


Fw: For Review

From Chris Dzadoovsky <cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com>

Date Mon 4/20/2026 7:56 PM

To Linda Cox <lcox@cityoffortpierce.com>

Cc Richard Chess <rches@cityoffortpierce.com>; Camille Wallace <cwallace@cityoffortpierce.com>; Sara Hedges <shedges@cityoffortpierce.com>

 1 attachment (27 KB)

WAGE_GARNISHMENT_city_attorney_question_set.docx;

Clerk Cox

Here is additional information that the Mayor and Commissioners should have that raised my concerns to a very high level.

Respectfully

Chris Dzadoovsky
City of Fort Pierce Commissioner
cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com
Work Cell - 772-710-7405
772 834 8539

From: Chris Dzadoovsky <cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com>

Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 12:53 PM

To: Linda Cox <lcox@cityoffortpierce.com>

Cc: Jared Sorensen <jsorensen@cityoffortpierce.com>

Subject: Fw: For Review

Linda:

It looks like I did not copy you in on this email, I had two versions while editing.... apologies

DZ

From: Chris Dzadoovsky <cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com>

Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2026 12:19 PM

To: Richard Chess <rches@cityoffortpierce.com>; Camille Wallace <cwallace@cityoffortpierce.com>

Subject: For Review

Good afternoon,

I wanted to follow up and provide some additional context based on my continued review of recent correspondence and the related governance considerations we have been discussing.

In reviewing the recent email from the City Attorney, there were a couple of statements that, when considered alongside recent actions and the current or recent email (below) regarding the development of an ordinance defining Charter Officer roles, raised additional questions for me.

I want to be clear in how I am approaching this.

In my opinion, it is possible that prior efforts—whether intentional or not—may have attempted to define or expand certain functions of the City Attorney through ordinance following the removal of language from the Charter under Home Rule provisions. However, based on my review to date, I have not identified any ordinance that clearly establishes authority beyond the advisory role consistent with the Charter structure.

With that said, I also want to acknowledge that the current City Attorney may be operating under the understanding that such authority exists or was previously established. My intent is not to challenge that perspective directly, but rather to ensure that we are all aligned on what authority has actually been adopted and approved.

From a governance standpoint, I believe it is important to reaffirm that:

- The Charter remains the controlling document
- Ordinances may define duties, but cannot expand or alter Charter-based authority
- Any change in the practical exercise of authority must be clearly understood and approved by the Commission

As discussion moves forward regarding the development of an ordinance addressing the roles of Charter Officers, I believe it is critical that:

- The City Manager is fully aware of any implications to administrative authority
- The Commission is clearly informed of any potential changes to how authority is exercised
- Any proposed ordinance be evaluated in the context of the Charter prior to consideration

In my opinion, this is not a matter of intent, but of ensuring clarity, transparency, and proper alignment with the Charter as the governing document of the City.

I appreciate your attention to this and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to ensure that our processes remain clear, consistent, and aligned with the Charter.

This will be added to my comments and research for Monday. I will provide the entire packet to the City Clerk as I should tomorrow when complete and printed for distribution as appropriate.

CUT AND PASTED BECAUSE (IT) WILL NOT PERMIT A WORD DOCUMENT TO BE ATTACHED:

Purpose of Comment

To ensure the Commission is fully aware of how ordinances may define duties and whether those definitions align with the Fort Pierce City Charter.

Charter as Governing Authority

The Fort Pierce City Charter establishes the framework of authority:

- City Commission – Policy Authority (Charter §2.01 – verify)
- City Manager – Chief Administrative Officer (Charter §3.01 – verify)
- City Clerk – Custodian of Records (Charter §4.01 – verify)
- City Attorney – Legal Advisor (Charter §45 – advisory authority only)

In my opinion, this structure defines separation of roles and limits authority accordingly.

Role of Ordinances Under Home Rule

Under F.S. §166.021 (Home Rule), municipalities may adopt ordinances to implement functions. However, ordinances must remain consistent with the Charter and cannot expand or alter Charter-defined authority.

Area of Governance Concern

A line in a recent email of developing ordinances to define Charter Officer roles raises the question of whether such ordinances could unintentionally expand or reinterpret authority beyond what is established in the Charter.

Why This Matters

If not carefully reviewed, ordinance language could:

- **Shift practical authority**
- **Introduce changes in administrative control**
- **Do so without full Commission awareness of implications**

In my opinion, this is a matter of transparency and governance clarity.

Request for Commission Awareness

I respectfully request that any proposed ordinance:

- 1. Clearly identify what authority is being described or modified**
- 2. Cite the Charter provision it aligns with**
- 3. Explain whether it changes practical authority**
- 4. Provide the Commission with adequate time to review and understand implications**

Closing Statement

My intent is to ensure the Charter remains the controlling document and that the Commission fully understands any changes before adoption. This is about clarity, transparency, and protecting the structure of governance.

Respectfully

Chris Dzadoovsky
City of Fort Pierce Commissioner
cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com
Work Cell - 772-710-7405
772 834 8539

From: Sara Hedges <shedges@cityoffortpierce.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 2:47 PM
To: Chris Dzadoovsky <cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com>
Subject: RE: For Clarification of our discussion today.

Good Afternoon –

Thank you for the follow-up. I have a call set with outside counsel for tomorrow morning. I will be asking him to provide a written opinion on this matter. Once it is received, I will send that to the entire City Commission, the City Manager, and the Human Resources Manager.

I will also be working on an Ordinance outlining both the City Attorney and the City Clerk's roles. From what I can tell, when the Code rewrite was done, language was stricken from the Charter that should have been put into an Ordinance related to both of those offices. For some reason, it was not. This was before I was here. I will work on getting that prepared for presentation to the City Commission. **I WILL DEMAND, FIRST THAT THE CITY COMMISSION MUST MAKE A MOTION TO CONDUCT SUCH AN ACTION BY THE CA WITH ALL OF THE QUESTIONS I HAVE PLACED IN MY DOCUMENTS EVEN IF FOR A DRAFT THAT WOULD HAVE TO COME BACK TO THE COMMISSION FOR REVIEW AND ACTION IF ANY.**

My biggest concern currently is the statement from the City Manager that he will intentionally be excluding the City Attorney's Office from all employment matters for the City moving forward. This is absolutely unacceptable for any City Attorney who is tasked with protecting the legal interests of this City. It is also a step backward in the progress this City has attempted to make in ending the past practices in the City Manager's Office of excluding the City Attorney from issues. This mentality is what has contributed to so many of the legal issues facing the City currently. My hopes of progress and correction seem misplaced at this point, which is truly sad for me and for this City.

You have specifically said your expectation of the Charter Officers is for us to work as a team. The City Manager continuing to intentionally exclude the City Attorney from legal matters affecting this City is the opposite of teamwork. After providing the City Manager with the Garnishment, discussing how he would like me to handle processing it, and taking the steps he specifically asked me to take with processing the Garnishment and notifying the City Commission, he failed to consult, include, or inform me of any decisions thereafter. I cannot effectively represent the City without cooperation from the City Manager.

Thanks.

Sara Hedges | City Attorney | City of Fort Pierce

City Attorney's Office

Phone: 772.467.3046 Fax: 772.489.5492

100 North U.S. 1 Fort Pierce, FL 34950

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#)



From: Chris Dzadoovsky <cdzadoovsky@cityoffortpierce.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 4:19 PM

To: Sara Hedges <shedges@cityoffortpierce.com>

Subject: For Clarification of our discussion today.

Ms. Hedges:

In order to continue my research on the matter and concerns you that brought to me earlier today, please help me with these questions:

Charter Authority

1. *Can you identify the specific provision within Section 43 of the City Charter that would restrict the City Manager from communicating with outside legal counsel retained by the City?*

Federal Law – Wage Garnishment

2. *Are you familiar with the requirements of 15 U.S.C. § 1674(a) under the Consumer Credit Protection Act, which prohibits termination of an employee based on a single wage garnishment?*
3. *Does your legal recommendation take into account the potential penalties outlined under 15 U.S.C. § 1674(b)?*
4. *Can you provide a written legal opinion confirming that termination in this case would not violate federal law?*

Liability Exposure

5. *Is there any potential personal liability exposure to the City Manager if termination occurs in contradiction to federal statute?*

Scope of Investigation

6. *What is the legal authority for reviewing an employee's personal financial history beyond the initial garnishment order?*
7. *How does that review align with employment law, privacy considerations, and due process?*

Outside Counsel

8. *What legal basis exists for restricting the City Manager from consulting outside counsel retained by the City?*

Thank you, Chris

Respectfully

Chris Dzadoovsky
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