



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
January 16, 2024 - 6:00 PM

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
Bernie Oder, Councilmember

Larry Carter, Mayor Pro Tem
April Sutton, Councilmember

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jared Cobb, City Manager
Hayward Dykes, City Attorney
Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director
Sheila Ortyl, Library Director

Dillon Morris, Interim City Clerk
Heather Day, Finance Director
Kelvin Cherry, Code Compliance Officer
Lillie Ealum, Library Technician

OTHERS PRESENT

Chad Rewis, OSCO Captain

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief

1. INVOCATION

Jeff Wagner, Ocean City Fire Chief, gave the invocation.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Stein at 6:00 PM.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Stein led the pledge of allegiance.

4. ROLL CALL

The Interim City Clerk called the roll as reflected above.

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked to switch item 6.1 and 6.2 in order of presentation.

Mayor Stein called for a motion to approve swapping the presentation of item 6.1 and 6.2. Mayor Pro Tem Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. City Council Vacancies and Appointment Process

Interim City Clerk Morris discussed the recruiting process for the council vacancies and stated all that he did to publicize it. At that time, he stated he had no applications. He turned the discussion to City Attorney Hayward on how to proceed.

City Attorney Hayward reiterated the current council vacancies and the processes that must take place. He told the importance of needing the current council present for voting at meetings. He also mentioned that the City should still publicize the vacancies and keep the appointment process open until the next election.

Council discussed the various municipalities having the same issues pertaining to council vacancies and the effects of Form 6 statewide. Mayor Stein asked about when someone would need to fill out Form 6 when appointed, to which City Attorney Hayward said it would be after appointment.

Councilmember Sutton discussed future meetings and taking more time to properly discuss topics. Mayor Stein asked if council would like to have this topic again at the next meeting, so if a citizen would like to be appointed, council can interview and vote at that future meeting versus holding a special election.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter discussed further the effects and his disdain of how Form 6 has affected Mary Esther and other municipalities. Councilmember Oder weighed in on the topic of Form 6 and voiced that he believes the requirements for the form will not change. He also discussed the difficulty of filling out the form for himself and when trying to get in contact with the form providers, they have been having difficulties adjusting to the new amount of forms required and received.

The mayor clarified that the city will continue to advertise the vacancies open for appointment and to have interviews conducted again in the February regular council meeting.

6.2. Veterans Day Appreciation Certificates

Mayor Stein discussed the city's Veterans Day Celebration and read a list of names of all that worked the event. He proceeded to give all present that worked the event a certificate of appreciation and a \$2 bill.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if anyone would like to make changes to the consent agenda. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Oder. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
SECOND:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

7.1. Minutes of the October 25, 2023, Special Council Meeting

7.2. Minutes of the November 6, 2023, Regular Council Minutes

7.3. Minutes of the December 5, 2023, Regular Council Meeting

7.4. Minutes of the December 20, 2023, Special Council Meeting

7.5. Code Compliance Report

7.6. Financial Report

7.7. Fire Department Report

7.8. Library Report

7.9. Public Works Report

7.10. Jacobs Report

8. CITIZENS WHO HAVE REQUESTED TO BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

None.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) Construction Loan Agreement DW460212

Finance Director Day stated that since project funding has been approved, the city can initiate the bidding process. The project cost is 7.25 million dollars, which covers improvements to the water and sewer, storm water, streets and sidewalks in the Azlea Park Neighborhood. Councilmember Sutton commented on the price. She stated that usually it is doubled. City Manager Cobb stated that if additional funding is needed, the city can go back to SRF.

Mayor Stein calls for a motion to approve Resolution DW460212, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Construction Loan Agreement, securing funding for the water portion of the Azalea Park Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

11.2. Resolution 24-01, Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) Lead Line Service Inventory Project #1460455

Public Works Director Lindsey talked about the loan, saying that it would save the city money if the city used all the loan as it is a 49% forgivable loan.

Upon hearing no discussion, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 24-01 to apply for Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) Lead Line Service Inventory Project #1460455. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Oder. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

11.3. RFB 2023-02, City Hall, Fire Station, and Library Remodeling Project

Public Works Director Lindsey stated that he has been negotiating bids with contractors for renovations to the fire department bathroom and library renovations. Mayor Stein asked about the friends of the library contributing to the amount, with City Manager Cobb stating the friends of the library have agreed to match the city dollar for dollar.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Bernardi Construction for the Fire Hall Bathroom addition/renovation project for an amount not to exceed \$99,736 and the Library Renovation for an amount not to exceed \$28,288 and authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement. Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked about the price of the Fire Hall Bathroom to which Public Works Director Lindsey elaborated that it is to renovate the current restroom and include a new restroom. Mayor Stein asked if he had an approval for the motion previously stated. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

11.4. Review of City-owned Real Property

City Manager Cobb shared a map of all current city-owned properties. He stated that most properties are parks and stormwater. Council began talking about the current waterfront property of the city and Councilmember Sutton brought up the possibility of selling some of the partials of land. City Manager Cobb stated that this map is just to bring attention to the Council and any discussion should be looked at in the future. Council continued to discuss much of the current land in the city and the possibilities surrounding some of the wetlands in the city.

11.5. FY 2024 City Manager Work Plan

City Manager Cobb stated that the items presented are included from the community vision plan as well as a CRM system for the public to use to report projects and track them internally. Councilmember Oder commented on all the dates and said that City Manager Cobb felt comfortable with all the dates presented. Mayor Stein asked if he was comfortable with the dates which City Manager Cobb reiterated that he is comfortable.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the FY 2024 City Manager Work Plan. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 3-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton
NAYS:	None

13. OTHER COMMENTS

Councilmember Sutton shared she went to a local military ball and relayed that Mary Esther has helped make the military feel very welcome in the community. She also commented that she looks forward to another 4 years as no one else has expressed an interest in running against her in election.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked City Manager Cobb asked about the consent order and its latest update. City Manager Cobb stated that it has been sent off and the in-kind project is ongoing, as well as the possibility of taking the wastewater plant to the county.

Mayor Stein remarked that the Santa run was great and Christmas was great. He has suspended Yard of the Month until further notice due to the winter weather.

Councilmember Oder talked about the Library Cooperative Board and the next meeting. He also remarked that the Florida League of Cities is concerned the state is going to extend or add another homestead exemption and how it would affect Mary Esther.

Interim City Clerk Morris talked about how he was reached out by a TPO representative asking who would be the representative present for their meeting. Councilmember Sutton volunteered to be the representative. He also talked about how he is working on livestreaming the meetings and publishing the video after a meeting is concluded. He also remarked he is trying to change the current voting software. Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked about the current council board committees vacancies, Interim City Clerk Morris stated all the current vacancies and mentioned that there could be a proper discussion in February.

City Manager Cobb discussed some of the projects the city has ongoing, saying the city hall due diligence period has expired, financing proposals is being reviewed the following day, two new valves in Springdale water main will be installed, sidewalks will be returned to in February, the boat ramp is project is moving, the pre-bid meeting for Ray's Pond is the following day, and he mentioned the League of Cities bills proposed.

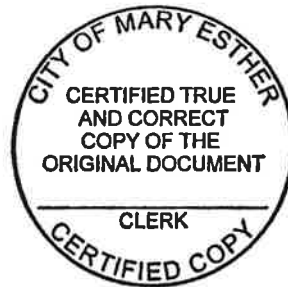
Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked about a recent magistrate hearing to which City Manager Cobb stated the results. Councilmember Sutton also thanked Jacobs for their handwork fixing a spill.

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.



Interim City Clerk Dillon Morris



Minutes approved at 2/5/24 meeting

