



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 5, 2026 * 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor – Jason Carson
District 1 Commissioner – Ed Gold
District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance – conf call
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell – conf call
District 6 Commissioner – Christopher Oller
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski

1. **Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum**

Mayor Carson called the Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and the City Clerk, Yolanda Quiceno, confirmed the presence of a quorum. City Manager (CM) Rudometkin, Chief Grimm, Attorney Langley, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. **Invocation and Pledge to Flag** - Comm Beth Lowell, District 5

Comm Lowell led the invocation and Pledge to the Flag.

3. **Public Comments & Announcements**

Mayor Carson opened the floor for public comments and announcements. There being none, he closed the public comment section.

Mayor Carson reminded the Council that Comm Bobrowski is on vacation and called for a motion to excuse Comm Bobrowski from the meeting.

Comm Gold moved to excuse Comm Bobrowski from the meeting.

Comm Shuck seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 6:0.

4. **Presentations**

a. Appointment of Vice Mayor

Comm Lance moved to appoint Beth Lowell as Vice Mayor.

Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.

b. New Resident Program – Richard Wensier Chairman of the Tree Board

Richrd Weinsier, Chairman of the Tree Board presented the proposed City's new resident program, which has been in development for approximately two years. The program was created to help educate new residents about City services, regulations, and community resources while also promoting tree planting and preservation initiatives. Mr. Weinsier explained that the program was developed in response to resident feedback indicating that many were unaware of City policies or available resources. The goal is to provide new residents with information early and encourage community involvement. Council was provided with sample materials included in the welcome packet. The packet includes information about the City, a refrigerator magnet, and QR codes linking directly to online resources and the new resident information page. The QR codes were designed to allow information to be updated electronically without reprinting materials. He also highlighted a program offering residents up to two free trees, with assistance provided to ensure appropriate tree selection and placement. The representative noted the importance of planting the right tree in the right location to avoid future utility conflicts.

Council discussed outreach efforts and the process of contacting new residents. Staff noted that the QR code serves as the primary electronic welcome packet and supports the City's efforts to reduce paper usage. Additional information was provided regarding upcoming recycling, electronics recycling, textile collection, and prescription drug take-back events, which will now be coordinated together twice annually in April and October with the Police Department.

5. Consent Items

- a. Approval of the City Council Meeting Minutes - April 21, 2026.
- b. RESOLUTION NO. 26-05 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE MAYOR AS SIGNATORIES ON THE CITY CHECKING ACCOUNTS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Comm Shuck moved to approve the consent items as presented.

Comm Gold asked if his edits were included, City Clerk confirmed. He seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.

6. Unfinished Business – na

7. New Business

- a. Review and Approval Submittal for RFP 2026-03 for Lobbying Services
CM Rudometkin presented staff's recommendation regarding the selection of a contract lobbyist for the City. He explained that the previous lobbying contract expired last year, and the Council had approved continuing services on a month-to-month basis while the City completed an RFP process for lobbying services.

The City received two proposals in response to the RFP: Gray Robinson, the City's current lobbyist firm, and Pittman Law Group, PLLC. An evaluation committee reviewed both proposals using established evaluation criteria and a point system. Following the review process, Gray Robinson received the highest overall evaluation score. Staff therefore recommended continuing services with Gray Robinson as the City's contract lobbyist.

CM Rudometkin noted that Gray Robinson has extensive experience representing the City and highlighted several accomplishments listed in the proposal materials. He explained that the firm assists the City by monitoring legislation affecting municipalities, advocating for City priorities in Tallahassee, and helping secure legislative appropriations and funding opportunities. Discussion included the firm's assistance with law enforcement-related legislation, updates on state budget matters, and representation regarding potential property tax reform discussions at the state level. Staff also noted that Gray Robinson has assisted the City with legislative appropriation requests, including recent requests for funding for replacement marine vessels as part of the City's capital improvement planning. Chief Grimm added that the firm provides guidance on legislative committees, budget processes, and state contacts, helping City representatives communicate directly with legislators and committee members regarding Belle Isle's priorities and funding requests.

After discussion, Vice Mayor Lowell moved to select and approve Gray Robinson as the City of Belle Isle lobbyist and instructed City Manager to contract with them and bring the contract back for council approval.

Comm Lance seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.

- b. Update on amending the Comprehensive Plan to amend the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan version date.
CM Rudometkin reported an update regarding an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan related to the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan version date. He explained that last year the Council approved the Comprehensive Plan update, which included a regional water supply plan amendment prepared and presented by RVI. He stated that the City recently received correspondence from the St. Johns River Water Management District requesting minor revisions to the adopted plan. Specifically, the requested amendment updates the schedule dates in Policy 5.1.1 and Exhibit A of the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan from 2025–2034 to 2026–2035. He noted that no substantive changes are being made to the water supply plan itself, and all other portions of the plan will remain the same. However, the City is required to complete the formal amendment process again, including review by the Planning and Zoning Board at the end of the month, followed by two ordinance readings before the Council in June.

8. Attorney's Report - na

9. City Manager's Report

a. City Manager's Report and Work Plan

CM Rudometkin provided an update on the City Manager's Report and Work Plan. He reported that the City has officially received reimbursement from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Soul Avenue stormwater project. The reimbursement totaled approximately \$196,000 and will be returned to the Stormwater Fund, as the project was funded through a stormwater grant for improvements on Cove and Soul Avenue. He noted that the project is now complete, fully signed off, and the funds have been received. He also provided an update regarding pending reimbursement related to Hurricane Irma expenses. He stated that the City is still awaiting FEMA reimbursement of approximately \$140,000 and that the process has been delayed due to more recent storm events and FEMA's backlog. He noted that the City has completed all required submissions and continues to monitor the status of the reimbursement request. Additionally, the City submitted a revised scope of work for the Hoffner Avenue Department of Transportation grant project because the original project costs exceeded available funding. Staff reviewed the project needs and revised the scope to focus primarily on sidewalk improvements and crosswalk enhancements, including the possible addition of elevated crosswalks pending County approval. The City is currently awaiting review and approval of the revised project scope.

In response to a Council question regarding Hurricane Ian reimbursement, CM Rudometkin stated that the City continues to follow up monthly with FEMA regarding the outstanding application. He explained that FEMA has provided only general status updates indicating the documentation is still under review, but the City will continue pursuing the reimbursement and does not intend to withdraw the application.

b. Chief's Report

Chief Grimm provided an update regarding the Hansel Avenue traffic study previously discussed by Council. He reported that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has approved a project for the area, including the addition of a school zone on Hansel Avenue. He explained that FDOT conducted the study through a consultant, who evaluated the area and provided recommendations to FDOT for approval. Chief Grimm stated that staff plans to coordinate with FDOT and attempt to have a representative or consultant attend a future meeting to explain the proposed improvements and changes to the roadway project.

Chief Grimm also reported that the recent DEA Drug Take Back event was successful, with a large quantity of medications collected. He noted that the City plans to continue partnering events together to increase participation and encourage additional public outreach and promotion for future community events. Additionally, Chief Grimm noted that the school year is nearing completion, with schools expected to finish by the end of May. He advised residents to remain aware of increased activity involving children and families throughout the summer months.

c. Public Works Report

Phil Price, Public Works Director, reported that they are preparing to begin a stormwater improvement project on St. Regis. This project involves lining an existing storm pipe that has experienced damage. The purpose of the work is to improve water flow and reduce street flooding. The project is expected to begin and be completed within the next two to three weeks. In addition, we will be starting seasonal tree trimming across multiple districts. Our contractor will be working through the areas in stages, focusing first on the locations with the most urgent needs. We are currently evaluating which areas are in the worst condition. Compared to previous years, when we were only able to address one or two districts, we are now in a position to cover more ground, potentially all districts, as resources allow. Finally, we are working on relocating a statue to City Hall.

The City Manager reported that Commissioner Gold had raised concerns regarding parking issues at the strip malls along Conway Road, particularly during larger events hosted by some businesses in the area. He stated that staff is working to address the issue by reaching out to the property management company, and the Police Department will also speak with one of the vendors hosting larger events to discuss possible solutions to improve parking availability and access for residents and visitors.

10. Mayor's Report

Mayor Carson reported that he met with Rick, Mr. Price, and several residents at Trimble Park to discuss the installation of benches in the dog park area. The benches are intended to provide seating for residents while their dog's play. The area is frequently used, and several residents have requested seating. At the most recent council meeting, there were about six or seven residents present in support of the idea. The staff will move forward with planning this project. Mr. Price is currently working on bench options and pricing. The goal is to place the benches in shaded areas so they can be used comfortably, especially during the summer months. Mayor Carson also acknowledges the recent tree trimming work in the area. The cleanup was done well, with debris properly gathered rather than left scattered. However, he received several resident calls about it but overall, the work appears to have been handled appropriately.

Mayor Carson reminds everyone to stay hydrated and be mindful of children around water. A recent state House bill was passed to provide funding assistance for drowning prevention, including swimming lessons for children. Drowning remains one of the leading causes of death for young children in Florida, so this is an important public safety initiative. If families need assistance, funding is available to help cover swimming lessons. He thanked PD, Public Works, City Hall staff, and the commissioners for all of their continued work and support for the city.

11. Commissioners' Report

Commissioner Lowell reminded all that our police officers are out working in the heat every day while carrying an additional 25 pounds or more of equipment. If you are able, consider donating a few cases of bottled water to the police department. Even small contributions are greatly appreciated and help support our officers while they serve the community during the hotter months.

Comm Shuck thanked the police department for staying on top of the cut-through traffic occurring in the neighborhoods, particularly in District 3, while the county continues work on Gondola Drive. Several residents had posted concerns on Facebook asking why something was not being done about the traffic. Shortly afterward, other residents commented that they had already seen police officers in the area conducting traffic stops and monitoring the situation. I appreciate the department's efforts and responsiveness to those concerns. He also asked if the staff can explore whether there is a way to organize or sort the city's email blast system by commission district. There are times when information may only apply to residents in a specific district, and it would be helpful to communicate directly with those residents without sending the message citywide.

12. Adjournment

There being no further items for discussion, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn, passed unanimously at 7:15 pm.