

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 7

Robert J. Daniels

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

ROBERT J. DANIELS, CM, MPA

456 Oriole Circle, Jupiter, FL 33458
(561) 339-4026 rjdan14@aol.com

Mr. Ron Williams
Colin Baenziger and Associates
2055 S Atlantic Ave
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Mr. Williams,

I am honored to present this documentation as my submission for the position of Town Manager with the Town of Juno Beach. Overall, I have over 8 years' experience as a City Manager and over 25 years in senior management in municipalities. I am currently working as the Town Manager in Sewall's Point for the past 2 years, a high end peninsular community in Eastern Martin County and I was planning on working here for the rest of my career in public service in Sewall's Point. That changed yesterday when I heard that the Town Manager's position was available in the Town where I previously worked as the Assistant Chief of Police. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work in Juno Beach, a community I loved and closer to my home.

I previously worked as City Manager with the City of Madeira Beach, a coastal community battling sea level rise and stormwater sewer renovations, with 4 major stakeholders: residents, businesses, tourism, and developers. I promoted community involvement through a monthly meeting at different venues with residents throughout the city, which also gave businesses the opportunity to meet the residents they serve. I am apolitical and was able to build consensus between developers and residents, implementing concessions acceptable to all stakeholders, including the commission. I worked hand in hand with the Commission to enact their vision, and we were successful in obtaining legislative allocations of \$1.75 million for renovation of our 50-year-old beach groins and \$500,000 towards a roadway and stormwater project to partner with a \$2 million dollar loan. In the height of COVID, we were able to complete \$12 million roadway reconstruction with replacement of water and sewer lines, replacement of the stormwater system, and sea walls within the budget and on time.

I was also Town Manager of Melbourne Beach, where I accomplished rehabilitating a crumbling stormwater utility system with a FEMA grant, revamped the code enforcement function creating a better quality of life for the residents, transformed the police department with the hire of a new police chief and the addition of a school resource officer, completed a pier restoration project, beach renourishment, and pavilion renovations. Prior to that opportunity, I served as the Interim City Manager at the City of North Bay Village in Miami-Dade County.

In Sewall's Point, we were very project driven securing an \$8.4 million grant for a septic to sewer project from DEP, \$10 million grant for a resiliency project raising the only major through street servicing the south part of Town, and converted the businesses along A-1-A that did not have sewers available.

Additionally, I oversaw all budget and conservative fiscal operations, demonstrated a strong desire to move the community and projects forward working with public works, I specialize in coastal communities, and improving intergovernmental relations in each of my management positions. I have an ability to de-escalate contentious situations, collaborate with a community leaders and resident groups, and be an effective problem-solver. I also embrace a positive attitude and mentor staff to excel and have membership in the Florida City County Managers Association (FCCMA), International City Managers Association (ICMA) where I am a credentialed manager, and the League of Cities.

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I believe that I am uniquely qualified to provide the vision and innovative leadership, direction, planning, operations and administrative expertise that should be expected from your Town Manager. I am available to answer any questions, living within a 20-minute drive.

Sincerely,

Robert Daniels

ROBERT DANIELS, CM, MPA

456 Oriole Circle, Jupiter, FL 33458

Phone: (561) 339 - 4026 | Email: rjdan14@aol.com

Results oriented City Manager with over thirty years progressively responsible experience in public administration managing operations in municipal government. Demonstrated proficiency in coordinating programs and interfacing with professionals of all levels; coupled with strong ability to assess services and support with stakeholders and elected officials. Profound knowledge of the government policies and regulations pertaining to budgeting and accounting, coupled with an outstanding knowledge of municipal ordinances, Florida laws, and federal legislation necessary for the management of a municipal government. Highly skilled in city planning, economic development, and personnel management as well as effective communication skills.

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Demonstrated working knowledge in the interpretation of the codes, city policies and procedures, and the state and federal laws applicable to Florida local government, including but not limited to the Public Records Act, Sunshine Law, Code of Ethics and the statutes governing the budgeting and financial operations.
- Demonstrated ability to delegate responsibilities to the proper employee and provide mentoring opportunities.
- Demonstrated ability to make effective recommendations to the Commission and provide feedback on all operations.
- Deals with residents, businesses, officials and contractors, and employees in a professional, tactful, diplomatic, transparent, and honest manner.
- Oversee the administration of all vendor contracts, interlocal agreements, grant opportunities, grant monitoring, and development agreements.
- Oversight of budget development, appropriations, and budget administration along with monitoring the effectiveness of all fiscal operations to ensure expenditures and revenue are within projections.
- Extensive experience in law enforcement management and government HR matters.
- Specialist in coastal communities with a population under 10,000.

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager – Town of Sewall's Point (2022 – Present)

- Streamlined operations dealing with a small staff but utilizing strong customer service skills.
- Effectively worked with the local legislative delegation for appropriations of \$1.5 million over two years for resiliency programs.
- Maintained communications with other jurisdictions within the County and Martin County managers as well.
- Improved communications internally and externally keeping the residents informed of the Capital Projects and the work of the Town Commission.
- Served as a resource for Commissioners advising them of the pertinent information for them to

make their official decisions.

- Worked to build trust and transparency with the public while maintaining an open door policy for residents and staff.
- Instituted new community events to gather the residents with an opportunity to improve neighbor relations.

Key Achievements:

Working with staff we were able to obtain funding for a septic to sewer project for 706 connections in the south part of the Town (\$8.4 million), funding for Phase 2 resiliency project adding stormwater treatment with outfall lines and raising the only through roadway (\$10 million), funding for Phase 3 resiliency project adding stormwater treatment with outfall lines and raising the only through roadway, and funding for a Vulnerability Assessment (\$100,000). Developed staff to a strong customer service organization to match the high expectations of our residents and including a police department with a bias to Community Policing. Instituted a full time position for finance to maintain the cash flows, grant reports, and the ability to cross train where the need arises. In a small town, everyone must wear many hats.

City Manager — City of Madeira Beach, Florida (2019 – 2022)

- Oversaw all operations of a barrier island community and increased community involvement.
- Ensured that all laws, provisions of the charter, and directives of the Board of Commissioners were enforced.
- Offer recommendations to the Board of Commissioners to facilitate a shared vision and assist in the decision-making of the Commissioners.
- Developed new avenues of communicating with the residents and other stakeholders seeking transparency of all operations.
- Submit regular communications to the Board of Commissioners concerning the operations of the City Departments, personnel, and on-going projects.
- Kept open door communications with Commissioners, residents, employees, and other stakeholders.
- Worked with lobbyists to secure Florida legislative allocations for major projects and local community partners to improve operations for the beach communities.
- Developed transparent code enforcement investigations and utilized a smart phone application to improve communications with residents.

Key Achievements:

All stakeholders reaped the benefits of a strong economic development program. Just recently, we were successful in obtaining legislative allocations of \$1.75 million for renovation of our fifty-year-old beach groins and \$500,000 towards a local roadway project. I also secured over \$3 million dollars in grant funding for various sustainability projects and successfully negotiated a three-year labor agreement with our firefighters. Our beach was chosen by Trip Advisor as the #9 beach in the country thanks to our cleanliness campaign and our pro-tourism strategies. We also developed a non-profit organization to seek funding for beautification of our parks, beaches, and the city.

Town Manager— Town of Melbourne Beach, FL (2017 – 2019)

- Direct administration of all departments of the Town except the Town Attorney.
- Developed community outreach programs to increase citizen involvement in town operations.

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- Worked with a long-standing Sustainability Committee to develop environmental programs and recycling kitchen waste into compost.
- Developing and overseeing the town budget and financial operations, planning and code management, personnel administration, facility management, procurement, public works, community development, grant administration, building department and public relations. Oversight of the volunteer fire department.
- Developed fund raising programs for park and playground improvements.
- Worked with local leaders to combat water pollution affecting local canals and waterways.

Key Achievements:

- Experience rehabilitating a crumbling stormwater utility system and securing FEMA grant funding to assist with the financial commitment.
- Revamped the code enforcement function creating a better quality of life for the residents.
- Transformed the police department with the hire of a new police chief, the addition of a school resource officer function, and revamping the security functions.
- Completed a pier restoration project, beach renourishment, and pavilion renovations.

Interim Town Manager — North Bay Village, FL (2010-2015)

Worked as the Interim City Manager for one year and additionally served as the police chief and acting City manager as needed.

- Managed all city operations to include planning, economic development, building, finance, personnel, IT, public works, water and sewer operations, and the police department.

Key Achievements:

- Calmed labor unrest by successfully negotiating a new labor agreement and instituting a labor-management committee.
- Improved internal and external communications with the City Commission and staff.
- Initiated a park development project with grant and bond funding.
- Successfully brought to closure a major main line sewer and beautification project.
- Developed the City's Code Enforcement functions with the latest technology.
- Initiated an Emergency Management Response Plan and responsible for all emergency operations.
- Implementation of security protocols to provide a safer working environment for employees and citizens.

Position Held in Law Enforcement

Chief of Police — North Bay Village, Florida (4 years)

Chief of Police -- Buckeye Police Department, Buckeye, Arizona (1 years)

Assistant Chief of Police -- Juno Beach Police Department, Juno Beach, Florida (3 years)

Interim Chief of Police -- Florida Atlantic University Police Services, Boca Raton, Florida (1 year)

Boca Raton Police Services Department, Boca Raton, Florida (26 years) retiring as Assist. Chief of Police

EDUCATION

M.A. Public Administration (MPA)

Florida Atlantic University – Boca Raton, FL

B.A. Business Administration (BBA)

Florida Atlantic University – Boca Raton, FL

Additional:

Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy FBI Training Academy - Quantico, VA

Post Graduate Studies – Criminal Justice Education, University of Virginia – Quantico, VA

Certifications: Management Development Certification; Certified Government Financial Manager;

Florida Executive Development Seminar; Florida Chief's Executive Seminar Class 29; Certificate in

Public Records Management, All FEMA required courses and certifications, Stormwater Inspector and

Operator certifications, **ICMA Credentialed Manager – Recipient of award for local government service.**

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

- International City Managers Association
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Florida City County Manager's Association
- Florida League of Cities (Legislative Committee)
- FBI National Academy Alumni Association
- American College of Forensic Examiners International
- Rotary.

Candidate Introduction

ROBERT DANIELS

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Florida Atlantic University (FL)
Bachelor of Business Administration, Florida Atlantic University (FL)
Credentialed Manager, International City Manager Association (2022)

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager, Town of Sewall’s Point, FL	2022 – Present
City Manager, City of Madeira Beach, FL	2019 – 2022
Town Manager, Town of Melbourne Beach, FL	2016 – 2019
Interim Town Manager/Police Chief, North Bay Village, FL	2010 – 2016
Chief of Police, City of Buckeye, AZ	2009 – 2010
Assistant Chief of Police, Town of Juno Beach	2006 – 2009
Interim Chief of Police, Florida Atlantic University, FL	2005 – 2006
Assistant Chief of Police, Boca Raton, FL (Through the ranks)	1978 – 2005

BACKGROUND

The Town of Sewall’s Point is a bedroom community on a peninsula between the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River in eastern Martin County, Florida, in an area known as the Treasure Coast. The main connection to the mainland is A-1-A, which was just renamed Jimmy Buffett Blvd. This road takes traffic to the beaches and points north along the Atlantic Ocean coastline.

The Town has a population of around 2200 people and is transforming from an upper-class retirement area to one that is seeing families migrate from California and New York. Some of the residents are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies or previous leaders. The Town employs 17 individuals, including a Police Department, a Building Department, Public Works, Finance, and a Town Clerk, with four department heads directly supervised by me. The General Fund budget is \$4,053,671, and the total budget with Capital Projects is \$28,663,320.

The three most significant issues facing the Town are:

- The most important issues are environmental and involve increasing the resiliency of the Town. Examples are the Septic to Sewer Conversion Project, which is important to the health of two bodies of water surrounding Sewall’s Point, the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River. The Town has several septic tank systems that are failing, causing fecal material to enter our waterways. The northern area of Sewall’s Point already has sewer service available, but since then, Martin County Utilities has made it harder for us to build a sewer system that connects to the County’s sewer treatment plant. We

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currently have authorization for 340 connections, but authorization is needed for 366 more connections.

- The Town has one roadway that serves the South area of Sewall's Point, where most residents reside. That roadway and some neighboring properties flood during king high tides, sea level rise, and torrential rainstorms. The Town is raising the roadway to a standard level of three feet above sea level, the highest level allowed because of the low floor heights of the homes along the roadway. The project has been divided into four sections, each needing \$10-12 million. The roadway will have two separate drainage systems, one servicing the road and one servicing the neighboring properties. The stormwater will then be treated in a stormwater treatment area and released through an outfall line into the Indian River. One section has been completed, and one is just starting construction, leaving the search for funding for the other two sections.
- Planning for the same roadway in the north area of Sewall's Point is more complicated. That section is a Martin County Roadway, and the County has refused to cooperate with raising that portion of the roadway along with the drainage project needed to keep the road and residences dry. For over two years, we have tried to have the County join us in the design work as a starting point, and we even obtained a grant for this purpose. This roadway is also essential as it is an evacuation route for the beach area during a hurricane evacuation.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I was previously employed by Juno Beach, having worked for the Police Department as the Assistant Chief of Police. The Town always had a hometown feel, and the employees formed a team that could provide exemplary service. I am sure some of the names have changed, but the charm of the Town has not. The sense of community is fostered by the events the town hosts, such as the Ice Cream Social and the summer picnic. The Town Council was professional and worked well together to craft the vision for the administration to follow. I know some changes in perspective have occurred, but we can constantly refocus on a shared vision directing us to what is best for Juno Beach. I am eager to utilize the experiences I have gained through the different organizations I have been a part of to assist Juno Beach in traversing through a strategic plan for the future.

I never stop learning and have been lucky enough to garner new ideas and concepts from everyone I have worked with. My participatory management style has helped not only my learning process but also that of my teammates through the exchange of knowledge. Succession management is also a priority to prepare the staff for other opportunities in Juno Beach or other municipalities. I always take time to speak with staff and am concerned about their problems. I stress that it is important for employees to take care of themselves first and then their families. Next comes their job, finding the balance between their personal and professional lives. Some

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think of legacies as the names on a building or accolades they obtain, but I believe in legacies left in your teammates.

This concern also reaches the commissioners I have worked with, dealing with their goals and desires as they work to make a better town. I gave them the information they needed to make the best decisions for the community. I never shy away from important decisions but realize that policy decisions rest with the Town Council. I strive to communicate with each council member, keeping them aware of important issues and preparing them for future Town Council Meetings. I strive to reach a consensus within the Town Council, finding a common ground that each member can agree on. I always follow the HEART principles: Honesty, Ethics, Accountability, Respect, and Trustworthiness. This is my code of conduct, which my previously elected officials have appreciated. I have found the truth is always the best course of action, and demonstrating professionalism even in adverse conditions is also the best option.

I'm always working on patience because I want to get the job done so we can move on to the next project or situation. I always maintain my composure and never lose my temper. Once you lose that, you have lost everything. I also believe in working with each employee to broaden their knowledge and experiences, which is documented with an annual goal-setting conversation usually held during their performance appraisal. I have found this process to help meet organizational goals as well. Goal setting usually leads to success and setting the bar high because you may never reach your expectations if you don't try. One of my most significant achievements came at Sewall's Point. I was told Sewall's Point has never received large grants. We applied for a \$8.4 million grant from the Department of Environmental Protection and received the award. This was the catalyst for our Septic to Sewer conversion process, in which we delivered 169 connections out of 706 connections in part 1 of the project in January 2025. This took coordination with the residents, the contractors, Martin County Utilities, the contractual Town Engineer, and the Town Commission. Part 2 will deliver 171 connections and is planned to start in May 2025.

I am in my second year as Chairperson of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a member of the Treasure Coast League of Cities, and the Martin County Local Mitigation Strategies Committee, all of which have assisted me in moving the Town's agenda forward. This has also been helpful with the projects we have worked on and those in the future. I have been fortunate to represent the Town of Sewall's Point at the Local Delegation Meeting and have successfully received legislative appropriations.

I also believe that we learn something from every failure. In my case, we had a \$1 million stormwater replacement project early in my career, and I did not double-check the work of the Town Engineer. The contractor and the engineer decided to start the project at one end of the street, which was different from where the project was supposed to start. It had already been published, and I contacted each resident on that block. The residents at the other end of the project received little notice and were upset with the mix-up. I learned to always check and recheck with contracted staff to ensure appropriate notice and communication is given to the residents.

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One of the most challenging parts of the job is terminating someone's employment. I never felt good about firing anyone, but it is a necessary function of being a Town Manager. I always allow employees to correct their behavior and prove that they can improve when possible. In December of 2019, when COVID was showing signs of occurring in China, at a staff meeting, I mentioned to our Fire Chief to make sure his personnel had enough personal protective equipment (PPE) since rescue personnel might be the first employees to have to confront COVID patients. In March 2020, COVID hit. Early on a Friday morning, I was met by the Fire Department Inspector, who explained that we had two firefighters the night before had two patients who supposedly had COVID, and one was in cardiac arrest and subsequently died. The Department had no PPE except for one set, and no firefighters were trained in using the gear. When the firefighter used the equipment on the now-deceased patient, the protective mask fogged up while he was doing chest compressions. I could not locate the Fire Chief. I called his house and cell phone, leaving a message to contact me immediately, and I subsequently discovered that the Chief was taking off on Fridays to go on last-minute cruises without submitting paperwork to the timekeeper. I had the Fire Inspector obtain the necessary PPE and conduct training with the firefighters. I learned he had lost the respect of his personnel due to his constant absence and his inability to protect his employees. I placed him on administrative suspension until my investigation was completed, and he was subsequently terminated after I met with each commissioner and the mayor to advise them of my actions. I believe senior staff members have an essential responsibility to their department members, and he breached that trust, among other apparent regulations.

I see the following challenges in Juno Beach:

- It is imperative to bring the Town Council and residents together and speak with one voice to face the town's challenges.
- Facing the challenges of new development and re-development while keeping the hometown feeling of Juno Beach.
- As change occurs on the federal level, be prepared to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate changes.
- Utilize the Vulnerability Study to make Capital Improvement Plans for further drainage and flooding improvements and promote the town's resilience.

During the first six months, my efforts will involve:

- Open lines of communication with the Town Council and the residents.
- Meet with citizen groups, other elected officials, and Fire/Rescue Department officials to build a bridge and strive for common ground.
- Meet with each employee and volunteer of the Town, stressing teamwork and communication.
- Evaluate each Department and function the Town provides to check effectiveness and efficiency.

ROBERT DANIELS

- Create strategies to handle future developments in the future.
- Work with County officials to enact more reasonable solutions to the Town's traffic.
- Develop a rapport with media representatives.

I have always had a good relationship with the media. I realize they have a job to do, and the easier I can facilitate their job, the better the Town will be. Honesty, to start with, is the best course of action with outstanding media relations. I am an open book and would never embarrass the Town, Council members, employees, or residents. I deal with everybody straightforwardly, so they understand the position of the Town, and some may not like the fact that I have to say no at times. I also utilize different forms of communication. For the most part, Facebook and Constant Contact are the more popular methods utilized. We have used both to communicate events, Council agendas, and recaps of Council meetings, all of which seemed to reach 60-65% of the residents. Also, emergency notices for natural disasters and our street closures are better received via e-mail.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Honest
- Ethical
- Approachable
- Proactive
- Reasonable
- Friendly

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB SECTION

There is only one position I would leave Sewall's Point for, and that is the position of Town Manager with the Town of Juno Beach. Juno Beach is close to home, and I have some great memories of my time there. I also feel that the time is right to utilize my skills and experience to benefit Juno Beach.

CURRENT SALARY

My current salary is \$130,000 plus benefits.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "BOB" JAMES DANIELS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	Results Pending
County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Martin County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Maricopa County, AZ	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Palm Beach County, FL	Results Pending
Martin County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	Results Pending
Maricopa County, AZ	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	Results Pending
Arizona	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle
Florida No Records Found

Credit Very Good

Personal Bankruptcy No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry Not Listed

Education Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT “BOB” JAMES DANIELS**

Employment

Confirmed, except for the City of
Madeira Beach (2019 – 2022),
North Bay Village (2010 – 2015)
and Buckeye Police Dept (2009 – 2010)

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "BOB" JAMES DANIELS
Personal Disclosure**

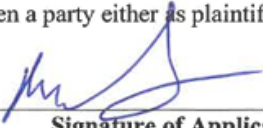
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: ___Robert Daniels___

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No X
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No X
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No X
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes No X
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No X
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. None Currently
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No X
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to:  _____
Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

John Hendricks – Former Mayor, Madeira Beach, FL 727-394-8877

Mr. Hendricks has known Mr. Daniels since around 2019. They enjoyed a good working relationship. Mr. Daniels did a good job for Madeira Beach.

Mr. Hendricks has lived in the town of Madeira Beach for over 40 years, and he knows the residents and staff. Mr. Daniels brought ideas and matters to Mr. Hendricks for his perspective and because of his knowledge base of the community. He listened and wanted to learn.

Managers should give the elected officials guidance, particularly when newly elected, because they may not always understand how the government works or the requirements that the City is beholden to. One of Mr. Daniels’ strengths was helping the elected officials understand what they could and could not do. He guided them in the right direction without pushing them.

While Mr. Daniels made good decisions when hiring staff, he also tried to promote from within the organization if the employee was qualified. They generally know more about the City and the organization than someone coming in from the outside.

Mr. Daniels kept processes the way they were, as long as they were running properly. He also did what he could to streamline the organization. He was not one to alienate staff with layoffs and harsh discipline. He counseled and mentored employees to help them improve).

The Barrier Island Government Council (BIG-C) is an active group in the community. Mr. Daniels attended roundtable discussions on matters related to the island. He listened to what was said and was there to help answer questions. He also provided feedback at the meetings. His knowledge and experience was very beneficial, as the group consisted of many Mayors that were new to their position, or had only been in place for a few years.

Mr. Daniels has great Florida and coastal experience. He has worked with FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers on grants to protect the City against floods and hurricanes. He is very calm under stress, and always retains his cool even under scrutiny.

The Mayor and Mr. Daniels had frequent meetings, several times a week. Mr. Daniels always wanted the Mayor to be informed. They met the day before a Commission meeting to go over what was on the agenda.

Mr. Daniels is customer service oriented. He meets deadlines. He hired a contract employee to audit and review the financials, even though they have a good finance staff. This employee handles the audits, which have all come back outstanding. He is the top of the class.

Mr. Daniels was very professional. Elected officials came to meetings in casual dress, some wearing flip flops. He always wore a suit because he wanted to put that good foot forward as their City Manager.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

An individual disliked the former Commission, ran for office, and won the election. He saw Mr. Daniels as an extension of the previous Commission and wanted him out. His vendetta had nothing to do with Mr. Daniels personally, but he became so angry at meetings that the other Commissioners had to calm him down. Mr. Daniels was always professional despite the actions of others. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Hendricks would hire Mr. Daniels. He would be a good hire for any community.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Loyal,
- Driven,
- Tenacious,
- Honest, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Paid close attention to detail, pursued grants for the City, always accessible.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Dave Hutson – Former Commissioner, Madeira Beach, FL 330-524-4313

Mr. Hutson has known Mr. Daniels since 2019. Mr. Hutson was a new Commissioner at the time and Mr. Daniels was very helpful. He shared the background of projects and matters, as well as current information.

Mr. Hutson believes that the most important attribute for a manager is to be ethical and act correctly for residents, employees, and the city. Mr. Daniels is ethical. Mr. Hutson would like to have Mr. Daniels back as their manager. He is a very well-rounded leader and understands how decisions affect certain groups. The community is divided between residents and businesses. He walked the line between the two sides better than other managers they have had.

Mr. Daniels was tasked with hiring a new Public Works Director. They had an internal candidate and an external candidate. While both were qualified for the job, the external candidate had management experience that the internal candidate did not have. Mr. Daniels felt some pressure to hire the internal candidate, and she has done well. She was not as polished at first, but she has grown in the role. His decisions in general are good.

Mr. Daniels held an event called Breakfast with Bob at a different location every month. This event gave residents the opportunity to speak with him. They sometimes made appointments to come to City Hall and talk about neighborhood issues. He often met with the community.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Mr. Daniels held scheduled meetings with elected officials every two weeks. One before the Commission meeting, and one before the workshop. Mr. Daniels went over agenda items and gave them an opportunity to ask questions. He was a wonderful manager.

The budget required three months of meetings. Generally, the finance person did the talking but Mr. Daniels reiterated and relayed the information in a way that people in the audience could understand the budget and what was included in it.

Sand blew under a bridge and the Department of Transportation (DOT) was involved in the solution to remove it. Mr. Daniels worked with the DOT, the Army Corps of Engineers, the County and a citizen who owned some of the land. The project received all necessary permits, but the project was halted due to covid.

When Mr. Daniels was being attacked, or the situation was very tense, he stayed calm. When he realized that some Commissioners wanted to let him go, he continued to do his job and even met with businesses on a project related to parking in the business area.

One Commissioner was accused of sexual misconduct and Mr. Daniels had to investigate the claim. It was a difficult situation as he reported to the Commission. Once they started investigating the matter, the victim withdrew the complaint. Pressure was applied by people in the town to put something in this Commissioner’s record, which Mr. Daniels did. This situation may have been a factor that led to Mr. Daniels’ dismissal. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Hutson would hire Mr. Daniels. He is a good manager who has worked for communities that were large enough to have several department heads, and he has worked for smaller places that did not and so he wore many hats. He has great experience.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Ethical,
- Calm,
- Fair, and
- Mentored employees.

Strengths: Ethical.

Weaknesses: With his police background he was willing to wade into situations like commercial enterprises putting their chairs too close to the beach. However, he was not the best spokesperson. He also could improve at aligning the employees and the elected officials. That said, at the time the Commission was very hostile.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Maria Pierce – Finance and Human Resources Director, Sewall’s Point, FL 253-307-7797

Ms. Pierce has known Mr. Daniels since 2022, and they work closely together. Mr. Daniels has done a great job, and he is a go-getter. He has been able to get many capital projects underway. The Town is small, and the employees must wear multiple hats. He jumps in and does what needs to be done. He keeps the staff informed.

Mr. Daniels makes good decisions, both in hiring and in general. He is not afraid of change and is innovative. Some long-tenured employees are resistant to change but he still tries to move the organization forward. He has good financial skills. He is very responsive.

One way that Mr. Daniels interacts with citizens is through community events and meetings. He introduced Arbor Days because the community has earned the Tree City Award. They are preparing for their third annual event. He helps with the set up and clean up. He has high expectations of staff, but he dives in and helps in any way he can. When the maintenance person is out, he has been known to clean the bathrooms.

Employees usually run booths at events while Mr. Daniels is focused on talking and meeting others, though he helps as needed. He came into the community and quickly learned everything and everyone. Ms. Pierce had been with the Town for longer than Mr. Daniels, but he was the one to take her into the community to show her areas of concern and opportunity. He also introduced her to the public works side of Capital Improvement Projects as she had previously only dealt with the grants and finance portion.

They have a septic to sewer project that did not have 100% buy in and they were receiving some push back. Mr. Daniels worked with the contracted engineer, the staff, and the granting agencies to bring the Commission along. When the project came up for vote, it passed 5-0 which surprised everyone as unanimous votes are very rare for these types of projects.

While Mr. Daniels has become frustrated a few times, he corrects himself, breathes, and reminds staff that they have this. For example, they are working with the DOT on a project funded by the state. In a Teams meeting the DOT said they were required to use federal guidelines. Mr. Daniels was frustrated but he remained professional. He waited for his turn to talk and then stated that they can use state guidelines because it is state funding. He can be firm, but not in a bad way, it is more of a negotiating tactic.

Code enforcement can be challenging. Mr. Daniels tries to have a good balance between the enforcement and individual. For example, a citizen cut down 24 trees without a permit, which is subject to a \$5,000 fine per tree, or \$120,000 total. Mr. Daniels follows the regulations, but shows compassion to residents. He explained the procedures and shared that the magistrate can decide to lower the penalty if they wish. They have a similar situation regarding a foreclosure property that someone else is interested in buying. He recommended that the interested party work with the magistrate.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Nothing in Mr. Daniel’s conduct or behavior is concerning. An employee made some claims which resulted in an investigation. The Town hired a private investigator at the employee’s request, but the results were not favorable to the employee. While this individual may have a negative opinion of Mr. Daniels, they were not found to be reliable during the investigation.

Ms. Pierce would hire Mr. Daniels. She enjoys working with him. He is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Supportive,
- Genuinely cares about the Town and employees,
- High expectations of staff but in a positive way,
- Flexible, and
- Visionary.

Strengths: Team player, ambitious, vision, good sense of the organization, keeps others on task.

Weaknesses: In Commission meetings when the elected officials ask for items, he promises to turn them around quickly. He may not always realize that it will take longer than what he is shooting for. He aims to please, and while he does listen to staff when they are overwhelmed, he still tries to get it all done.

Curt Preisser – Former Public Information Officer, Madeira Beach, FL 940-650-2883

Mr. Preisser has known Mr. Daniels since 2019. Mr. Daniels did an excellent job. He worked well with most elected officials, and the ones he did not were rogue operators who wanted to manage staff, which was against the charter and city policy.

Because Mr. Daniels seeks information to be well informed, his decisions are well thought out. He spoke with department heads and others before moving forward. As such, his decisions were well received. In layman’s terms, he is a straight shooter.

Mr. Daniels was consistently out in the community. They had a weekly coffee once a week with local businesses. He enjoyed speaking to others about the community and sharing his vision. He listened to the feedback that attendees had.

Mr. Daniels maintains operations at a high-performance level. He immediately recognized the value of having a communications professional on his team. He heard every suggestion that Mr. Preisser had and agreed with 99% of them. The community is very close-knit, everyone knows everyone, and it was important to Mr. Daniels to be upfront with communication both internally and with the community. Communication is a priority for him.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Madeira Beach only has one main street. They wanted to start a Farmer’s market downtown without blocking the evacuation route. Business owners were concerned about the impact on their sales. The effort required coordinated communication. Mr. Daniels met personally with the business owners at their location, rather than asking them to come to City Hall. He brought the Directors together and they were able to successfully hold a Farmer’s market.

When it came to putting the budget together, Mr. Daniels was excellent. He brought it to the Commission, while prioritizing projects and the work. He recognized that they only had so many tax dollars and found grant money to fund projects without raising the millage rate. He took advantage of partnerships. He brought all the pieces of the puzzle together, and even attained the approval of the Commission.

When Mr. Daniels has a deadline, he meets that deadline. A few times Mr. Preisser was not done with his part and requested more time. Mr. Daniels asked for what had been done and finished the rest of it so he could meet the deadline.

Madeira Beach requires patience, and Mr. Daniels handled the stress very well. When others may have been angry at how the elected officials conducted themselves, he never let it get to him. He always made himself available to the elected officials. Though some chose not to meet, his door was always open. He sometimes became frustrated, but this is common in local government. When a mistake was made, he owned it and never blamed the staff.

Mr. Preisser cannot recall any controversy that involved Mr. Daniels. One Commissioner wanted a different manager and refused to meet with him. He used the sunshine law as an excuse. However, he was voted out of office two years later.

With Mr. Daniels, what you see is what you get. He never tap dances around or plays politics. He does the best job he can with the tools at his disposal. He is very straightforward and direct. His style was appreciated by most of the community.

Mr. Preisser would hire Mr. Daniels in a heartbeat, he is an excellent manager. Mr. Preisser has worked for several managers and Mr. Daniels is in his top three. Mr. Daniels was consistent, and he gave the unvarnished truth. Though the scale for performance evaluations was one to five, he never gave fives because there are always things to learn. One of his best attributes is understanding the rules of communication. He listens before he speaks.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Deliberate,
- Concise,
- Able,
- Progressive, and
- Open minded.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Because he is a former law enforcement officer, he is by the book. Communication and clarity are all high strengths. Well versed in local government. He works well with the political nature of elected officials.

Weaknesses: He does not like it when technology does not work.

Joe Capra – President, Capra Engineering, Town of Sewall’s Point, FL 772-215-0330

Mr. Capra has known Mr. Daniels since 2022. Mr. Daniels does an excellent job. He is on top of everything and is very accommodating. When Mr. Capra’s team has been working hard on a project, he brings them donuts.

Mr. Capra has been in the region since 1988, and Mr. Daniels is one of the best managers they have ever had. He is outstanding and never backs away from an issue. He compromises when it is appropriate, and stands his ground as needed. He completes his work in a timely manner.

The last review Mr. Daniels had was great, his elected officials think highly of him. He works very well with members of the public. He communicates well, listens, and expresses the opinion of the elected body. He is never harsh but explains matters in a way the audience needs to hear.

They meet once a week and Mr. Daniel stays on top of it all. The Town has many construction projects planned, with a limited cash supply. Mr. Daniels worked with the bookkeeper and accounting staff to ensure they allocate the money properly. When they need to go into the reserves, he provides guidance to the accounting staff. He will not ask anyone to do anything that he will not do himself. He is an exceptional leader.

While Mr. Daniels may feel stress, he responds well and never looks overly stressed. He researches when he does not know the answer. He listens and responds, while accomplishing what needs to be done.

Mr. Daniels has not been involved in anything controversial. Mr. Capra would hire Mr. Daniels. Mr. Capra highly recommends Mr. Daniels for any position in management. He is experienced and honest. They were lucky to find him, and he has proven himself to be very capable. He was a good choice for their town. Anyone who hires him will be very fortunate.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Professional in attire and manner,
- Kind,
- Considerate,
- Generous,
- Thoughtful, and
- Upstanding person.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Personable, very good at his work, accommodates Commissioners and citizens.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bob Garlo – Town Manager, Town of Jupiter Island, FL 772-545-0104

Mr. Garlo has known Mr. Daniels for decades. Mr. Garlo had a long career in law enforcement in Palm Beach County. They met when Mr. Daniels was the Assistant Police Chief for Boca Raton, FL. They have stayed in touch. They interacted during the time Mr. Daniels worked for Juno Beach. They have collaborated on ordinances and other matters during Mr. Daniels’ tenure at Sewall’s Point.

Mr. Daniels is an excellent employee. He is very conscientious. His decisions are good. He has been handling finance and budget for years, and does very well. He is responsive.

Mr. Daniels is more active in the community in Sewall’s Point than Mr. Garlo is in Jupiter Island. He is also active in the League of Cities and Chamber of Commerce. Being an Assistant Chief in a large agency like Boca Raton is not easy, but he did very well in all regards. As the Chief Executive Officer for Sewall’s Point, he has handled interactions with the public well.

Sewall’s Point had a septic to sewer conversion, which was a substantial capital improvement project. Mr. Daniels has had to navigate the project with the County and has been rather successful in the process.

Mr. Garlo is not aware of any personal or professional controversies involving Mr. Daniels. While Mr. Daniels may have some detractors because of his position, Mr. Garlo does not personally know anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Garlo would consider hiring Mr. Daniels. He is a good manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Conscientious,
- Hard worker,
- Thorough in researching aspects of decisions he is faced with,
- Good work ethic, and
- Decent person.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Vast experience in government. Works well with an elected board.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
December 20, 2024

South Sewall's Point announces first STS phase

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

Some 169 homeowners in South Sewall's Point here are now eligible to apply for connection to sanitary sewer service provided by Martin County Utilities after officials announced the completion of Phase 1 of the septic-to-sewer program along South Sewall's Point during the Dec. 10 Town Commission meeting.

Martin County Utilities Technical Services Administrator Leo Rapetti provided the Commission an overview of the grinder sanitary sewer system now ready to be installed. "Each home would have a small individual grinder station installed near the building's clean-out," he said. "When we install these, we generally do directional drill – a highly invisible process – and that's one of the benefits of this installation. This past week, Martin County did our 1,000th install of these same grinder systems you'll be using here, so this is the extension of an ongoing successful program."

Rapetti insisted there was no systemwide assessment and homeowners would only have to pay for connections upon failure of their current septic systems. "Phase 1 is 169 homes shown in the purple-shaded homes," he explained. "These are the same properties also listed in the interlocal agreement between Martin County and the Town of Sewall's Point. So, if somebody lives a house away from this and wants to connect, we can't at this time because the interlocal only allows us to service those homes. The cost for our grinder system is \$10,000, but we are discounting that to \$7,000 if connected within the first 365 days."

Financing is also available for those who'd prefer to pay the cost of STS conversion as part of their monthly utility bill. "The other option is to pay \$85 a month on your utility bill that's spread out over 120 months [and] that's simple interest," Rapetti added. "It's a simple form to fill out online, and literally overnight approval. As long as you're a good customer with Martin County Utilities, that's kind of your creditworthiness."

Rapetti emphasized that new South Sewall's Point sanitary sewer customers could expect to see a \$50 total sewer bill in addition to their current water bills. The maximum would be \$70 per current rates. Installation would be as painless as possible for those applying for septic-to-sewer conversion. "We have contractors that provide all the materials, all labor, [and] we'll take care of the electric from your panel out to the pump," he said. "We'll install the basin and then the lateral out to our main in the right of way, connect the house gravity to that basin, pump the septic tank and clean and fill it, per Department of Health rules. We do all the grading, cleanup and sod work. The contractors do a really good job of not making a mess of your yard."

"What happens if you have to install a new water line?" Commissioner Vinny Barile asked. "Is this piping that's going down to the street going to affect a new water line coming in if we have to run across the top?" "Obviously, you wouldn't want to dig in the same trenches, but it can

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cross," Rapetti answered. "You'd want at least some separation. This is a fused poly pipe, so there's different rules with the Health Department. With the glued types, you have to keep a foot of separation between the two, but since this is a fused pipe, the Department of Environmental Protection will allow a closer separation."

The commissioner wondered about the possibility of mandatory connections related to Florida Statute 381.00655 that residents had opposed from the onset. "Florida Statute requires that, once a sewer system is available, a letter be sent out to the homeowners saying that it is available," he said. "That statute requires that people connect within 365 days. How are you ignoring this statute, or why are you ignoring this statute?"

In his response, the Utility's technical services administrator insisted he and his staff weren't ignoring that statute but rather honoring the rights of private property owners. "I cannot come on your property and force you against your private property rights," he said. "We can't shut off your water and say you have to connect. There's limits to what we can do. Forcing people to connect can also create a financial hardship. We're trying to be a kinder, gentler Martin County Utilities."

"Can someone pay the \$7,000 and not connect, and then when their system fails, connect and so lock in the price?" Tidikis asked. "No," Rapetti answered. "If you pay, you're a customer and we're going to connect you. Right now, \$7,000 is our pricing based on current market. We haven't raised it in the last five years that we've done it even though prices have gone up. You have a whole year to decide, the letter is going out today. Well send another letter out in about 11 months as a reminder to take advantage of the discount and connect now."

Tidikis lobbed his next question at Town Engineer Joe Capra related to the potential loss of electricity during weather events that could knock the grinders offline. "In the budget numbers that were put together per household, there was a line-item number for individual small, portable generators for each household," he said. "What happened to that?" "It's kind of difficult," Capra replied. "We did put that in there and told them they could maybe do that, but the unfortunate part about it is some people had generators and some didn't have generators. So, we've basically been trying to make sure everybody's paying the same amount of money. We talked about that, but we didn't put that in there."

Rapetti insisted mutual aid agreements with other nearby utilities would provide emergency pump-outs for the grinders in that circumstance, which do have a substantial holding capacity. "There's like 80 gallons of storage capacity in this thing [because] we went with the bigger basins," he said. "It'll give us a little extra time: It's 20-25 toilet flushes, it's a 10-minute cold shower." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield expressed her satisfaction with the first phase completion afterward. "Thank you for the presentation," she said. "You did a good job – a lot of good information. I think that the residents able to hook up will appreciate it. I'm excited that it's ready to go."

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Chairman Frank Fender expressed surprise that letters were mailed to those first prospective sanitary sewer residents the very day of the public announcement to the Board. "Does that imply that we'll start hooking up imminently?" he asked. Rapetti told him he's already been receiving requests from residents who wanted to convert to sanitary sewer. "We've got a list from the town of people that are struggling," he said. "Their septics aren't efficient when we get a little bit of rain. We have those names, and you don't have to wait until you get the letter. If someone's struggling to make it work, we will get you first."

"Does that also imply that the infrastructure's already in place and we're done with this phase of the infrastructure layout so that people can hook up?" Chairman Fender prodded. "Actually, 100 percent," Rapetti answered. "The system's cleared by DEP, everything's constructed. The infrastructure received by the town is the property of Martin County Utilities, which can now maintain the system."

Since Rapetti had also told commissioners that new residents who purchase properties after the end of the 365-day discount period would also have a grace period to connect at the discounted rate, Town Manager **Robert Daniels** wondered if that would apply to North Sewall's Point residents as well. "Yes," Rapetti said. "We've done 17 basins throughout the county. It doesn't matter, it can be 10 years after we inaugurate the service. We will honor the discount rate."

That response pleased the town manager. "Thank you for coming tonight, I really appreciate," **Daniels** said. "It's great to hear it straight from Martin County Utilities. Thank you for pushing us along so we could get that service going."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 26, 2024

Sewall's Point picks new grant team

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission got deep into the weeds of the grant writing/grant management process June 18 before ultimately deciding to contract with two separate firms, whose combined \$578,000 cap caused heartburn and prompted an in-depth staff lesson on grants and appropriations.

Sewall's Point had previously contracted with Kloee Ciuperger, the Stuart-based principle of Gallo Pavo, LLC, to provide grant writing and lobbying services on an annual retainer. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** decided recently to issue a request for proposals for those services. "As you know, Kloee did not want to move forward with us under a non-retainer arrangement," he said. "We had the RFP for grant-writing services, and we're trying to recoup those funds through the grant process. If you follow the procurement process and do what the federal government wants you to do and include all the language in there, we have a chance of getting those fees we pay reimbursed."

Both **Daniels** and Building Official Jack Reisinger rated the submissions from seven companies responding to the RFP, which included Boynton Beach Business Consultants; CAPTEC Engineering, the firm belonging to Town Engineer Joe Capra; Cape Canaveral Scientific, a company the town has previously contracted for those services; Fred Fox Enterprises; GrantWorks; Guardian Community Resource Management; and In Rem Solutions. Each applicant was rated on four categories for a total of 100 points, and now **Daniels** requested the Board take the unusual step of awarding the bid to both top-rated companies. "Out of that, there were three top firms," **Daniels** continued. "We have the two top firms for you, [and] I think we would like to have both firms. Captec would be our grant management side in providing information for the quarterly reports, and Cape Canaveral Scientific doing the actual grant writing."

Commissioner Vinny Barile immediately asked about the firms not being recommended as he examined the rating sheets on Captec and CCS. Both bid respondents listed \$289,200 as a not-to-exceed amount for their services. "Who was the third one?" he asked. "In Rem Solutions," **Daniels** replied. "What was their quote?" Barile prodded. "They were at \$165,000," **Daniels** said. "I wish we could have seen all seven," Barile said.

The only public speaker on the item, Crane's Nest resident Frank Tidikis, posed questions about the pricing, which was dramatically higher than Gallo Pavo's \$60,000 annual cost. "First of all, Kloee was paid \$5,000 a month basically for these services," he said. "Now we're engaging two firms with a projected cost of \$289,200 per year per firm. Captec bid it at \$11,855 per grant with an estimated time of 104 hours. It comes out to about \$113.99 an hour." Tidikis also opined on the other top-rated firm. "Canaveral Scientific is headed by Amy Adams, who worked for the

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town one other time," he added. "Her performance was not necessarily deemed satisfactory. She bid in an hourly cost of \$145 an hour. It seems that \$289,200 times two is an unnecessary expenditure of funds."

Commissioner Dave Kurzman launched the subsequent Board debate based on similar concerns. "When Cape Canaveral was doing our grants, it was very expensive," he said. "The problem is, if we get declined, we're still going to pay them. I remember when [Michelle] Berger called me into her office and showed me the return on investment was very poor."

Vice-Mayor Frank Fender then wondered if the decision had to be made that day. In his response, **Daniels** describing a looming grant timeline. "As many as three grants were left by our previous grant writer," he said. "We were notified by the Department of Environmental Protection that the drafts are in their portal. That's something that we need to look at right away, and the deadline is June 30. We need to get it done."

Fender likewise asked clarification questions about Captec's bid response and pricing. "I'm looking at the proposed fee schedule, and the number doesn't look anything like \$289,000," he said. "How do you help me map the difference between what we've been paying in the past and what makes this contract a viable [solution]?"

In his response, **Daniels** spoke about two different lobbying styles. "Kloee liked to lobby the executive branch instead of the legislative branch," he explained. "When you all approved the lobbyist, I think you were looking for somebody to lobby the legislative branch so we could get appropriations. We can kind of address that because that's been in the wheelhouse of Canaveral. As to the grant writing, the hourly fees are spelled out. Obviously, we have to watch the hours and make sure we're getting the best bang for our buck."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield admitted the technicality of lobbying and the differences between state appropriations and grants could sometimes be overwhelming to the uninitiated. "Obviously there's overlap, and it's very confusing," she said. "Overall, you're probably the best judge of how things are running, but I agree the \$289,000 and two contracts at the same time is a bit shocking. It looks like it's a one-year contract with four optional renewals, so maybe if it was structured more palatably. Overall, this is all very confusing to us, [but] we need the grants to do our projects."

Vice-Mayor Fender wanted assurances of the budget amount that would occupy the current \$60,000-line item for grant writing and lobbying services. "If you had to guess, what would you think that line item would be next year?" he asked. "It could be close to \$100,000," **Daniels** replied.

Capra came to the podium to provide his insight, emphasizing the complexities of grants. "We have to go through several PowerPoints to the different groups that the grant people form to make a decision," he said. "There's more than just writing the grant: We have to come up with a concept plan and put all the calculations together. All that is in this proposal." Capra also

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delineated the duties to be shared between him and Adams. "First of all, Amy keeps track of what the grant agencies want relative to what they're dishing money out for," he explained. "I'm designing things. She knows what the legislators want and knows their assistants. There's a lot of benefit to having someone who just writes grants all the time. I can do parts of it and give her the materials she needs, but I'm not keeping track of all that. I'm keeping track of getting the thing designed, permitted and built."

"Why such a discrepancy in the cost [of] \$60,000 for Kloe and \$578,000?" Barile asked. Capra insisted the not-to-exceed number was deceptive. "You're not giving me [or] Amy a contract for \$289,000," he replied. "You're telling **Bob** he can spend up to \$289,000 and either one of us can put together the grant and do the administration."

Adams subsequently came to the podium to explain why the bid responses included the \$289,200 cap, insisting her fee would most likely be considerably less. "We were not given in the RFP how many [grants] you wanted written per year, nor how many needed to be managed," she said. "So, I went with the low number of eight grants per year at \$9,000, [which] is \$72,000. I've never really written eight grants for one town per year because we usually get all the money in the first two. That's sort of the way we go."

The Commission then voted unanimously to award the bid to the two firms.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 5, 2024

Sewall's Point adopts \$79.7m capital improvement plan

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission formally adopted its \$79.7 million five-year capital improvement plan on May 28 despite a barrage of last-minute questions hurled at its members by two residents concerned about the municipality's ability to actually pay for the projects contained within the document. The Commission had previously approved the preliminary draft CIP on May 14 after a lengthy discussion dealing with flooding on South River Road aggravated by the construction of a new home in the area.

Both Town Engineer Joe Capra and Public Works Director Jack Reisinger offered their input that day on Capra's proposed \$2.5 million solution of the problem, represented by a budget item provisionally placed in the Fiscal Year 2027 column of the draft document. The pair had visited the area and came up with a provisional \$200,000-plus solution they believed would alleviate most of the problem until they could find grant funding for a more comprehensive solution.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** promised a detailed cost estimate and projected timeframe for that stopgap stormwater fix at the next meeting.

Before the Board could get to the resolution for the CIP approval that night, two members of the public came forward expressing concerns, beginning with North Sewall's Point Road resident Alan De Rosa. "I'm trying to understand the value that should be placed on the five-year capital improvement plan that now calls for \$80 million in expenditures over the next five years," he said. "We all know the town doesn't have this kind of money or revenue in the future, so where's the shortfall going to come from? Looking at the actual revenue and expenditures report year-to-date, I see under federal and state grants [that] we plan to receive \$16.3 million for the full-year budget. Through April, we've recovered \$354,000 or 2 percent. So, when I look at this overall five-year plan, can you tell me I should place absolute value on this plan?"

Crane's Nest resident Frank Tidikis expressed his doubts that the draft CIP was ready for a final vote. "No. 1 is capital projects increased by \$3,761,314," he said. "Why? If you take out for the patrol cars and the computers, that accounted for \$326,000. What drove the other \$3.4 million increase? The Police Department remodel increased by \$34,500 or 46 percent. North Sewall's Point Road increased by \$11,835,000 or 76 percent. Why? South Sewall's Point Road Phase 2 and 3 went down, why? At any rate, there was no explanation, and there is no explanation."

Tidikis said the capital maintenance portion of the capital improvement plan "decreased by 46 percent or \$1,675,000 from last year's CIP. Bridges and seawalls went down by a million dollars. Why? What's being deferred, what projects are being dropped? Stormwater maintenance decreased by \$300,000 a year to \$125,000 a year. The questions we asked earlier: How many outfalls do we have today, what's our maintenance cost per outfall, how many will we have after

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the phases are done on the road resiliency project and what will that do to maintenance costs? What assumptions were used in formulating this budget?"

While admitting he had not attended the prior CIP discussion that same month, he did watch it online and made a reference to a request from Vice-Mayor Frank Fender who'd asked for a more comprehensive business plan and funding overview. "Defer approving the CIP until Commissioner Fender is provided with what he requested; schedule a workshop so that the questions can be answered; and schedule a revised CIP for approval at the next meeting," Tidikis concluded.

Mayor John Tompeck attempted to alleviate some of the concerns. "The purpose of a capital improvement plan is not necessarily to identify how everything is going to be paid for and when it's going to be paid for," he said. "What you're trying to do here is to identify the projects and the priority you want to do those projects in, that kind of thing. Obviously, we're not going to do these projects when we anticipate we're going to be able to do them unless there's a lot of grants. The numbers don't disturb me because every one of these specific projects are going to have to get approval. If we don't have the money [or] the grant, it's not going anywhere."

Mayor Tompeck referred to the five-year CIP as "a 50,000-foot view" of our plans. "I understand your concerns, and they would certainly make sense when you look at these numbers," he continued. "You're just looking at our projects in the future and what's coming up. If we don't have the money, they just get pushed back. So, I think the way we should be looking at this as a Commission is: Are these the projects that we would like to do [and] in this order?" "I heard some angst about the size of the numbers on the plan, and because of that, it was not worth the plan that was created," Fender said. "I sort of disagree with that. I do want to ultimately tie this to a budget – but this is not a budget – this is a plan of the projects we want to do. We have actual flooding projects underway that have to be completed – that can't be completed – if the money is not in the budget. Even though we have the best-laid plan we could possibly come up with, we're pretty smart people. We're not going to spend money that doesn't exist. If we don't shoot for the stars, we're never going to hit the moon. So, we have to put numbers on a piece of paper in order to tell our funding municipalities how to budget and fund some of these pretty significant flooding problems." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield immediately made a motion to approve the CIP resolution, which was seconded by Vice-Mayor Fender and passed unanimously.

Afterward, **Daniels** provided a brief update on other items. "I did want to make certain that these are going to be addressed, either by having a special meeting or waiting until June 18," he said. "The one we discussed at the last meeting is the flooding issues we've had in the Marguerite area. On the capital improvement plan that y'all just adopted, we do have the South River Road section there, but it's what I call a short-term gap until we can get funding for the whole project. It's spelled out in that memorandum that Joe had submitted [with] a preliminary design and a budget of about \$250,000. So, we're identifying funding sources for this."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
May 1, 2024

Sewall's Point projects update

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

An update by the town engineer on April 8 for all current capital improvement projects here revealed substantial progress on the ongoing stormwater and septic-to-sewer projects as well as potential grant-related and logistical delays for both north and south Sewall's Point Road. "Most of our projects are dependent on a lot of grant money, and in doing that, we have to keep track of the various grants and how we handle items within the grants," Engineer Joe Capra said.

His update began with the first phase of the South Sewall's Point Road stormwater project, which required raising the roadbed from High Point to the Sewall's Meadow neighborhood, including the installation of two separate exfiltration systems, a sheet pile weir, a baffle box and an outfall. Crews replaced an existing water main at the same time. That work is complete, although the town is still awaiting grant funding to repay its own coffers. "All these grant programs are reimbursable," he said. "So, we spend all your tax money, and then we have to get the money back from them."

Phase 2 from Sewall's Meadows to Pineapple Lane is now underway. "We have been working on the design, which means we've been gathering field data, survey information [and] geotechnical information," he said. "We're expecting permits and design to be completed around September of this year, and we also have been pursuing easements on every one of these projects. We'll be working with Martin County Utilities on water main improvements in this area, and they'll let us know what lines they want replaced. In the past, they've been paying for those items."

Sewall's Point has grants in-hand for the second phase, which includes a \$1 million Department of Transportation State Appropriation Grant, as well as a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant, a Department of Environmental Protection Resiliency Grant and a DEP Septic-to-Sewer Resiliency Grant for all of South Sewall's Point. "In Phase 2 we will be putting in some low-pressure force main items," Capra said. "Our predicted time to start the bidding is expected in October or November, and we hope to go to construction in January of 2025. That'll probably take most of the year. I tell you these projected timeframes because it's always a matter of when the grant agencies give us the money."

Capra was about to continue onto Phase 3 from Pineapple Lane to Ridgeway Drive when Commissioner Vinny Barile, who was just elected to the Board in March, posed a question about the phasing. "How did you pick those phases?" he asked. "I'm just talking septic-to-sewer." The town engineer told Barile that Martin County was limiting the number of residences that could be serviced with such low-pressure force mains and grinder sewer systems. "We tried to concentrate on along South Sewall's Point Road [where] we're making drainage improvements by raising the road," Capra said. "I think that's the best time to get the sewer lines in place."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

They're also the most low-lying area, so the septic tanks will be impacted on how they operate. We have to put a sewer line down South Sewall's Point to serve all of the peninsula."

Commissioner Barile, who emphasized his opposition to mandatory hookups and assessments during his election campaign, immediately switched tactics. "I'm only concerned about how you pick who's going to get forced assessed and who's not," he said. "How is that done?" "There are no forced assessments," Town Manager **Robert Daniels** chimed in. "We're not forcing anybody to be assessed, that's the deal," Capra confirmed.

Barile continued prodding, however. "How do you pick that out if you're going to do a vacuum system?" he asked. When Capra informed him that the town had no plans to do a vacuum sewer system, Commissioner Barile questioned him about a gravity system. The former then emphasized that he wasn't a fan of a gravity system either. "If we do have to do it, we're trying to hear which people have the problems with their septic systems currently," Capra responded. "From that, we'll determine who needs the gravities first. Our goal is to get all the low-pressure forced mains in place so those people have the ability to hook up when they need to. We may or may not have enough money to do all the gravity at this point for the whole 706 units out there."

Daniels pointed out that current grant funding would cover low-pressure force mains for an all-grinder sewer system that Martin County has yet to approve. "The people would pay \$8,000 to \$12,000 to hook up," he explained. "If they spend that much money, they'll be matching what we're putting in from the grant. Unfortunately, the county said you can't put in all 706 connections with low-pressure mains, so we had to go to the next option, which was put in some gravity mains." While Sewall's Point could rehab some of those installed by developers in the area years ago, **Daniels** still hopes the county will change its mind on restricting Sewall's Point to 340 grinder connections. "It is our hope we can get the county to let us hook up all 706 connections," he added. "We can do that with the money we have now, and everybody would be on the same system."

After further discussion, Capra returned to his Phase 3 update, a project he hoped to construct from June of this year to March of 2025. "We have the design and permitting completed, we're kind of monitoring the water mains and sewer mains being built out there," he said. "This project has a FEMA grant [and] funding from DEP Resiliency. Unfortunately, it takes time to process the FEMA money. They told us the grant amounts are good, and we're going to get the money, but they need another month or two to get that all processed, so that pushes us back into May for bidding." "I don't think the Commission or the general public understand the difficulty in obtaining these funds and matching them," Mayor John Tompeck said. "It's a real jigsaw puzzle, and we appreciate how difficult it is, at least I do." "Do we have a plan in place to ensure that the funds are available to get the projects done?" Vice-Mayor Frank Fender asked. "Yes, we do have a plan, and you'll see some of that as we get into the capital improvement projects starting at the next meeting," **Daniels** answered. "I wanted to do the kickoff with the overview of the projects, and as we narrow down that focus, going out to bid is going to help us a lot in knowing what that amount is as we go through Phase 3."

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As far as Phase 4 between Town Hall and Ridgeland Drive, the town has a sewer line installed, a concept plan and the necessary easements in hand but still lacks the grants. Capra plans the same infrastructure improvements for North Sewall's Point Road now being implemented on South Sewall's Point Road but admits that phase will be expensive. "We're proposing that we build the road all the way from AIA to the north town limits," he said. "That's about 700 or 800 feet, [so] that's the longest phase of projects we'd be doing. We've come up with cost estimates and concept plans. We have one FEMA grant that allows us to start the program design [and] expect Martin County to help us. We've approached the county administrator, [and] he's agreed to put this in front of his board as a capital improvement project. Currently he's going to propose to his board that we equally share in the design of the project. He has not committed yet to equally share in the construction costs, so that's something that we have time to determine."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
January 3, 2024

Sewall's Point ends 2023 on positive grant footing
Town has \$19 million in pipeline, plus \$15.7 million for stormwater and septic-to-sewer projects

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The city's outside grant consultant brought the Town Commission here a bit of early holiday cheer Dec. 11 with the positive grant news revealed during her end-of-the-year grants update. Consultant Kloee Ciuperger, the Stuart-based principle of Gallo Pavo, LLC, has provided grant-writing and lobbying services for Sewall's Point for more than two years and helped bring the Board's last meeting of 2023 to a festive close as the last item on the agenda that night. "I was asked to do an update today, so I figured the best way to approach this is the beginning, middle and end, kind of where we were, where we are and where we're going," she said. "I have worked with you about two-and-a-half years, and in [that time], the town has managed to receive \$3,419,525 for Phase 3," she explained in reference to the South Sewall's Point Road stormwater retrofit. "\$8.4 million for the septic to sewer, which we had an awesome groundbreaking for yesterday; and an additional \$1 million in appropriations for Phase 3 and \$2,900,00 for Phase 2. That's over \$15 million, and we're still going."

The consultant attributed that success to her laser focus on specific grant programs and the support of Sewall's Point staff members including Town Manager **Robert Daniels**, Engineer Joe Capra and Finance and Human Resources Director Maria Pierce. "Under your town manager and working with Joe Capra and his staff and Maria too, we are in constant communication," Ciuperger continued. "A big part of my job is advocacy, but some of these things are very spin-on-a-dime. I'm able to pick up the phone at any given moment and get answers within 10 or 15 minutes. I work with a couple other local entities, and this is one of the most structured and best teams. It makes my job easy, and it makes you guys ideal candidates for a lot of good money."

In addition to the \$15,719,525 in grant monies already under its belt, Sewall's Point now has some \$19 million in current grant applications and appropriations requests before the Florida Legislature. Those include about \$9 million for the continued stormwater and simultaneous septic-to-sewer project along South River Road and other STS funding requests. "Project numbers are going up as you all know," she told commissioners. "We've put in an additional \$5 million for Phase 2 and 3 so that we can meet those growing project costs. We've got an additional \$4 million ask for South River Road, and then a couple million more for septic to sewer. There's also an appropriations request about to go into this legislative session for a million dollars for Phase 3 because we got funded for Phase 2. So, we're trying to make sure these projects get done and the town isn't footing the bill."

Ciuperger concluded her update with both a description of the upcoming legislative session that begins in Tallahassee on Jan. 9 and Gov. DeSantis' announcement of his environmental budget to be discussed between that date and the end of the session on March 8. She believes most of the

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

present funding requests could have their positive resolution during those debates. "This session he's looking for \$745 million for Everglades restoration," she said. "Over \$330 million for targeted water quality improvements, [including] \$135 million for newly expended water quality improvement grants; and \$100 million for projects that specifically address the Indian River Lagoon. There is also \$50.8 million to combat harmful alga blooms. All of this is money you all are eligible for." As soon as Ciuperger finished her presentation, Mayor John Tompeck asked her about potentially getting such grant information in smaller chunks for the future. "I was wondering if you could give us some kind of monthly report," he said. "You went over about 10 different grants, some of which I had no idea we were working on. I knew you were working on grants, [but] I just didn't know which ones. I think it would help us all if you'd issue a quick monthly status about which ones you're working on and where they are in the process." "Absolutely," she responded. "I think the monthly report would be helpful to give you an all-encompassing look. But when you look at that report, I want you guys to remember that a grant is so much more than just submitting a piece of paper. There's a lot of advocacy and discussion. Even when that grant gets awarded, you staff can tell you first-hand how much it takes in negotiations with the agencies to get the actual grant agreement to be in favor for the town."

Mayor Tompeck subsequently referred to a tree grant the City of Stuart had won recently and wondered if the Town of Sewall's Point shouldn't simultaneously be seeking other types of funding. Ciuperger admitted that she'd put all of her initial effort in getting the town's major infrastructure project funding underway, but now thinks Sewall's Point has the breathing room for just such expansion. "Now that we've gotten momentum with that, it generates itself," she said. "The state understands it, [and] I think we can now start expanding into different programs and tackling that list you all created during the strategic planning session." For his part, Vice-Mayor Frank Fender wanted to know about other potential waterfront resiliency grants that might be available. "We have a dock at the end of one of our public areas that we'd like to try to renovate and make available to the public," he said. "Certainly, we have lots of residents who live on the water, but we have lots of residents that live on the middle of the peninsula who need access to the water. While the buyers are buying up waterfront and sealing off access to it, we're looking for grants that make water availability accessible to the public. Just plant in the back of your mind if you see water-access types of grants." "Once those grants get released," Ciuperger replied. "We can be candidates for them because that'll happen after the budget is passed in April or May. So, we'll see in the summertime when those things open up."

Commissioner Dave Kurzman then wondered whether commissioners should consider showing up in Tallahassee to personally lobby the legislature during the upcoming session. While Ciuperger emphasized that the town has a great local legislative delegation working on its behalf, she believes there could come a moment when that extra lobbying effort could be just the ticket. "It actually may be very fruitful, but we kind of have to be very flexible during session time," Ciuperger told him. "**Bob** understands that process, and he's told me countless times, if I need to get up there, I'll get up there. So, I'm trying to make his life easier by having those meetings in the district, but those meetings may need to happen in Tallahassee."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 20, 2023

Commission focused on public education with new water main

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

SEWALL'S POINT – After putting the final tweaks Sept. 6 on the town's interlocal agreement with Martin County Utilities for a new water main running beneath South Sewall's Point Road, commissioners dove into their planned septic-to-sewer conversion in South Sewall's Point at the request of Town Manager **Robert Daniels**. **Daniels'** agenda item that evening was to discuss the next steps for septic to sewer conversion, since the exclusive peninsular community already has an \$8.4 million Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant in hand to connect 340 homes closest to the shores of the Indian River Lagoon.

Town officials had hoped to convince Martin County Utilities to double that number of approved and less-expensive individual home grinder systems but Utility officials remained firm on that cap. Now Sewall's Point is looking at adding a more expensive gravity sewer component, which may prove more difficult to win over die-hard residents still clinging to the independence of their aging septic tanks and drainfields. North Sewall's Point got access to sanitary sewer services about three years ago. South Sewall's Point residents did not want to be forced by the Florida Department of Health to connect to sewer once their septic systems failed.

A staunch opponent of the project, Frank Tidikis, addressed the Commission prior to the discussion and referred to a recent study done by Town Engineer Joe Capra detailing possible STS alternatives, including the creation of a hybrid grinder/gravity sewer system in South Sewall's Point. Martin County just approved an interlocal agreement with Sewall's Point to begin rehabilitation of old unused sewer lines and equipment in that same area. "I would like to know if Option 2 LPS-Grinder/Gravity Combination is what's being discussed tonight," he said. "Option 2 was priced at \$25.43 million. Page 15 of the report said the pipes and lift stations were substandard and would need to be replaced. Please confirm that this includes replacing the existing gravity pipes and building three new lift stations with emergency generators. Do you commissioners still stand by your pledges that there will be no assessments and no mandatory hookups? If so, I urge you to reject Option 2."

Another resident, Bonnie Flint, expressed concerns about the funding gap between the current grant funding and the estimated cost of the same alternative option. "As Frank pointed out, we're doing a combo project," she said. "Anyway, it could crank up to the \$25.4, [so] there's a difference of \$17 million not in the door. As a homeowner, that's scary number to me because but we seem to be running fast [and] need a lot more grants to come in." Flint also addressed the projected costs for individual homeowner connections, which are not currently covered by grant funding. "What I'm understanding is we're asking homeowners to kick in \$12,000 to \$13,000 per house," she continued. "And that's for a simple hookup before you get involved in where things are located, trees in the way and all that. Then there's a generator need with the grinders, which

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would be another \$500. In conclusion, is it good governance for five people to take on a \$25-to-\$30-million project?"

The town manager said he'd recently received calls from homeowners not part of the county's approved list wanting to know when sanitary sewer service would be available in South Sewall's Point. "We're getting close to a point now where we're going to have to start looking at what we're going to do next," **Daniels** said. "We have Part 1 [the first 170 homes] moving along and should be working on that towards the latter part of this calendar year. We're getting a lot of inquiries. Two today came in via email in reference to an individual that needs to hook up to a sewer system. I think it's good for our residents to have some idea of when they could expect that so they can make decisions whether they have to replace their drain field or what have you."

Daniels reminded the board that they'd agreed last December to proceed with 706 STS connections in South Sewall's Point, but staff had only been able to negotiate about half that number as grinder systems. "I want to make sure we can come up with a game plan on which way we want to go and obviously have the direction of our town engineer and what his recommendations are," he continued. "I did throw out the gravity [system] in there because, in my conversation with the county administrator, he acknowledged they were supportive of us rehabilitating some of our gravity lines to help come up with the 706 [connections]." Both **Daniels** and Mayor John Tompeck insisted both staff and commissioners were opposed to both mandatory assessments and connections. "I think we're headed in the right direction," the latter said. "There's going to be a lot of options as we move through this thing, and we need to be a little bit patient. I think there's going to be some places where we have a decision to make: If we don't have the money, we're going to have to get the grant or the work will not be done. It's really that simple."

Commissioner James Campo believes the town is still missing the mark on community education efforts after hearing the two public speakers' comments. He asked **Daniels** to display the South Sewall's Point STS map on the overhead screen for context. "As great as **Bob Daniels** has done, I think that communication has always been a challenge for us," he said. "Until we can tackle that, we're going to continue to have disinformation of \$16,000 special assessments, etc. This [map] to me, is a piece that should go out, so that everyone sees what we're working on right now, what we've got an interlocal agreement [on] now. This is as official as it gets. I'm against proceeding until we do some of this communication work." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield agreed with the need for better communications and admitted she'd made her own unsuccessful Hail Mary effort to get a total grinder system approved. "That would make the majority of people happy," she said. "I made a last-ditch effort to the county this past week, but there's not a lot of enthusiasm, which is a shame." "At this moment we're about 340 connections total on grinders," Capra said. "The map that's up there, that's 169 connections. The next phase gets us to 340. I recommend we move forward with the grinder stuff first because we have enough money for that. It's a lot easier, it certainly doesn't require mandatory hookup [and] it doesn't require mandatory assessment." While the Commission did not take an official vote that day, **Daniels** did say via email Sept. 11 that he'd be providing a full report on next steps to its members during the next meeting.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
August 24, 2023

Sewall's Point debates utilities agreements

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here warily approved two interlocal agreements with Martin County Utilities for planned projects in South Sewall's Point that still have unresolved issues, one of which could end up costing MCU administrative charges and the town more than \$100,000 not covered by current grant funding. Mayor John Tompeck asked to remove the two separate items from the non-discussion consent agenda on Aug. 15 due to those changes, the first made by Town Manager **Robert Daniels** and the latter by MCU staff. Mayor Tompeck specifically worried about **Daniels'** change to the first agreement on the South Sewall's Point Road water main replacement that may have caused concern to county officials. "The county may have some difficulties with what we have in the MOU," he added in reference to a 20 percent administrative fee for Sewall's Point.

Daniels then asked commissioners to turn to Page 75 of the first interlocal agreement that laid out the town's responsibilities in overseeing the water main construction and ensuring compliance with the contractual obligations. He said he tacked on the fee due to the interlocal agreement clause requiring town staff to perform periodic inspections and verify the project was constructed in accordance with the technical plans and specifications. "In other jurisdictions I've been in, there was a percentage of the contract that we undertook and had to do all these things, and that was 20 percent," he said. "We're trying to get the county to sit down and talk with us, but I really think the town needs to be making money off their contract because we have important responsibilities here. We need to protect ourselves and make sure we're taking the steps necessary to fulfill this agreement, and that's why I did it."

When Mayor Tompeck questioned if those same costs weren't covered under the county's existing construction, engineering and inspection contract, **Daniels** offered more clarification. "The county has already paid a design engineer for the county project portion and contracted for CEI services," he said. "But [clause] seven puts the ball back on our responsibility to conduct the inspections to make sure the job's on schedule. It means more time of our staff to go out and make sure that happens."

Mayor Tompeck directed his next inquiry to Assistant Town Attorney Susan Garrett. "I'm assuming the 20 percent is one of the issues the county has with the agreement," he said. "To me that jumped out at me at being a little bit high." "I just was informed this afternoon that the county had some substantive issues with the agreement," she responded. "I've asked for specifics but haven't received them yet." "We're trying to work out a partnership and recoup as many of the costs that we have with bidding and rebidding," said Commissioner James Campo.

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield agreed that going from nothing to a 20 percent fee probably shocked MCU officials. "I agree with the town manager that it makes sense if we're doing

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Robert James Daniels
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administrative work to be compensated," she said. "Hopefully there's a meeting – if not 20 percent – somewhere in the middle because we need each other to get this project done."

Mayor Tompeck asked for clarification on the second interlocal agreement on Phases 3 and 4 of the low-pressure force main installation along South Sewall's Point Road. As part of this agreement, MCU is requiring the town pay a monthly water surcharge until the new sewer line achieves a two-feet-per-second flushing velocity. The fees would be about \$2,000 per month, said Town Engineer Joe Capra. "The county's asked for a flushing station to be put on the low-pressure system because they can't estimate how many connections we're going to get to start off. We are going to have a force main down South Sewall's Point Road, and they want to make sure the line stays clear. It will take water to do the flushing, so that's the number we're talking about." "For how many months?" Campo asked. "If you think about the number of connections we need based on this flushing of two feet per second, it could be as much as five years," Capra replied. "It could be over \$100,000. I think our goal was to try to get that somehow into the grant, but we can't guarantee that."

Capra's major concern was that the flushing cost might have to be borne by the town's residents as a whole when the project will only benefit South Sewall's Point residents. **Daniels** agreed it seemed to be an unfair burden that MCU was placing on the town. "They're getting 706 customers at the end of the day," he said. "I just think it's unfair they're asking us. We have to turn this system over to them once it's completed, and then we have to pay for maintaining their system? I have a problem with that."

After Garrett told the Board she expected the county would make additional revisions to the agreements, commissioners voted unanimously to approve the two interlocal agreements.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 8, 2023

Sewall's Point ponders stormwater fee

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here debated the need for additional funding to maintain the community's stormwater infrastructure in the future, including the possibility of implementing a stormwater utility fee tacked onto a utility bill before ultimately authorizing the town manager to come back with a formal report. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** launched the discussion by emphasizing the millions of dollars the community is currently investing in the stormwater rehabilitation in South Sewall's Point. "I think a couple times during the last 10 months, we've talked about all the money we're putting into the infrastructure," he said. "Unfortunately, the folks before me never put some thought into how are we going to maintain the system that we have. We finished up Phase 1 just prior to me starting, and there are things that we have to do all the time between the pumps and the drains and the inlets. When we do get Phase 3 started and have it completed, we're going to be in the same boat."

As an example, **Daniels** pointed to a recent watermain leak under South Sewall's Point Road that cost the town more than \$20,000 in repair costs. "The money just doesn't sit there in an account somewhere," he said. "It'd be something that we'd have to make up and handle, which is fine, but I think long term we need to think how we are going to fund our maintenance for our stormwater system. Most communities utilize a stormwater utility fee that's tied in with the water bill or a utility bill. There's other ways to do it through taxes, but I'm not advocating that. Before I start researching it, I wanted to talk to you all and just see what your thoughts are."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield was the first member of the board to express her support of the idea. "Given our location that we're a peninsula and we have very low-lying areas and are constantly fighting stormwater flooding, I think it would be prudent and smart to have a plan in place," she said. "If you're a property owner and own a home, you know how important maintenance is, so I think it's a good idea."

Mayor John Tompeck, asked about any current funding in the town's budget that could be used to cover unexpected infrastructure repairs and if there were any other budgetary sources. "Right now, is the \$80,000 budget for the stormwater inlet/outfall maintenance what we have for this particular issue?" he asked. "Is that where we're getting the money? What do we anticipate the costs are going to be over the next four or five years? How do you figure out what kind of a fee if you don't have any idea how much it's going to cost? I'd certainly like to see a projection at least so we can figure that out." In response, **Daniels** pointed to a statewide organization as his starting point. "The Florida Stormwater Association is a great outfit for giving us the data on what we should be doing [and] what we should be looking at as a reserve," he said. "That's what I kind of envisioned. When you have it in a fund, the months that we don't utilize it from one year to the next, you can build up a reserve. It's always safer having money set aside in a reserve account under the stormwater utility, and then our normal maintenance would be covered." The

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town manager believes infrastructure maintenance will become more critical in the future. "As the sea level continues to rise, I think we're going to see more and more maintenance issues come up on South Sewall's Point Road [and] even the side streets where we have systems," he insisted. "Some of those systems have been in for years and years and years [and] I'm not sure of the stability. That's something I'll look into and come back with a game plan."

Commissioner James Campo wanted to ensure Sewall's Point residents are shown tangible projects that any such future fees would be spent on rather than just using the money for the designing and planning stages overseen by the town engineer. "A fee, user tax or ad valorem, you know it's all money coming from residents," he said. "I'm okay exploring this if the end product was an end product and not Joe Capra's engineering fees that just kind of get lost out there. It's the planning/ bureaucracy fees that people get alienated." Commissioner Frank Fender worried that the public would view the proposed stormwater utility fee as just another tax. "In my mind, there is budget that we have," he said. "We do a budget cycle every year, and we count line items for all different kinds of maintenance. To me, this is just another one of those kinds of maintenance that we have to plan for, and if we don't have enough money in that budget line item – we have to increase it. Costs are what they are. If we spend \$20,000 repairing damage, that's going to hit our budget cycle next year. Hopefully we can meet that shortfall or we have to have more ad valorem."

Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman insisted, however, that making any decision without the town manager's report would be premature. "I think we should hold off until we see some numbers before we say we're going to come up with other numbers," he said. "This should have been done years ago. Because we didn't maintain what we had, it wound up costing millions of dollars because we were trying to save a few dollars. I'd like to really see the end numbers of what's going to be involved. We're paying millions of dollars now, and if we can maintain it in our budget, I'd be fine with it, if it's going to cut things close, then I'm okay doing it this way."

The vice-mayor also agreed with Commissioner Campo about avoiding any extra fees incurred by Capra's engineering firm. "We shouldn't have to go through an engineering firm because it costs us money when our town engineer does this," he added. "At least get several quotes and see what it's going to cost. If we could avoid a middleman, I'm all for that." Tompeck emphasized that the Town of Sewall's Point could use its previous maintenance expenses as a guideline for potential future costs. "I think it'd be prudent to see how much we've been spending and see what that curve looks like," he said. "As we create more outfalls, we have a historical idea of how much they're going to cost and then you get an idea of what you're going to have to spend."

When the mayor acknowledged that his fellow board members weren't enthusiastic about the idea of imposing a stormwater utility fee on the residents, **Daniels** insisted that he just wanted "to go to the next step." "My plan is to do all that background work and then come back and readdress it, probably during the budget process," the latter said. "I just wanted to make sure that you all knew what I was doing so you don't [just] hear something about what Mr. **Daniels** is doing. I always try to be transparent."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
May 4, 2023

Sewall's Point dismayed at stormwater bid

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The town manager here dropped a bomb on commissioners April 25 that the only bid for the third phase of ongoing stormwater work along South Sewall's Point Road had come in at \$4 million over budget. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** didn't attempt to sugarcoat the scheduled bid update and hinted at the need for the Commission to soon make a decision either way on the award. "These are the particular numbers that we have of \$12.2 million for Phase 3, and we estimated the project at \$8.5 million," he said. "We had one successful bidder, and we've been negotiating with that bidder to see what we could do to bring their costs down. Hopefully we'll get that done sooner than later, (and) by the end of the week we can get some direction."

Mr. **Daniels** emphasized he would be reaching out right away to officials of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to inquire about additional funding to help with the unexpected higher cost. The town currently has a \$1.7 million grant award from FEMA. "The funding that we're getting is from a past storm a couple of years ago," he said. "We're hoping out of their pot of money they can help come forward with the money that we need to make up the rest of the difference. So, I'm looking at Options B, C and D on different things I can talk about at the next meeting and hopefully I should have everything in relation to that available." His last comment, however, prompted a question by Commissioner Kajia Mayfield. "You said Options B, C, D?" she asked. "These will be additional options," he replied. "Theoretical options B, C, D," Commissioner Mayfield confirmed.

Mayor John Tompeck posed a question to Town Engineer Joe Capra. "This isn't a minor increase, obviously," the mayor said. "I was wondering if you could highlight whether it was the construction (or) material costs. What's really the driver here?" Mr. Capra reminded the Commission that town staff had been actively searching for available stormwater grants for the project, which was initiated more than two years prior with an estimated price tag in the range of \$6 million. "Quite frankly the grant agencies we thought were being very generous with us, but unfortunately we've seen an increase in construction costs," he said. "I'm not going to tell you I'm surprised. Quite frankly, it's similar to what other agencies are seeing. If you look at the Department of Transportation averages in the last six months, the material costs and other costs have doubled."

Prices for both labor and materials began soaring with the onset of the pandemic some three years ago and have yet to fully stabilize. While Mr. Capra offered no hope to commissioners on such expenses coming down anytime soon, he did provide assurances he was working with the only bidder, West Palm Beach-based J.W. Cheatham, to find any cost savings. "We went back to the contractor and talked about items he could do, value engineering and some other items," he explained. "Some of those are alternative pipes, or different materials that we could consider. And they came back with some reductions for us." The town engineer also suggested breaking

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up the significantly larger Phase 3 100-acre drainage basin project into smaller pieces in accordance to the individual grant funding received. "We basically have a lot of work to do to get the drainage to work," he added. "One of the things we found out after we got several of the grants, is we had to break up the project into parts that show how each grant could pay for a specific area. That's why we have three areas."

Mr. Capra went on to explain the HMGP work area accounted for nearly a fourth of the contractor's bid amount. "Essentially that's the area that would drain in the lot that we acquired, creating a stormwater treatment area (and) one of our better outfalls," he said. "I think we have \$3.2 million in that area, yet we're only getting \$1.7 million from the grant agency." The South Sewall's Point stormwater work also includes two separate resiliency projects partially funded by the Resiliency Florida Program. "The south project will be adjacent to the South Sewall's Point Phase 2 Project," he explained. "That's probably a little less in cost, about \$2.2 million, because there are less items to be done in that area. Resiliency North came in about \$3.8 million. So, when you add \$3.8 and \$2.2, you get almost \$6 million. We have basically \$3.4 million in money from Resiliency (Florida)." Because the project also includes the installation of new water and force sewer mains along South Sewall's Point Road, Mr. Capra also is negotiating with Martin County Utilities to find other cost savings or funding assistance. "At this point, they have been willing to help us in that area," he said. "We first of all need to get the best price on the work we do. So [the] water main in the bid came in about a half million dollars higher than we hoped. We think we have a source of funding for that part of the project."

After his presentation, the town engineer emphasized the ultimate decision to accept the lone bid respondent – a general contractor that's previously done work for the town – would be up to commissioners. "There's options to bring the price down, and we're still not considering rebidding it," he concluded. "That's your choice, but I think at this point we'd like to continue negotiating until we can be satisfied the numbers are the best we're going to get. If that's still not good enough, and we don't get any more grant funding, we may need to rebid the project." Commissioner James Campo agreed with the latter suggestion, as well as working with MCU on any possible cost savings. "My thought would be to move ahead and continue the negotiations with Cheatham to see if there could be some different configuration between the contractors/sub-contractors to get the price down," he said. "I would like to give the county a week's time to review our final numbers to see if they can pull some strings and come up with some numbers that are more economical."

Mayor Tompeck believes Sewall's Point will still need to break up some of the work into smaller chunks in order to work with the grant funding already in-hand. "The fact that we have plenty of money here to do the force main in this particular project area is not really relevant to the fact we don't have enough money to do the stormwater work," he said. "It's obvious to me you have construction costs \$4 million more than before. You might be a good negotiator, (but) you ain't that good. So, I'm afraid we're still going to have to go back to the point where we have to break this down into some kind of phased approach."

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Commissioner Mayfield then credited Mr. Capra for exploring "a lot of options." "I think you guys are doing a good job and should continue on the path," she said. "I believe both you and the town manager wanted a little more time to negotiate and then the next logical step, to the mayor's point, we'd be doing it in segments. But you wanted kind of a last chance to see what you can do with the negotiations, is that correct?" "Yes," Mr. Capra replied. "Of the \$4 million, we're probably down a million, but we're not anywhere close. Basically, we're taking on additional work, stockpiling material and so forth. The fact of the matter is, it's highly unlikely we're going to get to the \$4 million, and that's why I went to the option of taking out some pieces."

Mayor Tompeck gauged the temperature of the commissioners on the next step. "Do we have a consensus to ask Mr. Capra and the town manager to see what they can do to bring it down a little bit more and come back with a proposal to maybe split the project into some pieces if we can't get it down to where we need to be?" he asked. They all agreed, with Commissioner Campo adding a final request as far as the MCU negotiations. "We're making huge amounts of progress, and I'd like the county to give us written comments on the final bid after you negotiate those things," he concluded. "If there's a way we can benefit from their savings, then I want to know about it. And if there's not, we'll be able to tell the public this is the way that we went about it."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
April 20, 2023

Sewall's Point continues tree ordinance discussion

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The town commissioners here once again tackled the thorny and occasionally divisive issue of un-permitted tree-removals April 11, but failed to reach a consensus on its new tree ordinance. The town staff has worked on the ordinance for the last few months and touches on penalties, potential mitigation and community education efforts.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** described a last-minute change suggested by Town Attorney Glen Torcivia to replace the term "native trees" with the term "non-invasive trees" throughout the draft document. "My hope was to have you give another look at the ordinance with the structure of it," Mr. **Daniels** said. "This is the original ordinance with the strike-through language and items that we wanted to change. Our town attorney did have a conversation with me, and he said the better terminology would be non-invasive because native trees here could be different than in the Panhandle of Florida. We're just better off dealing with non-invasive trees, which is what we're trying to get rid of and not have people plant."

In the early part of the discussion, Mr. **Daniels** expressed optimism his latest revisions to the draft ordinance would satisfy the concerns of all board members. "If you all come to an agreement, my thoughts are process-wise on what you would like to see in the ordinance," he continued. "I will get that back to Glen and we will try to get it through the reading process. I think it's more judicious to work out all the ifs, ands, and buts here in this format. Then in the next meeting when we publish it, it will be more routine. Hopefully it'll have the wording in it that you're going to mention tonight."

Commissioner Frank Fender led most of the ensuing conversation. "I just wanted to piggyback on some of the conversation we had at the last meeting, now that this has been typed up and you can read it clearly," Commissioner Fender said. "I don't have a ton of problems with changes, but I wanted to make sure it was clear that any changes recommended in my mind were never intended to be punitive. My only goal in bringing this ordinance back was to add the clarity that's missing." In addition to clarity, he insisted the draft ordinance lacked both a mitigation plan and a specific number of replacement trees for developers of larger lots. "My biggest gap in this ordinance is the fact that we don't specify that a mitigation plan is required prior to permitting," he continued. "I think it should be a standard part of the permit. I'm pushing to make sure the mitigation plan isn't the punitive side of it (but rather) the planning side. If a lot is under a half-acre, it specifies you must have eight non-invasive trees. If you are larger than a half-acre but smaller than an acre, you need to have 12 trees. I would recommend a third section: If you're greater than one acre, you should go with at least 16 trees."

Mayor John Tompeck subsequently questioned why the draft ordinance required a certified arborist to sign off on a dying tree before it could be removed. He also believed Town Building

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Official Jack Reisinger should be able to sign off on the removal. "If a tree is obviously diseased, and some of them obviously are, is that a determination that Jack can make?" he asked. "Or do we really have to get an arborist to say this tree has had it?"

Commissioner James Campo, in turn, offered a possible compromise. "You might say, if it's not apparent that it's diseased, they might need an arborist," he suggested. "But if it is apparent, the TBO could make that call."

Both Mayor Tompeck and Mr. **Daniels** liked that idea. "One of the other things that stand out is when the mushrooms start growing out of the tree," the latter said. "That's a sign of a fungus that the tree's going to die. So, with those, the sooner you can dispose of the tree, the better off you are, because that can spread."

For her part, Commissioner Kajia Mayfield spoke on one ordinance section that appeared to require property owners or developers who removed trees without permits to replace double the number of those trees or double the caliber (girth) of the trees. "I think it should just be single (replacement)," she said, "I think it should be the same and then we have the fine. It seems like a lot." Commissioner Fender, however, believed there should be separate penalties for those who knowingly break the rules and those who ignorantly do so. "Oh, OK, if you've gotten in trouble, double it," he said. "But if you're planning, what you're saying is reasonable for someone who is following the rules. But for somebody who has actually impacted you, why would you not then give them a stiffer fine because they did not follow the rules? To me that seems reasonable."

"I think in this case, they're going to be paying some civil penalties as it is," Mayor Tompeck chimed in. Commissioner Fender then repeated his calls for codifying mitigation planning in the ordinance. "I'm less concerned about the people who've already violated it," he insisted. "I'm more into keeping people from violating it. That's why I care about mitigation planning and putting this in the permitting process ahead of time."

Commissioner Campo concurred, at least partially. "I'm onboard with some of what you're proposing, such as clarifying definitions and having a mitigation plan in place," he said. "Some of this other stuff I think is going to be hard. I've got three trees on my entire lot, and I can't get my arms around any of them. So, I would be in violation because you're talking about the number of trees. I think caliber is what creates the canopy, so I think we should really insert that topic, the larger more mature trees."

While Commissioner Fender believed Commissioner Campo's property wouldn't be affected because the clause in the ordinance was aimed at "developers and people modifying" their lots, the latter recalled the development of the nearby Langford Landing property. "What you're going to have is a bunch of small trees because they want to get to that 16," Commissioner Campo said. "When they did Langford Landing, that was a clear-cut, and then they put up a bunch of twiggy trees. That's going to take 30 years. I just think when we're calculating the number of trees, we should include caliber."

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Vice Mayor Dave Kurzman waited until midway in the conversation before insisting on an educational component, referring to the planned newcomer packets describing the ordinance. "We've touched on, but we didn't go deep enough into it," he said. "One lady moved into the Archipelago (neighborhood) and had a 100-year-old oak tree obstructing her view. So, she decided to call a certain guy that cuts trees. This guy is the biggest violator, and we've done nothing, and he still cuts trees over here. He should be thrown out of Sewall's Point. He just did a butcher job across the street from me. He's also responsible for some of the people paying into the kitty, and he has no liability at all." After much further discussion, Commissioner Campo admitted the board was bogging down on all the separate issues. "I would advise Commissioner Fender to meet privately with staff and try to work through a lot of this stuff so that we're not doing it in this situation," he exclaimed. "We're like three or four meetings in, and we're just kind of digging ourselves into a hole." Mayor Tompeck then wondered if the commission was ready to stop for the day. "Have we thrashed this thing into submission yet?" he asked. "Almost, not quite," Commissioner Fender answered. "I was afraid of that," the mayor said. "I want to give everybody a chance to raise every comment they have about this ordinance," Commissioner Fender said in response. "I'm patiently listening and semi-arguing."

Mayor Tompeck subsequently expressed his doubts that **Daniels** had enough clarity or consensus to create a final draft ordinance for first reading. The latter, however, said he would give it his best shot. "If I can't get it done in time for the next meeting, it'll still be there for the meeting after that, so yes," **Daniels** said.

In addition to that lengthy discussion, the FPUA Board voted unanimously to authorize a restriction on the usage of the \$80,000 accumulated to-date in tree ordinance fines and allow **Daniels** to spend up to \$10,000 without prior board approval on items he sees fit. Members also authorized him to plan an upcoming Arbor Day event at Commissioner Campo's suggestion to help educate the public on the new ordinance.

Her fellow Sewall's Point resident Holly Hoover followed her to the podium, siding with the previous speaker's sentiments and informing the board that she was a professional engineer. "I am for septic to sewer, but I am for the vacuum system for the resiliency and maintenance reasons, as well as the lifestyle and practicality reasons," she said. "I agree with the former speaker that Captech has completely misrepresented the system. I request that, if you were to vote yes today, that you table the matter until I can give you all the details."

Ms. Hoover continued to speak out against the 300 semi-independent grinder sewer systems already approved by MCU for a portion of South Sewall's Point, insisting they were not resilient due to their need for generators during power failures. She called for MCU staff to take over the South Sewall's Point STS program and inform all that area's residents of the system's complications. "I would like for the county to take over the design and construction of the system," she said. "And for the county to require — because of the misrepresentation — that every resident of South Sewall's Point... be informed in writing of all the impacts of the grinder system [and] everything that they'll have to deal with for the next 20 or 30 years."

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Because the discussion was initially scheduled for later on during the meeting, Mr. Donaldson began trying to reach MCU Director Sam Amerson to have him come sooner since a couple of Sewall's Point representatives were in the audience. He arrived almost immediately upon the close of public comment and began a brief explanation behind the utility's 300 grinder cap. "For larger systems greater than 300 homes, we've selected a vacuum system, and for those communities fewer than 300 homes, we've selected a grinder sewer system," he said. "That fit our program [goal] of providing sewer service to 10,000 homes in 10 years, and we're meeting our goal at this point."

Mr. Amerson admitted that he'd previously received a letter from the Sewall's Point town manager requesting to increase that cap substantially. which had already been increased to just over 330 connections. "South Sewall's Point has 706 homes, and their request is to plead their case to allow 706 grinder systems in South Sewall's Point," he added.

Noticing Mr. **Daniels** in the audience, Mr. Amerson was about to invite him up to speak when Mr. Donaldson temporarily cut him off. "I just wanted to provide a little bit of background too," the latter said. "We'd also had conversations with his predecessor [Michelle Berger] about the ability to do some grinders for those that are the lowest [lying areas] — and as we understood it — those that were actually interested in having a sewer system right away."

Mr. Donaldson emphasized that MCU and Martin County had supported the town's application for the Florida Resiliency Grant for those previously approved grinder systems. "In the intervening time, that number has crept up to 330 based upon some other engineering considerations," he continued. "Mr. Amerson has put a cap of 330 as the maximum that he would consider in terms of the engineering design and the efficiencies of how we would serve the community. There's a lot of history behind the 300 versus economies of scale and how you build a vacuum or a gravity system."

Commission Chairman Ed Ciampi then invited the Sewall's Point town manager to the podium. "I've been in Sewall's Point now since Aug. 7, and I know this whole issue of septic-to-sewer conversions has been bantered about for the last couple of years," Mr. **Daniels** began. "I'm representing the Commission and all residents — not just some of the residents — and all these residents are also Martin County residents. Unfortunately, we tend to hear from people that have a different agenda. I have actually walked the streets in the last couple of weeks, and have only gotten one individual that didn't want to connect in the low-lying area. That's because they just built a brand-new home and have a new [septic] system, which is understandable."

Mr. **Daniels** immediately switched gears, reframing the conversation around teamwork and cooperation rather than the agenda item request before the Board that day. "I'm here today not to really talk about septic-to-sewer," he explained. "I really want to talk about cooperation. Your county administrator and Sam, they have been working with me hand-in-hand since I got into Sewall's Point, and I really appreciate that because your staff are top-notch. They go out of their way to help and not hinder."

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Emphasizing his desire for the commissions of the two municipalities to continue working together, he then dropped a bomb that brought the conversation to a screeching halt. "I'm here today to thank you all for everything," he said. "I know it was kind of a rush to get this on the agenda, but I would like to withdraw the request that I have in." Pointing to the need for more collaboration in the area of North Sewall's Point Road, which he insisted was in dire need of stormwater assistance and rehabilitation, Mr. **Daniels** said his eye was now on the future as well as the present. "I try not to just look at the problems we have right now," he concluded. "There's so much more we can get accomplished through teamwork to meet the goals and objectives of our constituents, our residents and our businesses."

Chairman Ciampi closed the discussion by affirming that both Martin County and the Town of Sewall's Point were on the same page. "I think the destination of where the village is trying to go is the same destination that we are [heading to] as a county to remove septic systems and get everyone to switch over to a sewer," he said. "As it goes back to your board and to your residents, I would tell you that the five of us are available to assist in any way possible. Our goal is the same as yours, to eliminate septic systems."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
March 23, 2023

South Sewall's Point to get more sewer lines

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission majority here agreed March 14 to formally accept an \$8.4 million Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant for the South Sewall's Point septic-to-sewer program. They also agreed to expand the program from 148 homes to the current cap set by Martin County of 337 sewer connections.

Although the Commission previously expanded sewer services southward from Jensen Beach to the northern end of town a few years ago, the effort to get the southern end of the exclusive enclave to end its reliance on septic tanks has met much more resistance. Before commissioners made the three separate votes to formally accept the FDEP grant, authorize the town manager to sign the documents and more than double the number of connections originally planned, Cranes Nest homeowner Frank Tidikis announced his desire to amend the town's charter so the Board could make no such future decisions without a referendum. "The amendment proposed will alter the Code of Ordinances and become effective immediately after a successful vote on the measure," he said. "The purpose of the petition is to put the question before the Town of Sewall's Point as to whether the voters should have a voice before the town incurs debt, has taxes raised greater than the Consumer Price Index or have a special assessment levied on the residents for town projects."

A staunch proponent of an STS (septic-to-sewer) referendum, Mr. Tidikis told the Board he was currently collecting signatures for his petition, but expressed frustration that the town attorney had declined to review his proposed ballot wording and Town Manager **Robert Daniels** refused to ask him to do so. "Unfortunately, this action is being triggered due to the fact the Town Commission had promised to put the question of installing sewers to the voters and then reneged," he continued. "In addition, the town commissioners ran on not raising taxes and then passed the largest tax increase in the town's history. The commissioners have publicly stated there will be no special assessments. If that's the case, the petition should garner your support." Although none of the commissioners addressed his comments afterward, the Board had previously discussed the idea of an STS referendum on more than one occasion last year but could never come to a majority consensus. Last Dec. 13, Commissioner James Campo made a motion to authorize staff to further investigate the referendum process. Although his motion received a second by Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman, it failed 3-2, with the rest of the Board dissenting. At least two of the dissenting commissioners, Kajia Mayfield and Frank Fender, insisted the ultimate decision should be left in the hands of elected officials. Town Engineer Joe Capra's Feb. 14 announcement this year that Sewall's Point had been awarded the \$8.4 million Resilient Florida Grant ultimately won Commissioner Campo over. The latter had voted against applying for it last August due to financial concerns.

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Mr. **Daniels** presented the latest three requests during the March 14 meeting. "As we talked about at the last meeting, we did get the reward notice and there is required paperwork that I have to sign and send in to let them know that we do want to receive the award of \$8.4 million for the septic-to-sewer plan," he said. Commissioner Campo made the motion to accept the award, which was seconded by Commissioner Fender and passed 4-1, with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting without comment. The town manager's subsequent request for authority to sign the documents – a fact not stated in the previous agenda item, which necessitated the addendum – prompted more debate and comments from the vice-mayor, who admitted he'd discussed the town's STS plans with a trio of county commissioners and Martin County Utilities Director Sam Amerson. "I spoke to Sam Amerson regarding the septic-to-sewer conversion," he said. "Three-hundred-thirty-seven [connections] is what he'll limit us to. So, when we're up to 337 and somebody's septic tank fails – it's not going to be 338 – Sam Amerson says there'll be no exceptions. They'll have to get a permit to get a new septic tank." Mr. **Daniels** refuted that last statement, however, since he insists the county's Health Department overseeing the issuance of such permits already has a firm policy in place. "I'm not sure if the information relayed to you is actually correct," he said. "I have spoken with the Health Department, and if there's a sewer in front of your house, you have to connect to the sewer. They will not issue a permit to put in a new septic tank. So, where that puts them when we're at 337, I don't know. The county Health Department makes that decision."

For his part, Commissioner Fender believed that Martin County Utilities might be persuaded to bump the final number up once Sewall's Point reached its cap of grinder system connections. "I know Sam is super in favor of septic-to-sewer conversion," he said. "I would imagine this decision is not about you can't go over 337; I think the issue is what you can do right now. I bet if you came back to him after the 337 and asked for more, then we'd start the discussion on how we get more." Mayor John Tompeck agreed. "Certainly, if you ask them now, they're going to be hard-nosed about it," he said. "At the same time, we won't get to that point until a couple years down the road and have all the main infrastructure already in. I can't believe they would turn down customers when the infrastructure's there – it makes no sense."

Commissioners then voted 4-1 to authorize Mr. **Daniels** to sign the grant documents, with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting. The Board spent most of its time on the final agenda item on potentially expanding the STS program to all the homes in South Sewall's Point, since the Town would now be flush with grant money. The Commission's original approval was for the initial phase of 148 connections, which the town manager now believes should be expanded to the 337 cap and perhaps even beyond in the future. "Right now, I'm authorized to have 148 connections," he said. That's taking the low-pressure force main from across the street at Harbor Bay Plaza down to just short of Pineapple Lane. Now there's enough money to do all of the connections, but we're not authorized by the county to do that. If that's what you all want, I will make sure we do what we need to do to move forward." The town engineer then explained how the new total of 337 connections would cover most of the low-lying areas along the peninsula. "That would put the line down South Sewall's Point Road all the way to High Point," Mr. Capra said. "It would cover all of High Point, as well as Island Road [and] Simara Street. We could go into some more areas of Homewood and we could also finish Rio Vista if you'd like to do that."

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The final discussion that evening revolved around how the town could potentially use the rest of the grant funding on the project within the five-year period. While Commissioner Fender hoped to use the money to keep homeowner connection costs to MCU on the low end of the \$8,000-to-\$12,000 estimate, Mr. Capra discussed other options, such as installing the more expensive gravity sewer systems into specific neighborhoods and giving those residents the option to hook up prior to septic tank failures. Because most Board members opposed mandatory assessments for the gravity systems, Commissioner Mayfield proposed another solution. "As opposed to giving those people above the 337 [cap] any kind of assessment, you could just give a smaller portion of people a gravity hookup where the grant would pay for it and then you'd have the same [connection] costs as the grinder," she said. "We should assess at a later date and there could be options, but currently we seem good with the 337."

Commissioner Campo ultimately made a motion to authorize Mr. **Daniels** to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with Martin County Utilities and to expand the STS program without mandatory special assessments. Commissioner Fender seconded the motion, which passed 4-1 with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
October 13, 2022

Sewall's Point passes Zoning in Progress

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The majority of the Town Commission here voted Sept. 27 to approval a Zoning in Progress that will put all development applications on hold for at least 120 days while an outside consultant updates the town's land development regulations to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** provided commissioners an extensive overview of how a ZIP works while explaining that the LDRs were not analyzed by Land Planner Bonnie Landry after completing her work on the Comp Plan as he's previously seen done in other communities. "You want to make sure that you don't do something that's contrary to your Comprehensive Plan," he said. "The land development regulations should match what you've decided to do in your Comp Plan, and that really gives you the ordinance that governs what you can and cannot do. Originally when we looked at doing the Comp Plan and the LDRs, they were together in the Request for Proposals, but because of the cost concerns, it was split up at that time." Mr. **Daniels** then described how he came up with his timeframe for pausing developmental applications during the ZIP. "Generally, you'll do a Zoning in Progress so it kind of holds up any action," he explained. "They [developers] can still make an application, but the actual decision-making process isn't done until that Zoning in Progress is done. The maximum amount of time is usually 180 days. We're looking at roughly 90 days, [but] the problem we have is the holidays towards the end of December. That's why I asked for 120 days with the hope that we'll get it done sooner because I don't want to hold up any progress."

Mr. **Daniels** concluded his introduction by highlighting the recent sale of an eight-acre property off North Sewall's Point Road that served as both the impetus for the request and the debate before the Commission that evening. "I actually had a conversation with the gentleman that purchased the parcel that is of concern," he said. "His intention is to subdivide it into two parcels, both of them going from east to west and both of being just under four acres. He's a builder who's used to Zoning in Progress from his experience in Jupiter Island. Obviously, he'd like to get in and do something, but he understands the process and what we're doing. Again, we don't have an application. [and] we don't have any information other than the sketch and a copy of the email explaining what his project is."

Commissioner James Campo launched the Board discussion immediately afterward, expressing frustration that an adjacent property owner had urged the Commission during its Sept. 20 Final Budget Hearing to expedite the ZIP due to the new owner's plans for the property. "I called **Bob [Daniels]** because I'm very concerned the way that this came up," he said. "I thought it was a heck of a way to welcome someone into the neighborhood to put together basically a freeze-up of his private property rights. I was concerned that a neighbor came to a budget meeting – which was not meant to conduct normal business – and inserted a concern about the new owner. So, our

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

first inkling is to slam on the brakes with any possible development." Commissioner Campo insinuated that passing a Zoning in Progress without including the property owner in the discussion could put the Town of Sewall's Point in a precarious situation similar to when the City of Stuart was successfully sued by the Lake Point Corporation. "This is hot potato stuff when you talk about a moratorium," he continued. "You don't want to bring this up at a public meeting that's intended for the budget and have it not adequately screened by the person that's going to be affected the most. I think we should give **Bob** a couple of weeks to work through this with this contractor to make sure we're all on the same page. When you start infringing on someone's use of their private property, it can result in a lot of damage, and I don't want to be a part of that."

Commissioner Frank Fender acknowledged that Commissioner Campo had hit on some "hot button issues" but insisted the idea of rewriting the land development regulations had not just come to light. "This discussion we're having here has been going on for as long as the Comp Plan's been under development," he said. "You're bringing up a concept of slow growth, versus no growth, versus fast growth and aligning it to the Lake Point issue. We're not stopping anybody from doing anything here the way I understand it; we're just saying let's have 120 days so somebody's not pushing something in under the wire. I absolutely want the developer to be able to develop." Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman concurred, emphasizing his desire to continue focusing on improving the town's stormwater flow, which is addressed in the recent Comp plan revisions. "This has been out there for quite a while, [and] the Comp Plan we've been working on for a while," he said. "Our biggest issue is flooding – that's why we're buying property right now – and this will actually protect the area from flooding. Underneath the old rules, he could flood the daylight out of us. It's not just one neighbor, but many neighbors who were nervous about this. I just think this is ready to go, and I don't see any reason we shouldn't approve this tonight."

