City Commission Meeting
July 22, 2025
6:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:
Adrian Petrila, Mayor
Karen Marriott, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 1
Lisa Robinson, Commissioner, District 2
Betty Rzewnicki, Commissioner, District 3
Jon Maldonado, Commissioner, District 4

STAFF PRESENT:
Frances Robustelli, City Manager
Ralf Brookes, City Attorney
Renee Rose, City Clerk
Brandon Berry, Senior Planner
Gil Martinez, Senior Planner
Devon Schmidt, Finance Director
Laura Canary, Community Development Director
Camden Mills, Public Services Director
Adam Poirrier, Assistant City Manager

Mayor Petrila called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
City Manager Robustelli requested to move Item 6b to be heard before presentations and Item 5a to be heard immediately following 6b before presentations.

Commissioner Robinson requested to add an item for discussion – beach ordinance.

Motion: **Vice Mayor Marriott moved, Commissioner Maldonado seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the July 22, 2025 City Commission Agenda as amended.**

6b. First Reading of Ordinance 2025-105: Emergency Bridge Loan
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH AUTHORIZING A LOAN FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT EXCEEDING $16,000,000 IN ORDER TO FINANCE OR REIMBURSE OPERATING COSTS INCURRED OR TO BE INCURRED BY THE CITY IN CONNECTION WITH HURRICANES HELENE AND MILTON; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A LOAN AGREEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH SUCH LOAN; AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF A PROMISSORY NOTE TO EVIDENCE SUCH LOAN; DELEGATING CERTAIN AUTHORITY TO THE MAYOR, THE CITY MANAGER AND OTHER OFFICIALS TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOREGOING; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION AND SCRIVENER'S ERRORS, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
Devon Schmidt, Finance Director, provided an update on the emergency bridge loan process, which has moved to the application phase to ordinance preparation. The project team, consisting of city staff, the city attorney, city manager, bond counsel Steve Miller, and financial adviser Jeffrey Larson, has been working to finalize the details. The loan is intended to address revenue shortfalls caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, with estimated needs of just under $16 million. The loan is meant to serve as a financial cushion for the general fund and wastewater utility and would only be drawn upon after the finance director confirms a shortfall affecting operations or fund balances. Following fiscal year 2026, any unused funds will be applied to prepay the loan, and a repayment plan will be set based on remaining balances. The ordinance authorizes borrowing up to $16 million from the State of Florida for operational, not capital, costs. It delegates authority to city officials to execute the loan agreement. The loan will be repaid using non-ad valorem revenues, preserving the city's ad valorem taxing power. Terms include a 10-year (120-month) maturity with 0% interest. The mayor is authorized to sign the promissory note. This is a limited obligation loan, meaning it creates no lien on city property. The city must manage the proceeds in a separate account, and any investment or interest earnings must comply with state and local regulations.

The discussion included the idea that this is a no-recourse loan. Mr. Larson said the loan is a 10-year, zero-interest loan with no penalties for early repayment and no property pledged as collateral. He clarified that although the loan is not tied to city assets and carries no interest, it must still be repaid using legally available non-ad valorem revenues, excluding property taxes and grants. If, after fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the city determines it has used, for example, $1.5 million, he would return with staff to recommend a repayment plan over the remaining eight years, integrated into the city's budget process. He noted that while there's flexibility in repayment, and prepayment is allowed, the principal must be repaid by the end of the 10-year term. The funds will be kept in a separate account, and interest earned, potentially at rates like 4%. The interest earned should be regularly swept out and used to offset revenue losses, particularly in the general and wastewater funds. This approach helps maintain fund stability without needing emergency borrowing. He also noted that with the city's general fund currently at a tight two-to-three-month reserve level, the loan serves as a financial cushion to ensure continued operations after disasters. The loan closing is expected in August, following final approvals, and full proceeds will be held until needed, with usage coordinated among city leadership.

<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u>
No members of the public came forward.

Motion: **Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Marriott and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-15: Emergency Bridge Loan.**

5a. <u>Authorize an Agreement with Stantec for a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Study and Finding of Necessity (FON) Report in the amount of $21,720.00</u>

Laura Canary, Community Development Director, said they will have a presentation, made part of the meeting record, from Gil Martinez, Senior Planner. He will provide an overview of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) process and the purpose of the Finding of Necessity. Representatives from the Florida Institute for Built Environmental Resilience (FIBER) were also present, in partnership for the development of the CRA. This would be the first CRA established on a barrier island in Pinellas County, with a focus on resiliency and infrastructure. Matt Lewis from Stantec was available to support the discussion.

Mr. Martinez outlined the purpose and process of creating a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) focused on resiliency and infrastructure improvements for a designated area on the barrier island. The immediate goal is to gain approval to proceed with a Finding of Necessity (FON), which would determine if the area qualifies for CRA designation under Florida law. This step is crucial to addressing long-standing infrastructure issues worsened by recent storms and to proactively prepare for future climate impacts. A CRA is a public agency established to revitalize areas facing decline or infrastructure challenges. The proposed CRA would prioritize strengthening aging systems, reducing flood risk, and improving environmental sustainability. The identified area, though not final, aligns with over 22 capital improvement projects and runs from 87th Avenue to 37th Avenue, including Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road. If the FON confirms eligibility, and both the city and county adopt the resolution, the next step is creating a community redevelopment plan. This plan would outline specific improvements, funding mechanisms, like tax increment financing (TIF), and goals tied to local planning policies. TIF captures the growth in property tax revenue over a base year and reinvests it into the CRA. A five-year projection example showed potential revenue of $466,000, including $210,000 from the county, funds currently out of reach without CRA designation. Once established, the CRA would be authorized to enter contracts, acquire property, apply for grants, and use TIF funds for infrastructure and public-private partnerships. The goal is to secure long-term community resilience and improve quality of life through targeted reinvestment.

Jeff Carney, FIBER, provided an overview of the FIBER program and its work, with a focus on its potential partnership in supporting the city's CRA efforts. He noted that both the mayor and city manager had participated in a recent city resilience workshop hosted by the University of Florida, highlighting the city's growing involvement in resilience planning. FIBER, based at the University of Florida, is composed of faculty across multiple disciplines and focuses on applied research to support resilient built environments. Their work combines research, real-world application, and community engagement. The institute manages specialized labs addressing everything from smart city technologies and energy efficiency to equitable disaster response and community-based planning. It also trains future professionals in planning, design, and construction-related fields. Mr. Carney shared a case study from Cedar Key, a storm-impacted coastal community. FIBER worked there using a Resilient Florida grant to conduct vulnerability assessments, mapping community risks through GIS and innovative 3D tools. This approach helped residents understand their local vulnerabilities and led to the development of a resilience plan with over 80 action projects. To implement these efforts, Cedar Key updated its decades-old CRA, incorporating the identified resilience projects into its redevelopment strategy. FIBER and its law clinic supported this process. He said the city's current approach to creating a resilience-based CRA is timely and aligns with successful models like Cedar Key, turning resilience planning into real, economically beneficial implementation.

Ms. Canary said they are requesting approval to move forward with the Finding of Necessity study. This study will document the current conditions and establish whether the area qualifies for CRA designation. The study will provide formal evidence, which is useful even if circumstances change when coordinating with the county. The findings will serve as a valuable resource for future planning and grant opportunities. If the city chooses to proceed with creating a CRA, the first step would be a robust community engagement process. Community input will be essential from the beginning, starting with education around the FON, and becoming critical during the development of the redevelopment plan. Public involvement is central to the process, as reflected in the very name "community redevelopment."

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deb Schechner, 710 Boca Ciega Isle Dr, raised concerns about revisiting the CRA, questioning whether eminent domain is excluded and how labeling properties as blighted could affect owners. She noted the need for community buy-in before spending funds and suggested holding a public workshop to explain the benefits and potential downsides.

The discussion suggested that the CRA concept sounded promising, as it could offer a tool to revitalize struggling areas by redirecting a portion of property tax revenues (TIF) back into targeted districts for improvements like infrastructure, transportation, housing, and parking. However, concerns were raised about the downside of labeling areas "blighted," especially if no further steps are taken after a FON is established. Ms. Canary clarified that no harm would come to property owners if a FON were made but the CRA does not move forward and noted that the designation is not parcel-specific; it refers to broader area conditions. She explained the difference between a CRA's power to voluntarily acquire and dispose of property versus eminent domain, which is no longer allowed under Florida law. Questions were also raised about property value implications, timing post-hurricane, the impact on the general fund, and whether the city could internally manage the study. City Manager Robustelli said the city lacks the capacity to conduct the study and said the $21,000 investment would be primarily for objective data collection. That data could later support future grant applications or further planning. Another discussion point was the potential loss of general fund flexibility if tax revenues are diverted to the CRA. Transparency and community buy-in before spending money was discussed, especially in areas not included in the initial study map, like Pass-a-Grille. Ms. Canary noted that boundaries can be revised later if they are contiguous and meet the required conditions. Examples from other cities like St. Augustine and Clearwater were shared to illustrate both the potential success and early challenges of CRAs. The discussion also clarified that the county must contribute at least 50% of TIF revenues if they participate, though some places start higher. There was debate about starting community engagement too early and possibly raising expectations before the FON data is available. The CRA, if created, could serve as a platform to secure matching grant funds in the future. If this CRA is not pursued, the findings could be useful for other strategies like resilience planning or interlocal agreements.

Motion: **Vice Mayor Marriott moved, seconded by Commissioner Rzewnicki and the motion carried 4-1 to authorize an agreement with Stantec for a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Study and Finding of Necessity (FON) Report in the amount of $21,720.00. Commissioner Robinson voted no.**

2. PRESENTATIONS

a. Follow-up Presentation by Calvin Giordano and Associates (CGA) regarding the impact of SB180 on the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code regulations

Community Development Director Laura Canary introduced Jim Hickey from CGA, to provide an update on the comprehensive plan, which had previously been put on hold. Mr. Hickey explained that no additional work had been done since May, pending direction from the commission. During that time, a new state law was signed by the governor, which imposes significant restrictions, particularly around local regulations like building height limits. Legal action is being considered by municipalities, but any resolution could take years. Given the new constraints, he recommended focusing on the Town Center (TC1 and TC2) districts rather than the Large Resort District, where regulatory changes are now limited. He suggested targeted public engagement, first separately with business and property owners, then with residents, and ultimately bringing both groups together, to develop thoughtful, balanced updates. Because the Town Center has smaller parcels and varied uses, redevelopment requires more nuanced planning. He noted that if the city proceeds with a CRA, the proposed Town Center updates could align with that effort. He concluded by presenting the commission with the option to move forward with this revised focus or to pause the process entirely and revisit it later.

The commission discussed the option of putting the planning project on hold for six months to a year to wait for clearer outcomes from ongoing litigation related to SB180 and potential developments regarding the CRA. Mr. Hickey said that the Town Center area could still benefit from efforts aimed at incentivizing development rather than imposing new restrictions, especially given recent legislative limitations. He also reiterated the importance of engaging separately with property owners and residents before bringing everyone together to understand differing perspectives. Commissioners noted that the recent hurricanes had revealed zoning inconsistencies, such as areas where residential uses do not align with commercial zoning, creating challenges for rebuilding. These issues could be addressed without a full comprehensive plan update but rather through targeted amendments to the zoning code. It was discussed that city staff can handle the detailed work of addressing specific zoning challenges and present options for the commission's consideration when ready. There was consensus to put the project on hold.

b. Proposed Amendments to the Noise Ordinance

Brandon Berry, Senior Planner, presented proposed amendments to the Noise Ordinance. The presentation was made part of the meeting record. This is a follow-up to a community meeting held earlier regarding the city's noise ordinance. Two main options had been explored for revising the ordinance. The first involved lowering the existing decibel limits, which currently allow 65 dB during the day and 55 dB at night. This approach presents challenges, especially for long-standing businesses or uses that might become non-compliant under stricter limits. Certain areas of the city already have high background noise levels, making it impractical to enforce lower limits since it's difficult to measure violations below ambient noise. The second option previously presented to the commission involves adopting a "plainly audible" standard, which is used in other Florida communities. This standard defines a violation as sound that can be clearly heard from a certain distance. The main issues with this approach are determining a reasonable distance, deciding on potential exemptions, and setting specific time frames for enforcement. Mr. Berry noted the need for a clear and enforceable ordinance that can be supported with existing equipment and training, such as standard decibel meters and enforcement protocols learned through Pinellas County Sheriff's Office training. He said that most complaints stem from relative noise, how loud a sound is compared to the surrounding environment, rather than whether it violates an absolute decibel limit. As an example, a 60 dB sound in a commercial area might be acceptable, but the same level at night in a residential neighborhood could be disruptive. In many cases, residents report noise that does not technically violate current standards but still significantly disturbs them when compared to the quieter ambient levels at their location. To address this, some cities have adopted a hybrid approach. An example of Naples was given, where an ordinance includes both absolute limits and a relative standard stating that no sound source should exceed the background level by more than five decibels. The goal is to preserve peace during appropriate hours by considering both the intensity of a sound and its context. He concluded by asking the commission for direction on whether to proceed with changes, noting the importance of having an ordinance that can be enforced with current tools and personnel.

The discussion centered around the proposed approach to enforcing noise complaints, especially during nighttime hours. The process would involve code enforcement responding to a complaint by first taking a sound reading at the complainant's property while the noise is ongoing. Then, the source of the noise would be paused, and a second reading is taken. If the difference between the two readings is greater than five decibels, it would be considered a violation. This five-decibel threshold is significant due to the exponential nature of sound, where even small increases represent a substantial change in volume. This process is aligned with current code enforcement practices, and the proposed changes would codify what is already commonly done, offering clearer legal backing and structure. It would apply primarily during "wind-down" hours (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.), extending the stricter noise controls beyond the current 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. ordinance. Daytime issues would still be addressed case by case. The ordinance would exempt special events approved by the city, such as block parties or concerts in the park, as well as uses governed by conditional use permits (CUPs), which often include stricter requirements. Mr. Berry noted these changes wouldn't change the CUP process but would standardize commonly expected conditions, such as management-controlled volume restrictions, for outdoor music uses. The goal is to give applicants predictability and help streamline approval. Questions were raised about enforcement logistics, including equipment availability (the city has two decibel readers), calibration and training (handled by the sheriff's office), and after-hours staffing. There was some uncertainty about the enforcement process following a violation, including how it ties into CUP reviews and communication between departments, which staff promised to clarify later. There was consensus to move forward with drafting the ordinance language.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Vincent Tormenia, 3514 Casablanca Ave, thanked staff and the commission for preventing flooding on Casablanca Ave. He asked for an update on the state case against the former commission. He announced that the post office would reopen in two weeks. City Attorney Brookes said he cannot provide comment at this time.

Kathy Garchow, 3607 Casablanca Ave, shared her concern about the city's financial instability, supporting a $300 annual tax increase to invest in long-term infrastructure rather than short-term fixes. She noted the need for a $16 million bridge loan, low general fund reserves, and lack of funding for $70 million in planned resiliency projects, requesting the commission explain how those will be funded. Mayor Petrila explained that the $16 million bridge loan was needed because the city had exhausted its reserves on emergency services and FEMA reimbursements could take years. The loan, which carries no interest or payments, serves as a financial safety net for future emergencies. Rather than raising taxes on residents, the commission is exploring alternative revenue sources, such as adjusting fees and increasing parking rates, especially for visitors. He emphasized that the city needs more revenue but chose not to burden residents right now. Regarding resiliency, the actual funding need is around $200 million, not $70 million, and the city is actively working on strategies to secure those funds.

Deb Schechner, Boca Ciega Isle Dr, criticized Commissioners Marriott and Rzewnicki for saying public input influenced their choice of Mr. Shiros as interim District 4 commissioner when they ignored resident opposition during votes on the Tradewinds and Sirata Resorts. She asked for updates on Publix and the Kash & Karry site.

4. CONSENT

a. Approval of the July 8, 2025 City Commission Budget Workshop #3 Minutes and the July 8, 2025 City Commission Meeting Minutes
b. Consider Appointments to the Police Pension Board
c. Authorize a work order with Rowland, Inc., for temporary barrier wall and erosion control at Gulf Way from 1st Ave to 9th Ave in the amount of $84,590.00
d. Approve the purchase of workstations with The CI Group/Laura Burkhart, in the amount of $28,547.14 for the Community Development office

Commissioner Robinson requested to pull 4d and Commissioner Rzewnicki requested to pull 4c for further discussion.

Motion: **Vice Mayor Marriott moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the July 22, 2025, City Commission Consent Agenda as amended.**

4c. Authorize a work order with Rowland, Inc., for temporary barrier wall and erosion control at Gulf Way from 1st Ave to 9th Ave in the amount of $84,590.00

Commissioner Rzewnicki questioned the necessity of spending $84,000 on a temporary barrier when a permanent solution is planned for 2026. After reviewing the site and observing differences in sand and wall conditions on each end of Gulf Way, she noted damage may have been made worse by sand removal efforts. She asked whether the temporary fix addresses a safety issue and was concerned that placing a new barrier in the same spot might not prevent future damage.

Camden Mills, Public Services Director, explained that the proposed temporary barrier would be placed on the west side of the sidewalk, closer to the dune, like existing structures north of 9th Avenue. The permanent wall would also follow this placement. While some wall sections were removed post-storm due to safety concerns like exposed rebar, the impact from sand cleanup efforts is not clear. The temporary wall is meant to provide protection during the upcoming storm season, as the permanent solution, scheduled for fiscal year 2026, will take time due to design, contracting, and construction phases. Community feedback has shown strong support for having something in place in the meantime.

There was further discussion that the community's concerns about the temporary barrier were for protection from windblown sand, storm surge, and preventing people from walking on the dunes. The barrier would look like concrete highway jersey barriers and wouldn't resemble the old wall. The temporary barrier isn't FEMA-eligible, but the permanent wall replacement, planned for fiscal year 2026, is a FEMA project, estimated at around $3 million, including wall and road repairs. The permanent wall will have a deeper foundation to prevent overturning and damage caused by water and sand movement. Community support, especially in District 4, is strong due to ongoing hurricane season risks.

Motion: **Commissioner Maldonado moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve Consent Item c - Authorize a work order with Rowland, Inc. for temporary barrier wall and erosion control at Gulf Way from 1st Ave to 9th Ave in the amount of $84,590.00**

4d. Approve the purchase of workstations with The CI Group/Laura Burkhart, in the amount of $28,547.14 for the Community Development office

Commissioner Robinson raised questions about the purchase of 13 workstations for 7 limited duration personnel. She asked if other space, like underused conference rooms, can be better utilized, such as relocating technical review upstairs, to save money. Mayor Petrila said the issue isn't physical space, but giving staff proper workspaces instead of tables. City Manager Robustelli said conference rooms are overused, she created a small meeting space in her office for groups of six or fewer. She wouldn't ask staff to work all day at a conference table due to ergonomics and comfort. While cubicle sizes might be slightly reduced, the savings would be minimal. Further discussion supported the project, recognizing that staff explored less expensive options, but ergonomics, staff health, welfare and morale play a critical role.

Motion: **Mayor Petrila moved, Vice Mayor Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve Consent Item d - Approve the purchase of workstations with The CI Group/Laura Burkhart, in the amount of $28,547.14 for the Community Development office.**

5. Action Items

a. ~~Authorize an Agreement with Stantec for a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Study and Finding of Necessity (FON) Report in the amount of $21,720.00~~

6. ORDINANCES

a. **Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-10: Amendments to Land Development Code DIVISION 26 – SIGN ORDINANCE**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE DIVISION 26 SECTIONS 26-1 THROUGH 26-42 ENTITLED SIGN ORDINANCE TO ENSURE CONTENT-NEUTRAL SIGN DEFINITIONS, STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS, AND ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMITTING, ENFORCEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE FOR NEW, EXISTING AND NONCONFORMING SIGNS IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Brandon Berry, Senior Planner, summarized changes from the last meeting based on Commissioner comments. The presentation is made part of the meeting record. Two comments were received to make amendments:

1. Vehicle Signs Definition (Page 162/Ordinance page 8):
   The original definition was unclear and has been revised to clarify that any vehicle parked contrary to commercial vehicle standards (assuming it has signage) is considered a vehicle sign. There was feedback about allowing exceptions for residential vehicles, especially personal vehicles with commercial wraps, so they are not subject to the 72-hour removal rule applied to commercial/mixed-use vehicles. The proposed change is to replace "commercial or mixed use" with "non-residential" to better reflect the intent to exempt residential properties from this rule. The existing restrictions on commercial vehicles (longer than 20 feet, taller than 10 feet) parking overnight on residential property remain unchanged.
2. Transitional and Emergency Signage (Page 183/Ordinance page 29):
   The current state-of-emergency signage rules remain unchanged. The commission requested allowing additional signage for parcel-specific catastrophic events (like a fire affecting a single property, not a citywide emergency). The amendment would permit one additional temporary sign (e.g., a sandwich board) during the repair of that property, as approved by the city manager, without overly strict regulations.

There was discussion about an inconsistency in the allowed display period for election signs. The current draft shows 30 days before and 2 days after an election, but the candidate handbook lists 45 days before and 7 days after. Previously, the code had no defined timeframe. There was also a question about whether the Beach Theatre's dual marquee signs were considered under the code. Staff confirmed that the theater had a variance for their signage and that the current ordinance allows additional signs for theaters, so no change is needed. Consensus was reached to restore the 45-day election sign timeframe and align the 2-day post-election limit with other temporary signage rules.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: **Vice Mayor Marriott moved, seconded by Commissioner Rzewnicki and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-10: Amendments to the Land Development Code DIVISION 26 – SIGN ORDINANCE, as amended to incorporate changes.**

b. ~~First Reading of Ordinance 2025-105: Emergency Bridge Loan~~

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. **Announcing intent to present a resolution to declare a green reuse (brownfield) area designation for 75 Corey Avenue and 85 Corey Circle**

Brandon Berry, Senior Planner, said it's a statutory requirement that this is announced prior to bringing it forward. There will be a resolution on the next agenda. It involves expanding a 2022 declaration for the Corey Landings property to include two newly acquired parcels. The owner is actively remediating the properties and pursuing tax credits and related benefits. The resolution does not commit to any development, and the applicant's attorney will be present at the next meeting. This resolution will go through two readings. City Attorney Brookes said the resolution does not approve any specific development plan. It requires an end use designation for the property, any permitted use that returns the site to productive use and creates at least 26 jobs.

b. City Manager Annual Review

City Manager Frances Robustelli provided a performance evaluation update and reflected on her first year in the role. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve and summarized feedback from the 360-evaluation process, which included input from staff and commissioners. Key improvement areas identified were communication, community engagement, cross-department collaboration, customer service, and infrastructure planning. Positive feedback included enhanced transparency, strong leadership during storm recovery, effective staffing, and improved financial reporting. She outlined future goals, including closing the infrastructure funding gap, organizational changes, and aligning the strategic plan with the budget. She also proposed a contract amendment to include the same cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) pending approval in the upcoming budget to be effective the same date as staff's COLA and one additional week of paid time off.

The discussion expressed praise and appreciation for the City Manager's performance during a particularly difficult year. It was acknowledged that she stepped into the role during a period of internal instability, including the abrupt departure of a previous city manager and a wave of commission resignations, followed by two historic hurricanes. Despite these challenges, she provided steady leadership, helping to restore organizational structure, improve responsiveness, and guide the community through recovery. The discussion called attention to her decision to purchase a home in the city and live among the residents; it demonstrated a commitment that went beyond holding the position. Her hands-on approach and transparency, particularly in choosing to submit discretionary spending items to the commission when not required to, were commended as signs of integrity and respect for public trust. The City Manager's openness to feedback was highlighted through her participation in two separate 360-degree evaluations, something prior managers had refused, giving staff across departments a voice in the review process. Improved resident engagement and satisfaction, faster response times, and progress in areas like stormwater management and financial reporting was also recognized. While the topic of her compensation was raised, there was support for her request for a cost-of-living adjustment and additional paid time off, citing the extraordinary circumstances she faced and the improvements she brought to the organization. It was noted that her actions, like her choice to embed herself in the community, reflected a level of dedication that went beyond expectations, and there was support to see her continue in the role long-term.

c. Beach Ordinance

Commissioner Robinson said she heard concerns from residents about separating the three elements of the beach ordinance. Sue suggested that the last two elements, which are related, may be better combined to ensure consistency in regulations affecting both hotel and residential beach use. Combining these elements could help create uniform rules for issues like umbrellas and alcohol on the beach, rather than having different standards on each side. The discussion noted that the City Attorney recommended splitting the ordinance to reduce the risk that a legal challenge to one part would invalidate the entire ordinance. The intent was to pass the less controversial sections first and address the more complex parts later with stakeholder input. It was noted that this reasoning hadn't been clearly explained in earlier meetings. Senate Bill 180 was mentioned, and the ordinance is being reviewed to ensure compliance, as the bill affects development-related regulations but not behavioral ones.

7. CITY CLERK, CITY MANAGER, CITY ATTORNEY, AND CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

City Clerk – had no report

Frances Robustelli, City Manager – had no report

City Attorney Brookes – He is attending the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association conference, where topics will include noise ordinances, covering the good, bad, and ugly, as well as updates on federal contracting requirements under the new administration and the new state legislation, including Senate Bill 180.

Commissioner Maldonado – He will keep all District 4 board and committee member appointees. He talked with all of them and they still want to serve.

Commissioner Rzewnicki – She has had meetings with Belle Vista and Don Cesar neighborhoods and will announce a park meeting for the other areas of District 3.

Commissioner Robinson – She attended the FDOT meeting for Blind Pass Rd. She is hosting her Library Hours August 5 from 5pm-5:45pm.

Vice Mayor Marriott – She also attended the FDOT meeting for Blind Pass Rd. She spoke with the owners of the former Winn Dixie. They are actively seeking tenants. She heard that both Woody's and Willie's, both favorites in D1, may be returning.

Mayor Petrila – He asked Ms. Robustelli to provide updates on beach renourishment, Publix, and the Bayway Butcher shop. Vice Mayor Marriott said the Bayway Butcher shop got permits and are under construction with a plan to open in November. City Manger Robustelli said the county has approved beach renourishment for the entire barrier islands, with the value to St. Pete Beach estimated at about $1.2 million. Work is expected to begin in August and take roughly 10 weeks to complete. Regarding Publix and the shopping center, the property manager recently indicated they are considering either remodeling or rebuilding Publix with an elevated design including parking. They have discussed stormwater and drainage issues as part of any new project, but no final decisions have been made yet.

Mayor Petrila adjourned the meeting at 8:37pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: AUGUST 19, 2025

RENEE ROSE
CITY CLERK

ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR