

MINUTES OF A REGULAR 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 5:05 P.M. ON MONDAY, AUGUST 04, 2025.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hudson called the August 04, 2025 Regular Meeting of the City Commission to order at 5:05 P.M.

**2. OPENING PRAYER - Pastor Jordan Good of Bible Baptist Church**

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**4. ROLL CALL**

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

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

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Approval of the minutes of the July 21, 2025 Special Meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2025 Special Meeting.

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

Passed

B. Approval of the minutes of the July 21, 2025 Regular Meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Arnold Gaines, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2025 Regular Meeting.

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

Passed

**6. PROCLAMATIONS**

A. Justice For Survivors Week Proclamation

**7. LETTERS TO COMMISSION**

**8. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Staff pulled item 13A.

Motion was made by Commissioner Michael Broderick, seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve the agenda as amended.

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

Passed

**9. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS NOT  
REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Any person who wishes to comment on an agenda item which is not under Public Hearings on the Agenda may be heard at this time and must sign up to speak in advance. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes or less, as directed by the Mayor, as this section of the Agenda is limited to thirty 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.

Kris Einstein  
Rick Reed  
Mazella Smith  
Charles Wilson

**10. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS**

- A. Lincoln Park Main Street, Inc. program update covering the third quarter of FY2025 (April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025.)

The Commission discussed having both Main Street organizations present during the same meeting to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency. Commissioner Gaines expressed concern over the optics of separate presentations and emphasized the need to evaluate both groups equally. While the Mayor noted the difference in contract timelines and functions, Commissioner Broderick supported aligning future presentations, suggesting both report in the fourth quarter to simplify public access and decision-making. Pamela Carrithers presented the Lincoln Park Main Street, Inc. program update for the third quarter FY2025.

**1. Business & Property Development**

Created a detailed database of 96 businesses in the Lincoln Park District and surrounding areas.

Continued work on a database of vacant and occupied commercial properties, including land use, size, ownership, and historical data.

Supported local businesses like Blue Clarinet and Cynthia's Alterations with grants and improvement projects.

**2. Historic Preservation**

Completed the Lincoln Park Historic Survey funded by the Florida Department of State.

Engaged the community through meetings and oral histories to support historic designation of properties.

Encouraged public contributions of historical documents and records.

**3. Marketing & Community Engagement**

Partnered with St. Lucie County Cultural Alliance for events like Jazz on Moore's Creek.

Used radio, social media, and posters to promote events, with a reported increase in social media reach.

Collected community feedback via surveys and testimonials.

Showcased archives and artifacts at public events to raise awareness.

**4. Affordable Housing Support**

Assisted in rebranding and marketing homes at the Oaks at Moore's Creek, targeting teachers and first responders.

Promoted upcoming community events to showcase available homes.

Identified awareness and outreach as major barriers to sales.

**5. Resource Development**

Submitted grant applications to support arts, culture, and historic preservation.

Logged 110 volunteer hours for the quarter.

**6. Future Goals & Recommendations**

Develop benchmark-driven presentations for transparency and accountability. Continue collaboration with city staff and the school district to enhance youth involvement.

Use historic preservation efforts as a catalyst for tourism, education, and economic growth.

Mayor Hudson suggested leveraging the Property Appraiser's Office to assist with the commercial property survey, noting much of the data—such as building age and property details—is available and can be generated based on specific parameters. However, she cautioned that some building ages may be inaccurate. She highlighted local historical resources that could support the historic preservation initiative:

St. Lucie County History Center scanned yearbooks from Lincoln Park Academy. Genealogy Society & Samuel Gaines indexed funeral books from Stone Brothers Funeral Home.

Ongoing indexing of the old Chronicle newspaper, providing rich insights into local families and history.

Mayor Hudson emphasized that these resources could strengthen historic preservation efforts and noted growing community interest in local history, which also holds economic value through historic designation and heritage tourism.

The Commission praised Lincoln Park Mainstreet's efforts in historic preservation and community engagement, emphasized the importance of educating youth on local history, recommended city acquisition of aging historic sites to prevent deterioration, and commented on the need for data benchmarks in future presentations to ensure transparency, equitable funding, and measurable impact across Main Street programs.

## 11. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval to purchase 20 security cameras from Tactical Video, Inc. in the amount of \$85,444.00, to be installed in the area of the IRSC Blackburn Educational Building to improve public safety, reduce crime, enhance law enforcement effectiveness, and foster community engagement using the award through IRSC.
- B. Approval of City Manager Richard D. Chess's request to attend the Florida League of Cities 2025 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida from August 14, 2025, to August 17, 2025, for the amount of \$1,650.42.
- C. Approval of salary increase for Linda Cox, City Clerk, discussed at the July 21, 2025 City Commission Special Budget Meeting for a new an annual salary in the amount of \$160,000.00 effective October 1, 2025; said annual salary to be inclusive of the cost of living increase being provided to City employees effective October 1, 2025.
- D. Approval of Lincoln Park Main Street's Third Quarter Disbursement in the amount of \$12,500 subject to acceptance of the Third Quarter Report.

Commissioner Johnson pulled items 11C and 11D of the Consent Agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to approve items 11 A and 11B of the Consent Agenda.

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

Passed

As to item 11C

The Commission debated a proposed salary increase for City Clerk Mrs. Cox to \$160,000—a 25% raise. The discussion centered on fiscal responsibility, fairness, and timing, amid budget constraints and public scrutiny.

Commissioner Johnson:

Clarified the raise is not a 5% increase on top of the current salary, but a flat adjustment to \$160,000.

Raised concerns about affordability in light of budget shortfalls and \$60,000 in anticipated special election costs.

Suggested a more moderate increase (12–15%) now, with potential to revisit midyear.

Emphasized the need for fiscal prudence given recent budget tightening across departments.

Mayor Hudson:

Supported the raise, stating the City Clerk role has significantly evolved over 13 years and that the increase corrects a long-standing issue.

Asserted comfort with the proposed \$160,000 figure.

Commissioner Broderick:

Reviewed compensation data and found the \$160,000 figure aligns with peers and department heads.

Acknowledged 5% of the raise overlaps with the standard COLA increase, making it a net 20% adjustment.

Expressed concerns about deficit spending and emphasized the need for a comprehensive budget review.

Commissioner Gaines:

Strongly supported Mrs. Cox receiving a raise, acknowledging her performance.

Voiced hesitation over the proposed amount due to timing and fiscal pressure.

Suggested considering a phased increase similar to the city manager's compensation plan.

Stressed the importance of public perception and accountability.

Due to financial concerns and differing opinions on timing and amount, Commissioner Johnson moved to table the item until the next Regular Commission Meeting on August 18, 2025, to allow for further review and consensus.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to postpone item 11C to the August 18, 2025 Regular Meeting.

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

Passed

During the discussion on the proposed salary increase for City Clerk Mrs. Cox, Commissioner Broderick highlighted that even after adjustments, the budget reflects a \$400,000 deficit, equating to approximately 0.75% of the operating budget. He stressed that while the shortfall may seem small, it is unacceptable given the city's financial obligations and the unpredictability of emergency expenses, such as recent drainage repairs on Surfside.

Commissioner Johnson requested clarity from staff, noting that although the budget may appear balanced on paper, the elimination of the deficit likely requires cuts, either already made or upcoming. He emphasized the need for transparency in how the deficit was addressed before any further financial commitments, including salary increases, are finalized.

As to item 11D

Commissioner Johnson emphasized the need to develop a standardized template with staff and Mr. Chess for both Main Street organizations. He proposed that all future funding requests be tied to clearly defined milestones and goals, ensuring accountability and public understanding of each organization's impact.

He praised the Lincoln Park Main Street website but noted the need for broader community awareness. While not recommending any current funding stipulations, he expressed intent to introduce a performance-based evaluation template in the next quarter, covering business development, marketing, and economic impact.

Mr. Chess confirmed that quarterly performance measures already exist for both Main Street organizations. While the current report includes references to deliverables such as surveys, promotions, and grants, he acknowledged the need to more clearly link deliverables to specific performance goals.

Commissioner Johnson suggested improving future presentations by explicitly stating each performance measure and showing how deliverables align with those goals. Some deliverables have been fully or partially completed, with many not due until September 30th. The structure is in place, but greater clarity and labeling in presentations would enhance transparency and evaluation.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to approve item 11D of the Consent Agenda.

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

Passed

## 12. PUBLIC HEARINGS

*Quasi-Judicial Hearings follow a strict set of rules and procedures which can be found on the City's website using this link: <https://www.cityoffortpierce.com/DocumentCenter/View/6740/Quasi-Judicial-Procedures>. All Quasi-Judicial decisions by the City Commission must be based on competency substantial evidence. Competent substantial evidence is evidence which will establish a substantial basis from which the fact at issue can reasonably be inferred. It includes fact or opinion evidence offered by an expert on a matter that requires specialized knowledge and that is relevant to the issues to be decided. It is evidence a reasonable mind could accept as having probative weight and adequate to support a legal conclusion. Hypothetical, speculative, fear or emotion based generalized statements that do not address the relevant issues and that cannot be reasonably said to support the action advocated, are not competent substantial evidence.*

- A. Quasi-Judicial Hearing - Review and Approval of an application for a Conditional Use (No New Construction), submitted by property owner and applicant, LaShanna Roberts, to operate a licensed APD (Agency for Persons with Disabilities) provider group home for up to five (5) residents at 2021 Sunrise Boulevard, Fort Pierce, FL. The property is zoned Office Commercial (C-1). Parcel ID: 2415-703-0220-000-6.

Mayor Linda Hudson asked all present to listen carefully to what City Attorney Sara Hedges would read regarding Quasi-Judicial Hearings.

Sara Hedges, City Attorney, reviewed the quasi-judicial hearing rules and procedures.

Mayor Linda Hudson called the proceeding to order.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, confirmed that the City complied with the advertisement and notice requirements.

Mayor Linda Hudson inquired with the Commission regarding ex-parte communications.

Commissioner Broderick – No (Attended Planning Board meeting)

Commissioner Gaines – No (Watched Planning Board meeting)

Commissioner Johnson – Yes (Watched Planning Board meeting)

Mayor Hudson – No (Watched Planning Board meeting, email from applicant, conversation with a resident)

City Clerk, Linda Cox, swore in those wanting to speak during the Quasi-Judicial hearing.

**Staff Presentation:**

Vennis Gilmore, Senior Planner, presented an application for a Conditional Use with no new construction at 2021 Sunrise Blvd.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposed Conditional Use (No New Construction) application adheres to the requirements of the City Land Development Code and guidelines of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, Staff recommends APPROVAL of the requested application with the following conditions:

Per City Code Section 125-316. – Access Control: Residential driveways shall be a minimum of 12 feet wide with a maximum of 26 feet wide. The driveway width must be extended to a minimum width of 12 feet.

Limit the number of vehicles parked to no more than two (2) vehicles at a time.

**Commission Questions of Staff:**

Mayor Hudson inquired whether the applicant holds a state license, noting that the matter is before the Commission solely due to zoning—the property is in a commercial zone (C-1) but surrounded by residential areas, and near Virginia Avenue, which is trending toward commercial use.

Planning Director Kevin Freeman explained that the group home use is listed as conditional in the C-1 zoning table, meaning the City Commission must determine if the use is appropriate based on its potential impact on health, safety, and neighborhood welfare. Staff reviews the application, intensity of use, and traffic impact, and although state licensing is required, the City cannot condition approval on the applicant's licensure—it must be obtained prior to a Certificate of Occupancy.

Commissioner Broderick questioned why the application requires conditional use approval if state statute governs licensing. He raised concerns about group home density, noting that state law may restrict new homes if a certain number already exist within a defined area. He also asked about proximity to schools.

Mr. Gilmore responded that group homes must be at least 1,200 feet apart, and that two schools—St. Lucie Elementary and Dale Cassens School are nearby.

Lashanna Roberts, Applicant, had no questions for staff and assured the Commission that residents pose no threat to children.

Obed Bazile, Facility Manager, explained that eligible residents are those receiving services through the APD Medicaid Waiver Program. There are no term limits for residency. Residents may drive, but 99% do not. Community activities are provided.

Ms. Roberts confirmed her presentation included property upgrades made to the facility.

**Commission Questions of the Applicant**

Mayor Hudson asked about resident demographics and transportation. Staff confirmed zoning is C-1 (Commercial), and group homes in this district require conditional use approval.

Commissioner Johnson inquired about resident activities, term limits, and security.

Mayor Hudson opened the public hearing.

Lisa Kauffmann

Mayor Hudson closed the public hearing.

**Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Broderick raised concerns about parking, ADA compliance, and whether required building code upgrades (e.g., ramps, ADA bathrooms,

sprinklers) had been triggered by the renovations. He questioned if proper building use classification and permitting had occurred.

Mr. Freeman explained that the application meets state standards for group homes but requires local conditional use approval due to commercial zoning. Confirmed the building permit process will trigger review of ADA compliance, fire safety, and other relevant codes during the Certificate of Use phase.

Ms. Hedges clarified that conditions imposed during this hearing will be enforced by staff, and the Commission will not re-review once the Certificate of Use is issued.

Commissioner Gaines emphasized the quasi-judicial nature of the hearing, noting that decisions must be based on evidence, not speculation. Supported adding reasonable conditions (e.g., ADA compliance, parking) per Section 121-237 of the code.

Commissioner Broderick advocated for adding a condition requiring the applicant to obtain a Certificate of Use, triggering inspections from Planning, Fire, and Building Departments to ensure safety and code compliance.

City Clerk Linda Cox confirmed that obtaining a Certificate of Use covers all necessary inspections and is a precondition to operation.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve the application with three conditions, the third, the inclusion of the certificate of use.

AYE: Commissioner Arnold Gaines, Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., Mayor  
Linda Hudson

NAY: Commissioner Michael Broderick

Passed

- B. Legislative Hearing - Ordinance 25-021 - Review and approval of an application to amend the Millcreek Planned Development (PD) zoning in respect of one (1) parcel containing approximately 62.51 acres, and generally located north of Orange Ave and West of 41st Street in Fort Pierce, with a Planned Development Final Site Plan for Pod 2 to construct a total of 439 dwelling units, distributed in 309 townhomes and 130 detached single-family homes at a density of 7.1 du/ac. The application submitted by applicant REDTAIL DG Tod Mowery on behalf of owner FM Millcreek Holding LLC. more specifically at Parcel ID #2407-124-0001-000-3 - SECOND READING.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, introduced the Ordinance, read by title only, into the record.

ORDINANCE NO. 25-021

AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE MILLCREEK PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) ZONING IN RESPECT OF ONE (1) PARCEL OF APPROXIMATELY 62.51 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, AND GENERALLY LOCATED NORTH OF ORANGE AVE AND WEST OF 41ST STREET; APPROVING MILLCREEK PD POD 2 FINAL SITE PLAN THROUGH THE FINAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) ZONING PROCESS; APPROVING A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONING AGREEMENT; AMENDING ORDINANCE 23-011 AS TO FINAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL, SEPARATION OF PODS, UNIFIED CONTROL, AND UNITY OF TITLE; PROVIDING FOR A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ORDINANCES OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. SECOND READING

Mayor Hudson opened the public hearing.

Tod Mowery, Redtail, addressed two key requests for consideration related to a development agreement timeline and conditions:

#### Clarification of Condition #6 – “Immediately”

The term "immediately" in Item #6 of the timeline (last page of the agreement) was flagged as potentially misleading.

Mr. Mowery clarified that construction plans cannot be submitted immediately after approval, as they must first be developed.

The word “immediately” does not reflect the realistic sequence of events and is redundant, as the agreement already outlines the process in multiple sections.

Request: Modify or remove the word “immediately” from Item #6 to avoid confusion and ensure accurate expectations.

#### Timeline Adjustment Request

Due to delays in reaching the Commission for approval, the current timeline (Exhibit) places the project out of compliance before construction can realistically begin.

Specifically, Item #2 on the timeline assumes groundbreaking by November, which is not feasible.

Request: Add 4 additional months to the initial timeline phase to allow time for construction plan preparation and permit submittal.

Mr. Mowery also noted that Dr. Juan Ortega, a certified traffic engineer, was available to answer any follow-up questions related to traffic impacts.

Mayor Hudson closed the public hearing.

Ms. Hedges:

Clarified that the applicant’s request to change language (specifically the word “immediately” in Item #6) and amend the project timeline must follow proper procedure.

Since the agreement was already signed, any changes would require:

A new signed agreement with revisions.

A second reading before the Commission.

Commissioner Curtis Johnson:

Acknowledged that the process has taken significant time and questioned the practical impact of the word “immediately.”

Noted traffic concerns with upcoming development on Orange Avenue and raised broader questions about traffic flow and signalization.

Expressed that “immediately” is open to interpretation and shouldn’t derail progress.

Emphasized the need for contextual flexibility in enforcing that condition.

Ms. Hedges

Confirmed that the term “immediately” was part of the original motion made by Commissioner Johnson at the previous meeting and included in the final agreement.

Noted that “immediately” is interpreted as "immediately hereafter," not an arbitrary timeframe such as six months.

Reiterated that any modification to wording or project timeline must be directed by the Commission and requires a formal amendment and resubmission.

Commissioner Broderick:

Asked if the Bent Creek development had applied to the state for signalization and if this project could piggyback on that request.

Expressed concern over infeasible timelines, noting the development team has already indicated they will not be ready to break ground by November 2025.

Mr. Mowery:

Attempted to confirm with the County whether Bent Creek had applied for signalization but did not receive a response.

Mr. Freeman

Confirmed that based on communications with the development team, permits and plan preparation are not on track to meet the current November 2025 groundbreaking date.

Commissioner Broderick acknowledged that the applicant will not meet the current

November 2025 groundbreaking date, citing outdated timelines and permitting delays. He emphasized two key issues:  
“Immediate” Signalization Language – The term needs clarification or revision to reflect realistic procedural steps.  
Phase Timeline Revisions – The applicant's request for an additional four months to prepare construction plans is reasonable given the delays.  
He asserted that the current agreement is no longer viable and sets the applicant up for failure, and agreed Ms. Hedges that amending the agreement requires a formal rewrite, not informal edits. He recommended:  
Direction from the Commission to rework the agreement language and timelines.  
A consensus to proceed without causing further delay.  
A revised agreement that sets the applicant up for success while maintaining accountability.  
He concluded by calling for practical cooperation to ensure the development proceeds efficiently and transparently.

#### The Commission Discussed

Timeline Adjustments: The developer requested a 4-month extension to all project phases listed in Exhibit 2 due to delays in finalizing construction plans.  
Language Revision – Condition #6: The developer requested to remove the word “immediately” from Condition #6 related to the FDOT signalization submission.  
The Commission agreed to revise the language to align submission timing with each phase’s actual site plan submittal.  
The Commission agreed unanimously to the requested changes.

All parties present confirmed agreement with the revisions.  
However, Ms. Hedges clarified that because the ordinance approves the signed development agreement, the revised agreement must be brought back in final form.

The revised development agreement with:  
The removal of “immediately” from Condition #6, and  
A 4-month extension to the development timeline in Exhibit 2 will be brought back on August 18, 2025 for the second reading.

The Commission explicitly stated this does not restart the process or constitute a new first reading. It remains a second reading with minor revisions.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to postpone Ordinance No. 25-021 to August 18th to correct the ordinance and exhibit to reflect a four-month extension to the development timeline and the removal of the word “immediately” on second reading.

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

Passed

- C. Legislative Hearing - Ordinance 25-022 amending Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 5, Police Officers Retirement/Pension Funds to allow the Police Chief to opt out of the Police Officers Retirement Trust Fund and to increase DROP participation period to six years to mirror the general employee plan. FIRST READING

City Clerk, Linda Cox, introduced the Ordinance, read by title only, into the record.

#### ORDINANCE NO. 25-022

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION, ARTICLE IV, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES, DIVISION 5, POLICE OFFICERS’ RETIREMENT/PENSION FUNDS, SUBDIVISION II – POLICE OFFICERS’ RETIREMENT TRUST FUND; BY AMENDING SECTION 2-381, DEFINITIONS AT THE DEFINITION OF POLICE

OFFICER TO ALLOW THE POLICE CHIEF TO OPT OUT OF THE POLICE OFFICERS' RETIREMENT TRUST FUND PLAN; BY AMENDING SECTION 2-388, EMPLOYEE WITHDRAWAL FROM PLAN TO CORRECT AN INTERNAL INCONSISTENCY; AMENDING SECTION 2-397, DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN (DROP) TO INCREASE DROP PARTICIPATION PERIOD TO SIX YEARS TO MIRROR THE GENERAL EMPLOYEE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.FIRST READING

City Manager, Richard Chess, clarified that this is the first reading of an ordinance related to the Police Officers' Retirement and Pension Fund. The ordinance would allow any Police Chief to opt out of participating in the Police Officers' Retirement Fund. If approved, the change would apply retroactively to the current Police Chief.

Mayor Hudson opened the public hearing.  
Seeing no one, she closed the public hearing.

Motion was made by Commissioner Arnold Gaines, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. to approve Ordinance No. 25-022.

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

Passed

### 13. CITY COMMISSION

- A. PULLED AT THE REQUEST OF STAFF. Resolution 25-R51 Approving an Amendment to the Assigned and Assumed Agreement for the Development of King's Landing (Villas Plat) and Release of the City's Reverter to the Villas Plat Property, only.
- B. Resolution 25-R55 appointing a member to the Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful Board to fill an at-large vacancy.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, introduced the Resolution, read by title only, into the record.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-R55  
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, CERTIFYING THE APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE KEEP FORT PIERCE BEAUTIFUL ADVISORY BOARD; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Commissioner Gaines – T-Erica Pugh

Mayor Hudson – Anthony Adams

Commissioner Johnson – Debbie Edmond

Commissioner Broderick – Debbie Edmond

Motion was made by Commissioner Arnold Gaines, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. to appoint Debbie Edmond to the Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful Board.

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

Passed

- C. Resolution 25-R56 appointing members to serve on the Fort Pierce Youth Council.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, introduced the Resolution, read by title only, into the record.  
RESOLUTION NO. 25-R56  
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, CERTIFYING THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Cox commented that, in the past, we have appointed all interested individuals rather than limiting the group to the seven designated members. So far, this approach has worked well—we've been able to manage the group of young participants without needing to turn anyone away.

The Commission emphasized the importance of maintaining quorum for the group to function effectively. Staff will monitor participation, and if a student appears disengaged or decides it's not the right fit after the group begins meeting, they may be asked to step down to preserve quorum and ensure smooth operations. Additionally, it was noted that outreach had been conducted to all Fort Pierce schools to recruit student participants. Commissioner Gaines mentioned that St. Andrew's had initially been overlooked and confirmed he had reached out to their principal. Other participating schools include John Carroll, Fort Pierce Central, Fort Pierce Westwood, and Port St. Lucie High School.

Motion was made by Commissioner Arnold Gaines, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. to approve Resolution No. 25-R56 appointing all applicants to the board.

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

Passed

- D. Resolution 25-R57 Setting a Special Election to fill the vacant Commissioner seat of District 2, Seat 2.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, introduced the Resolution, read by title only, into the record.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-R57  
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, SETTING A DATE FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF FILLING THE VACANCY OF CITY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 2, SEAT 2; ESTABLISHING A QUALIFYING PERIOD; SETTING THE DATE FOR A RUNOFF ELECTION IF NECESSARY AFTER THE SPECIAL ELECTION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Commission reviewed the resolution setting the primary election for November 4 and the run-off for January 13 (moved from January 20 due to venue availability).

Discussion included early voting locations, with consensus to use the Supervisor of Elections' office as the early voting site due to cost savings, air-conditioned facilities, and logistical challenges in securing alternate venues for eight days. The Commission noted this location is reasonable despite some residents needing to travel farther.

Regarding precincts, several commissioners emphasized keeping all current precincts open on Election Day to avoid confusion, ensure voter accessibility, and maintain public trust. While combining smaller precincts could save \$1,300–\$2,500, the Commission agreed that preserving each precinct location was more important than the potential cost savings. Staff will continue to work with the Supervisor of Elections to minimize election expenses without reducing access.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Michael Broderick to approve Resolution No. 25-R57.

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

Passed

#### **14. 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 thirty 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.

Larry Winters  
Kris Einstein  
Iola Mosley

#### **15. COMMENTS FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

##### **A. Reports**

City Manager, Richard Chess, provided the Police Chief recruitment update – reporting that the job description has been finalized and is ready for posting, pending completion of the recruitment brochure, expected this week. Final coordination with Risk Management is needed to address liability coverage; a meeting is planned within the next two days. Once finalized, the agreement will be signed, with the goal of posting the position next week. Mr. Chess confirmed that the posting will be sent to commissioners, and updates will be provided during upcoming individual meetings.

City Clerk, Linda Cox, commented on committee coverage as Commissioner Taylor previously served on three committees: Tourist Development Council, St. Lucie County Roundtable, and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. Mayor Hudson will cover the Tourist Development Council, Commissioner Broderick will cover the St. Lucie County Roundtable, and Commissioner Johnson will cover the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

City Attorney Sara Hedges – No comments.

#### **16. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Broderick expressed appreciation to staff for their dedication and perseverance. He commended their “whatever it takes” attitude, ability to keep city business moving forward, and commitment to serving the citizens of Fort Pierce despite being short-handed and taking on additional committee assignments.

Commissioner Johnson thanked the residents of Fort Pierce for attending the hero’s funeral for Jarius, showing strong community support for her family. He commended the Pink Rose Foundation and partnering organizations for a successful back-to-school event with large turnout and generous donations. He reported requesting a meeting with city staff and the Downtown Business Association Alliance to ensure effective communication, a unified voice, and appropriate use of city resources. He also scheduled a meeting with CRA staff , further reported that the Zora Neal Hurston Museum on 9th Street was recently vandalized, with copper stolen and walls damaged. Restoration progress is ongoing despite the setback, and additional security measures are being implemented.

He closed by encouraging vigilance and safety as students return to school.

Mayor Hudson noted that a property has been identified by a national landmark

group and will check if funding is available from them. She emphasized the need for communication and coordination regarding the designation.

Commissioner Gaines urged immediate enforcement against an unregistered short-term rental, stressing fairness to compliant owners. Staff confirmed the ordinance requirements would be enforced promptly. He clarified that commissioners did not receive a raise, only a cost-of-living adjustment like other city employees. Addressing retirees, he explained the retirement board (on which he and Commissioner Broderick serve) commissioned a study and found benefits cannot be increased until the plan reaches 90% funding, per state statute and city charter. The fund is currently just over 80%. Reaching 90% would require significant additional contributions from the city and employees. Gaines encouraged retirees to initiate a charter change if they wish to remove the 90% requirement. Additionally, encouraged residents to be mindful and prepared as the new school year begins. Families are reminded to plan ahead for increased morning and afternoon traffic and to exercise caution for students traveling to and from school. Appreciation was expressed to the many organizations, community groups, and volunteers who generously donated backpacks and school supplies, ensuring that local students start the year equipped for success.

Johnna Morris, Director of Finance, reported the fund is currently 82% funded, with \$71.85 million in assets and an unfunded liability that must be fully covered, plus interest, before benefits can be increased. Per city ordinance, the plan must be 100% funded to grant a COLA, and Florida statute prohibits granting benefits not in place during a retiree's employment.

Mayor Hudson noted that a resident who spoke about short-term rental regulations operates one himself and was involved in the planning process, appreciating his commitment to compliance. Reported attending the celebratory kickoff for the new school year at Legacy High School, located at the far end of Crosstown Parkway. The event highlighted St. Lucie County's "A" district rating, set ambitious goals for the coming year, and was attended by a large number of teachers, county officials, and the superintendent. She praised the event as a first-class celebration and mentioned ongoing improvements at Westwood Prep, and commented on the A1A's name change and signage.

## 17. ADJOURNMENT

Immediately following adjournment, please move toward the doors and exit the chambers. This allows for the safe and courteous exit of all persons, and those on the dais. Conversations after the meeting should be held outside of chambers, in the foyer or elsewhere, but not in the commission chambers where lights will be out as soon as the chambers are empty.

Mayor Hudson adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR COMMISSIONER