

City Commission Meeting
April 14, 2026
6:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Scott Tate, Mayor
Karen Marriott, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 1
Lisa Robinson, Commissioner, District 2
Al Causey, Commissioner, District 3
Jon Maldonado, Commissioner, District 4

STAFF PRESENT:

Frances Robustelli, City Manager	Adam Poirrier, Assistant City Manager
Ralf Brookes, City Attorney	Mandy Edmunds, Resident Services Director
Renee Rose, City Clerk	Devon Schmidt, Finance Director
Camden Mills, Public Services Director	

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

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Maldonado requested to add discussion items about permit fees and decorum/civility as items 7a and 7b.

Motion: **Commissioner Causey moved, Commissioner Maldonado seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 14, 2026 City Commission Agenda, as amended.**

2. PRESENTATIONS

a. Micro Transit Program Direction

Resident Services Director Mandy Edmunds presented an overview of the City's microtransit program, an on-demand, app-based service operated by Freebee, providing approximately 2,300 rides and 4,200 passengers per month. Her presentation was made a part of the meeting record. The program operates seven days a week and is primarily used along key corridors such as Gulf Boulevard and major activity centers. The total annual program cost is approximately \$536,000, with a net monthly City cost of approximately \$34,000 to \$35,000 after revenue offsets, including advertising and non-resident fares. The cost per ride ranges from \$13 to \$17, and ridership trends have shown variability, including declines in the months following the storms. She noted the program provides benefits such as reducing parking demand and offering an alternative transportation option, but also highlighted challenges, including limited resident utilization and the need for ongoing subsidy. She closed by requesting Commission direction on whether to continue the service by issuing a new request for proposals and including funding in the FY27 budget, or to sunset the program at the end of the current contract.

Commission discussion focused on program costs, ridership data, and future options for the microtransit service. Questions were raised regarding the lack of detailed data distinguishing resident versus non-resident usage and inconsistencies in available reporting. Ms. Edmunds clarified that funding for the program is derived from ad valorem taxes and that ridership declines may be attributed in part to the implementation of user fees. Further discussion included the balance between providing a valued community amenity and the significant annual subsidy, with interest in exploring more cost-effective alternatives. There was support to issue a request for proposals to allow for competition among vendors and to evaluate different service models, including reduced-cost options. Additional ideas included pursuing partnerships with private providers, engaging local businesses and hotels to contribute financially, and identifying alternative service structures that could reduce or eliminate the City's financial burden. Concerns were also raised regarding vendor practices and data handling. Consensus direction was to proceed with developing a request for proposals that incorporates potential partnerships, cost-sharing opportunities, and alternative service models.

3. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Sylvia Gabe, Mirabella Ct., spoke in support of Freebee.

Dave Green, De Bazan Ave., spoke in opposition of the City competing with existing private microtransit services, noting concern over public funding for such programs and suggesting a partnership or RFP process to reduce costs and support local businesses.

Linda Vanino, 2nd St E., supported the microtransit service but raised concerns over its cost, noting current lower demand due to recovery conditions. She supported exploring more cost-effective options or partnerships, particularly with hotels.

Lesley Brown, De Bazan Ave., congratulated newly elected commissioners and mayor. Free Beach Ride has provided free local transportation on St. Pete Beach for 17 years. She requested the opportunity to participate if the service is put out to bid in the future.

Joe Maddox, Belle Vista Dr., spoke in support for a microtransit service but questioned declining ridership and rising costs, suggesting the program could be operated more efficiently and encouraging consideration of alternative, lower-cost options.

David Hubbard, Boca Ciega Dr., expressed support for the microtransit service but raised concerns about lack of data, unreliable wait times, and app functionality, recommending improved service standards and performance requirements to increase usability and ridership.

Dominic Isgro, 46th Ave., raised concerns about the Plaza Beach Hotel unlawfully restricting public beach access and installing hazardous obstructions, requesting the City affirm public access rights, enforce removal of barriers, and provide guidance to prevent similar issues.

Lisa Reich thanked City Manager Robustelli for issuing a letter regarding the Country Thunder event, noting its positive impact on conservation efforts.

Tiffany Quintero, Belle Vista Dr, thanked the City for actions supporting wildlife and expressed concerns about small cell installations, requesting evaluation of their necessity, placement, and potential health and safety impacts, including efforts to minimize RF exposure.

4. CONSENT

- a. Approval of the March 24, 2026 City Commission Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of the Special Event permit for VDubs Beach Bash (Volkswagen car show) on October 17, 2026
- c. Authorize the City Manager to piggyback on Pinellas County Cooperative Contract RFP No. 25-0763-RFP for disaster recovery and supplemental staffing services
- d. Approval of Replacement Light Materials for the Vina Del Mar Bridge
- e. ~~Authorize the City Manager to transition four Limited Term Duration Employment (LTDE) positions into full-time positions.~~
- f. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Task Order Amendment 4 with Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc. for the Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$29,295.00
- g. ~~Authorize the City Manager to execute Change Order 5 for the Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation Project with TLC Diversified Inc. in the amount of \$395,096.67~~

Commissioner Robinson requested to pull item g and Mayor Tate requested to pull item e for further discussion.

Motion: Vice Mayor Marriott moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 14, 2026 City Commission Consent Agenda, as amended.

- e. Authorize the City Manager to transition four Limited Term Duration Employment (LTDE) positions into full-time positions.

Mayor Tate requested clarification regarding proposed staffing changes, specifically the transition of certain temporary positions to permanent roles. He asked the City Manager to identify the department involved and

explain the anticipated benefits of making the positions permanent. City Manager Robustelli provided background on staffing needs within the Community Development/Permitting Division following hurricane recovery efforts. Staffing levels were temporarily increased to address the significant surge in permitting demand, with up to 37 employees at peak and approximately 22 currently. She explained that limited-duration positions were added to manage ongoing workload, and based on continued high demand, four of those positions are recommended to be converted to permanent roles. The conversion is intended to retain experienced staff, stabilize operations, and maintain current service levels. She noted that permitting volume is not expected to decrease in the near term and that current staffing levels reflect an appropriate balance to meet statutory requirements and enhance customer service. The positions are already funded in the current fiscal year, and no new budget allocation is required at this time, though continuation would be proposed in the next fiscal year. Further discussion noted how the proposed permanent staffing positions would align with anticipated implementation of new permitting software. Ms. Robustelli explained that all permitting personnel, including the proposed positions, would be integral to the transition. It was noted that software implementation typically increases workload in the short term due to parallel systems and data migration, reinforcing the need for adequate staffing levels.

Motion: Commissioner Maldonado moved, Vice Mayor Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve Consent Item e, Authorize the City Manager to transition four Limited Term Duration Employment (LTDE) positions into full-time positions.

- g. Authorize the City Manager to execute Change Order 5 for the Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation Project with TLC Diversified Inc. in the amount of \$395,096.67

Commissioner Robinson requested Public Services Director Camden Mills address some questions focused on the status, budget, and timeline of the Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation project. Mr. Mills reported the project is underway, with a total budget of approximately \$6.25 million and about \$4.1 million already encumbered. This pending change order would reduce the remaining balance but keep the project within budget. There were questions regarding the number of change orders, use of contingency funds, and overall project phases. Mr. Mills explained that the change orders are associated with previously planned scope items and confirmed that no additional expenditures beyond those presented are anticipated. He confirmed that the project is expected to be completed under budget by approximately \$1.7 million and remains on schedule. Substantial completion is anticipated in July, with final completion expected in November following installation of a backup generator.

Motion: Vice Mayor Marriott moved, Commissioner Maldonado seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve Consent Item g, Authorize the City Manager to execute Change Order 5 for the Pump Station 1 Rehabilitation Project with TLC Diversified Inc. in the amount of \$395,096.67.

5. ORDINANCES

a. First Reading Ordinance 2026-08: Amending Chapter 66 of the Police Officers' Retirement System
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 66, PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT; ARTICLE III, POLICE OFFICERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM; AMENDING SECTION 66-230 SHARE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, CONSTRUCTION, PUBLICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Attorney Brookes read Resolution 2026-08 in title only.

Finance Director Devon Schmidt presented an ordinance amending Chapter 66 of the City Code to update the share plan allocation method, providing for equal distribution of qualifying premium tax revenues to eligible retirees. The ordinance also clarifies administrative and distribution procedures to ensure consistency with Florida Statutes. She noted that the plan is fully funded through excess premium tax revenues, with no impact

to the City's general fund. An independent actuarial review confirmed there is no financial impact to the City, no changes to actuarial assumptions, and no effect on contribution requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Maldonado moved, Commissioner Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt the first reading of Ordinance 2026-08.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Election of Vice Mayor

City Clerk Renee Rose said pursuant to the City Code, the Commission annually elects one of its members to serve as Vice Mayor for a one-year term. The Vice Mayor acts in the Mayor's absence. This requires an affirmative vote of three or more members.

Discussion regarding the Vice Mayor position included interest from Vice Mayor Marriott and Commissioner Robinson. Commissioners discussed the value of experience and continuity in external committee representation, as well as the tradition of selecting the most senior member of the Commission to serve as Vice Mayor. Clarification was provided that service on external boards, including BIG-C, is not limited to the Vice Mayor.

Motion: Commissioner Maldonado moved, Commissioner Causey seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to elect Commissioner Robinson as Vice Mayor.

b. Appointments to Outside Agencies

Mayor Tate said there are several outside agencies with current vacancies due to recent turnover. A list of prior appointments had been provided for reference. Discussion included Commissioner preferences for certain assignments, with some indicating a willingness to remain in their current roles and others requesting changes or new appointments. It was noted that certain positions, such as those on the Mayors Council of Pinellas County, may be more appropriately filled by the Mayor and Vice Mayor. Additional discussion included individual interest in serving on agencies, as well as confirmation of continued service in existing roles. It was also noted that Commissioner Marriott was appointed by the Big-C to the PTSA Board, and that this appointment was made externally and not by the City.

Motion: Mayor Tate moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to make the following appointments: *BIG C*: Mayor Tate – Representative, Commissioner Marriott – Alternate; *Florida League of Cities*: Commissioner Maldonado – Representative, Commissioner Causey – Alternate; *Mayor's Council of Pinellas County*: Mayor Tate – Representative, Vice Mayor Robinson – Alternate; *Pinellas County Flood Insurance Committee*: Vice Mayor Robinson – Representative, Commissioner Marriott – Alternate; *Suncoast League of Cities*: Commissioner Marriott – Representative, Commissioner Maldonado – Alternate; *Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council*: Commissioner Causey – Representative, Vice Mayor Robinson – Alternate.

c. Resolution 2026-09: Establishing and Amending Public Parking Fees

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE PARKING FEE SCHEDULE, INCLUDING BOTH METERED AND PERMIT PARKING FEES BY RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING RESOLUTIONS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Attorney Brookes read Resolution 2026-09 in title only.

Assistant City Manager Adam Poirrier presented a resolution consolidating all parking-related fees into a single

document following the prior removal of parking fees from the City's code of ordinances. The resolution is administrative in nature, intended to relocate parking permit fees alongside previously approved parking meter rates. No changes to existing permit fees or rates were proposed, and the resolution reflects actions already approved by the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Causey moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to adopt Resolution 2026-09.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Discussion on Permit Fees (Added)

Commissioner Maldonado brought forward concerns raised by residents regarding the cost of storm-related permit fees and the financial burden on homeowners who were delayed in beginning repairs. He requested the Commission consider extending or reducing permit fees for storm-related work, including the possibility of retroactive rebates or a reduced fee structure moving forward. There were differing views, with some supporting relief for residents still recovering, and others raising concerns about fairness, administrative difficulty, and the impact on City resources. Discussion included prior fee waivers and reductions, the challenges of implementing retroactive rebates, and the importance of maintaining adequate staffing and efficiency in the building department.

Laura Canary, Community Development Director, provided additional context regarding earlier permit fee waivers and their relationship to FEMA reimbursements, noting that waived fees reduced the amount of reimbursement received by the City. She noted that extensive outreach had been conducted encouraging residents to apply for permits early to take advantage of waived or reduced fees. She said that while permit costs can be significant for some residents, they are typically a small portion of the overall project cost. However, she doesn't want projects being delayed due to inability to pay permit fees. As an alternative to fee waivers or rebates, she suggested the potential creation of a hardship-based program to address individual cases, allowing for case-by-case consideration. Additional concerns were raised about administrative challenges, confusion, and equity issues associated with retroactive fee adjustments, especially for those who had already complied with prior deadlines.

Discussion continued, focusing on the difficulty of implementing rebates and potential impacts on FEMA reimbursements. Ms. Canary noted that prior fee waivers were factored into federal reimbursement calculations, which could complicate any retroactive changes. City Manager Robustelli asked if there was consensus on a hardship program; consensus was achieved. She will bring back a formal proposal by resolution, including eligibility criteria, financial analysis, and a potential funding cap to manage budget impacts. It was also noted that approximately 235 properties remain without permits following storm damage, which may help define the scope of potential applicants.

b. Discussion on Decorum and Civility (Added)

Commissioner Maldonado brought forward the importance of maintaining decorum and civility in meetings, referencing Resolution 2022-13 and noting that expectations for respectful conduct have not been consistently followed by both the Commission and members of the public. There were concerns regarding instances of disrespect toward Commission and City staff, and the need to enforce existing standards prohibiting profanity, personal attacks, and disruptive behavior. The Commission should lead by example and address decorum issues proactively. He introduced the idea of adopting a formal code of civility through a resolution or ordinance and he proposed a workshop to discuss further.

Mayor Tate issued a public apology to Commissioner Maldonado for not intervening sooner during an incident at the previous Commission meeting. He acknowledged the responsibility of the Chair to maintain order and expressed a commitment to being more proactive in upholding decorum moving forward. He also voiced support for establishing a code of ethics and civility to guide conduct among Commissioners and the public.

There was some support for holding a workshop to explore the concept, while some questioned whether additional policies were necessary, noting that existing ordinances already address decorum and that enforcement may be sufficient. City Manager Robustelli noted that establishing a code of ethics is considered a best practice and could provide clear expectations for conduct both publicly and internally. Discussion also included the possibility of defining guiding principles and potential consequences for violations. A majority of the Commission expressed interest in continuing the conversation. Ms. Robustelli said there was sufficient direction for staff and the City Attorney to develop a framework for a future agenda item for Commission discussion.

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

Renee Rose, City Clerk – She reported that the City Clerk’s Office is currently accepting applications for vacancies on the Board of Adjustment and the Police Pension Board. Qualified residents who are interested in serving are encouraged to apply through the City Clerk’s Office. More information, including the application, is available on the City’s website.

Frances Robustelli, City Manager – She provided an update regarding the Country Thunder event, noting that due to significant public interest, the event has been relocated from St. Pete Beach to a non-beach site in Clearwater. The event is scheduled to proceed May 8–10, with organizers currently expediting permitting through the City of Clearwater. The relocation has been confirmed with the TradeWinds Resort, and all parties have been notified.

City Attorney Brookes – He reported that House Bill 399 has taken effect and he distributed a legal review to the Commission for review. The legislation does not have any significant impact on the City but it was provided for informational purposes.

Commissioner Maldonado – He publicly commended City Manager Robustelli for her handling of the Country Thunder matter, recognizing her integrity, transparency, and adherence to established processes. He appreciated her proactive communication and leadership throughout the situation.

Commissioner Causey – He was impressed with City staff’s performance and shared optimism for the future. He announced parking surveys have been distributed in District 3 on 46th Avenue and Boca Ciega Isle. He encouraged residents to participate and submit responses by May 1.

Vice Mayor Robinson – nothing to report

Commissioner Marriott – She thanked the Parks Department for hosting a successful spring concert series, noting great attendance and positive community engagement. She appreciated the Veterans of South Pinellas County for their fundraising efforts at the event.

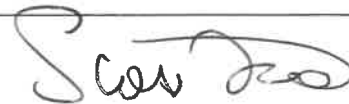
Mayor Tate – He shared appreciation for the City staff and City Manager, noting the strong turnout at Spring Fest and highlighting the pool Easter egg hunt as a fun and unique addition. He said the concert series continues to be a great success.

Mayor Tate adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm

MINUTES APPROVED: APRIL 28, 2026



RENEE ROSE
CITY CLERK



SCOTT TATE
MAYOR