Commissioner Campo then found an ally in Commissioner Kajia Mayfield. "I hadn't heard of this before," she said of the current debate over the new property owner. "We had the budget, we had this meeting [and] it was a lot I was trying to understand in all of it. I do agree it was rushed. I would support putting it off because I don't feel totally prepared to make a decision like this that could impact a property owner. A hundred and twenty days is a long time in the real estate market." Taking her support as a sign of potential success, Commissioner Campo made a motion to table the Rezoning in Progress, which was seconded by Commissioner Mayfield. That was followed by much more Board discussion, as well as input from Town Attorney Glen Torcivia. "There's nothing illegal about doing this – Zonings in Progress are done often," he said. "This is a resolution that you can change at any time. On the one hand, Commissioner Campo is suggesting you postpone starting this for two weeks. You could just as easily rescind this two weeks from now, six weeks from now or eight weeks from now. It's really a discretionary decision."

After Mr. Torcivia's comment, Mayor John Tompeck asked Ms. Landry to provide her professional opinion on Zonings in progress. "The Zoning in Progress is a typical planning function," she said. "If you identify something about your LDR that needs to change, what you don't want is to have the LDR being drafted and this [current] one in place, and somebody puts an application in right in the middle. Then there's a conflict between what's being drafted and

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what's approved and the Comprehensive Plan and the LDR. That actually puts you in a more vulnerable position legally than not doing the Zoning in Progress." The Board then voted Commissioner Campo's motion, which failed 2-3, with Mayor Tompeck, Vice-Mayor Kurzman and Commissioner Fender dissenting. Vice-Mayor Kurzman, in turn, made a motion to approve the ZIP, which was seconded by Commissioner Fender and passed 3-2, with Commissioners Campo and Mayfield dissenting.

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 28, 2022

Sewall's Point finalizes 2023 budget and millage

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here voted unanimously Sept. 20 to approve the 2023 millage rate and \$10.7 million budget during its final budget hearing, notably characterized by its muted tone and lack of angry residents.

The Board initially approved the 2023 millage rate of 3.27 mils during its July 26 meeting and affirmed that millage during its first formal budget hearing on Sept. 7, both with minimal public comment and virtually no opposition. A year ago, however, when then Town Manager Michelle Berger proposed raising the 2.87 combined millage rate to 3.2688 mils to help fund the stormwater retrofit of South Sewall's Point Road, the ensuing public outcry ultimately contributed to her resignation on Jan. 31 of this year. Her replacement hired on July 21, **Robert Daniels**, presided over much quieter proceedings this year, aided by Interim Town Manager Dan Hudson, who's kept the town running for the last several months.

Prior to opening the latest hearing, Mayor John Tompeck called for public comment on non-agenda items. The first speaker that evening, Mandalay Road resident Dorien Gilbert, did, however, pose a question related to the budget. "This is in reference to the River Road Project that was going on for many years that we've heard of anyway," he said of the ongoing \$4 million-plus stormwater rehab. "I heard one aspect of it saying that it depends money-wise whether we have the money or it's going to be a grant. I was told the money – about \$435,000 – has been approved. Is it available for that project?"

Mayor Tompeck subsequently informed him that he'd have to wait until later during the meeting to get his answer before turning the budget hearing over to Mr. **Daniels**. "I'm going to ask Mr. Hudson to step up since he's been sort of coaxing this baby along through the whole process of my getting hired and taking over," the town manager said by way of introduction. "He's going to read the roll back rate announcement for us into the record." Mr. Hudson, in turn, read the brief sentence, followed by short period of silence. "The proposed millage rate of 3.27 mils is greater than the roll back rate of 2.9357 mils by 11.39 percent," he said. Mayor Tompeck couldn't resist taking a jab at him at that point. "Is that all you have to say," he quipped, as the chambers erupting into laughter. "Would you like me to go ahead and give you the overview?" Mr. Hudson replied. "Yeah, why don't you go ahead," Mayor Tompeck answered.

Mr. Hudson began by reminding commissioners that they'd decided to revamp the budget structure this year by setting up a three-fund structure. Some citizens had complained during last year's budget hearings that there weren't enough details on categories like employee salaries. "We don't need to read every line, but the total budget is \$10,656,050," he said. "On Sept. 7, you asked to address the planning fees, and we were able to clarify that. The water supply plan – which was one of the items in question – is not included in the budget at this time. It will be, if

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and when a grant is approved. So, the budget and the grant are going to come back at an appropriate time. What is funded in the budget now is \$20,000 for ongoing planning issues and \$10,000 for the land development regulation updates."

The final version of the 2023/2024 Fiscal Year Budget also includes additional budget comparisons that some Board members asked for during the first formal budget hearing. "Exhibit A has two." Mr. Hudson continued. "The first one is just a simple look at the three funds, without really going into a lot of comparison. Then, the second chart gives you the line-item breakdown: how much you've spent year-to-date on each line item, and then a percent comparison of this year over last year. I think that was kind of what you were asking for." The last item the interim town manager described was the capital improvement project sheet, which he emphasized was still a work in progress and had seen only one change since Sept. 7. "The Town Commons restroom was moved out and is not included in the 2023 budget," he said. Right before he recommended adoption of both the millage rate and budget, Mr. Hudson briefly touched on the public comment related to the latter. "The question that was raised regarding the money for the South River Road project – it's still in the budget as part of the Capital Improvement Plan," he concluded.

Mr. **Daniels**, in turn, provided new information about potential funding for the water supply study before turning the discussion back over to the Board. "I've been working with the county on their study to see what we need to comply with," he said. "There is a grant available from the Department of Economic Opportunity [and] the opening for the applications is in January. DEO grants are fully funded – they're 100 percent – so there is no match we have to worry about budgeting. As we get closer to that deadline, we can discuss the grant application and where I recommend we head."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield launched the brief Commission discussion, beginning with the \$20,000 Mr. Hudson said was dedicated to "ongoing planning issues." "Is that the communication plan – what is that one specifically?" she asked. In his response, the interim town manager referred to a comment by the other public speaker, North River Road resident Chuck Farrow. The latter reminded commissioners that he'd emailed each of them with his proposal of a "development application moratorium" while town staff updated the LDRs. "We have people come in from time to time, and they want an interpretation of the Planning Code," Mr. Hudson said in answer to Commissioner Mayfield's question. "It doesn't really reflect [the] Building Code so much; it is a planning-oriented kind of question. Dr. Farrell's comment just now, that's a planning issue: Actually, it'd be the LDR updates – the one that's directly relevant – but those are the kinds of questions we get from time to time."

For his part, Commissioner Frank Fender wanted to make sure staff addressed Mr. Gilbert's question posed prior to the budget discussion. "Do we want to take this time to address Dorien's question about the funds, or did you mention it?" he asked. "Yeah, that's what he just mentioned in the budget, effective Oct. 1," Mr. **Daniels** responded in reference to Mr. Hudson's presentation. Commissioner Fender also expressed satisfaction with the new information in this year's budget. "I was happy they came in and put the percentages in," he said. "For next year, I

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would love to see a year-over-year rolling percentage change for each line item. It would just help to make the understanding of the changes much more visible." Mr. **Daniels** told him that idea was already on the backburner. "As we build on each year, our plan is to go to a five-year rolling number so you can look back and historically see what we've funded for that particular account," he said.

Mayor Tompeck likewise lauded Finance Director Holly Vath and Mr. Hudson for their collaborative efforts on streamlining and improving the 2023 budget. "They did a terrific job," he said. "I'm not a budget expert, [but] it was a lot clearer in what exactly we were doing this year. It made it a lot easier for me to review, so I appreciate that."

The Board then voted 4-0 to approve the 2023 millage and budget, with Commissioner James Campo absent.

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 8, 2022

Sewall's Point seeking \$8 million septic-to-sewer grant

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The majority of the Town Commission here voted Aug. 31 to apply for an \$8 million Resilient Florida Grant to help fund a controversial septic-to-sewer project along South Sewall's Point Road, but not without resident opposition and some frustration from Board members.

Just the mention of the words septic to sewer is enough to raise the hackles on some of this exclusive riverfront community's residents, who have long opposed loosening their grip on their septic tanks. The debate became so heated last year that it led to calls for the dismissal of former Town Manager Michelle Berger who backed the proposal, as well as a millage-rate increase to pay for the ongoing stormwater rehab of the same roadway that was eventually approved. Although she ultimately resigned in late January over a contract-renewal dispute, her recently hired replacement, **Robert Daniels**, may have to tread lightly to avoid enraging the Sewall's Point masses.

Lantana Lane resident Art Swartz was one of the loudest voices in January opposing Ms. Berger's contract renewal, signing up to speak during the latest meeting even before the agenda item got underway. "Yesterday I'm pleased to say that we had our septic system pumped out," he said. "It was clean, inspected, -- everything was great at my house -- as it has been since we bought the house in 2004. We never had an issue, so I ask, where is the evidence to confirm the need for South Sewall's Point to undertake the expensive, disruptive and unwanted conversion from septic to sewer? I've heard a lot of talk [and] been to numerous meetings. I respect the opinions of you all, but I haven't seen any evidence from a report that says we really need to do this."

Mr. Swartz also insinuated that the town's engineer, Joe Capra of Captec Engineering Inc., might have ulterior motives in urging the Board to both apply for grants and proceed with the project. The firm is currently in charge of the ongoing \$4 million-plus stormwater rehab of South Sewall's Point Road. "I don't know much about Captec other than Joe Capra attends a lot of meetings," he continued. "He leads our commissioners as if he was a pied piper. I'm frustrated by the actions being taken by this body that have not been approved or mandated by the residents and the town people of Sewall's Point. Actions that are expensive, disruptive and unwanted should be a topic of discussion for the town."

Town Manager **Daniels** then formally introduced the agenda item on the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan and Project Implementation Grant, whose application window was rapidly closing. "I got a phone call Friday night about this opportunity, similar to the opportunity that we addressed on the Aug. 9 meeting," he said in reference to the planned conversion of the Town Hall and three adjacent commercial buildings from septic to sewer. "The difference with this one is, a portion of it is federal dollars that we can use for matching the

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original grant that we put in. It is an \$8 million grant that has opened. I thought with the Commission taking the action on Aug. 9, that I would bring this one forward in all transparency. This is something that we can consider, which should help us with our match on the original grant."

Mayor John Tompeck was the first to speak afterward, lamenting a lack of advance notification. "I am really disappointed that I can't seem to get a listing of the opportunities for grants," he said. "I look at the Resilient Florida Grant page that was given to us, and this portal opened on July 1. Here we are Aug. 31, and it's the first time we're discussing it. That's not acceptable. I don't know if there's any opportunity for appropriations. We can't be in this position where you have to call a special meeting because a grant is due that day or the next day." As far as the project in question, Mayor Tompeck assured residents that neither he nor anyone else on the Board would support mandatory septic-to-sewer connections. "The residents want to know, how are we going to do this and how much will this cost?" he continued. "The answer is, we don't know. We have an idea of the total project cost, but we don't know how it'll cost [residents] because we don't know how much we're going to get in grants. I think the Commission agrees that nobody's interested in any kind of mandatory assessment. That's something important for everybody to understand."

The mayor also defended the town engineer, insisting that Mr. Capra had only recently received the draft report on the South Sewall's Point Road septic-to-sewer project from the consultant. "It's long, it's complicated, and he's trying to put it in some kind of a summary fashion that'll be easy for us to understand," Mayor Tompeck explained. "An important piece of this puzzle is – once he's got the options – he needs to see what Martin County is agreeable to do. If we do, in fact, go ahead with this conversion, they're going to get 650 customers for life. So, they ought to be able to throw a whole lot of money into the pot to help us out here."

In response to Mr. Swartz' calls for more notification and the mayor's complaints, Mr. **Daniels** said he'd already spoken to Mr. Capra and contracted grant writer Kloe Ciuperger about improving their game on providing grant information in advance. "In all fairness, that transparency has to be there, [and] obviously we go through great pains even in special meetings of getting out as much notice as we can," the town manager said. "I am working on a list of all of our grants that we have currently now and hope to have that out in a couple days. Also, we're looking at putting the grant information on the website, so we have full transparency out there on what we have."

Mayor Tompeck then invited Veronica Piccolo to the lectern, the only other member of the public signed up to speak on the topic. "We are lucky now that we have money that could be matched," the latter said. "But that's only these grants – you're not going to get another federal piece. You're going to end up down the road getting grants that have to be matched, and that's coming from the residents. If I lived in North Sewall's Point, I would tell you all to take a hike. They already have the sewer [and] are going to be assessed for something in South Sewall's Point. Why would they want to put the money out?"

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Ms. Piccolo urged the Board to drop the issue altogether until Martin County Utilities comes calling. "If we all shut up and didn't do anything as a Sewall's Point entity, we would come up on a list with Martin County, and Martin County would be doing everything that you guys are doing," she insisted. "You wouldn't have to spend any time: They would be the ones to do all the plans," Mayor Tompeck shot down that scenario, however. "We're certainly on the Martin County list, when Martin County gets to us, they just throw it on your tax bill, and that's the end of the story," he said. "They did that in North River Shores and Golden Gate. There wasn't any discussion – they just put it on their tax bill – and they're paying for 20 years. You're not going to save any money that way, trust me."

Commission Kajia Mayfield concurred. "I think it's important that we take part in it, try to reduce the cost as much as we can and have more control," she said. "As most people know, I support the conversion to sewer in South Sewall's Point. I don't want to tear up the road again." Commissioner Mayfield then made the motion to apply for the grant, which was seconded by Commissioner Frank Fender without comment. Commissioner James Campo was the last to speak, emphasizing that he opposed the current application but not the idea of septic to sewer conversions. "I'm disappointed that seven months ago we spent over \$100,000 on a study, and it sounds like some of those results are in, but we still haven't seen that," he said. "I think the residents of Sewall's Point are fair and willing to spend money when a case is made, and I think that's what lacks right now. We need a plan, [and] we need cost estimates before we move ahead."

The Board then voted 3-1, with Commissioner Campo dissenting and Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman absent.

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
July 28, 2022

Sewall's Point selects new town manager

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

After holding a community meet and greet July 20 for six managerial candidates, the Town Commission voted unanimously the next day to hire Jupiter resident **Robert Daniels** as its new town manager. A career law-enforcement officer, Mr. **Daniels** cut his administrative teeth in Miami-Dade County's North Bay Village, where he served as police chief and both interim and acting city manager before taking over management of the Town of Melbourne Beach in 2017. Two years later he hopped to the opposite coast, holding the same position at the City of Madeira Beach for a two-year period as well.

The second of the candidates the Board interviewed in alphabetical order on July 21, Mr. **Daniels** was preceded by Raymond Bossert Jr., the current village Administrator of Port Edwards, Wis. He was then followed by Brian Geoghegan, the current city manager of Howell Township, N.J.; Ben Hogarth, the community affairs liaison for the City of Stuart; Lynne Ladner, the interim finance director for the City of Pahokee; and Larry Tibbs, the Moore Haven city manager. At the end of the same day, commissioners and staff held a special meeting at the Town Hall where each candidate was called in separately to provide their final comments and answer two final questions posed by Commissioner James Campo.

Mr. Bossert, like every other candidate that evening, began by thanking the Board and members of the public who'd come out to meet them the day previous day. Reminding commissioners that he was a history buff, the U.S. Army administrator who retired in 2019 described his management style utilizing an analogy of the town's namesake founder. "I would say what Captain Sewall would in looking for a town manager," he said. "He would say, you need a leader, you need a captain of this ship, to make sure it goes in the right path. He would say the leader needs to have inspiration, motivation and competency. He would need to provision the ship properly through rough, as well as, calm waters. Most importantly, the captain needs to understand the passengers – the townspeople – and how you communicate with them."

Commissioner Campo then posed his first question to Mr. Bossert related to his potential acceptance of the new town manager contract finalized by the Board on May 24. "Have you read the contract that was provided, and are there any terms that you do not agree with and would like to have changed that we need to know about before we potentially make an offer to you?" he asked. Mr. Bossert pulled no punches, insisting the \$110,000 salary listed in the contact was too low for the workload, something that Commissioner Kajia Mayfield repeatedly stated during the May discussion. Commissioners balked early this year at substantially raising the salary for former town manager Michelle Berger, who resigned Jan. 31 amid contract renewal discussions. "In my estimate, you're asking for more than a town manager," he said. "You're asking for a human resource director, a finance savvy person, a person that can cobble together your public

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works. I would ask that it be in the \$125,000 range because you're wanting experience, you're wanting someone that's competent and someone that has the capability to move forward." Commissioner Campo's second question was a lot simpler. "What would be the earliest start date?" he asked. Mr. Bossart's reply was a common answer for most candidates still employed by a municipality. "I have a 30-day notice clause in my current contract," he said.

While Mr. **Daniels** didn't refer to the posted salary, he did express his desire for upfront vacation time instead of waiting for it to slowly accrue. The Commission increased the annual starting vacation to three weeks in May, up from the standard two weeks allotted to most employees. "When we look at vacation time, obviously the tenure of a manager could be three years, and I'm used to having some amount of time frontloaded," he said, referring to the contract's three-year employment period. "I'm going to be working hard for you all the time, but you do need some down time." As far as his potential start date, Mr. **Daniels** is currently between jobs and very flexible. "I'd be ready tomorrow if I could sign this thing today," he said. "But I do have to get my son back to Alabama for school next week."

The next candidate, Mr. Geoghegan, highlighted his experience as a town administrator dealing with the same issues currently faced by the Town of Sewall's Point. "I did work at a small beachfront community after a natural disaster, so I bring that experience as well as extensive grant-writing experience," he said. "I've worked on some large-scale sewage projects recently, so I have a little bit of unique knowledge with that." Mr. Geoghegan's reply to Commissioner Campo's contract question echoed that of Mr. Bossart. "The starting salary is a little bit on the low side," he admitted. "In lieu of waiving the medical benefits and that kind of savings, I was hoping in the \$130,000 to \$140,000 range if possible."

Unlike the first candidate, Mr. Geoghegan didn't appear to need the 30 days' notice, which is a stipulation of the aforementioned contract. "Really, it could be immediately if everything were aligned," he said. "I do have some obligations throughout the fall I would have to meet, but I can provide those dates in advance."

Mr. Hogarth emphasized that communication with both the Board and the public would be a primary focus if he were selected as town manager. "I think it's something all of us can do a little bit better, to make everyone be heard and feel heard," he said. "I believe philosophically that residents – their voices – should be uplifted as much as possible." He had "no qualms or concerns" over the terms of the contract but did note that he was currently in the process of relocating to Martin County and preferred not to start immediately. "I would appreciate the ability to move first," he said. "That would be Sept.1."

Ms. Ladner, the final candidate standing in the previous candidate search, reiterated her desire to work for the Town of Sewall's Point. "My interest in Sewall's Point and the desire to be town manager has not wavered since I first learned of this opportunity in early April," she said. "My experience in local government and dedication to advance the goals and objectives of this community makes me the best candidate." Ms. Ladner had no complaints about the contract but said she did need to provide a 30-day notice to the City of Pahoee.

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The final candidate that afternoon, Mr. Tibbs, cited his financial background, grant-writing experience and familiarity with the same issues facing the town as his final selling points. "I do think I could contribute to what you're doing here, and know the seriousness of what you're dealing with," he said. "In the City of Moore Haven, we had similar issues with septic-to-sewer, flooding and upgrading stormwater infrastructure."

After Mr. Tibbs exited the Chambers, Mercer Group Senior Vice-President Dona Higginbotham, the Commission's contracted headhunter, suggested a potential voting format. "I would ask that you choose your number one, number two and number three choice," she said. "The candidates have been made aware that should your number-one choice not agree to the terms, the number-two person would step forward to negotiate."

Commissioners briefly debated among themselves on different and perhaps less-confusing options for tallying the votes until finally accepting an alternative method suggested by Commissioner Campo of reversing the order and using the number three as the top choice. "Whoever gets the most points is the favorite," he said. His suggestion proved to be the charm, with the Board only having to vote once. Village Clerk April Stoncius promptly tallied up the results for commissioners. "Number 1 is **Robert Daniels** with 13 points," she said. "Number two is Raymond Bossert with seven points; and Ben Hogarth is number three with five points." The Board then voted unanimously to offer Mr. **Daniels** the position and directed the village attorney to frontload at last half of the vacation days per the candidate's request. His first day with be Aug. 8.

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TBN
September 29, 2021

Madeira to renew city manager search — without Daniels

By Wayne Ayers

The search for a city manager will continue, following the rejection of the job by Lee Staab from Colorado, who had been the City Commission's number one choice. But this time, there will be an important difference as the search process moves forward. City Manager **Bob Daniels** will not be a candidate. **Daniels** had been the number two choice and was, in the words of Mayor John Hendricks, "the last man standing" after three of the top four candidates pulled out. Hendricks said Staab turned down the job after it was offered to him because "if his wife wasn't happy with an area, she was the boss, and he was going to go by her decision."

The decision to start a new search for city manager came at a special meeting on Sept. 22, called for the purpose of deciding how to proceed. The commission had two choices: Proceed with a new search or rehire **Daniels**. In a statement at the meeting's start, **Daniels** said he had been very happy with serving the residents and commission as city manager for the past two years. But he recognized "there is some divisiveness in the commission about retaining me." **Daniels** said he wanted to do what's best for the community. "If you make the decision to open the (selection) process up again, I am not applying," **Daniels** told the commission. He added, "I've been through the process, and done everything you asked of me. So it would be counter-productive to my staff and to the community" to reapply for the position. **Daniels** also said he would remain as interim manager "to keep the ship afloat" until a new city manager is selected. "I plan on doing that until you tell me you don't need me here," he said.

The commission divide that **Daniels** spoke of was apparent in the comments made by the commissioners following his remarks, and in the close vote to continue the city manager search without **Daniels** as a candidate. Commissioner Nancy Hodges said **Daniels** should continue as city manager. She stressed that it is important to have someone who has experience in a waterfront community, and said that **Daniels** has lived on the east coast of Florida as well as Madeira Beach. Referring to Staab's selection over **Daniels** for the city manager job, Hodges said, "Bringing someone in from out of state was really out of place." **Daniels** has done a good job, Hodges said. "He would be my choice."

But Commissioner Helen "Happy" Price spoke against **Daniels**. "It is not in the best interest of Madeira Beach to accept a city manager just because he is the last man standing," Price said. "Mr. **Daniels** didn't make my top five list," she said. "I'm inclined to get a different city manager in here." She added, "I appreciate all **Bob's** work." Price said she recently learned of an "unwritten rule that city manager candidates do not apply if there is a sitting city manager already in place. So, others with the local knowledge that we are seeking just do not apply."

Commissioner Doug Andrews said he wants to "see what happens" with a new city manager search. "Let's push forward," he said. Repeating comments he has made in the past, Andrews

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

said **Daniels** should be replaced because “we need leadership, and we need direction.” Under **Daniels**, Andrews said the city has lost every department head except for one. “I don’t see any major accomplishments that have come out of this administration,” Andrews said. “Just because he’s a nice guy and he’s kind of steadied the ship is not enough reason to move forward with him.”

Commissioner Dave Hutson said **Daniels** has done a good job. In the two years he has been city manager, **Daniels** has gone through a change of commission, and COVID, “which has never happened before,” Hutson said. “He hasn’t had major accomplishments because there were no projects available to push through.” **Daniels** would bring continuity, Hutson said. “It would be very nice if he would stay.”

Two residents spoke on the city manager issue, and both wanted to keep **Daniels**. Jean Farnan said she has been a Madeira Beach resident for 30 years. “I have seen city managers come and go, and I am blown away by Mr. **Daniels**’ professionalism,” Farnan said. “I’ve never seen that here,” she said, naming several previous city managers. Farnan also said she was unhappy with the way some of the commission members have treated **Daniels**. She said if **Daniels** has “the intestinal fortitude to put up with this commission, I think we should retain him.”

Anita Roberts also said she was impressed with **Daniels**’ professionalism. She said the city needs a manager like **Daniels** who can handle things. “I’m a volunteer here, and I’ve seen him in action. He’s always been on top of everything,” said Roberts. “He’s a wonderful man,” she said. “I don’t understand why you wouldn’t hire him back.”

Commissioner Price made a motion “to give Mr. **Daniels** his 40 days’ notice, and for the city to renew its search for a different city manager.” The vote was 3 to 2 in favor. Andrews and Price voted yes; Hodges and Hutson wanted to keep **Daniels** and voted no. The deciding yes vote came from Hendricks, who did not speak on the issue. The mayor was also the swing vote when the commission picked Staab over **Daniels**. At that time, Hendricks said, in voting for Staab, he hoped to remove the discord on the commission and “settle the city down.” The commission will now proceed with a new city manager search, which is where it started three months ago.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Newspaper Weekly
September 8, 2021

Madeira Beach city manager is out; outsider picked to lead city

By Wayne Ayers

Following an extensive and exhaustive selection process that started with 28 candidates, the City Commission met in a special meeting Sept. 7 and made the final decision for city manager. In a close vote, a sharply divided commission picked Lee Staab, a Colorado resident with a mostly military background, over City Manager **Bob Daniels** to lead the city. The candidate field had been reduced from 28, to seven, and then to four. After the final four candidates were selected, one withdrew because he wanted a higher salary, and another for unspecified reasons, leaving only Staab and **Daniels**.

Before the vote was taken, it was clear from previous comments that two commissioners strongly favored Staab, two favored **Daniels**, and one — the mayor — would be the swing vote. Commissioners Doug Andrews and Helen “Happy” Price were for Staab. Neither of them had even included **Daniels** in their top five or top three list. Andrews’ criticisms of **Daniels** were frequent and sharp throughout the selection process. “To say that **Daniels** is the best candidate is absurd,” Andrews had said. Price was a strong supporter of Staab, saying, “If there’s anyone that can bring people together, it’s Staab.” Commissioners Nancy Hodges and Dave Hutson favored keeping **Daniels**. Hodges had said at a previous meeting, “I’ve read through everything and I thought **Bob Daniels** was the best.” Hutson said he had wanted to keep **Daniels** for stability.

With the commission split, Mayor John Hendricks became the swing vote that ousted **Daniels** as city manager and gave Staab the job. Hendricks had shown support in the past for keeping **Daniels** but was also impressed with Staab. When the candidates were narrowed to four, Hendricks said that Staab “has had experience all over the world doing different things. He’s very, very qualified.” The commission members said very little at the September 7 meeting where they made the final city manager selection. They voted by paper ballot, with the city clerk reading how each member voted, with Hendricks, Price and Andrews for Staab, and Hodges and Hutson for **Daniels**.

After the final 3-to-2 vote was announced, **Daniels** spoke. He thanked the commission for giving him the opportunity to serve as city manager for the past two years. **Daniels** is currently serving as interim city manager since his contract expired Aug. 31. Then **Daniels** pointed out that the commission members had, “in this age of Zoom meetings,” never met Staab face to face. All of the interviews with Staab were electronic, with Staab in Colorado where he lives. “Hiring somebody for this type of position without even meeting with them face to face is just different,” **Daniels** said. “It’s not in the best interest of you or your staff.” He advised the commission to consider “flying Mr. Staab in and have some type of meetings with him face to face.”

The commission agreed later in the meeting to bring Staab to Madeira Beach for a visit of two to three days or more, that would include contract negotiations and meeting staff members. He will

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Robert James Daniels
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be offered a salary of \$135,000 and “we will not go beyond that,” said Hendricks. That salary figure was given to Staab during interviews, Hendricks said, “and it was acceptable to him.” To ease the transition, Hendricks recommended that there be an overlap period between Staab starting and **Daniels** leaving. The commissioners and **Daniels** were agreeable to doing that. Staab will be offered a 30-month contract, so that it will not end during budget season.

Hendricks spoke of his vote in a later phone conversation with Tampa Bay Newspapers. “**Bob** did a good job,” he said. “You’re not going to please all the people all the time.” But, he said, there were problems between **Daniels** and “a commission member,” and “we can’t have this type of discord going on at commission meetings.” Hendricks said his goal “is to settle the city down, and this will do that.” He also said his decision to vote for Staab was “one of the most difficult I’ve ever had to make.” He mentioned Staab has no Florida experience, “which the commission has said they wanted, and that’s a problem for me.” “We’ll have to take a wait-and-see approach” with Staab, Hendricks said. “I hope he’s as good as his resume says he is.”

Staab is a former county manager of Grand County, Colorado, and a city manager in Minot, North Dakota. He has military background, and is a West Point graduate with 27 years as a commander of the Corps of Engineers. After retiring from the Army, he was president of a military-related company. He currently heads a nonprofit that works with military people and veterans seeking housing.

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Robert James Daniels
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Tampa Bay Times (FL)
June 18, 2021

Madeira Beach’s city manager post fraught with turnover

Author/Byline: Gabe Stern

Robert Daniels stepped in as city manager two years ago amid rapid turnover in Madeira Beach’s city hall. Now, he’ll need to reapply for his job after the city’s board of commissioners voted not to renew his contract. The vote came at a special meeting earlier this month and will open up a search that could result in the city’s fourth manager since 2017. **Daniels’** contract is set to expire Sept. 1. “Unless somebody wants to make the case that this city is running perfectly, and we shouldn’t look outside of what we got currently — I’m not sure that that argument can be made,” commissioner Doug Andrews said before the vote.

Now, just over a week after the vote, there has been little traction in promoting the new role, Madeira Beach Mayor John Hendricks said. The commission will likely work with the city attorney to decide on where to look. There have been no advertisements or interviews so far, he said. Hendricks, who voted against the motion to not renew the contract, said he was disappointed that the board did not renew it. “**Bob** has done most everything I’ve asked him to do,” he said. While making clear that the decision was not “firing somebody or embarrassing somebody,” Andrews — along with the other two commissioners who voted for not renewing **Daniels** — cited Madeira Beach’s complicated makeup, along with the chance for a manager to better navigate its divisions, as reasons to look elsewhere.

Along the 2.5 miles of beachfront that make up Madeira Beach, bitter divisions over how to develop properties have run deep, and several city managers have come and gone in recent years. Before **Daniels** was Jonathan Evans, who resigned to return to his old job as Riviera Beach’s city manager. He was accused by Andrews of lying to the commission about his commitment to Madeira Beach. Before Evans was Shane Crawford, who was suspended then forced to resign after ethics complaints filed both by and against Crawford, and a power switch on the city’s commission.

Daniels was hired in 2019 as the commission moved quickly to find a replacement. He served as interim city manager for a month in 2019 before the commission passed a rare unanimous vote to keep him full-time. This came after the commission’s first two choices for city manager fell through. During **Daniels’** two years as city manager, Madeira Beach has navigated a sand dredge problem at tourist attraction John’s Pass, zoning hurdles, the coronavirus pandemic and the long-lasting conflict between development and anti-development groups in the city. “I agree we need to open this up and look for somebody with a skillset that really fits our town a little more so than how **Bob** was really drafted at the last minute,” said commissioner and Vice Mayor Helen “Happy” Price at the meeting. “I would like to open it up and see who else would be interested in being our city manager. And comparing him to whoever else applies.”

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Price said in a text message that she would not yet disclose what she is looking for in the next city manager — the board will decide that as a group, she said. Andrews, in an emailed statement, said new appointments in city hall makes the city manager an attractive position again, and “it only makes sense to gauge the interest that’s out there.”

Speaking in front of the commission on June 8, **Daniels** made the case for why he should stay. He cited increased community outreach and an improved relationship with the city’s business community. He said that coronavirus restrictions and a turbulent 2020 hindered some of what he had hoped to accomplish.

“In reality, when you take one of those years out, we couldn’t do the normal contact things that I like to do with the residents,” Andrews said at the meeting. “We couldn’t do ‘Breakfast with **Bob**’. We couldn’t do live meetings for a while. And not having that outreach is important not only for the commission, but for your city manager. And that’s what I’ve tried hard to work on.” He also said he never asked for a raise because he didn’t want to bring it up with the commission. He currently makes \$125,000 along with benefits, per his contract. “So I just hope that you can look at those things and the positives that we’ve been able to accomplish, and the bridges that we’ve built,” Andrews continued.

After he spoke, Price put the decision to a vote. “I’ll make a motion for the city of Madeira Beach not to extend the city manager’s employment agreement, but certainly open it up and we fully expect **Bob Daniels** to reapply.” The motion passed, 3-2.

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Robert James Daniels
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Tampa Bay Times (FL)
April 15, 2020

Sheriff: Keep beaches closed

Author/Byline: Mark Puente

The Pinellas County Commission’s idea to consider opening parts of the closed beaches and condominium pools for exercise might die before the discussion is scheduled to start at a public meeting on Thursday.

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who opposed closing the beaches last month, said Tuesday he does not support opening the beaches in a limited capacity because the coronavirus pandemic has not yet peaked in Pinellas County. He fears that opening beaches would further spread the virus, which has killed at least 38 people in the Tampa Bay area, including 15 in Pinellas. “I’m not going to go back and visit the past,” Gualtieri said during a Facebook Live discussion with County Administrator Barry Burton. “That ship sailed. There is nothing to fix this other than distance and keeping people apart. Why would we back off something we already put in place?”

During a public meeting on Monday, a majority of the Pinellas County Commissioners said they want information for a Thursday meeting so they can consider opening private pools at condominiums and parts of the county’s beaches for exercise and recreation. Several residents complained about the closures.

Commissioners will receive updated data projections on Thursday from the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County on whether the coronavirus spread is increasing or decreasing, Burton said. The county, he said, is not at the point where the numbers are rapidly decreasing. “At this point, we don’t need to go backward to look at what would occur if, in fact, we loosened up on these restrictions,” Burton said. “The restrictions are in place. They’re consistent with almost every other part of the country. “ Citing fears over the growing coronavirus crisis, the commission voted in March to close public beaches and parking lots along the county’s 35 miles of sand. This came after a video went viral online showing a packed Clearwater Beach, unleashing a flood of accusations from across the country that Pinellas elected officials were enabling a public health crisis.

Clearwater City Manager Bill Horne said he cannot support opening the beaches until the virus curve has flattened and the number of new positive tests decreases. The idea to ease beach restrictions surprised Horne. He said he expects and understands that commissioners might be getting pressure from the business community to make changes to the safer-at-home orders. “I don’t see how you would enforce a limited opening of the beaches,” he said. “It will be very difficult for our law enforcement agencies to police. The beaches still need to be closed. It’s premature.”

During Monday’s meeting, Commissioner Dave Eggers suggested that keeping public parking lots closed would prevent visitors coming from outside the county. Horne disagreed. He said that

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type of plan “doesn’t even serve the needs of the people who live here. People aren’t going to walk to the beach.” Clearwater Police Chief Dan Slaughter agrees with Horne’s concerns and does not support beach openings, a department spokesman said.

Pinellas Commissioner Janet Long, who supported the idea of hearing information about easing beach restrictions, changed her position on Tuesday. In a newsletter, she said it “would be detrimental to our community at this point, but would very likely hurt us all much more in the long run.”

Gregg Mims, the Indian Rocks Beach city manager, said the city will support whatever decision the commission makes. The beach closures have “greatly reduced the use of the beach for out-of-town guests,” he said, but residents continue to walk the beach daily. “In reality, the beaches are being used for walking today,” Mims said in a statement.

In Madeira Beach, City Manager **Robert Daniels** said that any beach opening needs to be done with a regional approach. The city’s shoreline has been nearly empty since the closures and “very few people are out and about,” he said. He said he expects county commissioners to heed the advice from local health officials. “We just can’t take this lightly,” **Daniels** said. “Is the time right? I don’t know.”

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Madeira Beach Florida
December 2, 2019

‘Breakfast with Bob’ Comes to Madeira Beach VFW Post #4256 on Thursday, December 12th

City Manager **Bob Daniels** will host “Breakfast with **Bob**” from 8 – 9 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019 at the Madeira Beach Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4256, 12901 Gulf Blvd. Coffee and a light breakfast will be available courtesy of the VFW.

The Town Hall style event allows residents to receive in-person updates on community development projects, city initiatives, programs and services from Mr. **Daniels** and his leadership team. Residents and business owners can also ask questions of Mr. **Daniels** and city staff.

“Breakfast with **Bob**” happens every month in Madeira Beach. Coffee shops, breakfast venues, and other businesses interested in hosting "Breakfast with **Bob**" can contact the City Manager's office at 727-391-9951 x228. For more information, contact Curt Preisser, City of Madeira Beach Public Information Officer

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Times (FL)
October 4, 2019

LAYING DOWN THE LAW FOR - LIVEBOARDS

Author/Byline: Sheila MULLANE Estrada

MADEIRA BEACH

A woman showered on the deck of her boat, nude. Another boat had an unusual passenger — a goat. These and other liveboard boats anchored in the Intracoastal Waterway in Madeira Beach may soon face substantial fines if they do not move, and their options are limited.

The City Commission is expected to give its final approval on Tuesday for a proposed ordinance that bans liveboard boaters from the city’s waters unless they pay a \$5 permit fee — and then they can remain anchored for only 72 hours and cannot leave their boats for more than eight hours at a time. The ordinance permits liveboard boats to dock at licensed marinas in the city. However, the city-owned marina does not allow liveboard boats to dock there, unlike in the past.

The city decided to crack down on liveboard boats anchoring in its waters after receiving repeated complaints. Just where these boats will go is uncertain. “It’s kind of like water. They seek the path of least resistance. When asked to move from one jurisdiction, they just go to another,” City Manager **Bob Daniels** said at a recent commission meeting. In a memo to the commission, **Daniels** said “Liveboard vessels are a growing issue in city waters and pose a threat to public health and safety.”

Daniels also is working with Pinellas County and nearby cities and towns to draft a “shared set of principles” to regulate and enforce rules regarding the anchoring of liveboard boats. Currently, there are about 40 boats anchored in Madeira Beach waterways and at least 15 have people living on them, according to Sgt. Richard Trump, who heads the Sheriff’s Office marine patrol unit. Trump said most of the liveboard boats are in the waters just northeast of the Tom Stuart Causeway Bridge between the American Legion building and the Sea Towers condominiums. Others anchor near the Madeira Beach Elementary and Fundamental schools and the Bay Pines veterans hospital. Much of these waters are outside the city’s jurisdiction. City Attorney Ralf Brookes said the city is considering annexing this part of the Intracoastal Waterway to gain legal jurisdiction to regulate anchored boats.

The people living on the boats often tie up their dinghies throughout the day at docks owned by a nearby Publix and McDonalds and at a dock owned by St. Petersburg College near a public school complex, prompting complaints, Trump said. “If a boat is moored to a private dock, we cannot touch it,” Trump said. Exacerbating the problem is that Madeira Beach is one of the few beach cities that has a significant protected anchorage area, according to Trump.

North of the city, the Intracoastal Waterway narrows significantly, deterring boats from anchoring there. Most of the waters to the south are restricted for liveboard boaters, while towns

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to the north have mixed rules regarding liveaboard boats. A Treasure Island ordinance restricting liveaboards from anchoring in that city was the basis of the new Madeira Beach ordinance. St. Pete Beach also restricts anchoring liveaboard boats in its waters for more than 24 hours without getting a permit. Both cities' permits are free, are good for only 72 hours, and cannot be issued to the same boat more than once in a given month.

Redington Beach does not restrict liveaboard boats, except to require that they be "seaworthy" and be able to maneuver. North Redington Beach and Redington Shores completely ban liveaboard boats from mooring in their waters or at its docks. Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach and Belleair Beach don't address the issue of liveaboard boats in their town ordinances. Belleair restricts anchoring of liveaboard boats to 72 hours.

Compounding the issue for boaters are the fees charged by the few marinas that accept liveaboard boaters. "It's always been tough finding a place to anchor your boat," said Todd Nye, marina manager at the Blind Pass Marina. He says there are only four marinas that officially dock liveaboard boats: Blind Pass Marina, Pasadena Marina, the Harborage Marina and the St. Petersburg Marina. Other marinas may accept liveaboards, but generally don't advertise the fact.

The cost for for docking a liveaboard boat varies and is usually based on the length of the boat. Combined with other fees, the cost can range into the hundreds of dollars monthly. The only other legal option is Gulfport's new mooring field that accommodates and services up to 25 sailboats at a monthly cost of over \$500 for liveaboard boats.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Paradise News
August 22, 2019

Madeira Beach Seeks to Make Daniels Permanent City Manager
by Paradise News Team

Robert J. Daniels came to Madeira Beach in early July on a temporary assignment. His role as “interim” City Manager was to keep government operations running smoothly while the Board of Commissioners negotiated with James Drumm, to become the permanent City Manager. On Tuesday night at the City Commission meeting, that changed when Mayor Maggi Black, unbeknownst to the rest of the board, staff and the public, sought consensus from her fellow board members to offer **Daniels** the position permanently.

One by one, each commissioner offered commentary on their observations and experiences of working with Mr. **Daniels** over the past weeks. Each recognized his ability to hit the ground running, focus on short and long-term priorities, and create relationships with staff, the public, and commissioners. The Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to begin negotiations with Mr. **Daniels** immediately.

Mr. **Daniels** was gracious in his accepting the position and pointed out that there is plenty of work to do. “It’s teamwork and communication between the staff, the commission, and the residents,” said **Daniels**. “We’re all going to have challenges to get through, but the key is to work on them together. We’re not perfect, but I think if we all work together its amazing what you can do when you’re unified.”

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Robert James Daniels
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Florida Today
March 13, 2019

Melbourne Beach town manager fired by 4-1 vote during special meeting

Rick Neale

Wednesday night, the Melbourne Beach Town Commission fired Town Manager **Bob Daniels** by a 4-1 vote. **Daniels** was hired in November 2017. This past December, town commissioners renewed **Daniels**' employment contract for two years and increased his salary from \$86,000 to \$96,500 per year.

Mayor Jim Simmons requested Wednesday's special meeting, calling for "discussion of leadership, including concerns with project planning, implementation and follow-through and staff morale," the agenda stated. "Over the past year, and especially in the past few months, I've witnessed numerous issues that I believe reflect systemic problems in our current town manager's leadership and follow-through," Simmons said during the special meeting. "Also over the past year, and especially in the past few months, I've been approached by department heads several times each, in which they consistently stated their dissatisfaction with the town manager's leadership, planning, implementation and follow-through," Simmons said.

Before Wednesday's vote occurred, **Daniels** rattled off a list of his accomplishments as town manager. "I have put my blood, sweat and tears into my work with this town. And I deserve a future greater than ending at this meeting tonight," he said. **Daniels** said he offered an open-door policy with town employees to discuss any issues. "Why they've never come to me, I don't know. It should have never come to this," he said.

Finance Manager Elizabeth Mascaro was appointed to serve as interim town manager. She will earn \$86,000, the same amount that **Daniels** earned when he was hired.

Commissioner Steve Walters cast the dissenting vote against firing **Daniels**. The commission did not discuss a future town manager job search.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Veronews
March 9, 2018

Fretting over growth of short-term rental

Written by Geroge White

Now that state legislators have apparently stalled on taking the lead on new rules for short-term rentals, beachside cities are planning their next moves in the ongoing struggle against the takeover by the “hotels next door.” With the rise of popular rental websites like Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and AirBnB, it is easier to advertise and rent, causing an exponential rise over the last four years in the number of properties used as short-term rentals in Florida.

However, the main concern for Brevard homeowners was a recent warning by Satellite Beach officials and others of outside firms contacting residents to purchase their homes to add to their stock of vacation rentals. The homes would operate short-term rentals full time, which could add to parking and traffic problems, cause noise complaints and threaten the balance of city services. “This is their gold mine to them. They don’t care about your community, your standards or the people that live next door. They care about making money,” said Melbourne Beach Town Manager **Robert Daniels**.

While the Legislature seeks but remains unsuccessful in taking over the authority to regulate short-term rentals, Florida cities fall into two categories: those fortunate enough to have had an ordinance in place prior to 2011 (Satellite Beach, Indialantic), and those without specific regulations in place (Indian Harbour Beach, Melbourne Beach), who in essence are left with very little authority over short-term rentals. Satellite Beach allows short-term rentals, but only of over 30 days on the east side of SR A1A in all properties zoned RM-3 (primarily condominiums). Addressing concerns that those rules may not continue to be grandfathered in, the Satellite Beach City Council is working on including a referendum question on the November ballot to strengthen its position against vacation rentals. Indialantic allows vacation rentals in its tourist district, on the east side of SR A1A. Rentals on the west side of A1A are prohibited from short-term rentals and can face fines of up to \$250 per day, said Indialantic Town Manager Christopher Chinault. “We have people that we’ve notified. They’ve complained but they have come into compliance. People will point them out as being promoted as a vacation rental and we have to go after them,” he said.

Indian Harbour Beach had intended to pass an ordinance to identify and regulate short-term rentals, but that effort was put on hold pending consideration of the issue by the state Legislature. Melbourne Beach Town Council also is waiting to see what the state Legislature will come up with before addressing the issue on a local level, said Town Manager **Robert Daniels**. The town currently allows rentals but only in its multi-family districts. “It is a violation of our zoning unless it is in a multi-family district, and that’s where something like that should be, instead of in a single-family district where people pay good money for their homes there. A few years ago, nobody ever heard of vacation rentals being this popular,” **Daniels** said.

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Robert James Daniels
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 25, 2015

North Bay Village police chief Robert Daniels fired

Author/Byline: JACKIE SALO

North Bay Village police chief **Robert Daniels** was fired last Friday by the Village Manager Frank Rollason in hopes that the police department could rebuild. Even though this follows recent complaints by residents about a string of burglaries, Rollason says the dismissal did not stem from a specific event, but rather an overall performance review of the department. **Daniels'** contract requires that he be given six months notice, so he was placed on paid administrative leave until August. His leave was effective Feb. 20. "I have been observing the police department for the year and a half that I have been here and I just feel the direction needs to change, [such as] the emphasis on community response," Rollason said.

Lt. Brian Collins will serve as the acting police chief until a replacement is determined. "Brian has got experience in the community here and he's been here many, many years," Rollason said.

At the Feb. 10 monthly commission meeting, residents of the Kennedy House, a condominium at 1865 79th St. Causeway, complained to the commission that the police department was ineffectively handling reported burglaries at the condo and that the investigations were unnecessarily prolonged. "We have a good police department, however I don't know where their priorities are I don't know why were are in the situation that we are," Kennedy House resident Jorge Brito said at the meeting. Brito, who is a former Miami-Dade County police detective, and other Kennedy House residents in attendance demanded answers from **Daniels**.

Daniels had served as police chief since July 2010 when he joined the department. Prior to his hiring, **Daniels** had 31 years of experience with the Boca Raton and Juno Beach Police departments, and served less than a year as police chief of Buckeye, Arizona. According to his terms of employment, he will receive three months' severance in addition to his accumulated vacation and sick days. He will also receive extended health benefits for the three months.

Village commissioners were not aware of **Daniel's** dismissal until Friday. "I did not poll the commissioners," Rollason said. "It was strictly my decision." **Daniels** could not be reached for comment.

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<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/southwest-valley/2014/02/20/buckeye-police-chief-assistant-trade-roles/5638021/>

The Arizona Republic-12 News Breaking News Team
February 20, 2014

Buckeye police chief, assistant trade roles

By Matthew Casey

Buckeye Police Chief Larry Hall wants to inspire a shared vision in the department, continue to extend its reach by adding substations and prepare its next generation of leaders. Hall, 43, was sworn in Feb. 13. He now leads a department that has gone through tremendous changes as it has evolved from a small-town police force to a city law enforcement agency with complex challenges. “In talking to some of the people and getting their feedback we were able to craft a vision of what we’re looking for,” Hall said. “To be the best-trained, best-equipped, best-compensated, hopefully, police department in the state.”

Buckeye’s new top cop takes over the job held by Mark Mann for several periods since 2008. Mann, 55, has moved into Hall’s assistant chief post, where he expects to stay for the next 30 to 60 days, or until a new assistant chief is chosen. Mann wants to eventually serve as lieutenant or commander in Buckeye for the next few years. Mann plans to use the additional free time to continue doing mission work for his church. Earlier plans called for Hall to transition to chief in two years, but city officials sped up the change because Hall was ready to lead, Mann said.

Hall is now technically Mann’s superior, but Mann will still be paid a higher salary, according to Jennifer Rogers, Buckeye’s marketing and communications manager. Hall has 24 years experience in law enforcement. Before coming to Buckeye in 2006, he worked five years for the New York Police Department and 11 years for the Mesa Police Department.

Mann, who spent the early years of his career serving New York State police, said he worked closely with Hall soon after Mann joined the department. Hall had excellent command presence as well as strong leadership skills, desire and passion, Mann recalled. “I knew that he was the guy,” he said.

When Mann restructured the department and gave officers additional training, it forced Hall and other officers to mature quickly. Hall was promoted to assistant chief in 2010. In May 2011, Mann and Hall oversaw the department as it coped with the murder of Officer Rolando Tirado. Tirado was an 11-year veteran, and the Buckeye Police Department’s first death. The gunman who killed Tirado, Cesar Tomas Quiroz Leon, was fatally shot in an ensuing gunbattle with Officer Christopher Paz, who was working off-duty security with Tirado.

City Manager Stephen Cleveland hired Hall and the decision was announced to the City Council Jan. 21. Now that he has the top job, Hall plans to continue plans to upgrade the police building at Sundance Crossings so it can be used as administration building and substation, build a

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

substation at Festival Ranch and explore building a firing range. He also plans to pursue more professional development and leadership training for officers and help the department achieve Tier 1 accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc., within the next 18 months. “(Having Tier 1 accreditation) reduces liability and ensures you are operating by the highest-level industry standards,” he said. Hall said he was excited Mann will continue to serve the department. “This is an incredible opportunity because I still have my friend and mentor with me,” Hall said.

‘Unorthodox’ transition

Mann came to Buckeye in 2007, during a time when the department did not have a good reputation in the Valley. Buckeye used to be known as the place where officers went when they were in trouble or on their way out the door, Mann said. In 2008, Mann took over as interim chief after Dan Saban left to run for Maricopa County sheriff.

Robert Daniels, was appointed chief in 2009 and served for 10 months before he resigned. After **Daniels** stepped down, Mann was appointed chief.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to Robert Daniels is listed below. Omitted was information about the Baccalaureate programs, in which Mr. Daniels was not mentioned.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 20, 2012

North Bay Village’s police department budget raises concerns - Some commissioners raised questions about added positions for North Bay Village’s police department, which accounts for more than 60-percent of the municipality’s general fund. A proposed International Baccalaureate program for the local ele

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

While North Bay Village commissioners may have tentatively approved a \$14 million budget for next year at their Sept. 13 public hearing, they have raised concerns about the cost of the city’s police department as well as the assets of the International Baccalaureate program proposed for the local elementary school.

At the meeting, Police Chief **Robert Daniels** asked the commission to add two part-time patrol officers in next year’s budget. The city already has two such officers. But **Daniels** said new positions are needed, noting that the existing part-time officers are sometimes on duty at a city event and unavailable. The police department takes up 63 percent— or \$3 million — of the general fund in the proposed budget. “You are trying to justify a 60 percent plus [budget],” Commissioner Stuart Blumberg told **Daniels** during the meeting, adding that residents have complained to him about the police department’s costs. “And now we are being asked to add two more”

Commissioners first voiced concerns about the police department’s spending at a budget workshop earlier in the summer when **Daniels** had proposed to add an assistant chief of police position. After much debate at the workshop, city staff recommended scratching that position. The tentatively approved budget did not include the expense for the two part-time patrol positions but Finance Director Bert Wrains said his staff is crunching the numbers to include the two positions. The proposed budget that will go for a second discussion in front of commissioners Thursday for a final vote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 5, 2012

NBV residents worried about nearby sex-offender camp - Some residents of North Bay Village are worried about sex offenders wandering into town from across a bridge to the west.

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

North Bay Village is one bridge away from the Shorecrest street camp to which sex offenders report at night — and that proximity concerns a handful of residents of the three-island city. “It bothers me,” said Eva Exposito, 67. “They are sex offenders. They can bother kids. If I had my grandkids here or they were nearby, I would be up in arms.” Since the media reported about a month ago that sex offenders had set up camp on a sidewalk along Northeast 79th Street and 10th Avenue, North Bay Village Mayor Connie Leon-Kreps has received about a half-dozen calls from concerned residents who fear that the sex offenders will wander into the city. The western North Bay Village city limit begins at the eastern edge of Pelican Harbor, a drive over the JFK Causeway from 10th Avenue.

The issue of where sex offenders need to be at night, and their living on the street, stems from a Miami-Dade County ordinance that dictates it is illegal for them to live within 2,500 feet of schools. An ordinance prohibits sex offenders from coming into a park where a child or teen younger than 16 years old is present. The only exception is for a sex offender who is the parent or legal guardian of a child in the park. The same rule applies for child-care facilities. The Miami Herald has reported that there are about 13 sex offenders living at the 79th Street camp, according to the state Department of Corrections. The department has denied that it directs offenders to the site when they are released from prison. The Shorecrest area is where they have to report at night. But during the day, they can “drive into any community they want to,” said North Bay Village Police Chief **Robert Daniels**.

To Jean Ferris, 69, the Shorecrest sex offenders’ camp is “unfair” to North Bay Village and Shorecrest residents, as well as to the offenders themselves. “It’s totally inappropriate for people to be put in that situation, no matter what crime they are convicted of,” said Ferris, of North Bay Village. “It is compromising the families who live nearby with children.” Ferris has been thinking about selling her North Bay Village home. But she thinks its value would decrease because of its proximity to the 79th Street camp. “Who is going to want to buy a house that is over the bridge from that?” she said. Ann Bakst, 74, of North Bay Village, said the camp does not bother her. The sex offenders “have paid their dept,” she said. “And they are not even giving them a chance.”

The 79th Street camp resembles a similar one set up about five years ago under the Julia Tuttle Causeway. About 100 men lived there due to county law restrictions. Drawing nationwide criticism, the camp was later disbanded. According to Miami Herald archives, the city of Miami will sue the state Department of Corrections in an effort to stop the influx of newly-released-from-prison sex offenders to city streets. In the meantime, there is no clear solution to the

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

problem. The county Homeless Trust has said it would try to find homes for the sex offenders, but it is not prioritizing them over other people in need, The Miami Herald has reported. “Living on the street in that corner is nonsense,” Ferris said. “They cannot allow this to turn into another Julia Tuttle Causeway. And this is what is setting up to happen.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 25, 2011

North Bay Village keeps tax rate flat - North Bay Village tax rate stays flat and a trimmed-down budget gets final approval at a Tuesday meeting that included both financial discussions and criticism of the mayor.

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

After a nearly four-hour commission meeting that often turned into a tug-of-war battle for the right to speak between commissioners, the vice mayor and the mayor, North Bay Village officials approved a \$16.7 million budget for the next fiscal year Tuesday night. The budget hinges on revenue generated by the city’s tax rate, also approved Tuesday, of \$4.77 for every \$1,000 of taxable property, the same as the current rate. Commissioners Eddie Lim and Paul Vogel and Vice Mayor Connie Leon-Kreps voted in favor; Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and Commissioner Frank Rodriguez voted against. Esquijarosa tried unsuccessfully to push the final budget vote to the following week, saying the budget needed more work. Sept. 30 is the last day commissioners can approve the proposed budget for next fiscal year. “We have 10 days to make this a very good budget,” she said. “We are almost there.”

Esquijarosa said there was still “wiggle room” in the budget to partially pay for the addition of a \$130,000 International Baccalaureate program to Treasure Island Elementary School. Esquijarosa, however, said that North Bay Village would adopt the IB program only if Miami Beach pays for \$55,000 of the total cost — since out of 645 students enrolled in Treasure Island Elementary School, 280 come from Miami Beach, according to Esquijarosa. That would leave North Bay Village responsible for funding about \$75,000 of the total cost. She also said that if IB is added to the city’s elementary school, more of the 336 vacant seats at the school would be filled. “We owe it to our residents to try to see if we can have this program,” Esquijarosa said.

Leon-Kreps acknowledged the importance of education but said that she does not want the city to spend the money on the program unless they are sure that none of the expenses would be pinned on residents. Interim City Manager **Robert Daniels**, who is also the police chief, said funding for the program was uncertain. “I can’t count on a grant that we do not even know where to find,” he said. To balance the budget the city will reduce funds in the police, city clerk, finance and general government departments.

During the meeting, about half a dozen residents spoke during public hearing — some with funding proposals of their own. Ann Bakst, a North Bay Village resident for 38 years, said that the city might be able to find the money to fund the IB program if it has the county property appraiser conduct a study and see if property owners in North Bay Village were improperly claiming homestead exemptions — something of a politically charged issue in the city.

Shortly before the meeting started on Tuesday, the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust ruled that Esquijarosa had violated county ethics code and claimed a false homestead exemption on a Miami property she owns and rents out. The River Lofts condominium unit

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

carries a lien of \$3,109.70 due to owed back taxes. According to state law, the \$50,000 homestead exemption can be declared only on a principal residence, not on income-producing property.

The county ethics commission also found that Esquijarosa had not disclosed the income she receives from that property when she ran for North Bay Village mayor last year. Candidates are required by law to file financial disclosure forms, listing their income, assets and liabilities. The mayor is currently facing a recall effort, has maintained that she did nothing wrong, citing oversight or clerical errors as explanation for the discrepancies in her homestead exemption and financial filings. Supporters of the recall say the issue is reason enough for her to lose her seat. “I have a problem with her participating in the budget process when she has chaeated and not paid her own taxes,” said local activist Fane Lozman at Tuesday’s meeting. “Get you own financial affairs in order before you’re going to decide how you are going to spend the resident’s money.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 28, 2011

Commissioners deadlock on a host of issues - Commissioners could not agree on a preliminary tax rate, on whether there should be a new interim manager or what that position would pay. Meanwhile, the mayor has until Monday to launch her defense in recall effort.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

Facing an approximate 35-percent drop in property values in the last two years, the North Bay Village commission could not agree on a preliminary property tax rate this week to determine next year's budget. They couldn't agree on the terms of contract for a new city manager, the status of current interim Manager **Robert Daniels** or whether to hire Randy Hilliard, a Miami Beach political consultant, as new interim manager. Meanwhile, Mayor Corina Esquijarosa has until Monday to issue a statement on the effort to recall her, veteran commissioner Paul Vogel has been absent from the dais for the last two meetings due to illnesses, and city officials are still searching for a new manager after Bob Pushkin resigned in June.

At the July 26 meeting, **Daniels** proposed capping the city's tax rate at 5.9 percent, up from the current 4.7 percent rate. **Daniels** said he didn't intend to raise the current rate, but wanted wiggle room in the event of higher costs or lower revenues. Esquijarosa and commissioner Frank Rodriguez opposed the measure, saying they did not want to increase taxes for residents. The commission deadlocked in a 2-2 tie and will take up the issue again during the September budget hearings. Property values declined by 7.1 percent in North Bay Village this year, one of the larger declines among Miami-Dade's municipalities. This comes after a 28 percent decline in property values last year in the city. City officials told commissioners that if they did not raise taxes, property owners would pay less in taxes than last year due to lower property values, resulting in less revenue in a budget that's already slim.

Daniels submitted a draft of \$9.4 million in projected expenses, about \$175,000 less than the current year's budget. The proposed budget includes approximately \$8,000 in bonuses for the city clerk, finance director, police chief and public works director, and another \$2,000 in raises to various members of the city's management team. Cuts come mainly from reducing the city's contributions to employee retirement accounts by 40 to 50 percent. The city's finance director, for example, was receiving \$12,000 in retirement contributions. Under the proposed budget, the city would contribute about \$7,000. "This budget will be tuned as we hear feedback from commissioners and the public," **Daniels** said. "This is the start of the process, this isn't the end. All of these numbers will be explained as we go through the workshop meetings." The mayor, however, objected to the bonuses and raises. "I will not approve increases to personnel and bonuses. I will not approve salary increases when everybody else is hurting," Esquijarosa said.

Esquijarosa motioned to fire **Daniels** over a controversy stemming from last month's meeting. Last month, residents spoke out of order during the meeting. The mayor asked city police to remove them, but the police didn't. The mayor told **Daniels** he should have taken actions against

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the police officers. He didn't. The mayor's motion was dropped after a 2-2 vote, with commissioners Eddie Lim and Connie Leon-Kreps voting against it, while Rodriguez sided with the mayor.

Rodriguez proposed another choice for interim city manager: political publicist Randall Hilliard. Only Esquijarosa supported his motion, which deadlocked at 2-2. "I think you're totally out of your mind. We're in the middle of budget," Lim said. "From what I've heard about Randall Hilliard, there's nothing positive about him." Hilliard is no stranger to North Bay Village politics. He ran former Mayor Oscar Alfonso's winning campaign in 2008. The city hired him as a public relations consultant last year, paying him \$15,000 for six months of work. He's also known for his role as a bribe-payer-turned-FBI-informant in a 1997 scheme that implicated Monroe County officials. The commission also disagreed on a salary for a new city manager. The search committee proposed a \$180,000-per-year package. Esquijarosa said the city should pay no more than \$115,000-a-year plus benefits. The commission deferred the matter until the next meeting.

Meanwhile, Esquijarosa has until Monday to submit a statement in response to the effort to recall her. Last week, the county certified the 414 signatures collected by former commissioner Al Blake to recall the mayor. According to Florida law, Blake needed at least 275 signatures of the city's 2,748 registered voters to force a recall election. On July 4, he submitted the 414 signatures.

The next commission meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 9 in the City Commission Chambers, 1700 Kennedy Cswy., #132.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 6, 2011

Police chief will take over as interim manager on June 14 - North Bay Village Police Chief Robert Daniels will replace City Manager Bob Pushkin after his retirement, effective June 14.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

Following North Bay Village City Manager Bob Pushkin's recent announcement that he would retire later this month, city commissioners tapped Police Chief **Robert Daniels** to serve as interim. The change will be effective June 14, Pushkin's last day.

Commissioners Paul Vogel, Connie Leon-Kreps and Eddie Lim, who proposed the appointment, voted for **Daniels** at last week's commission meeting; Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and Commissioner Frank Rodriguez voted against his appointment. "I believe this process needs to be somewhat more transparent than today appointing somebody," Esquijarosa said, adding that her main concern was developing the city's budget, which must be approved by September. Last week, preliminary estimates from the county tax appraiser's office showed that North Bay Village's property tax base declined by 7 percent in 2011 over 2010. It was one of the largest declines in the county.

Esquijarosa said **Daniels'** expertise was not in developing city budgets and writing grant proposals. "Your resume is very impressive; I have no problems with you being an interim manager if it was any other time in the year," she told him at the commission meeting. "I have reservations because we don't have much time left for the budget to be submitted. I'm concerned because you will have to make tough decisions in this budget." Rodriguez, who has often questioned the spending in the police department, agreed with Esquijarosa, asking **Daniels** how he would handle a budget that does not raise taxes.

Daniels, 54, said he wants to develop a budget with equal cuts throughout each department. "Sometimes there are tough decisions, but I'm not going to hold back whether it is the police department because I'm the chief, or other department," he told the commission. "We all have tough decisions and my job is to bring you a balanced budget with realistic cuts so we don't have tax increases."

North Bay Village took a hit last year with property values declining by 28 percent, the second-steepest drop after Homestead. In October, the city cut a youth program, outsourced the garbage pick-up service and raised taxes. Pushkin did not say why he was retiring, other than noting "it's time to move on." He has been the city manager since July, when the previous commission approved a resolution to name Pushkin city manager after serving as assistant city manager and interim city manager since 2005.

"I don't have plans of submitting applications for a permanent position; I'm very happy being the chief," **Daniels** said. Lim said **Daniels'** extensive resume qualifies him for the position.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Leon-Kreps, meanwhile, likes **Daniels** for his knowledge of the city. “I don’t think our city can afford or endure going through interim city managers who are not familiar with our city,” Leon-Kreps said. “Chief **Daniels** has brought up his department to a professional level that we have not had in the last few years. If we have an individual here who already is familiar with our city, why are we going to go to the outside?” Vogel agreed.

Daniels, whose \$109,000 in an annual salary makes him the city’s highest-paid employee, will temporarily be both the police chief and manager. He said he’ll appoint someone to replace him in the police department if the situation deems it necessary. His salary will not change during this period.

The city’s official search for a new city manager will close on June 24. At the next regular commission meeting, commissioners will create a seven-member review committee, consisting of five residents representing each island and two outside professionals. The committee will recommend applicants to the commission, who will vote on the candidates. On July 26, commissioners will conduct public interviews of their finalists. A final choice will be made Aug. 9. The next commission meeting will take place at 7 p.m. June 14 in the commission chambers, 1700 Kennedy COSWAY., #132.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 28, 2011

City Commission meeting ends abruptly - The city commission meeting resulted in one group walking out and the mayor abruptly ending the meeting, after three commissioners did not support the group's call to revise the charter.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

A newly formed activist group demanded North Bay Village commissioners to change the city charter or face a recall, but their requests were heeded by only two of the five commissioners at Wednesday's commission meeting. North Bay Village Voice, headed by city resident Kevin Vericker, requested four changes to the city's charter and an independent audit of the city's police department.

The charter changes the group sought were:

- To require a super-majority vote of the commission to raise taxes and grant tax concessions to developers.
- To require a five-member review board to approve city purchases over \$10,000.
- To require a five-member review board to approve nonunion employment contracts.
- To prohibit post-electoral employment or contracts with the city by all elected officials for three years following their service with the city.

The commission took up the police audit request, along with the charter amendments on the taxes and the \$10,000 purchase issue. None of the three measures passed. Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and commissioner Frank Rodriguez supported the two charter amendments, while commissioners Eddie Lim, Connie Leon-Kreps and Paul Vogel voted against them. After the first three requests by North Bay Village Voice were denied, Vericker stormed out of the meeting. Esquijarosa immediately ended the meeting. "The meeting was a travesty," Vericker said in an email to The Herald on Thursday. "The three, Vogel, Lim and Kreps had clearly prepared their stance together prior to the meeting and deprived residents of the opportunity to vote on these changes." Lim disputed Vericker's assessment: "He's a very dangerous man and he's making false accusations. We are all aware of the Sunshine Law and we don't talk about the issues outside."

Lim, Leon-Kreps and Vogel said they were concerned with the cost of the charter amendments. To make changes to the charter, the city would need to run a special election, which could cost the city up to \$25,000, according to city staff. North Bay Village took a financial hit when property values declined 26 percent last year, the second-biggest drop in the county after Homestead. The three commissioners also said a charter review board is needed before any charter revisions were made. Vericker said the group will start a recall against Vogel, Lim and Leon-Kreps later this year. Nancy Sonnet-Selwyn, a member of North Bay Village Voice, filed a memo with the city clerk on April 22 to begin a recall drive against Vogel. Meanwhile, only one resident not connected to either North Bay Village Voice or Citizens for Full Disclosure supported the measure to conduct an outside assessment of the Police Department. "I'm really

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

happy with the department,” said city resident Doris Acosta. “But I feel there’s a lack of transparency. I don’t see the problem of bringing someone from the outside to tell us what we’re doing right or wrong.” Other residents disagreed. “I’m not supporting this,” said resident Donna Verski, who told commissioners she was once married to a police officer. “The Police Department is managed by the manager, not by the commission.”

Lim, Leon-Kreps and Vogel argued that Police Chief **Robert Daniels** has been managing the Police Department adequately, and any intervention by the commission would result in micromanagement.

Vericker said the Police Department is spending too much money to conduct investigations on personnel issues, and believes the department will go over budget this year. The Police Department receives 70 percent of the city’s budget. “Passing this resolution will establish that the commission runs the city,” he told commissioners. “They will provide the help and guidance that the police chief needs to finally unite this department,” Vericker said. Leon-Kreps disagreed: “The micromanaging of our administration, or by our administration, increases the liability of unnecessary expenses.” Vogel agreed, saying commissioners should not manage the Police Department. Rodriguez countered: “I don’t call it managing the Police Department. If we are to succeed as a city, we need to take a harder look at how we are spending our money. This is absolutely necessary, we need to look at every corner of our city government.” Esquijarosa said the issue is not about the chief’s management, adding she’s happy with his work. “The cost of conducting investigations, labor issues, is draining the city,” she said. “The last amount I signed for the police was over \$30,000.”

But there’s a legal problem with the group’s demands, **Daniels** said, citing The Law Enforcement Bill of Rights. “Every officer is entitled to an investigation to clear their name, and if I fail to follow the statute, I’m in violation of that same law,” he told commissioners. “Such an action as demanded by North Bay Village Voice is illegal and unnecessary.” The commission unanimously agreed to create a citizens advisory board to assess the Police Department.

Meanwhile, the mayor’s issues are unresolved. Two activists, Al Blake and Fane Lozman, had asked her to resign by noon April 27, citing her failure to disclose financial information when she ran for office last year. She did not resign, and Lozman and Blake said that if she is not prosecuted, they will start a recall effort. The city clerk is researching whether such an effort can be undertaken in May or would have to wait until November, when Esquijarosa would have served a year. The Miami-Dade Property Appraiser’s Office cited the mayor last week for falsely claiming a homestead exemption for a Miami condo she was renting out. Florida law allows the homestead exemption to be granted only on a primary residence, not income-producing property. The appraiser’s office said she owes \$3,109.70 in back taxes and penalties and interest. She has to pay by May 20, or face a lien on the condo. Vericker, a supporter of Esquijarosa during last year’s mayoral run, said North Bay Village Voice does not support Lozman and Blake’s efforts to recall the mayor.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 25, 2010

NORTH BAY VILLAGE: New North Bay Village Police Department chief eager to mend staff, establish trust in community - Veteran police officer Robert Daniels, who has served in Boca Raton, Juno Beach and Buckeye, Ariz., has been hired to head the North Bay Village Police Department.

Author/Byline: CHRISTINA VEIGA

The North Bay Village Police Department is under new leadership. **Robert Daniels** has taken the helm of the department with hopes of reigning in spending, bridging gaps within the often-fractured department and reaching out to the community. "It's going to take all of us to move forward," **Daniels** said at his swearing-in ceremony last week. "I truly think this is a great organization." **Daniels** brings 31 years of police experience and a financial savvy to North Bay Village, which has been without a chief since March.

Daniels returns to South Florida after serving briefly as chief of police in Buckeye, Ariz. As assistant chief of police at the Boca Raton police department -- where he served for 12 years -- **Daniels** helped oversee a \$35 million budget. He also has a master's degree in public administration and is a certified government financial manager. "He's a talented professional," said Vice Mayor George Kane. "That's why I have faith in him."

Those qualifications will come in handy as **Daniels** helps prepare the department's budget -- which makes up more than half of the city's total budget. This year's cuts probably will include layoffs and furloughs as North Bay Village struggles with a 26 percent decline in property values, the second-highest decline in Miami-Dade County. "My job is to be able to continue delivering that high-quality service with less dollars," **Daniels** said.

Daniels also must work to make amends within the department, which has been split since a new union was voted in last year. Numerous internal affairs investigations have taken their toll on morale, some officers said. The new chief said he plans to meet individually with police officers in order to smooth out relations. "It's refreshing to know that at least this chief is not one-sided," Mayor Oscar Alfonso said.

The chief also plans on working with residents to help restore faith in the often criticized department. He wants to reach out to homeowners to put a "personal touch" on policing efforts. "We're here to be involved in the community and hopefully add value to the community," said **Daniels**, who counts photography as a hobby and enjoys spending time with his wife and son, who is a Cub Scout.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 18, 2010

Police chief hired in latest of shaky municipal shuffles

Author/Byline: CHRISTINA VEIGA

North Bay Village commissioners on Tuesday hired a police chief and continued to do a legal dance around the firing of their city attorney. Commissioners told their interim city manager to go ahead with the hiring of Chief **Robert Daniels**, even as concerns were raised about how much the city would pay for his salary. A contract has yet to be negotiated with the new chief, who will be sworn in Monday. **Daniels** has 31 years of experience with the Boca Raton and Juno Beach Police Departments, and served less than a year as police chief of Buckeye, Ariz. He resigned from that position, citing personal reasons and a pay cut.

Commissioners voted on the hiring without knowing how much **Daniels'** salary will be -- that still has to be negotiated. But residents worried that the new chief -- who left his position at Buckeye when his salary was cut from \$140,000 to about \$120,000 -- will cost more than the city can afford. "Folks, I think we have the right candidate, but the wrong time," Mayor Oscar Alfonso announced to the commission. "We cannot afford it."

But some cited **Daniels'** financial savvy -- he has a master's degree in public administration and is a certified government financial manager -- as reason to bring him on board. The department still hasn't realized budget cuts mandated for this fiscal year and faces layoffs and furloughs in the coming fiscal year. "This is a gentleman, I believe, we can't afford not to hire," said resident Steve Luben. "We have to take some serious looks at our police." Others argued that the department, rife with personal feuds and union quarrels, is in need of a leader. The police department has been without a chief since Roland Pandolfi resigned in March. "We can no longer go on with a table with one leg missing," said commissioner Reinaldo Trujillo.

As the clock ticked past midnight and commissioners packed up to head out of the meeting, city attorney Joe Geller handed out a resignation letter. In it, he proposed to resign after city elections in November. The letter also states that he will stay on as city attorney should that be the wish of the new commission, and recuses himself from any elections-related litigation which may arise.

In June, Trujillo ordered Interim City Manager Bob Pushkin to enter negotiations with the city attorney to orchestrate the lawyer's firing. Those negotiations have been unsuccessful. Geller insists he hasn't been fired, since no agreement has been reached. "This is exactly why he was fired: for playing games," Trujillo told The Miami Herald.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Robert Daniels** is listed below.]

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/LEPCAgendaMinutes/LEPCAgenda050709.pdf>
May 7, 2009

PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION
LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL
FINAL AGENDA

Clayton Hutchinson Agricultural Center
Exhibit Hall “B”
559 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, Florida

VI. Chairman’s Comments

- There will be a Law Enforcement only briefing regarding child predators at the conclusion of this meeting.
- The LEX Board of Directors Meeting scheduled to follow this meeting has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.
- Best wishes to Juno Beach Assistant Chief **Bob Daniels** as he leaves to become Chief in Buckeye Arizona.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
August 18, 2006

Council upgrades Juno budget
By Sarah Stover

With U.S. 1 improvements almost complete and \$369,000 in the contingency fund, Town of Juno Beach officials decided it was time to add some items to its budget. The proposed 2006-07 budget is \$6.9 million. The proposed tax rate is set at last year's rate of 3.4 percent but may decrease during discussions between now and September. The tax rate is set at \$3.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value for residents.

At the Aug. 8 council meeting, council members voted on a list of outstanding items that were not originally included in the budget. The council voted in favor of computer upgrades, a technology consultant, overlays on North Juno Lane, South Juno Lane, Jupiter Lane and Zenith Lane, an actuary study for the general employee pension plan, a roadside message board and aerators for Pelican Lake.

The town already has one road-side message board, but the need for another arose when U. S. 1 had to be closed in both directions because of improvements, so the town had to borrow one from another municipality, said town manager Jeff Naftal. The town's desire for technology upgrades and a consultant stems from wanting to resolve an issue within the current system. "The problem we have right now is, all of our computer needs for the Internet are through one system, so if one part malfunctions, they all do," Mr. Naftal said. The town hopes to keep outages to a bare minimum by hiring a consultant and adding software, servers and firewalls Mr. Naftal added.

After the voted items were added into the budget and deducted from the contingency fund, \$157,000 of the \$369,000 was left. The overage can be put into reserves, used to help decrease the tax rate or put toward other projects, finance director/assistant town manager Joseph LoBello said. The council will discuss what to do with the funds at its meeting on Aug. 23.

Some upgrades to the police department will be made this year thanks to forfeiture funds, which are funds from property seized or forfeited during arrests or investigations. These funds can only be used for items in law enforcement, Police Chief H.C. Clark, II, said. The funds will help pay for a portable range target system, an electronic fingerprint system and a child identification upgrade. Each officer has to be tested on their firearm ability every year, and Juno Beach does not have a true system for officers to practice on, chief Clark said.

Palm Beach County has a range officers practice on off Southern Boulevard in West Palm Beach. The portable system tracks the officers' hits, so they do not have to look over paper figures attached to the target boards anymore, assistant police chief **Bob Daniels** said. The electronic fingerprint system and child identification upgrade work hand-in- hand. Instead of the old system of having someone who is arrested dip their fingers into ink and then rolling them

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

onto a piece of paper, they will now place their fingers onto a machine, which will show if they have a previous record. As part of the child identification kit, children will have their fingerprints uploaded into the system.

The police department is also getting some new furniture, firearms and an evidence- processing chamber. The chamber will probably be located in the public works compound behind Seminole Plaza, Chief Clark said. Previously officers relied on the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to process evidence.

Other grant-funded projects are being discussed. A \$300,000 grant for a lighting project along Ocean Drive North has been awarded and is waiting for permit approval from the county. The lights will be north of Donald Ross Road and are turtle friendly; they will only shine west, so adult turtles and hatchlings will not be disoriented by them, Mr. LoBello said.

The council will discuss the budget at its Aug. 23 meeting. First reading is scheduled for Sept. 14.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
March 3, 2006

Town welcomes new assistant chief

By Sarah Stover

Meet **Bob Daniels**. He's the new assistant chief of police at the Juno Beach Police Department. Mr. **Daniels** was sworn in at a Town Council meeting on Feb. 22 by Chief Skip Clark. He began working for the department Feb. 6. Mr. **Daniels** worked as a police officer in Boca Raton for 27 years. His experience was a key factor in his selection.

The town received between 16 to 20 applications, narrowed the choices to five and then two, said Chief Clark. "After a discussion (about the final two) interviews, we both decided that **Bob** was the best fit for our town. So far, that has proved to be true," said town manager Jeff Naftal. "He's been in the position before, so he has a really good working knowledge of the position, so it was less of a transition," said Chief Clark.

While Juno is smaller than what Mr. **Daniels** is used to, it has its own advantages. "The environment is a nice town. I've known Chief Clark for a number of years, and I always thought he was a progressive chief," he said. As assistant chief, he oversees the daily operations of road patrol, investigation and dispatch. "There's a lot of talent here. A lot of the new technologies are being employed, so it's an exciting time to be an officer," he said.

Assistant Chief **Daniels** is commuting to work for now, but is looking to move closer to the area or into Juno Beach. "I hope to serve Juno Beach until my last dying breath," he said. He has some goals, both long- and short-term, regarding his work with the town. "Right now, short-term (goals are) to learn as much as I can about the agency and the community we serve. For long-term, I would like to take the knowledge I receive from Chief Clark and the town manager to increase production and efficiency of the agency."

