



## MINUTES

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING NOVEMBER 12, 2025 4:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a regular workshop meeting at 4:00 p.m. on November 12, 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 Consultant  
Thomas Trask, City Attorney

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brooks called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

#### 2. ROLL CALL

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

#### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

#### 4. PRESENTATIONS

##### A. Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC) Central West Director Lisa Morris

Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC) Central West Director Lisa Morris recognized City Clerk Clara VanBlargan for achieving a significant milestone in becoming one of the first municipal clerks in Florida to earn the Florida Certified Professional Clerk's Certification from

the John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government at Florida State University. Ms. VanBlargan was presented with her certification and pin.

## **5. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **A. Lobbyists Contracts/Agreements**

Acting City Manager Clint Belk presented contracts for four lobbyist firms under consideration with their proposed fees. The firms included Ballard Partners, Capital City Consulting, Myers Consulting Group, and Shumaker.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr initiated the discussion by sharing that he had rewatched the presentations on YouTube and conducted research on the firms. He noted that Ballard Partners and Capital City Consulting appeared to be the largest firms and typically secured more appropriations funding, with Capital City seeming to obtain more for resiliency projects. He expressed concern that Myers Consulting Group would be a one-person operation without a supporting team, as the City would be Myers' first municipality.

Commissioner Tagliarini stated he had limited his choices to Myers and Shumaker based on their experience with barrier island communities. He indicated he was leaning toward Shumaker based on experience and past reports.

Mayor Brooks expressed concerns about Shumaker, saying they did nothing for the City for one year and collected \$55,000. She noted that the representative who presented a check to the City had acknowledged that the funds were secured because of the Commission's efforts, not the lobbyists'. She also pointed out that Shumaker did not attend or provide updates regularly. Mayor Brooks favored Myers Consulting Group, arguing that RJ Myers had done the actual work for the City when he was with Shumaker, and that being the firm's first municipality client would make Madeira Beach a priority.

Commissioner Ghovae supported Myers Consulting Group, citing their commitment to providing pre-session meetings, briefings, summaries, and education for City employees.

Commissioner McGeehen also supported Myers, drawing a parallel to his own experience of starting a business at a young age, noting that youth does not necessarily indicate inexperience. He valued Myers' local presence and motivation to succeed.

Vice Mayor Kerr remained concerned about the size of Myers' operation and said he was worried that the City might need a larger lobbying firm with more resources, reiterating that the City's elected representatives in Tallahassee need strong support.

The consensus of the Board was to vote on the matter at the regular meeting later that evening.

### **B. Strategic Planning Proposals**

City Clerk VanBlargan introduced the strategic planning proposals from Kimley-Horn and the Florida Institute of Government at USF, which were presented at the October 22nd workshop meeting.

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

Commissioner Tagliarini said that it made more sense to continue with Kimley-Horn for the strategic plan since they were already working on the Comprehensive Plan from which the strategic plan would be extracted.

Vice Mayor Kerr noted that the Florida Institute of Government proposal was essentially for a one-day workshop, which could not be compared in scope to Kimley-Horn's more comprehensive approach.

Commissioner Ghovae and Mayor Brooks both agreed with moving forward with Kimley-Horn.

The consensus of the Board was to proceed with Kimley-Horn for the strategic planning process, as they were already familiar with the City's ongoing initiatives.

### **C. Purchasing Code and Purchasing Manual**

Acting City Manager Belk suggested tabling the discussion on lowering the purchasing threshold from \$30,000 to \$15,000 until the new city manager comes on board. This would allow the new city manager to provide input on what they would prefer.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr agreed to table the item, provided it would be brought up at the first meeting with the new city manager.

Commissioner Tagliarini expressed concern about lowering the threshold by half, suggesting it could limit the city manager's efficiency. He advocated for clearer wording about public-facing decisions and ensuring project sums remain under the threshold.

Mayor Brooks agreed that the \$30,000 limit was not the problem, but rather the definition needed clarity. She said that based on her conversations with others, if you cannot trust your city manager to spend \$30,000, you need a new city manager, as many situations require quick action.

The consensus of the Board was to table the matter until the new city manager is hired, with a commitment to revisit the issue promptly.

### **D. Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting Start Time Discussion**

Mayor Brooks opened the discussion on the meeting start time, suggesting that commissioners share their thoughts before seeking public comment.

Commissioner Tagliarini shifted focus to agenda length rather than start time, suggesting that not every commissioner needed to comment on every item and questioning whether all presentations were necessary.

City Attorney Trask commented that the workshop agenda was crazy compared to other cities he represents, noting that most limit workshop meetings to 1-4 topics, not 30. He observed that discussions after 9 p.m. tend to be less productive and recommended focusing on general reviews rather than specific subjects.

Commissioner Tagliarini agreed, suggesting that by 9-10:30 p.m., commissioners were not functioning at their best, and staff who had been working since 7:00 a.m. were similarly fatigued. He advocated for limiting presentations to items requiring Board approval.

Mayor Brooks suggested using the consent agenda more effectively and having department heads present before the Board of Commissioners items to allow staff to leave afterward. She emphasized that commissioners should use their one-on-one meetings with staff to get educated on agenda items so that Board discussions could focus on decision-making rather than information gathering.

Vice Mayor Kerr pushed back, stating that the workshop was their only opportunity to discuss issues among themselves and share different perspectives, which necessarily takes time. He suggested starting earlier (at 4:00 or 5:00 p.m.) to accommodate more substantive discussions.

Commissioner McGeehen supported reducing agenda items to improve productivity. Commissioner Ghovae agreed, adding that shorter, more focused meetings would attract more community interest, as residents had commented that lengthy meetings were difficult to follow.

The consensus of the Board was to start workshop meetings at 4:00 p.m., with budget meetings starting at 2:00 p.m., and to schedule city employees' presentations first so they could leave afterward.

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

## **6. ACTING CITY MANAGER**

### **A. HR Director Position Job Description**

### **B. Communications Manager Position Job Description**

Items 6.A. and 6.B. were discussed together. Acting City Manager Belk explained that according to the BOC handbook, the commission does not dictate job descriptions but approves positions and salaries. He suggested tabling both the HR Director and Communications Manager positions for the new city manager to hire their own team.

Vice Mayor Kerr supported tabling the entire topic until a new city manager is hired. He referred to data showing that the City had gone from 69 full-time employees in 2019 to 84.3 in 2025, questioning why more positions were needed when the City had not grown.

Mr. Laflin clarified that the Communications Manager position was already budgeted for in FY 2026, but the HR Director position was not. He explained that the HR Director discussion had surfaced after the budget was formalized, and a budget amendment could be proposed during FY 2026 if they decided to proceed.

Commissioner Tagliarini noted that while a Communications Manager was budgeted, an HR Director would support the City's growth in tourism services. He favored creating both positions but allowing the new city manager to be involved in hiring.

Mayor Brooks pointed out that the city manager's assistant currently handles HR duties along with other responsibilities, suggesting these are different skill sets. She mentioned that the Civil Service Commission had strongly encouraged having a full-time HR person.

Commissioner Ghovae supported both positions but agreed to table the discussion for the new city manager.

Commissioner McGeehen concurred, preferring to let the new city manager make these personnel decisions.

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

The consensus of the Board was to table the items until the new city manager is hired.

### **C. John's Pass Village Committee**

Mayor Brooks initiated the discussion about creating a John's Pass Village Committee, explaining that merchants had considered reforming their non-profit association but were concerned about associated costs like insurance. She suggested a city committee would provide accountability and facilitate communication between the merchants, the City, chambers of commerce, and residents.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment.

Captain Dylan Hubbard from Hubbard's Marina described how John's Pass merchants had previously operated through various iterations of associations that tended to go through cycles of activity and inactivity. He explained that they had already begun holding informal monthly meetings, which the Mayor and Recreation Director had been attending. Captain Hubbard emphasized the need for continuity in communication, marketing, and events, suggesting that City involvement could provide administrative support and stability.

Jill Dunovan, Pinellas Beaches Chamber, said it is important to have consistent City personnel be a part of the organization.

Randy Esponda, SunPubs, expressed support for creating a formal committee to enhance visitor experiences, coordinate events, and work with the City to improve John's Pass. He advocated for monthly events and 4-5 major annual events similar to the Seafood Festival.

Denise McLeod, board member for the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce, voiced the Chamber's support for the committee's creation and willingness to partner with the City and businesses.

City Attorney Trask cautioned that a formal committee would require public meetings with minutes recorded by City Staff and potentially additional staff time. He explained that an enabling resolution would be needed to establish the committee, defining membership, quorum requirements, meeting schedule, and responsibilities.

Acting City Manager Belk suggested that he, Recreation Director Jay Hatch, and Assistant to the City Manager Megan Powers meet with Capt. Hubbard and the current informal committee to develop a proposal to bring back to the board.

The Commission agreed with this approach, with Mayor Brooks emphasizing the importance of strengthening relationships with John's Pass merchants and potentially making events like the Seafood Festival more frequent through joint efforts.

## **7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. Ordinance 2025-20, Certified Recovery Residences**

Community Development Director Marci Forbes explained that the ordinance was drafted by City Attorney Trask in response to a state requirement under Senate Bill 954. The bill requires all municipalities to adopt ordinances establishing procedures for review and approval of certified recovery residences by January 1, 2026.

City Attorney Trask explained that the draft ordinance would appear in Article 6 under Supplemental District Regulations of the City Code. He noted that while recovery residences would need to meet all land development code regulations, the ordinance creates a process for requesting reasonable accommodations. The City added two technical requirements beyond what the statute requires: providing a survey of the property and a scaled drawing showing proposed development.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr expressed concern about whether recovery residences could circumvent rental period restrictions in certain areas. The City Attorney explained that these would function similarly to residential homes or group homes, where people might stay for varying periods as part of a recovery program.

After discussion, the Commission understood the mandate and the need to adopt the ordinance, though the City Attorney noted there were no specified penalties for non-compliance in the statute.

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

Community Development Director Forbes explained that Kimley-Horn had provided a proposal to review the City's Mobility Impact Fees in light of potential overlap with Pinellas County's fees. The \$5,000 proposal would ensure the City was correctly charging for mobility impacts and determine whether the City should collect its own mobility fees separately from the County's.

Commissioner Tagliarini expressed support for moving forward with the agreement to ensure all requirements were properly addressed.

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

The consensus of the Board was to proceed with the Kimley-Horn agreement.

## **8. FINANCE**

### **A. FY 2025 Budget Amendment #2**

Mr. Laflin explained that a year-end review of expenses compared to the budget revealed that the Information Technology Department was slightly over budget. The proposed amendment would increase the IT department's budget to maintain budgetary compliance.

Mr. Laflin noted that unexpected expenses related to computer and laptop replacements for the Windows 11 upgrade had contributed to the overage. All other departments were under budget, and he provided a comparison of budget versus actual results for both revenues and expenses in the accompanying documentation.

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

Commissioner Ghovae agreed with the staff recommendation, and the other Commissioners had no questions or comments.

### **B. Resolution 2025-12 – Reimbursement of Capital Expenditures**

Mr. Laflin presented the reimbursement resolution, which would allow the City to be reimbursed from future tax-exempt financing proceeds for capital expenditures already paid on the land purchase. He explained that the City had used available cash reserves to pay for the \$18 million land purchase but intended to issue debt in the long term.

The resolution would preserve the opportunity to explore tax-exempt financing, which would yield a more favorable interest rate. Mr. Laflin noted that decisions about how much debt to issue and the structure would depend on the intended use of the property and additional potential capital expenditures.

