



**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
May 16, 2024 - 6:00 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
Bernie Oder, Councilmember
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

Larry Carter, Councilmember
April Sutton, Mayor Pro Tem

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jared Cobb, City Manager
Hayward Dykes, City Attorney

Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

1. INVOCATION

No invocation was given.

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 the council wished to make any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed 4-0.

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

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1.

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

Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the previously approved bid for restrooms in the fire hall. The contractor selected decided not to sign the contract and the city asked Florida Architects to find additional bids. A bid was submitted by Trotter's General Contractors for \$99,487.50. Councilmember Carter asked if the contract was reviewed, and he was satisfied with the details. Public Works Director Lindsey said that it was just a bid and the contract would come later to sign. Councilmember Oder asked where they were based out of with City Manager Cobb stating they are from Destin, Florida.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Trotter's General Contractors, INC for the Fire Hall Bathroom addition/renovation project for an amount not to exceed \$99,487.50 and to authorize the mayor to execute the agreement. 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

6.2. City Council Vacancy Appointment

Mayor Stein asked the respective candidates to step out of the room for council to discuss questions for the interview. Mayor and council discussed the questions the candidates would be asked, along with how the council would ask them, and who asks in what order. The questions agreed upon are as follows:

1. (Sutton) What motivates you to serve on the Mary Esther City Council?
2. (Lawson) How do you plan to contribute to the community through your role on the City Council?
3. (Stein) What do you see as the biggest challenge facing our city, and how would you address it?
4. (Carter) Can you tell us about your previous involvement in local community projects or initiatives?
5. (Oder) City Council requires a significant time commitment, usually 1-2 meetings a month, as well as reading prep prior to meetings. How will this fit in with your other commitments?
6. (Sutton) Are you familiar with municipal government?
7. (Lawson) What skills and experience do you have that you believe would be beneficial to you as a Councilmember?
8. (Stein) What is your approach to handling controversial and complicated issues?
9. (Carter) Do you think you have any personal or professional relationships that could become a conflict of interest while serving as a Councilmember?
10. (Oder) What do you believe is the role of the City Council in our Community?
11. (Sutton) What previous community involvement have you had in Mary Esther or in another city?

(For the purpose of the minutes, the candidates answers will be numbered in their interviews as they relate to the questions above.)

Damion Green Interview

1. Mr. Green sees a lot of changes coming to the city, mentioning items about transgenderism and gay rights and wanting to protect against it.
2. He seeks to give benefits to the community to support families, discussing the problem with housing prices in the area.
3. He views scarcity of land as a pressing issue.
4. He mentioned helping in fund drives and voting elections.
5. He discussed that he would not have issues with timing.

6. He has read the charter, is familiar with state politics but not familiar with local.
7. He mentioned he has read the constitution and keeps up with state regulations.
8. Mr. Green discussed that he believes his views try to align with what the founding fathers intended.
9. He said he did not.
10. He said that council determines where money is spent and allocated and why is the city spending the money.
11. He mentioned he has moved a lot in his career but hangs out at local coffee shops.

Mayor and council asked if he had any questions. Mr. Green asked why the city boundaries are not defined in the city charter. Councilmember Oder discussed the process of changing the charter, how much time it takes, and how costly it is.

K.C. Woods Interview

1. Mr. Woods discussed his family and wanting to take part in the community.
2. He wants to be a voice for young families, discussing parks as well, wanting to make a city for both retirees and families.
3. He views progress as the biggest challenge and figuring out how to blend the citizens of retirees and families together for an identity.
4. He mentioned that his position involves him in the community, being an assistant principal and football coach, and taking opportunities to take part in the community.
5. He mentioned that he would not have applied if he did not have the time, and that anything meaningful requires time.
6. He discussed being in small towns and his experience talking with local officials, as well as working with education administration.
7. He talked about being a career educator, working closely with schools, and having good relationships with knowing people.
8. He discussed often working with controversy in the education system, respecting everyone, understanding both sides, and that he is good at finding common ground.
9. He stated he did not.
10. He views city council as a voice for the people, and maintaining the city's identity while also moving forward.
11. He mentioned taking part in his previous communities, being a part of park planning and building, school improvements plans, and getting to know candidates in meet and greets.

Mayor and council asked if he had any questions for them. Mr. Woods asked what they view as the biggest challenges facing the city. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed the city's infrastructure and updating the parks, doing things to help the community and their identity. Councilmember Carter agreed about the infrastructure and discussed funding. Mr. Woods asked what is the most fulfilling and unfulfilling parts of sitting in the councilmember seat. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton mentioned the best part is discussing and hearing from and about the community. She mentioned the negative is sometimes dealing with the politics. Councilmember Oder added to the discussion about infrastructure, encouraging more forward thinking and looking ahead, and how some things the city does are things the city has to do per regulations or that more services require more funding. Councilmember Oder asked Mr. Woods is familiar with the Sunshine Law, to which he commented that he is.

Julia Thomas Interview

1. Ms. Thomas stated she wants to be more involved in the community.
2. She believes she can bring a unique perspective to the city council that not everyone may experience.
3. She stated more community outreach.
4. She mentioned being involved in book drives and community clean-up programs.
5. She stated it would fit in fine and that she would have no problem reading the agenda.

6. She stated she is familiar.
7. She discussed reaching out to community members and organizing.
8. She said she will discuss with all parties.
9. She stated she did not.
10. She discussed helping the city grow and evolve, keeping up with projects, and dealing with damage control.
11. She discussed working with a rescue program for cats and dogs, being a local drama instructor, and volunteering with beach clean ups.

Mayor and council asked if she had any questions for them. Ms. Thomas asked what the most difficult tasks facing them this fiscal year. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed the water and sewer updates.

Council wrote their votes down on paper which City Clerk Morris took up and City Manager Cobb compiled the votes and read the rankings as follows:

1. K.C. Woods
2. Julia Thomas
3. Damion Green

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to appoint K.C. Woods as a councilmember for the City of Mary Esther to fill an unexpired term until a special election called and the results are certified. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed 3-1.

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

Mayor Stein discussed a bit more to Mr. Woods about the financial disclose and the upcoming election process. Councilmember Carter said that he was still impressed with Ms. Thomas and encouraged her to still run in the special election. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton seconded his statement, encouraging her to run. Councilmember Oder discussed a candidate university discussing how to handle the process of becoming a councilmember. After discussion, City Clerk Morris swore in Mr. Woods, making him officially Councilmember Woods.

7. **ADJOURN**

The council meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Minutes approved at the 6/3/24 meeting.



Dillon Morris, City Clerk

