

City of Marco Island Florida

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



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, August 25, 2025

2:00 PM

Special-Called Meeting

Community Meeting Room

City Council

Chair: Erik Brechnitz

Vice-Chair: Stephen Gray

City Council: Rene Champagne,

Tamara Goehler, Deb Henry,

Darrin Palumbo, Bonita Schwan

City Manager: Mike McNees

Assistant City Manager: Casey Lucius

City Attorney: Alan L. Gabriel

City Clerk: Joan Taylor

1. Call to Order

City Clerk Joan Taylor called the Special Meeting to order at 2:01 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Councilor Champagne, Councilor Goehler, Vice-Chair Gray, Councilor Henry, Councilor Palumbo and Councilor Schwan

Not Present: 1 - Chair Brechnitz

(Note: Vice-Chair Gray and Councilor Palumbo were confirmed as remotely available via Zoom teleconference connection at Roll Call. Chair Brechnitz was also expected to be connected remotely but did not confirm his presence at Roll Call; his remote participation was later confirmed at 2:20 P.M.)

Also Present

*Casey Lucius, Assistant City Manager
Joan Taylor, City Clerk
Robert Myers, City Attorney
Tracy Frazzano, Police Chief
David Ennis, Police Captain
Joe Belardo, Police Lieutenant
Chris Byrne, Fire Chief
Mat Marshall, Deputy Fire Chief
Sharon Dangles, Acting 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 Hinton, Budget Manager
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician
Citizens and Visitors*

Motion to Allow for Remote Participation by Chair Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Gray, Councilor Palumbo, and City Manager McNeas

MOTION by Councilor Champagne, seconded by Councilor Schwan, to allow Chair Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Gray, Councilor Palumbo, and City Manager McNeas to participate in all matters coming before the Council at this meeting, and for Chair Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Gray, and Councilor Palumbo to vote on all matters coming before the Council. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:

Yes: 4 - Councilor Champagne, Councilor Goehler, Councilor Henry and Councilor Schwan

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Council members Champagne, Goehler, Henry, and Schwan.

Instructions From City Attorney Robert Meyers

City Attorney Robert Meyers advised the Council that, in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair to physically preside over the meeting, a Councilor who is present may be nominated, seconded, and if confirmed by a majority vote of the Council, confirmed to preside over the business of the meeting.

Election of Special Meeting Presider

**MOTION by Councilor Palumbo, seconded by Councilor Henry, that Councilor Schwan be Appointed as Presider of the City Council Special-Called Meeting.
MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:**

Yes: 6 - Councilor Champagne, Councilor Goehler, Vice-Chair Gray, Councilor Henry, Councilor Palumbo and Councilor Schwan

Not Present: 1 - Chair Brechnitz

(THE MEETING WENT INTO RECESS AT 2:06 PM TO ALLOW FOR RE-SETTING OF THE ELECTRONIC MEETING EQUIPMENT TO FACILITATE COUNCILOR SCHWAN'S ABILITY TO PRESIDE OVER THIS SPECIAL-CALLED MEETING. IT IS NOTED FOR THE RECORD THAT SIX COUNCILORS (EXCEPTION: COUNCIL CHAIR BRECHNITZ) WERE CONFIRMED AS PRESENT WHEN THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 2:11 P.M.)

4. Business

[ID 25-4657](#) FY26 Budget Options - Casey Lucius, Ph.D., Assistant City Manager

Attachments: [August 25th FY26 Budget Memo to Council](#)

Assistant City Manager Casey Lucius briefly recalled the direction by the Council at its August 18, 2025 Special-Called Meeting, requesting that the City Staff reconfigure its 2026 Fiscal Year budget recommendation in tiered options (and detailing the line item reductions) that could result in a 1.240 millage neutral property tax millage rate.

Ms. Lucius outlined the detailed reductions as noted in her August 25, 2025 FY26 Budget Options memo to the City Council to achieve a total proposed budget reduction of \$4,873,719.00, and she highlighted two categories of additional budget reduction options affecting: 1) proposed safety and risk mitigation initiatives for Fiscal Year 2026, and; 2) potential personnel reductions, that would address the remaining \$607,399.00 budget reduction shortfall necessitated by strictly adhering to a 1.240 millage neutral property tax millage rate.

Assistant City Manager Lucius recommended that the Council consider and approve one of four alternative courses of action:

- 1) Support a 1.29 mils property tax millage rate for FY 2026 to fund the identified safety and risk mitigation category of initiatives;*
- 2) Maintain the 1.24 millage neutral property tax rate with reconsideration and adoption of a 3% LCEC Franchise Fee to fund approximately \$1.5 million in Capital Improvements identified during the Council's previous 2026 Fiscal Year Budget Workshops;*
- 3) Maintain the 1.24 millage neutral property tax rate, and further cut the proposed safety and risk mitigation initiatives proposed by the City Staff, or;*
- 4) Maintain the 1.24 millage neutral property tax rate and offset additional Council-desired expenditure*

priorities through reductions in the number of General Fund employees on the City's payroll.

All members of the Council offered their inputs and shared their perspectives on the alternatives presented.

Attorney Robert Meyers clarified a specific question regarding whether the current budget situation and the need to set a property tax millage rate rose to the level of being deemed an "emergency" as outlined in the City's Charter.

Public Comment:

The following members of the community came forward to offer their thoughts for the Council's consideration:

- 1) Ms. Barbara Edwards (S. Barfield Dr.)*
- 2) Ms. Victoria Myers (Bluebonnet Ct.)*
- 3) Ms. Lee Willer Spector (Rainbow Ct.)*
- 4) Mr. Chris Scherzinger (Cape Marco Dr.)*
- 5) Ms. Linda Scherzinger (Cape Marco Dr.)*
- 6) Mr. George Vilk (Magnolia Ct.)*
- 7) Mr. John Martini (Nassau Ct.)*
- 8) Mr. Brad Henson (Marco Island Resident)*
- 9) Ms. Teri Sommerfeld (San Marco Rd.)*
- 10) Mr. David Boggs (Delbrook Way)*

MOTION by Councilor Palumbo, seconded by Chair Brechnitz, that authorization of the City Manager to craft a 2026 Fiscal Year City Budget Resolution under a 1.24 mils property tax millage rate without an additional LCEC Franchise Fee, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL VOTE:

Yes: 4 - Councilor Goehler, Vice-Chair Gray, Councilor Palumbo and Chair Brechnitz

No: 3 - Councilor Champagne, Councilor Henry and Councilor Schwan

Mr. John Martini (Nassau Ct.) proposed that the Council consider conducting future City budget meetings later in the day to allow for employed, working residents to participate in the City's annual budget development workshops and meetings.

Assistant City Manager Casey Lucius advised the Council that the City Staff will prepare the 2026 Fiscal Year Budget Resolution in accord with the Council's direction for the First Reading of the Resolution at its September 8, 2025 meeting, and, if any surpluses or shortfalls are identified after re-calculating the City Spending Cap amount, propose specific initiatives to potentially add or cut to the Council for its direction.

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, Special-Called Meeting Presider Bonita Schwan adjourned the meeting at 3:59 P.M.

Bonita Schwan, Special-Called Meeting Presider

Erik Brechnitz, Council Chair

ATTEST:

Joan Taylor, City Clerk

PREPARED BY:

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist