

Town of Melbourne Beach

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING September 6, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. COMMUNITY CENTER – 509 OCEAN AVENUE

MINUTES

Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members:

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Attorney Ryan Knight
Town Clerk Amber Brown

1. Call to Order

Mayor Alison Dennington called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Attorney Ryan Knight
Town Clerk Amber Brown

3. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

4. Public Comments – 2:13

After being acknowledged by the Mayor, members of the public should state their name and address for the record. The Commission encourages citizens to prepare their comments in advance. Each individual will have three (3) minutes to address the Commission on any topic(s) related to Town business, not on the Agenda.

Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash – Congratulated the Mayor on the announcement today from the League of Cities.

Jean Lewis – 506 Hibiscus Trail – Congratulated the Mayor.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about being appointed to the legislative advocacy committee for the League of Cities and being elected to the Board of Directors for the League of Mayors.

5. New Business

- A. Discussion and Consideration on how to fill the Town Commission seat vacated by Commissioner Adam Meyer – 3:37

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about Commission vacancies are governed by Section 2.04 of the Town Charter. The Commission has two options. One option is to appoint a qualified elector of the Town within 30 days, which in this case is by September 27th. The appointment would be for one year until the November 2025 election. Since there are four Commissioners, it would require an affirmative vote of three Commissioners. The second option is to have a special election and the Town would have to pay for that since it is not part of the general election. Those are the two choices. The Commission needs to decide which course of action you'd like to take. The second issue to consider is the cutoff date for any interested qualified electors to submit their name for consideration for appointment, if the Commission chooses to go that route.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the Commission is deciding if they would like to do it at all and if so decide on the procedure.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about if people want to submit their names for consideration, then set a cutoff date for that. You could have a cutoff date of next Friday, then hold a special meeting if you would like to speak with the individuals at a public hearing, or push it to the Regular Town Commission Meeting to make a decision on an appointment at that time.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about if they open the process for appointment and people apply that meet the minimum qualifications, but nobody likes anybody then it leaves it open, so it is not clear. Would prefer to vote on the process, get applications from that process, as long as one or more applicants meet the minimum qualifications then there is already a vote that someone is going to be chosen from that group. It would be more fair to agree ahead of time before you start receiving applications.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about if there is no appointment within 30 days then it has to go to a special election.

Commissioner Marivi Walker spoke about appointing someone because a special election is too expensive and not necessary. Interested citizens should submit their resume by next Friday, and then vote on it on September 18th.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about agreeing with Commissioner Marivi Walker. Cannot agree to the unknown of an appointment regardless of who submits. If only one person applies and the Commission does not feel it is a good fit then the Commission can proceed in a different direction. Have a deadline of next Friday and vote at the Regular Town Commission Meeting.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro asked about holding a Special Meeting before the Regular Commission Meeting to appoint someone.

The Commission agreed to have a Special Commission Meeting at 5:00 pm.

Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash Ave – Asked if the person is being appointed until November 2025. The Charter says until the next general election.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about the qualifying for this year's election has already passed, so it is too late to do it on this election. In order to get on the ballot, there is a qualifying period that has passed. Since you cannot get on the ballot for this upcoming election in November 2024 the only alternative would be through a special election.

Pat Scordino – 500 Harland Ave – Spoke about being confused and asked if you appoint someone how long would they be in the seat, and does the Commission have someone in mind yet?

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about receiving emails from a couple of residents who are interested. The Commission has to appoint someone within 30 days otherwise they can no longer appoint someone and then it has to go to a special election.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about anyone can apply until next Friday.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the Town had to wait to update the residents on this until the Commission decided how to proceed. Now that they have, the Town will notify the residents, and anyone can apply by sending an email of intent, a resume would be great to her or the Town Clerk.

Dawn Barlow – 1710 Pine St – Asked for clarification can any of the current candidates fill the seat.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the candidates can apply, but they might have to withdraw from running in the election.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about if a candidate was appointed they could not be elected in November because you cannot hold two seats at once.

Tim Reed – 302 Fourth Ave – Asked about the criteria for the people who apply for the appointment. Will it be similar to what the candidates have to do? Spoke about the Code says until the next general municipal election.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about they have to have the same qualifications, but they do not need to do the campaign documents.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about if there is a referendum between now and November 2025 would that end the term of the appointed Commissioner, and wanting the Town Attorney to go through the provisions to make it more clear.

Tina Bove – 216 Ash Ave – Asked for clarification on how many candidates are running and about one of them filling the vacancy. Let the residents vote do not appoint someone. Let the residents put forth people then the Commission votes.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about how before Commissioner Adam Meyer resigned there were two seats up for this election and there are 4 candidates. If the Commission decides to appoint then a list of interested people would be posted and then it would go to a meeting. Spoke about having interested people go out and get signatures like they are a candidate.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about being fine with that.

Commissioner Marivi Walker spoke about how we have never done that previously, and it is a volunteer position for one year.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about how there is only one week to complete this. Thinks the signatures are a bad idea because people might be out of Town or unavailable to get signatures in that timeframe. Would be fine with a special election if it were not so expensive.

Commissioner Corey Runte left at 7:15 pm.

Frank LaGrassa - 412 First Ave – Spoke about Commissioner Corey Runte being concerned about the cost of a special election, but approved the budget.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about not voting for it unless the signatures are required.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about the vote to appoint someone would take a majority of the Commission.

Mike Bove – 216 Ash Ave – Urged the Commission to do an election and not do an appointment. Charge the residents to cover the cost of a special election.

Commissioner Corey Runte returned at 7:20 pm.

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Attorney Ryan Knight
Town Clerk Amber Brown

Erika Orriss – 263 Loggerhead Drive – Spoke about other places that have had people apply, then do a speech, and allow the public to comment. 25 signatures is reasonable.

Jean Lewis – 506 Hibiscus – Spoke about being concerned about the obvious fighting going on up there. Would rather see the residents vote even at \$20,000 if it will avoid the fighting.

Commissioner Corey Runte made a motion to proceed with the appointment process in lieu of a special election with the following conditions all applicants shall submit some form of application or resume and shall meet all qualification requirements set forth by our Charter due by Friday close of business the 13th of September and it will be voted on with applicants or not at the Regular Town Commission Meeting September 18th with no signature requirement due to extenuating circumstances; Commissioner Marivi Walker seconded; Motion carried 3-1 with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.


Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about voting against it because the cost of an election wasn't too much, and not having the requirement of at least 25 signatures.

Commissioner Corey Runte left at 7:26.

6. Adjournment

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie moved to adjourn; Commissioner Marivi Walker seconded; Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.



Alison Dennington
Mayor

ATTEST:





Amber Brown, CMC
Town Clerk