



**CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, February 03, 2026 * 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 (conf call)
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell (conf call)
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 City Clerk, Yolanda Quiceno, confirmed the presence of a quorum. City Manager (CM) Rudometkin, Chief Grimms, Attorney Schaffer, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Commissioner Stan Smith, District 6

Comm Smith led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.
CM Rudometkin announced that item 3a will be postponed to February 17th.

3. Presentations

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

4. Public Comments & Announcements

Mayor Carson opened for public comments and announcements.

- Marthaly Irizarry, residing at 6431 Kearce Street, Orlando, thanked the Council for the opportunity to introduce herself as a candidate for Orange County Commission, District 3, and is looking forward to working with the city and its residents in the future.

There being no further comment, Mayor Carson closed public comments.

5. Consent Items

a. Approval of the City Council Meeting Minutes - January 20, 2026

Comm Partin moved to approve the consent items as presented.

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

6. Unfinished Business

a. 3904 Arajo Court Update

CM Rudometkin reported that an updated email was sent to the Mayor and Commissioners with recent correspondence from Bernard regarding the property. The email included a copy of a quitclaim deed indicating a change in ownership. Staff noted they were unsure whether it had been recorded and will verify. He noted that the new owner, Bernard, indicated plans to begin work on the house and backyard during the week of February 17–20, with work continuing through March and an anticipated completion in April.

CM Rudometkin said that a site visit conducted by Phil and him before the meeting confirmed that the lawn and weeds had been trimmed and that a roll-off container had been removed; however, no interior work or significant improvements were observed. Staff noted that Bernard said Lizar's health-related issues

have caused delays. CM Rudometkin recommended allowing the new owner approximately one month to begin work and submit the remaining documentation, with the item to be brought back to Council at the March 3 meeting to assess progress, initiate a hard conversation, and determine next steps if necessary. Comm Lance shared his concerns and said he agrees to the 30-day period; if nothing happens within that time, he will consider moving forward with the condemnation.

Mayor Carson stated that the matter has been ongoing for an extended period and that prior discussions and deadlines have already occurred. He expressed frustration with ongoing delays and lack of progress despite the guidance and time provided, noting that repeated extensions and shifting explanations have prevented resolution.

Comm Smith shared the same concerns, stating that the situation has cycled without meaningful progress. Comm Smith referenced prior representations that funding and approvals were in place to complete repairs, followed by subsequent changes in ownership and financing plans. He noted inconsistencies in the information provided over time and expressed his opinion that demolition of the structure should be considered.

Comm Bobrowski reported reviewing the Orange County Property Appraiser records and stated that, as of February 1, the property ownership had not changed and remains listed under the prior owner. She expressed concern that a quitclaim deed may not have been recorded. Based on the continued lack of progress, unresolved ownership status, and repeated delays, Comm Bobrowski said she supports moving forward with demolition and recommended ending further extensions or discussions. Comm Bobrowski also asked if there were any open code violations on the property. Comm Shuck and Comm Vertolli agreed with the statements and expressed opinions that demolition of the structure should be considered.

Comm Lowell asked whether existing condemnation proceedings remain in effect if property ownership changes. Attorney Schaffer said that condemnation actions run with the structure, not the owner, and therefore do not restart upon a transfer of ownership. The prospective owner has been involved in the process for several months and has had notice throughout. Restarting proceedings due to ownership changes would allow indefinite delays, which is inconsistent with the intent of the code.

There being no further discussion, Comm Bobrowski moved to require payment in full of all outstanding code enforcement fines within thirty (30) days before any other action is taken on the property. The intent is to ensure compliance with existing obligations and to emphasize that the City expects immediate accountability moving forward.

Comm Partin seconded the motion for discussion.

Comm Bobrowski amended her motion to require that all code enforcement and legal fees be paid within 30 days; if not, we will proceed to demolition.

Comm Partin seconded the amendment.

The Council discussed accumulated attorney fees and demolition costs. Attorney Schaffer clarified that any liens on the property remain attached to the property, not the owners. Council consensus was to have the City Manager notify the new homeowner of the Council's decision and to include all open fines and legal fees.

Comm Smith asked. In response to the motion, he asked what the city's position is if the outstanding code enforcement fines are not paid within thirty (30) days. Attorney Schaffer said the City retains its existing legal authority to proceed with demolition without restarting the condemnation process. The notice and enforcement actions remain with the property regardless of ownership changes. If the fines are paid within the allotted time, no automatic approval or relief is granted; further action would require a subsequent motion by the Council. Payment would demonstrate compliance and investment by the owner but would not prevent future enforcement, including demolition, if progress is not made. The City would remain financially protected, having recovered fines, and the enforcement process would continue without resetting.

7. New Business

a. Wildan Contract Extension

CM Rudometkin provided an update on the ongoing stormwater study, noting that it has been underway for several years and is planned to be completed in 2026. Due to prior setbacks, including delaying a fee increase last year for Council approval, the study was not finalized as originally anticipated. Staff cannot extend the current contract beyond March without Council approval and are requesting authorization to extend it through the end of the fiscal year. No additional funding is requested; the extension is for time only. Once completed, stormwater fees will be addressed through the budget process, in light of the property tax reductions in coordination with the Council and the budget committee.

Comm Smith and Comm Lowell asked why it took so long. CM Rudometkin said that issues remain regarding how stormwater charges should be applied to businesses and residents, specifically the distinction between charging by parcel versus dwelling unit, and whether current commercial rates are correct. April Fisher is currently assisting with the project. Because rate increases were not included in last year's budget due to focus on the fire millage, the study was delayed. Staff are coordinating with Attorney Langley to clarify the distinction between parcels and dwelling units and to complete the remaining analysis. The study was originally anticipated to return to Council in April; however, staff requested additional time, potentially through the end of the fiscal year, to allow flexibility during the budget process. The original contract was approximately \$54,000. There will not be any cost increase associated with the extension to complete the work.

After further discussion, Comm Lowell moved to extend the contract to May 2026 with a one-time 30-day extension option.

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

b. Heron Bronze Statue Placement

CM Rudometkin reported on a Heron bronze statue purchased by the City in 2018 for \$9,000, which includes a water feature. The statue was originally intended for the fountain at the Nela roundabout, but the fountain could not accommodate it, so it was placed at Public Works for storage. Residents have inquired about its location and potential locations in the city, including Venetian, Wallace, Regal, and Trimble Park. He also noted that a resident approached him to purchase it for their home. Council discussed potential locations for the statue, including City Hall, parks, and other city properties. Considerations included whether to use the water feature, power requirements for lighting or pumps, safety, maintenance, cost, and securing the statue. Commissioner Partin suggested placing it near City Hall. It was noted that placing it near the police station could deter vandalism. Once the location was determined, Comm Lance asked that the name of the Fountain remain the Harvey Readey Fountain. **After discussion, Comm Smith moved, seconded by Comm Partin, to have staff scout potential locations, with or without the water feature, and return with options for Council consideration. Motion passed unanimously 7:0.**

8. Attorney's Report - na

9. City Manager's Report

a. City Manager's Report and Work Plan

- CM Rudometkin announced the Arbor Day celebration and invited all residents to attend on Saturday, February 7th. He also announced that March 14th is Police Appreciation Day.
- Lancaster House - Staff met with Brian Leahy regarding the Lancaster House fence. It was confirmed that Pioneer Days will pay for the fence along the south and east sides. Installation will occur after the exterior work is completed; the fence will be installed once either CCA or Lancaster finishes their respective construction. The lease currently calls for fencing on all four sides, but staff discussed modifying it to cover only the south and east sides, with a white picket fence planned for the west and north sides. Mr. Leahy will review this with Chairman Brooks. Once finalized and costs are determined, the lease will be updated and returned to Council for approval, with a project start date of March.
- Sol Avenue – CM Rudometkin reported delays in the final reimbursement due to the contractor's refusal to provide a required compliance memo for Attachment A. DEP confirmed prevailing wage was not

required for the project. The contractor has not provided the requested signature, and staff are working with DEP on alternative compliance documentation. Reimbursement is still expected, but the timing remains uncertain.

- FEMA – Still under review.
- RFPs – Staff will have four RFPs to go out in Feb/March

b. Chief's Report

Chief Grimm announced that Officer Ramos will be leaving his post to join the Navy. The staff wished him well. Chief Grimm thanked the Council for their support of the staff and the military. He announced that CCA will start on the gymnasium building and will have some road closures during school hours. He announced the upcoming Arbor Day event, Pioneer Days, and CCA Casino Night.

c. Public Works Report

In response to a Council question, staff reported smelling a propane or gas odor near the Lancaster House while on site; the source was unknown and may have been related to demolition activity at the nearby school. Fire trucks were later observed at the school in response to a reported gas issue, though no emergency activity was apparent, and no confirmed information was received.

Phil Proce, the Public Works Director, noted the city experienced unusually cold temperatures over the weekend but had no water main breaks or significant pipe damage. Parks and irrigation backflows were inspected; only minor leaks were observed, which may self-seal. Staff will continue monitoring conditions.

10. Mayor's Report

Mayor Carson announced the upcoming Arbor Day event on February 7 at City Hall and noted she would be unable to attend due to a family commitment. A tentative community event with the Belle Isle Police Department is scheduled for March 14 at Warren Park, and residents are encouraged to attend. The Mayor also recognized the Pine Castle Historical Society's jelly cook-off as a successful community event despite the cold weather

11. Commissioners' Report

The Mayor and Council expressed appreciation to City staff, Public Works, and Public Safety for their continued efforts.

Comm Lance asked whether the PD could obtain the deceased individual's name so he could send a condolence card to their family. He also asked that Council members' cell phone usage during commissioner meetings be added to the agenda. Council agreed to have the City Manager meet with Comm Lance to gather additional information before committing to an agenda item.

Commissioner Smith asked whether Council members had received an invitation to meet with the Orange County Clerk of Courts and suggested extending an invitation to attend a Council meeting. He also announced his resignation from the Council, effective April 7, 2026, and thanked the Council and residents for their support and the opportunity to serve.

The City Clerk noted the Code requires a 30-day posting period followed by an additional 30 days, and suggested posting the vacancies earlier, in February, to avoid delays. Council referenced a similar approach used previously. Council discussed the upcoming vacancies for Districts Six and Seven, which will be effective at the first meeting in April. With the Council's consensus, vacancies may be posted in advance to ensure timely appointments.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Mayor called for adjournment, unanimously approved at 7:50 pm.