



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
April 1, 2024 - 6:00 PM

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

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

CITY STAFF PRESENT

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

Dillon Morris, City Clerk
Heather Day, Finance Director
Kelvin Cherry, Code Compliance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT

Chad Rewis, OSCO Captain
Josh Robinson, JACOBS Operations Supervisor

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief
Randal Killian, Project Manager

1. INVOCATION

Jeff Wagner, Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District, 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 City Clerk called the roll as reflected above.

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if anyone would like to make any changes to the agenda, to which he asked to move the item 6.1 Installation of Newly Elected Officials down to unfinished business. Upon hearing no other changes, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the modification. 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

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. National Vietnam War Veterans Day Proclamation

Mayor Stein read the National Vietnam War Veterans Day proclamation. Afterward, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to authorize him to sign the proclamation, declaring March 29th, 2024, as "National Vietnam War Veterans Day" in Mary Esther. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. The motion passed 3-0.

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

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if anyone would like to make any changes to the consent agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter. 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 March 4, 2024 Regular Council Meeting

7.2. Minutes of the March 13, 2024 Special Council Meeting

7.3. Financial Report

7.4. Public Works Report

7.5. Library Report

7.6. Fire Department Report

7.7. Code Compliance Report

7.8. Jacobs Report

7.9. Law Enforcement Report

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

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

Mayor Stein asked if anyone from the public would like to speak.

Jeff Wagner, Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District, introduced Battalion Chief Clint Cooper and Commissioner Captain Johnny Johnson, discussing their history with the Fire Control district. Chief Wagner shared the plaque that was awarded as Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District is an accredited agency. He thanked his leadership and the mayor and council of Mary Esther. Chief Wagner presents the plaque to the mayor and takes pictures with everyone.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1. City Council Vacancies and Appointment Process

Mayor Stein discussed that citizen Richard Lawson expressed an interest in being appointed to city council. He explained how the interview process would work with council having a list of questions in front of them and at the end a motion would be made to appoint him. Mayor Stein asked Mr. Lawson to share a little about himself. Mr. Lawson discussed his history of meeting his wife in Mary Esther, buying a house, and raising his kids in Mary Esther. Mr. Lawson shared that as he is retired he wanted to give back to his community. Councilmember Oder asked how Mr. Lawson plans on contributing to the community through city council. Mr. Lawson answered with listening, getting guidance, and making decisions to support Mary Esther. Mayor Pro Tem

Carter asked how Mr. Lawson would build a consensus if there was something he was not in support of. Mr. Lawson stated he would get all the facts and make a decision that is best for Mary Esther. Councilmember Sutton asked what Mr. Lawson sees as the biggest challenge for Mary Esther. Mr. Lawson stated that while he has received a little information about Mary Esther's projects, he does not have enough information to know which ones are the most important. Councilmember Sutton asked if there are any areas the city is not addressing. Mr. Lawson shared there was not. Councilmember Oder asked what Mr. Lawson hopes to accomplish during his tenure. Mr. Lawson mentioned he wants to make Mary Esther the best it can be. City Attorney Dykes emphasized that this appointment would last until the special election. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to appoint Mr. Lawson as a councilmember. Mayor Pro Tem Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Oder. Mayor Stein reemphasized that Mr. Lawson would have to fill out the form 6 after appointment, to which Mr. Lawson acknowledged. 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

10.2. Installation of the Newly Elected Officials

Richard Lawson is sworn in as a councilmember.

April Sutton is sworn in as a councilmember.

Chris Stein is sworn in as mayor.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Selection of Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Stein asks council if anyone would like to be mayor pro tem. Councilmember Sutton asked to be appointed. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to appoint Councilmember Sutton as Mayor Pro Tem for the next year. Mayor Pro Tem Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 4-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Larry Carter
SECOND:	Councilmember April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	None

From here on in the minutes, Councilmember Sutton will now be referred to as "Mayor Pro Tem Sutton" and Mayor Pro Tem Carter will now be referred to as "Councilmember Carter" as reflected in the previous motion.

11.2. Emergency Purchases for Water Line Break on Highway 98

Public Works Director Lindsey discussed a water line leak that occurred on Highway 98. He shared that the city had to take on emergency purchases for traffic control, exaction and backfilling material, and repaving costs, and are looking for council to approve the purchases. He remarked that the city plans to speak with FDoT about the paving over of valves. City Manager Cobb stated they are not looking for the ratification of FDoT purchases, and reiterated that the

city plans to speak to FDoT. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton asked if there is a probability for FDoT to offset the costs. City Manager Cobb stated that he does not know until they speak with FDoT and bring it back to council. Mayor Stein asked if all the valves are covered to which Public Works Director Lindsey mentioned that everything is covered but will be put back once finished. City Manager Cobb stated that in the future the city should not have the main lines in the road. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to pay L30 and Construction Materials and law enforcement. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Sutton. The motion passed 4-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	None

11.3. Rescinding Resolution 24-01 and Approving Resolution 24-03, Authorizing Lead Line Service Inventory Loan with Principal Forgiveness

Public Works Director discussed that resolution 24-01 passed but the program number was wrong, so it needs to be rescinded and approve the new resolution. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to rescind Resolution 24-01 and approve Resolution 24-03. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed 4-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	None

11.4. RFB 2023-03, Ray's Pond Stormwater Improvements

Public Works Director Lindsey recommended to reject all bids for Ray's Pond and rebid the project. He stated the engineer said that the bids were much higher than anticipated and it is believed rebidding it with Ray's Pond will lead to more competitive bids. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to reject and readvertise Ray's Pond with Ditch Rehabilitation project. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Oder. The motion passed 4-0.

RESULT:	(4-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Oder
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	None

11.5. General Fund Mid-Year Budget Amendment

Finance Director Day discussed the adjustments to the budget, noting that staffing adjustments, acquisition of the new city hall building, and the restructuring of the public works department contributed to this budget amendment. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton asked if the city has received FEMA reimbursement for Misty Water. Finance Director Day said not yet, that she has reached out to confirm when the city will receive it and if she needs to apply for it, and that she would follow up. Mayor Stein asked if there was any more discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the attached mid-year budget amendment for the General Fund. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion

passed 4-0.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	None

11.6. Security Discussion

Councilmember Oder discussed Pensacola is upgrading the security in their town. He mentioned that the Panhandle is dealing with politically challenged people as well as uncivilized people according the North West Florida League of Cities. He discussed staff researching cameras around city properties. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton agreed with Councilmember Oder, discussing city hall at dark, as well as using facial recognition on her laptop. Councilmember Carter asked City Manager Cobb when the last security analysis was done. He also brought up the idea of flock cameras in the city. City Manager Cobb stated the security review has been completed, and that staff is looking at upgrading security at city hall and the library, discussing that they want to have all systems work together. Captain Rewis came to the podium and discussed flock cameras, privacy concerns from citizens, pricing, and how flock cameras work. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed keeping the community safe. Mayor Stein asked about public records request pertaining to the footage. Captain Rewis discussed that there are certain restrictions with records request and what is turned over but he is not an expert on the subject. City Manager Cobb discussed the city was already looking at buying cameras for city properties, and is seeking guidance on what council would like. Councilmember Carter mentioned that there should be a plan for implanting security features. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton mentioned that city hall and the library should have security before worrying about everywhere else.

11.7. Red Light Camera Discussion

Captain Rewis, discussed Crestview's red light cameras, how they are city owned, and how they work. City Attorney Dykes mentioned that there is some legislature in Tallahassee pertaining to banning red light camera's but only discussed right now. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed the effectiveness of the red light cameras, potential of some in Mary Esther, as well as possible spots they could be. She added as well that the red light cameras could help contribute funds to the city. Councilmember Carter added that code compliance should look into possible body cameras for when out in the field. Captain Rewis discussed that the footage is a public record and that the footage would need to be redacted depending on what is shown. City Attorney Dykes stated as well about the public records request, the city would need to look at a policy for how to record and store the footage. Captain Rewis added that the vetting of footage for a public records request is an additional duty someone would have to take over for. City Manager Cobb asked if council is giving direction to research red light cameras to which council confirmed.

11.8. Holiday Closing Schedule Discussion

City Manager Cobb discussed that one of the previous city managers decided to close city hall and the library during the final week of the year, staff using time off for that period, and the cost being less to the city than over the summer. He also added that during that time city hall still takes payments electronically over the phone, online, and in mail, Jacobs receives emergency calls if there is a line break, and the library has have access to electronic media during that time. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed that the library should not be closed for the full week and discussed a limited schedule to be open. Councilmember Carter asked to know what hours they would want to work to know how they would be impacted. Councilmember Oder voiced that the policy should not change as if the library stays open, city hall should stay open. He as well mentioned that it is a benefit to the city staff and that city staff still have to apply vacation time for it. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton mentioned that she views city hall and the library as different and that they are a service offered to the citizens. Councilmember Oder asked what Councilmember Lawson thinks. Councilmember Lawson stated that he did not want to change it. Mayor Stein

voiced that if the people asking are from Florosa county, they are not citizens of Mary Esther, and that the citizens are who should be asked about the closing. Councilmember Carter asked how the city would relay the information to the public with City Manager Cobb stating it would be shared on the city website, Facebook, and discussed in his monthly coffee. City Manager Cobb stated that he is looking to know whether council want to change the schedule. Mayor Stein asked if there is a motion to keep the schedule the way it is. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed 3-1.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-1)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, Richard Lawson
NAYS:	April Sutton

12. COUNCILS' STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

Mayor Stein combined councils' standing committee status reports with other comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutton welcomes Councilmember Lawson to the council.

Councilmember Lawson has nothing to report.

Mayor Stein has nothing to report.

Councilmember Carter discussed that it is time to start preparing for the Veterans Day Parade, about the city's float, and that next council meeting should have a realignment of committees.

Councilmember Oder discussed the library cooperative meeting, viewed the Niceville library and their security system in place along with a metal detector. He added as well that the friends of the Mary Esther library donated to purchase systems to get high school diplomas outside of libraries. Additionally, the library will have a statewide training day. He also mentioned that the next meeting he will not be able to attend so the alternate will need to take his spot for the library board. Lastly, he will be appointed to the president of the North West Florida in the summer.

City Attorney Dykes said he looks forward to working with Councilmember Lawson.

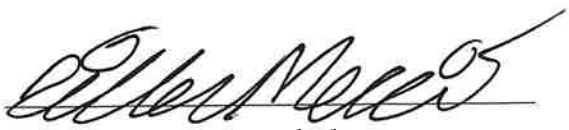
City Clerk Morris thanked mayor and council for appointing him to the clerk position, mentioning he met with Kim Barnes, city clerk for Fort Walton Beach to know where to start. He mentioned that he became a member of the FACC, applied to be a member of the IIMC, is working on starting his CMC process, and working on his notary training.

City Manager Cobb discussed the wastewater project of creating a line from Mary Esther to the Okaloosa county plant, stating that many groups are receiving it well.

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 7:41 P.M.

Minutes approved at 5/6/2024 meeting.


Dillon Morris, City Clerk

