



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
September 20, 2023 - 6:00 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
Susan Coxwell, Councilmember
Jan Lipscomb, Councilmember

Larry Carter, Mayor Pro Tem
April Sutton, Councilmember
Bernie Oder, Councilmember

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jared Cobb, City Manager
Jennifer Gutai Comella, City Attorney
Kelvin Cherry, Code Compliance Officer

Valerie Broxson, City Clerk
Heather Day, Finance Director
Sheila Ortyl, Library Director

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Deputy Chief

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Stein asked Deputy Chief Jeff Wagner from the OCW Fire Department to provide the invocation. Mayor Stein called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm, following the invocation .

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Stein led the pledge of allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll as reflected above.

4. FY 2024 BUDGET HEARING

4.1. FY 2024 Final Budget Review by City Manager

- City Manager Cobb shared that on September 6th the council had its first public hearing about the FY 2024 Budget. This is the second public hearing. CM Cobb shared that there are no changes to the budget presented. The property tax rate is the same as the previous year, 5.0261 mills. The budget includes a 5% cost of living adjustment for staff and a 5% increase in water and sewer rates due to inflation.
- Mayor Stein opened the Public Hearing and opened up the meeting to public comments. (There were no comments in person or via zoom.)
- Mayor Stein read the following public announcements:
 - The name of the taxing authority is the City of Mary Esther.
 - The rolled-back rate is 4.6770 mills.
 - The percentage increase by which the millage rate exceeds the rolled back rate is 7.46%.
 - The millage rate to be levied for Fiscal Year 2024 is 5.0261 mills.
- Mayor Stein closed the public hearing.

4.2. Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-01, Establishing the FY 2024 Millage Rate

City Clerk Broxson read Ordinance 2023-01 by title as follows.

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA,
ADOPTING AN AD VALOREM TAX MILLAGE RATE OF 5.0261 MILLS FOR THE 2023-2024

TAXABLE YEAR; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2023-01, adopting an ad valorem tax millage rate for the 2023-2024 taxable year. Councilmember Oder made the motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2023-01, adopting an ad valorem tax millage rate for the 2023-2024 taxable year, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. Hearing no discussion, council voted. The motion passed 5 to 0.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Bernie Oder, Larry Carter, Susan Coxwell, Janice Lipscomb, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

4.3. Reading of Resolution 23-03, Adopting the FY 2024 Budget

City Clerk Broxson read Resolution 23-03 by title as follows:

RESOLUTION 23-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2023; APPROVING AND AFFIRMING THE APPROPRIATIONS SET FORTH IN SAID BUDGET; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 23-03, adopting the FY2024 Budget. Councilmember Coxwell initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lipscomb. Hearing no discussion, the council voted. The motion passed 5 to 0.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
SECOND:	Councilmember Janice Lipscomb
AYES:	Bernie Oder, Larry Carter, Susan Coxwell, Janice Lipscomb, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

5. FY 2024 Pay Schedule

5.1. Consideration of FY 2024 Pay Schedule

City Manager Cobb shared that the agenda item is for the FY 2024 Pay Schedule that is presented annually. All changes in pay are from one of the following: a compensation study, cost of living increase, reclassification of existing positions, or additional positions. The pay schedule includes a 5% cost of living that was approved in the budget earlier in the meeting and changes in pay were also reflected in the approved budget.

Mayor Stein asked if the council had any discussion. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the FY 2024 Pay Schedule as presented. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. The motion passed 5 to 0.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton

SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
AYES:	Bernie Oder, Larry Carter, Susan Coxwell, Janice Lipscomb, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

6. Resolution 23-04, Amending the Comprehensive Fee, Fine, and Revenue Schedule

6.1. Reading of Resolution 23-04, Amending the Comprehensive, Fee, Fine and Revenue Schedule
City Clerk Broxson read Resolution 23-04 by title as follows:

RESOLUTION 23-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY; AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE FEE, FINE, AND REVENUE SCHEDULE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Stein asked if the council had any discussion on the subject. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 23-04, amending the Comprehensive Fee, Fine, and Revenue Schedule. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed 5 to 0.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Bernie Oder, Larry Carter, Susan Coxwell, Janice Lipscomb, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

7. Ordinance 2023-03, Compensation for the Mayor and the Councilmembers

7.1. Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-03, Compensation for Councilmembers and the Mayor
Mayor Stein shared that this is the second reading of Ordinance 2023-03 regarding compensation for the Council and the Mayor.

City Clerk Broxson read Ordinance 2023-03 by title as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-03

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY AND FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR AN INCREASE IN ANNUAL SALARIES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Mayor Stein asked if the council wished to discuss the topic further. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the 2nd reading of Ord. 2023-03, Compensation for Councilmembers and the Mayor. Mayor Pro Tem Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 5 to 0.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Bernie Oder, Larry Carter, Susan Coxwell, Janice Lipscomb, April Sutton

NAYS:

None

8. **ADJOURN**

Before adjourning, Mayor Stein asked if the Council had any comments.

Councilmember Sutton shared that she had the pleasure of meeting the only female Florida Supreme Court Justice, Jamie Grosshhans. Councilmember Sutton presented her with a City of Mary Esther coin.

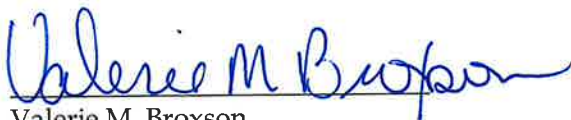
Mayor Pro Tem Carter expressed his appreciation for being present at the meeting.

Councilmember Coxwell shared that she has been working with City Manager Cobb to see if a charity event can be included to help the community at the Christmas Tree Lighting on December 2. The council liked the idea and felt like a food drive would be a great addition to the tree lighting. City Manager Cobb shared that he is working with the library to come up with some type of charity event to add to the Christmas tree lighting.

Mayor Stein shared that he attended the Okaloosa County BOCC meeting on Tuesday, September 19th for the Hit and Run Awareness Proclamation. Mayor Stein shared that previous Mayor Margaret McLemore provided him with a book from Ida Kreiser. Mrs. Kreiser son passed away as a result of a Hit and Run Crash. Mayor Stein read the book by Mrs. Kreiser, and he is leaving the book at City Hall for individuals to read if they are interested.

Mayor Stein shared that the October Yard of the Month will be for seasonal decorations, and it will be awarded one week before Halloween. In addition, Yard of the Month for December will also be seasonal and based upon decorations.

There were no other comments. The council meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm.



Valerie M. Broxson
City Clerk



(Approved at the 10/2/2023 meeting.)