

City of Marco Island Florida

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



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, January 12, 2026

1:00 PM

City Council Priorities Workshop

Community Meeting Room

City Council

*Chair: Darrin Palumbo
Vice-Chair: Rene Champagne*

*City Council: Erik Brechnitz, Tamara Goehler,
Stephen Gray, Deb Henry,
Bonita Schwan*

*Interim City Manager: Casey Lucius
Assistant City Attorney: David Tolces
City Clerk: Joan Taylor*

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Councilor Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Champagne, Councilor Goehler, Councilor Gray, Councilor Henry, Councilor Schwan and Chair Palumbo

Also Present

*Casey Lucius, Interim City Manager
Joan Taylor, City Clerk
David Tolces, Assistant City Attorney (via Zoom teleconference connection)
John Wallace, Police Captain
Chris Byrne, Fire Chief
Carol McDermott, Finance Director
Justin Martin, Public Works Director
Diana Snover, Human Resources Director
Jeff Poteet, Water & Sewer General Manager
Joe Parrilli, Fleet & Facilities Manager
Mary Holden, Senior Planner
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician
Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist
Citizens and Visitors*

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Councilor Goehler.

4. Business

[ID 25-5064](#) City Council Priorities for 2026, Casey Lucius, Interim City Manager

Attachments: [City Council Goals 2026](#)

Chair Palumbo opened the Workshop by outlining the objectives and expectations for the Workshop.

Councilor Schwan requested an opportunity to engage the Council in a special discussion prior to the Workshop's Adjournment, and City Clerk Joan Taylor confirmed that Assistant City Attorney David Tolces was present to participate remotely via Zoom teleconference connection.

Interim City Manager Casey Lucius thanked all members of the Council for providing their individually-proposed priorities for the remainder of the 2026 Fiscal Year, and she briefly outlined her proposed process for narrowing the individually-proposed priorities into a shorter, actionable list.

Twenty-eight (28) distinct priorities proposed by the members of the Council were displayed on four, wall-mounted chart pad sheets. Several members of the Council requested explanations and clarification from other members of the Council regarding the intent of their proposed priorities, and Chair Palumbo reminded the Council to not become too deeply immersed in the details of any particular proposed priority.

Each Councilor was provided with five (5) red stickers to place on up to five listed priorities displayed on the wall-mounted chart pad sheets. At the conclusion of the sticker placements, Interim City Manager Lucius tallied the proposed priorities that received the most Councilor-placed stickers.

They were:

- Identify Income/Revenue Options - 6 stickers
- Infrastructure Bond (bridges, roads, medians) - 6 stickers
- Level of Service Study Every Year - 4 stickers

Four proposed priorities each received three (3) Councilor-placed stickers. To further prioritize these items, each Councilor was given a different color sticker to place on his/her top two (of the four) proposed priorities. Three of the four proposed priorities received four (4) Councilor-placed stickers. They were:

- Follow-up Action on the City's Parks & the Old Marco Master Plans
- Develop a Grant Policy/Process
- Implement AWT (Advanced Wastewater Treatment)

Interim City Manager Lucius then led the Council through a discussion of each of the above-noted six (6) priorities, receiving Councilor input, noting specific actions for City Staff to undertake in gathering needed information, and establishing a timetable to return to the Council for further review and approval. A summary of the committed action items follow:

PRIORITY: Identify Income/Revenue Options

City Staff will provide the Council with the listing of alternative sources of revenue that the Florida Department of Revenue has identified as being employed by other municipalities in Florida.

Council identified several more potential opportunities for investigation:

- Instituting LCEC fees
- Amending the impact fee agreement with Collier County (Interim City Manager stated she had an appointment with the County Manager to discuss this topic in the near future).
- Exploring funding through the Tourist Development Council (TDC)
- Placing tolls on the City side of the bridge
- Securing revenue generated from County parking lots
- Creating paid parking opportunities
- Charging rental registration fees
- Reinstating County "1% sales tax" through voter referendum (Chair Palumbo will draft a letter to Collier County District 1 Commissioner Rick LoCastro requesting that the reinstatement of Collier County's temporary one cent sales tax increase be placed on a future ballot for voter consideration and approval.)

PRIORITY: Infrastructure Bond (bridges, roads, medians)

City Staff will assess what amount of debt could be financed under the City's current spending cap (i.e. not requiring voter approval)

City Council will consider alternative bonding or assessment opportunities vs. a General Obligation Bond.

City Staff will provide Council with the various elements required to meet the 2026 ballot proposal timetable on the potential issuance of General Obligation Bonds by the City of Marco Island.

PRIORITY: Level of Service Study Every Year

City Staff will provide a list of potential Level of Service (LOS) studies to Council for consideration.

Staff is currently working on the FY 2026 Transportation/Traffic LOS.

Council will discuss cadence for conducting LOS studies, and if needed amend the City's Code of Ordinance, Section 30-717 "General procedural guidelines; reporting requirements", to reflect the Council's approved direction.

PRIORITY: Follow-up Action on the City's Parks & the Old Marco Master Plans

City Staff will review and seek direction from the City Council on the Parks Master Plan (in February), and the Old Marco Master Plan (after review of the Parks Master Plan).

Council will provide direction if either Master Plan elements should be funded through the potential General Obligation Bond referendum or other funding source.

PRIORITY: Develop a Grant Policy/Process

City Staff will bring forward a proposed policy for Council review and approval.

PRIORITY: Implement AWT (Advanced Wastewater Treatment)

City Staff will complete the current Black & Veatch study and report results to the Council.

Council to determine if they will pursue an AWT initiative based on recommended type of treatment and design.

City to conduct a Revenue Sufficiency study

Funding source to be identified (for example through a particular bond and/or reserves).

Following the identification of the action plans for the six (6) Council-determined priorities, Chair Palumbo inquired about other significant infrastructure budget needs as identified by the City Staff. Public Works Director Justin Martin noted the unpredictable, but always present, expense of repairing aging, underground storm water pipes. He requested that the Council consider increasing its annual funding allocation for the repair of underground pipe ruptures.

5. Public Comment

Mr. Rich Blonna (San Marco Rd.) reminded the Council of the work that was accomplished under the previous City Council in obtaining funding from Conservation Collier to purchase and preserve undeveloped wildlife habitat property parcels along South Barfield Drive and West Inlet Drive. He expressed his disappointment that the current body of the City Council had not prioritized a continuation of this effort.

Mr. Blonna also reminded the Council of the opportunity that was initiated under the previous Council to potentially provide for public, non-motorized, paddle craft access within the interior canal system from Castaways Park to Veterans Community Park. He suggested that the development of this kind of non-motorized, paddle craft access would provide a benefit to the Island's property owners who do not directly live on a canal.

Mr. Dennis Bartolucci (Caxambas Dr.) proposed that the Council step back from the prioritization effort

undertaken at the January 12th Workshop to: 1) look beyond the remaining eight months of the current budgetary fiscal year, and; 2) establish a longer-term, over-arching objective for the City's actions into future fiscal years. He offered two examples for the Council's consideration.

Mr. Bartolucci also offered a perspective on the current dialogue regarding Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) in the context of the City's past decision to replace individual property septic systems with a City-wide sewer collection and wastewater treatment system.

Requested Special Discussion by Councilor Schwan

Councilor Schwan raised concern with the nature of a Mr. John Martini's text message that was forwarded to all City Councilors on Friday, January 9, 2026.

Assistant City Attorney Tolces advised the Council that, since this item was not noted on the Workshop Agenda and available for public notice and comment, he proposed that the Council consider placing this item on a future City Council Agenda for discussion and action.

Chair Palumbo thanked all members of the Council and Interim City Manager Casey Lucius for their input.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, Chair Palumbo adjourned the Workshop at 3:16 P.M.

Darrin Palumbo, Council Chair

ATTEST:

Joan Taylor, City Clerk

PREPARED BY:

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist