

Meeting Called to Order by Mark Frandsen, President at 6:04 pm.

Invocation By: Mark F.

Pledge of Allegiance Led By: Sean B.

Dignitaries, Candidates and Officials were introduced. Guests were welcomed.

All in attendance were required to sign in. Members in good standing received name tags and lanyards. No audio or video recording is permitted. Only persons wearing lanyards may ask questions of the speakers.

Mark began the meeting by reviewing important dates. Primary Election is August 18 and General Election is November 3. Our candidate picnic is July 25th.

Jack Brill, Chairman of the Sarasota County REC was introduced. He noted that we have 34 races this year from the Governor down to local municipalities. The REC is offering candidate schools. Another session is coming up. We need volunteers for all types of duties. The school board is our most important objective this year. We cannot lose even 1 of the 3 conservative majority seats. Where there are multiple Republican Candidates for the same position, the REC may provide an endorsement of one. There is a specific process for this and the endorsements would come out about May. The Pie Rally will be held on July 18th which falls shortly after By Mail Ballots have been sent. There is a Statesman Dinner planned for May 16th. Due to increasing populations, Ron Turner has added an 11th early voting site that will have to be staffed. As mentioned earlier, we will need volunteers.

Mark then noted that early voting for the August 18th Primary will be at the Biscayne Plaza location on August 8 to August 16. We need to cover 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Mark cannot be in the heat all day every day. Sign-up sheets will be out at next month's meeting. Early voting for the general election will be 10/19 to 11/1. Again our Candidates' Picnic is July 25th and our Christmas Party December 14.

At the last club board meeting, Robert Sisson was appointed by the board to fill the position of Treasurer. He will continue as Photographer and Webmaster. At the next meeting, we will all vote on this. It is a 2 year term.

Then Mark introduced the first speaker. Mr. Bill Woeltjen is running for the SMH Hospital Board Northern District 2. He is a long-time Hospital Administrator from 1990-2022. He is a Fiscal Conservative. He was the CFO at SMH from 2010-2022. He intends to keep SMH strong and a public institution with Quality Care. He wants to continue SMH having 5 star CMS ratings and have it grow to meet the needs of the area. They will spend \$507 Million on the new North Port Hospital. Several questions concerned number of employees at the new hospital. About 1000. Recruitment of nurses. Still difficult to do and they recruit from all over. When will the Wellen Park Hospital be started? Unknown at this time.

Next Up was Michelle Pozzie. She was a previous candidate for Florida House #74. She is currently running for the Sarasota County School Board. If elected she would be only the 2nd North Port resident on the school board. In the last 5 to 6 years she has attended almost all of the School Board Meetings. She has closely followed the district problems. She has 25+ years teaching the performing arts and has

home schooled her children. Florida leads the nation in parental control over their children's education. Currently, there are NGO and 3rd Party Groups pushing students to activism. In this district we need to focus on increasing math and reading skills. With less students in the district due to charters, homeschooling and school choice we need to take a serious look at the budget. Questions were raised about the incident at North Port High School. She supports school safety, increases in security systems and strong disciplinary rules. Budget concerns were again discussed. She would like to see a line item audit of the school budget which has not been done.

Mark then introduced Elaine Allen-Emrich a Candidate for City Commissioner District 4. Elaine has lived in North Port since 1989. She has been a local newspaper reporter for 35+ years and learned from Gene Mathews to be an advocate for North Port. She raised her children here and now her grandchildren live in North Port. Her work as a reporter led her to become involved with many issues and local organizations. She has championed causes for schools, the hospital, families and the local environment to name a few. Her experiences include building relationships with local and state politicians on behalf of North Port. She is now ready to serve the citizens of North Port as a Commissioner and help to promote the city. Elaine is well known in this community for her work and commitment.

Lastly, Phil Stokes an incumbent commissioner running for re-election in District #5 was introduced. Mr. Stokes is a member of and/or volunteer for 9 different organizations and boards in the City and Sarasota County. He is all in for this community. He spoke of the many accomplishments of the City and the challenges still to be met. He supports safety, high quality services and a balanced budget. He proposes to balance future growth with quality of life. It is difficult to stop growth but it must be managed. Costs need to be controlled and budgets followed. He would like to bring in high paying jobs so that all the traffic does not need to leave the city each day for work. He also supports affordable housing and agrees a diversity of housing is needed. Questions were about affordable housing and complaints that "non-North Port" persons are living in these housing developments. We cannot decide who will live or not live here. Concerns about the proposals for property tax elimination at the state level were discussed. They will need to cut the budget this year.

Ann Bunting who is the REC Elections operations chair spoke requesting volunteers for a variety of duties now and through the primary and general election. Contact her to help.

Mr. Vic Rohe stood to mention that he is running for Senator Gruter's seat. Mark will have him speak at our next meeting.

Meeting Ended at 7:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian L. Patricoski, Secretary