

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, APRIL 20, 2026.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hudson called this meeting to order at 5:05pm.

2. OPENING PRAYER - Commissioner Arnold Gaines.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Michael Broderick; Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky;
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 minutes from the April 6, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve the minutes from the April 6, 2026 regular meeting.

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

Passed

6. PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Arbor Day, City of Fort Pierce
- B. Ft. Pierce Sunrise Kiwanis 100th Anniversary Celebration Month, St. Lucie County
- C. World Landscape Architecture Month, Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

7. LETTERS TO COMMISSION

8. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

City Manager Richard Chess requested to pull item 11A as there are three sticking points that have to be worked out with the vendor.

Motion was made by Commissioner Michael Broderick, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. to approve the agenda with the removal of item 11A.

AYE: Commissioner Michael Broderick, Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky,
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.

10. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

- A. Lincoln Park Main Street, Inc. Second Quarter Program Update covering FY2026 (January 1, 2026 to March 31, 2026).

Pamela Carithers, Lincoln Park Main Street, gave a brief presentation covering completed and anticipated projects along with their revenue and expenses. Ms. Carithers shared that a boxing gym opened on 910 Avenue D through the support and advertisement from Lincoln Park Main Street. Ms. Carithers shared that Lincoln Park Main Street has partnered with Sunrise City Community Housing Development Organization Inc to develop models for sustainable housing within Lincoln Park. Commissioner Curtis Johnson Jr. asked for City Manager Richard Chess to receive the budget to provide Commissioner Johnson with an understanding why Lincoln Park Main Street's budget is in a deficit. Ms. Carithers stated the Lincoln Park Main Street has not received City funding for the second quarter so that is why their budget is showing to be in a deficit. Mr. Chess inquired if Lincoln Park Main Street has paid for their expenses and if so, where the funding comes from. Ms. Carithers stated that they paid for their expenses with their savings reserve. Commissioner Arnold Gaines inquired as to how the community is benefitting from Lincoln Park Main Street directly. Ms. Carithers shared that they advertise events going on in the community; Commissioner Gaines asked to schedule a meeting so that she can provide him with more information of what Lincoln Park Main Street does to directly benefit the community.

- B. Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc. Second Quarter Program Update covering FY2026 (January 21, 2026 to March 31, 2026).

Michelle Cavalcanti, Main Street Fort Pierce, gave a brief presentation discussing publications and on going projects along with their revenue and expenses. Ms. Cavalcanti shared updates regarding to the work Main Street Fort Pierce has done on the Platts/Backus House. Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky suggested that Main Street Fort Pierce should consider acting as a "welcoming step" to support individuals and businesses looking to open business in Fort Pierce. Ms. Cavalcanti stated that Main Street Fort Pierce would be willing to assist and would like to work with the Engineering and Building departments to expand their knowledge to better assist. Commissioner Arnold Gaines inquired if there is a report done by Main Street Fort Pierce to showcase how many new businesses are being generated in correlation to their publications. Ms. Cavalcanti indicated that she will look into having that report generated. Commissioner Curtis Johnson, Jr. inquired if Main Street Fort Pierce has a board to discuss their strategic planning; Ms. Cavalcanti confirmed they do and that the strategic plan is presented to the public during Main Street Fort Pierce's annual meeting on May 20, 2026.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. PULLED AT STAFF'S REQUEST. Approval of Management Agreement with VenuWorks of Fort Pierce, LLC for Operation of the Sunrise Theatre

- B. Approval for the Mayor to execute the Management Control Agreement between SLCSO, FPPD, and PSLPD and St. Lucie County to update authorized signatories to reflect current officeholders.
- C. Approval of a license agreement to temporarily allow FDOT access to perform maintenance work on City of Fort Pierce Parcel No. 2422-413-0000-010-3.
- D. Approval of a license agreement to temporarily allow FDOT access to perform maintenance work on City of Fort Pierce Parcel No. 2422-601-0008-000-3.
- E. Approval of Lincoln Park Main Street, Inc.'s FY2026 Second Quarter Disbursement in the amount of \$12,500 subject to acceptance of the FY2026 Second Quarter Report.
- F. Approval of Main Street Fort Pierce Inc.'s FY2026 Second Quarter Disbursement in the amount of \$12,500 subject to acceptance of the FY2026 Second Quarter Report.
- G. Approval of Letter of Support for the Lincoln Park Main Street Small Business Accelerator program.

Motion was made by Commissioner Michael Broderick, seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve items 11B through 11G of the Consent Agenda.

AYE: Commissioner Michael Broderick, Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky,
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.

13. CITY COMMISSION

- A. Resolution 26-R29 accepting City Audit on all funds for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025, as prepared by DiBartolomeo, McBee, Hartley & Barnes, P.A.

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

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA; ACCEPTING THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE'S FY2025 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2024 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mark Barnes, DiBartolomeo, McBee, Hartley & Barnes, P.A., gave a brief presentation highlighting items from the audit of the 2025 Fiscal Year. Mr. Barnes shared that the City's cash and investments went up by \$5.8 million since the City's revenue had exceeded its expenses. Liability decreased by \$6.8 million due to the American Rescue Grant received by the City. Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky provided commentary that the report done by a State Representative stating that the City spent over \$10 million was not an official audit; Mr. Barnes confirmed it was not an audit as the City's detailed records were not reviewed. Mr. Barnes shared that the City's tax revenue increased by \$13 million over the last five years. Mayor Linda Hudson requested clarification that the tax revenue increase was due to the increase in property value; Mr. Barnes affirmed.

Commissioner Curtis Johnson Jr. inquired if any early trend indicators presented an

impact on the Solid Waste with the increase in fuel prices, equipment costs, and the tonnage being picked up. Mr. Barnes shared that the expenses increased by \$400,000 while the revenue increased by \$200,000. Commissioner Johnson expressed concern regarding the expected trends that will impact Solid Waste. Commissioner Johnson requested clarification on the 21% operating income increase for the Stormwater fund. Mr. Barnes provided that the City's revenue went up by \$200,000 while the expenses went down by \$100,000 and the net non-operating revenue also went down which made up the additional profit.

Commissioner Michael Broderick questioned if the auditors get a list of the outstanding account receivables and if it is incorporated into the financial report; Mr. Barnes stated that the total for the outstanding account receivables are provided in the report. Commissioner Johnson provided commentary that the Golf Course's negative revenue can be decreased if the concessions there are improved. Both Commissioner Broderick and Commissioner Dzadoovsky provided ideas of improvements that can assist the revenue of the Golf Course that are to be further discussed during the City's Strategic Planning. Mr. Barnes stated that the Animal Adoption Center's negative income is \$800,000. Commissioner Arnold Gaines stated a discussion must be had to see what can be done to keep the City from continuing to lose money.

Commissioner Broderick inquired if the auditors found any anomalies in the financial report; Mr. Barnes provided that they left comments in the letter regarding any sections that need adjustments. Commissioner Broderick questioned if the auditors look at the City-owned properties' real estate tax invoices and if so, where any anomalies found. Mr. Barnes provided that the auditors do a random sampling and no anomalies were found. Commissioner Broderick stated a detailed forensic analysis must be completed so that the City has a clear understanding of any outstanding balances that need to be collected on.

Motion was made by Commissioner Michael Broderick, seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve Resolution 26-R29.

AYE: Commissioner Michael Broderick, Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky,
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.

Delores Hogan-Johnson

15. COMMENTS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Richard Chess shared that the Employee Picnic will take place on April 25th at Jaycee Park.
City Clerk Linda Cox and City Attorney Sara Hedges had no comments.

A. City Manager Report

16. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Arnold Gaines shared Charles and Hassie Russ' legacy in the City of Fort Pierce and gave his condolences. Commissioner Gaines shared that he is now 1 of 52 individuals, in the State of Florida, as a Certified Retirement Board Trustee from FPPTA. Commissioner Curtis Johnson Jr. acknowledged the Russ' significant lives and legacy to Fort Pierce and expressed his condolences. Commissioner Johnson shared that due to prior commitments, he will be out of town the following week. Commissioner Johnson stated that by having tough conversations regarding things that must change, the commission will move the City of Fort Pierce forward. Additionally, Commissioner Johnson stated that the vandalism to the Highwaymen Museum's gate is unacceptable and he will be discussing with Fort Pierce Police Chief David Smith to rectify this situation. Commissioner Michael Broderick seconded Commissioner Johnson's comment regarding the vandalism and stated that the activity on that corner of Avenue D is constant. Commissioner Broderick stated that the Fort Pierce Police Department has to get involved in the situation. Additionally, Commissioner Broderick thanked Commissioner Gaines for his commitment to the Retirement Board for the betterment of the City. Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky discussed his research of the City Charter concerning the roles of the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney. Mayor Linda Hudson suggested for Commissioner Dzadovsky to request to add an agenda item moving forward so that the Commission is prepared for the extensive discussion and so that the public may view the attachments as well. Mayor Hudson shared that she is open to discussing the City Charter and believes it would be a great refresher for the Commission.

Commissioner Dzadovsky opened the discussion if the City Attorney Sara Hedges must be involved in the City Manager Richard Chess' communication with outside counsel regarding a City employee. Commissioner Broderick stated that the outside counsel is contracted through the City Attorney's budget; thus, Ms. Hedges is within her scope to request to be involved in the conversation. Commissioner Dzadovsky challenged by stating that Ms. Hedges' role is advisory only and that Mr. Chess is within his scope to make decision on behalf of the City without Ms. Hedges' involvement. Commissioner Dzadovsky further stated, in his opinion, Ms. Hedges' conducted unnecessary legal research of information regarding the discussed employee. Commissioner Broderick countered by stating that Ms. Hedges was within her scope of work as the research was conducted after the City was served. Mayor Hudson stated that if Ms. Hedges was involved in the communication made to the outside counsel, she would not have had to conduct additional research. Commissioner Gaines reminded the Commission that what is stated on the record can be used for any potential lawsuits. Commissioner Gaines expressed concern regarding how a decision was made without the acknowledgement of an established federal law. Additionally, Commissioner Gaines suggested that this discussion should be added as a separate agenda item for an upcoming meeting. Commissioner Johnson expressed concern that it seems that there is missing information in this discussion and stated that a discussion should be had with all involved parties to ensure the Commission has all the necessary information to move forward. Commissioner Broderick requested a special meeting be held to further this discussion. City Clerk Linda Cox shared that the May 4th City Commission meeting can shut down for any further items and this discussion can be added as the final agenda item for discussion.

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 this meeting at 7:55pm.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR COMMISSIONER