

MINUTES

CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH- SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025 AT 10:30 A.M.

HOLIDAY INN HARBORSIDE- 401 2nd STREET – PELICAN-SANDPIPER ROOM

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FL. 33785

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor-Commissioner Denise Houseberg, Vice-Mayor Commissioner Janet Wilson, Commissioner John Bigelow, Commissioner Jude Bond, and Commissioner Hilary King.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Attorney Randy D. Mora, City Manager Gregg Mims, and City Clerk Lorin Kornijtschuk.

1. DISCUSSION OF: Request for Proposal for Municipal Legal Services.

Mayor Commissioner Houseberg opened the discussion on releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for municipal legal services and turned it over to City Manager Mims for further explanation.

City Manager Gregg Mims explained that the agenda packet included several sample RFPs from other municipalities, including the one previously used by the City of Indian Rocks Beach on May 18, 2014, to hire the current City Attorney. He recommended using the 2014 RFP format, with appropriate updates.

The process would include a three-week open period, consistent with standard government procurement timelines. City Clerk Kornijtschuk, with Public Works Director Dean Scharmen, would update the RFP accordingly. A key provision from the 2014 document would remain: no contact between potential bidders and City officials during the RFP period, with all questions directed to the City Clerk. Responses will be provided by the City Manager and the City Clerk. These questions and responses would be made public to ensure transparency and equal access to information for all interested parties.

- City Manager Gregg Mims clarified that the current agreement with Attorney Randy Mora includes a provision for extending services beyond the existing contract. He emphasized that using an interim legal firm would require going through the same RFP process.

Commissioner King asked for clarification about the updates to the RFP and whether the commission would be able to review the final document before it is released. She also inquired further about the no-contact provision.

City Attorney Randy Mora confirmed that the described procedures align with standard government practices, including the public release of all clarification responses for transparency.

Mayor- Commissioner Houseberg expressed support for using the 2014 RFP as a base, noting that reusing a proven framework would allow the city to move forward efficiently. She emphasized the importance of timeliness and expressed confidence in the 2014 document's structure, provided necessary updates are made.

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg opened public comment.

Kelly Cisarik, 448 Harbor Drive South, expressed concern about the tight timeline for selecting a new legal firm and asked whether the May 31 deadline could be extended to the end of June.

Mayor Commissioner Houseberg Closed the Public Comment.

City Attorney Randy Mora clarified he chose not to renew his contract but offered to continue services through June 2025 at a new rate of \$225/hour to support the transition. He emphasized this would not include new projects, but rather a wrap-up of existing work.

Commissioner King raised a question about upcoming magistrate hearings in June.

City Attorney Mora stated that those would need to be addressed as part of the transition plan, but that there are unlikely to be June cod enforcement hearings and there may be a short gap until the new attorney is in place. He noted the City may need to adjust or postpone any noticed June hearings accordingly.

Unanimous Approval to proceed with an updated version of the 2014 RFP for legal services.

2. DISCUSSION OF: Recruitment of a New City Manager.

Mayor Commissioner Houseberg introduced the topic of recruiting a new city manager, acknowledging the scope of the task ahead, and turned it over to City Attorney Mora for further explanation.

City Attorney Mora offered insight into the recruitment process, starting with a key clarification: per best practices and ICMA guidelines, the City Manager should not be involved in the recruitment process to preserve impartiality. Outgoing City Manager Mims has confirmed he will facilitate the administrative aspects of the transition but will not participate in recruitment efforts, having formally announced his departure.

City Attorney Mora detailed the city's purchasing policies, highlighting that any engagement exceeding \$10,000 would require a competitive bid unless piggybacking off an existing competitively secured contract from another municipality. He strongly advised the Commission to use an outside recruitment firm, noting that none of the current commissioners had prior experience hiring a city manager and that the city had not undergone this type of search in over a decade.

- **Piggybacking** off another city's active recruitment contract.
- **Using the FCCMA's Senior Advisors Program**, a volunteer-based resource that may assist if conditions align.
- **Issuing a formal RFP (Request for Proposals)**, which would take several weeks but allow the Commission to define its own criteria.

Commissioner Bigelow asked Vice-Mayor Commissioner Wilson about the Florida League of Cities as a possible contact point for piggybacking opportunities. **Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson** deferred to City Attorney Mora for better insight. **City Attorney Mora** affirmed the firm had contacts at both FLC and FCCMA and could reach out for information.

City Attorney Mora clarified that, if a qualifying contract is available, piggybacking could be done relatively quickly—within a week or two—while issuing a new RFP would likely take about a month, including development, approval, publishing, and candidate selection.

Commissioners Bigelow, King, Wilson, and Bond discussed the importance of both fiscal responsibility and acting quickly to secure a high-quality candidate.

Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson expressed concern about piggybacking on contracts from cities of dissimilar size or needs.

Commissioner King raised concerns about needing an interim manager, given the complexities facing the city.

Mayor Commissioner Houseberg confirmed no current city employees had expressed interest in the interim

role and voiced her support for engaging a recruitment firm. She stressed the importance of finding a strong leader who could earn the trust of both staff and residents and emphasized the need for respect and professionalism throughout the process.

Commissioner Bigelow agreed that hiring a recruiter was likely the best route, despite his fiscal concerns.

Commissioner Bigelow inquired whether a recruiting firm could also be used to assist in hiring a new city attorney if using one firm for both positions might result in cost savings.

City Attorney Mora confirmed that it was legally permissible, though doing so would involve similar procedural challenges and likely rule out the piggybacking option for a joint contract; unlike in the private sector, such efficiencies are not guaranteed.

Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson opposed the idea, pointing out that the pool for city attorney candidates is already small and largely Florida-based, making a recruiter unnecessary for Municipal Legal Services.

City Attorney Mora explained that while preparing for the RFP, the city can choose to hire a full-service legal firm or split services among different firms, provided that those firms are not somehow jointly serving as the City Attorney. He noted that as city attorney, there are limits. Additionally, there are financial limits to the City's insurance, covering only some litigation costs. Once those funds run out, the city must decide who will continue legal representation and how to manage legal and administrative services going forward.

Commissioners King and Mayor Commissioner Houseberg agreed, citing the need for a more time-sensitive, streamlined process in filling the city attorney role.

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg opened public comment.

Kelly Cisarik, 448 Harbor Drive South, suggested that certain qualifications for an interim city manager, such as a full-time commitment or an undergraduate degree, might be waived to expand the candidate pool. She emphasized the importance of knowing the status of the city budget before the current city manager's departure on July 25th. She proposed considering local talent for an interim role, including two former mayors residing in the city, and a retired former city manager from Belleair Beach.

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg closed public comment.

Unanimous Approval was given to engage with a recruitment firm for the City Manager position.

City Attorney Mora stated he will coordinate with staff and report back on progress, including findings on piggybacking opportunities and RFP drafts.

3. ADJOURNMENT.

Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Bond seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

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