



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL SECOND PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 * 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Ed Gold
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance (conf call)
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell
District 6 Commissioner – Christopher Oller
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

N/A

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum

Mayor Carson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, and the Clerk confirmed quorum.

City Manager Rick Rudometkin, Attorney Langley, Deputy Chief Millis, Public Works Director Phil Price, Finance Director Tracey Richardson, Compliance Officer Maureen McKuhen, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. Invocation and Pledge to the Flag - Comm Partin led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.

3. Second Budget Hearing & Adoption FY 2026/2027

- a. Proposed Budget FY 2026/2027 by City Manager Rudometkin - State the % increase over the rolled-back rate and the reasons for the increase.

CM Rudometkin stated that this was the second and final public hearing for adoption of the FY 2026–2027 Budget. The resolutions before Council were Resolution 26-13, adopting the final millage rate, and Resolution 26-14, adopting the final budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2026, and ending September 30, 2027. He reported that the rollback rate is 4.6449 mills and the final proposed millage rate is 4.7845 mills, which is 3.01% above the rollback rate. He emphasized that the 4.7845 rate is the same millage rate as the current fiscal year and therefore does not represent an increase in the City's millage rate from the prior year. CM Rudometkin explained that the only change to the proposed budget since it was originally presented occurred at the first public hearing, when Council reduced the proposed millage rate from 4.9999 mills to 4.7845 mills. No other changes were made to the proposed budget.

Council requested clarification on why the millage remained above the rollback rate. CM Rudometkin explained that the City previously increased its millage in response to significant increases in the cost of Orange County fire protection services, as the City does not operate its own fire department. He said fire protection costs increased by about \$110,000 this year, bringing the City's annual fire service expense to nearly \$3.1 million. Although an additional millage increase had initially been proposed for FY 2026–2027 to help offset increasing fire costs, Council decided at the first public hearing not to proceed with that increase and instead maintained the existing 4.7845 millage rate.

b. Citizen Comments

Mayor Carson opened for Citizen Comments on the Adoption of the FY2026/2027 Budget.

- Rick Miller, residing at 2001 Nela Avenue, thanked Council for maintaining a steady millage rate but

expressed concern that there had not been substantive discussion regarding reducing operating expenses. He stated that using reserves to fund recurring operations is not sustainable and encouraged Council and the public to discuss cost-saving measures, including renegotiating contracts and considering temporary salary or hiring freezes. Mr. Miller encouraged the City to continue discussions with Orange County about rising fire service costs while focusing on expenses within the City's control. He specifically referenced the Personnel Policy Manual and expressed concern regarding delegated authority for certain salary increases, implementation of the Police step plan, and potential employee bonuses. He suggested that, during the current period of cost containment, Council should review such expenditures through the consent agenda and requested that Council consider freezing those actions until the budget has been aligned with the expenses.

- Dr. Jason Battle, residing at 3109 Indian Drive, raised concerns regarding the City's ongoing budget imbalance. He referenced the approximately \$1 million difference between recurring revenues and expenditures discussed during the prior budget presentation and asked how the City intends to address the issue in future years. Mr. Battle said his concern was similar to the previous speaker's comments and asked Council to consider how the City will address the recurring shortfall going forward so the issue does not continue from year to year.

CM Rudometkin clarified that the approximately \$1 million shortfall being discussed is a potential future revenue reduction if Amendment Three passes in November. He stated that the City, with assistance from Rick Miller, completed an initial assessment of the potential impact. He explained that the FY 2026–2027 Budget includes approximately \$5.7 million in ad valorem revenue, while Police and Fire expenditures together total almost \$8 million. The City uses other non-ad valorem revenues and transfers to cover General Fund expenses. He said the City's unrestricted fund balance is about \$2.5 million, or 23.7%, which serves as a reserve for hurricanes, catastrophes, and other needs. If Amendment Three passes, initial estimates indicate the City could receive just over \$1 million less in revenue by the end of 2027, with an additional potential reduction of approximately \$700,000 to \$800,000 the following year. The City Manager stated that the budget was being adopted based on current conditions. If the amendment passes, the City will then work with Council, committees, and interested residents to discuss reductions and expenditures that could be deferred or not made. He emphasized that an amount included in the budget does not have to be spent and that unspent funds return through reconciliation to the unrestricted fund balance.

Mr. Miller clarified that his concern about the approximately \$1 million shortfall relates to the current operating budget, not solely to the potential impact of Amendment Three. He stated that the existing shortfall still needs to be addressed and that, if the amendment passes, it could create an additional financial challenge.

CM Rudometkin acknowledged the current budget shortfall but said that, after using available funds, the City would still have about \$2.5 million in reserves. Mr. Miller expressed concern about using reserves for ongoing operations, stating that reserves could instead be used for one-time expenses, such as swales or the Venetian area, and that using reserves for recurring operating expenses is not sustainable. CM Rudometkin noted that an increase had been proposed to help cover expenses, but Council decided to maintain the current revenue level.

c. Council Discussion

Mayor Carson opened for council discussion; there being none, he closed council discussion.

d. State the taxing authority, rolled-back rate, % increase over the rolled-back rate, and the millage rate to be levied

CM Rudometkin read the required information prior to adoption of the resolutions. He stated that the taxing authority is the City of Belle Isle, Florida, the rollback rate is 4.6449 mills, and the millage rate represents a 3.01% increase over the rollback rate. The millage rate to be levied is 4.7845 mills, which is the City's current millage rate and has not increased.

e. RESOLUTION 26-13 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL MILLAGE RATE FOR THE LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE FOR THE

FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Carson read Resolution 26-13 by title and called for a motion.

Comm Bobrowski moved to adopt Resolution 26-13 of the City of Belle Isle of Orange County, Florida, adopting the final millage rate for the levy of ad valorem taxes for the city of Belle Isle for the fiscal year beginning October one, 2026, and ending on September 30, 2027, providing for an effective date.

Seconded by Comm Gold, which passed 6:0 upon roll call, as Comm Lance was absent for the vote.

- f. RESOLUTION 26-14 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Carson read Resolution 26-14 by title and called for a motion.

Comm Bobrowski moved to adopt Resolution 26-14 of the City of Belle Isle of Orange County, Florida, adopting the final budget for the City of Belle Isle for the fiscal year beginning October 1st, 2026, ending on September 30th, 2027, providing for an effective date.

Seconded by Vice Mayor Lowell, which passed 6:0 upon roll call, as Comm Lance was absent for the vote.

- g. Close Second Budget Public Hearing

There being no further business, Mayor Carson closed the Public Budget Hearing.

4. Public Hearing to Adopt Five-Year CIP Included in FY 2026/2027 Budget

- a. Proposed Five-Year CIP Included in FY 2026/2027 Budget

CM Rudometkin stated that the proposed Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was included in the FY 2026–2027 Budget and had been presented throughout the budget process. He noted that the CIP had been reviewed during three workshops, two Budget Committee meetings, and one public hearing, and that a synopsis of the CIP was also presented at the previous Council meeting.

- b. Citizen Comments

Mayor Carson opened for citizen comments; there being none, he closed citizen comments.

- c. Council Discussion

Mayor Carson opened for council discussion; there being none, he closed council discussion.

- d. RESOLUTION 26-15 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2031; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Comm Bobrowski moved to adopt Resolution 26-15 of the City of Belle Isle of Orange County, Florida, adopting the five-year capital program for the period beginning October 1st, 2026, and ending September 30th, 2031, providing for an effective date. Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed which passed 6:0 upon roll call, as Comm Lance was absent for the vote.

- e. Close Public Hearing to Adopt Five-Year CIP Included in FY 2026/2027 Budget

There being no further business, Mayor Carson closed the Public Budget Hearing.

Mayor Carson announced that Comm Lance was no longer on the conference call due to connection issues. Comm Carson called for a motion to excuse Comm Lance from the meeting.

Comm Bobrowski moved to excuse Comm Lance from the meeting.

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

5. Public Comments & Announcements

Mayor Carson opened for public comment and announcements.

- Former Comm Frank Vertolli, residing at 5106 St. Marie Avenue, discussed the former Pine Castle Elementary School property located at 905 Walton Avenue, consisting of approximately 53,603 square feet. The speaker stated that purchasing the property could benefit the City by increasing its property footprint and encouraged Council to pursue the property and make a reasonable offer. He suggested the City consider a bond issue to finance the purchase, allowing the City to acquire the property now and determine its future

use later.

- Dr. Jason Battle referenced the previous discussion regarding a resident's trailer parked in a driveway and asked whether there had been any resolution to the matter. He suggested that Council consider allowing a trailer to remain if it is screened from view, such as by a fence, shrubbery, or other screening, and asked that this option be considered as part of any future discussion.
- Antonio DeViva, Chair of the Belle Isle Special Events Committee, provided an update on upcoming community activities. He stated that the Committee currently has three open seats and that prior event-planning experience is not required. He announced that Boogie on the Bridge will be held October 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., giving families and residents an evening to dance, trick-or-treat, and gather as a community. He stated that the Committee is seeking one or two title sponsors, including support for a proposed light show on the bridge, as well as local business sponsors and "Candy Champions" willing to participate and donate candy for children. He encouraged anyone interested in joining the Committee, sponsoring the event, or becoming a Candy Champion to contact the Special Events Committee and emphasized that community events provide opportunities for neighbors to meet, families to make memories, and local businesses to support the Belle Isle community.

6. Presentations

a. CE Appeal 26-0405 - 5275 Jade Circle

Mayor Carson opened discussion of appeal 26-0405.

CM Rudometkin introduced the Garcia family and Code Compliance Officer Maureen McKuhen.

CO McKuhen reported that the department issued a courtesy notice on August 8 regarding a canopy shelter at the property. After the courtesy notice, the property owners were given two extensions to address the matter. At the beginning of September, the canopy remained in place, and the City issued a Notice of Violation with the applicable fine. She referenced the City Code definition of a canopy shelter as a canvas, polyester, or other fabric structure constructed in a tent-like manner and used to store motor vehicles, watercraft, utility trailers, or other equipment. CO McKuhen stated that canopy shelters are not permitted in residential districts and that replacement of a previously authorized canopy shelter is not permitted.

Janelle and Ariel Garcia, 5275 Jade Circle, addressed Council regarding a code violation of an accessory structure under Code Section 50-102. Mrs. Garcia stated that a white canopy has been located behind their fence since May 2024 to protect their boat from the elements. She explained that they selected a white canopy to match their home and gate and that the structure does not obstruct neighboring properties. She also noted that their neighborhood has an optional HOA and that the HOA had not raised concerns regarding the canopy. Mrs. Garcia stated that they were surprised to receive the violation after the canopy had been in place without complaints. She noted that they had observed similar accessory structures at other properties throughout Belle Isle and discussed other property maintenance conditions they had observed in the City and their neighborhood. The Garcias requested that the City consider a variance for the canopy, emphasizing that it is located behind their gate, screens the boat from view, and is being used to protect their boat. They stated that boating and access to the Conway Chain of Lakes were important reasons they chose to live in Belle Isle and asked Council to consider their circumstances when reviewing the violation.

Comm Lowell asked about the prior courtesy notices and wondered why they were surprised to receive the violation. Mrs. Garcia explained that they had hoped the matter might be resolved as the City continued discussing similar canopy cases and possible changes. They stated that the canopy had been in place for several years and that they believed the City's approach might change. They confirmed that they paid the citation promptly and appeared before Council to discuss the matter.

Comm Gold stated that the property is within his district and compared the canopy to an enclosed structure located on his own property. He stated that, based on the photographs, he did not believe the two structures differed aesthetically. He supported reviewing and changing the applicable Code provision,

particularly since there had been no complaints from neighboring properties. He acknowledged that Code Compliance had appropriately enforced the existing Code but said the Code itself may need reconsideration when a structure is not creating an aesthetic issue or negatively affecting neighboring properties. Comm Gold referenced the fee schedule and other City requirements he would like Council to review later, including permitting requirements for items such as installing a ceiling fan. He stated that he did not intend to address all of those matters that evening. Regarding the canopy, Comm Gold asked Council to consider a variance for the property while the City reviews the broader regulations. He agreed that any future changes should include standards or “guardrails” rather than allowing all structures without restriction. He stated that, based on the photographs, the canopy appeared to be in keeping with the community and provided a more cost-effective option than a permanent structure.

Comm Partin agreed that the Code should be reviewed but stated that any changes should include appropriate standards, such as requiring replacement when a canopy becomes damaged or deteriorated. Comm Partin noted that the canopy is located behind the fence, provides a roof over the boat, and that not every resident can afford a more expensive aluminum structure. He also clarified that staff enforces the ordinances currently in place. Under the existing ordinance, the canopy is not permitted; however, Council could meet, discuss the ordinance, and consider changes moving forward.

Mayor Carson agreed that the Code should be revisited and said several provisions may need revision. He noted that, although this may appear to be a small issue, it directly impacts residents; similar canopies have existed in other neighborhoods without creating problems; and he acknowledged that the courtesy notice was issued and extensions were provided under the current process. Mayor Carson expressed support for reviewing these types of issues and available options more broadly and making changes to the Code as needed.

CM Rudometkin said that Code Compliance is responsible for enforcing the ordinances adopted by Council. He explained that staff first provides courtesy notice and, if the violation is not corrected, proceeds with a Notice of Violation as required by the existing Code. CM Rudometkin shared his appreciation for the Code Compliance Officer's work and noted that residents have an opportunity to bring their cases before Council. He said the fee schedule and other permitting requirements could be reviewed later, noting that certain permits, such as those involving electrical work, are required for safety and regulatory purposes. CM Rudometkin suggested that, rather than continuing to address canopy issues individually, Council may want to consider a broader approach while reviewing the regulations.

Comm Gold suggested temporarily suspending enforcement related to canopies until Council could discuss the issue and possible changes. The Council member requested guidance from the City Attorney regarding whether such a suspension could legally be implemented.

Attorney Langley advised that Council could direct the City Manager to temporarily suspend enforcement of the applicable canopy provision for a specified period of time while the matter is reviewed. He clarified that a Charter amendment would not be required to change the regulation. Any proposed Code amendment would first go before the Planning and Zoning Board and then come before the City Council for two readings of an ordinance.

The City Clerk, Code Compliance Supervisor, said the department is currently handling about 20 canopy violations, including some resulting from complaints by neighboring residents. She asked Council to consider establishing clear parameters before suspending enforcement, so Code Compliance staff would know what types of canopies would be acceptable during any temporary suspension. She expressed concern that a broad suspension without standards could result in structures such as tarps being placed in driveways or front yards to cover vehicles, potentially affecting the appearance of the community. She acknowledged the need for canopies in some circumstances but emphasized that Council should also consider their location and appearance. She requested that Council provide clear guidance with Code Compliance before placing the violations on hold.

Attorney Langley cautioned that the City cannot enforce the Code based on verbal or subjective standards. He explained that enforcement cannot be applied differently depending on whether staff believes

a particular canopy looks acceptable. He stated that Council could either enforce the existing provision, suspend enforcement of the provision, or address the specific property currently before Council. However, Council could not direct Code Compliance to continue enforcement against some properties while excluding others based on appearance without established standards in the Code.

Council discussed whether to place a temporary moratorium on canopy enforcement or address the matter on a case-by-case basis while reviewing the Code. Attorney Langley advised against establishing informal enforcement standards that could lead to unequal application of the Code and suggested that Council could instead grant the property owner a temporary exception while considering future amendments.

Several Council members emphasized that the existing Code remains in effect and Code Compliance properly followed the enforcement process, including issuing courtesy notices before the violation. Council expressed support for reviewing the canopy regulations but stressed the need to establish a schedule and clear standards before making changes. Staff noted that canopies are one of several recurring issues, along with RVs and vehicle parking, that could be brought to Council together for broader Code review. Council also discussed the \$50 violation and the separate \$50 fee the property owner paid to bring the matter before Council. Comm Bobrowski suggested allowing the violation to stand while refunding the hearing fee. Staff clarified that payment of the violation does not correct the underlying violation and that additional violations could be issued while the canopy remains in place. The Code Compliance Officer stated that enforcement had been paused once the appeal was received pending Council's consideration. Council further discussed potentially granting the property owner a six-month exception, allowing the existing canopy to remain while Council reviews the ordinance. The proposed approach would maintain the original \$50 violation, refund the \$50 hearing fee, and provide Council with time to consider amendments to the Code. Staff clarified that Council may determine on a case-by-case basis whether to uphold or refund applicable fees and penalties based on the information presented.

Discussion ensued, and the Council discussed whether the Garcia family could be granted a variance or whether the canopy could be considered permitted. Attorney Langley clarified that the canopy does not comply with the current Code and that Council could not declare it compliant under the existing ordinance.

Comm Bobrowski moved to waive the \$50 appeal fee and grant the Garcia Family a six-month enforcement exception while the City reviews the applicable canopy provisions of Section 50-102. Comm Gold seconded the motion.

During discussion, Comm Gold Council suggested that the future review could include a workshop and an opportunity for public input regarding appropriate community standards for canopies. Staff stated that the proposed Code review would first come to Council for direction on how Council wished to proceed. Council clarified that the six-month exception applied only to the Garcias' property and was not a citywide moratorium. Other property owners could bring their individual cases before Council for consideration.

The motion passed 4-2 with Comm Shuck and Comm Lowell, nay.

7. Consent Items

- a. Approval of the FY 2026/2027 Fee Schedule
- b. RESOLUTION NO. 26-16 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES; SUPERSEDING THE REMAINING PROVISIONS OF THE POLICE PAY PLAN; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
- c. August 2026 Monthly Reports: PD, Finance (<https://cleargov.com/florida/orange/city/belle-isle>), and OC Fire

Comm Shuck moved to approve consent items as presented.

Vice Mayor Lowell seconded the motion.

Comm Partin discussed whether to remove the Personnel Policy item from the consent agenda after a question was raised regarding provisions related to compensation and Police Department pay. Because a motion and second to approve the consent agenda were already on the floor, Attorney Langley clarified that it would first need to address the pending motion unless it was withdrawn or otherwise modified.

Comm Shuck withdrew his motion.

Comm Partin moved to pull item b. Resolution 26-16.

Vice Mayor Lowell seconded the motion to pull item b to Unfinished Business, which passed unanimously.

Comm Bobrowski moved to approve items a and c as written.

Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

8. Unfinished Business

Comm Partin stated that the Personnel Policy item was raised in response to a resident's concerns about supervisors' and the City Manager's discretion to provide bonuses or other compensation. He requested clarification regarding those provisions. Finance Director Richardson explained that Council approved the bonus provision in 2021 through a resolution directing that the policy be incorporated into the Personnel Manual.

CM Rudometkin said the concerns raised about compensation and other expenditures were part of the broader budget discussion. He explained that, following the November vote regarding property taxes, the City would review expenditures that could be affected by any reduction in ad valorem revenue. CM Rudometkin noted that City expenses continue to increase and that, without corresponding revenue increases, Council may eventually need to consider reducing expenditures or services. He stated that these issues would require further discussion with Council once the outcome of the November vote is known. CM Rudometkin noted that, beginning January 1, 2027, the City would be required under new state law to prepare an example budget showing a 10% reduction for the next budget cycle. He noted that such a reduction could significantly impact the City and would be part of the upcoming budget discussions.

Comm Partin requested clarification regarding the language in Resolution 26-16 stating that the resolution would amend the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures and supersede the remaining provisions of the Belle Isle Police Department Salary Adjustment and Agreement. Finance Director Richardson explained that the language referred to provisions in a previously adopted resolution. She said that the Police Department Salary Adjustment and Agreement originally established the Police pay plan. When the City subsequently adopted its compensation plan, the salary portions of the Police pay plan were superseded, but certain remaining provisions continued in effect, including provisions related to court scheduling and bilingual pay. She stated that those remaining provisions were scheduled to expire on September 30. Resolution 26-16 would formally supersede those remaining provisions so that the updated Personnel Policies and Procedures would govern moving forward.

There being no further discussion, Comm Partin moved to adopt Resolution 26-16, amending the City of Belle Isle Personnel Policies and Procedures and superseding the remaining provisions of the Belle Isle Police Department Salary Adjustment and Agreement. Vice Mayor Lowell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously upon roll call.

9. New Business

a. Pine Castle ES Site - Purchase Consideration

CM Rudometkin provided an update regarding the former Pine Castle Elementary School property, stating that the City had been communicating with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) regarding its plans for the site. He explained that OCPS had previously considered constructing a STEAM school at an estimated cost of approximately \$50 million, but those plans did not move forward and the site was subsequently cleared. He reported that he recently learned that an offer had been submitted for the property. Following a public records request, he identified the offer as being from the ERA Foundation in the amount of \$1,210,000. OCPS advised the City that, if Belle Isle is interested in purchasing the property, the City may also submit a written offer for consideration. The City Manager stated that the property consists of approximately 6.06 acres and that he had begun discussing potential financing options with the City's bank.

CM Rudometkin also discussed Wallace Field, noting that if the organization associated with the charter school acquires the former elementary school property, Council may wish to explore whether Wallace Field could be returned to the City. He noted that other purchasers may be interested and that the property could become competitive. He presented the matter to Council for discussion and direction as to whether the City wished to submit an offer for the former Pine Castle Elementary School property.

Comm Partin provided background on the City's previous efforts to identify land acquisition opportunities, including properties near Daetwyler and McCoy, Judge and Conway, and the former Pine Castle Elementary School site. He said Pine Castle Elementary had been considered several years earlier, but potential plans by Orange County and later OCPS did not move forward. Comm Partin noted that the property had since been demolished and cleared and stated that an appraisal valued the approximately six-acre property at \$1.21 million, which was also the amount of the offer currently submitted. He also referenced previous public comments and communications from residents supporting consideration of the property. Comm Partin expressed support for the City finding a way to submit an offer, noting that the property's size provides opportunities for future City use or development. Although the Council had not yet determined a specific use, Comm Partin suggested the City could acquire the property, engage residents in potential uses, and develop a plan for the site. After some discussion, the Council spoke about potential financing, including the possibility of a bond, which was also raised for further discussion.

Comm Lowell noted that the organization associated with the school had already demonstrated an interest in the property by submitting an offer. She suggested that, if the City purchased the property, the City could potentially retain ownership of the land while working with the school for its future use, including the possibility of the school becoming a tenant. She stated that this could provide a "win-win" opportunity, allowing the City to acquire the property while continuing to work with the school.

CM Rudometkin stated that, if the City acquired the property, several options could be considered for its future use. These included entering into an agreement with the school, constructing a future City facility, or considering some form of shared use or development to help offset the cost of the property. He noted that discussions regarding ultimate use could occur after acquisition. He discussed potential financing options. He noted that one of the City's existing bond payments is ending, while the City continues to make an annual payment of approximately \$158,000 on the Bank of America building through 2040. Preliminary financing information from the City's bank included possible 10- and 15-year loan options, with interest rates ranging from approximately 4.73% to 4.86%. He stated that the City could also explore financing through the Florida League of Cities to determine whether more favorable rates are available. CM Rudometkin advised against purchasing the property entirely from the City's reserves. He stated that using approximately \$1.21 million from the current \$2.5 million reserve balance would reduce the reserve percentage from approximately 23% to 9.6%, significantly reducing the City's available financial cushion for hurricanes or other emergencies. He suggested that financing the purchase, potentially with a down payment and a smaller loan, may be a more appropriate option. He cautioned that Council should also consider the potential impact of Amendment Three, which could reduce City revenue by approximately \$1 million, along with annual debt service ranging from approximately \$150,000 to \$300,000, depending on the financing terms.

CM Rudometkin requested direction from Council regarding whether it wished to pursue the property and, if so, asked Council to establish negotiating parameters, including an amount the City could initially offer, and a maximum amount that could be negotiated before the matter would need to return to Council.

Attorney Langley clarified that the previously discussed offer was a nonbinding Letter of Intent (LOI), not a binding purchase offer. He explained that Council could authorize submission of an LOI to the School Board identifying a proposed purchase price and commercially reasonable terms, which would serve as a roadmap for a future purchase and sale agreement. He noted that a future agreement could include an

inspection period of approximately 90 days and a contingency allowing the City to withdraw if acceptable financing could not be obtained. He stated that the timing would likely extend beyond the November vote, allowing Council to consider the outcome before committing funds to the purchase. If the School Board accepted the City's proposed terms, a formal purchase and sale agreement would return to Council for approval. Attorney Langley recommended that Council focus at this stage on determining an acceptable purchase price and authorizing submission of the Letter of Intent, while allowing additional time to evaluate financing and whether to ultimately proceed with the purchase.

Comm Bobrowski expressed support for moving forward with a Letter of Intent as soon as possible. She suggested beginning with an offer approximately 5% above the \$1.21 million appraised value, noting the importance of demonstrating the City's interest in acquiring the property. She said that the City could continue evaluating how to finance the acquisition as the process moves forward and expressed concern that, if the City did not pursue the property, it could potentially be acquired for development that might increase traffic and other impacts in the surrounding area.

Comm Gold spoke briefly of the former Winn-Dixie property, now occupied by Wawa, as an example of why the City should consider acquiring property when it wants greater control over future development. He said City ownership of the former school property would allow the City to determine or influence its future use and could also provide the option to sell the property later.

The Council discussed the proposed purchase price. It was suggested that the City consider an amount between 5% and 10% above the \$1.21 million offer. Attorney Langley advised that the Letter of Intent should contain a specific purchase price rather than a range, noting that the Letter of Intent would become a public record once submitted. Council discussed that there was no need to significantly increase the initial offer because OCPS could seek additional offers and the matter could return to Council if the City needed to increase its proposed purchase price. CM Rudometkin reiterated that the Letter of Intent required a specific amount.

CM Rudometkin explained that, after the Letter of Intent is submitted, staff would remain in communication with OCPS regarding the process. If additional Council direction was needed, the matter could be brought back at a regular meeting or, if necessary, the Mayor could call a special meeting for Council to consider any revised offer or next steps.

There being no further discussion, Comm Partin motioned that the City move forward with the offer letter of intent for \$1,220,000. The motion was seconded by Comm Oller, which passed unanimously 6:0.

10. Attorney's Report – na

11. City Manager's Report

a. City Manager's Report and Work Plan

CM Rudometkin provided an update on the canals, stating that the City received a letter from Orange County that was provided to Council. Staff is coordinating a meeting with County representatives to discuss the matter. Following that meeting, staff will bring the information back to Council for further discussion. He also discussed a request from Pioneer Days regarding fencing at the Lancaster House. He explained that Pioneer Days had submitted a request for approximately \$7,000 through the BING Grant program toward the required fencing but was advised that the organization did not qualify for that program. Pioneer Days subsequently requested an opportunity to appear before Council to seek financial assistance. He explained that the lease agreement requires replacement of the existing fencing with a six-foot steel fence matching the fencing being installed by the neighboring school. The required fencing is sole-source and must be completed as part of the agreement. Council discussed the history of the Lancaster House project, previous funding discussions, the fencing requirements, and the effect of the fencing expense on funds intended for

renovations. CM Rudometkin clarified that the immediate question was only whether Council wished to place the funding request on a future agenda for consideration. Council reached consensus to allow Pioneer Days to present its request, and staff stated that the item would be placed on the October 6 agenda.

b. Chief's Report

Deputy Chief Millis reported that activity on the lakes has begun to decrease with the start of fall. He also reported a recent increase in vehicle burglaries, particularly around commercial properties and gyms, with some incidents also occurring in residential areas. He noted similar activities throughout Orange County. The Agency is increasing patrols in the affected commercial areas and neighborhoods. DC Millis thanked residents for providing video footage, noting that community assistance has helped the Department's investigations.

c. Public Works Report

Public Works Director Price reported that staff has been coordinating with Middlesex regarding upcoming roadway paving. Following the paving of Fairlane Avenue between Randolph and Hansel, the City is also scheduled to pave Waltham Avenue between Randolph and Hansel. The contractor accelerated the schedule and plans to complete the work Sunday evening, with work expected to be completed before school traffic begins Monday morning. He said a notice would be distributed to residents about the paving schedule. Mr. Price noted that Middlesex previously completed the McCoy Road paving project and performed well.

d. Code Compliance Report

CCO McKuhen reported that 82 cases were handled during August, with 42 cases closed during the month. Tall grass was the most common violation, with 11 cases, of which 10 were closed. In response to a Council question regarding accessory structures listed in the monthly report, she clarified that those cases currently relate to canopy structures. She reported that five canopy cases were opened and six were closed during August, including a case carried over from July.

12. Mayor's Report

Mayor Carson reported that discussions are continuing with the mayors of the other municipalities regarding issues involving Orange County. He stated that meetings have been occurring regularly and that efforts are underway to meet with individuals expected to take office following the November election. He stated that he would continue to keep Council informed as those discussions progress. Mayor Carson encouraged Council members to develop relationships with Orange County Commissioners, particularly given the anticipated transition in representation for the City's district. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that County officials are familiar with Belle Isle and maintaining relationships that allow the City to advocate for its interests and concerns. He concluded by thanking Public Works, the Police Department, and City staff for their continued work and specifically recognized staff efforts during the budget process.

13. Commissioners' Report

- Comm Partin commented on the Lancaster House, stating that additional information provided during the meeting may affect her consideration of the matter. He noted that he has supported preserving the property because of its historical significance but has also heard from residents who do not support continued investment in the structure. He said his goal has been to find a way to maintain the property while recognizing the differing views within the community. Comm Partin expressed concern regarding inaccurate information being shared on social media, particularly regarding the Bank of America property. He clarified that the property is expected to generate approximately \$492,000 in revenue during the next budget year and encouraged residents with questions to contact the City or Council for accurate information. Comm Partin thanked Public Works Director Price for working with the City of Orlando regarding traffic conditions near 5502 South Conway Road. He explained that the closure of Cove Road has led motorists to make unsafe movements through the turn lanes on Conway Road. He reported that traffic delineators, similar to those

used on Hoffner Avenue, are expected to be installed to help address the issue.

- Comm Bobrowski reported attending an Orange County community meeting and thanked Sergeant Wasman and Officer Kimberlin for attending on behalf of the City. She described the meeting as small but productive and noted that it provided an opportunity for residents and officials to discuss lake-related concerns and possible solutions in a civil setting, and the importance of continued dialogue regarding the lakes because Belle Isle is a lake community. Comm Bobrowski thanked the City's Police officers and Code Compliance Officer Maureen for her work. Comm Bobrowski acknowledged the challenges of Code enforcement and said that, while Council can consider changes to existing regulations, the City has an obligation to enforce the Code as currently adopted unless it is changed.

Comm Bobrowski announced the upcoming Boogie on the Bridge event and stated that, as in the previous year, she planned to set up a tent and distribute candy. She suggested rebranding the tent as a Commissioners' Tent and invited other Council members to contribute toward the cost. She said she would handle purchasing, packaging, setup, and distribution, but noted that supplying enough candy for the number of children attending could cost about \$500.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn, unanimously approved at 8:30 pm.