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

The consensus of the Board was to move forward with the resolution.

### **C. Emergency Bridge Loan Agreement & Related Documents**

Mr. Laflin reported that the City had been approved by the Florida Department of Commerce for an Emergency Bridge Loan of \$3,148,500. He explained that this interest-free loan would cover revenue losses resulting from hurricane damage, including reduced property tax revenue and decreased parking revenues.

Mr. Laflin noted that the loan documentation was still being negotiated with the Florida Department of Commerce, as there were concerns about some of the language. He requested that the agenda item be removed from the regular meeting for formal approval until the issues are resolved.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr noted a clause indicating that simple interest would accrue at 3% and asked for clarification on when this would apply. He also emphasized the importance of pursuing potential loan forgiveness in the future.

## **9. FIRE**

### **A. Discussion of 2025 Emergency Medical Services ALS First Responder Agreement, Amendment 1**

Deputy Chief Mortellite explained that Pinellas County EMS agreed to fund and authorize the City's budget request of \$1,556,821 for fiscal year 2025-26. The amount reflected the combination of funding for both the Madeira Beach and Redington stations.

Acting City Manager Belk clarified that this was essentially revenue coming into the City.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr confirmed there was no fiscal impact to the City.

The consensus of the Board was to move forward with the agreement.

## **10. PUBLIC WORKS**

### **A. ITB #25-13 Archibald Snack Shack Discussion**

Public Works Director Megan Wepfer presented the bid results for the Archibald Snack Shack remodeling project, with the lowest responsive, responsible bidder coming in at \$238,062. She provided background on the structure, noting it was originally constructed in 1934 as a rehabilitation center for veterans and repurposed in 1975 as a concession stand.

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



Director Forbes added that the FEMA 50 percent spending limit was a significant concern, explaining that the current bids only covered "white boxing" the structure without including restaurant equipment like hoods, stoves, walk-in coolers, and freezers, which would count against the 50 percent threshold.

Recent investigations have revealed significant issues with the subfloor, including rotten wood, rusted metal straps, and termite damage. These issues were not fully quantified in the bid because additional problems would likely be discovered during demolition, potentially pushing costs over the 50 percent threshold.

Director Forbes explained that if the building were designated as historic, the FEMA 50 percent rule would not apply. However, the City would need to add historical preservation provisions to its Land Development Regulations, a process estimated to take approximately 8 months and cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000.

Mayor Brooks expressed reluctance to tear down the landmark without exhausting all options, noting that the building had emotional significance to the community and that many residents had contacted her opposing demolition. She suggested investigating the subfloor conditions more thoroughly before making a final decision and potentially pursuing historical designation simultaneously.

Commissioner Ghovae supported additional investigation, emphasizing the importance of respecting residents' wishes. Vice Mayor Kerr questioned whether the structure was worth saving given its condition and location in a coastal flood zone but acknowledged its iconic status in the community.

Commissioner McGeehen expressed concern about safety, saying the structure was unsafe and would inevitably exceed the 50 percent threshold for repairs.

The Commission directed staff to obtain quotes for investigating the subfloor condition while also pursuing information on the historical designation process. This approach would allow them to make a more informed decision about whether to repair or rebuild the structure.

#### **B. Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement with Pinellas County for Water Quality Monitoring**

Director Wepfer explained that this was a simple amendment to extend the existing interlocal agreement with Pinellas County for water quality monitoring for an additional five years through 2030. The agreement is required for the City's MS4 permitting.

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

There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

#### **C. FY26 Park Street Lease Approval**

Director Wepfer presented the annual renewal request for the Park Street lease at 5090 4th Street, asking for authorization for the acting city manager to sign the renewal letter.

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

Vice Mayor Kerr said it is a no-brainer and that the big blue building works well for the City.

The consensus of the Board was to move forward with it.

## **11. RESPOND TO PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

There were no public comments to respond to.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Brooks adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

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Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clara VanBlargan, MMC, MSM, City Clerk