

**ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA**

**Meeting of September 20, 2018  
City Hall – Room 100  
1:00**

**Members & Alternate:** Chair Ed Montanari, Amy Foster, Brandi Gabbard, Lisa Wheeler-Bowman; Alternate – Charlie Gerdes

**Support Staff:** Justin Andrews

**A. Call to Order**

**B. Approval of Agenda**

**C. Approval of Minutes**

1. May 17, 2018

**D. New/Deferred Business**

1. Legislative Priorities for 2019 Legislative Session
  - i. John Rodriguez, Director Government Affairs
  - ii. Taylor Biehl, Capital Alliance Group
  - iii. St. Petersburg Legislative Delegation
    1. Sen. Jeff Brandes
    2. Rep. Ben Diamond
2. **St. Pete Day**
  - i. Matt Lettelleir, St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce

**E. Referrals**

1. Discussion of proposed resolution concerning the statutory restrictions precluding municipalities from being able to offer certain assistance on water and wastewater bills. **(Legal)**
2. Discussion on advocacy or governance on the state level on oversight and monitoring of the Housing Authority **(Steve Kornell)**

**F. Schedule for 2019 Legislative Session**

**G. Upcoming Meeting Agenda**

1. TBD

**H. Adjournment**

ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**Report**

**May 17, 2018**

**1:00 – City Hall – Room 100**

Present: Chair Ed Montanari, Amy Foster, Charlie Gerdes (alternate), State Senator, Darryl Rouson; State Representative, Kathleen Peters; State Representative, Ben Diamond; HJ; Office Systems Specialist Paul Traci, JR; City Council Administrative Officer, Cindy Sheppard; Jane Wallace; Legislative Aide, Justin Andrews

The Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Montanari. Approval of agenda.

Jeff Sharkey updated the committee on the 2018 legislative session, summarizing it as dramatic due to hurricane Irma and the Parkland shooting. These events had large budget impacts, with over \$400 million allocated to address gun violence in public schools. A record low 196 bills were passed. Jeff spent a lot of time on the USF consolidation issue but there was little movement on the bill, and it became a part of the higher education package that passed. Mr. Sharkey and Senator Brandes spent time discussing appropriation for the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge. Brandes estimated that the city could secure one or two million dollars in funding and recommended pursuing the issue next session.

State Rep. Kathleen Peters discussed the effects of the Parkland shooting on the legislative session. Rep. Peters went on to describe the increases in mental health funding, including the placement of a mental health counselor at every public school in Florida.

State Rep. Ben Diamond felt that officials from our area were better prepared and active during the legislative session. Discussed CRA bill and how it would damage St Petersburg's work with CRAs. Rep. Diamond discussed the legislative response to the Parkland shooting, stating that there were too many financial questions left after session, and that we need to fund police in schools, rather than pursuing a guardian program. Rep. Diamond summarized local funding that made it into the final budget, including funding for local museums.

Rep. Peters interjected to discuss the handling of our mental health system during emergencies like Hurricane Irma. Rep. Peters suggested working with Chief Holloway to address mental health closures during storm preparations.

Chair Montanari asked Senator Rouson and Rep. Diamond to talk about legislative priorities for the 2019 session. Rep. Diamond stated that addressing the opioid epidemic would be his top priority. CM Foster asked about funding for programs that assist residents in recovery, or at risk of homelessness. Senator Rouson estimated that a funding solution would be finalized by June 30. Senator Rouson listed his priorities for 2019, specifically addressing the opioid crisis and arts funding. Jeff Sharkey shared his thoughts on the 2019 session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REMOVAL OF STATE STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS ON CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICES; INSTRUCTING THE CITY CLERK TO TRANSMIT THIS RESOLUTION TO CERTAIN PERSONS AND ENTITIES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the cost of providing drinking water and wastewater service is increasing due to aging infrastructure, regulatory requirements and new technologies; and

WHEREAS, some citizens of our community live in poverty and some experience unexpected crises which affect their ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, customer assistance programs can help to provide better access to essential drinking water delivery and wastewater services; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Petersburg (the “City”) presently offers customers assistance through voluntary donations, payment plans, recurring billing, and permanent due date extension, and further plans to implement budget billing as well as a bill round-up program for additional voluntary donations; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) in 2016 published a report of Drinking Water and Wastewater Utility Customer Assistance Programs (the “EPA Study”) compiling its extensive research of customer assistance programs in 795 utilities across the country; and

WHEREAS, the EPA Study showed that under current rate structures, utilities often find approximately one (1) percent of their customers are unable to pay at any particular time and low-income households are three (3) times more likely to have their water and/or sewer service disconnected than other households; and

WHEREAS, according to the EPA Study, customer assistance programs across the country include bill discounts, flexible terms, a lifeline rate, temporary assistance, and water efficiency measures, however, of the eighteen (18) Florida agencies and utilities which provide some type of customer assistance program, none provide a lifeline rate which would allow a customer to pay a subsidized rate for a fixed amount of water or sewer service; and

WHEREAS, there is concern that the statutory rate setting requirements under Chapter 180, Florida Statutes impact the ability to offer a subsidized lifeline rate or free services for citizens in need in Florida, which is demonstrated by the EPA Study which showed that no Florida agencies or utilities offer a lifeline rate; and

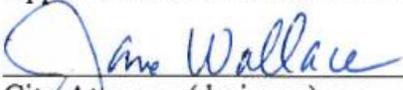
WHEREAS, if the need for affordability programs continues to increase and although the City has implemented other programs to assist customers, without the ability to offer subsidized lifeline rates or free services to citizens in need, these citizens of St. Petersburg will continue to struggle to keep access to drinking water and sewer services.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida that City Council urges the Florida Legislature to make a deliberative and thorough effort to remove the statutory restrictions which limit the City's ability to offer a subsidized lifeline rate or free services to citizens of St. Petersburg who live in poverty or experience unexpected crises which affect their ability to pay for water and wastewater services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that that this Council hereby instructs the City Clerk to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Senate President, the House Speaker and the Pinellas County Delegation.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

Approved as to form and content:

  
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City Attorney (designee) *Citylaw A18-00930*

## 2019 SESSION DATES

August	1, 2018	Deadline for filing claim bills (Rule 4.81(2))
January	25, 2019	Friday, 5:00 p.m., deadline for submitting requests for drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, <u>including requests for companion bills</u>
March	1, 2019	Friday, 5:00 p.m., deadline for approving final drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, <u>including companion bills</u>
March	5, 2019	Regular Session convenes (Article III, section 3(b), Constitution) 12:00 noon, deadline for filing bills for introduction (Rule 3.7(1))
April	20, 2019	All bills are immediately certified (Rule 6.8) Motion to reconsider made and considered the same day (Rule 6.4(4))
April	23, 2019	50th day—last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings (Rule 2.9(2))
May	3, 2019	60th day—last day of Regular Session (Article III, section 3(d), Constitution)