



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING MAY 27, 2026 4:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a regular workshop meeting at 4:00 p.m. on May 27, 2026, in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor
Eddie McGeehen, Vice Mayor/Commissioner District 3
David Tagliarini, Commissioner District 1
Charles “Chuck” Dillon, Commissioner District 2
Housh Ghovae, Commissioner District 4

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CHARTER OFFICERS PRESENT: Michael Helfrich, City Manager
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk
Thomas Trask, City Attorney
Andrew Laflin, Finance Director Consultant

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.

Mayor Brooks added Item 5.C. GrantWorks Update.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Fire Department Presentation: Donation Proceeds – 5th Annual Legends Never Die 5K

Fire Chief Belk spoke on behalf of the Madeira Beach Fire Department. On April 12, 2026, the department hosted its fifth annual Legends Never Die 5K, an event dedicated to raising awareness

and resources for mental health and suicide prevention among first responders, military personnel, active-duty service members, and veterans. The event drew 565 registered participants. The Madeira Beach Fire Department presented a \$20,100 check to the Franciscan Center for its Operation Restore program, which serves first responders, military personnel, veterans, and their families in the Tampa Bay area. Sponsors and representatives from the Franciscan Center were present and recognized during the check presentation.

B. Fire Department Presentation: Recognition of A-shift Crew

Chief Belk presented the department's Stork Award to members of A Shift. On April 27, 2026, Truck 25 and Medic Unit 25 responded to a residence for a reported childbirth. Upon arrival, crews found the patient on the fourth floor in active labor with delivery imminent. In coordination with responding Sunstar EMS units, personnel delivered a healthy baby boy on scene without complications. The mother and newborn were subsequently transported to the nearest facility. The following personnel were presented with the Stork Pin in recognition of their actions:

- Lieutenant George Hill
- Driver Engineer Jamie McGee
- Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Lucas

Firefighter Mario Barbara and Firefighter Kyle Watts were unable to attend. The Mayor noted that the family had been visiting from Arizona, making the child a native Floridian.

5. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A. Samples of Recognition and Appreciation Forms to include an explanation as to why the person was chosen to receive recognition

The City Clerk presented sample recognition and appreciation forms for the Commission's review, with the goal of establishing a fillable form on the City's website for residents to submit requests for proclamations or similar recognitions (e.g., 100th birthdays, significant anniversaries). The City Clerk indicated that several sample formats had been compiled and asked the Commission for feedback so a finalized form could be brought back at the next workshop.

The Mayor referenced a prior Commission resolution on this subject and noted that Commissioner Ghovae had been working with the City Manager's office on a related matter regarding the "Key to the City" recognition, including the selection of an appropriate physical plaque. The City Clerk acknowledged that work on the key format had been delayed, in part, due to the transition in the City Manager position, and that the available samples had not yet met the Commissioner Ghovae's expectations. The Mayor directed Commissioner Ghovae and the City Manager to continue working together and to bring the matter back to a future workshop for finalization.

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

B. Discuss changing Municipal Elections from March to November (Information available by Meeting Date)

The City Clerk introduced the item and shared cost comparison data from the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections, noting that conducting municipal elections in November would be substantially less expensive than holding them in March.

City Attorney Trask advised that, based on recent case law, specifically *City of Miami v. Gonzales*, the City's Charter requires a resident referendum to change the election date, and a simple ordinance would not suffice. He emphasized that time is of the essence if the Commission wishes to place the question on the March 2027 ballot, as the Supervisor of Elections' deadlines typically fall in early December and the language would need to be prepared, adopted, and translated into Spanish in advance.

Commissioner Ghovae asked how the change would affect Commissioners currently scheduled for election in March, including himself and Vice Mayor McGeehan. City Attorney Trask confirmed that some terms would need to be extended to align with the November cycle and that this would be addressed in the ordinance. The Mayor clarified that affected Commissioners would still need to qualify, campaign, and win their seats under the March election cycle, and that any term extension would apply only to the end date of those terms.

Commissioner Tagliarini expressed support for moving elections to November, citing higher voter turnout and noting that City elections in March sometimes feature very few candidates. Commissioner Ghovae agreed, stating that increased participation would outweigh the benefit of a standalone election focused solely on City races.

The Commission reached consensus, directing City Attorney Trask to work with the City Clerk to begin preparing the necessary charter amendment ordinance for the Commission's consideration, with a target of placing the referendum on the March 2027 ballot. The City Clerk said they might be able to get it on the November Election ballot if they meet the deadline for that Election. The upcoming March terms would be extended to November 2027, and the other terms to November 2028.

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

C. GrantWorks Update

Mayor Brooks added a discussion of GrantWorks to the agenda as Item 5C, noting that the topic had come up at a prior budget meeting. The City Manager provided a brief update, explaining that the City currently has a GrantWorks agreement specific to FEMA-related grants. A separate piggyback agreement with a different city is under review to determine whether it would allow GrantWorks to be engaged for non-FEMA grant applications. The City Manager indicated he had not yet completed the comparison review but would do so within the coming week.

The Mayor clarified for the record that GrantWorks is currently under contract only for FEMA-related work and that no agreement is in place for the broader grant services previously discussed by the commission, including support for recreational grants. In the interim, the relevant staff member continues to handle those duties.

6. CITY MANAGER

A. Hearing Officers – Grievance Hearings

City Attorney Trask presented on behalf of the City Manager's office. Under the City's adopted personnel policy, non-probationary, non-at-will employees have the right to seek review of disciplinary terminations. Following a 2025 joint workshop between the Board of Commissioners and the Civil Service Commission, procedures were established for post-termination hearings to be presided over by a neutral hearing officer. After canvassing qualified individuals, the City identified two candidates for the hearing officer role: Sasha Dyson and Michelle Nadeau. Their hourly rates differ slightly, and the intent is not to use one exclusively over the other. Instead, selection would be based on availability and relevant expertise for a given case. The City Manager, in consultation with City Attorney Trask and the firm's labor/employment partner, would make the selection on a case-by-case basis.

Agreements with both hearing officers have been drafted and are included in the agenda packet. City Attorney Trask clarified that the hearing officers are not on retainer and will be compensated only for time actually spent on a matter.

Mayor Brooks opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

The Commission expressed no objection to the arrangement and indicated general support for adding the item to the agenda of the next regular commission meeting for formal approval.

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Ordinance 2026-04, Zoning – Establishing Division 6 – Low Density Vacation Rental

Community Development staff Kathryn Younkin and Andrew Morris presented Ordinance 2026-04, a privately initiated amendment to a land development regulation that would create a new R2R zoning district to permit nightly vacation rentals for stays of less than three months in areas currently classified under the Residential Medium future land use category.

Staff recommended denying the ordinance, citing two primary concerns: (1) the likelihood of spot zoning in predominantly residential areas as property owners seek parcel-by-parcel rezoning, and (2) the potential for significant change to the character of established residential neighborhoods. Staff noted that Forward Pinellas raised no objection to the ordinance because such uses are permitted under the countywide rules. City Attorney Trask clarified that this item is a text amendment to the city's land development code, creating a new zoning category, not a rezoning of any specific parcel.

Mayor Brooks opened the floor to public comment.

Public comment in support was offered by the applicant's representative, two adjacent property owners on 144th Avenue, and a property owner on 143rd Avenue. All described the area as

predominantly multifamily and argued that allowing vacation rentals would support economic recovery after hurricane damage and benefit local businesses.

Commissioner Tagliarini spoke at length in opposition, citing the staff recommendation, the Planning Commission's anticipated denial, concerns about spot zoning, the potential loss of neighborhood character, and the ordinance's private initiation rather than inclusion in a comprehensive citywide discussion. He noted that the Commission had recently heard from residents about problems associated with short-term rentals in residential areas and urged the Commission not to move forward. Commissioner Dillon and Commissioner Ghovae concurred. The Mayor likewise expressed opposition, noting that the City has designated targeted areas for short-term rentals and that there is significant community opposition to their expansion into residential neighborhoods.

Staff clarified that the item is scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission the following week. City Attorney Trask recommended that, consistent with proper procedure, the ordinance be placed on a regular Commission agenda for a first public hearing, during which the full applicant presentation could be heard, and residents could offer sworn testimony. The Commission agreed with this approach.

B. Ordinance 2026-06, John's Pass Village Hotel Vacation of Right-of-Way Request – Portion of Fisherman's Alley

C. Ordinance 2026-05, John's Pass Village Hotel Planned Development (PD) Rezoning

D. John's Pass Village Hotel Planned Development (PD) Development Agreement

Community Development staff presented a three-part application package consisting of: (1) a vacation of the right-of-way for a portion of Fisherman's Alley; (2) a rezoning request from John's Pass Activity Center to Planned Development (Ordinance 2026-05); and (3) an associated development agreement. The proposed meeting schedule includes a Planning Commission review on June 1, a first reading before the Board of Commissioners on June 10, and a second public hearing on July 8.

The applicant, JPV Hotel Properties LLC, proposes an 87-room hotel with ground-floor restaurant and retail space, a sixth-floor restaurant, and a small event space on approximately 1.457 acres, including the proposed vacated right-of-way at the east end of the John's Pass Village boardwalk area. The project involves the partial vacation of Fisherman's Alley abutting the project lots only, and all required utility companies have responded. All utility relocation costs would be borne by the developer.

Staff presented the developer's requests for flexibility under the Planned Development district, including a building height of 73 feet above the design flood elevation (versus 55 feet allowed by right), a 79-foot stair tower, five stories over ground-level commercial (versus four), zero-foot front and upper-floor setbacks, balconies and awnings over the public right-of-way, and reduced visibility triangles at two intersections. In exchange, the developer is providing significant community benefits, including 92 publicly available parking spaces at rates no more than one dollar per hour above the City's current rate, a covered pedestrian arcade, an extension of Pelican Lane as a private street with a public access easement, enhanced green space with public restrooms

and a park area, ten-foot-wide sidewalks on three street frontages, new crosswalks, milling and resurfacing of Boardwalk Place, and access easements for two adjacent private properties during special events. Staff confirmed that all density, FAR, and impervious surface area calculations meet the requirements of the John's Pass Village Activity Center zoning district.

Mayor Brooks opened the floor to public comment.

Public comment was offered by the applicant's legal representative, Brian Ong, and civil engineer Sean Cashman. Sue, the owner of Walt's Fish Shack, raised concerns about business interruption during construction related to utility relocation, access to her property via Fisherman's Alley during special events, and adequate signage directing customers to her establishment. The applicant's representatives responded that no water, sewer, or electrical service would be disrupted during construction, that access would be maintained throughout the construction period, that the garage access easement would be available during special events, and that appropriate signage would be coordinated with staff. Both the commission and the applicant's team indicated a willingness to work with the neighboring business owner on signage and access details through the development agreement process.

Commissioners expressed general support for the project. Commissioner Ghovae raised a concern about density, clarifying that density is regulated by the state and county rather than the City and that staff had verified compliance with Pinellas County. Commissioner Dillon expressed comfort with the project, noting that access routes along Boardwalk Place and Pelican Lane remain open. Commissioner Dillon and the Mayor highlighted the benefits of the community amenities provided. The matter was noted as proceeding to the Planning Commission on June 1 for review prior to the first public hearing before the Board of Commissioners.

8. MARINA

A. Approval of RFP 26-05 Bid Award and Contract to Speeler Companies for Marina Seawall Replacement and Tom & Kitty Stuart Park Seawall Improvements

The Marina Director Brian Crabree introduced the item as a continuation of the ongoing seawall replacement project at the City marina, extending from the fuel dock to the cell tower location and including the closure of the decommissioned boat ramp. The closed ramp area will be converted into a wash-down station with improved filtration and additional vehicle parking.

Public Works Director Megan Wepfer presented the Tom and Kitty Stuart Park component of the contract. Two options were considered: a concrete block wall and a vinyl wall. Staff recommended the concrete block wall with a domed concrete cap doweled with rebar, consistent with the approach used at Archibald Park, where the seawall performed well during Hurricane Helene, sustaining only cap damage. The contractor, Speeler Companies, is expected to mobilize within two weeks, and the Tom and Kitty Stuart work is projected to be completed before the Fourth of July. The Commission expressed support for the staff's preferred option and raised no significant concerns. Questions were addressed regarding construction access through the adjacent private property, the removal of the fence to be replaced with bicycle barricades, resulting in approximately \$500 per month in rental fee savings, and the work boundaries.

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

9. PUBLIC WORKS

A. Amendment to Pinellas County Interlocal Agreement to share cost with FDEP for NPDES MS4 Permit

Director Wepfer presented this item as a routine five-year extension of an existing interlocal cost-sharing agreement with Pinellas County for the FDEP/NPDES MS4 stormwater permit, extending the term from 2027 through 2031. City Attorney Trask confirmed he had reviewed the agreement, recommended revisions that Pinellas County incorporated, and characterized the matter as straightforward housekeeping applicable to all participating municipalities. No public comment was received, and the Commission raised no concerns.

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

B. 2025 Ford F550 4X4 Dump Truck Purchase

Public Works Director Megan Wepfer explained that the Commission had approved the purchase of a dump truck in February. When Palmetto attempted delivery, the vehicle was a 2024 model with multiple dashboard error codes, and the City refused to accept it. The City subsequently voided the purchase order and procured a 2025 Ford F-550 through Duval Ford, using the Florida Sheriff's Association bid, a competitively procured cooperative contract available statewide. The replacement truck has a slightly larger bed, 18 inches versus 16 inches, and is priced at \$96,953, well within the \$125,000 budgeted for the purchase.

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

C. Approval to Piggyback off the City of Belleair Bluffs Duncan Drive Roadway & Stormwater Improvements Contract for area 5 and various locations Roadway and Drainage Improvements

Public Works Director Megan Wepfer presented a request for the Commission to discuss approval of a piggybacking arrangement on the City of Belleair Bluffs' contract with Keystone, a contractor with whom the City has a favorable working history. Formal action is anticipated at the June 10 meeting. The arrangement avoids the time and cost of a separate bid process. Locations to be included in the project scope are: Area 5 (129th and 131st Streets), Bay Point Drive, beach accesses from 135th Street to John's Pass Park (damaged by Hurricane Helene, with FEMA funds allocated), John's Pass Village, and potentially Tom and Kitty Stuart Park. Specific cost figures for each location will be presented at the June 10 meeting.

Mayor Brooks opened the floor to public comment.

Lori Hopkins (912 Bay Point Drive), Bernie Brown (916 Bay Point Drive), and Christy Giuliano (840 Bay Point Drive) thanked the Commission and staff for prioritizing Bay Point Drive resurfacing and asked about the status and timeline for Pruitt Drive, which had been expected to be resurfaced earlier in the year.

Director Wepfer acknowledged ongoing scheduling difficulties with the contractor responsible for Pruitt Drive and noted that the City has faced significant obstacles. City Attorney Trask disclosed that the contractor filed suit against the City after the City determined the contractor was not complying with the contract terms. The City has filed a motion to dismiss and is pursuing a resolution as quickly as possible. The Mayor clarified that the delay is attributable to external circumstances rather than any lack of urgency on the City's part. A timeline for Bay Point Drive milling and resurfacing is expected to be provided at the June 10 meeting.

10. RESPOND TO PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

There were no public comments to address.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brooks adjourned the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

ATTEST:

Clara VanBlargan, MMC, FCPC, MSM, City Clerk