

# City of Marco Island Florida

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



## Meeting Minutes - Final

**Monday, April 22, 2024**

**5:30 PM**

**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 McNees*

*Assistant City Manager: Casey Lucius*

*City Attorney: Alan L. Gabriel*

*City Clerk: Joan Taylor*

## 1. Call to Order

*Chair Grifoni called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.*

## 2. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

(Note: Councilor Irwin was present remotely via Zoom teleconference connection)

## Also Present

*Michael McNees, City Manager  
Casey Lucius, Assistant City Manager  
Joan Taylor, City Clerk  
Alan L. Gabriel, City Attorney  
Tracy Frazzano, Police Chief (arrived at 6:36 P.M.)  
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  
Raul Perez, Chief Building Official  
Angela Johenning, Purchasing & Risk Manager  
Sonia Iszler, Water & Sewer Engineering & Operations Manager  
Samantha Malloy, Parks, Culture & Recreation Manager  
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician  
Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist  
Citizens and Visitors*

## 3. Invocation

*Offered by the Reverend Scott Kerens of the Marco Presbyterian Church.*

## 4. Pledge of Allegiance

*Led by Chair Grifoni.*

## Motion To Allow for Remote Participation by Councilor Irwin

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Brechnitz, seconded by Councilor Folley, to allow Councilor Irwin to participate in , and vote on, all allowable matters coming before the Council at this meeting. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 6 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

## 5. Approval of the Agenda

*Councilor Blonna requested that Agenda Item 12c (Vietnam Memorial Update) be moved to a position earlier in the Agenda, and he proposed a placement. Chair Grifoni offered an alternative, and Councilor Blonna concurred with the recommendation.*

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Brechnitz, seconded by Councilor Folley, that the Amended Agenda be Approved with the Council's discussion of Item 12c (Vietnam War Memorial Update) advanced as the first Item for Council consideration under Agenda Item 12 (Resolutions and City Council Items). MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

## **6. Approval of the Minutes**

- a. [ID 24-3554](#) Approval of the City Council Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2024

*Councilor Blonna advised the Council of his review of the video and Minutes of the March 18, 2024 meeting with City Clerk Joan Taylor following the rescheduling of the approval at the April 8, 2024 meeting, and he indicated his concurrence with the wording of the Minutes as drafted.*

**MOTION by Councilor Folley, seconded by Councilor Palumbo, that the City Council Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2024 be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

- b. [ID 24-3560](#) Approval of the City Council Workshop Minutes of April 8, 2024

**MOTION by Councilor Blonna, seconded by Councilor Folley, that the City Council Workshop Minutes of April 8, 2024 be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

- c. [ID 23-3110](#) Approval of the City Council Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2024

**MOTION by Councilor Folley, seconded by Councilor Palumbo, that the City Council Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2024 be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

## **7. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**MOTION by Councilor Blonna, seconded by Councilor Palumbo, that the Consent Agenda be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

### **[Approval of the Consent Agenda Passed the Routine Items Listed Below]**

- a. [ID 24-3557](#) Appointment of Mr. Bob Roth to the Coastal Advisory Committee (CAC) of Collier County, Florida - Joan Taylor, City Clerk
- b. [ID 24-3552](#) Approving the Purchase Order for American Engineering Consultants of

Marco Island, Inc. for the Analysis, Pre-Design Survey, SUE, Design, and Bidding of the Bayport - Tahiti Drainage Improvement Project (Second Part), in an Amount Not to Exceed \$107,000.00 - Justin Martin, P.E., Director, Public Works

## 8. Proclamations and Presentations

- a. [ID 24-3553](#) Proclamation - In Recognition of Dr. Carlos Portu, Member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

*In appreciation of Dr. Carlos Portu's leadership and service on the City's Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, his membership on the Marco Island Community Parks Foundation Board, and in recognition of his many accomplishments in that capacity for the benefit of the citizens of Marco Island, Chair Jared Grifoni and the Marco Island City Council honored Dr. Portu with a Proclamation in his honor. Dr. Portu shared a few words of appreciation, and he a received a warm round of applause from all present.*

- b. [ID 24-3549](#) Presentation - 2024 Marco in Bloom Awards - Julie McDonald, Beautification Advisory Committee Member

*City Beautification Advisory Committee Member Julie McDonald announced the category winners and runners-up of the 2024 Marco In Bloom Landscape Awards, and she presented each property owner with a corresponding yard sign in honor of this annual recognition. A warm round of applause congratulated this year's awardees.*

- c. [ID 24-3567](#) Presentation - Underground Electric Infrastructure - Tricia Dorn, Key Account Executive, LCEC

*Ms. Tricia Dorn, Lee County Electric Cooperative (LCEC) Key Account Executive, and Mr. George Smith, LCEC Supervisor of System Planning, shared information and insight comparing the advantages and disadvantages of underground electric infrastructure for a southwest Florida coastal community like Marco Island.*

*Ms. Dorn and Mr. Smith also advised the Council of the impending installation of two new LCEC circuit systems for Marco Island to support future electric service growth and improve overall electrical system reliability on the Island.*

## 9. Citizens' Comments on Items Not Scheduled for Public Hearing and Items Other Than Those Appearing on the Agenda

*Mr. Anthony Oliverio (Olds Ct.), in follow-up to concerns that he raised at the March 4, 2024 City Council Meeting, came forward to offer thanks and words of appreciation to a number of City employees and Council members who assisted in resolving his concern.*

## 10. Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing

- [ID 24-3569](#) Resolution - Variance Petition Request to Sec. 6-38(c), and Sec. 6-85(g) of the Marco Island Administrative Construction Code to Permit (SEAW-23-05362) for the Construction of a Seawall Cap at 990 North Barfield Drive, Marco Island, FL 34145 - Raul Perez, Chief Building Official, Building Services, Community Affairs

*City Attorney Alan Gabriel swore in all parties who indicated an intention to provide witness or testimony, and each Council member conveyed a verbal ex parte disclosure relative to the Applicant's Appeal.*

City Clerk Joan Taylor read Resolution 24-17 into the record by title only, noting, along with City Attorney Gabriel, the correction and alignment of references to the City's Code of Ordinances as compared to what was publicly noticed in anticipation of the Council's quasi-judicial hearing on this variance petition request.

City Chief Building Official Raul Perez briefly introduced the petition, noted the Staff recommendation of approval, and invited Mr. Olivier Sureau, Senior Project Manager, Collier County Facilities Management Division, and Mr. Mark Shannon, Principal and Senior Project Manager, Studio+ Architects, to review the details of the variance petition request.

No members of the public came forward to offer comment.

[Editorial Note: Councilor Becky Irwin, as a remote participant to the hearing, was ineligible to vote on this quasi-judicial matter]

**MOTION by Councilor Palumbo, seconded by Councilor Blonna, that Resolution 24-17 - Variance Petition Request to Sec. 6-38(C) and Sec. 6-85(7) of the Marco Island Code of Ordinances to Permit the Construction of a Seawall Cap at 990 North Barfield Drive, Marco Island, FL 34145, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:**

**Yes:** 5 - Councilor Blonna, Councilor Folley, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

**No:** 1 - Vice-Chair Brechnitz

## 11. Ordinances

None.

## 12. Resolutions & City Council Items

[Editorial Note: Per City Council direction, Agenda Item 12c was discussed first among the three Resolution and City Council Items on the Agenda]

- a. [ID 24-3565](#) Award of Contract to Johnson Controls, Inc. (JCI), to Conduct an Investment-Grade Audit (IGA) in the Amount of \$309,811 - Jeffrey E. Poteet, General Manager, Water & Sewer Department

City Water & Sewer General Manager Jeff Poteet provided the Council with an overview of the City's request to conduct an Investment-Grade Audit (IGA) to fully assess and understand the operational and financial benefits of implementing an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for its future City water delivery and metering systems. Together with Mr. Adam Kane, Account Executive with the Water Resiliency Division of Johnson Controls International PLC, Mr. Poteet addressed several questions from members of the Council.

No members of the public came forward to offer comment.

**MOTION by Councilor Palumbo, seconded by Councilor Folley, that Authorization for the City Manager to Award a Contract to Johnson Controls, Inc. (JCI) to Conduct an Investment-Grade Audit (IGA) in the Amount of \$309,811.00, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

- b. [ID 24-3570](#) Discussion of Options for the West Winterberry (Smokehouse Bay) Bridge

- Justin Martin, P.E., Director, Public Works

*City Public Works Director Justin Martin reviewed the results of the City's request for bids to replace the West Winterberry (Smokehouse Bay) Bridge and, in light of the projected costs of the project, presented five alternative course of action for the Council's consideration.*

*Public Comment*

*Mr. David Rasmussen (Caxambas Ct.) encouraged the Council to consider the thirty-year lifecycle cost of repairing (versus replacing) both the West Winterberry and the Caxambas Court bridges.*

*Mr. Ralph Verrastro, PE (Secoya Reserve Circle, Naples), a bridge consultant for Collier County, expressed his belief that the repair of the West Winterberry Bridge could be completed in a very cost-effective manner.*

**MOTION by Councilor Blonna, seconded by Councilor Folley that Authorization for the City Manager to reject the submitted bids, forego the approved \$1.7 million Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant, and proceed with a bridge rehabilitation (rather than replacement) to extend the useful life of the West Winterberry (Smokehouse Bay) Bridge, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

**c. [ID 24-3534](#) Vietnam War Memorial Update - Casey Lucius, Ph.D., Assistant City Manager**

*Per City Council direction, Assistant City Manager Casey Lucius provided follow-up information from the Council's March 4, 2024 Vietnam Memorial Workshop. Dr. Lucius presented the recommended three location options for the Memorial (based on the Memorial's proposed size) by Veterans Community Park landscape architectural firm, Kimley/Horn. Additionally, Dr. Lucius shared the formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed between the City of Marco Island and American Legion Post 404 for Council approval.*

*The following members of the public spoke on behalf of American Legion Post 404's proposal to erect and fund the cost of building the proposed Memorial:*

- 1) Mr. Tom Niebling (S. Collier Blvd.)
- 2) Mr. Steve Moore (Grapewood Ct.)
- 3) Mr. John Apolzan (Polihale Way, Naples)
- 4) Mr. Terry Kehoe (Jungle Palms Dr., Naples)
- 5) Ms. Yvette Benarroch (Rose Ct.)
- 6) Mr. Lee Rubenstein (Rialto Way, Naples)
- 7) Ms. Rhonda Gloodt (Vernon Pl.)
- 8) Mr. Ryan Really (Bermuda Rd.) yielded his time to Mr. Rubenstein
- 9) Mr. Joe Batte (Marquesas Ct.)

**MOTION by Councilor Folley, seconded by Councilor Blonna, that Authorization for the City Manager to: 1) execute the Proposed Memorandum of Understanding with American Legion Post 404; 2) waive any and all associated permit and impact fees associated with the placement and construction of the Memorial; 3) locate the Memorial within Veterans Community Park at the location requested by American Legion 404 (i.e. Location #3 as listed in the April 22, 2024 presentation "Honoring our Veterans") ; 4) City Staff and American Legion Post 404 to recommend a lower-height base for the Memorial Structure, and; 5) return**

for final Council approval of the revised Memorial Structure's design, base, size, and location, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Vice-Chair Brechnitz, Councilor Folley, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Palumbo, Councilor Rola and Chair Grifoni

*(THE MEETING WENT INTO RECESS AT 7:34 P.M. IT IS NOTED FOR THE RECORD THAT ALL COUNCILORS WERE PRESENT WHEN THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 7:40 P.M.)*

### **13. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda**

*No items were removed from the Consent Agenda at this meeting.*

### **14. Council Communications & Future Agenda**

*Councilor Blonna announced his intention to seek re-election to the Marco Island City Council. He also inquired about the City's maintenance of the engraved pavers within the Veterans Memorial area of Veterans Community Park, and he shared his experience and observations riding the Collier Area Transit (CAT) Route 21 Marco Island Circulator bus.*

*Vice-Chair Brechnitz advised the Council of his initiative to craft a revised Investment Policy Statement for the Fire Rescue Pension Board, and he requested that this item be placed on the Council's Future Agenda.*

*Councilor Palumbo publicly thanked Naples Public Works Director Bob Middleton for hosting him in a two-hour tour of Naples advanced water treatment facility.*

*Councilor Palumbo also extolled the virtues of the City's annual Camp Mackle program for the children of Marco Island, and he encouraged public sponsorship of a "camper" for this upcoming May 31 - August 12 season.*

*Councilor Palumbo concluded by complimenting Councilor Blonna for his initiative in personally investigating and experiencing the Collier Area Transit (CAT) Marco Island Circulator bus route and its ridership. Chair Grifoni echoed Councilor Palumbo's compliments.*

*Councilor Folley noted a lack of public drinking fountains (and fountains for pets) along the major thoroughfares around the Island. He requested that the City Staff investigate the implementation of some low cost options to improve this condition for Council consideration during the upcoming 2025 FY budget cycle.*

*Later during Council Communications, Councilor Folley encouraged Public Works Director Justin Martin to follow up on several of the repair/maintenance recommendations offered by the Collier County bridge consultant who addressed the Council during City Council Agenda Item 12b (Options for the West Winterberry (Smokehouse Bay) Bridge).*

*Councilor Irwin conveyed her appreciation to the Council and City Staff for enabling her ability to participate in the meeting remotely, and she thanked the American Legion Post 404 supporters who came to support the Legion's request regarding a new Vietnam War Memorial for Veterans Community Park.*

*Councilor Irwin requested that the City Staff facilitate repairs to the Children's Splash Pad at Mackle Park before the summer season sets in, and she took a moment to offer her comments regarding her children's positive experiences riding public buses in the Ft. Lauderdale area.*

[ID 23-3111](#) Future Agenda Items

*Vice-Chair Brechnitz requested that a review of the revised Fire Rescue Pension Board Investment Policy Statement be added onto the Council's Future Agenda for the May, 2024 schedule of Council meetings.*

## 15. Council Reports

[ID 24-3559](#) A Two-Step Plan for Preserving More Open Space and Enhancing the City's Parks and Recreation Programs - Councilor Rich Blonna

*Councilor Blonna solicited his colleague Councilors' support in requesting that the City Staff investigate and bring into the Council's 2025 FY budget planning process: 1) a focused discussion on creating and funding an "Open Space Preservation Fund" to enable the City to qualify for, and obtain, matching grant funds, and; 2) a specific allocation in the 2025 FY budget for an experienced grant writing resource (City hire or contracted service) to identify, apply for, and obtain available land preservation grant funds for the City of Marco Island.*

*Public Comment*

*Mr. David Rasmussen (Caxambas Ct.) supported Councilor Blonna's initiative and expressed his belief that there are many donors who would see this as an opportunity to establish a personal legacy for the benefit of future generations on Marco Island.*

*Following several comments of support from members of the Council, Chair Grifoni asked City Manager McNees to bring this item forward as part of the 2025 FY departmental budget presentation and Council review process.*

## 16. City Manager's Report

*None.*

## 17. City Attorney's Report

[ID 23-3113](#) City Attorney's Report

*City Attorney Alan Gabriel briefly updated the Council on the results of the initial judicial hearing seeking injunctive relief on the implementation of Form 6 for locally-elected municipal officials in Florida.*

*He reminded the Council of his impending vacation from May 3 - 18, and noted that Attorney David Tolces will be filling in for him during this time.*

## 18. Departmental Reports

[ID 23-3112](#) Monthly Departmental Reports

*No comments or questions were raised regarding the City's Monthly Department Reports.*

## 19. Citizens' Comments

*No members of the public came forward to offer comment during this portion of the meeting.*

**20. Adjournment**

*There being no further business before the Council, Chair Grifoni adjourned the meeting at 8:40 P.M.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Jared Grifoni, Council Chair*

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Joan Taylor, City Clerk*

PREPARED BY:

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