

# City of Marco Island Florida

*51 Bald Eagle Drive  
Marco Island, Florida  
cityofmarcoisland.com*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

**Monday, July 22, 2024**

**1:00 PM**

**Operating Budget Workshop**

**Community Meeting Room**

### **City Council**

*Chair: Jared Grifoni*

*Vice-Chair: Erik Brechnitz*

*City Council: Rich Blonna,*

*Greg Folley, Becky Irwin,*

*Darrin Palumbo, Joe Rola*

*City Manager: Mike McNeas*

*Assistant City Manager: Casey Lucius*

*City Attorney: Alan L. Gabriel*

*City Clerk: Joan Taylor*

## 1. Call to Order

Chair Grifoni called the Workshop to order at 1:00 P.M.

## 2. Roll Call

**Present:** 5 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Palumbo and Chair Grifoni

**Not Present:** 2 - Councilor Irwin and Councilor Rola

(Note: Councilors Irwin and Rola arrived at 1:02 P.M.)

## Also Present

Michael McNees, City Manager  
Casey Lucius, Assistant City Manager  
Joan Taylor, City Clerk  
David Tolces, City Attorney  
Tracy Frazzano, Police Chief  
Chris Byrne, Fire Chief  
Guillermo Polanco, Finance Director  
Daniel J. Smith, Community Affairs Director  
Justin Martin, Public Works Director  
Jose Duran, Information Technology Director  
Jeff Poteet, Water & Sewer General Manager  
Melissa Raynor, Budget Manager  
Raul Perez, Chief Building Official  
Heather Reed, Fleet & Facilities Coordinator  
Samantha Malloy, Parks, Culture & Recreation Manager  
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician  
Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist  
Citizens and Visitors

## 3. Business - Operating Budget Workshop

### a. [ID 24-3727](#) The City Manager's Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Operating Budget

At the request of City Council Chair Jared Grifoni, City Manager Mike McNees initiated the Workshop by noting that the City Staff's budget request for the 2025 Fiscal Year was successful in meeting the Council's directive for a balanced City budget under the new property tax millage rollback rate. He also highlighted and discussed the interaction of several key line items in the document entitled "FY25 Budget Summary".

City Manager McNees then invited City Finance Director Guillermo Polanco to review a number of key metrics and offer his insights for the Council's benefit and consideration.

The following City Staff leaders presented their Operating Budget requests, and they addressed questions from members of the Council during the course of their presentations:

Assistant City Manager Casey Lucius:  
Proposed Operating Budgets Reviewed: Legislative, Executive, Legal

City Finance Director Guillermo Polanco:

*Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Finance*

*Community Affairs Director Daniel Smith:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Growth Management*

*Information Technology Director Jose Duran:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Information Technology*

*City Clerk Joan Taylor:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: General Government*

*Acting Fleet & Facilities Manager Heather Reed:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Fleet & Facilities  
(Note: Assistant City Manager Casey Lucius also reviewed the City's proposed 2025 Fiscal Year Fleet & Facilities Department Staffing Plan during the Fleet & Facilities Department operating budget presentation)*

*Police Chief Tracy Frazzano:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Police*

*(The Workshop Went Into Recess at 2:47 P.M. It is Noted for the Record That Six Councilors Were Present When the Meeting Reconvened at 2:52 P.M. Councilor Irwin returned to the Workshop at 2:56 P.M.)*

*Fire Rescue Chief Chris Byrne:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Fire Rescue, Emergency Disaster Relief*

*Police Chief Tracy Frazzano:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Code Compliance*

*Public Works Director Justin Martin:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Public Works, Streets & Drainage*

*Community Affairs Director Daniel Smith:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Parks & Recreation, Racquet Club, Sailing Center, Building Services*

*Water & Sewer Department General Manager Jeff Poteet:  
Proposed Operating Budget Reviewed: Water & Sewer*

*No comments were received from members of the community during this portion of the Workshop.*

**b. [ID 24-3731](#) Other Proposed Operating Budget Initiatives for FY 2025**

*Public Works Director Justin Martin reviewed the 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget request of the Waterways Advisory Committee for \$36,388.00 to expand water quality testing to include quarterly testing for potentially toxic algae growth. This proposed amount was in addition to the continued annual funding of the Committee's monthly water quality testing program, and its Committee communication, education, and community outreach budget.*

*Chair Grifoni, in considering the supportive comments offered by members of the Council toward the Waterways Advisory Committee's additional quarterly algae testing request, directed the City Staff to include the \$36,388.00 in the City's 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget without affecting the 2025 City of*

*Marco Island property tax millage rollback rate.*

*No comments were received from members of the community during this portion of the Workshop.*

*Councilor Rich Blonna reviewed his proposed 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget request of \$618,036 to fund four (4) initiatives in the upcoming year, with initial emphasis on carefully explaining and delineating how the proposed Winter Season Trolley Pilot Program differed from past proposals and several citizen interpretations that were recently circulated on social media. Funding for the four proposals would be redirected from previously-allocated grant-matching funds in the City's reserve account that were identified for a matching grant award that was not realized.*

*Following significant input and discussion by all members of the Council, Chair Grifoni determined that a majority of the Council was supportive of the proposed Winter Season Trolley Pilot Program, and he directed the City Staff to include the proposed \$206,480.00 in the 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget.*

*Council discussion next focused on Councilor Blonna's proposed establishment of an Open Space Preservation Fund (\$200,000.00), and the hiring of a professional grant writing firm for two years (\$150,000.00 in Year One) to solicit and secure public and private grants, in an amount that would exceed the City's cost of securing this service. The solicited grants would be directed toward the City's purchasing and preserving of natural habitat property parcels for native species on Marco Island.*

*The Council supported the inclusion of the Open Space Preservation Fund and the proposal to hire a professional grant writing firm in the 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget, and, in alignment with Councilor Blonna's recommendation, endorsed assigning the \$200,000.00 Open Space Preservation Fund to the Marco Island Community Parks Foundation. [Editorial Note: Later, during the Council's 5:30 P.M. City Council Meeting, this \$200,000.00 budget allocation was re-directed to fund the City Beach Access Improvements Initiative (see July 22, 2024 City Council Meeting Agenda Item 12c. (ID 24-3692) "Approval of Interlocal Agreement Between Collier County and the City of Marco Island for City Beach Access Improvements in the Amount of \$147,500").]*

*The fourth initiative proposed by Councilor Blonna (Building Services Permit Clerk II (\$61,556.00)) was included by Community Affairs Director Daniel Smith in the Proposed Operating Budget Review for the Building Services Department earlier in the Workshop. No additional budget was needed to fund this position.*

*No comments were received from members of the community during this portion of the Workshop.*

#### **4. Public Comment**

*Fifteen members of the public requested an opportunity to comment on issues raised during the 2025 Fiscal Year Operating Budget Workshop.*

*Three individuals (Mr. Brett Bartholomaeus (Delbrook Way), Mr. Thomas Polston (Seaview Ct.), and Mr. Gary Revall (Bali Ct.) signed up to encourage the Council to maintain the excellent quality of the softball fields at Winterberry Park as it reviewed the budget and staffing requests of the City's Fleet & Facilities Department for the 2025 Fiscal Year. (Note: Messrs. Bartholomaeus and Polston spoke, while Mr. Revall conceded his time)*

*Four individuals (Mr. Lee Rubenstein (Rialto Way, Naples), Mr. Rene Champagne (Inlet Dr.), Mr. Terry Kehoe (Jungle Plum Dr. East, Naples), and Mr. Joe Batte (Marquesas Ct.) signed up to address the Council regarding their disappointment with the current level of maintenance of the fountain and surrounding grounds at Veterans Community Park. (Note: Mr. Kehoe spoke, while Messrs. Rubenstein, Champagne, and Batte conceded their time in favor of Mr. Kehoe.) [Editorial Note: Documents provided to the Council by these gentlemen may be found on [www.cityofmarcoisland.com](http://www.cityofmarcoisland.com) under Our Government >*

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*Eight individuals requested the opportunity to address the Council regarding the Winter Season Trolley Pilot Program. Two individuals (Ms. Michelle Bartholomaus (Delbrook Way), and Mr. Martin Winter (Perrine Ct.)) encouraged the Council to pursue the proposed pilot effort to gather appropriate data and better inform the Council's future decision on the matter. Five individuals (Ms. Jill Kiley (Cutler Ct.), Ms. Victoria Myer (Bluebonnet Ct.), Mr. Stephen J. Gray (N. Collier Blvd.), Ms. Sheila Yahwitz (N. Collier Blvd.), and Ms. Christine Dowell (Biscayne Way) expressed opposition to the proposed trolley pilot and raised their concern with the apparent lack of detail on the proposed measurement criteria to determine how the pilot would be evaluated. One individual (Ms. Mary Pitzzi (S. Collier Blvd.) signed up to address the Council on this topic, but she did not come forward when called.*

**5. Adjournment**

*There being no further business before the Council, Chair Grifoni adjourned the Workshop at 4:42 P.M.*

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*Jared Grifoni, Council Chair*

ATTEST:

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*Joan Taylor, City Clerk*

PREPARED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist*