



**Town of Surfside
Special Town Commission Meeting
MINUTES
March 24, 2020
7 p.m.**

Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2nd Floor
Surfside, FL 33154

1. Opening

A. Call to Order

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk Novoa called the roll with the following members present:

Mayor Charles Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, Commissioner Nelly Velasquez, Commissioner Charles Kesl, and Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer.

Also present were Town Manager Guillermo Olmedillo and Town Attorney Lillian Arango.

C. Rules of Procedure for public meetings utilizing communications media technology by Update No. 2 - Town of Surfside Emergency Measures - dated March 21, 2020.

Town Manager Olmedillo introduced the item and spoke regarding the procedure of how the public can dial in and be part of the meeting.

Town Attorney Arango introduced the item and provided an overview and explanation.

2. Newly Elected Officials to discuss the Operation and Management of Town During and following the COVID 19 Health Emergency - Mayor Charles W. Burkett

Discussion among the Commission took place regarding the operation of Town management and administration as well as the Assistant Town Manager.

Town Manager Olmedillo advised the Commission that Assistant Town Manager Tavares retired on Saturday and explained the next steps in addressing Town administration.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that they were not informed about Assistant Town Manager Tavares' retirement. She stated that they do not have time to waste and need to bring someone in on a temporary basis to act as an Assistant Town Manager and someone that can assist the Town.

Mayor Burkett stated that Town Manager Olmedillo is working on it and they cannot be in a panic mode.

Mayor Burkett introduced Florida Senator Jason Pizzo to speak on the update.

Florida State Senator Jason Pizzo gave an update of the restrictions as well as an update on the corona virus and PPE gear for first responders. He stated that the Governor will be releasing Hurricane Irma monies that are owed to the Town. He stated that the Town of Surfside is scheduled to receive \$275,000 for the Abbott Avenue Drainage System Project and there will be a Florida Senate Special Session in the Summer.

Commissioner Kesl thanked Senator Pizzo for his comments and spoke regarding what the public is experiencing and the mechanisms in place. He feels that there is some confusion on what Surfside is responsible for and getting the information out to the public.

Vice Mayor Paul spoke regarding communicating with staff and the Town Manager on getting the information on Channel 663 and fixing the communication gap. She also stated that the Commission needs to be communicated with on a daily basis.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that we should work together along with neighboring communities and the need for a crisis management team to assist in these matters.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that they should consider using our resources in order to accomplish these tasks.

Discussion continued among the Commission and staff regarding steps to take place regarding staffing.

Senator Pizzo committed himself to assisting businesses on sales, payroll taxes and his resources in order to assist the Town. Senator Pizzo stated that he will be sending elected officials a civic chart showing the responsibility of charge and hierarchy of who is responsible for what.

Mayor Burkett thanked Senator Pizzo for his hard work and caring for the Town.

Commissioner Kesl thanked Senator Pizzo. He also stated that you need a Town Manager structure along with leadership and a communication plan. He stated that we have not given the team in place a chance. He suggested possibly bringing in a communication team in place.

Vice Mayor Paul thanked Senator Pizzo for being there for the Surfside community. She spoke regarding the Task Force Commissioner Salzhauer mentioned and she said that the Commission is the Task Force and they are there to assist the Manager to reach those that need help.

A motion was made by Commissioner Salzhauer to engage with a public relations firm for crisis services to assist the Town during this crisis. The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that we should give the staff an opportunity to do their job.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that they are not getting rid of staff just having someone in place to assist staff.

Vice Mayor Paul commented on staff and the need to have proper staffing to run Town business. She also stated having someone step in to help the Town Manager communicate better.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that she is familiar with the firm that Bal Harbor is using. She feels that they have to define what they are looking for and streamline things.

Commissioner Salzhauer reiterated her motion of needing a crisis management company.

A motion was made by Commissioner Salzhauer to engage services of the firm being used by Bal Harbor.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated that they have been speaking with Brian Andrews and Bal Harbor's Town Manager on assisting the Town.

Commissioner Velasquez asked how long Assistant Town Manager Tavares worked with the Town of Surfside.

Town Manager Olmedillo answered Commissioner Velasquez' question and stated that he worked with the Town of Surfside as an Assistant Town Manager for approximately 2 or 3 years.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that she does not agree with hiring a firm that would restructure a government that is already in place.

Mayor Burkett stated that he agrees that the Town is functioning and they are not equipped to do the hiring Commissioner Salzhauer is requesting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Salzhauer to hire a crisis management firm for one week, seconded by Vice Mayor Paul. Motion failed with Mayor Burkett, Commissioner Velasquez and Commissioner Kesl voting no.

The following individuals from the public spoke on the subject:

Steven Dunn

Clara Diaz-Leal

Debby Cimadevilla stated that she would like to know what can be done extending payment of property taxes and obtaining sanitizer wipes in assisting the elderly.

Tricia Fowley

Commissioner Kesl addressed comments made by the public and commented on business owner relief.

Town Manager Olmedillo suggested to request the property tax assessor to delay the collecting of taxes for three (3) months.

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to request from the property tax assessor for a three (3) month deferral of the obligation of collecting property taxes, and send it to the County Mayor and the Governor, seconded by Commissioner Kesl. All voted in favor.

Commissioner Velasquez suggested hiring an Assistant Town Manager and have proper staffing. She is not in agreement in hiring a new Town Manager.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that the Town Manager has an assistant that can help him and has staff that can assist him to run the Town.

3. Newly Elected Officials will have a “Commission round table” to discuss the issues put forward by the candidates over the last two months, in order to develop a list of priorities and time frames for the rapid implementation of same - Mayor Charles W. Burkett

Commissioner Velasquez wants a priority to be flooding on Abbott Avenue and other streets in Town.

Mayor Burkett asked if Commissioner Velasquez wants Town Manager Olmedillo to come up with a report to address the flooding and that the flooding has to stop.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Paul directing the Town Manager to work with the Public Works Director to address the Abbott Avenue drainage problem and all other areas prompted to flooding within the next 30 days, seconded by Commissioner Kesl. All voted in favor.

The following individuals from the public spoke on the item:

Clara Diaz Leal stated to come up with a long-term plan and pause and not run everyone else ragged.

Debbie Cimadevilla spoke regarding the flooding issue.

Yoann Andreu spoke regarding stopping construction projects and needing more than one day to remedy.

Commissioner Kesl commented regarding the flooding and would like to head in the direction of needing an answer from an agency from the Town.

Commissioner Velasquez addressed comments made by the public on flooding.

Commissioner Salzhauer addressed comments made by the public regarding flooding.

Commissioner Salzhauer spoke regarding being cautious with the elderly residents and the condominiums.

Further discussion took place regarding the concerns of the elderly, the public's health at risk and the condominiums.

The following individuals from the public spoke on the item:

Ben Aquarion

Jennifer Rotker

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to allow certain construction under a max of 2-3 workers at any given time so people can continue to finish their project, only if their project does not require an inspection. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Kesl is concerned that the Town does not have the mechanism to be able to have this continue.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that they have to secure their construction sites.

Mayor Burkett addressed the comment made by Vice Mayor Paul on the construction sites. He asked if the Town Manager can make a determination of what will be considered a safe stay position.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated affirmative.

Commissioner Kesl suggested a work group/task force to work with the Town Manager daily.

Town Attorney Arango stated that there is a resolution that authorizes for the Mayor and the Town Manager to discuss the chain of command and protocol and if there is a task force, there needs to be delegated duties and commissioners meeting might present sunshine issues.

Mayor Burkett stated that Commissioner Kesl would be the liaison.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that each commissioner can address special areas that they have knowledge about.

Mayor Burkett asked Town Manager Olmedillo if they can contact Pinzur.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated that he would contact Pinzur.

A motion was made by Commissioner Salzhauer to have another emergency meeting in one week, March 31, 2020, seconded by Commissioner Velasquez. All voted in favor.

Commissioner Salzhauer asked Town Manager Olmedillo what their resources are with staffing.

Discussion took place among the members of the Commission on outreach for family members and elderly who are sick that will be detrimental to their health and identify their needs.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Paul to deal with the COVID-19 virus first and stop any projects as well as all payments to consultants, vendors, contractual obligations and have an organizational flow chart for the next meeting, seconded by Commissioner Kesl. All voted in favor.

Mayor Burkett asked Town Attorney Arango if there can be a freeze placed on contracts and projects.

Town Attorney Arango stated that they have to see the provisions in place.

Commissioner Salzhauer commented on the contracts pending and understanding who is doing what and the organizational chart of the Town.

Mayor Burkett would like to address the taxes, if the Town can derive the same on a reduction of 2/3 mileage rate. He would like to understand the annual budget, how much money is being spent, how much it can be reduced and give relief to residents.