Mr. **Daniels** said he knew he wanted to be a police officer in high school. "I got a calling, as I say. I have the ambition of life as a public servant. I have enjoyed it," he said. His fiancé, Michelle Melkin, pinned the badge onto his uniform after Chief Clark swore him in. "It's a very fortunate situation the town manager and chief have put me into," he said. "He's acclimating very well. I think he's a really great addition to our team," said Chief Clark.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
November 24, 2005

FRUSTRATED INTERIM FAU POLICE CHIEF QUILTS

Author/Byline: BILL DOUTHAT

Robert Daniels has resigned as head of the Florida Atlantic University Police Department after holding the position of interim police chief for more than five months. In his resignation letter, **Daniels** expressed frustration that the university is taking so long to name a permanent police chief to lead the 45 officers of the university's police force. "I have decided to withdraw from the process and resign my position with the university," **Daniels** said in his letter dated Monday and released by the university Wednesday. **Daniels** was among candidates seeking the permanent job.

A university spokeswoman said Dennis Crudele, associate vice president of financial affairs, will oversee the department until a permanent chief is selected. The department polices FAU campuses in Palm Beach, Broward, Martin and St. Lucie counties.

Daniels, an assistant police chief in Boca Raton before joining FAU in February as deputy chief, was named interim chief in June after the dismissal of former Chief Dolores Danser. **Daniels** had retired from the Boca Raton Police Department after 27 years of service. In his letter, **Daniels** said university officials told him that a chief would be picked by early October. "Unfortunately there has been a delay in making the final selection, long past the promised date," **Daniels** wrote. **Daniels** could not be reached for comment.

University spokeswoman Aileen Izquierdo said the university is reviewing applications and scheduling interviews for the job, but no hiring deadline has been set.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
June 21, 2005

**SEX HARASSMENT ALLEGED AT FAU - GRAPHIC POLICE REPORT CITES
FORMER OFFICER**

Author/Byline: Leon Fooksman

An internal Florida Atlantic University police investigation has found evidence that a lieutenant who resigned nearly two weeks ago sexually harassed three co-workers. In graphic detail, one of the women told an investigator that she was groped and touched last year by then-Lt. Darren Kirch at Patch Reef Park in Boca Raton during her first day on the job. She allowed it to happen because she feared losing her job or having Kirch take action against her, she told the investigator. She didn't want to complain to FAU Police Chief Dolores Danser because of Danser's friendship with Kirch, she told the investigator. The investigation report released Monday said Kirch allegedly made explicit remarks and advances toward two other female FAU police employees, including some on-duty incidents. One of those women also said she didn't feel comfortable reporting the harassment because Kirch and Danser "are best friends." Kirch resigned June 8 for unspecified reasons and Danser did not have her contract renewed last week. Danser, an almost 15-year employee of the department who earns about \$95,000 a year, is awaiting another job with the university. Her supervisors did not explain why they did not renew her contract, which expires at the end of the month. The internal affairs report is not clear on what, if any, connection Danser's employment status has to do with Kirch's case. But a police official said Monday that Danser was not one of the victims of sexual harassment.

Deputy Chief **Bob Daniels**, who conducted the investigation, will serve as acting chief until the university conducts a national search to fill the position.

The university's equal opportunity programs office is conducting a separate investigation concerning conduct within the Police Department. Kirch, who was hired in 1995 and earned \$58,000 a year, defended his actions by telling the investigator that his relationships with the women mostly involved flirtation and were consensual. But later, he admitted his comments and actions should not have happened, according to the report. Kirch was married at the time but told one of the women he had an "open relationship" with his wife. He acknowledged that he was aware of the department's and university's sexual harassment policy and attended training on the subject, according to the report. Kirch and his lawyer could not be reached for comment despite multiple attempts by telephone. The investigation found evidence that Kirch violated the university's code of ethics and other rules. He had been on administrative leave when he resigned voluntarily. The findings will be sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which will review Kirch's law enforcement certification. Two of the women Kirch was accused of harassing still work for the department. Kirch did not directly supervise the three women, but one woman was assigned to him for orientation and equipment. Kirch had been investigated for other sexual harassment complaints but none could be supported, the report said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
March 7, 2005

MOVING UP - ROBERT J. DANIELS

Name: **Robert J. Daniels**
Position: Deputy police chief for Florida Atlantic University
Place of business: Boca Raton

Recent accomplishments: **Robert "Bob" Daniels** was drawn to police work much like others are called to religious professions. "I had a calling for it, and for public service, and I've enjoyed every single day of it," he says.

Daniels, recently retired from the Boca Raton Police Services Department after 27 years. Prior to that, he worked for the Davie Police Department. He was promoted to sergeant in 1983, lieutenant in 1996, captain in 1999 and assistant chief in 2000. Last month he took a new job as deputy chief of police at Florida Atlantic University.

Daniels was born in Pennsylvania but moved to South Florida with his parents when he was 9 months old. "My whole family was in the construction field but a good friend of the family went into law enforcement and that's what I've wanted to do since high school," he says. **Daniels'** love of police work apparently rubbed off on his son Bob, who's now a Boca Raton police officer. "He had a calling, too," the older **Daniels** says, "and he's extremely happy." While he enjoyed his work with the Boca force, **Daniels** says he was in a retirement program that would have forced him to leave the city in two years. Taking the FAU job meant he wouldn't have to move, he could work on a campus he knew well, and his son would get more of a chance to shine on his own merits.

Daniels' call to service isn't exclusive to police work. He was ordained as a deacon at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Boca and is very involved in church work on the weekends. "I've always had a strong faith that I attribute to my wife and my mom," he said.

Daniels, second in command of FAU's police department under Chief Delores Danser, is responsible for operations, traffic and parking. The department has 45 sworn positions and 50 civilian jobs to protect students and faculty at the university's seven campuses in Palm Beach, Broward, Martin and St. Lucie counties.

FAU has a low crime rate, and **Daniels** plans to keep it that way. But **Daniels** stresses that students need to be vigilant, and that student safety is his top concern. "The average college student is away from home and they think they are invincible. We need to make them as safe as possible. If they put their dorm information and phone information on the Web, it could cause problems." **Daniels** says he's pleased to have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills he has developed with the city in a campus environment. "The university staff has welcomed me with open arms," he says.

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Robert James Daniels
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Education: B.S., business administration; M.S., public administration, Florida Atlantic University. He also has completed training programs with the FBI and the Association of Government Accountants.

Age: 48

Personal: Married 30 years to Ellie. They live in Boca Raton and have three children: Rene, who is married and lives in Indiana; Bob Jr., a police officer in Boca Raton; and Robyn, a college student in Missouri.

Hobbies: Photography and working as a deacon at St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church.

Career highlight: "The day that I got to swear in my son as a police officer for the city of Boca Raton."

Quote: "I look to bring out the best in people, highlighting their strengths and turning their weaknesses into strengths."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
September 29, 2004

BOCA'S HOTLINE HELPED RESIDENTS COPE WITH STORM

Author/Byline: STEPHANIE SLATER

In the aftermath of Hurricane Frances, a phone call came into the city's information hotline from a bank whose client, a blind woman, was stranded in her fourth-floor Boca Teeca apartment with only crackers to eat. Assistant City Clerk Diane King, who coordinated the hotline, immediately called her mother, who also lives there. "Do you want to be a good Samaritan?" King asked. Claire St. Jean climbed four flights of stairs and brought the elderly woman a sandwich. The call was one of 13,882 answered during a 10-day period by city employees manning eight phone lines in the Citizen Information Center at the Boca Raton Emergency Operations Center. Boca Raton was the only municipality in Palm Beach County to provide such a service. Employees gave updates on ice distribution, dispelled rumors about damage, listened to frustrated residents without power, and tried to calm the concerns of adult children whose parents refused to evacuate their beach condos. "We had calls from as far as Poland and Germany from people wanting to know how bad it was," King said.

The EOC, headquartered at the Municipal Services building on Northwest First Avenue, was a lot like mission control, said Mayor Steven Abrams, who slept there the night of the storm. Representatives from the city's key departments were stationed at desks and posted information onto white dry-erase boards as they received it. Assessment teams were deployed to identify damage. The data was compiled on a computer and recorded on a plastic map of the city. Downed trees were marked in green; downed powerlines in red. "We started with the most important - getting the streets accessible for police and fire vehicles, getting to electrical lines that were down," City Manager Leif Ahnell said. Throughout the clean-up period, officials also held 8 a.m. meetings, 1 p.m. conference calls with the county's EOC and afternoon briefings to discuss plans for the following day. At least two dozen employees worked at the EOC, including Public Information Officer Neil Evangelista, who provided newspapers and TV and radio stations with continuous updates on the city's status. Municipal Services Director Bob DiChristopher worked with Florida Power & Light to identify downed powerlines and coordinated debris clean-up with Pompano Beach contractor Ash Britt. The clean-up is estimated to have cost \$6 million.

The Police Fire Communications Center received 2,048 calls Saturday, Sept. 4, of which 230 were 911 calls. That's three times as many as usual, said Lt. Raul Travieso, communications coordinator. Firefighters, working 48-hour shifts, responded to respiratory emergencies, car accidents, people suffering from heat exhaustion and those injured while cleaning up debris. Six structure fires the Monday after the storm set a record for the department. "We really need to do some public service work to educate the community," said Deputy Fire Chief Jack McCart. "As soon as the storm is over, we want people to take down at least one set of shutters. In the case a structure fire, it hampers our efforts and certainly their escape capability from the house."

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Robert James Daniels
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The hurricane lowered the city's crime rate, said Assistant Police Chief **Bob Daniels**. People stayed home, making it difficult for crimes of opportunity, and about 80 officers were on patrol at all times. There were no looting incidents, though there was a burglary at a jewelry store on North Federal Highway. The suspects removed plywood and broke a window, stealing \$25,000 worth of Rolex watches. They were later arrested by Davie police. About 15 people were arrested for curfew violations, however, in most cases the person had committed some other offense. "Traffic was our biggest problem, but our accident rate was lower than usual because we had so many officers out there directing traffic," **Daniels** said.

Department heads are now putting together after-action reports that will identify items in the hurricane preparedness plan that need tweaking, said Jackie Mabesa, a research and development specialist for the fire department who also coordinates the city's emergency plan.

Construction is already under way to enlarge the EOC.

According to the mayor, the biggest challenge was the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whose job was "locking up" critical supplies, such as fuel, generators, ice and tarps, and directing the items to the hardest hit areas. The city had to import generators from Seattle and ice from Virginia. "We still needed fuel or our power plant and wastewater plant would've shut down," Abrams said. "We have to look at what steps the city can take now to be even more self-sufficient . . . maybe investing in building our own fuel storage tanks or entering into contracts with private oil companies."

Ahnell said the tendency for TV and radio stations to focus coverage on the hardest hit areas also was an issue. "People in Boca still needed information and we were competing with other municipalities to get it out," Ahnell said. Another obstacle was making sure the information was correct and consistent. "We had two stations report boil water orders for specific neighborhoods and another station said it was city-wide. It was a significant challenge," he said.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
July 14, 2001

BOCA DIVIDED ON ALLEY'S FUTURE - MERCHANTS SAY THEY'RE VITAL TO BUSINESS

Author/Byline: C. Ron Allen

Trendy boutiques and doctors' offices line much of South Federal and Dixie highways, two main thoroughfares in this fashionable city's downtown. But in the area between these roads is a little-known and somewhat seedy alley that has reignited a long-festering debate between city officials and merchants. That is: Are most alleys grimy relics peopled by the homeless and thieves? Or, when properly maintained, are they the capillaries of a healthy downtown, useful for merchants, drivers and even pedestrians?

Alleys were once as essential to cities and neighborhoods as fire hydrants and sidewalks. But these back corridors have fallen out of favor, at least with Boca Raton City Council member Bill Glass and many others who make the decisions on how this city will look. "Over the years, I know when I grew up, alleys were a part of the whole environment," Glass said at a recent Community Redevelopment Agency meeting. "I think over the years [it] was determined that they are conducive to criminal activity and pedestrians that you really don't want at night."

For most of the past half century, alleys have been slowly disappearing in American cities. Yet, with the advent of the "New Urbanism" doctrine of planning, which advocates pedestrian-friendly downtowns, and revivals of city centers across the country, alleys are being reconsidered. In several Palm Beach County downtowns -- including Delray Beach, Lake Worth, West Palm Beach and Palm Beach -- where strolling is a popular pastime, alleys have long been a part of the local landscape and of people's memories. "Most of all our utilities -- water, sewer and power -- are in our alleys, primarily in the rear of the building and in the middle of the block," said Ray Smith, planning director for Lake Worth. "That keeps them off the streets so we don't have power lines running up and down our streets." Smith said many planners "really talk up the use of alleys because it allows you to get a lot of the maintenance [and] institutional kind of traffic out of and away from the front of the building." Delray Beach relies on its well-maintained downtown alleys to get traffic off congested roads such as Atlantic Avenue and back to parking lots.

Though some cities still use their garbage trucks to collect trash in alleys, the trend in recent decades has been to close off such back lanes, thereby absolving the city from any responsibility for service or maintenance. The Boca Raton alley that has focused attention on the issue runs from Southeast First Street down to Southeast Eighth Street. It already has been divided by the sale of one block from Northeast Second Street to Northeast Third Street. The appearance of much of the alley seems to validate Glass' viewpoint.

Sections of the alley, which is about 2,016 feet long, are riddled with garbage and laced with potholes. The city's homeless find a haven there and "Dumpster divers" also mine trash bins

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along the strip. The block to be closed once housed the Boca News. Since the newspaper moved to a newer building on Congress Avenue in July 1999, the building has been vacant. The building's bay, which abuts the alley, is littered with garbage. Merchants along the alley, however, said that despite the lack of maintenance, they need the alley for their deliveries, garbage pickup and as an employee entrance. Closing the section of the alley will take a chunk out of the passageway, merchants complain. Cars will no longer be able to go straight through. They would have to go east or west to Federal or Dixie then cut back to continue their journey.

Even though, according to city records, this is the first petition to close part of an alley that has come before the City Council, usually such petitions spring from a property owner wishing to convert a portion of the alley to an extension of his lot, making a slightly larger building possible, planners said.

Boca Raton Mayor Steven Abrams vehemently opposes the practice. Abrams said he has a "philosophical problem" with closing the alley. "I think that you're losing a great network when you abandon an alleyway, especially in the downtown," said Abrams, who was outvoted 3-2 in a Community Redevelopment Agency board meeting to keep the alley open. While the action must now go to the City Council to be official, the council acts as the agency's board.

Commissioner Carol Hanson was Abrams' other supporter. Abrams said he is suspicious of the city's latest effort to "revitalize" the downtown. "I am fearful that it will be a domino effect and that we are going to lose that whole strip, which runs a good distance through our downtown and I think it's been very useful," Abrams said. Boca Raton's development director, Jorge Camejo, and Abrams said they are not surprised at efforts to abandon the alley. They said they foresaw it more than a decade ago when both were neophytes on the city government. In 1987, the CRA approved a map showing the alleys in the city that the agency thought should be targeted for closure.

Armed with statistics from the city's Police Department, Abrams wants to debunk Glass' notion that the alley at issue harbors crime. Though crime statistics are not kept by alley, "From June 2000 to June 2001, we identified two cases in which the alley was specifically a factor, a business burglary and a loitering and prowling arrest," acting Chief of Police **Robert J. Daniels** wrote in a July 5 memo. **Daniels** also provided reports showing there were more than a dozen crimes in the surrounding area during the same period.

Some local business operators say there is no reason to worry about safety and alleys. "I've been here 38 years and there's never been a crime," said Dan Garber of Boca Raton Printing Co.. "I normally work late at nights. You might get some hangouts at the restaurants next door, but apart from that, we haven't had any problems. "Closing the alley would kill us. All of our delivery trucks use the alleyway," said Garber, whose company is on the Fourth Street block.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
December 9, 1993

BOCA POLICE PUSH SAFETY SEATS AND SOBER DRIVING

By JIM Di PAOLA

Don't drink and drive. Don't drive without buckling up, and for gosh sakes, don't drive without having your child strapped into a restraint seat. These are the life-saving messages the Boca Raton police will be persistently preaching for the next month. And they are backing up their words with action. A three-pronged program by police about safe driving for the holidays is under way. The officers are seeking the public's help.

Police are looking for old restraint seats from families whose children have outgrown them. "We'll take them and clean them up, and we'll give them to people who need them," police spokesman Sgt. Mike McCutcheon said. Sgt. **Bob Daniels** came up with the idea to recycle the restraint seats about a month ago. "We thought this is a chance to really make a difference," **Daniels** said.

Nationally, three children die and 260 are injured in car crashes each day, according to statistics from the Palm Beach County Safety Council. In Florida, the chances of children dying in a crash are twice as great when they are not in restraint seats. But the restraints can be costly. An infant seat - which can safely secure a baby under 22 pounds - costs about \$35. For a restraint that handles more than 22 pounds, the cost can jump as high as \$85.

State law says all children under 6 must be in a restraint while riding in a vehicle. Violators are fined \$155. **Daniels** said that while on patrol, he has found that many offenders of the child-restraint law were families who could not afford the seats. This program offers an alternative for those families. "When we give out the seats, an officer will tell the family how to install them properly," **Daniels** said.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 27, 1992

'POLICING' KIDS POLICE PROGRAM STEERS CHILDREN FROM CRIME, GANGS.
Author/Byline: By A.D. BURCH

BOCA RATON -- The question was simple. Before joining the New Pines enrichment program, did you bully or beat up people? "No," he said, then shrugged his nine-year-old shoulders. Are you sure? "Maybe I did. Sometimes," he said while kicking up tracks of sand. One more time. Did you give your buddies a hard time? "OK. Yes. But not anymore. I stopped fooling around. The officers say we should stay out of trouble and out of fights," he said matter-of-factly. The young boy got the message.

The program works. Just ask Jackie. Or Jennifer. Or Jason. Or Dennis. "The program keeps me out of trouble," said one 11-year-old. Stern, tough talk from four Boca Raton community officers are all in a typical day's work in the New Pines program for the youth of the Delray Manors/New Pines neighborhood in north Boca Raton. The four-month-old program offers children an alternative to drugs, crime and gangs. The program operates during one of the most vulnerable times in a child's daily routine: between 4 and 6 p.m., when they are unsupervised. "That is the time when children can go astray. Additionally, many of these children are straddling the fence, getting ready to decide if they want a positive life or life in the streets. We are helping them make the right choice," said Officer Wayne Barton, who created and coordinates the program. He patterned it after the after-school program for Pearl City children. Between 30 and 50 children meet at Sand Pine Park on Newcastle Street, which forms the southern border of the neighborhood. The working-class area is bounded by Coventry Street on the north and Federal and Dixie highways east and west. The children, between the ages of 5 and 17, participate in activities like bowling, picnics, trips to the beach and tours of the police station. They are encouraged to excel in school and to stay away from drugs. They hear the spiel from police, parents and community leaders.

The program has been financed through fund-raisers and personal donations, but officers hope to get a \$98,971 grant from the Children's Service Council. The City Council preliminarily approved the grant request recently, and the council is just waiting for word from the agency, said Sgt. **Bob Daniels**, who heads the community police unit.

For the officers who deal with these children daily, the project is a way to break down stereotypical images of police as intimidating, gun-toting Dirty Harry types. "I think one of the biggest benefits is to get to know us police officers on a personal basis," said Officer Vinny Nava. "Then the kids realize we are people who care rather than just somebody driving in a squad car." Added Officer Jeff Kelly: "We want the kids to know we do more than just arrest people." Boca Raton Police Chief Pete Petracco said the goal is also to break down the fear of police and to provide preventive guidance. "We would like to deal with children now, rather than once they are in the system," he said. An added benefit is that the children have become more racially sensitive. "This program teaches them to respect themselves and each other," said Angela

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Hudson, mother of two children in the program. "They used to call each other derogatory names. Now, they speak properly, or not at all."

On a recent afternoon, the children gathered at a couple of park benches and discussed the merits of the program. They were honest. Brutally honest. "Me and my brother used to steal from other people and tear up our mother's jewelry. I guess you could say we were bad. Now the only person I beat up is my brother," one 8-year-old said. Barton said incidences of vandalism, truancy and fights have decreased, though specific figures were not available. "I think we are making a real difference," said Officer Wayne Boxer. "A lot of the kids come from families with problems. Sometimes they are exposed to things like drugs. We give them a choice."

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Robert James Daniels
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Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 3, 1992

POLICE TRAINING FOCUSES ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME BOCA OFFICERS' SESSION STRESSES AWARENESS

By: NEIL SANTANIELLO

BOCA RATON -- On the second floor of the police station one morning last week, 27 officers assembled for a training session. As the class got under way, it became clear the officers were not there to learn about traditional police things such as firearms or arrest procedures. Nor were they going to be briefed on the latest crime wave. Instead, the group listened to Capt. Linda Forst, a road-patrol supervisor, talk about ... pesticides. And water pollution. And recycling. "This is probably ... unique compared to the training we've had in the past," said Sgt. **Bob Daniels** during a break in Forst's four-hour "environmental awareness" class.

Swept up in the green revolution, police departments have started teaching their officers how to handle environmental crimes. The majority of Boca Raton's officers start such training in October. But first, the officers are learning how they can do their part to save the Earth. "There are little things we can do in everyday life to make a difference," Forst told the class. "You are very visible out there. People look to you as role models." Forst asked the class, "What are the world's most pressing ecological problems?" She got back several answers: pesticides, water pollution, ozone depletion. And "tires, tons and tons of tires." Later, the class watched two environmental videos, including one created by the Environmental Defense Fund. Forst said she conceived the environmental awareness class as a project for a graduate course she's taking in adult education at Florida Atlantic University. With Boca Raton Police Chief Peter Petracco's consent, she said she started teaching the class in January to the Police Department's civilian workers. Now she is instructing the department's uniformed and plainclothes officers.

Forst starts the class by handing out plastic blue-and-white coffee mugs and asking officers to use them in place of paper or foam cups. She also gives officers reading material: magazine articles and excerpts from books that contain such information as how to concoct Earth-friendly alternatives to insect repellent and what toxins are found in tap water. During the class last week, Forst told fellow officers she used to order two large cups of coffee from Dunkin Donuts during night duty until she realized "I was throwing those two Styrofoam cups into a landfill." Teaching police about how to be green-minded at home is a good place to start their training on environmental crime, said Forst, who practices recycling at home and is a Sierra Club member. "It gives them the desire to enforce the (environmental) laws," she said. Anonymous evaluations handed in at the end of every session show most officers find the class useful, she said. A few have responded by saying it did not seem relevant to police work, she said.

Daniels said he thought the class appropriate because he occasionally gets questions about recycling from city residents. Lt. Bob Hoffman, too, did not find the class out of character for police training. "We are human beings before we are police officers," he said.

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Robert James Daniels
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Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 19, 1987

**REPEAT OFFENDERS MAKE LIST REPORT KEEPS TABS ON YOUTHFUL
CRIMINALS**

Author/Byline: By JEAN DUBAIL

For many youths arrested on minor criminal charges, a trip to the police station and a tour of the jail are enough to discourage them from ever again daring to break the law. Others, despite frequent court appearances, counseling and repeated terms in "reform school," are constantly rearrested. These youths represent just a fraction of the population of youthful offenders, but they account for a disproportionate number of crimes committed by juveniles.

In an effort to keep track of these youths, who might otherwise slip through cracks in Palm Beach County's judicial system, the state attorney's office each month compiles a list of those arrested four times or more on felony charges. The list, the centerpiece of the 2-year-old Career Delinquency Intervention program (CDI), is distributed to juvenile-division officers from police agencies throughout the county.

Juveniles often are released to their parents' custody with stern warnings and a pat on the back. But with this list in hand, officials hope, police officers are less likely to give a break to someone who does not deserve it. Those who make the list, if arrested again, also are more likely to be prosecuted as adults. The existence of the list is therefore an acknowledgement that some youths cannot be helped by the usual means. "If the juvenile system was working for them, they wouldn't be such recidivists," said Jeanne Howard, chief assistant state attorney in the juvenile division. "There does come a time when we've done all we can for them," said Sheree Cunningham, a juvenile-division prosecutor. "They're just protected by virtue of their age."

In a typical month, the list includes almost 200 names. New names are added from time to time, while others are dropped as they turn 18 or are charged as adults. These are not vandals or runaways. Many have committed as many as 15 felonies, including burglary, armed robbery and rape. Many have drug problems. "Those kids who make one mistake -- they're not on this list," Cunningham said. "But there are certain people we cannot permit to remain on the streets."

Law enforcement officials say they are grateful for the information provided through CDI. "It helps us identify people who are geared toward a definite crime avenue," said Sgt. **Bob Daniels**, chief of the juvenile division of the Boca Raton Police Department. "I feel it's something that's been needed for a long time," said Ed Brewer, a supervisor in the Palm Beach County School Board's security system. "It seems like a get-tough approach is the only way to go these days," said Lake Worth Detective Sue Pults.

Unfortunately, Howard said, few of the county's 39 police agencies are equipped to make full use of the information supplied through CDI. Less than 10 agencies have juvenile divisions, and many of these comprise only one officer who works on juvenile cases part time, she said. "We

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

cannot convince the communities of a need to set up a special unit or person to do juvenile prevention work," Howard said.

Of all the police agencies, the Palm Beach County school system's security force would seem to be most in need of CDI information. "If it's valuable to anyone, it's valuable to us," security director Johnny McKenzie said. But state law limits dissemination of information about juvenile offenders to parents, social workers and court and law enforcement personnel, McKenzie said. School principals are technically forbidden to receive it. In practice, however, juvenile officials "sort of turn their back and say, 'Give it to who you want,' " McKenzie said. "I think there is some communication between the security person and the (school) administration," McKenzie said. "There has to be." School officials are trying to get the state law changed, McKenzie said.

Experience with the CDI program also has made it clear that probation, counseling and commitment to an institution -- the usual methods of dealing with juveniles -- are not enough to deter some youths from the criminal life, Cunningham said. Juvenile officials are trying to organize a program whereby youths charged with three felonies would be taught to apply for and hold down jobs. If the program works, these youths would "purchase what they want instead of taking it from a person's house," Cunningham said.

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