the Harbor Drive traffic study, adding a traffic signal on Pinebrook Road at the Sarasota Memorial Hospital entrance, closing the South Jetty gate earlier, and budget for repair and maintenance of fleet parts.

[21-5097](#)

Fire & EMS - Chief Shawn Carvey

Chief Carvey spoke regarding taking over EMS services, personnel, number of calls received, assisting with vaccinations, homebound pilot program, providing vaccinations to city employees, field data provided to hospitals during transport, air care for high critical patients, CARES Act funding, decontamination equipment, additional rescue vehicle, safety equipment, new engine purchase, tactical training, working with the police department, marine equipment, marine rescue calls, and succession plan.

Deputy Chief Giddens commented on the department's main goal and objective, and budget increases.

Discussion followed regarding staff providing a presentation to council on relocating Fire Station 2, projected growth in northeast Venice, and

maintaining a high level of care.

Deputy Chief Giddens responded to council questions regarding the increase in call volumes and average response time for calls.

Mr. Lavallee commented on calls, collaboration with the county, and the department's operational efficiency and revenue success.

Deputy Chief Giddens responded to council questions on staff being provided with adequate resources for mental health needs.

[21-5098](#)

Public Works, Solid Waste, Fleet, and Historical Resources - Director James Clinch

Dr. Neunder left the dais at 11:42 a.m.

Mr. Clinch spoke on his department.

Dr. Neunder returned to the dais at 11:44 am.

Mr. Clinch spoke on CIP and park impact fee projects, operating budgets, solid waste and recycling funds, automation, increasing budget and building reserves, fleet maintenance facility, historical resources facility upgrades, and responded to council questions regarding vehicle purchases, using Florida friendly plants for new parks, replacing maintenance equipment with eco-friendly devices, and measuring cost savings of automation.

Ms. Senne responded to council questions regarding park impact fees for Venezia Park and Northeast Venice Park.

Discussion followed on setting expectations for the Northeast Venice Park and communicating project timeframe to residents, finding a park location, presenting estimated timeline to council, park size and elements, and solid waste and recycling fee surcharge.

Mayor Feinsod passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Caetero and left the dais at 12:17 p.m.

Mr. Clinch advised the solid waste and recycling fee surcharge is based on market demand, and he prefers having an adjustable rate.

Recess was taken at 12:19 p.m. until 1:22 p.m.

[21-5099](#)

Engineering and Stormwater - City Engineer Kathleen Weeden

Vice Mayor Caetero returned the gavel to Mayor Feinsod.

Ms. Weeden commented on finishing the road bond, completing strategic road plan, initiating contract for the maintenance of rehabilitating existing pavements, online permitting, plan reviews, monthly bike ride program, road evaluations, beach project, and responded to council questions on developing a budget for resurfacing projects and placing funds in a separate account, considering electric vehicles, and process to add a traffic signal at the entrance of Sarasota Memorial Hospital and Pinebrook Road.

Ms. Senne responded to council questions on moving road impact fees for Laurel Road from FY23 to FY22.

Discussion followed on beach renourishment funding and protection.

Ms. Weeden commented on the stormwater fund, rate study, Community Rating System (CRS), flood map and code updates, staff, inspections, and vacuum truck purchase.

21-5100

Building Department- Building Official Greg Schneider

Mr. Schneider spoke to new construction growth, an increase in demand for services, staff positions and vacancies, and responded to council questions regarding permit turnaround timeframe, excess reserves, and inspector training and shortage.

21-5101

Planning & Zoning - Director Jeff Shrum

Mr. Shrum spoke regarding land use petitions, development, department goals, community outreach, city rezoning, comprehensive plan updates, land development regulations (LDRs), tree survey, mitigation fund and study, budget increase in communication services, and responded to council questions on providing the LDR draft to council, and opportunity for advisory boards and the public to provide input on the LDRs.

Mr. Shrum advised he will work with Public Information Officer Lorraine Anderson to solicit input.

Discussion followed regarding the capital improvement schedule (CIS), adding a traffic signal at the entrance of Sarasota Memorial Hospital and Pinebrook Road, traffic study, staff communicating with the hospital on their plans for the intersection, Mr. Lavallee providing a status report to council, prioritizing state and local projects separately, prioritizing roads based on road failure and volume/capacity (V/C) data, and traffic signal timing on Pinebrook Road and Edmondson Road.

21-5102

Information Technology - Director Christophe St. Luce

Mr. St. Luce spoke on number of Zoom meetings conducted and department staffing.

Ms. Fernandez responded to council questions regarding holding a shade meeting on the city's cyber security.

Mr. St. Luce commented on the city being a member of the Florida Local Government Information System Association.

Recess was taken at 2:50 p.m. until 2:59 p.m.

[21-5103](#)

Human Resources - Director Alan Bullock

There was consensus to address all items on the agenda and finish the meeting today.

Mr. Bullock spoke regarding department staff, budget, collective bargaining agreements, insurance for general fund, COVID-19 challenges, union negotiations, city vacancies, and responded to council questions on Sarasota Memorial Hospital accepting Florida Blue health insurance, and new hire salaries and employee recruitment.

Ms. Senne responded to council questions regarding employee contributions for group life and health insurance, the city's eligibility for Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and insurance claims.

[21-5104](#)

City Attorney - City Attorney Kelly Fernandez

Ms. Fernandez noted the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is being applied to the retainer and hourly rate.

Dr. Fiedler encouraged Ms. Fernandez to schedule workshops that would be productive for council.

Discussion followed regarding special magistrate pay, Ms. Fernandez providing council with a copy of the contractual services budget, Ms. Fernandez researching shade meetings for cyber security and mediation, and council's ability to access private documents.

[21-5105](#)

City Council & City Clerk - City Clerk Lori Stelzer

Ms. Stelzer spoke on the city clerk's budget.

Discussion followed regarding ethics training, and record keeper of motions made at council meetings.

Ms. Stelzer spoke on council's budget.

Discussion followed on ability for council members to attend group training and considering a pay increase for council members.

Ms. Stelzer explained an increase to council salaries would require a vote by the public, and suggested Mr. Kelly provide topic to the Charter Review Committee for consideration.

Discussion followed on council's summer break.

Ms. Stelzer advised council's break coincides with the county's schedule.

[21-5106](#)

City Manager - City Manager Ed Lavallee

Mr. Lavallee spoke to department goals, budget, and operational activities.

Discussion followed regarding concern with Economic Development Corporation's (EDC)'s funding and charter officer raises.

There was consensus for a three and a half percent raise for charter officers.

Mayor Feinsod passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Cautero and left the dais at 4:02 p.m.

[21-5107](#)

Finance - Director Linda Senne

Ms. Senne spoke on department functions and budget.

Mayor Feinsod returned to the dais at 4:05 p.m.

Vice Mayor Cautero returned the gavel to Mayor Feinsod.

Discussion followed regarding budget book, expected turnover in the finance department, and interest rate hikes in 2023.

Mr. Lavallee spoke on the relationship between staff and council.

Discussion followed regarding the city's budget.

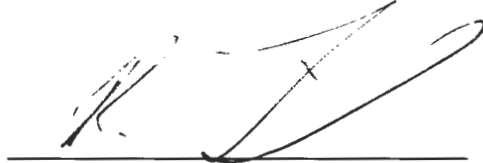
Ms. Senne commented on the one-cent sales tax and obtaining resident input on projects.

III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.


IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.



ATTEST:

Mayor - City of Venice



City Clerk