



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 6:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a regular workshop meeting at 6:00 p.m. on September 24, 2025, in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor
Ray Kerr, Vice Mayor/Commissioner District 2
David Tagliarini, Commissioner District 1
Eddie McGeehen, Commissioner District 3
Housh Ghovae, Commissioner District 4

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CHARTER OFFICERS PRESENT: Clint Belk, Acting City Manager
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk
Andrew Laflin, Finance Director
Thomas Trask, City Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brooks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Clara VanBlargan called the roll. All were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A. Presentation – Shumaker Advisors

Jim Talor of Shumaker Advisors provided a legislative update to the Board. Mr. Taylor explained that the firm currently represents Madeira Beach at the state level and had successfully secured \$100,000 for the seawall project in the past legislative session. He noted that in total, Shumaker

Advisors has delivered approximately \$4 million in state funding to the City since their representation began, and around \$46 million to all their clients in the past year.

Mr. Taylor discussed the upcoming legislative session, noting that leadership remains unchanged, with Senator Hooper serving as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Representatives Chaney and Diceglie as key local advocates. He outlined the timeline for the legislative session, with committee weeks starting October 6, followed by the 60-day legislative sprint beginning January 13.

Mr. Taylor highlighted that Shumaker's services include identifying appropriations opportunities, working with staff and the Board to develop proposals, and regularly updating the City during the session. He mentioned that this year would focus on property tax reform, with lawmakers examining the potential elimination of ad valorem taxes and their impact on local governments.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Ghovae asked about Mr. Taylor's connections in Tallahassee, and Mr. Taylor confirmed he has relationships with numerous lawmakers, particularly committee chairs and leadership in both chambers.

Mayor Brooks pointed out that Representative Chaney had been disappointed with how the City managed previous state funding for dredging, particularly the permitting process, which explained the limited appropriation for the current year. The Mayor said she begged Representative Chaney for the \$100,000 appropriation. They received the final permit for dredging last week.

B. Flood Insurance Letter

Acting City Manager Belk said Vice Mayor Kerr drafted a letter for the National Flood Insurance Program. The Vice Mayor said he wanted to send it to their federal representatives and share it as a template with other cities throughout Florida.

Vice Mayor Kerr explained that the timing was crucial, as people rebuilding after the hurricanes would face higher property values and, consequently, higher insurance costs.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Ghovae stated that they required additional support from the federal government. Commissioner Tagliarini agreed they need to send it to state and federal senators and congress members.

Mayor Brooks suggested that personalized letters would be more effective than form letters, noting that identical copies of letters tend to be disregarded by elected officials. She would bring up the issue at the Big-C meeting to encourage other coastal communities to create their own personalized letters. A good place to start would be to find the right person at the federal level who can make a difference.

C. Purple Heart Ceremony

Commissioner McGeehen said they are still working on the ceremony. They are currently working with the American Legion to find a Purple Heart recipient who is a resident.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Ghovae asked Commissioner McGeehen to contact Father Bob, the co-founder of Purple Heart, for guidance.

D. Strategic Planning

Acting City Manager Belk said the City Clerk received a proposal from the Florida Institute of City Government. City Clerk VanBlargan said she and the Mayor met with the representative and explained what they were looking for.

Mayor Brooks said they need a plan for the City. They have spent money on several different project designs that went nowhere. The road projects use the LOST Fund to pay for them, and other projects are proposing the same. The LOST Fund cannot be used for everything. They only receive a certain amount of money each year from the state for the fund. They need to examine the long-term projects they wish to undertake, how they will fund them, and develop a strategic plan for the City's growth. If Public Works could get appropriations, they might not need the LOST Fund for roadway projects. She feels very strongly that strategic planning would be beneficial for them.

Mayor Brooks said they should not waste staff's time and energy by not following through on projects presented to them. When plans are to be submitted to them, they should include details on how they will be funded.

Commissioner Tagliarini believed the strategic plan should be specific, and upon comparing the 2017 and 2018 strategic plans to the Master Plan draft, it was evident that most of the goals had been outlined and addressed through short-term, midterm, and long-term strategies. He requested clarification on the distinction between the Master Plan and strategic planning. Mayor Brooks thought the Master Plan was more of an overview rather than a specific plan. The strategic part of the Master Plan is how and when to implement and move forward with a project.

The Board's consensus was not to wait for a new city manager and directed the Acting City Manager and City Clerk to obtain two additional proposals, including Kimley-Horn, as they are familiar with the City's Master Plan.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

E. Public Works State Appropriation Request

Acting City Manager Belk said that he had sent a copy of the five-year Capital Improvement Plan to the Board of Commissioners. He believed the state appropriation request should come from the

Public Works Department because that department would be able to benefit the entire City. He would like the Board to rank the projects in the plan that they would like the lobbyist to push for.

Mayor Brooks opened public comment. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Tagliarini agreed with prioritizing public works projects. The continuation of the seawall project would benefit residents and tourists.

Marina Manager Brian Crabtree gave an update on the Marina Seawall Project.

Mayor Brooks recommended changing the City's lobbyist, suggesting that their previous lobbyist, RJ, who now operates his own firm, would provide better and more personalized service. She said RJ is local and well-known to city staff, and has stronger relationships in Tallahassee that would benefit the City. The acting city manager said that the contract with Shumaker Advisors automatically renews after 12 months and includes a 30-day written termination clause. In the event the client terminates, Shumaker Advisors will be entitled to compensation for the remaining initial term.

Vice Mayor Kerr said he did not think they were maximizing their grant opportunities. He would consider hiring a grant writer rather than an HR person. Directors should not spend time finding grants. Mayor Brooks said they contracted with GrantWorks, and they need someone at the top of the City to manage it. They were paid to try to obtain the FDEP Resilient Florida Grant. The Acting City Manager said he would invite GrantWorks to speak at a meeting.

Commissioner Tagliarini asked if they would prioritize the public works request and the marina request, as they are all infrastructure-related and storm-related. Mayor Brooks said yes.

Commissioner Ghovae recommended that, if phases of a project are going to take several years, the entire cost of the phases be combined so the consultants would not be encouraged to raise their fees to match what is budgeted. Mayor Brooks said they need to put it in bytes when they ask the state for money, or else the number would be too big.

Mayor Brooks said the deadline to submit their appropriation request to Representative Chaney is November 21. The Community Development Director said that they typically create a critical path method for the entire project and communicate the project milestones to the grant provider. Provided the project milestones were being met, the funding would continue.

F. Rebid Information Technology Contract (Network People/Integris)

Mayor Brooks said when the item was brought up, the City Manager said they could discuss putting it out to bid. They contracted two years ago and would have to buy out the next three years. A \$250,000 grant was available from the state when they went to bid, but they did not apply for it. It has been three years, which amounts to \$750,000 they missed out on. Subsequently, they entered into a contract for \$60,000 that the Board did not approve. She asked the Acting City Manager to find out what they are providing for the additional monthly \$5,000. The majority of what they are doing under the additional contract was already included in the original bid package.

Mayor Brooks stated that the city manager at the time signed a contract for \$60,000, but he only had the authority to sign contracts for up to \$30,000. Is the contract valid? The City Attorney stated that there is a strong argument that the \$60,000 contract is invalid. The Vice Mayor asked if they had been paying for something that was part of the bid package. The City Clerk said she would research it.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

G. Selection of Recruiting Firm – City Manager and other Senior Vacant Positions

Acting City Manager Belk explained that Commissioner Tagliarini and Assistant City Manager Megan Powers interviewed three firms. He asked for direction from the Board.

Ms. Powers explained the item. She and Commissioner Tagliarini recommended S. Renee Narloch & Associates.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comments. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Ghovae asked about using ICMA for recruitment, but Mayor Brooks explained that previous ICMA listings for other positions had not been successful in generating applications. Commissioner Ghovae asked about the cost. Ms. Powers said their recommended charges are a \$26,500 lump sum plus expenses not to exceed \$5,450. The firm will help with a nationwide search. Commissioner Tagliarini said they may need to consider the salary because it is on the low side.

The Board's consensus was to move forward with S. Renee Narloch & Associates.

H. Roles and Responsibilities for City Manager to be advertised

The Acting City Manager explained the item and said they would like to have the job description and be able to vote on it by October 1. Mayor Brooks asked if they would want the recruitment firm's input on writing the job description since they would be contracted with them. She held her thoughts until they have a contract with someone. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Tagliarini pointed out that candidates with connections to Board members should not lobby the Board and should not be considered if they do so.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

Vice Mayor Kerr said he would like to have a conversation about the city manager's spending authority. Mayor Brooks said she is not as concerned about the \$30,000 spending limit as she is about the way the purchasing policy has been used in the past. The purchasing policy could be written better. Having a transparent direction within the City is important for the Commission and the community. It will be a future line item for discussion.

Vice Mayor Kerr suggested adding the grant writing responsibility to the city manager's roles and responsibilities synopsis. Commissioner Tagliarini said they could give that to the recruitment firm as something they are looking for. Mayor Brooks asked everyone to be mindful, read it, and send it out accordingly.

The Board's consensus was to add the grant writing responsibilities, financial accountability, and maintaining required relationships to the roles and responsibilities.

5. CITY MANAGER (ACTING)

A. Restricted Swim Area Discussion

The Acting City Manager stated that there has been considerable discussion regarding what is and what is not allowed in swim zones, as per the ordinance. They should discuss better defining the ordinance.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment.

There were no public comments made against changing the ordinance to allow the fruit float to operate within the designated swim zone.

Those who commented in favor were as follows:

- Hannah Nygren, Owner of Fruit Float and Fruit Float Café
- Amanda Lee, Fruit Float employee
- Erica Hartman, Madeira Beach resident
- Amelia (?), Madeira Beach resident
- Steve (?), Boca Ciega Drive
- Sedona (?), Fruit Float employee
- Terry Anderson, John's Pass boat captain
- Matthew Staley, 500 129th Avenue

City Attorney Trask clarified that the ordinance only allows surfboards, paddleboards, and sailboats in swim zones; motorized vessels of any kind are prohibited, even if the motor is not running. If Fruit Float has been operating in the swim zones, it has violated the code. They cannot be in there with 2.5-horsepower engines.

Commissioner Tagliarini said he liked the idea, but something would need to be changed to make it work.

Vice Mayor Kerr said they are discussing whether any business should be allowed, and if they open it up, any business could mimic it, regardless of whether they are qualified or not. He expressed concern about safety in the pass with such a small boat. He said there would be no restriction if they navigated just outside the swim zone.

Commissioner McGeehen thought they could change the ordinance, and it was a great idea as long as the engines were not being run inside the swim zones. It should be allowed for businesses in Madeira Beach, and they should be permitted at City Hall, with each one assigned a number.

Commissioner Ghovae believed they did not have jurisdiction over the state's waters. The City Attorney said there is a Statute that would allow them to do it. It specifically provides them with the ability to create swim zones. That is their legal authority. 327.46 of the code allows for a restricted area. There are exceptions in the code, but the Fruit Float boat does not qualify.

The Board discussed the need to rewrite the code to allow for such operations, potentially. Mayor Brooks noted that other communities, such as St. Pete Beach, have ordinances permitting similar activities and recommended that the Community Development Department study those regulations and bring back recommendations. The Board agreed, but Vice Mayor Kerr also wanted further research on the business side of it, and whether they are allowed to operate on the sandbar.

Director Forbes agreed to research options and bring back a proposal that would maintain safety while allowing for managed commercial activity in swim zones.

The Acting City Manager said the Fruit Float would be considered a food truck, and the City does not regulate food trucks. It goes through the state.

B. Project Update

Acting City Manager Belk provided updates on several key projects:

- John's Pass Dredging - All permits have been received. Once they determine whether a turbidity curtain is required, they will be able to go out to bid. There is \$1.55 million in state appropriations for the project, but it is unclear if it will cover the entire cost.
- Jetty Sidewalk - Making the jetty sidewalk ADA-compliant would cost well over \$500,000. He suggested looking at other, less costly options. The Board discussed looking for grant opportunities rather than proceeding immediately.
- Snack Shack - The current contract will be terminated on November 1. The City will go out to bid for a new vendor, and the current vendor will be eligible to bid again.
- Swim Buoys - All 36 swim buoys have been installed throughout the beach, replacing the previous poles.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

The Board discussed concerns that the dredging might exceed the available funding and the high cost of the jetty sidewalk project. Commissioner Tagliarini asked how they would pay for the dredging if it went over the appropriations. Mayor Brooks said they can have the conversation when they get the bids. Aptim is committed to submitting the construction plans, technical

specifications, and documents to the City by October 2, so they can go to bid by October 8 and open the bids on November 21.

Vice Mayor Kerr suggested they turn the jetty sidewalk project over to GrantWorks and Representative Chaney for funding. Mayor Brooks said the Acting City Manager has been working with Al Carrier on the design. They should have a better idea of the cost when he is finished. The Vice Mayor said grant funds might be available for it because of the handicap access. Commissioner Tagliarini thought it should be low on their priority list.

They also reviewed the Snack Shack situation, with City Attorney Trask clarifying that the current vendor had defaulted on their contract by not paying rent and that the 90-day termination notice had been properly issued. Mayor Brooks did not understand why they were allowing the vendor to stay until November 1 without paying rent. The City Attorney said they still owe rent according to the contract. The Mayor asked if they could make them pay the back rent. The City Attorney stated that they have until November 1, and if they argue they have a right to be there, they must pay the back rent to cure the default. Their attorney is arguing that they do not have to pay it because the city manager stated they did not need to. The city manager did not have the authority to make that decision without Commission approval.

C. Legal Advice for Employees moving to Exempt Status

The Acting City Manager explained that, after consulting with labor attorney Rob Eshenfelder, they determined that many of the employees Gearing Group had recommended for exempt status were not eligible for such classification under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Out of 12 recommended employees, only three were moved to exempt status:

- Marina Manager
- Parking Supervisor
- Fire Marshal.

He emphasized that incorrectly classifying employees as exempt could result in severe penalties and back pay requirements. He wanted to ensure they got it right, and they would have a year to make any necessary adjustments. The Board agreed with the more cautious approach.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment. There were no public comments.

Mayor Brooks emphasized the need for an HR professional in the City. There is confusion between exempt status and non-exempt status. The Acting City Manager stated that it is based on the actual job duties, rather than the title of the position. They still do not have the job duties to make the determination. Mayor Brooks said HR duties are divided among multiple people. The Gehring Group did not fulfill the City's expectations because they did not conduct any interviews. The Acting City Manager stated that the Gehring Group responded to an email, indicating that they had made recommendations, and the City is entitled to act as it sees fit. The job descriptions are expected to be complete by the end of the week. Mayor Brooks did not understand how they could write a job description when they did not know the job duties.

D. City Purchasing Property

The Acting City Manager reviewed the item.

The Board discussed potential property purchases for a new public works building and fire training facility. Vice Mayor Kerr presented several options, including the STEM center property, which is already elevated, adjacent properties on Navajo Drive behind the fish store, and a property outside city limits, which was presented to them by former Mayor John Hendricks. The Vice Mayor stated that the STEM center would be his top priority.

