



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 * 6:30 PM
MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Ed Gold
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell
District 6 Commissioner – Christopher Oller
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Mayor Carson called the Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and the City Clerk, Yolanda Quiceno, confirmed the presence of a quorum. City Manager (CM) Rudometkin, Chief Grimm, Attorney Langley, Public Works Director Phil Price, Finance Director Tracey Richardson, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Comm Holly Bobrowski, District 2, led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.

Mayor Carson asked for a motion to excuse the absence of Comm Shuck.

Comm Bobrowski moved to excuse Comm Shuck from the meeting.

Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.

3. Public Comments & Announcements

Mayor Carson opened the floor for public comments and announcements.

- Caroline Vertoli, a Belle Isle resident, requested assistance from the City's state representatives regarding the City's efforts to obtain approximately \$1.2 million in FEMA reimbursement for Hurricane Ian expenses. She noted that the funds represent taxpayer money and are significant to the City's budget.

There being no comments, Mayor Carson closed the public comment section.

4. Presentations

Mayor Carson welcomed Representative Dr. Anna V. Escamani and Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith.

Representative Anna V. Eskamani and Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith presented the City with a \$350,000 State appropriation to support public safety initiatives, including the Belle Isle Police Department's marine patrol vessel and emergency response efforts on the Conway Chain of Lakes. They thanked City staff, the Police Chief, and those who supported the funding request, noting that the appropriation was secured through a bipartisan effort after several attempts. They expressed appreciation for the City's partnership and emphasized the importance of supporting public safety as the region continues to grow.

5. Consent Items.

- Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes – July 7, 2026
- Approval of the MetroPlan Orlando FY2026-2027 Funding Agreement
- June 2026 Monthly Reports: PD, Finance and OC Fire

Comm Bobrowski asked to pull item b for discussion.

Comm Bobrowski moved to approve consent items a and c as presented.

Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Comm Bobrowski discussed the value of maintaining a seat at the table for MetroPlan despite concerns about some regional studies and acknowledged that the membership fee is relatively nominal.

Council discussed the City's annual MetroPlan Orlando membership fee and the benefits of continued participation. They discussed the value of the membership, the annual cost, and whether participation is mandatory. CM Rudometkin clarified that the City's annual contribution is approximately \$548 (based on a per-capita assessment) and that the item is routinely included on the consent agenda. Phil Price noted that he is on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and TSMO Boards and provided an overview of the benefits of MetroPlan participation. He explained that it offers regional transportation coordination, networking opportunities, early awareness of projects, and the ability to provide input on future regional infrastructure improvements. Examples included discussions on planned improvements to the SR 528/Florida Turnpike interchange and opportunities for the City to advocate for projects affecting Belle Isle residents.

Comm Bobrowski moved to approve consent item b as presented.

Comm Gold seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Unfinished Business - na

7. New Business

a. Proposed Maximum Millage Rate for FY 26/27 Discussion

CM Rudometkin presented the proposed maximum millage rate for FY 2026–2027 and explained that establishing a maximum rate preserves the Council's ability to adopt a lower final millage during the budget hearings. Council discussed the recommendation to set the maximum rate at 5.0000, citing increased fire service costs, while also considering tax impacts, annexation, reserve levels, and maintaining flexibility under new state requirements. Several commissioners supported setting a higher maximum to preserve future options and making an educated decision should things change after the election, while concerns were expressed about taxpayer perception and maintaining a competitive tax rate. Comm Gold and Bobrowski shared their concerns about raising the millage, taking away the attractiveness aspect for annexing in the future, and being fiscally responsible. Comm Gold noted that he would like to be a tax-friendly city. Council also discussed setting the maximum rate just below 5.0.

After further discussion, Comm Lance moved to set the proposed maximum millage rate at 4.9999 for FY 2026–2027. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bobrowski and passed unanimously on roll call 6:0.

b. Discussion of Statutory Limitations Concerning Property Tax Ballot Questions

CM Rudometkin reminded Council of the legal guidelines regarding discussions of ballot measures and referenced information previously provided by the City Attorney concerning the November property tax reform amendment. The purpose of the discussion was to clarify the City's limitations on advocating for or against ballot measures while providing factual information. City Attorney Langley noted that elected officials retain their individual First Amendment rights to express personal opinions, provided City funds are not used to do so. **No action was taken.**

c. Approval of Harris Engineering Services Contract Extension

CM Rudometkin welcomed David Taylor from Harris Engineering and spoke briefly on consideration of continuing the contract. Council discussed the expiration of the City's engineering services contract with Harris Civil Engineers, the firm's proposed fee adjustment, and whether to extend the contract or issue a new solicitation. CM Rudometkin and staff recommended continuing with Harris, citing the firm's performance, familiarity with City projects, and ongoing MS4 permit compliance efforts. Council discussed contract timing, procurement requirements, contract length, and the value of maintaining continuity. They further discussed the termination provision within 30 days' right of practice.

Comm Bobrowski moved to extend the contract with Harris Civil Engineers for three years, with an option for a one-year extension, and to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to update the contract language and fee schedule and execute the agreement.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gold and passed unanimously 6:0.

d. Approval and Acceptance of PD Confiscated Funds

Chief Grimm presented a request to deposit **\$20,754** in seized funds into the City's Law Enforcement Trust Fund following a narcotics investigation and negotiated forfeiture settlement. Chief Grimm explained that, pursuant to Florida law, funds deposited into the trust fund may only be used for authorized law enforcement purposes and that 25% of forfeiture proceeds over the statutory threshold must be donated to charitable organizations. Council discussed potential local charities for the required donation.

After discussion, Comm Partin moved to approve the written request and certification, authorized the deposit of \$20,754 into the Law Enforcement Trust Fund, and appropriate the funds for authorized law enforcement training and equipment pursuant to Section 932.7055, Florida Statutes. The motion was seconded by Comm Gold, approved unanimously 6:0.

e. ORD 26-03 Continuance to August 4, 2026 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE II, SECTIONS 50-32 AND 50-33 OF THE CITY CODE TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS GOVERNING SUBDIVISIONS AND LOT SPLITS AND DEFINITIONS, AND AMENDING CHAPTER 54, ARTICLE I, SECTION 50-3 OF THE CITY CODE GOVERNING NON-CONFORMING USES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

CM Rudometkin read Ordinance 26-03 by Title.

Mayor Carson opened for Council discussion.

CM Rudometkin requested that Ordinance 26-03, concerning subdivisions, lot splits, definitions, and nonconforming uses, be continued to August 4, 2026, for second reading and final consideration.

Commissioner Bobrowski moved to continue Ordinance 26-03 to the August 4, 2026, City Council meeting and direct the City Clerk to post accordingly. The motion was seconded by Comm Partin and approved unanimously 6:0.

f. ORDINANCE 26-05 First Reading and Consideration - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE RESCUE SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS WITHIN THE CITY; AMENDING CHAPTER 12 OF THE BELLE ISLE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION; RESERVING SECTIONS 12-2 THROUGH 12-10 OF ARTICLE I; CREATING A NEW ARTICLE II, ENTITLED "FIRE RESCUE ASSESSMENT"; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; PROVIDING DETERMINATIONS OF SPECIAL BENEFIT; AUTHORIZING THE IMPOSITION, LEVY, COLLECTION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF ANNUAL FIRE RESCUE SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS WITHIN THE CITY; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE ADOPTION OF ASSESSMENT RESOLUTIONS AND ROLLS, FOR NOTICE, AND FOR INTERIM ASSESSMENTS; PROVIDING THAT THE ASSESSMENTS CONSTITUTE A LIEN ON ASSESSED PROPERTY; PROVIDING METHODS OF COLLECTION; AUTHORIZING EXEMPTIONS AND HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

CM Rudometkin read Ordinance 26-05 by Title.

Mayor Carson opened for Council discussion.

CM Rudometkin presented the first reading of Ordinance 26-05, explaining that the ordinance establishes the framework for a potential future fire rescue assessment but does not impose an assessment. Council discussed the purpose of the ordinance, the required public process, transparency of fire service costs, potential exemptions, and the need for a future rate study before any assessment could be considered.

City Attorney Langley explained that adoption of the framework ordinance would not impose a fire rescue assessment but would preserve the City's option to consider one in the future. He outlined the required process, including a rate study, multiple public hearings, mailed notices to property owners, and adoption of initial and final assessment resolutions before any assessment could be placed on the tax roll. He also noted that any future assessment would be based on property use, would not recover 100% of the County's fire service costs, and would be limited by Florida law and applicable case law. Adoption of the ordinance would not obligate the City to implement an assessment but would allow the City to continue evaluating the option through the required public process.

Comm Bobrowski moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance 26-05 and advance it to second reading. The motion was seconded by Comm Gold, which passed unanimously 6:0.

g. RESOLUTION NO. 26-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, REPEALING THE PURCHASING POLICY FOR THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO. 20-08 AND AMENDED BY RESOLUTION NO. 25-02; ADOPTING AN UPDATED PURCHASING POLICY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

CM Rudometkin read Resolution 26-06 by Title.

Mayor Carson opened for Council discussion.

CM Rudometkin presented the updated Purchasing Policy, explaining that staff and the City Attorneys revised the policy to update language, ensure compliance with current statutes, clarify purchasing procedures, and increase purchasing thresholds to reflect current costs. The proposed changes are intended to streamline purchasing, improve efficiency, and better align with industry practices while maintaining appropriate procurement requirements. Staff noted the policy is a living document that will be updated as needed and brought back to Council for future amendments.

Comm Partin moved to approve Resolution 26-06, a resolution of the City of Belle Isle, Florida, repealing the purchasing policy for the City of Belle Isle adopted by Resolution number 20-08, and amended by Resolution 25-02, adopting an updated purchasing policy, providing for an effective date.

Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.

h. Discussion on OC Ordinance Regarding Water Ways Update

Sgt Wasmund presented Orange County's proposed changes to waterway regulations affecting the Conway Chain of Lakes, including converting several existing no-wake zones to slow speed/minimum wake zones to comply with state requirements. Council discussed the proposed changes, potential impacts on boating safety, erosion, and enforcement, and expressed concerns regarding areas including the Nela Bridge, Daetwyler Lagoon, and the omission of the Venetian boat ramp. Staff advised that the proposal remains under public review and encouraged residents to participate in upcoming public meetings and submit comments. The meeting calendar will be posted to the City's agenda packet on the website.

8. Attorney's Report - na

9. City Manager's Report

a. City Manager's Report & Work Plan

CM Rudometkin reported on the following

1. CM Rudometkin reported that the City is still awaiting a decision on the \$3.6 million stormwater appropriation request for flood mitigation. The same request was previously approved but later vetoed. No updates have been received.
2. An RFP will be issued for upgrades to the Council Chambers audiovisual system.
3. The FY 2026-2027 draft budget has been provided to the Budget Committee for review. Budget discussions with the Council will continue in August.
4. Staff is closely monitoring proposed property tax reforms and recently enacted legislation affecting the budget process, including changes related to millage voting requirements and the requirement to prepare a hypothetical reduced-budget scenario. These topics will be discussed further at the July 21 budget workshop.
5. The proposed tax bill emphasizes protecting police, fire, and infrastructure funding. The City is evaluating potential impacts and future budget options. A budget pre-workshop will include discussion of increased fire service costs, which rose by more than \$100,000 this year, along with other budget-related items. He and the City Attorney are preparing an ordinance intended to provide the City with flexibility to respond to potential state actions related to property tax legislation. He stated that while future costs will remain a challenge, staff will work with the Council to determine the City's direction.
6. The City received a \$350,000 state appropriation for replacement of the City's marine unit boats and motors. The appropriation was not vetoed by the Governor.
7. Regarding the clock on Hoffner, staff met with the property management company and determined that improving the surrounding landscaping, including removing trees and shrubs that obstruct visibility, would be a better solution than raising the height of the clock. The property management company is willing to proceed with the landscaping improvements.

b. Chief's Report

Chief Grimm reviewed the monthly Police Department dashboard, highlighting calls for service, traffic citations, DUIs, fraud cases, and burglaries. He also reported that the Police Department completed two weeks of block training and reminded residents to take precautions during the extreme heat, particularly by checking on elderly neighbors. Council inquired about the timing of the monthly dashboard's publication, and the Chief stated staff would explore releasing it earlier.

c. Public Works Report

Phil Proce reported the completion of the Fairlane Avenue paving project near CCA, with pavement striping to follow after the required curing period. He also announced an upcoming paving project on McCoy Road between Daetwyler Drive and Via Flora to address recurring potholes. An update was provided on the Judge Road and Conway Road intersection closure for Orange County paving work, ongoing concrete and sidewalk improvements, citywide tree and canopy trimming, and hurricane season preparedness efforts. Council discussed installation of a bench outside City Hall and the challenges of coordinating canopy trimming along Hoffner Avenue due to traffic.

10. Mayor's Report

Mayor Carson thanked City staff, the Police Department, and Public Works for their continued service and efforts during budget season. Appreciation was expressed for the condition of City parks, the Police Department's monthly reports, and the presentation on the proposed lake regulation changes. Council encouraged residents to participate in the upcoming public meetings regarding the proposed waterway changes.

11. Commissioners' Report

Council thanked staff, the Police Department, and Public Works for their continued service. Appreciation was expressed to Ms. Vertoli for her public comments and community involvement, and support was voiced for continuing efforts to pursue FEMA reimbursement. Council also thanked Sergeant Wasmund for his presentation on the proposed lake regulation changes and encouraged continued public participation. Staff responded to a question regarding accident debris cleanup procedures and acknowledged a concern about visibility of a speed limit sign on McCoy Road.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved at 8:40 pm.