Mayor Burkett also requested to revisit the water bill and the amount residents pay for water services. He stated this is not to be a profit center and would like to see if the service fees for water services can be reduced and would like the Town Manager to come back to the Commission in 30 days with a plan.

Mayor Burkett also requested information from the Town Manager regarding the garbage fees, where the monies are coming in from and being spent on.

Mayor Burkett commented on the P3 project and stated that he would like to revisit the money lent to developers. He requested information on the monies lent to those developers and how to address that and the options available.

Mayor Burkett would like to look at the Zoning Code and the possibility of revising it. He would like to reestablish the Design and Review Board and would like a plan on how the Commission can reestablish it.

Vice Mayor Paul would like to reevaluate the undergrounding of power lines.

Commissioner Velasquez would like to check all the light poles and would like proper lighting on the streets.

Commissioner Salzhauer would like Town Hall to be a resident friendly place to visit.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated that they will arrange someone to answer the phones to help the residents.

A motion was made by Commissioner Salzhauer requesting the Town Manager communicate with Bal Harbour and Bay Harbor to look into a possible testing site, seconded by Commissioner Kesl. All voted in favor.

4. A Commission discussion regarding the communications being disseminated by the Town to the residents - Mayor Charles W. Burkett

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that the Town has staff with public relations experience who can assist with getting the press releases out to the public regarding this crisis.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated that he is using the resources he has at hand and clarified that there is no Assistant Tourism Director, that they only have the Tourism Bureau Director.

Commissioner Salzhauer wanted to know who will do the outreach to the community.

Town Manager Olmedillo responded to the comments made by Commissioner Salzhauer.

5. Additional Resident Resources related to Coronavirus – Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer

Commissioner Salzhauer introduced the item.

Discussion continued among the Commission and Town staff regarding having someone from the Town staff to assist the Town Manager regarding the COVID-19 Task Force.

Vice Mayor Paul asked Police Chief Yero how the police officers are doing during this time.

Police Chief Yero addressed the comments made by Vice Mayor Paul and advised of the policies they have in place to keep officers safe.

Mayor Burkett would like a report in 30 days on the status of the Sustainability Resiliency Fund and the monies being spent.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that the previous Mayor put monies in a resiliency fund.

Town Attorney Arango stated that the new Commission can rescind or amend the previous resolution.

Vice Mayor Paul commented on CLEO and the resiliency and climate change. She asked if the resiliency monies can be used for health issues due to climate change.

Mayor Burkett stated that they need to know how much money is in there and what it can be used for.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that she was working with Assistant Town Manager Tavares on updating Channel 663, and asked who she would have to work with now that Assistant Town Manager Tavares retired.

Town Manager Olmedillo stated to Vice Mayor Paul that she can continue to work with Tourism Bureau Director Trigueros on updating Channel 663.

**6. Parks and Recreation Programming during State of Emergency –
Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer**

Commissioner Salzhauer introduced the item and stated that they are working on many things. She stated that she worked with Parks and Recreation Director Milian and would like to use live interactive classes through Zoom and generate new programs for all age groups.

Vice Mayor Paul agreed with Commissioner Salzhauer's comments and stated that there is a video on silver sneakers on the Town website.

Deputy Town Clerk Herbello read the email comments from residents into the record.

Members of the Town Commission addressed the comments/emails received from the residents.

Members of the Town Commission gave direction to the Town Manager to follow up with the comments and concerns made by the public.

Commissioner Salzhauer asked Town Manager Olmedillo if he needs any other tools to succeed.

Town Manager Olmedillo answered Commissioner Salzhauer's question.

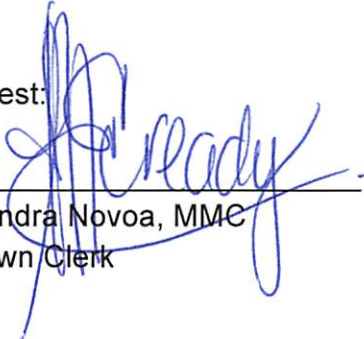
The Town Commission by consensus agreed to holding the next virtual Special Commission Meeting on March 31, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment


A motion was made by Commissioner Kesl to adjourn the meeting without objection at 11:08 p.m. The motion received a second from Commissioner Salzhauer. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted this 16th day of April, 2020.

Attest:


Sandra Novoa, MMC
Town Clerk



Charles W. Burkett, Mayor