

INDIAN SHORES

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TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023, BEGAN AT 5:00 P.M. INDIAN SHORES MUNICIPAL CENTER, 4TH FLOOR

The Town Council Meeting convened at 5:00 P.M.

Those present: Mayor Patrick C. Soranno, Vice Mayor Diantha Schear, Councilor Mike Hackerson, Councilor Mike Petruccelli, Councilor Bill Smith, and Town Attorney Regina Kardash.

Also present: Town Administrator Bonnie Dhonau, Director of Finance and Personnel Susan Scrogam, Town Clerk Freddie Lozano, Police Chief Rick Swann, Police Major Glen Smith, Building Official Brian Rusu, Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District (PSFRD) Fire Chief Jeff Davidson, PSFRD Fire Commissioner Larry Schear, Town Labor Attorney Sacha Dyson, and Newspaper Correspondent Jeannie Carlson.

Those absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ITEM # AGENDA ITEM

1.0 Consideration of approving the Town Council Meeting agenda for February 14, 2023.

***Agenda Amendments made by Mayor Soranno:**

- 4.0A (#12.0) Consideration of a request from the Police Department for additional personnel and Police Activity Report for January 2023 and (#18.0) Police Activity Report for January 2023.
- 4.0B (#7.0) Report from the Fire Chief.

Patrick C. Soranno
Mayor

Diantha Schear
Vice Mayor

Mike Hackerson
Councilor

Michael (Mike) Petruccelli
Councilor

William F. (Bill) Smith
Councilor

Bonnie Dhonau
Town Administrator

Richard (Rick) Swann
Chief of Police

Susan L. Scrogam
Director of Finance
and Personnel

Freddie G. Lozano
Town Clerk

Regina Kardash, Esq.
Town Attorney

- Add email from former Police Chief E.D. Williams under Correspondence.
- Add 8.0A Resolution No. 04-2023, Adoption of Personnel Manual.
- Add 13.0A Discussion on the vice mayor election process.

Motion by **Councilor Smith** – seconded by **Councilor Petruccelli** to approve the Town Council Meeting Agenda for February 14, 2023, as amended. **All Ayes. Motion carried 5-0.**

2.0 Comments from the public on any agenda item.

Barbara Soranno, 19531 Gulf Blvd., commented that she supports the Town Administrator who has been serving the Town for nearly 16 years. Out of those 16 years, the Administrator has spent the last 9 years in their current position. Mrs. Soranno referred to a previous meeting where Councilor Hackerson had reservations on moving forward with the drafted town administrator job description and proposed that the Town Council should look for a qualified candidate who possesses the necessary credentials, which the current Town Administrator could also apply for. She named of a few successful businessmen without college degrees. Mrs. Soranno commented that given the Administrator's experience and knowledge in managing the Town, it was time to put any doubts about their credentials to rest.

Katrina Hale, 193163 Gulf Blvd., has owned a small business in Indian Shores for 23 years. She is not a resident of the Town but expressed her appreciation for the peaceful and drama-free community. She credits the Police Department, Town Officials, and Town Staff for their responsiveness in handling any issues that arise, making Indian Shores an amazing place to live and work. Finally, she expressed her desire for the Town to continue onto a positive path and avoid any problems that other neighboring towns often face.

Larry Schear, 19829 Gulf Blvd., commented that there were different versions of the town administrator job description presented to the Town Council; one job description from years past, one provided by the current Town Administrator, one from the Town's Labor Attorney, and another from a Council Member who Mr. Schear mentioned was not hired to draft the job description. To the Town Council, he recommended selecting the job description prepared by the Labor Attorney.

Lori Kauffman, 19531 Gulf Blvd., found that the Town Administrator and Town Staff to be organized and professional. She added that budgets, schedules, and vendors were managed well. As a voter and constituent,

she supported keeping the Town Administrator in their current role given their years of experience with the Town.

Gabe Galasti commented that she successfully retired from Siemens and now owns a successful business in Town without obtaining a degree. She added that the Town Administrator's hard work is what makes them successful. She believes hard work and motivation makes one successful and not necessarily a degree.

3.0 Safety Award and Recognition presented to the Town's Public Services staff.

Mayor Soranno, along with the members of the Town Council, presented the Safety Award to Public Services staff members Michael Scrogam, Willis Knight, Steve Hale, and Tommy Boullianne for their perfect safety record in 2022.

4.0 Consideration of approving the "CONSENT AGENDA" as follows:

A. MINUTES:

- 1. Town Council Workshop, January 10, 2023.**
- 2. Town Council Meeting, January 10, 2023.**

B. RECURRING EXPENSES: for January 2023.

C. AGREEMENTS:

- 1. Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections Agreement for Precinct 419 Polling Place.**
- 2. DR-4673 – Hurricane Ian Federally Funded Subaward and Grant Agreement.**

D. Airbrushing of donated benches for the Monument at Tiki Gardens in the amount of \$1,500.

Motion by **Vice Mayor Schear** – seconded by **Councilor Smith** to approve the Consent Agenda. **All Ayes. Motion carried 5-0.**

AGENDA AMENDMENTS (4.0A and 4.0B)

4.0A Consideration of request for authorization to add one full-time police officer position to the Indian Shores Police Officers staff and approval of allocating an additional \$74,750.00 in the Police Department's FY 2022-2023 budget for this purpose.

The Police Chief addressed the importance of adding an additional police officer position to the Police Department. He explained that this would help the department keep up with necessary training and deliver quality services to the Town. He also shared that a recent hire did not work out, but there is another candidate in the hiring process. The Police Chief hoped to have this candidate join the team in March.

Motion by **Councilor Hackerson** – seconded by **Councilor Petruccelli** to approve the addition of one full-time police officer position to the Indian Shores Police Officers staff and approve the allocation of \$74,750.00 in the Police Department's FY 2022-2023 budget for this purpose adoption.

The Town Council was polled. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.

(Agenda Item #18.0 Police Activity Report for January 2023, was included under 4.0A)

The Police Chief reported that the Police Department has a new recruiting brochure that is now available. Staffing is becoming an issue and he plans to have regularly scheduled visits to the police training facility at Pinellas State College to recruit officers.

He discussed the police budget issues related to overtime pay, which was incurred due to Hurricane Ian at the end of Fiscal Year 2022 and the beginning of Fiscal Year 2023. He mentioned that this resulted in most of the overtime expenses being recorded on the first payroll of Fiscal Year 2023. To address this issue, the Department is planning to reduce overtime as much as possible. Additionally, the department expects that the additional police officer position will assist in minimizing overtime expenses.

4.0B Report from the Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief reported a total of 48 emergency fire and rescue calls for January 2023, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 35 seconds. One way to improve response times is to construct a fire station in Town, which he is actively pursuing.

At the recent John Morroni Law Enforcement and First Responder Appreciation Dinner, PSFRD and the City of Madeira Beach Fire and Rescue were honored for their life-saving actions during a life-threatening incident in the Town of Redington Shores. While they proudly accepted the award, the Fire Chief acknowledged that the outcome of the incident would not have been the same without the actions of Police Chief Rick Swann and Police Major Glen Smith.

The Fire Chief also announced that there will be a public presentation on Monday, February 27 at 6 p.m. at the Belleair Beach City Hall. During the presentation, he will discuss solutions to improve weaknesses identified in the system at no cost to taxpayers, as well as more funding to support the Fire Department. He requested the support of the citizens and community.

5.0 Correspondence.

- **Thank you letters from local charities Clothes to Kids, Suncoast Voices for Children, and Santa's Angels for contributions they received that were raised by the Indian Shores Police Department and the Town during the No Shave November event and throughout the 2022 holiday season.**
- **Thank you email from the Town Library Volunteers for the February 1, 2023, Library Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.**
- **Email correspondence from Mayor Soranno to neighboring beach mayors and a County Commissioner regarding the Sand Key Project.**
- **Email correspondence from former Police Chief E. D. Williams regarding the qualifications of the Town Administrator.**

6.0 Town Attorney's report.

At the earlier Workshop, the Town Attorney discussed the requirement of re-advertising public hearings that are continued to a future date. There were no further comments.

7.0 Report from the Fire Chief. (Agenda Item 7.0 moved to 4.0B.)

8.0 PUBLIC HEARING: RESOLUTION NO. 03-2023

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF INDIAN SHORES, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A FEE AMOUNT FOR REVIEW OF PHASE ONE THRESHOLD INSPECTION REPORTS; ADOPTING FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE REASONABLENESS OF SUCH FEES; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS INCONSISTENT HEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Town Attorney read Resolution No. 03-2023 by title only. She noted two revisions to the resolution:

1. In the resolution title, "Threshold Inspection Reports" will be replaced with "Milestone Inspection Reports."
2. Under Section 2, the fee to review the Phase One milestone inspection report was reduced from \$450 to \$300.

Mayor Soranno opened the floor for public comments and Council deliberation, which there were none.

Motion by **Councilor Smith** – seconded by **Vice Mayor Schear** to approve Resolution No. 03-2023.

The Town Council was polled. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA AMENDMENT (8.0A)

8.0A PUBLIC HEARING: RESOLUTION NO. 04-2023

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF INDIAN SHORES, FLORIDA, AMENDING AND ADOPTING THE TOWN'S PERSONNEL MANUAL; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS INCONSISTENT HEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Town Attorney read Resolution No. 04-2023 by title only.

Mayor Soranno opened the floor for public comments and Council deliberation, which there were none.

The Town Attorney advised that the following revisions as discussed at the earlier Workshop should be included in the motion if the Council chooses to incorporate them in the personnel manual:

1. Remove "dialing 9 for an outside line" under Section 4: Workplace Safety.
2. Include the tuition reimbursement policy in the manual.

Motion by **Vice Mayor Schear** – seconded by **Councilor Smith** to approve Resolution No. 04-2023 adopting the amended Town Personnel Manual with the two revisions as noted above.

The Town Council was polled. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.

9.0 PROCLAMATION:

Proclamation designating March 2023 as "Irish American Heritage Month".

Mayor Soranno read the Proclamation.

10.0 Consideration of adoption of Town Administrator job description.

There were three versions of the draft town administrator job descriptions discussed at the earlier Workshop.

- Version 1 – with proposed revisions from the Labor and Town Attorneys
- Version 2 – Version 3 (below) with proposed input from Councilor Hackerson
- Version 3 – approved job description from 2014 with proposed updates

Motion by **Councilor Hackerson** – seconded by **Councilor Petruccelli** to approve Version 2 of the job description and to keep #22 regarding maintaining open and effective communications with Police Department Operations, Town Clerk and Town Attorney.

Councilor Smith opposed the motion due to the inclusion of a college degree requirement in the proposed job description.

The Town Council was polled.

- Councilor Petruccelli – Yes
- Councilor Smith – No
- Councilor Hackerson – Yes
- Vice Mayor Schear – No
- Mayor Soranno – No

Motion failed (2-3).

Councilor Hackerson made it clear for the record that the Town has set the lowest standard for qualification requirements when hiring a future town administrator. He has repeatedly stated that the proposed job description is for future town administrator candidates and not for the current Town Administrator. He mentioned that he provided input to the job description that the Town Administrator wrote to bring it up to a more professional level.

Vice Mayor Schear suggested adding equivalent to an education degree or commensurate experience with a certain number of years to the Education and Experience requirements section of the proposed job description.

Councilor Petruccelli's concern was that the current Town Administrator may not meet the qualification standards set by many of the municipalities in Pinellas County.

Councilor Smith asked if the proposed job description could apply to the current Administrator, to which Attorney Dyson replied yes if the Council chooses to do so.

Attorney Dyson suggested including an and/or statement in the first sentence of the Education and Experience section of the job description. This statement would ensure that work experience is considered as an equivalent qualification to an educational degree.

Amended motion by **Councilor Hackerson** – seconded by **Councilor Petruccelli** to approve Version 2 of the job description with the following revisions:

- keep #22 regarding maintaining open and effective communications with Police Department Operations, Town Clerk and Town Attorney
- update the first sentence under the Education and Experience section of the job description to "Graduation from an accredited University or College with a four-year degree in Public or Business Administration, **and/or** actual experience with, or as a Town Administrator and/or Manager.

The Town Council was polled. All ayes. Motion carried 5-0.

11.0 Consideration of adoption of updated Town Personnel Manual.
(Agenda Item 11.0 moved to 8.0A)

12.0 Consideration of request for authorization to add one full-time police officer position to the Indian Shores Police Officers staff and approval of allocating an additional \$74,750.00 in the Police Department's FY 2022-2023 budget for this purpose.
(Agenda Items 12.0 and 18.0 moved to 4.0A)

13.0 Update and discussion on 2023 St. Patrick's Day Festival.

At the earlier Workshop, the Town Council discussed and reached a consensus to move forward with the festival.

AGENDA AMENDMENT (13.0A)

13.0A Discussion on the vice mayor election process.

Councilor Petruccelli preferred to follow the customary process where Council Members publicly vote for the vice mayor.

Councilor Smith preferred a written ballot process.

On March 28, 2023, the Town Clerk will initiate the written ballot process for filling the vice mayor seat. The process involves the distribution of the ballots to the Council Members, who will indicate their interest in the position by filling out the ballots. The Town Clerk will then collect and announce the results of the ballots during the meeting.

Motion by **Councilor Smith** – seconded by **Vice Mayor Schear** to approve the selection of the vice mayor by written ballot.

The Town Council was polled. Motion carried 4-1 (opposed by Councilor Petruccelli).

14.0 Report from the Building Official for January 2023.

The Building Official reported that 31 building permits were issued, and 127 inspections were conducted, total valuation of \$335,392.11, and \$9,460.45 in fees were collected.

Senate Bill 4-D was briefly discussed. A Town Hall forum will be scheduled to provide citizens an opportunity to ask questions about the new bill. Furthermore, a clarification was made regarding the frequency of milestone inspections for properties located within three miles of the beach. As per the clarification, the first inspection will take place 25 years after the initial inspection, with subsequent inspections taking place every 10 years.

15.0 Report from the Town Administrator.

The Town Administrator let her report stand as presented.

Councilor Hackerson thanked the Town Administrator for working with Morelli Landscaping who has done a great job with the landscaping in Town.

16.0 Consideration of approving the Financial Statement for period ending December 2022.

The Finance Director commented that 75% of the materials requested for the Fiscal Year 2022 audit have been provided to the Town's Audit Firm. The 2022 audit will be completed before June 30, 2023.

Motion by **Vice Mayor Schear** – seconded by **Councilor Petruccelli** to approve the December 2022 Financial Statement. **Motion carried 5-0.**

17.0 Report from the Fire Commissioner.

Fire Commissioner Schear encouraged everyone to check their battery-powered devices, such as fire and carbon monoxide detectors, emergency radios, key fobs, garage door opener, etc., to determine if their batteries are still in good condition.

18.0 Police activity report for January 2023.
(Agenda Items 12.0 and 18.0 moved to 4.0A.)

19.0 Citizens' comments on any subject. None.

20.0 Council members' comments on any subject.

Councilor Hackerson announced that the Spring Beach Cleanup is scheduled for April 15, 2023. He attended the recent Keep Pinellas Beautiful Honors Luncheon and was amazed at the number of activities Keep Pinellas Beautiful is involved in.

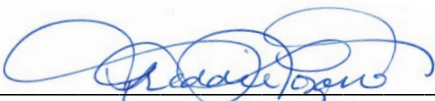
Councilor Petruccelli commented on the outstanding participation of those who attended and expressed their thoughts at the meeting.

Councilor Smith highly recommended speaking with a condominium director to those who have questions regarding Senate Bill 4-D. He advised condominium owners to act now to avoid being placed further down on the list of approximately 82,000 condominium that may require civil engineering inspections.

Vice Mayor Schear announced the next Library Read & Feed is scheduled February 16, 2023, featuring the book "Four Winds" by author Kristen Hannah.

Mayor Soranno thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

21.0 Meeting adjournment. 6:08 P.M.



Freddie Lozano, CMC
Town Clerk