



**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL**

**September 23, 2025 - 6:00 PM**  
195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

**CITY COUNCIL PRESENT**

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

Bernie Oder, Mayor Pro Tem  
Larry Carter, Councilmember  
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

**CITY STAFF PRESENT**

Jared Cobb, City Manager  
Hayward Dykes, City Attorney (Virtual)  
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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 6:01 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.

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

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

**6. FY 2026 BUDGET HEARING**

**6.1. Staff Presentation**

City Manager Cobb presented the budget for final approval. Mayor Stein then read the following into the public record:

- The name of the taxing authority is the City of Mary Esther.
- The rolled-back rate is 4.8756 mills.
- The percentage increase by which the millage rate exceeds the rolled-back rate is 3.09%
- The millage rate to be levied for Fiscal Year 2026 is 5.0261 mills.

**6.2. Public Comment**

Mayor Stein asked if anyone in the public would like to comment, to which no one got up to speak.

**6.3. Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-05, Establishing the FY 2026 Millage Rate**

City Clerk Morris read the title of Ordinance 2025-05.

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING AN AD VALOREM TAX MILLAGE RATE OF 5.062 MILLS FOR THE 2025-2026 TAXABLE YEAR; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 2025-05, adopting an ad valorem tax millage rate for the 2025-2026 taxable year. Councilmember Coxwell initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**6.4. Reading of Resolution 25-11, Adopting the FY 2026 Budget**

City Clerk Morris read the title of Resolution 25-11.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2025; APPROVING AND AFFIRMING THE APPROPRIATIONS SET FORTH IN SAID BUDGET; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25-11, adopting the FY 2026 budget. Mayor Pro Tem Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**7.1. Reading of Resolution 25-12, Amending the Comprehensive, Fee, Fine, and Revenue Schedule**

City Manager Cobb discussed Resolution 25-12. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked City Clerk Morris to read the title of Resolution 25-12.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER,**

**FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY; AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE FEE, FINE, AND REVENUE SCHEDULE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25-12, amending the Comprehensive Fee, Fine, and Revenue Schedule. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Oder. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**7.2. Consideration of FY 2026 Pay Scale**

City Manager Cobb discussed the FY 2026 Pay Scale. There was some discussion.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the FY 2026 Pay Schedule as presented. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**7.3. Approval of Employee Health, Vision, Dental, AD&D, Long-Term Disability, and Life Insurance Renewals**

City Manager Cobb provided an overview of the city's employee health, vision, dental, accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D), long-term disability, and life insurance renewals. There was some discussion.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the attached renewal rates from Florida Blue, The Standard, and Principal for employee health, vision, dental, accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D), long-term disability, and life insurance coverage. Councilmember Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**7.4. Approval of Property, Auto, Liability, and Workers' Compensation Insurance Renewals**  
City Manager Cobb provided the background of the city's property, auto, liability, and workers'

compensation insurance renewals.

Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the proposed renewal of the City's property, auto, liability, and workers' compensation insurance coverages with Brown & Brown. Councilmember Coxwell initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed unanimously. There was some discussion after the vote passed.

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

**8. ADJOURN**

Councilmember Sutton discussed attending the Emerald Coast Regional Council board meeting and an upcoming groundbreaking.

Councilmember Coxwell had no additional comments.

Councilmember Lawson had no additional comments.

Mayor Stein discussed the progress on the Veterans Day parade.

Councilmember Carter had no additional comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Oder discussed the state's municipalities committees' property tax meeting and the library cooperative.

City Attorney Dykes had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris had no additional comments.

City Manager Cobb had no additional comments.

The council meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Minutes approved at the 10/6/25 meeting.

  
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

