

Meeting called to order at 6:09 pm by Mark Frandsen, President.

Invocation by: Dawn F.

Pledge of Allegiance by: Sheriff Kurt Hoffman

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Secretary and Treasurer Reports were available for review. Dignitaries, Officials and Candidates were introduced and welcomed by Mark. All were welcomed to the new venue for our meetings.

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Before the meeting began, members were asked to sign the membership roster. The signed roster will be required at each meeting going forward. Club Dues for 2024 were collected or reminders for payment were provided.

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Mark noted that it is important to have party unity in the State and County. He stated that his loyalty lies with the RPOF and the REC. In the end, when the candidate is chosen by the primary process, all must stand behind that candidate.

Then Andrew Sias was introduced. Andrew is running for District 3 Commissioner in North Port. Andrew gave a very brief synopsis of his concerns for North Port. These are also the issues he will work on if elected. He indicated that he supports all Republican Core Values. North Port is growing rapidly and we must not continue to delay projects to improve the City such as Price Boulevard. We must support the Fire and Police Departments. Attention to Water Resources are important as North Port and Sarasota County continue to grow exponentially. Finally, we only have 8% of city property developed as business/commercial. We need to increase this to 20% to reduce tax burdens on residential properties. He would build relationships with private and public entities to correct this disparity.

Mark then acknowledged the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our Club Member Nina. He spoke of her independence and continued involvement in the community. We sang Happy Birthday and a cake, provided by the club, will be enjoyed at the end of the meeting.

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Mark then introduced the featured speaker for the evening, Michael A. Moran. Mr. Moran is currently the Sarasota County District 1 Commissioner and the commission's Chair. He noted that his opponent, the incumbent, Barbara Ford-Coates, has been in that office for 49 years. She is the only Democrat to hold an elected office in Sarasota County.

Mr. Moran enumerated an extensive list of services and responsibilities that the county of Sarasota provides for its residents. He noted that all bonds issued by the county have the highest bond rating and that we also have the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest millage rate in Florida. He was proud of the accomplishments of the County Commission that he has served for 7 years.

He emphasized his support of Republican principles and his history of membership in Republican organizations. He has an opponent in the primary, Charles Bear, that has only been a registered Republican for 10 months and has no voting history in primaries, whatsoever. He stated that it is important for all Republicans to speak openly about party principles. Do not allow opposing principles to go unchallenged.

Mr. Moran noted that he has 3 incentives for seeking the office of Tax Collector in Sarasota County. First, in addition to Ms. Ford-Coates that has been in that office 49 years, several other Constitutional officers in the county are also advancing in age and longevity in their positions. In the next few years there could be many seats that will be up for election at the same time. Second, he is well suited for this as he has experience in the private sector running a payroll business and understands the importance of accurate and timely service. Finally, the current software system used by the Collectors office is several versions out of date. The software vendor may no longer service that system and there has been no sign of action or concern from the Collector's office. Cybersecurity is connected to the integrity of the software as well.

Questions were posed by the audience regarding his Republican opponent and Sarasota county legal issues.

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Mark noted some final points. The wait staff at the AMVETS Post 312 are all volunteers. They earn money from tips so please be generous. On February 1<sup>st</sup> at the 4pm meeting of the North Port Commissioners, Nina will receive a proclamation from the City and all are invited. All Website purchases by credit card will now be subject to a 3% service fee. On Thursdays from 5:30pm to 6:30 pm on WKDW 97.5 FM there is a political talk show. Please tune in.

Next speakers will be in February, Ron Turner. In March, Ed Brodsky. In April, James Buchanan and Michelle Posey will each present to the club.

The cake was served and the meeting adjourned at about 7:08pm

Respectfully submitted,

Marian L. Patricoski

Secretary