



OFFICIAL MINUTES
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 – 9:00 AM
TOWN OF INDIAN RIVER SHORES
6001 HIGHWAY A1A INDIAN RIVER SHORES, FL 32963

The regular meeting of the Indian River Town Council was held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, in Council Chambers, 6001 Highway A1A, Indian River Shores. Those present were Brian Foley, Mayor; Bob Auwaerter, Vice Mayor; Sam Carroll, Councilmember; James Altieri, Councilmember and Peter Tedesco, Councilmember. Also present were James Harpring, Town Manager; Heather Christmas, Finance Director; Peter Sweeney, Town Attorney and Janice C. Rutan, Town Clerk.

1. **Call to Order**

- a. Invocation
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Roll Call

Councilmember Carroll offered the Invocation. Mayor Foley led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Town Clerk called the roll. All members were present.

2. **Agenda Reordering, Deletions, or Emergency Additions**

There being no reordering, deletions or emergency additions, a motion was made by Councilmember Carroll and seconded by Councilmember Altieri to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

3. **Presentations/Proclamations**

- a. Florida City Gas - Tim Knutson

Tim Knutson, Senior Account Manager for Florida Gas, gave the Town Council a status update on the natural gas line project in Indian River Shores. He reported that work in John's Island had been delayed due to existing construction and infrastructure, though more than fifteen miles of pipeline have now been installed. Florida Gas expects to begin work in the Estuary in mid-March, followed by smaller projects in Village Shores and Pebble Lane. Marbrisa and Indian Trails are nearing construction. In response to Vice Mayor Auwaerter, Mr. Knutson stated that Ocean Colony was on track for completion within two years.

He noted that Florida City Gas anticipates a significant amount of work ahead in Indian River Shores and continues to project a ten-year timeline for full completion. Mr. Knutson explained that permitting through FDOT can take up to a month.

4. **Comments From the Public Regarding Agenda Items(s)**

None.

5. **Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of Minutes of Special Call Meeting dated January 21, 2026
- b. Approval of Minutes of Town Council Meeting dated January 22, 2026
- c. Approval of ILA with Indian River County Property Appraiser re: Septic to Sewer Conversions
- d. Approval of ILA with Indian River County Tax Collector re: Septic to Sewer Conversions
- e. Approval of Signature Card Update
- f. Approval of Authorization for Health Insurance Renewal
- g. Approval of Vehicle Purchase
- h. Approval of Disposal of Asset - Public Safety Equipment – Polaris
- i. Approval of FDEP Grant for Adaptation Plan
- j. Approval of FDEP Adaptation Plan Contractor
- k. Review of Construction East of CCCL – 908 Holoma Drive, Dune Crossing
- l. Review of Construction East of CCCL – 610 Ocean Road, Retaining Walls
- m. Review of Construction East of CCCL – 610 Ocean Road, Single Family Residence & Pool
- n. Approve Local Gas Option Tax Agreement
- o. Review of Recommendation of PZV - Tree Removal Request 341 Sabal Palm Lane

A motion was made by Councilmember Carroll, seconded by Councilmember Altieri, and unanimously passed (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

6. **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Foley reported on Friday's temporary one-hour closure of Highway A1A, as well as a fallen tree that damaged a water main and disrupted services over the weekend. He referred to Town Manager Harpring for a detailed update.

He then addressed pending legislation related to property tax reform and utility fees. He noted that no action on property tax changes is expected during the current session, and no dates for a special session had been announced. He expressed concern about utility franchise fees, specifically the additional charges imposed on residents of the Town because they reside outside the City of Vero Beach's jurisdictional boundaries. He also expressed concern about the City transferring their enterprise funds into the general fund.

Mayor Foley reported on the beach replenishment project underway in St. Lucie and their consideration of an offshore barrier to mitigate erosion. He reminded the Council that both Indian River Shores and the Town of Orchid had previously proposed similar concept but were told that because of geological conditions of the barrier island, it would not work. He suggested the Town revisit the idea.

He reported that Vero Beach Vice Mayor Dingle had requested a voluntary DOGE audit of the City. Mayor Foley supported his request and hoped that the audit would include the City's enterprise funds. Doing so would protect the residents of the Town of Indian River Shores since they do not have voting authority over the officials that set the rates.

Mayor Foley asked each Councilmember to reach out to Vice Mayor Dingle on an individual basis to express support.

7. Councilmember Items

a. Vice Mayor Auwaerter – PFAS Strategies

Vice Mayor Auwaerter gave a brief overview of the City of Vero Beach Utilities Commissions advisory role to the City Council. He reported that at a recent meeting of the Vero Beach Utilities Commission, Director Bolton presented findings from a study on PFAS detected in the Vero Beach water supply. He then reviewed a power point presentation outlining the results and the associated remediation strategies and costs which would be in addition to the constructions costs for the reclamation facility.

A discussion followed.

8. Discussion with Possible or Probable Action

a. Ordinance No. 587 – Short Term Vacation Rental Enforcement

The title was read by Attorney Sweeney. Town Manager Harpring gave Staff's report. A motion made by Councilmember Carroll was seconded by Councilmember Altieri to approve Ordinance No. 587 on first reading. The Town Clerk called the roll. All members present voted in the affirmative. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Ordinance No. 588 – Establishment of Departments

The title was read by Attorney Sweeney. Town Manager Harpring gave Staff's report. A motion was made by Vice Mayor Auwaerter, was seconded by Councilmember Altieri to approve Ordinance No. 588 on first reading. The Town Clerk called the roll. All members present voted in the affirmative. The motion passed 5-0.

c. Ordinance No. 589 – Repeal of Section 31.05 Contracts required for services.

The title was read by Attorney Sweeney. Town Manager Harpring gave Staff's report. A motion was made by Councilmember Carroll, was seconded by Councilmember Tedesko to approve Ordinance No. 589 on first reading. The Town Clerk called the roll. All members present voted in the affirmative. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Appointment to Finance Committee for term expiring November 2026

There was a vacancy on the Finance Committee due to the appointment of Finance Committee member Peter Tedesko to the Town Council. The Town Clerk received applications from Robert "Rob" Stevenson and Theresa Morgan. Vice Mayor Auwaerter suggested the Town Council consider appointing Rob Stevenson as a full member to the Committee and Theresea Morgan as an alternate member to serve when a quorum was not available Further, he added that come November, long serving Finance Committee members Michael Ochsner and Robert Moore would be term limited, leaving three vacancies on the Committee.

Councilmember Tedesko noted he met with both candidates and was quite impressed with their qualifications. He supported Vice Mayor Auwaerter's suggestion.

Councilmember Carroll reiterated his prior support for Rob Stevenson and recommended his appointment to the Finance Committee. He noted that the Council had moved away from appointing alternates to committees. He stated that he had also met with Ms. Morgan.

A brief discussion followed regarding the use and role of alternate members serving on the Town's Committees.

Vice Mayor Auwaerter moved to appoint Rob Stevenson as the full member of the Committee and Theresa Morgan as the alternate for a term expiring November 2026. Councilmember Altieri seconded the motion.

Councilmember Carroll then moved, seconded by Mayor Foley, to appoint Mr. Stevenson as the full member of the Committee for the term expiring November 2026.

Mayor Foley called for the vote. The first motion failed with two votes in favor (Vice Mayor Auwaerter and Councilmember Tedesko) and three votes opposed (Mayor Foley, Councilmember Carroll, and Councilmember Altieri).

The vote was called on the second motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

e. **Appointments to County and Regional Committees**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Auwaerter, seconded by Councilmember Altieri, and unanimously passed (5-0) to appoint Councilmember Tedesko to complete the unexpired terms on the following Regional Committees:

- Treasure Coast League of Cities: Full Member
- City of Vero Beach Utilities Commission: Alternate Member
- Affordable Housing Committee: Alternate Member
- Elected Officials Oversight Committee: Alternate Member

9. Staff Updates

a. **Building Official Report & Statistics**

Town Manager Harpring was available to answer questions.

b. **Code Enforcement Report**

Town Manager Harpring was available to answer questions.

c. **Public Works Department Report**

Town Manager Harpring was available to answer questions.

d. **Town Treasurer Report**

Finance Director Heather Christmas was available to answer questions.

e. **Public Safety Department Report & Statistics**

Assistant Chief Ryer reported that the new ambulance was scheduled for delivery later that day and invited Council and Public to a "push in ceremony" the following morning. He noted

that several AEDs had been donated to the department and confirmed that the Town discontinued the use of fire suppressing contaminants in 2023. He also provided updates on recent water main leaks. Assistant Chief Ryer reminded all that a burn ban remained in effect due to extreme drought conditions.

10. Town Attorney Report

Attorney Sweeney reported that the legislative session had reached its midpoint with 1,859 bills filed and twenty-six having passed both houses. The Governor has released his proposed budget. Property tax reform legislation had not gained momentum. He will continue to monitor developments update Council.

11. Town Manager Report

a. Sea Turtle Nesting Season Update

Town Manager Harpring offered a Power Point presentation on information for the upcoming Sea Turtle nesting season beginning March 1, noting residents' positive compliance with lighting requirements. He also reported dune plantings had begun at Beachcomber Lane and reminded everyone of the Public Safety's push in ceremony scheduled for the next day.

12. Council/Committee Reports or Non-Action Items

a. Call for Committee Reports, Informational Updates or Comments

Mayor Foley reported on his attendance at the Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments which included a presentation on the St. Lucie Airport expansion. The airport currently contributes an estimated 550 million in economic impact annually. The School Board announced a potential increase of up to 200% in health insurance costs.

Vice Mayor Auwaerter presented data showing that the Town of Indian River Shores contributes 18.1% of the County's tax revenue, while only having 2.6 percent of the County's population.

He also reported on the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long-Term Transportation Plan and provided updates on public transportation ridership.

Vice Mayor Auwaerter reported that he continued to work with FDOT on the crosswalk project south of Town and on A1A in front of the 7-11. He noted that serving on the MPO committee has helped move these projects along.

12. Call to Audience

Cindy Diamond, 4865 Coventry Court, Vero Beach. Ms. Diamond addressed the Town Council on her nonprofit organization TNVR (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, Release) an animal welfare supported method for managing feral cats. Mayor Foley agreed to send a letter of support.

13. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Town Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Approved: March 26, 2026



Janice C. Rutan, Town Clerk

