



# Town Council Town Hall Meeting Minutes

---

Thursday Community Center  
 August 24, 2023 - 6:00 P.M. 4670 S. Peninsula Drive, Ponce Inlet, FL

---

1. **Call to Order:** Mayor Paritsky called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Council Present:**

- Mayor Paritsky, Seat 1
- Councilmember Milano, Seat 2
- Councilmember Caswell, Seat 3
- Councilmember Villanella, Seat 4
- Vice-Mayor Smith, Seat 5

**Staff Members Present:**

- Mr. Disher, Town Manager
- Ms. French, Cultural Services Manager
- Chief Glazier, Police Chief
- Mr. Griffith, Public Works Director
- Mr. Hooker, Code Compliance Manager
- Ms. Hugler, Office Manager (FD)
- Ms. McColl, Finance Director
- Chief Scales, Fire Chief/Public Safety Director *pro tem*
- Ms. Stewart, Assistant Deputy Clerk

**Special Guest(s):**

- Duncan DeMarsh, Aide to Representative Chase Tramont
- Charlene Gagnier, Aide to Senator Tom Wright
- Jim Judge, Volusia County Emergency Management Director
- Matt Reinhart, Volusia County Councilmember
- Senator Tom Wright

2. **Mayor’s Welcome and General Introductions:** Mayor Paritsky welcomed attendees and introduced Ponce Inlet Councilmember-Elect Skip White. She introduced Senator Tom Wright and noted the committees on which he serves; she introduced Ms. Charlene Gagnier, Senator Wright’s aide and Mr. Duncan DeMarsh, Representative Tramont’s aide. Representative Tramont was elected as our Representative last year after having served as a Councilmember in Port Orange; she listed the committees Representative Tramont serves on. She announced this is the first year in the history of Ponce Inlet that the town made a request for appropriations at the state level. Many areas were flooded in the wake of Hurricanes Ian and Nicole; therefore, the town put in a request for an emergency standby generator to be installed at the community center. Senator Wright and Representative Tramont delivered this appropriation request for the Town. The final element of this process is the Town Council’s approval to include the matching funds in this year’s budget which will be considered and discussed at the September 6, 2023

47 Special meeting. She introduced Volusia County Emergency Management Director Jim Judge  
48 and noted that the Town Manager and Department Heads are present to provide information on  
49 the Town’s hurricane preparedness.

50

51 **3. Presentation from Senator Tom Wright and Representative Chase Tramont:**

52 Senator Wright stated he is here to celebrate an investment of resilience and preparedness for the  
53 community and is presenting a state appropriation check for \$20,000 for a back-up generator at  
54 the Ponce Inlet Community Center to ensure that safety and functionality will continue  
55 uninterrupted during a storm event or other emergency. This appropriation represents our shared  
56 belief in community resilience and the town’s commitment to the community for preparedness  
57 and well-being. Senator Wright noted that he brought \$33 million in appropriations to our district  
58 last year and \$92 million this year; he will go back to the legislature in the fall to fight for  
59 funding for the other generators requested. He announced that Florida had a \$116.5 billion  
60 budget this year and put \$50.3 billion into a rainy-day fund; the state of Florida is solid and  
61 fiscally responsible and is the strongest financial state in the country. He reviewed some of the  
62 other appropriations awarded this year.

63

64 Mr. Duncan DeMarsh, aide to Representative Chase Tramont, stated they are grateful to Senator  
65 Wright and his team for working to bring funds into Volusia County and Ponce Inlet; and for  
66 defending our budget process. They are grateful for the residents and their courage, heroism, and  
67 charity after the hurricanes.

68

69 **4. Presentation from Jim Judge, Volusia County Emergency Management:**

70 Mr. Judge introduced Mr. Clint Mechan as Volusia County’s new Emergency Management Director. Mr.  
71 Judge provided a [presentation](#) on the County’s Emergency Management program. The County’s  
72 [website](#) includes plans and programs for all types of emergency management; he noted anyone  
73 can tour the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and a virtual tour is available on the website.  
74 He reviewed the predictions for the 2023 hurricane season and noted there have been eight  
75 named storms so far this year. The County has continuous and ongoing training on various topics  
76 throughout the year. He announced the Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday is August 26 –  
77 September 8, 2023. Mr. Judge opened public comment and answered questions (many of which  
78 were inaudible): what residents in condominiums can and cannot do regarding generators - he  
79 offered to provide a presentation to any condominium association upon request; does the County  
80 have a list of people that are on dialysis and what those people should do in a storm event – he  
81 stated that the County works closely with Davida prior to hurricane season and there are special  
82 needs shelters that assist getting patients to the right location; regarding electric vehicles, where  
83 should they be stored during a storm - parking garages are an option, but owners should read the  
84 manufacturer’s recommendation; and asked who makes the determination of mandatory  
85 evacuations and when that determination is made - Mr. Judge explained that he makes the  
86 recommendation to the County Manager, and it is a team effort that includes the Sheriff, Public  
87 Works, and local municipalities.

88

89 **5. Presentation of Tentative Millage Rate:**

90 Mayor Paritsky provided a [presentation](#)  
91 regarding the budget process and determination of the millage rate. She explained that the budget  
92 serves as a financial plan for the coming year intended to support the Town’s operations and to  
93 meet the goals that have been set by the Town Council, as well as provide for the continued  
safety, well-being, and high level of service residents expect and deserve. She announced the

94 next budget meeting will be held on September 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm to discuss the proposed budget and  
95 the tentative millage rate; the final budget and millage rate will be determined at the September  
96 21, 2023 regular Town Council meeting.

97  
98 **6. Hurricane Preparation by Town Departments:** Mr. Disher stated that staff members  
99 will provide an overview of what each department does for hurricane preparedness.

100  
101 Chief Scales stated the National Weather Service website and other sources are monitored daily  
102 during hurricane season and at the end of hurricane season, a final inventory of supplies and  
103 equipment is conducted. Residents should also be prepared and stocked with supplies  
104 beforehand. He discussed evacuation orders and explained that as weather conditions deteriorate,  
105 first responders may not be able get to residents. He reminded attendees that the town has a small  
106 staff that are out in the storm preparing, securing, assessing, responding, etc., before, during and  
107 after a storm. In order to provide better communication and to be consistent, the Public  
108 Information Officers (PIO) for Ponce Inlet, South Daytona, Port Orange, and Daytona Beach  
109 Shores have formed our own group in addition to the County’s public information network.

110  
111 Ms. Hugler explained the “Check on Your Neighbor” program is a new community outreach  
112 program that is guided by the Fire Department and a meeting will be held on August 31, 2023, at  
113 1:00 pm at Town Hall. She is the Public Information Officer for the Town and noted the  
114 collaboration with the neighboring municipalities will work together to put out the correct  
115 information. The “Check on Your Neighbor” program also will provide feedback to the Fire  
116 Department on what may be needed; this is only during a storm event and is separate from the  
117 Citizens Watch.

118  
119 Ms. McColl, Finance Director, stated the Finance Department and Human Resources Department  
120 have more of a supporting role before, during, and after a storm. Before a storm, they ensure all  
121 hurricane-related contracts are in place; that all departments have all required forms for FEMA,  
122 and ensure employee contact information is up-to-date. After the storm, the focus is on obtaining  
123 reimbursement from FEMA as quickly as possible. It typically takes several years to close out  
124 FEMA grants. The core team includes the Public Safety Director, Hurman Resource Director,  
125 Accountant/Grants Coordinator, and herself. They work closely with all departments, the  
126 insurance company, FEMA, and the State. They respond to all requests and submit all necessary  
127 documents; prepare and submit quarterly reports; and prepare audit schedules and reconciliations  
128 as required. Mr. Disher added that the Finance Department ensures all documentation is  
129 completed properly to be accepted for reimbursement by the federal government.

130  
131 Mr. Griffith, Public Works Director, stated the County graded South Atlantic Avenue which will  
132 help reduce flooding; the Public Works Department has cleaned out 9,000 linear feet of storm  
133 pipes and the project will be completed next year. Public Works will dig out the ponds on the  
134 south end of Town as part of hurricane preparation, so they will not need to be pumped. Public  
135 Works handles sandbags, installs storm shutters, and ensures trucks and equipment are prepared.  
136 The wastewater is treated by the City of Port Orange and he is familiar with where the pumps are  
137 located and which ones have generators. Chief Scales noted that the Community Center and the  
138 Fire Department are sandbag locations; and stated that after a storm passes, the Public Works  
139 Department staff are the first responders to remove debris and clear the roads.

