

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, HELD IN THE CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 100 NORTH U.S. #1, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AT 9 A.M. ON MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hudson called the May 19, 2025 Special Meeting of the City Commission to order at 9:00 A.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Michael Broderick; Commissioner Arnold Gaines; Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr.; Mayor Linda Hudson; Commissioner James Taylor

Staff Present: City Manager Richard Chess
City Attorney Sara Hedges
City Clerk Linda Cox

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Any person who wishes to comment on any subject may be heard at this time. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes or less, as directed by the Mayor, as this section of the Agenda is limited to fifteen minutes. The City Commission will not be able to take any official actions under Comments from the Public. Speakers will address the Mayor, Commissioners, and the Public with respect. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

Linnes Finney

Joyce Jackson

Hazel Hoylman

Larry Lee, Jr.

Delores Hogan-Johnson

Marjorie Harrell

Pinkie Hendley

Luke Lewis

Mario Wilcox

Larry Croom

Sidney Ferguson

Brian Scott Dodd

Charlie Hayek

Kim Johnson

Jean Leroy

Pearl Davis Liverpool

Lisa Mobley

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Follow up discussion from the May 12, 2025 City Commission meeting regarding the final report conducted by the Center for Public Safety Management and the status of the Police Chief's employment.

City Manager, Richard Chess, submitted into record the resignation of Chief Burney received by email on May 18, 2025, and indicated that he had accepted it.

City Attorney, Sara Hedges, provided the options for the Commission and Chief Burney's contract.

Mayor Hudson asked Ms. Hedges to provide the charter language which she provided.

Mayor Hudson commented on the need to complete the discussion of the results of the final report conducted by the Center for Public Safety Management and that there are things that must be considered moving forward, including funding, the leadership of the police department, and the resignation of Chief Hobley-Burney.

The Commission discussed the leadership of the police department, structural concerns including funding and pay scale, due process, challenges with accepting the resignation, concerns with meetings with staff, resolutions to the funding issue, cost of implementing the suggestions of the CPSM, consideration of the Sheriff's Department.

The Commission inquired on the severance package and what triggers it, voluntary resignation compensation, continuation of benefits options.

Ms. Hedges clarified that the severance is not available with resignation and provided the terms if terminated and deferred to human resources for additional details.

Mr. Chess clarified the life and health benefits for 90 days and commented on receiving a number from the Finance Director on the cost of implementing the recommendations of the CPSM.

Jared Sorenson, Human Resources Manager, explained the available options after separation.

Commissioner Taylor addressed concerns posed by the Commission.

Commissioner Johnson commented on the remarks made by Commissioner Taylor.

Commissioner Gaines requested that the survey being discussed and Chief Burney's letter of resignation be added to the agenda.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, commented that the items had been attached to the agenda.

Mr. Chess commented that he had questions regarding the survey information and inquired on the participants and how they were selected.

Commissioner Johnson expressed his concern with how the survey was presented and would like clarification of the data.

Commissioner Broderick addressed the resignation and the vacancy.

Commissioner Gaines inquired on the next steps in addressing the vacancy.

Mayor Hudson requested the direction this would move by Mr. Chess.

Mr. Chess explained his directions and recommendations.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to accept Chief Burney's resignation with administrative leave of 90 days per the contract, effective May 19, 2025.

AYE: Commissioner Michael Broderick, Mayor Linda Hudson, Commissioner James Taylor

NAY: Commissioner Arnold Gaines, Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr.

Passed

Mr. Chess recommended Deputy Chief Ridle as Acting Chief of Police.

Deputy Chief of Police Robert Ridle commented that he would accept the acting position until a new chief is selected.

Mr. Sorenson inquired on compensation.

Ms. Hedges commented that compensation should be handled normally unless directed additionally by the City Manager.

Mayor Hudson explained that the police department is managed by the City Manager.

Ms. Hedges clarified the role the Commission plays in this decision and the steps once a new chief has been selected.

Commissioner Gaines clarified the details of the vote.

Ms. Hedges commented on the administrative leave time frame and suggested Mr. Chess provide a recommendation prior to the 90 days.

Commissioner Johnson requested clarification of the role of acting and interim chief.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to accept Deputy Chief Robert Ridle as Acting Chief of Police for the next 90 days.

AYE: Commissioner Michael Broderick, Commissioner Arnold Gaines, Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., Mayor Linda Hudson, Commissioner James Taylor

Passed

Mr. Chess commented on his respect for the leadership of the police department and his passion for the employees.

The Commission discussed the direction of recruitment and the utilization of a search firm.

Mr. Sorenson provided background on the recruitment of the City Manager and how it affected the human resources department. The department is willing to take on the search but is open to a recruitment firm.

Mayor Hudson commented that a search firm was utilized for the previous chief search.

Commissioner Broderick suggested analyzing capital expenses as there is a significant issue as the Commission needs data.

Mr. Chess commented on the budget, including capital expenses and the capital budget, which makes the City available for additional funding. The City is currently focusing on a five-year plan and its approval.

Commissioner Gaines asked that the community be considered when the special meetings are scheduled.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Hudson adjourned the meeting at 11:11 A.M.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR COMMISSIONER