

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

**Town of Ponce Inlet  
Town Council  
Special Meeting Minutes  
April 15, 2021**

19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to proper notice, Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 4300 South Atlantic Avenue, Ponce Inlet, Florida.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Town Council:

Mayor Smith, Seat #1

Councilmember Milano, Seat #2

Vacant, Seat #3

Councilmember Israel, Seat #4

Vice-Mayor Paritsky, Seat #5

All members of Council were present.

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Baker, Chief Building Official/CFPM

Ms. Cherbano, Human Resource Director/Deputy Clerk

Mr. Disher, Director, Planning & Development

Ms. French, Cultural Services Manager

Chief Glazier, Police Chief

Ms. Hugler, Office Manager

Ms. Hunt, Assistant Deputy Clerk

Ms. McColl, Finance Manager

Mr. Miller, Public Works Manager

Chief Scales, Fire Chief

Attorney Shepard, Town Attorney

Deputy Chief Taylor

Ms. Witt, Town Manager

Seat #3 Applicants Present:

Stacey Bell

Elizabeth Caswell

Joseph V. Perrone

Joseph J. Villanella

Mayor Smith passed the gavel to Vice-Mayor Paritsky under section 3.03.B of the Town Charter, due to a temporary medical issue that impacts his reading.

4. **TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTMENT TO FILL THE VACANCY CREATED FOR SEAT #3 BY THE RESIGNATION OF COUNCILMEMBER MARY HOSS.**

Vice-Mayor Paritsky read the title of item #4 for the record and noted that this is a four-part process: applicants will be interviewed by Council; the ballot voting process; the swearing-in ceremony, and the new member's acceptance of the appointment as Alternate Representative to the Volusia County Roundtable of Elected Officials. Ms. Witt explained the voting and ballot process, noting that the two candidates with the lowest score would proceed to a run-off, unless one candidate is selected as the first choice by the majority of voting members. Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if there were any objections to utilize this process; there were none. The applicants voluntarily waited in the meeting room and were escorted to the Chambers for the interview process by Ms. Cherbano. Vice-Mayor Paritsky invited the public to submit questions to Council, that would be asked of each applicant during the interview process; there were none.

**Stacey Bell**

Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if she had any other materials or information to provide to Council before the interview process begins. Ms. Bell stated that her resume and application were complete.

Mayor Smith asked for her opinion on the initial and continued Accreditation of our Police and Fire Departments. Ms. Bell stated although it is a lengthy process, it is worth the designation and she supports accreditation. Mayor Smith asked if she was prepared to run for Seat #3 during the election; Ms. Bell stated, yes.

Councilmember Milano stated he had no questions, has known Ms. Bell for many years and was very impressed with her credentials.

Councilmember Israel asked if she would expand on her love for the community. Ms. Bell explained that she worked for the Marine Science Center, met her husband there, fell in love with the Town and is raising her family here. He asked if she supports contracting-out police, fire, or public works services to other jurisdictions; Ms. Bell stated there is some good that can come from contracts, but it is important to keep our services in town. He asked how long she has served on a town board; Ms. Bell stated nine years.

Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked Ms. Bell if there were any areas that need Council's focus. Ms. Bell stated she would like to see more community involvement in the town's processes.

**Elizabeth Caswell**

Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if she had any other materials or information to provide to Council before the interview process begins. Ms. Caswell referenced documents she submitted to town hall and requested that they be copied to Council.

Mayor Smith asked her opinion of the initial and continued Accreditation of the Police and Fire Departments. Ms. Caswell stated she is proud that the Police Department is accredited and supports the Fire Department pursuing accreditation. He asked if she is prepared to run for Seat #3 in the election; Ms. Caswell stated yes, she is ready to go on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Councilmember Milano asked for an example of her research background. Ms. Caswell stated she is a speaker and an author for a trade association that supports more than 1,200 global enterprises across the world. She noted that we are a diverse community, and we have an opportunity to help

93 the residents live a better life in Ponce Inlet. She reviewed her resume and noted that she performs  
94 analyses and research.

95  
96 Councilmember Israel asked if she has ever volunteered for a town board or at any town event;  
97 Ms. Caswell replied no and acknowledged that the three other applicants have extensive history of  
98 community service. He asked if she supports contracting-out any of the police, fire, or public works  
99 services to other jurisdictions; Ms. Caswell stated there is not enough information to formulate a  
100 black and white response, but her inclination is to not contract-out the services that we provide;  
101 yet she remains open to explore all available options. He asked if she felt there is a problem with  
102 lock-step voting on this Council; Ms. Caswell replied that she does not believe it is a problem with  
103 this Council at this time. He asked if she was familiar with the Sunshine Law; she stated yes, has  
104 read the Sunshine law and training materials, and watched the attorney's DVD. He asked if she  
105 supports special events, such as bike week; she replied yes and those events support our local and  
106 small businesses.

107  
108 Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if there were any areas that need improvement. Ms. Caswell stated she  
109 chose Ponce Inlet for the quiet and privacy but there has been massive development over the past  
110 twenty years; she would like to utilize her personal and business experience to help manage and  
111 influence the changes that are coming, while in keeping with the vision statement and the town  
112 Charter. She thanked Council for the opportunity and thanked the three other applicants for their  
113 public service and for being ready to further serve the community.

114  
115 **Joseph Perrone**

116  
117 Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if he had any other materials or information to provide to Council  
118 before the interview process begins. Mr. Perrone had prepared a statement that he wished to read  
119 (Attachment 1).

120  
121 Mayor Smith asked for his opinion regarding the initial and continued Accreditation of our Police  
122 and Fire Departments; Mr. Perrone stated his support of accreditation of both departments. Mayor  
123 Smith asked if he was prepared to run for Seat #3 during the election; Mr. Perrone stated yes.

124  
125 Councilmember Milano stated he had no questions, has known and worked with Mr. Perrone for  
126 many years.

127  
128 Councilmember Israel stated that at last month's meeting, a resident spoke regarding Ms. Witt's  
129 salary; the next day, you posted on Nextdoor a 3-page scenario of what people make and why they  
130 make it. What stuck out was Mr. Perrone's comment "residents of Ponce Inlet please wake up";  
131 and now you want to sit on this Council? Mr. Perrone stated that this was his response to Mr.  
132 Mirage's comments about the Manager's salary and seeing if the town could find someone to do  
133 it "cheaper"; adding that Ms. Witt was paid well below that of her peers; and wanted to put this  
134 matter to bed. Councilmember Israel asked Mr. Perrone if residents have the right to determine  
135 what staff members are paid; Mr. Perrone stated the residents do not know what is going on.  
136 Councilmember Israel stated, "okay, so now you are calling people ignorant"; Mr. Perrone stated  
137 that he *never* said that; and he wanted to compare salaries and put the matter to an end.  
138 Councilmember Israel asked Mr. Perrone if he is a boardmember of C4PI and would he resign if  
139 appointed; Mr. Perrone stated he writes informational articles for C4PI and would resign from the  
140 board if appointed. He asked if Mr. Perrone felt the Charter was outdated; Mr. Perrone stated that  
141 issue was discussed at the last council meeting and everyone agreed that it should be reviewed.

142 Councilmember Israel asked if he thought C4PI has the right to publish political articles; Mr.  
143 Perrone stated they publish *public records*. Councilmember Israel stated that they also publish  
144 election and financial reports; Mr. Perrone stated those are public records. Vice-Mayor Paritsky  
145 stopped the questioning and asked the town attorney for weigh-in. Attorney Shepard cautioned  
146 that it is unwise to indicate that compliance with public records laws is a burden as compliance  
147 with public records laws is a requirement, not a choice.

148  
149 Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked Mr. Perrone if there were any areas that he feels needs Council's  
150 attention. Mr. Perrone stated he agrees that we need to improve communication with the residents  
151 and suggested that Council hold a couple of "town hall" meetings a year to engage the public. He  
152 also suggested that the town put together a welcome packet for new residents.

153  
154 **Joseph Villanella**  
155  
156 Vice-Mayor Paritsky asked if he had anything he wished to share or provide to Council before the  
157 interview process begins. Mr. Villanella noted he has been a resident since 1992 and his application  
158 reflects his experience and community involvement shows his commitment to the residents of the  
159 Town.

160  
161 Mayor Smith asked his opinion on the initial and continuation of the Accreditation of our Police  
162 and Fire Departments; Mr. Villanella stated his support of accreditation of both departments.  
163 Mayor Smith asked if he is prepared to run for Seat #3 during the election; Mr. Villanella stated  
164 yes.

165  
166 Councilmember Milano stated he has observed Mr. Villanella running the Code Board meetings  
167 for many years and he does a great job; he stated he had no questions.

168  
169 Councilmember Israel asked if he supports contracting-out any of the police, fire, or public works  
170 services to other jurisdictions; Mr. Villanella stated his opposition to turning anything over to the  
171 County; added that this was an exploratory exercise and noted his belief that there was a  
172 combination of misinformation and outright lies spread throughout the community.  
173 Councilmember Israel asked if he is on the board of the C4PI. Mr. Villanella no, he is a member.

174  
175 Vice-Mayor Paritsky commended Mr. Villanella for his service on the Code Board asked if there  
176 were any areas that he feels need attention. Mr. Villanella stated he has heard concerns about the  
177 growth of the town and wants to ensure that we are not compromising our building standards and  
178 that we continue to maintain our quality of life.

179  
180 **Public Comments**  
181  
182 Vice-Mayor Paritsky opened public comments.

183  
184 Tony Goudie, 4715 Dixie Drive, stated these are all great candidates with impressive experience.  
185 He noted that this process is more balanced and nuanced with elected officials and encouraged  
186 diversity.

187  
188 Tom Rutledge, 4112 Oriole Avenue, thanked the applicants and recognized Mary Hoss for her  
189 many decades of public service. He stated that this town has had more than ten years of efficient  
190 and effective public service, while keeping the tax rate near the bottom of the list. He stated the

191 town is fortunate to have an exceptional staff and a town attorney with integrity. He stated that  
192 public records must be released, the town has no choice; there was never a plan to turn the fire  
193 department over to the County, there was a request to determine financial costs and staffing levels,  
194 that was all; for questions about legal expenses, one should look into the matters that the attorney  
195 worked on; he expressed concerns with the interference with public administration issue and stated  
196 that the staff works for the Manager and they all work for the residents - just ask first; he stressed  
197 the importance of appointing a resident who will respect the staff and the residents, and have no  
198 special interests.

199

200 Vice-Mayor Paritsky closed public comments.

201

202

### 203 **Town Council Vote**

204

205 Ms. Witt distributed and collected the ballots; she and Attorney Shepard then tabulated the results.  
206 Ms. Witt announced that Elizabeth Caswell was selected by a majority of voting members and  
207 therefore a run-off ballot was not required. She administered to Oath of Office to Councilmember  
208 Caswell.

209

210 Ms. Witt noted that Ms. Hoss served as the Alternate Representative on the Volusia County  
211 Roundtable of Elected Officials and Vice-Mayor Paritsky is the Primary Representative. Vice-  
212 Mayor Paritsky asked Councilmember Caswell if she would accept the Alternate position;  
213 Councilmember Caswell stated that she would.

214

215 Vice-Mayor Paritsky moved to appoint Councilmember Caswell as the Alternate Representative  
216 on the Volusia County Roundtable of Elected Officials; seconded by Councilmember Milano. The  
217 motion PASSED 5-0 with the following vote: Vice-Mayor Paritsky - yes; Councilmember Milano  
218 - yes; Councilmember Israel - yes; Mayor Smith - yes; Councilmember Caswell - yes.

219

220 5. **ADJOURNMENT** - Vice-Mayor Paritsky adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

221

222 Respectfully submitted by:

223

224

225

226 \_\_\_\_\_  
226 Jeaneen Witt, CMC, Town Manager/Town Clerk

227 Peg Hunt, Assistant Deputy Clerk