



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
May 5, 2025 - 6:00 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

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Stein at 6:02 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. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

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 Coxwell initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed unanimously.

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

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Yard of the Month

Mayor Stein discussed the two addresses submitted for Yard of the Month: 81 Emory Lane and 610 Brian Circle (see attachment). After some discussion, Councilmember Sutton made a motion to award "Yard of the Month May 2025" to 81 Emory Ln., seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Stein asked if the council wished to make any changes to the consent agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	(5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Richard Lawson
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernard 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 April 7, 2025, Local Planning Agency Meeting

7.9. Minutes of the April 7, 2025, Public Workshop Meeting

7.10. Minutes of the April 7, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

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

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

Fire Chief Wagner spoke about Ocean City Wright-Fire Control District potentially submitting an RFP to Okaloosa County and seeking a reference letter from the council. City Attorney Dykes spoke that a letter would have to be drafted and then approved to have either the mayor or city manager to sign it. Mayor Stein directed Fire Chief Wagner to work with City Clerk Morris for whatever is needed.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Proposed FY 2026 Budget Calendar

Finance Director Day led the discussion on the proposed 2026 budget calendar. Councilmember Sutton asked if the September 22nd meeting could be moved. Mayor Pro Tem Sutton added that some of the meetings fall on Wednesdays. Finance Director Day stated they could move the September 22nd meeting to September 23rd. Mayor Stein asked if everyone was happy with the other dates, to which there were no complaints. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the financial year 2026 budget calendar with one change. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.2. Proposed Mid-Year Budget Amendment

Public Works Director Lindsey led the discussion of the proposed mid-year budget amendment. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked City Clerk Morris to read the title of the resolution. City Clerk Morris read the title of Resolution 25-06. Mayor Stein then requested a motion to approve Resolution 25-06, which would approve the mid-year budget amendment. The motion was initiated by Mayor Pro Tem Oder, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.3. Talcon Change Order Number 2

Public Works Director Lindsey led the discussion of Talcon Change Order Number 2. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve change order #2 with Talcon Group LLC. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.4. Award of Construction Engineering and Inspection Services (CEI) for Azalea Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements

Public Works Director Lindsey led the discussion on the Azalea Neighborhood infrastructure improvements. Councilmember Sutton asked why the CPH bid was higher and if the project

would be the same crew that did Springdale. Public Works Director Lindsey stated the distance made the bid higher for CPH. Mike Craddle, Jacobs Engineering, discussed that he did not know who the crew was, but he would find out and let the council know. Councilmember Sutton requested better communication in this project. Mayor Pro Tem Oder emphasized the importance of checks and balances. Councilmember Sutton asked if Public Works Director Lindsey felt confident working with Jacobs Engineering. He confirmed that he did feel confident working with them. After discussions, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Amendment 1 to Task Order 2022-01 with Jacobs Engineering for a total cost not to exceed \$390,616. Mayor Pro Tem Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.5. Direction regarding 911 E. Miracle Strip Private Lift Station

Public Works Director Lindsey provided the background of the 911 East Miracle Strip Private Lift Station. A discussion ensued regarding the property's location, Fort Walton Beach's interest in the property, potential financial assistance for annexation, tri-annual inspections and reports, the consequences of Mary Esther annexing the property, cutting off water to the property, the 90-day notice requirement, the fire assessment, involuntary annexation, coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), potential costs, and other private lift stations in Mary Esther. After this discussion, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to find out what the response is to the 90-day letter. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Oder. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.6. Holiday Closing Schedule

City Manager Cobb led the discussion of the holiday closing schedule. Councilmember Coxwell discussed liking the schedule. Mayor Pro Tem Oder expressed support for closing city facilities during the holiday period. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to authorize the closing of city facilities during the holiday period beginning at noon on December 23, 2025, and reopening on January 2, 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Bernard Oder
SECOND:	Councilmember Richard Lawson
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernard Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell

NAYS:	None
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11.7. Consideration of City Attorney Rate Schedule

City Attorney Dykes led the discussion of the city attorney rate schedule. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the rate increase. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.8. Discussion of Citizen of the Year Proposal

City Clerk Morris provided the background to the discussion of the citizen of the year proposal and sought feedback on how the mayor and council would like to proceed. Discussion occurred about requirements, awards, costs, citizens in Mary Esther, and leaving it with only one citizen. City Clerk Morris stated he would bring something back in the June meeting.

12. COUNCILS' STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

Councilmember Sutton discussed meeting with the governor and newest representative, and if there is an issue with the city, to call city hall or the police, not the councilmembers, as they do not write the tickets.

Councilmember Coxwell had no additional comments.

Councilmember Lawson discussed attending the library's Earth Day event.

Mayor Stein remarked he was going on vacation.

Mayor Pro Tem Oder discussed the base's road and housing situation, the library cooperative, and a possible extension to the legislative session in Tallahassee.

Councilmember Carter stated things were going well with his daughter and asked for an update on the new city hall. Public Works Director Lindsey reported on the status of the new city hall.

13. OTHER COMMENTS

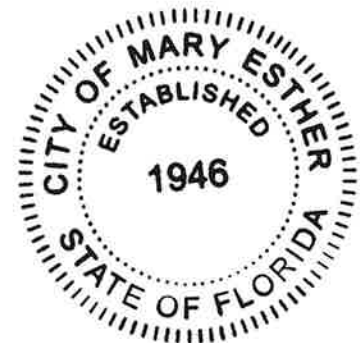
City Attorney Dykes had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris reminded the council to check their mailbox, do their ethics training, do their cybersecurity training, file their financial disclosures, and attend the IIMC conference.

City Manager Cobb discussed the reopening of Scottsdale Drive.

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.



Minutes approved at the 6/2/2025 meeting.

Dillon Morris
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

81 Emory Ln.



610 Brian Cir.

