



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 * 6:30 PM
MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Frank Vertolli
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell
District 6 Commissioner – Stan Smith
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Mayor Carson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and the Clerk confirmed the presence of a quorum. City Manager Rudometkin, Deputy Chief Millis, Attorney Langley, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Commissioner Karl Shuck, District 3
Comm Shuck led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.

4. Public Comments & Announcements - na

Mayor Carson opened for public comment. There being none, he closed the public comment section.

3. Presentations

a. Consideration and Appointment for Special Events Committee Member – Tanya Moenchmeier

The Council welcomed Tanya Moenchmeier.

After the presentation, Comm Smith moved to appoint Tanya Moenchmeier to the Special Events Committee. Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 7:0.

b. Consideration and Appointment for Special Events Committee Member – Carly Olson

City Manager Rudometkin stated that Ms. Olson was not present; however, Comm. Bobrowski noted that she previously met with Ms. Olson and would be a great addition to the Committee.

After a brief discussion, Comm Smith moved to appoint Carly Olson to the Special Events Committee. Comm Lowell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 7:0.

a. Consideration and Appointment for Budget Committee Member – Sharon Harkey

The Council welcomed Sharon Harkey.

After the presentation, Comm Lowell moved to appoint Sharon Harkey to the Budget Committee. Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 7:0.

5. Consent Items

- a. Approval of meeting minutes - November 4, 2025
- b. Approval of meeting minutes - November 18, 2025
- c. Approval of Mutual Aid Agreement Child Abduction Response Team (CART)
- d. Approval of Contract Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety High Visibility Enforcement and Support Program FY 2026
- e. November 2025 Monthly Reports: PD, Finance (<https://cleargov.com/florida/orange/city/belle-isle>), and Fire

Mayor Carson called for a motion to approve items a and e as presented.

Comm Lowell moved to approve items a and e as presented.

Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 7:0.

6. Unfinished Business

a. 3904 Arajo Court – Update and Demo Contract

City Manager Rudometkin provided an update on the Arajo Court property and the proposed demolition contract, which requires council approval. The condemnation notice was published and expired on December 9. CM Rudometkin reported that Mr. Bernard, the Homeowner, and Ms. Leizer have been actively removing debris and personal items from the home and have significantly cleaned the property. The demolition contractor confirmed continued interest in the project but indicated demolition cannot occur until January 2026 due to the holiday schedule. The proposed action is to approve the demolition contract at this meeting so the contractor may proceed with permitting in advance of the January demolition. Mr. Bernard and Ms. Leizer were present to answer questions and address the council, including any request to reconsider demolition. Council was advised that it may proceed to approve or deny the demolition contract.

Mr. Bernard addressed the council on behalf of Ms. Leizer, requesting that demolition be postponed. He reported substantial interior cleanup, removal of debris, and inspections indicating no significant structural damage, mold, or truss failure. Third-party contractors reportedly confirmed the structure is sound, with repairs primarily needed for code compliance, windows, doors, and exterior improvements. Estimated costs were provided, and Bernard stated that funding is now secured through refinancing and other financial resources. They requested additional time to demonstrate that the home is repairable and are committed to promptly improving the exterior.

The staff acknowledged the cleanup efforts, and Council expressed appreciation for the work completed. Several commissioners stated their primary concerns were the prolonged timeline (spanning several years), the financial risk to the homeowner, and the city's responsibility to uphold code enforcement and neighborhood standards. The Council emphasized that prior assurances and timelines had not been met and noted that the house had already been approved for demolition. The Council discussed the importance of immediate exterior improvements, including debris removal, yard maintenance, and overall curb appeal, as a prerequisite to any reconsideration. There was general agreement that the exterior must be brought to a presentable condition promptly and maintained consistently. Interior renovations were viewed as secondary, provided exterior conditions and code compliance are maintained.

The City Manager advised that expectations must be realistic and that all work must follow permitting and inspection requirements. Council emphasized the need for accountability, proof of funding, and regular progress updates to avoid repeating past delays. Several commissioners expressed compassion for the homeowner while reiterating the city's obligation to residents and the financial costs incurred by prolonged enforcement actions. The consensus was that the council is willing to consider postponing demolition only if measurable progress is made.

After discussion, Comm Lance moved to stay the demolition contract for 3904 Arago Court and revisit the matter at the second council meeting in January 2026 to evaluate progress and commitment toward rehabilitation of the property. The motion was seconded by Comm Partin.

Clarification was provided by CM Rudometkin that the intent of the motion was to stay both the demolition contract and the condemnation proceedings from moving forward at this time. It was noted that regular progress updates are expected, though not formally included in the motion. City Attorney Langley confirmed that no additional public notice would be required should demolition proceed in the future, as prior notice requirements had been met and the property owner, Ms. Leizer, was present and acknowledged understanding that all personal property must be removed from the home and that any remaining items would be subject to removal or destruction if demolition proceeds.

The motion was called to a vote, which passed 5:2 with Comm Shuck and Comm Smith, nay.

Mr. Rudometkin and staff indicated follow-up communication would occur, and the property owner and contractor were advised that future council action would be based on demonstrated progress.

7. New Business

a. Review and Approval of Orange County Fire Contract Amendment

CM Rudometkin presented the proposed amendment to the Orange County Fire Rescue Interlocal Agreement, which resulted from a significant service cost increase implemented approximately two years ago. Orange County Fire Rescue issued a letter proposing a revised cost-calculation method intended to provide potential relief in future years. Under the amendment, annual charges would be based on the lesser of two assessed property value calculations, which could

result in a reduced increase, no increase, or modest savings. Mr. Rudometkin clarified that all property valuation data used in the calculation is provided by the Orange County Property Appraiser's Office. The amendment compares Belle Isle's assessed value growth to Orange County's overall assessed value growth. For the most recent year, Belle Isle's assessed value increased approximately 5.94%, compared to 7.38% countywide, resulting in a lower relative increase for the City.

Commissioner Vertolli asked clarifying questions regarding the source of valuation data and expressed cautious support for any opportunity to reduce costs. Some commissioners expressed skepticism about the extent of the savings and characterized the amendment as limited relief. The Council also discussed longer-term strategies, including coordination with other municipalities served by Orange County Fire Rescue to explore alternative billing structures or potential separation of fire service assessments, noting that such efforts would require legal review and collaboration.

Mr. Rudometkin indicated that discussions with other affected municipalities and Mayors are ongoing and will continue into the new year. Mr. Rudometkin stated that no negative impacts were identified and that the amendment applies the lesser valuation method in future calculations.

After discussion, Comm Smith moved to approve the First Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement with Orange County Fire Rescue as presented. Comm Partin seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Professional Services Agreement with Drumond Carpenter for Vulnerability Assessment Grant #23PLN26

Mr. Rudometkin presented the proposed professional services agreement with Drummond Carpenter, PLLC, for completion of a Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (VA) required under the FDEP Resilient Florida Grant program. The total project cost is \$115,000, consisting of \$80,000 in grant reimbursement and a \$35,000 City match, which has been budgeted in the current fiscal year. He explained that while Belle Isle is included in Orange County's vulnerability assessment, completion of a city-specific evaluation is required to qualify for future grant opportunities. Drummond Carpenter previously performed the county assessment and already possesses much of the relevant data, allowing for continuity and efficiency. The overall project cost is fixed by the grant and reimbursement structure, resulting in a net cost of \$35,000 to the City.

Council questioned the cost structure and noted that the vulnerability assessment does not guarantee future grant funding. Mr. Rudometkin confirmed that the assessment itself does not generate funding but is a prerequisite that strengthens future grant applications and is considered a necessary cost of doing business. He recommended waiving formal procurement in accordance with the City's adopted resolution, citing Drummond Carpenter's prior work, familiarity with existing data, and demonstrated experience with similar assessments.

After discussion, Comm Smith moved to approve the Professional Services Agreement with Drummond Carpenter, PLLC, including Exhibit A, for the FDEP Resilient Florida Grant Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment, and to waive formal procurement pursuant to Resolution 25-02. The motion was seconded by Comm Lowell and passed 6-1 with Comm Vertolli, nay.

c. Review of Lancaster House Contract Lease Agreement - Billy Morgan

CM Rudometkin presented an initial draft lease agreement for the Lancaster House between the City and Pine Castle Pioneer Days (PCPD), represented by Billy Morgan. He noted that this was the first draft for review and that no action was requested at this time, as the agreement remains in the discussion and revision stage.

CM Rudometkin said staff reviewed highlighted sections of the draft and noted proposed revisions, including replacing the term "renovation" with "rehabilitation" or "restoration" to align with historic preservation grant requirements. The lease commencement date will be determined later, pending further discussion with PCPD.

Council discussed appropriate lease term lengths. Consensus emerged to establish an initial three-year term to allow time for grant procurement and rehabilitation efforts, with an option to extend for an additional ten years, subject to performance and compliance. The lease includes provisions that revert control of the property to CCA upon default, including authority for demolition, if applicable. The proposed lease rate was discussed and agreed upon as \$1 per year, payable annually. Council also discussed potential future uses of the property, including nonprofit offices, museum space, storage, and educational uses. No specific plans regarding admission fees were presented and will be addressed when PCPD returns for further discussion.

CM Rudometkin confirmed that PCPD would assume responsibility for all costs associated with the property, including insurance, maintenance, taxes, and liability, with no ongoing financial obligation to the City. He indicated that PCPD intends to provide a detailed rehabilitation schedule, which will be incorporated into the lease as an attachment outlining phased improvements and timelines. The draft language regarding commencement and completion timelines will be revised to align with the agreed initial lease term. CM Rudometkin said that additional revisions will be made, and the updated lease will be returned to the Council for further review and potential approval at a future meeting. No vote was taken.

d. Discuss/Approve Deputy Chief Millis to attend the Admin Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute, University of Louisville

CM Rudometkin presented a request for approval from Chief Grimm for Deputy Chief Millis to attend the Administrative Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute, University of Louisville, beginning in February 2026. He noted that the program is a three-month leadership and management course designed for law enforcement executives and provides academic credit applicable toward a master's degree. He emphasized the program's value for leadership development, succession planning, and organizational stability, noting Deputy Chief Millis' long-term commitment to the City and the benefits of investing in internal leadership.

Deputy Chief Millis addressed the Council and explained that the training aligns with his professional development goals and would enhance leadership skills within the department. He stated that he has no plans to leave the City and anticipates completing his career with the department. He also clarified that the estimated cost, exceeding \$10,000, would be covered through existing departmental training funds and the 104 fund, with no request for additional budget appropriations or contractual obligation requiring continued service was included.

After the presentation, Comm Vertolli moved to approve Deputy Chief Millis' attendance at the Administrative Officers Course at the Southern Police Institute. The motion was seconded by Comm Lance, which passed unanimously 7:0.

e. Approve Sponsorship for Pine Castle Pioneer Days, January 2026

CM Rudometkin presented a sponsorship request for the upcoming **Pine Castle Pioneer Day** event. CM Rudometkin noted that the sponsorship options and packages were included in the meeting packet and that the City had sponsored the event in the previous year at a similar level. It was confirmed that sufficient funds were budgeted for community event sponsorships, consistent with the prior fiscal year, and that any necessary budget adjustments could be made if needed. He also relayed a request from event organizers for a group photograph of the Council for inclusion in Pioneer Day promotional materials, to be taken following the meeting.

