



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING FEBRUARY 26, 2025 6:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a regular workshop meeting at 6:00 p.m. on February 26, 2025 in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Robin Gomez, City Manager
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk
Andrew Laflin, Finance Director/City Treasurer
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. Flood Awareness Week Proclamation

Mayor Brooks read a proclamation proclaiming March 3 – 9, 2025, as “Flood Awareness Week” in the City of Madeira Beach.

B. Key to the City

Commissioner Ghovae said he would like the Commission to present Senator Nick DiCeglie and State Representative Linda Chaney with a Key to the City for a job well done. It would also give some recognition in Tallahassee that the City of Madeira Beach presented them with a Key to the City.

The Board decided to discuss criteria and a procedure at the March 26, 2025, BOC Regular Workshop Meeting to be fair moving forward. They asked for a list of who received a Key to the City in the past and the reason for it and provide that to them. The City Clerk said she would be happy to do that and send it to the City Manager to send it to them.

C. Task Force Committee

Commissioner Ghovae said he thought a task force committee would be a good way to keep citizens informed and get their input and ideas. The committee could come up with a good path for them to know how to address some of the concerns that citizens may have. When citizens expressed their concerns to him, he encouraged them to come to the meetings and express their concerns during public comment. A task force committee would get out there and let the citizens know how hard the City is trying. They would be better informed. Commissioner Ghovae volunteered to help with the committee.

The City Manager said the task force's purpose would need to be specific. The Board thought Town Hall meetings with a specific topic were a better way to get community input.

D. Information Officer

The City Manager said the discussion was to consider creating an information officer position or consolidating some areas. They do not budget for a specific information officer. The departments maintain their information on the City's webpage. He had asked that they update their information and remove what is outdated. The city uses various methods to disseminate substantial information. They are not looking to change the website, only the design and feel.

Chuck Dillion, a resident, suggested that a public information officer could send out a summary of the minutes after the meetings, as David had done in the past. It would be informative. They would be responsible for gathering information to express something specifically. Commissioner Kerr said former Commissioner Dave Hutson used to send out minutes summaries.

Mayor Brooks said the purpose of an information officer is to deliver information. They had one in the past, and it would be nice to have one now. They are a large enough city, and information matters.

Vice Mayor Tagliarini suggested partnering with one of the other cities that might have a public information officer. It might not be a full-time job, but it could be for two or three barrier islands. A disadvantage could be overlapping information, but it would be very specific. He would not want to put that work on staff. They all have plenty to do. That person should work closely with the City Manager and the City Clerk. They should explore the idea of sharing it with another barrier island.

Mayor Brooks said the City of Treasure Island has an information officer, and they could probably partner. The Redington's are small, so there is probably an opportunity there. The City Manager said they provide fire and rescue to the Redington's, so there is an opportunity for that.

Commissioner Kerr suggested that the City Clerk send the meeting minutes out through Constant Contact and perhaps email them to let them know the minutes are coming so they expect them. The City Clerk said she was happy to do that. She posts a draft copy within a couple of days after the meeting in the City's meeting center and replaces them with the approved ones.

Commissioner McGeehen said partnering with another community on the barrier islands would be a great idea. Anything to alleviate the false information out there would help the community.

Commissioner Ghovae suggested text messaging, which is the best form of information. Mayor Brooks said it would be like Pinellas County. People can sign up for text messaging. The City Manager said the existing contract might allow them to do that. They will review it. It would be easy for people to sign up. Getting everyone on board to send the information could be challenging.

The City Manager said they encouraged people to sign up for the emailed information through Constant Contact on the City's website. Director Hatch uses it the most for City events and project updates. Recreation Director Jay Hatch said they have a list of about 6,200 email addresses to which they send information, which is growing.

Mayor Brooks asked the City Manager to bring an update on the texting to the next meeting. They have talked about it a few times, and she would like to know the costs and how they would implement it.

5. CITY MANAGER

A. SBA Loans – Rick Morales

The City Manager said that the presenter was not present.

B. John's Pass Dredging

The City Manager said they heard back from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). They visited the site in July and requested additional information. The City's contractor, Aptim, replied with the information. They expect to hear back within 30-60 days. Upon receipt of the permits, a bid will be issued, and the dredging can be completed by June 2025. He follows up with Aptim weekly to see the status of FDEP and the U.S. Army Corps. They can have an extension through December 2025. He will send that request next week. They are looking to complete the dredging by June but do have until the end of this year to complete it.

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

Mayor Brooks said that Representative Linda Chaney obtained the grant for them. She had called, letting her know she was struggling with the City's lack of communication and relationship. When calling the City, she got no responses and no callbacks. There was legislation a few weeks ago. Three appropriations had been requested through the City and the lobbyists for her to go for. Mayor Brooks said it frustrates her that they have a timeline approaching. Representative Chaney has connections at the state level to help the City with that, and they are not calling on her. She had requested something through the lobbyist and did not receive it. She received something from the City Manager's office, but it was not what she requested. They need to get better at communicating. When she received the phone call, she had no idea what they were talking about. Perhaps they were told, and she missed it. Representative Chaney said she lost trust in the City and was not going to put forth over \$3 million in requests for appropriations because updates were not provided to her in a timely manner from the City. She advocates for them and keeps going back until she gets the appropriations. Having that relationship with her and her office matters. It is just as important that they have a relationship with Nick DiCeglie's office. She brought it up because they can only discuss it at a Commission meeting. She had discussed it with Robin last week. Representative Chaney is still looking for a call from the City. She assured Representative Chaney that she would provide updates to her on the dredging project.

Mayor Brooks explained how difficult it could be to meet a June or July deadline. Representative Chaney could help with that. She is frustrated but not trying to be down on anybody. When receiving information, it must be factual and not change. She wondered if Aptim knew what they were doing. She had not yet heard if they had prepared the bid package to be sent out.

Commissioner Ghovae said that if a consultant submits to FDEP or Army Corps and they do not respond to comments correctly, they will come back with more comments.

Commissioner Kerr said that when John Hendricks was there, he had a one-on-one relationship with Representative Chaney. He asked how they would nourish that relationship. He thought the bridge between the City Manager and Representative Chaney had already been resolved. It might take the Mayor and the City Manager to build that relationship with them because it was seriously damaged.

Mayor Brooks said she had a good relationship with Representative Chaney but wanted the City Manager to work on his relationship with her, pick up the phone, and call her. He will be there long-term, and they will not. She is willing to put in the time and appreciates the opportunity, but they must work as a team.

Commissioner Kerr said it would come up at some point to decide whether to continue the relationship with the lobbyist and pay the fees. He has not seen anything done for the City lately. It is troubling if they are on the bad side of their representatives, who will not submit anything on the City's behalf if relationships are not improved.

The City Manager said the appropriation of funding they received since 2022 was for a road project, dredging, beach groins near completion, and a seawall project almost completed. They will do whatever they need to do to make it work.

Commissioner McGeehen said that Representative Chaney was a great friend to their community. A Key to the City would show their appreciation.

C. Honor Court

The City Manager said the City expects to receive complete and final design details to bring back to the Board at the March workshop. They budgeted \$250,000, but it will likely be higher than that. They will give an update at the March workshop.

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

The City Manager and Director Wepfer responded to questions and comments from the Board.

D. City Purchasing

The City Manager reported on the item. Department heads or their designees can purchase anything up to \$5,000. Any item over \$5,000 and up to \$30,000 requires obtaining three quotes. Any item or service over \$30,000 requires a formal competitive bid. Exceptions would be if they were sole-sourcing or using another government contract by piggybacking or a purchasing agreement.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comments.

Chuck Dillion, a resident, asked if they could look into getting a bid proposal for Tom and Kitty Stuart Park to get it repaired and open to the public.

Vice Mayor Tagliarini said he looked at it closely, and nothing stuck out. If a project is going to be very visible to the public, regardless of whether it is above or below \$30,000, it should be discussed at a workshop.

Mayor Brooks said she did not think increasing it to \$30,000 for the City Manager was intended to be used for anything that would be a major change to the community. Purchasing is different than discussing something. They would probably have support if they had real public communication about the pilings beforehand. When they make a major visual change to the community, there should be a discussion before it happens.

Commissioner Ghovae said that when something of that great magnitude occurs, it needs to be heard by the Board and the public. They would hope and expect the City Manager to do that.

Commissioner McGeehen said he agreed that it should be heard.

E. CAP Government Agreement for Building Department Services

The City Manager said the Building Official resigned, and the position is advertised. They had two interviews this week and one next week. In the meantime, they piggybacked an agreement with another City to utilize a building official and to do inspections. They have an array of building

permitting services if needed and can do that until the position is filled. After looking at three companies, they decided to go with CAP, an existing government contract.

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

Commissioner Kerr said it is expensive, but they have no choice. He asked if they were trying to hire a replacement. The City Manager said yes.

Commissioner Ghovae asked if they could get Pinellas County to review their plans and permits. It has happened before, and the costs would be much less. He is just giving options. The City Manager said they could ask. Mayor Brooks said they do not need anyone to review building permits; they only need to issue them and do inspections. Commissioner Ghovae said Pinellas County can do that.

Mayor Brooks said she heard great things about the person inside and out in the community. She thought that they were advertising for a building official and a deputy. The deputy is not online. The City Manager said they interviewed someone for the deputy position and will add it to the website.

F. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Updates to the Code for C-1 and C-2 Zoning District

Community Development Director Jenny Rowan said staff reviewed the Land Development Regulations and found three different places that referenced the C-1 and C-2 Zoning Districts, which need to be revised because of the adoption of John's Pass Village Activity Center. The amendments respond to the adoption of the Activity Center. Three ordinances will update the section.

Andrew Morris, Community Development Long Range Planner, explained the changes to be made. He said Forward Pinellas reviewed the ordinances, and their letter will be attached to them at the first reading.

- Ordinance 2025-09: Fixes the references to the old names of the C-1 and C-2 Zoning Districts.
- Ordinance 2025-10: This section in the Code references all Zoning Districts. The John's Pass Village Activity Center previously consisted of the R-3, R-2, C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 zoning districts. A further review of what amendments will be made based on Character Districts.
- Ordinance 2025-11: This section in the Code references all Zoning Districts. The John's Pass Village Activity Center previously consisted of the R-3, R-2, C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 zoning districts. A further review of what amendments will be made based on Character Districts.

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

Director Rowan and Mr. Morris responded to questions and comments from the Board.

Mayor Brooks said that when they do a planned development, the idea is to negotiate with a developer and to get something bigger and better for the City.

The City Attorney said they could add, “Unless authorized by the Board of Commissioners.”

Mayor Brooks asked if there was another way they could have more long-term control over a PD. The City Attorney said that when trying to control specific things after the development agreement has expired, they add declarations of covenants or restrictions that are recorded to run with the land. They have done it in the past. The declarations are attached as an exhibit to the development agreement, and they would be recorded simultaneously with the development agreement. The development agreement may go away, but the restrictions continue.

Mayor Brooks said she would like a sentence that would give them the will to make an adjustment if they wanted to. Mr. Morris said they could add it.

Commissioner Kerr said he recalled Mr. Trask saying they could not mandate things during a PD. The City Attorney said it is called prohibited exaction. They have to get something in return. They cannot tell them to do something unless the code requires it.

B. Post-Hurricane Update Recovery, Rebuild, Permitting, FEMA, FDEM

The City Manager said he and Megan had a productive meeting with FEMA that day. He gave an update, which included the following:

- Over 800 interior demo permits, over 420 permits for interior remodel, and over 1,200 substantial damage determination notifications have been sent out.
- There were 1,200 applications for Elevate Florida in the first couple of days.
- Pinellas County was awarded over \$800 million for long-term recovery issues.
- The homes that have changed owners since the storms will not be eligible for free permits.

Director Rowan said open office hours are posted online and will last through March 31st, including a few Saturdays.

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

The City Manager and Director Rowan responded to questions and comments from the Board.

6. FINANCE

A. FY 2025 Financial Presentation – Through January 2025

Finance Director Consultant Andrew Laflin gave an update on the FY 2025 financials and responded to the Board's questions and comments.

Mayor Brooks opened to public comment.

Chuck Dillion, a resident, asked if FEMA would reimburse them for the hurricane-related expenditures.

Vice Mayor Tagliarini asked if they had an opportunity to see how the reduction in the public works fees from \$38.00 to \$10.00 would impact them and if they could sustain the hit. Mr. Laflin explained that it would affect the sanitation fund. They do not have an analysis today but will provide it at the second reading of the ordinance.

Commissioner Kerr asked if the insurance and FEMA would cover the lost revenue. He asked if that had been submitted and approved for the 10-year non-interest-bearing loan. Mr. Laflin said not yet. They are working through the process and will bring a proposed repayment amount to the Board. September 30th is the deadline.

7. PUBLIC WORKS

A. John's Pass North Jetty Update

Director Wepfer reported on the item. They would need to submit a 408 Application. She asked if the Board would like her to proceed with the temporary Mobi Mat permitting.

There was no one present for public comment.

Commissioner Kerr asked about the Mobi Mats and if there were grants for it. Director Wepfer said she would look into it.

Director Wepfer said it would be a minimum of eight months to begin building the concrete walk.

Mayor Brooks said she had not received any complaints lately about the Jetty. She said it would be interesting to see if HUD had anything available. Director Wepfer said she would reach out to them tomorrow.

B. ITB 25-02 Purchase Rear Load Replacement Containers Contract Approval

Director Wepfer explained the item. Iron Container bid the lowest. She proposed proceeding with awarding a three-year contract with them.

There was no one present for public comment.

Commissioner Ghovae asked if they could apply to FEMA for reimbursement. The City Manager said that if the insurance has not covered everything storm-related, it will be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

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

C. Approval of Purchase for Rear Load Containers

Director Wepfer explained the item. She responded to questions and comments from the Board.

There was no one present for public comment.

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

D. City Street Ends Project Update

Director Wepfer reported:

- On 134th Avenue East, the home that shared a driveway with that park has now been demolished. They would no longer need to provide a driveway through the street end to that parcel.
- Changing Tides on 134th Avenue and Boca Ciega Drive has an application for complete demolition. The City will not need to put in parking pavers because the new development will be responsible for it.

Those two areas will look a little different but will still match the original idea.

There was no one present for public comment.

Director Wepfer said she forgot to do a budget amendment to roll the project into 2025, so that will be coming back to the Board for approval.

8. RECREATION

A. RFP 25-03 Madeira Beach Recreation Center Interior Hurricane Repairs

Recreation Director Jay Hatch explained the item. Staff recommended the approval and award of the contract with Grosz Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$57,700 for RFP-25-03. He responded to questions and comments from the Board.

There was no one present for public comment.

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

B. Facility Use Agreement

Director Hatch explained the item. Staff recommended moving forward with the Facility Use Agreement with Burton Meiring, LLC dba Simple Weddings. He responded to questions and comments from the Board.

There was no one present for public comment.

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

C. Facility Rental Fee Updates

Director Hatch said staff made some adjustments to the existing fee structure. He responded to questions and comments from the Board.

There was no one present for public comment.

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

D. City Sponsored Fireworks

Director Jay Hatch said it is the final one-year extension request for Master Pyro, LLC. Staff recommended moving forward with it. The recommended dates in 2025 are March 15, May 3, November 8. He responded to questions and comments from the Board.

There was no one present for public comment.

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

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brooks adjourned the meeting at 9:31 p.m.

ATTEST:

Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

Clara VanBlargan, MMC, MSM, City Clerk