Mayor Brooks informed the Board about a signed contract to purchase the Holton property for \$18 million, which was contingent on the Board's approval at the next meeting. She emphasized this was a unique opportunity to control the look of the property at the entrance to the City, noting it had appraised well above the purchase price. Potential uses could include building the public works building on part of the land, creating green space, building approved boat slips for revenue, or developing a restaurant. She was in favor of purchasing the property.

The Board expressed strong support for the purchase of the Holton property, viewing it as a significant long-term investment for the City. City Attorney Trask noted that the proposed 15-day closing timeline in the contract would need to be extended due to the necessity of conducting thorough due diligence. A counter proposal came in late today, but he has not read it yet.

The Board's consensus was to move forward with it and vote at the next regular meeting.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Noise Ordinance and Senate Bill 180 Compliance

Long Range Planner Andrew Morris explained the item and how other municipalities were addressing the issue. He discussed the City's noise ordinance and the limitations imposed by Senate Bill 180, which restricts cities from adopting more restrictive land development regulations. Staff proposed two recommendations. One is that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and the City Manager's Office should coordinate and provide regular updates about noise code enforcement to the Board. The other option is to coordinate through the Big-C to advocate for Senate Bill 180 to be amended, removing the restrictions on local governments related to amending their development regulations and comprehensive plans.

Community Development Director Marci Forbes explained that while the current noise ordinance prohibits noise audible from more than 50 feet away regardless of time of day, the way it is written is confusing. Commissioner Tagliarini recommended improving the tracking of noise complaints, providing clearer guidance for enforcement, and developing a handout for businesses to clarify the requirements.

The Board discussed enforcement challenges and agreed that the existing ordinance is adequate but needs clearer language and better enforcement. Mayor Brooks said she would be interested in the data on the number and location of noise complaints to understand the scope of the issue better.

Mr. Morris explained that Senate Bill 180 prevents the City from implementing many recommendations in the Madeira Beach Master Plan if they would be more restrictive than current regulations, such as reducing the density of temporary lodging in the Town Center area. The state is rejecting the Comp Plan amendments.

The Board's consensus was to have Director Forbes bring back the results of the data collected.

B. Kimley-Horn Letter of Agreement Impact Fee Ordinance Letter Agreement

Director Forbes explained the item and introduced a representative from Kimley-Horn.

A representative from Kimley-Horn presented a proposal to update the City's impact fee structure. The proposal consisted of two main components, totaling \$55,000. One is an hourly task to review the City's mobility fee and its interaction with the County's multimodal fee. They would provide their professional opinion and understanding of their recommendation. They would recommend that the City adopt the County's fee. The second component is a lump sum fee for reviewing the updates to the impact fee study related to the parks and recreation impact fee. Their plan includes community engagement with education and feedback from the community. The goal would be to create a system that city staff could update in the future without hiring outside consultants.

Vice Mayor Kerr said he had asked many times if it could be focused solely on commercial development and was told that it could not. Later, he was told that if planned differently, it would not have had a residential impact. He expressed concerns about how impact fees are applied to residential properties, particularly when homeowners are simply rebuilding or expanding a home. He would like more information on the options available to them.

Mayor Brooks asked if it could be paid for with already collected impact fees. The City Attorney said no, and he did not think it would qualify under the Building Fund.

Mayor Brooks said they need to spend the \$5,000 to be right with the County. She asked if they could spend the additional \$50,000 and have some assurance that there would be an option to separate the residential and commercial areas. Director Forbes said she would need to find out more information. The Mayor asked if there was a grant to fund it. The representative was unaware of any.

The Board's consensus was to proceed with the \$5,000 mobility fee review and to explore whether the larger project could be funded through grants or combined with other initiatives.

7. FINANCE

A. Amendments to Aclarian Consultant & Software Agreements

Mr. Laflin presented two amendments to the existing consultant and software agreements with Aclarian. One was to extend his consultant services as Finance Director for fiscal year 2026 at \$98,400 per year, and another was to add a 5% cap on any annual fee increases for the ERP

software subscription to protect the City from unexpected price hikes. Mr. Laflin stated that the agreements are exclusive, and either party could choose to proceed with the ERP software or discontinue the consultant services, provided a 30-day notice is given.

Vice Mayor Kerr inquired about the total cost of the Finance Department, which Mr. Laflin stated was approximately \$423,782 in personnel costs, excluding his consulting fee for FY 2025. The Board discussed the value proposition of the consultant arrangement versus hiring a full-time finance director. Mr. Laflin noted that a full-time director would cost between \$140,000 and \$180,000 in salary and benefits. They could approve the consultant and software agreements and cancel at any time, provided they gave 30 days' notice.

The Board consensus was to include the amendments on the October 1 regular meeting agenda for approval.

8. MARINA

A. John's Pass Village and ROC Park Dock Discussion

Marina Manager Brian Crabtree explained the item. He said it was something for the Board of Commissioners to consider. He presented options for public docks at three locations: John's Pass Village, behind City Hall/Recreation Center, and ROC Park. The presentation included examples from the Keegan Clair Park docks in Indian Rocks Beach, which are free public docks with restrictions, including no overnight stays, no commercial use, and no fishing.

For the John's Pass location, Mr. Crabtree presented designs for a 50-foot floating dock located near the corner, adjacent to Don's Dock, which is ADA compliant, and another 100-foot dock by the bell tower. For the area behind City Hall, he suggested floating docks similar to those at Keegan Clair Park.

Mr. Crabtree explained that grant funding is available for these projects, but cautioned that some grants require certain activities, such as charters, which might not align with the City's desired use. He also noted the potential for transient slips that could generate revenue at \$2.10 per foot per night that would require power and water, with stays limited to 15 nights. There is money available in the transient grants for bathrooms and showers.

The Board expressed interest in the concept, with questions about revenue potential, maintenance, and feasibility. Commissioner Tagliarini requested a one-on-one meeting with Mr. Crabtree to gain a better understanding of the options.

Commissioner Ghovae asked if they have riparian rights in the canal behind City Hall. Mr. Crabtree said they have a state-submerged land lease, but he would look into how far it extends into the canal. At the Marina, there is a portion on which they collect rent. At the beginning of the year, he reports what they make and pays a percentage as a state submerged land lease.

Commissioner Ghovae asked if they would have pump-outs. Mr. Crabtree said there is a Clean Vessel Act Grant for it. The difficulty with it would be determining where to discharge, as it would directly discharge into the sewer system.

9. RECREATION

A. Mowing and Lawn Maintenance Services – Contract Renewal

Recreation Director Jay Hatch said the three-year agreement with Natural Design Landscaping, LLC, will expire, and there are two one-year extension renewal options. They maintain all city property except the library at a rate of \$2,800 per month. Director Hatch recommended renewing the contract for another year at the same rate, noting that the contractor had initially suggested an increase but withdrew the request after being informed that it would require a rebidding process.

Mayor Brooks inquired about the possibility of bringing landscaping services in-house. Director Hatch explained that current staffing levels in the Recreation Department would not support taking on the additional responsibility.

The Board's consensus was to approve the renewal at the next regular meeting.

10. RESPOND TO PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

There were no public comments to respond to.

Mayor Brooks said she would like to add the City Clerk review to the next workshop. They had not conducted a review in a while, and this year's raises are based on performance and a cost-of-living increase. After conversing with the City Attorney, they will workshop on how they want to do that. Then, vote on her performance in the following meeting. The Board consented.

The Acting City Manager reminded everyone he would not be in the office on Thursday and Friday. The City Clerk said she would be off on Friday.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brooks adjourned the meeting at 10:09 p.m.

Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

ATTEST:

Clara VanBlargan, MMC, MSM, City Clerk