



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
April 7, 2025 - 6:30 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
April Sutton, Councilmember
Susan Coxwell, Councilmember

Bernard Oder, Mayor Pro Tem
Larry Carter, Councilmember (Virtual)
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jared Cobb, City Manager
Hayward Dykes, City Attorney
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

Kelvin Cherry, Code Compliance Officer
Heather Day, Finance Director
Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director
Tyler Reed, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT

Chad Rewis, OSCO Captain

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief

1. INVOCATION

Jeff Wagner, Fire Chief, Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District, gave the invocation.

2. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Stein called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Stein led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll as reflected above.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion for Councilmember Carter to participate virtually. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if the council wished to change the agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Hurlburt Field and Community Partnerships - Lt. Col. Sean Stapler

Lieutenant Colonel Shawn Stapler, Hurlburt Field, led the presentation. He thanked the city for their work together and discussed the intergovernmental support agreement. He discussed the base sharing many functions the city has and the need for more opportunities for base maintenance. He discussed meeting with the city about working with the city for wastewater treatment, finding what the city and base share, and seeing more about working together, and gathering more support from the city. The mayor thanked him for his discussion and stated the city would support the base. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed that the base also has a letter of support from Senators and Governors.

6.2. Yard of the Month

City Clerk Morris pulled up a picture of 721 Crestwood Street, see attachment. Mayor Stein discussed the yard of the month program to gather more interest in submissions. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to award "Yard of the Month April 2025" to 721 Crestwood Street. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if the council wished to change the consent agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

7.1. Financial Report

7.2. Public Works Report

7.3. Library Report

7.4. Fire Department Report

7.5. Community Development Report

7.6. Jacobs Report

7.7. Law Enforcement Report

7.8. Minutes of the March 3, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

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

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

Cokie Tyler, 522 East Hollywood Boulevard, discussed Mary Esther's setbacks, how Fort Walton Beach's are different, and how they could change those. Mayor Stein discussed variance requests from the Local Planning Agency as an option to solve her issue.

James McMan, 612 Hollywood Boulevard, discussed the formation of a sinkhole on the property. Public Works Director Lindsey discussed being aware of the sinkhole and working with the county. James McMan also asked about limiting large vehicle traffic. Mayor Stein stated that this road is a county road and Mary Esther has no jurisdiction.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1. Second reading of Ordinance 2025-01, Lot Split and Lot Consolidation

Community Development Director Reed provided the background on Ordinance 2025-01. City Attorney Dykes asked if there had been any changes to the ordinance, with Community Development Director Reed stating there had been none. Mayor Stein asked the clerk to read the title of the ordinance. City Clerk Morris read the title of Ordinance 2025-01. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2025-01 by title only. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed 4-1.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-1)
MOVER:	Councilmember Richard Lawson
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	April Sutton

10.2. Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-02, Public Camping or Sleeping in City facilities, grounds, right-of-way, and sidewalks

Community Development Director provided the background of Ordinance 2025-02. Mayor Stein asked if anything had changed in the ordinance, to which Community Development Director Reed stated nothing had changed. Mayor Stein asked the clerk to read the ordinance. City Clerk Morris read the title of Ordinance 2025-02. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2025-02 by title only. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Richard Lawson
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

Councilmember Coxwell asked if that only applied to public properties, with Mayor Stein confirming it.

10.3. Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-03, Photo Speed Enforcement in School Zones

City Manager Cobb provided the background of Ordinance 2025-03. Councilmember Oder asked for more information about them being a citizen's arrest warrant, as he saw on Facebook. Chad Rewis, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, stated he saw that same post. He discussed that it would be cited as an ordinance violation, and if it is not paid within a specific time, it is converted to a traffic violation. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed her experience of getting a violation in Gulf Breeze, and that it was treated as a code violation. Mayor Stein asked the clerk to read the title of the ordinance. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the second reading

of ordinance 2025-03 by title only. The motion was initiated by Mayor Pro Tem Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Conditional Use Permit for Privacy Fence- 161 W. Miracle Strip Parkway

Community Development Director Reed provided the background of the application for a conditional use permit for a privacy fence. Mayor Stein asked if there were any questions. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the conditional use permit to allow for a privacy fence with a gate to extend beyond the front elevation of the principal dwelling unit, subject to the conditions therein. The motion was initiated by Councilmember Oder and seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.2. Resolution 25-04, Lot Split Application and Review Fees

Community Development Director Reed provided the background of Resolution 25-04. Mayor Stein asked why this was in a resolution. City Manager Cobb stated that the city's fees are set through ordinance. City Attorney Dykes added on that most municipalities set fees in a fee schedule in a resolution to only need one reading instead of two. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton asked if they also pay the fee to the county. Community Development Director Reed stated this was worked into the fee. Councilmember Carter asked if this was in line with other municipalities. Community Development Director Reed stated it was in the middle for fees. Mayor Stein asked the clerk to read the title of the resolution. City Clerk Morris read the title of the resolution. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25-04. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.3. Financial Auditing Services Contract

Finance Director Day provided the background of the financial auditing services contract. Councilmember Oder discussed endorsing the use of Warren Averett and liking their practices.

He discussed that it gives the city transparency with its finances. Councilmember Carter asked how much the contract increased. Finance Director Day stated it had a 13% increase. Mayor Stein asked if there was any more discussion. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to accept the attached engagement letter from Warren Averett to renew the contract for an additional three years. The motion was initiated by Councilmember Oder and seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 11.4. Mary Esther Boulevard Landscaping Grant Application and Design Task Order**
Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the background of the Mary Esther Boulevard Landscaping Grant application and design task order. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton discussed being careful of what trees are going into the boulevard, saying to limit the droppings they leave. Mayor Stein asked if there was any more discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the submission of a grant application to FDOT in the amount of \$350,000 for the landscaping of the medians on Mary Esther Boulevard. Councilmember Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Sutton. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the attached task order with Kimley-Horn for the landscaping project's design and management on Mary Esther Boulevard. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Oder. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 11.5. Mary Esther Boulevard Landscaping Conceptual Design**
Public Works Director Lindsey introduced the presentation of the conceptual design of the Mary Esther Boulevard landscaping. Elliot Capers, Kimley-Horn, presented the two design concepts for Mary Esther Boulevard, discussing the layouts, differences, and design concepts. Councilmember Carter asked if the maintenance includes water consumption, with Elliot Capers discussing that it is low-water-use plantings. He and Public Works Director Lindsey discussed that the price point of the two plans was also kept relatively close together. Mayor Pro Tem

Sutton discussed that regardless of the concept, using native plantings and trees that do not have a lot of droppings or sheddings. Councilmember Coxwell also discussed that using palm trees would not fit Mary Esther's identity. Councilmember Carter asked which concept the maintenance crew would prefer, with Public Works Director Lindsey stating there was no preference, as the level of maintenance on both was about the same. Councilmember Oder discussed his concern about the size of the trees. Public Works Director Lindsey stated that it was kept in mind with the design. Councilmember Oder discussed that it would be better for a storm not to bring power lines down. City Manager Cobb discussed that the final design could also be brought to the council for approval. Councilmember Carter asked what maintenance costs would be in the coming years, with Public Works Director Lindsey stating it was too early to tell. Councilmember Coxwell motioned to move forward with the final design of concept 2, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Sutton. The motion passed 4-1.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-1)
MOVER:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
AYES:	Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	Larry Carter

11.6. Award of RFB 2025-01 Cold Applied Pavement Products

Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the background of RFB 2025-01. Mayor Stein asked if it was oil being put on the road. Public Works Director Lindsey stated it was more in line with asphalt. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to award RFB 2025-01 to SealMaster and authorize staff to issue a purchase order not to exceed \$50,000 for this year's pavement preservation work and authorize the city manager to sign the purchase order. The motion was initiated by Mayor Pro Tem Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

Councilmember Oder discussed sharing information about the sealing so the citizens are more aware of it.

11.7. Award of Purchase Order for Azalea Park Trail Materials

Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the background of the purchase order for Azalea Park trail materials. Councilmember Coxwell asked if it would take care of the spongy spots on the trail. Public Works Director Lindsey discussed that some of the spots hardened and that they will try a new practice to see if it will prevent the spongy spots. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the purchase order of \$ 30,049 to Play Space Services for Rubber and Binder for Azalea Park and authorize the city manager to sign the purchase order. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Richard Lawson

AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

11.8. Selection of Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Stein asked if there were any nominations. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton nominated Councilmember Oder, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Susan Coxwell
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

11.9. City Clerk Performance Review

City Manager Cobb discussed the background of the city clerk's performance review. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the performance review for the city clerk as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Bernie Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Richard Lawson
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

11.10. Consideration of Operations, Maintenance, and Management (O&M) Contract with Jacobs

Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the background of the operation and maintenance contract with Jacobs. Councilmember Sutton discussed and thanked the Jacobs crew for their service, and she was looking forward to continuing to work together. Mayor Stein asked if there were any more comments. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the O&M contract agreement with Jacobs. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

12. COUNCILS' STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

Councilmember Sutton thanked City Manager Cobb and Mayor Stein for going with her to Tallahassee to meet with senators and representatives, and she discussed working with the mayor and a citizen of the year and employee of the year award.

Councilmember Coxwell wished her husband a happy birthday.

Councilmember Lawson discussed going to Hurlburt Field with Mayor Stein and Councilmember Sutton to see the new plane.

Mayor Stein discussed the Citizen of the Year award.

Councilmember Carter discussed that by Friday, he should know if his daughter would have a donor and possibly return for the June meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Oder thanked the Public Works Director for getting the grant, the library cooperative board meeting, the library cooperative training day, the luncheon for One Okaloosa EDC, the upcoming EAGLECLAW ceremony, and the Eglin Federal Credit Union grand opening.

13. OTHER COMMENTS

City Attorney Dykes had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris reminded mayor and council to check their mailboxes, do their ethics training, do their cybersecurity training, to let him know if they would like to attend the Okaloosa County League of Cities dinner, he would be out of town May 18 - 23 for the IIMC conference, and that he is looking forward to another year.

City Manager Cobb discussed the upcoming parks and greenways master plan public workshop and survey online.

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Minutes approved at the 5/5/2025 meeting.


Dillon Morris, City Clerk



