

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Adrian Petrila, Mayor (via Zoom)
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	Laura Canary, Community Development Director
Ralf Brookes, City Attorney	Camden Mills, Public Services Director
Renee Rose, City Clerk	Brandon Berry, Senior Planner

Vice Mayor Marriott 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 remove Presentation 2a to a future meeting and move 6a to be considered immediately following 2d, the Wastewater I&I presentation. Commissioner Robinson requested to add a discussion item on backfill.

Motion: **Commissioner Robinson moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the September 22, 2025 City Commission Agenda, as amended.**

2. PRESENTATIONS

a. Representative Linda Chaney Check Presentation

b. Hurricane Recovery and Preparedness Update

Community Development Director Laura Canary provided an update on recovery and preparedness efforts. She reviewed historic designations to date, noting 62 applications had been submitted, with 49 approved, nine pending, and four withdrawn. Certificates of Appropriateness for demolitions totaled 27, all of which were approved. For restoration and additions, eight applications were submitted, with four approved, three pending, and one withdrawn. She noted one FEMA floodplain variance involving a historic home with a small addition that was not being elevated. Permit processing remains a major focus. As of mid-September, 5,507 applications had been submitted. Daily intake has slowed compared to earlier in the year, with more than 1,000 now completed and closed. While new applications are declining, workload remains high due to inspections, change orders, and follow-up on open permits. Demolition permits reached 144, with 90 issued and 20 closed, averaging about seven days for issuance. Elevation permits totaled 34, with 15 issued and none yet closed. Ms. Canary encouraged residents to reach out directly to Elevate Florida for elevation program questions. She also reminded the public of a Community Development staff forum scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, 5:30–7:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers. The forum will present the City's substantial damage administrative procedures plan, normally used internally, but being shared publicly to gather feedback before final acceptance, not adoption, by the Commission. The plan will remain flexible to allow adjustments as federal, state, or local requirements change.

Public Services Director Camden Mills reported on infrastructure recovery. For wastewater, the City has a contract with Rowland, Inc. for systemwide cleaning and inspection on the agenda tonight. Staff are also performing internal work. The Pass-a-Grille area from 1st to 6th Avenue has been completed. For stormwater, an RFP closed September 10 for a systemwide contract now under review, with Commission approval targeted for October 28. City crews have also cleaned and inspected systems in the Lido neighborhood, 55th Avenue, North Tessier Drive, Bay Street, and East Vina Del Mar Boulevard, with Pass-a-Grille Way and 26th Avenue next on the list. Critical areas identified in the Stormwater Master Plan, as well as reports from SeeClickFix and staff observations, guide scheduling. Mr. Mills also gave an overview of hurricane preparedness monitoring, noting

staff regularly review seven-day forecasts circulated by the Fire Chief. At the time of the meeting, Hurricane Gabrielle was tracking east of Florida with little expected impact. Other disturbances in the Atlantic were being monitored but posed no immediate threat.

Ms. Canary reported that staff continue to complete NIMS and ICS training, and the Fire Chief is finalizing his coursework to earn an EOC Manager designation. A recent FEMA grants management session was beneficial in preparing staff for better compliance and documentation. The City has hired a Deputy Building Official, bringing the Building Division to full staffing for the first time in years. The City also plans to piggyback on Pinellas County's recent contract with multiple firms for supplemental community development personnel, creating a pool of on-call providers for both blue-sky and disaster recovery needs. Staff participated in discussions with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission on the region's first Coastal Master Plan, a four-year project supported by \$2 million in funding. The City anticipates joining as a collaborator. A presentation is scheduled for November 3 to allow the Commission to review the plan and determine the City's level of participation.

Discussion included restoring permit intake to normal business hours given the slowdown in new applications. Ms. Canary will evaluate the timing and consult with the City Manager. Questions were asked about a comparison of current hurricane-related permit volumes against a typical pre-storm year. Ms. Canary confirmed prior analysis showed nearly four times the normal annual volume and will provide updated figures with year-over-year trends. While intake slows, open permits still require inspections, plan changes, and follow-up, keeping staff workloads high. It was requested that staff provide metrics on stormwater cleaning, including linear footage, and confirmation that critical areas identified in the Stormwater Master Plan are prioritized. Mr. Mills explained that one area typically takes about one crew day to complete if tides are favorable. For example, 27 stormwater assets recently took 29 crew days to service. Contracted work will allow for faster progress. Staff are working to improve public communication on where cleaning is occurring and which neighborhoods are next. Questions were raised about the letters staff were sending out. Ms. Canary clarified that the second round of letters to property owners has not yet been sent but is in draft form. Additional staff capacity should allow the letters to be finalized and sent soon. It's important to pursue after-the-fact permits quickly in future disaster recovery. Ms. Canary shared new draft procedures will include pre-prepared placards to serve as instant permits, providing property owners with immediate authorization to begin work after an event. There was discussion on the appraisal standard for substantial damage determinations under FEMA's new letter. Ms. Canary noted they are working to clarify acceptable cost sources, which may include appraisals, builder estimates, and modeling systems like Forerunner. The goal is to adopt a consistent, FEMA-compliant approach while maintaining as much flexibility as possible.

c. Potential amendments to regulations for substantial improvement (elevation and living level reconstruction) of single-family residences

Brandon Berry, Senior Planner, gave a follow-up presentation on front yard stair encroachment. The presentation was made part of the meeting record. He explained that the issue primarily affects single-family homes being elevated or reconstructed above the floodplain in the same footprint, rather than new construction. The City has seen an increase in elevation permits, 35 applications since January compared to about one per year previously. Last year the Commission amended the code to allow in-place elevation of non-conforming homes without a variance, but criteria for equipment and stair encroachments were not addressed. Mr. Berry outlined two main options: allowing stairs to extend no closer than the existing front setback of a home or permitting a limited encroachment (up to 10 feet) provided stairs remain at least 10 feet from the property line. These options would make it easier to design safe, code-compliant access without excessive stair runs. Examples were shown of recent cases where homeowners sought relief for incidental stair extensions. Mr. Berry also recommended limiting landings so they serve as functional entries, not large decks, and requiring breakaway bases to minimize visual bulk. Additional considerations included allowing elevation of existing mechanical equipment in side yard setbacks, increasing shed size from 80 sq. ft. to 120 sq. ft. to reflect common homeowner needs, allowing existing pools, gazebos, or deck covers in setbacks to remain if the primary residence is substantially improved. The

Planning Board supported stair encroachment allowances and in-place elevation of equipment, with conditions. They had mixed views about larger sheds and setback exemptions for gazebos and deck covers. Mr. Berry concluded by seeking Commission input on drafting ordinance language covering four areas: stair encroachments, equipment elevation, accessory structures in setbacks, and shed size.

Discussion included whether larger sheds are necessary when elevated homes provide open space underneath. It was noted that enclosed sheds may be a lower-cost option compared to finishing enclosed storage below an elevated house. Concerns were raised that allowing larger sheds might not be needed, but others felt it should be left to homeowners' discretion. On stair encroachments, it was agreed the draft changes should primarily cover existing homes being elevated, not new construction, though there was some support in exploring limited allowances for new builds on odd-shaped lots. There was eventual consensus to look at new construction. The need for functional landings larger than the 3'x3' Florida Building Code minimum was highlighted, as the minimum is not practical for daily use. It was also noted that variances would still be available in unique cases, which provides flexibility. Mr. Berry confirmed the proposal would not eliminate variance pathways and would continue to require stairs and landings to remain within established setback limits, except as modified. Visual impacts, neighborhood character, and potential right-of-way conflicts were identified as key factors to balance in any ordinance language.

d. Wastewater Inflow & Infiltration Updates

Public Services Director Camden Mills provided an update to Wastewater I&I. His presentation was made part of the meeting record. He reviewed the City's sanitary sewer system and the inflow & infiltration (I&I) contributing to elevated chlorides from saltwater intrusion. The system, built in 1954–57, remains in place today. The City operates 38.7 miles of gravity sewer with 864 manholes, conveying an average daily flow of 2.62 million gallons per day to the City of St. Petersburg's Northwest Water Reclamation Facility. I&I occurs when groundwater or other non-domestic water enters the sewer system, leading to dilution, reduced treatment efficiency, and the risk of exceeding design capacity. Previous assessments identified extensive rehabilitation needs: the 2017 report estimated \$5.8 million in repairs, while the 2023 asset management plan recommended \$3.15 million over five years. Since 2017, the City has invested approximately \$5.2 million, which is about \$2.7 million short of recommended levels. Mr. Mills explained that chloride intrusion is a growing concern. St. Petersburg has set a daily chloride limit of 1,350 mg/L. Monitoring shows elevated concentrations, particularly in lift stations serving the Pass-a-Grille area, with higher levels observed during rainy months and storm events. While overall wastewater flows remain within contractual capacity (2.95 mgd reserved, 3.15 mgd future allocation), high chloride levels affect St. Petersburg's ability to produce reclaimed water. Coordination with St. Petersburg has been ongoing since late 2023. The City plans to increase investment in cleaning, inspections, and rehabilitation. Upcoming actions include a \$2 million contract for systemwide cleaning and inspection in FY 2026, and \$3.9 million in I&I improvements (pipeline point repairs, lining, and manhole rehab) over the next five years. Staff will have biweekly coordination with St. Petersburg and adjustments made with new inspection data. The long-term goal is to taper annual I&I spending to about \$250,000 by 2035–2042 once conditions stabilize. On the regulatory side, staff will notify site plan applicants about current chloride conditions and seek St. Petersburg's concurrence on concurrency determinations case-by-case. The City is also updating user connection fees as part of its fee study.

Discussions raised concerns about the history of inflow and infiltration issues and there were questions why communication on chloride levels did not happen sooner, given reports dating back to 2016 and 2021. There is a need for a root cause analysis, accountability on what was known and when, and clarity on whether the City has met its past consent order requirements. City Attorney Brookes confirmed the City was released from a 2014 consent order in 2022 after completing required studies and improvements. The consent order was made a part of the meeting record. Discussion highlighted frustration that previous investments did not meet recommended levels, leaving significant portions of the system unrepaired. Questions focused on whether private utility boring had caused damage, how the City can track such impacts, and whether new inspection requirements could be

placed on right-of-way work. Mr. Mills explained that televising can reveal damage, but additional inspection requirements would need to be explored. Funding was also discussed, asking if sufficient money is budgeted not only for inspections but also for the repairs that will follow. Mr. Mills said the FY26 budget includes a CIP line for wastewater system improvements. Questions were also raised about whether federal, state, or county grants could support private lateral replacements, given their potential scale. There is a need for transparency with residents, citing the long history of problems, but the City should focus on solutions going forward. Discussion also emphasized the importance of inspections, prioritizing hotspot areas, securing adequate funding for repairs, and preventing a repeat of past mistakes.

ACTION ITEMS

6a. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with Rowland, Inc. for Sewer System Cleaning and Inspection Services in the amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 annually.

Mr. Mills reported that the City publicly advertised a Request for Proposals for qualified contractors to perform citywide sewer cleaning and inspections. Four sealed bids were received in August, and Rowland, Inc. was determined to be the lowest responsive and qualified bidder. The proposed contract establishes unit prices for services including sewer pipe cleaning and televising, specialty cleaning such as tree root and grease removal, manhole inspections, bypass pumping, private lateral inspections, and an artificial intelligence platform for data analysis. The contract term is three years, with two optional one-year extensions, and will serve as the basis for citywide system cleaning. The work will update the City's asset inventory, give a clear picture of the system's condition, and help set priorities for future repairs. The contract is capped at \$2 million, which is already included in the FY26 capital budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: **Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Commissioner Maldonado seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with Rowland, Inc. for Sewer System Cleaning and Inspection Services in the amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 annually.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

George Smith, 5940 Bimini Way N, supported staff's proposed amendments to code changes but opposed extending those changes to new construction. He also opposed allowing larger outdoor sheds, noting that elevated homes already create storage space underneath and that loose sheds could become storm debris. He also raised concern about stormwater infiltration from damaged PVC cleanouts and suggested a public information program.

4. CONSENT

- a. Approval of the September 8, 2025 Budget and Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
- b. Authorize the ratification of the tentative collective bargaining agreement (CBA) reached between City Administration and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 4966 for the period October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2028.
- c. Authorize the City Manager to execute Amendment 1 to the Advanced Life Support (ALS) First Responder Agreement with the Pinellas County EMS Authority for FY25-26, Including Funding Adjustment, Rescue Captain Implementation, Traffic Preemption System, and FDLE Criminal Background Screening Requirements
- d. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Professional Auditing Services agreement not to exceed \$60,500 annually and Non-attest Services for the FY2025 Audit not to exceed \$34,000 annually
- e. Approval of First Amendment to City Clerk Employment Agreement – Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Provision
- f. Approve a Special Event Permit with street closure and alcohol consumption for the annual Belle Vista

Halloween Block Party scheduled for October 31, 2025.

- g. Approve a Special Event permit with street closure for VDubs Beach Bash (Volkswagen car show) scheduled for November 15, 2025.
- h. Authorize the City Manager to execute Change Order 3 for the Master Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation Project with TLC Diversified Inc. in the amount of \$137,322.76.
- i. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Continuing Contract for Professional Design Services with Adeas-Q, LLC, for three years.
- j. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Continuing Contract for Professional Design Services with Advanced Engineering Design, Inc., for three years.
- k. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Continuing Contract for Professional Design Services with Halff Associates, Inc., for three years.
- l. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Continuing Contract for Professional Design Services with NorthStar Consulting Group, Inc., for three years.
- m. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Continuing Contract for Professional Design Services with Cummins Cederberg, Inc for three years.
- n. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with Harris- McBurney Company for the 36th Avenue Roadway and Stormwater capital improvement project in the amount of \$329,145.36
- o. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with KM2H, LLC for the 36th Avenue Seawall Repair capital improvement project in the amount of \$373,290.50
- p. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with Florida Parking, Inc., DBA Yellow Dawg., for citywide street paving in the amount of \$500,000.00 annually.
- q. Approve the Purchase of Fire Department Bunker Gear from American Public Safety in the amount of \$31,301.10.

Discussion noted the number of engineering contracts and highlighted the value of drawing on firms' experience with shoreline stabilization, stormwater, and similar projects in other Florida cities, encouraging staff to use this collective expertise to identify proven solutions before investing in new conceptual plans.

Motion: Commissioner Maldonado moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the September 22, 2025 City Commission Consent Agenda.

5. ORDINANCES

a. Public Hearing: Final Reading Ordinance 2025-18: Establishing the Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2026

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA ESTABLISHING THE MILLAGE RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026, BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026; PROVIDING AND ANNOUNCING THE NAME OF THE TAXING AUTHORITY, THE ROLLED-BACK MILLAGE RATE, THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE OVER THE ROLLED-BACK MILLAGE RATE, AND THE MILLAGE RATE TO BE LEVIED; PROVIDING FOR READING IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Brookes read Ordinance 2025-18 in its entirety.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Robinson moved, Commissioner Rzewnicki seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-18, establishing the millage rate as 3.0913 for fiscal year 2026.

b. Public Hearing: Final Reading Ordinance 2025-19: Adopting the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026, BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026; PROVIDING

FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE ADOPTED CAPITAL BUDGET AS THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR READING IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE
City Attorney Brookes read Ordinance 2025-19 in its entirety.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Robinson moved, Commissioner Maldonado seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-19, adopting the budget for fiscal year 2026.

c. Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-17: Specifying elevation requirements for replacement of flood-damaged equipment associated with non-substantially improved and non-substantially damaged buildings

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA FOR THE PURPOSE OF AMENDING CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 98 – BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS, TO SPECIFY MINIMUM ELEVATION STANDARDS FOR REPLACEMENT OF FLOOD-DAMAGED EXTERIOR EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH A SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED OR DAMAGED BUILDING; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Brookes read Ordinance 2025-17 in title only.

Community Development Director Laura Canary noted there are no changes for the second reading. She stated the City has committed to the State to review the code comprehensively, including floodplain regulations, to ensure full compliance and determine if any additional updates are needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Vice Mayor Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Ordinance 2025-17.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Authorize the City Manager to execute a Services Agreement with Rowland, Inc. for Sewer System Cleaning and Inspection Services in the amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 annually.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Discussion on backfill

Commissioner Robinson raised an issue regarding backfill regulations, noting issues with varying elevations, garage flooding, and the need for consistent standards that balance resiliency with neighborhood impacts. It was suggested that the current code may be outdated and should be reviewed, particularly as other communities like Treasure Island are also evaluating the issue. City Manager Robustelli said this issue is complex, would require outside expertise, and recommended that the Commission consider adding it to the December priority work session for discussion and direction on prioritization.

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

City Clerk – nothing to report

Frances Robustelli, City Manager – She reported that the free fall concert series at Horan Park will begin on Friday, October 3, from 7–9 p.m., featuring China Grove with guest band Supernatural. SPB Fire Rescue will sell

hot dogs and burgers, while the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber will sell beer and wine. The event is free and open to the public, with pets permitted on leashes and outside food and drinks allowed (no glass). She also highlighted a new “Code Enforcement Corner” initiative, shifting toward an education-first approach. A monthly social media spotlight will cover common code issues, starting in October with overgrown vegetation and trash/debris. The goal is to increase awareness, encourage voluntary compliance, and reduce the need for cases to go before the Special Magistrate. Courtesy hang tags will also be reintroduced as friendly notices to inform property owners of concerns and provide contact information. The City encouraged residents to reach out to Code Enforcement staff for assistance.

City Attorney Brookes – nothing to report

Commissioner Maldonado – He is hosting Cookies with a Commissioner Saturday, September 27, from 9am-10am at Vina Del Mar Park. His next community engagement meeting, with the City Manager, will be October 6, from 6pm-7pm at the Warren Webster.

Commissioner Rzewnicki – She reported that there’s a Belle Vista community meeting on October 9th at 7:00pm at the triangle park. The Don Cesar Property Owners Corporation invites the city to the 100th anniversary event on November 2nd at the Don Cesar Hotel. The invitation and details are at <https://dcpoc.org/>.

Commissioner Robinson – She is changing her library hours from Oct 7 to Oct 1 at 5:00pm. She reported that a resident in the Bayside Addition area is hosting an open house to discuss the impacts of the Corey Landings development on nearby neighborhoods, including Bayside, Gulf Winds, and adjacent streets, particularly regarding ingress and egress. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., and residents interested in attending were encouraged to call the commissioner’s cell phone number listed on the City’s website.

Vice Mayor Marriott – nothing to report.

Mayor Petrila – nothing to report

Vice Mayor Marriott adjourned the meeting at 8:10pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: OCTOBER 14, 2025



RENEE ROSE
CITY CLERK



ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR