

# **FORT PIERCE YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Fort Pierce Youth Council - Thursday, December 19, 2024 - 4:00 p.m. City Hall - 2nd Floor Conference Room, 100 North U.S. #1, Fort Pierce, Florida

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Janessa Diaz called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

## **2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Vice Chair Reese Adams; Chairperson Janessa Diaz; 2nd Vice Chair Naomi Hypolite; Emily Maldonado; Elizabeth Outten

Absent: Tianna Edgecombe; Elliott Gardner; KaShylla Wood

Staff Present: Audria Moore, Special Projects Coordinator; Jennifer Robinson, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Attendees: Linda Cox, Presenter, Marsha Commond, Presenter

## **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **a. Approval of the Minutes of the October 17, 2024 Meeting**

Motion was made by Emily Maldonado and seconded by 2nd Vice Chair Naomi Hypolite to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2024 meeting.

All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

## **4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

No additions or deletions to the agenda were proposed.

## **5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Any person who wishes to comment on any subject on this Agenda may be heard at this time. Please limit your comments to no more than five (5) minutes, as this section of the Agenda is limited to thirty minutes. The Youth Advisory Committee will not be able to take any official action under "Comments from the Public" section.

No members of the public were present.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Upcoming Events/Activities
- **Youth Council Legislative Action Days Program** The 2025 Youth Council Legislative Action Days Program will be held on March 25-26, 2025 in Tallahassee.
  - **Community Service Contest** Starting in January, this contest invites youth councils to submit current projects addressing a local need.
  - **Video Competition** Starting each August, the Youth Council Video Competition provides a way for Florida's youth councils to showcase their ideas, creativity, and commitment to their communities.
  - **Council2College Scholarship** This essay contest assists Florida municipal youth council leaders who are pursuing post-high school education. The councils also must be active in the League's youth council programs.

Under old business, the committee discussed several upcoming events and activities. The Youth Council Legislative Action Days program was announced for March 25-26, 2025, to be held in Tallahassee. The Community Services Contest, scheduled to begin in January, was reviewed, with Ms. Moore offering to provide examples at the next meeting. Discussion then turned to the Video Competition, set to begin in August of the following year, which will showcase the council's activities and community involvement. Members learned that past participants would be eligible to participate in the competition even after graduating and heading to college. The Council to College Scholarship program was also presented, with Ms. Moore agreeing to distribute application deadline information to all members.

## 7. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Council Training

1. Linda Cox, Acting City Manager

The meeting featured a presentation from Linda Cox, who serves as both Acting City Manager and City Clerk of Fort Pierce. Ms. Cox explained the city's governmental structure, describing how the Mayor and City Commission oversee three charter officers: the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney. She detailed her responsibilities as Acting City Manager, which include overseeing all city operations and managing more than 300 employees across twelve departments, including Police, Animal Care and Shelter, Planning and Zoning, and Administrative Services. In her ongoing role as City Clerk, which she has held for eleven years, she manages city documentation and handles citizen inquiries.

Ms. Cox addressed several current challenges facing Fort Pierce, including the complexities of city boundaries and annexation processes. She outlined major ongoing projects managed by the City, such as the St. Anastasia building reconstruction on Orange Avenue and the renovation of the Seven Gables House Visitor Center. The presentation covered the city's approach to addressing homelessness through partnerships with the Treasure Coast Homeless Coalition and dedicated police outreach, as well as challenges with housing affordability affecting the city's first-time homebuyer program. Ms. Cox mentioned that Mayor Linda Hudson is knowledgeable about the city's history, and might provide a future presentation to the Council.

b. Youth Award Recognition Program

This item was postponed to the January 16, 2025 meeting.

c. **EMPOWER YOUTH Labor of Love**

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to discussing a proposed youth volunteer program designed to assist senior homeowners struggling with code enforcement compliance. Ms. Marsha Commond, Special Projects Coordinator/Office Manager from Public Works, shared insights from her experience with Fort Lauderdale's "Adopt a Neighbor" program. The proposed initiative would require coordination between Code Enforcement, which would identify eligible homeowners, and Public Works, which would provide technical expertise and oversight for volunteer teams.

The Council engaged in detailed discussion about implementation timing and scope, ultimately deciding to start with a pilot program of one or two homes. Members considered various factors, including the timing of the hurricane season and academic testing periods, while focusing specifically on addressing regular maintenance needs for homeowners. Ms. Commond recommended examining similar programs in other cities to develop effective guidelines, noting that the proposal would require City Commission approval due to resource requirements.

To move the project forward, specific assignments were distributed among council members. Chairperson Janessa Diaz will continue developing qualification criteria with Code Enforcement, while Naom Hypolite will coordinate with Public Works regarding volunteer support and technical expertise requirements. Emily Maldonado was tasked with creating a promotional strategy to engage youth volunteers.

8. **COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS**

The meeting concluded with a brief lesson on parliamentary procedure by Ms. Moore, who reminded the members about the correct protocol for making and seconding motions for adjournment. The meeting was then properly adjourned.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Emily Maldonado and seconded by 2nd Vice Chair Naomi Hypolite to adjourn the meeting at 5:13 PM.

All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (772) 467-3065 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.