



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL
May 4, 2026 - 6:00 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT

Chris Stein, Mayor
April Sutton, Councilmember
Bernie Oder, Councilmember

Susan Coxwell, Mayor Pro Tem
Larry Carter, Councilmember
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

CITY STAFF PRESENT

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

Heather Day, Finance Director

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief

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.

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 Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

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

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Second Public Hearing: FFY 2025 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application

Mayor Stein opened the public hearing for the FFY 2025 small cities community development block grant (CDBG) application on May 4th, 2026, at 6:05 p.m. Heather Day, Finance Director, introduced Jeffery Winter and discussed why this is being brought before council. Jeffery Winter, Cornerstone Community Partners, discussed the purpose of the public hearing and the two proposed project applications. There was some discussion among the council, with Jeffery Winter answering questions. Mayor Stein opened the floor for public comment. Wiebke Anderson, 2 Azalea Dr, discussed the survey process, attachments, and changes to how the

letters address citizens. Hearing no other comments, Mayor Stein closed the public comment and public hearing at 6:15 p.m.

6.2. Hurlburt Field Wastewater Decision and Future Support — Lt. Col. Phil Compton, 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron

Lt. Col. Phill Compton, 1st Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron, discussed Hurlburt Field's wastewater treatment plant and the decision to withdraw from the deal with Mary Esther and Okaloosa County. There was some discussion among the council, with Lt. Col. Phil Compton answering questions.

6.3. Yard of the Month - May 2026

Dillon Morris, City Clerk, presented the yards submitted for May yard of the month: 18 Kohler Dr. and 117 Pryor Dr. Councilmember Sutton made a motion to select 18 Kohler Dr. as yard of the month for May 2026, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	PASSED (5-0)
MOVER:	Councilmember April Sutton
SECOND:	Mayor Pro Tem Susan Coxwell
AYES:	April Sutton, Susan Coxwell, Richard Lawson, Larry Carter, Bernie Oder
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. Mayor Pro Tem Coxwell initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed unanimously.

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

7.1. Monthly Financial Report

7.2. Monthly Performance Report

7.3. Minutes of the April 6th, 2026, Regular 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. Ordinance 2026-02: Electric Bicycles, Motorized Scooters, and Micromobility Devices

Jared Cobb, City Manager, discussed the request from the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department to make changes and move the item to June. The council reached a consensus to wait until June.

10.2. Consideration: Status Update and Direction on the Long-Term Wastewater Solution

Jared Cobb, City Manager, discussed discussions from Okaloosa County and the city receiving an extension from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. There was some

discussion among the council. City Manager Cobb further discussed the necessity of the council being comfortable with one of the options before proceeding to seek grants, discussions with Okaloosa County if they proceed with that option, and hard numbers pertaining to costs. There was further discussion among the council. Scott Jernigan, Jacobs Engineering, answered the council's questions regarding the pros and cons of rehabbing the wastewater plant and the force main to Okaloosa County. There was a discussion among the council on whether a decision should be made at this meeting. After the discussion, Mayor Stein asked for a motion to go with the force main option on the sewer system. The motion was initiated by Councilmember Carter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton. The motion passed 3-2.

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

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1. Consideration: Award of Bid for the Azalea Park and Caswell Circle Neighborhood Improvements Project

Jared Cobb, City Manager, discussed moving this item to the May 18 special council meeting. The council reached a consensus to move the item.

11.2. Consideration: Proposed FY 2027 Budget Calendar

Heather Day, Finance Director, discussed the proposed FY 2027 budget calendar and sought feedback on any dates that do not work. After discussion, the council stated the only date to change is September 7 to September 8 due to Labor Day. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to approve the FY 2027 budget calendar with proposed changes. Councilmember Sutton initiated the motion, seconded by Councilmember Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

11.3. Consideration: 2026 Holiday Closing Schedule

Jared Cobb, City Manager, discussed the proposed 2026 holiday closing schedule. There was some discussion among the council. Mayor Stein asked for a motion to authorize the closing of City facilities during the holiday period beginning at noon on December 23, 2026, and reopening on January 4, 2027. Councilmember Lawson initiated the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Coxwell. The motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS:	None
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11.4. Discussion: City Charter Changes

Dillon Morris, City Clerk, discussed the correspondence received from Supervisor of Elections Lux regarding adding a charter change to the upcoming ballot. There was some discussion among the council, giving direction to bring back an ordinance adjusting election dates.

12. COUNCILS' STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

Councilmember Sutton had no additional comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Coxwell thanked Jacobs Engineering for their input, the upcoming closing of the chapter for Mary Esther Elementary, asked if the city could ask the school board to relinquish the Mary Esther Elementary medallion, and the county SHIP program to help citizens with housing issues.

Councilmember Lawson had no additional comments.

Mayor Stein stated he would take care of the yard-of-the-month winner and showed the council a video from the mall of a speeding car smoking its tires.

Councilmember Carter had no additional comments.

Councilmember Oder discussed the Northwest Florida League of Cities summer event, the ad valorem tax issue

13. OTHER COMMENTS

City Attorney Dykes had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris reminded the council to file their financial disclosures, complete their ethics and cybersecurity training, check their mailboxes, and attend the upcoming International Institute of City Clerks convention.

City Manager Cobb discussed adding the SHIP program to the website and acknowledged the council's decision regarding the wastewater solution.

14. ADJOURN

The council meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes approved at the 6/11/2026 meeting.

Dillon Morris

Dillon Morris, City Clerk