141 Ms. French, Cultural Services Manager, explained that the Public Works Department preps the  
142 Town parks before a storm by removing shade structures, windscreens, and securing park  
143 equipment. Her department takes photographs of the parks before and after a storm to ensure  
144 damage is accurately documented for FEMA reimbursement. They also assist with sandbag  
145 distribution and resident passes. She coordinates park closures and openings with other  
146 departments. The Ponce Inlet Historical Museum is the first facility to close and the last to open;  
147 all historical items are inventoried and secured; she assists Ms. Hugler with Facebook updates,  
148 and a staff member goes to the EOC to monitor weather conditions and coordinate resources  
149 based on the Town’s needs. Chief Scales added that the Town has eight staff members trained in  
150 EOC operations.

151  
152 Chief Glazier stated the Police Department continues to patrol until it becomes too dangerous to  
153 do so; officers “live” at the station for the duration of the storm and resume patrols when safe to  
154 do so. Officers document and report downed trees and power lines, blocked roads, etc., and work  
155 with Public Works and EOC staff to provide assistance. The Police Department performs welfare  
156 checks as requested and responds to 9-1-1 calls. Officers are also on the lookout for “predator”  
157 contractors; and that contractors must obtain a permit from the Town. He referred to the disaster  
158 access pass and noted the pass does not allow residents over the bridges if they are closed; the  
159 pass allows residents or business owners over the bridge once they are opened and allows access  
160 into the Town. Chief Scales added that the passes are available at Town Hall, Public Works,  
161 Police Department, and Fire Department offices and they do not expire.

162  
163 Mr. Hooker, Code Compliance Manger, explained that his department of planning and  
164 development handles all permitting required for the Town, building inspections, and code  
165 enforcement. Before a storm, staff ensures all supplies are in place, contacts HOA managers to  
166 update contact information; take photographic evidence of homes for historical value if there is  
167 damage (which helps with the permitting process); and drives through Town to spot for loose  
168 items such as front porch chairs. He noted that tree trimmers pile debris on or near the road  
169 which then becomes flying objects during a storm – he reminded residents that contractors are  
170 required to take the vegetative waste with them. Volusia County has a list of certified contractors  
171 and he suggested starting at the bottom of the list if a contractor is needed. After the storm, staff  
172 perform damage assessment throughout the Town and document it; that information is put into a  
173 model which is used for insurance purposes and FEMA reimbursement. His team has a color-  
174 coded map that shows the flooding areas. They check contractors to ensure they are licensed and  
175 ensured. Chief Scales stated that we have a small staff and they work hard to prepare for each  
176 hurricane season; and staff welcomes feedback from residents as well.

177  
178 Mayor Paritsky opened public comment. Charles Burge, Harbour Village Links South,  
179 commented he would like to know more about the Transform 386 program. Mr. Disher explained  
180 the federal government is helping Volusia County and others that were affected by the hurricanes  
181 last year; to receive those funds, the County must develop a plan and send it to the Department of  
182 Housing and Urban Development for approval; once approved, the funds are then released. The  
183 Town submitted a list of items that were not reimbursed by FEMA or insurance. The purpose of  
184 this program is to help fill the gap between FEMA funds and insurance reimbursement.  
185 Residents expressed concerns regarding homeowner’s insurance rate increases; Mayor Paritsky  
186 noted that the advocacy needs to occur during the next legislative session in Tallahassee. A  
187 resident asked if there will be any improvements to the crosswalk at Winterhaven Park and the

188 7/11 at Harbour Village. Mr. Disher explained the hurricanes interrupted that project but it is still  
189 on the list. A question was asked if coquina or other type of rock is being considered for the  
190 Volusia County shoreline. Mr. Judge stated that he recently visited Jekyll Island and they had  
191 rocks in areas to protect homes; but there are regulations from the Department of Environment  
192 Protection (DEP) to protect the sea turtles so he will research it.

193

194 **7. Councilmember Comments:** There were no additional Councilmember comments.

195

196 **8. Open Public Comments/Questions:** None.

197

198 **9. Adjournment -** Mayor Paritsky adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

199

200 Respectfully submitted by:

201

202 Kim Cherbano

203 Kim Cherbano, CMC, Town Clerk

204

205 Prepared by: Debbie Stewart, Assistant Deputy Clerk