

Meeting called to order at 6:04 Pm by Mark Frandsen, President.

Invocation By: Mary Jepson

Pledge led By: Bill Haugh

Treasurer and Secretary Reports Available for review.

Officials and Dignitaries were introduced. Visitors were welcomed.

Audio and Video recording is not permitted.

Mark began the meeting by announcing that long-time members Bill and Arletta Haugh were moving back up north to be closer to family. We will miss them.

Alice Rothbauer, Vice Chairperson of the Sarasota County REC thanked all who attended the April 1st event for Ms. McGillicuddy. A donor provided \$25,000 toward the event. She thanked our club for participating at the County Fair in March. She encouraged all present to contact neighbors and friends to vote in the May North Port Referendum Election. Alice noted that the next REC meeting has been rescheduled to June 12. It will be at the Robard's Arena at 7pm. The speaker will be the Vice Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida. REC must meet 6 times per year and they try to rotate venue locations.

Mark noted that early voting for the referendum will be held May 5th through the 10th at the Biscayne Plaza only. Volunteers needed at our non-partisan tent to answer voter questions. Election Day is May 13th from 7 am to 7 pm. Contact Ron Turner's office for locations.

Mark then introduced one of the featured speakers for the evening, Phil Stokes, the current Mayor of North Port. Mark described how Tom Munroe encouraged him to speak with Phil. These conversations eventually led to Phil, a Democrat, becoming a Republican and their friendship.

Phil in tandem with Deputy City Manager, Jason Yarborough discussed the details of the 5 Referenda to be decided at the May 13th Election. First, the request by the city to allow borrowing for emergency expenses without voter approval. They noted this would be short term borrowing and only occur for emergencies declared by state, local or federal agencies. It will not be repaid from property taxes but from other revenue streams.

The 2nd referendum permits a change to the City Charter. Currently, the City Attorney and City Clerk are required to reside within the City within 1 year of being hired. The referendum requests voters to decide if this should continue or be amended. Phil noted that these positions only advise the city and do not have decision making authority.

Third is the Solid Waste Transfer Station. Trash trucks must drive to Sarasota when filled. This takes about 3 hours round trip. Results in extra costs for maintenance of the vehicle and staff time. The proposal is to develop an area at a distant location within the city to serve as a station where trash can temporarily be unloaded, sorted and prepared before disposal at the landfill. They will need to issue \$ 14 Million in bonds for this project. Solid Waste revenues will pay for the bonds not property taxes. North Port will own the station as it is more expensive to privatize this service. Return on Investment should occur within 10 years. This will add \$2.00 per month to your tax bill.

The 4th Referendum item is the Waste Water Treatment Facility improvement. The current facility is under decree from the Florida EPA. A fine was issued due to a previous storm related effluent discharge. We must build a new 30 inch pipeline from the Pan American Station to a deep injection well in the Myakka Forest. The current plant is quickly reaching capacity. They need to issue \$17 Million in bonds to finance this project. It would be paid back from water and sewer revenues and is NOT a new tax. This will add \$4.00 per month to tax bills for water and sewer customers.

Finally, the new Police Headquarters was discussed. The project cost will be \$115 Million and will add to property taxes. By comparison, the new High School in Wellen Park costs over \$200 Million. Today's headquarters was built in 2006. It is above and beyond capacity now with closets being turned into offices. It is more costly to upgrade the current building. That building will be turned over to the city for other departmental offices. The new location will be on Toledo Blade and will have capacity to cover the next 30-40 years of growth. A yearly Ad Valorem Assessment will be applied to property taxes for this. They are hoping to find grants to pay for some costs and with increasing residents the Ad Valorem amount should go down. Mayor Stokes and Mr. Yarborough encouraged everyone to go to the City Website for more information about these Referenda.

Questions from Members were taken about the Police Stations; City Clerk/City Attorney issue; Hospital impact on sewage capacity; Status of Wellen Park SMH project; request to lower taxes with the proposed \$300 Million city budget; Impending State Property Tax Legislation; and when will we see property tax relief with lower house value. Perhaps in 2 years. Presentation then concluded.

Mark noted from the audience feedback that North Port has been ignored in the past. But now county and other municipalities are starting to take notice. We are the largest voting block in the county. He encouraged attendance at County Board Meetings, School Board Meetings and Charter Review Meetings.

October 11th will be the Annual Picnic at the Scout House from 11:30am to 2:30pm.

A motion was made and carried to skip the May General Meeting due to Memorial Day. We will instead pass out flags at the city event. Volunteers needed for this.

Club Shirts available for \$35.00 each. See Treasurer Joe to purchase.

There is a May 1st and June 5th Monthly Socials for Republicans. See flyer for details.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian L. Patricoski, Secretary