After discussion, Comm Smith moved to approve a \$1,000 Sound Stage sponsorship for Pine Castle Pioneer Day. The motion was seconded by Comm Partin and passed unanimously.

f. 2026 Legislative Update

CM Rudometkin provided an overview of anticipated issues for the upcoming 2026 Florida Legislative Session, including property tax reform, state budget shortfalls, infrastructure funding, environmental policy, and local government authority, Water and wastewater policy, and Rural Development. Council was also briefed on potential countywide transportation surtax proposals and on major regional infrastructure projects, including the expansion of Orlando International Airport. He also noted that the City has submitted state appropriation requests related to police department capital needs, though veto risk remains high as the Governor enters his final year in office. No formal action was taken.

CM Rudometkin informed the Council on the discussions led by

- **Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings** regarding a proposed **one-cent sales tax** to fund transportation and infrastructure projects, with the goal of placing the measure on the **November ballot**. Depending on the tax structure, a portion of the revenue (estimated at \$300,000-\$800,000 annually) could be distributed to smaller municipalities such as Belle Isle. Concerns were noted regarding timing and voter perception. Alternatives discussed at the county level include the use of **Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues** or a hybrid funding approach; and
- The **Orlando International Airport (MCO)** is moving forward with a major expansion of **Terminal C**. City representatives have been invited to participate as stakeholders in the initial planning phase. While the City will

not have decision-making authority, participation will allow Belle Isle to remain informed regarding potential impacts such as increased air traffic and roadway congestion.

8. Attorney's Report – No report.

9. City Manager's Report

- a. City Manager Report and Work Plan - CM Rudometkin provided a copy of the work plan for review.
- b. Chief's Report
Deputy Chief Millis presented the November 2025 report, noting that the department is approximately halfway through the holiday season. Upcoming events include the golf cart parade and boat parades scheduled for the weekend. The department expressed gratitude to the council for providing the necessary tools to support law enforcement operations. Regarding a previously reported item (block or 357, location Trembling), it was entered into FCIC/NCIC. No updates have been reported, and the item will be returned if located during a traffic stop or investigation. No further questions were raised.
- c. Public Works Report
Public Works Director Phil Price reported that Orange County Utilities will be conducting work in various neighborhoods, including areas around Gibson Drive, Quando, Sol, and McCoy, over the next several days. The department also provided an update on the Judge Conway Lakes project, noting minor delays due to pressure-testing issues. Restoration work is expected to begin after the New Year, with completion still projected for February 17. Additionally, AT&T fiber installation is planned for Windsor Place and Lake Conway Shores neighborhoods early next year.

10. Mayor's Report

The Mayor highlighted the success of the recent Light Away event, noting record attendance and expressing appreciation to all volunteers and staff involved.

11. Commissioners' Report

Comm Vertolli noted that the Light Away event was a great success and praised the hard work of everyone involved. He also suggested reviewing scooter and electric bike regulations, citing Winter Garden's draft rules, as this may become a growing concern.

Comm Bobrowski recognized the Special Events Committee for their work on the Santa Ride and associated activities. Highlights included distributing 900 toys and 275 dog toys, as well as an auction that raised approximately \$2,200. The police department was commended for participating in the Santa Ride.

Comm Lance said that a resident, David Allen, shared positive feedback regarding city staff, highlighting April Fisher for her responsiveness and efficiency, and commended Universal for their excellent service. He expressed satisfaction with the progress on his home renovations. Additionally, he thanked all for the continued professionalism over the past nine months, noting a marked improvement in civility and teamwork.

Commissioner Shuck addressed concerns from golf cart-owning residents regarding narrow sidewalks obstructed by planted shrubs, which create safety issues. She emphasized the need to keep easements clear and requested verification that newly poured sidewalks meet the proper criteria.

The Council concluded by thanking volunteers and staff for their efforts during Light Away, recognizing specific participants, and extending holiday greetings to residents and city staff. The Council wished residents, commissioners, and city staff a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and a happy holiday season.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously at 8:06 pm.