



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
December 8, 2025 - 6:00 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor	Bernie Oder, Mayor Pro Tem
April Sutton, Councilmember	Larry Carter, Councilmember
Susan Coxwell, Councilmember (Virtual)	Richard Lawson, Councilmember

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jared Cobb, City Manager	Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director
Jennifer Comella, City Attorney	Tyler Reed, Community Development Director
Dillon Morris, City Clerk	

OTHERS PRESENT

Chad Rewis, OSCO Captain	Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief
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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 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 Coxwell to participate virtually. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (4-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson
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 to approve the agenda as presented. 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

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Update: Status of School Zone Speed Enforcement Program

City Manager Cobb provided an update on the status of the school zone speed enforcement program. There was some discussion among the council.

Claude Thomas, 9 Magnolia Dr, expressed his support for the speed enforcement cameras and provided a document to the council and city staff (See attached).

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 to approve the consent agenda as presented. 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, 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 November 3rd, 2025, Regular Council Meeting

7.9. Minutes of the November 17th, 2025, Local Planning Agency Meeting

7.10. Minutes of the November 17th, 2025, Special Council Meeting

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

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

None.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1. Big Box Retail/ Grocery Market Major Preliminary Development Order

Community Development Director Reed presented the preliminary development order for the big-box retail/grocery market. He provided the background and concerns on the preliminary development order. There was a discussion among the council.

Stephen Tatum, the applicant's attorney, provided a rebuttal and clarifications to the concerns and allowed the mayor and council to ask questions regarding the application. There was a discussion among the council.

After all the discussion concluded, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the preliminary development order (PDO) for the proposed big box retail/grocery market, consistent with the findings and conditions outlined in this report, subject to the following conditions:

Approval of the preliminary development order is contingent upon the applicant submitting a

complete preliminary plat that meets all subdivision requirements prior to issuance of any permits, commencement of site work, or review and approval of a final development order. The preliminary plat submission will follow the city of Mary Esther platting procedures, Ordinance 2025-06, and Florida Statutes.

1. Any major or minor changes to the approved PDO site plan will need to come back to the council for approval. Any changes to the preliminary plat will follow City of Mary Esther platting procedures.
2. A preliminary or final plat does not create a condition where variances or special exceptions are needed.
3. Utility services agreement is approved or considered with the preliminary plat application.
4. A preliminary plat shall meet statutory requirements for a plat made for recording. That is, what the final plat must show under Section Fl. Statute 177.091 and the City of Mary Esther platting procedures Ordinance 2025-06.
5. The updated site plan showing any improvement/redevelopment for the PDO, showing that it fits within the new plat boundaries.
6. If a complete preliminary plat is not submitted to the city within forty-five (45) calendar days, the preliminary development order automatically expires, unless extended by fifteen (15) days by the city manager, or his designee, with justification from the applicant.

Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Carter. The motion passed 3-2.

RESULT:	PASSED (3-2)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Councilmember Larry Carter
AYES:	Larry Carter, April Sutton, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	Bernie Oder, Richard Lawson

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Discussion: Annual Veterans Day Celebration and Parade

Councilmember Carter provided a discussion and presentation about the annual Veterans Day celebration and parade. He provided the attached bullets to the mayor and council (see attached). There was a discussion among the council.

11.2. Consideration: Selection of Citizen of the Year Nominee

City Clerk Morris discussed the citizen of the year application received. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, he asked for a motion to award Connie Schabowski Citizen of the Year. Mayor Pro Tem Oder initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 11.3. Ratification: Emergency Purchase for Hurlburt Field Effluent Pump Station Repair**
 Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the emergency purchase for Hurlburt Field for an effluent pump station repair. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to ratify the emergency purchase of \$15,718 from Morrow Water Technology for the new motor to serve the Hurlburt Effluent Pump Station. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 11.4. Resolution 25-22: Approval of Animal Control Services Agreement with Panhandle Animal Welfare Society**
 City Manager Cobb led the discussion on the approval of the animal control services agreement with Panhandle Animal Welfare Society. There was a discussion among the council. Mayor Stein asked City Clerk Morris to read the title of the resolution, which he did.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE PANHANDLE ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY, INC., CONTRACT FOR ANIMAL SERVICES IN THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA.

Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25-22: Approval of the Animal Control Services Agreement with the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Councilmember Carter initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Oder. The motion passed 4-1.

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

- 11.5. Resolution 25-23: Approval of Managed IT and Cybersecurity Agreement with Digital Boardwalk**
 City Manager Cobb led the discussion of the managed IT and cybersecurity agreement with Digital Boardwalk. Mayor Stein asked City Clerk Morris to read the title of Resolution 25-23, which he did.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE DIGITAL BOARDWALK CONTRACT FOR MANAGED IT AND CYBERSECURITY SERVICES IN THE CITY OF MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA.

Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25-23, approving the agreement with Digital Boardwalk for managed IT and cybersecurity services and authorizing the city manager to execute the contract. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 11.6. Consideration: Purchase Order for City Hall Sidewalk and Curb Improvements**
Public Works Director Lindsey discussed the purchase order for the city hall sidewalk and curb improvements. There was a discussion among the council. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to award a purchase order to Brazilian Brick Pavers in the amount of \$38,330 (including the \$5,000 contingency) for sidewalk and curb improvements using the architect-recommended Napoli color blend pavers. 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, Bernie Oder, April Sutton, Richard Lawson, Susan Coxwell
NAYS:	None

- 11.7. Consideration: Purchase Order for City Hall Hurricane Shutters from Storm Force Shutters**
City Manager Cobb discussed the purchase order for the city hall hurricane shutters from Storm Force Shutter. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve a purchase order with Storm Force Shutters in the amount of \$35,743.28 for the installation of hurricane-rated Bahama shutters and decorative shutters at City Hall. 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

- 11.8. Consideration: Purchase Order for City Hall Furniture from ImageWorks Commercial Interiors**
City Manager Cobb discussed the purchase order for city hall furniture from ImageWorks Commercial Interiors. Mayor Stein asked if there was any discussion. Upon hearing none, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve a purchase order for ImageWorks Commercial Interiors in the amount of \$59,358.57 for City Hall furniture at state contract pricing, and for design, delivery, assembly, and installation services. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

12. COUNCILS' STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

Councilmember Sutton thanked Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District for the ride-along she participated in, attending the recent legislative conference, and thanked city staff for the Christmas tree lighting.

Councilmember Coxwell agreed with Councilmember Sutton's comments on the Christmas tree lighting

Councilmember Lawson agreed with the sentiment of the Christmas tree lighting.

Mayor Stein discussed attending the recent legislative conference and agreed with the sentiment of the Christmas tree lighting.

Councilmember Carter discussed speed cameras for the new calendar year, and the city should start looking at potential items to remove from the new fiscal year to raise revenue.

Mayor Pro Tem Oder discussed the upcoming library cooperative meetings, agreed with Councilmember Carter's point on raising revenues, and the potential implications of cutting property taxes.

13. OTHER COMMENTS

City Attorney Camilla had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris reminded everyone to check their mailboxes, do the yearly cybersecurity training, do the yearly ethics training, an ethics training offering by the Florida League of Cities, and wished everyone a merry Christmas.

City Manager Cobb agreed with the sentiments of the Christmas tree lighting and thanked

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Minutes approved at the meeting.

1/20/2026

Dillon Morris
Dillon Morris, City Clerk



Pensacola made \$242,995 in revenue from the city's red light cameras in the first five months of their operation, from 10,616 paid tickets.

Why the City Should Lead the Veterans Day Celebration

- Public already views the parade as a *city event*
- Accountability rests with the city regardless of who organizes it
- City should lead if the city bears the liability
- Current float has safety risks (no steps, no handrails, elevated platform)
- Parade route limits engagement and raises median-safety concerns
- Event has outgrown the informal volunteer model
- No structured post-parade ceremony or veteran recognition
- City leadership provides consistency, safety oversight, and clear authority
- Partnerships remain valued—city leadership strengthens them
- Veterans deserve a celebration marked by excellence, dignity, and stewardship