

The Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, and when permitted or required by the subject matter, the Panama City Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, held on April 25, 2019.

ROLL

MAYOR MIKE THOMAS

COUNCILORS:

PAUL CASTO

PHIL CHESTER

GEOFF MCCONNELL

HECTOR SOLIS

CITY MANAGER:

MARIO GISBERT

CITY CLERK:

MARY JAN BOSSERT

CITY ATTORNEY:

AMY MYERS

Mayor Thomas called the Regular Meeting to order at 9 a.m. with all Councilmen, the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney present.

Councilman McConnell gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Thomas announced the upcoming Community Events.

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting April 11, 2019 were read. **Councilman Chester made the motion to approve the Minutes as written. Second was by Councilman Casto and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

Mayor Thomas asked if there were any additions or deletions to the Agenda. There were none. **Councilman McConnell made the motion to approve the Agenda as written. Second was by Councilman Chester and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**PRESENTATIONS**

1 **FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE.** Chief Couch gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Fire Department. The presentation included a flowchart of the department along with descriptions of the two fire stations and the new station currently being under construction. He explained the number of accidents that have occurred this year compared to previous years and other counties. The Special Operations Unit, Wildland Burn Team, CISM Team, Task Force 111 in Mexico Beach were recognized. He explained the Department is involved in humanitarian aid in Bay County and is invested in the community and youth activities.

Chief Couch explained the department is tied into County dispatch. He stated the County will install new radio equipment in the next year. Councilman McConnell commented that fiberoptic cable is already laid for the traffic system, it could also be used for communications; this issue needs to be pursued as a County initiative for getting some hard lines placed. Councilman Solis agreed it would be a good time to talk with the County about placing dedicated fiber from the EOC and to the Beach. With the expansion being done on Airport Road, the cable could be running on the back side where there are no infrastructures. He also asked if dead trees are being inspected within the City limits. Chief Couch explained he has spoken with the Forestry Department to gyro tract around the City. Chief Couch and Mr. Gisbert explained limitations with going on privately owned land and that the City's consultants and Bay County were

working to address deadfall in the area. Mr. Gisbert explained the County is working on getting permission from the State to access private property so they can create fire breaks. Chief Couch explained the deadfall is not a big issue as it is over the bridge.

Councilman Chester asked what role the City has in assisting the airport. Chief Couch explained Panama City Beach Fire Department is the closest responding outside agency to the Airport. They typically arrive first on scene and set up the groundwork for others coming in to assist. The Fire Department also helps conduct training at the airport.

Mayor Thomas asked about the status of Hurricane Michael related fire station repairs. Mr. Gisbert explained they are working with FEMA on the scope of the repairs. Mayor Thomas stated water rescue equipment needs to be on all fire trucks. Councilman Casto stated he would like to see Beach Rescue transitioned from the Police Department to the Fire Department. Mr. Gisbert explained something will be brought to the Council in October. Mayor Thomas and the Council thanked the Fire Department for all they do.

**2 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION FOR YEARS OF SERVICE – NELDA FIELDS.** Mayor Thomas invited Nelda Fields to the podium and congratulated her for her valuable contributions and dedication over the past 50 years to the City. She received a Key to the City and lapel pin for her service. Ms. Fields thanked the Mayor and stated it has been a wonderful journey. The audience responded with applause.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS (REGULAR NON-PUBLIC HEARINGS AND CONSENT ITEMS)**

Mayor Thomas opened the Public Comments section of the meeting at 9:32 a.m. and invited comments.

1 Gary Beck. Mr. Beck offered the Fire Department his fire suppression invention. Mayor Thomas explained the public comments section is in reference to the regular and consent items only.

2 Genese Hatcher, 203 S Wells Street. Ms. Hatcher thanked Ms. Nelda for always being kind. She explained she bought lots on Oleander to build rental homes and that parking is no longer allowed there. She explained there are five feet left over after houses are built if the City adds the additional three feet people can park under the houses. Parking is a serious issue for Panama City Beach. This would be a benefit for investors and others.

With no further comments, Mayor Thomas closed the Public Comments period at 9:36 a.m.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Bossert read the Consent Agenda Items by title.

**ITEM 1 RESOLUTION 19-80, SHADDAI SHRINE TEMPLE SPRING CEREMONIAL PARADE.** *“A Resolution of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, authorizing careful traffic control and extraordinary usage of a portion of Front Beach Road (U.S. 98) to permit the Shaddai Shrine Temple Spring Ceremonial Parade on the morning of Saturday, May 18, 2019; and providing an immediately effective date.”*

**ITEM 2 RESOLUTION 19-84, BID AWARD – NORTH GLADES AND HOMBRE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS.** *“A Resolution of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, approving an agreement with Gulf Coast Utility Contractors, LLC, related to the North Glades and Hombre Drainage Improvements Project in the amount of \$748,472; and providing an immediately effective date.”*

**ITEM 3 RESOLUTION 19-85, BID AWARD – WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY GENERATOR REPLACEMENT RADIATORS.** *“A Resolution of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, approving an agreement with TAW Power Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$123,388 for the purchase of two generator replacement radiators; and providing an immediately effective date.”*

Councilman Chester asked if a grant was received for the North Glades and Hombre Drainage Improvements Project. Ms. Younce explained there was not a grant and the project was included in the budget.

**Councilman Chester made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Second was by Councilman Solis and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**ITEM 1 RESOLUTION 19-81, BUDGET AMENDMENT – RETIREMENT.** Ms. Myers read Resolution 19-81 by title. The Council had no comments.

**Councilman McConnell made the motion to approve Resolution 19-81. Second was by Councilman Chester and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**ITEM 2 RESOLUTION 19-82, AMENDMENT TO DISASTER PAY POLICY.**

Ms. Myers read Resolution 19-82 by title. She explained in anticipation that the City will be faced with emergencies in the future, staff requests the Council amend the personnel policies to permit additional compensation to salaried personnel during declared emergencies. Councilman McConnell explained this is a valuable tool for department heads to be compensated. Councilman Chester stated he saw department heads working around the clock even when their homes were destroyed or in need of repair.

**Councilman Chester made the motion to approve Resolution 19-82. Second was by Councilman McConnell and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**ITEM 3 RESOLUTION 19-86, CONTRACT FOR FIREFIGHTER PHYSICALS.** Ms.

Myers read Resolution 19-86 by title. She explained the Fire-Rescue Department is requesting the purchase of a multi-year contract for services to perform annual National Fire Protection Association physicals for the City's firefighters in accordance with NFPA Standards. The Council had no comments.

**Councilman Casto made the motion to approve Resolution 19-86. Second was by Councilman Chester and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman McConnell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Solis</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Casto</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Chester</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Thomas</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**ITEM 4 ADDITIONAL HEIGHT IN FBO-1 – DISCUSSION.** Ms. Myers explained given the Council's recent policy decisions to remove avenues that increase the maximum building heights in the City, she requested the Council's input so that the Planning Board could have a clear idea on how they would like to proceed on this matter. Mayor Thomas explained the City has received letters that requested to be read into the record. Ms. Bossert read the two letters opposing the addition height in FBO-1.

Councilman Casto explained when he was Public Works Director, he received hundreds of complaints about parking and noise on Oleander. He stated he cannot support more density in the residential neighborhood. Councilman Chester asked Mr. Leonard if the three feet were approved could it increase habitable floors. Mr. Leonard stated it could. Mr. Leonard explained that a developer could dig down three feet to achieve additional height. Councilman Solis explained he has had several people voice their opposition to the height increase. Councilman McConnell explained he received emails, all opposing

the height increase and did not support the additional height in FBO-1. Mayor Thomas explained his opposition.

### **DELEGATIONS**

Mayor Thomas explained the Delegations period and opened this portion of the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

1 Burnie Thompson, 17292 Front Beach Road. Mr. Thompson inquired about Mayor Thomas' text he made during the meeting. He asked Councilman Solis if he encouraged citizens to write the letters of opposition for the height increase. He requested the Federal Bureau of Investigations to investigate the City Council and the Governor of Florida to do a forensic audit. He stated the Civil Service Board to be put on the referendum cost the city ten thousand dollars and he would like to see the Council pay that out of their own pockets.

2 Genese Hatcher, 203 S Wells Street. Ms. Hatcher accused the Council of lying in opposition to the requested height increase. She reiterated that additional parking was a need for the City.

3 Gary Beck. Mr. Beck explained he was handed a letter that prohibits him to speak at the City Council Meetings. He explained the City of Panama City and Bay County Commissioners did the same to him. He spoke of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

4 Mr. Sewell, 435 Hidden Island Drive. Mr. Sewell inquired about the Joan Avenue lift station. He explained Oleander has always been rental properties, there are only two residents there now.

With no further comments, Mayor Thomas closed the Delegations period at 10:08 a.m.

Mayor Thomas explained he received a phone call during the meeting and responded via text message that he would return the call after the meeting. He defended the integrity of the Council and stated that each Council Member acts in the best interests of the City. In reference to the Civil Service Board referendum, Mayor Thomas explained the referendum was solely intended allow department heads to make hiring decisions.

Councilman Solis explained the Civil Service Board is an antiquated system and putting it on the referendum was money well spent. The Council is trying to save time and get employees hired faster. Councilman Solis defended the integrity of the Council and vehemently denied allegations of corruption. Councilman Solis stated that many detractors of the City do not live in the city limits but ignore issues in other cities. Councilman Solis stated that the public needs to take notice of the individuals that do not live in the City that are trying to run the City and not to listen to fake news.

Councilman Chester asked Mr. Ponek if anything was coming up in the budget for additional pickleball courts. Mr. Ponek explained that with three indoor courts and two outdoor courts he did not anticipate additional courts in next year's budget. Councilman Casto requested they put lights up for the outside pickleball courts. Councilman McConnell asked for the department to look at something to help shade the playground equipment, it's too hot to play on the equipment during the summer. Mr. Ponek said the department is working on that issue.

Councilman McConnell explained the Civil Service Board's hiring process is a waste of time and resources. He stated everyone can have an opinion. The Civil Service Board hiring process does not agree with a growing organization.

### **ATTORNEY REPORT**

Ms. Myers stated she had no report.

### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

Mr. Gisbert gave an update on Bay Parkway. The dredge and fill permits were submitted to the State, the project is on schedule.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Casto had no comment.

Councilman Solis explained he would like to see the Auxiliary Police pay increased. The pay is currently ten dollars an hour with no benefits. All Council Members agreed to look at the pay scale.

Councilman McConnell thanked the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce Hype Group to let him speak to them. He thanked Mr. Shortt and his department for the facility tour. He explained he missed the last council meeting and appreciated the opportunity to attend the Advanced Elected Municipal Officials training in Tampa with the Florida League of Cities.

Councilman Casto complimented the staff on getting the North Glades and Hombre Drainage Improvement Project passed through. At the beginning of proposing this project back in 2013, the initial response was that the ditch couldn't be widened. With the persistence of the consultants and staff, this project is going to happen.

Councilman Chester asked who oversees cleaning debris from ditches. The Mosquito Control oversaw cleaning ditches, but they have sold their equipment. Ms. Younce explained the only ditch in the city limits with the debris is North Glades and they are working it. The other ditches of concern were privately owned. The City would have to contact the property owners and receive a hold harmless agreement before any work could be done. She explained the Mosquito Control Board expects each municipality to clean their own ditches. Ms. Myers explained the mosquito control has one ditch that is under their jurisdiction.

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

READ AND APPROVED this 9<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019.

**IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FOREGOING MINUTES AND A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THESE MINUTES, THE FOREGOING MINUTES SHALL CONTROL.**

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk