

City of Marco Island Florida

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



Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 17, 2024

1:00 PM

Capital 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 McNees

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

(Note: Councilor Folley left the Workshop at 3:11 P.M. and returned at 3:48 P.M.)

Also Present

Michael McNees, City Manager

Joan Taylor, City Clerk

Alan L. Gabriel, City Attorney

John Wallace, Police Captain

Chris Byrne, Fire Chief

Guillermo Polanco, Finance Director

Daniel J. Smith, Community Affairs Director

Jose Duran, Information Technology Director

Jeff Poteet, Water & Sewer General Manager (remotely via Zoom teleconference connection)

Lazaro Pomier, Fleet & Facilities Project Manager

Heather Reed, Fleet & Facilities Coordinator

Melissa Raynor, Budget Manager

Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist

Citizens and Visitors

3. Business - Capital Budget Workshop

[ID 24-3657](#) City of Marco Island Budget Priorities - Capital

City Finance Director Guillermo Polanco opened the Workshop by presenting the Council with the estimated impact to the City's Fiscal Year 2025 millage rate for the single General Fund capital request that is proposed by City Staff.

The following City leaders, in turn, reviewed their departmental capital expenditure priorities and plans for the upcoming year, and each leader responded to questions and concerns raised by members of the Council.

Fleet & Facilities Department – Fleet & Facilities Project Manager Lazaro Pomier

Public Works Department – Public Works Director Justin Martin

[Note: The Workshop went into Recess at 2:36 P.M. between the conclusion of the Public Works Department review and the start of the Fire Rescue Department presentation. All Councilors were present when the Workshop reconvened at 2:41 P.M.]

Fire Rescue Department – Fire Rescue Chief Chris Byrne

Information Technology Department – IT Director Jose Duran

Police & Code Enforcement Departments – Police Captain John Wallace

Building Services Department – Community Affairs Director Daniel Smith

Water & Sewer Department – Water & Sewer Department General Manager Jeff Poteet

At the conclusion of the Departmental reviews, Councilor Irwin requested the establishment and recognition of a designated “Tree Fund” in the City’s 2025 Fiscal Year budget to fund the future replacement of existing trees that may become damaged or destroyed by weather and non-weather related events. [Editorial Note: the City’s current “10,000 Trees in Ten Years” pilot initiative is focused on adding to the City’s existing population of trees]

Chair Grifoni directed that: 1) the City Staff add a “Tree Fund” line item to the 2025 Fiscal Year Budget; 2) divert future landscape-related fines and specifically-directed public donations to this Fund, and; 3) re-visit this item during the Council’s Operating Budget Workshop to determine an appropriate budget allocation for this account for the 2025 Fiscal Year.

Additionally, Chair Grifoni requested additional clarification from the City Staff on the status of the Code Enforcement boat, trailer, vehicle, and dock grant authorized in 2022.

[ID 24-3680](#) **A Two-Step Plan for Preserving More Open Space and Enhancing the City’s Parks and Recreation Programs - Councilor Rich Blonna**

Councilor Blonna reviewed his proposals to: 1) establish an “Open Space Preservation & Parks and Recreation Enhancement” Fund, and; 2) contract with an outside, expert consultancy to solicit and procure grants to enable the City to procure, preserve, and protect natural habitats on Marco Island.

Utilizing a presentation entitled: “Creating a New Mini Preserve Along The Nature Highway” to provide a visual context and perspective in support of his proposals, Councilor Blonna recommended two re-allocations of existing City resources to initiate the funding of both elements of his plan.

[Editorial Note: Councilor Blonna’s “Creating a New Mini Preserve Along The Nature Highway” presentation is listed on www.cityofmarcoisland.com under ‘Our Government’ > ‘Agenda and Minutes’ > City Council 6/17/24 Capital Budget Workshop > ‘Meeting Details’]

4. Public Comment

Mr. Jim Scarpa (Edgewater Ct.), Member of the City’s Beach & Coastal Resources Advisory Committee, offered insight on the density of gopher tortoise burrows in the midway parcels along the “Nature Highway” presented by Councilor Blonna.

Mr. David Crain (Gayer Way), former Chair of the City’s Waterways Advisory Committee, 1) indicated his support for the preservation efforts championed by Councilor Blonna; 2) reinforced the benefits noted by Public Works Director Justin Martin in providing waterway connections under San Marco Road, and; 3) shared his observations regarding illicit discharge violations in the Island’s interior waterways in support of the request for a low-speed boat for the Code Enforcement Department.

Ms. Christine Dowell (Biscayne Way) questioned: 1) why illicit discharge portals in new seawalls are not being flagged by City inspectors, and; 2) whether remotely-operated drones might be equally effective in identifying code violations that are only visible from the Island’s canals. Ms. Dowell also: 1) asked when the Mackle Park Airnasium project is scheduled to commence; 2) observed that a Stryker chair should be able to be purchased by the Fire Rescue Department for no more than \$4,000; 3) requested an accounting for the money already spent on the West Winterberry Bridge project, and; 4) what cybersecurity provisions have been made to protect the City’s Water & Sewer utility systems.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, Chair Grifoni adjourned the Workshop at 4:19 P.M.

Jared Grifoni, Council Chair

ATTEST:

Joan Taylor, City Clerk

PREPARED BY:

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist