

Town of Melbourne Beach

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING September 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. COMMUNITY CENTER – 509 OCEAN AVENUE

MINUTES

Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members:

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Attorney Ryan Knight
Town Clerk Amber Brown

1. Call to Order

Mayor Alison Dennington called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Clerk Amber Brown

3. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Mayor Alison Dennington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public Comments – 1:09

After being acknowledged by the Mayor, members of the public should state their name and address for the record. The Commission encourages citizens to prepare their comments in advance. Each individual will have three (3) minutes to address the Commission on any topic(s) related to Town business, not on the Agenda.

Pat Scordino – 500 Harland Ave – Spoke at a Commission meeting 2 years ago about paving issues and storm drain issues related to Harland Ave. The road is failing, lower the speed limit, and make it a no-through traffic road. Nothing has been done in two years. Would like the concerns to be addressed and she does not see anything in the budget for it.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the engineering is being done for basin 1 which would include that area. This has been going on for months because it is a big area. After the engineering is done then the Town can go out for grants because the project might cost up to 4 million dollars. The project will include paving, storm drains, outlets, etc. The process will begin in 2025.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about how the project was funded in that budget, however, it opened a can of worms that has shown a lot of major issues involving multiple roads. The project has significantly evolved. Additionally, emergency projects such as Cherry collapsing popped up.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about this year's budget included putting \$500,000.00 into stormwater. Asked about the status of the engineering and scheduling another public workshop.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about there being a lot of pipework that needs to be done, so it will be done in phases. Can look into scheduling another public workshop.

Gail Gowdy - 215 Ash Ave – Asked when was the stormwater workshop.

Alison Dennington spoke about it being around March or April.

5. Public Hearings – 14:42

A. Public Hearing on the Town's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 (FY25) Millage Rate and Annual Budget – Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how nothing has changed since the last vote.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about receiving the vacancy rate data from the Police Chief and she calculated the vacancy rate over the last 5 years as 4.68% which is pretty low. The national average in police departments is around 30%. She will be voting against it because we do not need additional officers, and we should be lowering taxes. Spoke about an AGO opinion regarding needing 2 officers on at all times. As long as you have

mutual aid agreements then you are not in violation. The Town has mutual aid agreements with Indialantic and Brevard County.

Commissioner Marivi Walker spoke about the national average would include large cities like Minneapolis and Chicago which are not comparable to Melbourne Beach.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the priority is safety.

Bruce Larson – 1507 Pine St – Spoke about nowadays it is not ok to be alone because no mutual aid agreement is going to be fast enough. Two people in separate vehicles. You cannot determine if another officer is needed without knowing how many shifts an officer is working alone. Single shifts are not okay. Is there not a lot of overtime because they are doing single shifts? Approve the money, but prior to hiring get the data. There are 4 line items that can get this budget back to the rollback rate. There are errors in the budget.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about there not being a lot of money in overtime.

Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash Ave – Spoke about being concerned because there is no backup and thinks there are still mistakes. The Town Manager and Police Chief presented incorrect information about how many officers were in Indialantic and Satellite and there is no data to back the information. How can the Commission make a decision without backup?

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the numbers that were presented for the other departments were for the entire department not just the officers.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about not thinking there is enough justification for the budget, and that hiring another officer would be violating the Town Charter and Code because it requires a referendum.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about the Town Attorney already providing an opinion and does not think police department staffing needs to go to a referendum.

Ronaldo Dovale – 215 Ash Ave – Spoke about previous years the budget was not approved until the last few days in September, so there is still time to approve the budget later.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about how there are legal advertising notices that need to be done, and we are at the very end of the deadline.

Mayor Alison Dennington read section 15.1 and spoke about the Town not complying with the minimum requirements. Spoke about there is not enough justification to support adding officers.

Recess 6:37 – 6:39

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie
Commissioner Corey Runte
Commissioner Marivi Walker

Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Clerk Amber Brown

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about if the reason for adding officers is due to having a hard time with retention then where is the data? If the reason is there are shifts with only one person working then where is the data? This budget has never provided the bare minimum justification.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about the Police Chief did a presentation, provided documentation, emailed the Commission, and had a meeting with each Commissioner as to why he needed the additional officers. Safety is the biggest issue, but there has also been a large increase in traffic. In favor of 2 additional officers, unsure about having an additional code enforcement officer. If you look at pages 1-7 and the exhibits everything is in the budget, and believes we have met the requirements.

Commissioner Marivi Walker spoke about being fine with the information she has received.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about information she received from the Police Chief. Tonight there will only be one officer from midnight to 5:00 am, and on average 10-30 times per month there is a single officer and it is always that night shift from midnight to 5:00 am.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the data and how the information is supposed to be given to the public, it is the taxpayer's money and the information needs to be given to them so they can understand it. The police department is the largest chunk of our budget. If there is a justification it needs to be in the budget. Believes it violates the Town Charter. There are a lot of people in Town who would like to get rid of the police force.

Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie spoke about the Police Chief presented everything during a public workshop. During that meeting, she asked the Police Chief if he needed anything additional to cover the expenses of any additional officers, and he said no, any expenses are included in the proposed budget.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about not receiving the single-shift data. Received anecdotal data that is not true. What additional trainings need to be done every month with all of the shifts? Law of diminishing return.

Steve Walters – 416 Sixth Ave – Spoke about the Mayor wasting her time because it sounds like they already have their decisions made. It sounds like the Commission wants to wait until after the election.

Mayor Alison Dennington passed the gavel.

Mayor Alison Dennington made a motion to remove the extra officer from the budget, and next year we can get the data if we need it, and add it back in;

Motion failed for a lack of second

6. New Business

- A. Resolution 2024-08, Adopting the Final Millage Rate for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 – Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro – 53:36

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MELBOURNE BEACH OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adopt Resolution 2024-08 setting the final operating millage rate for fiscal year 2024-2025 at 4.4770 mills, which is greater than the rollback rate of 4.2798 by 4.608%, and setting the final debt service millage rate for fiscal year 2024-2025 at .2350 mills.; Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie seconded;

Bruce Larson – 1507 Pine St – Spoke about passing the budget, but continue working on the budget anywhere there is conflict.

Roll Call Vote by Town Clerk

Mayor Alison Dennington – Nay
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie – Aye
Commissioner Corey Runte – Aye
Commissioner Marivi Walker – Aye

Resolution 2024-08 carried by a vote of 3-1 with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.

- B. Resolution 2024-09, Adopting the Final Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 – Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro – 1:00:02

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MELBOURNE BEACH OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adopt Resolution 2024-09 setting forth the appropriations and revenue estimate for the final budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 in the amount of \$4,582,113; Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie seconded;

Roll Call Vote by Town Clerk

Mayor Alison Dennington – Nay
Vice Mayor Sherri Quarrie – Aye
Commissioner Corey Runte – Aye
Commissioner Marivi Walker – Aye

Resolution 2024-09 carried by a vote of 3-1 with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adjourn; Commissioner Marivi Walker seconded; Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.

ATTEST:



**Alison Dennington
Mayor**



**Amber Brown, CMC
Town Clerk**

