

MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Special Meeting of The City Council

March 18, 2025

A Special City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

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

Councilmember Hearn provided the invocation, and Councilmember Koss led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Patricia Weeks	Deputy Mayor (via phone)
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lavander Hearn	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Kristin Eick	City Attorney (via phone)
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Monica Arsenault	City Clerk

ABSENT:

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Abby Morgan, Public Works Director; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Evander Collier, Police Chief; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Samantha Senger, Communications and Economic Development Director; Lorne Stinnett, Human

Resources Manager; Robert Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Jennifer Webster, Planner; and Corbin Gilbert, Jr. Systems Administrator.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. Agenda: Special Meeting of March 18, 2025. (2025-167).

* **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve the agenda for the Special City Council meeting of March 18, 2025 as written.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Minutes: (a) Regular Meeting of January 28, 2025. (2025-168).

* **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to approve the minutes for the Regular City Council meeting of January 28, 2025 as written.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Awards and Presentations:

1. Finance Professionals' Week Proclamation. (2025-178). (Finance Director).

Councilmember Hearn read the proclamation into the record.

2. Women's History Month Proclamation. (2025-226). (Deputy Mayor Weeks).

Councilmember Koss read the proclamation into the record.

IV. Delegations:

Aleck Greenwood, 640 Brevard Ave., Cocoa, spoke about the new security guard service that has started in downtown Melbourne. He shared an article with the Council.

V. Consent Agenda:

1. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY 2025 Budget, BAF 25-038-A&T to Reconcile the Match and Grant Portion of Fiske Blvd. Complete Streetscape Project. (2025-156). (Finance Director).
2. Approve a Resolution Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget by way of BAF 25-045-IFT (1-3) to shore up the Inter-Fund Transfers Across all Funds/Departments. (2025-216). (Finance Director)
3. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY 2025 Budget, BAF# 25-044-A1&A2, to shore up Assigned Fund Balance Projects (AFBP) 21 and 22. (2025-217) (Finance Director).
4. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY 2025 Budget, BAF 25-027-A and T to Shore Up City Grants and Solid Waste Expenses. (2025-220). (Finance Director)
5. Approve BAF-046-PT for the funding of design for the West Central Avenue Watermain Relocation Project. Approve TO #2025-4 in the amount of \$150,232 to McKim and Creed using Continuing Service Agreement Q-23-12-COC-C for the engineering design of West Central Avenue Watermain Relocation Project. The estimated construction cost for this project is \$576,182.50. (2025-221). (Utilities Director)
6. Approve the date change for the Space Coast Classic Runners 15k and 2miler race. (2025-223). (Comm. & Economic Dev. Director)
7. Approve Aggregation of Lots (Unity of Title) for Oxbow Circle, Lots 7 & 8. (2025-229). (Planner)
8. Approve the Aggregation of Lots (Unity of Title) for Oxbow Circle, Lot 26 & 27. (2025-228). (Planner)
9. Request Council to approve the Cocoa Police Department to enter in a MOA with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). (2025-235). (Police Chief)
10. Approve BAF#25-043-T for Brightly Software (SBITA) Account Correction, in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements. Approve a Resolution Amending the Budget for future GASS 87 Leases and GASS 96 Multi-Year Service-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA), within the City Managers Signing Authority. (2025-177). (Chief Technology Officer)
11. Request approval for a multi-year agreement between the City of Cocoa and Parrish Medical Center for Occupational Health Services effective March 18, 2025,

through March 17, 2028, and authorize the City Manager to execute any renewal terms per agreement. (2025-232). (Administrative Services Director)

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve the Consent agenda.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. Public Hearings:

VII. Council Business:

1. Consider the Appointment of Joseph Bachand, Russell Sengel or Keith Wall to Fill One Regular Member Vacancy and One Alternate Member Vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Board. (2025-152). (Administrative Services Director)

The City Council submitted their voting ballot forms to the City Clerk.

The City Clerk tallied the vote and determined that the top ranked nominee is Russell Sengel and the second-place nominee is Joseph Bachand. As Joseph Bachand is already an Alternate member, the Council determined that Keith Wall will fulfill the 2nd Alternate member position.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Hearn to appoint Russell Sengel as a Regular member and Keith Wall as an Alternate member.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Council Approval to Apply for a Phase 2 - Construction Grant Waterway Assistance Program (WAP) Grant Through the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for the Construction of a New Docking System and Riprap Revetment to Replace and Protect the Day Slips That Were Destroyed by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Located at the Cocoa Waterfront. Approve Resolution #2025-XXX. Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Grant Application. (2025-192). (Public Works Director)

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to apply for a Phase 2 Construction Waterway Assistance Program (WAP) Grant Through the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for the Construction of a New Docking System and Riprap Revetment to Replace and Protect the Day Slips That Were Destroyed by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Located at the Cocoa Waterfront; to approve Resolution #2025-020; and authorize the City Manager to Execute the Grant Application.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VIII. City Business:

1. Approve the FY 2024-2025 HOME Disbursement Agreement between the City of Cocoa and Brevard County in the amount of \$401,671.98. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY25 Budget, BAF#25-047-A for the current Allocation. (2025-139). (Community Services Director)

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Hearn to approve the FY 2024-2025 HOME Disbursement Agreement between the City of Cocoa and Brevard County in the amount of \$401,671.98. Approve a Resolution Amending the FY25 Budget, BAF#25-047-A for the current Allocation.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Request Council approval to contribute \$1,216.00 for Major Abby Sweetwine sign to be located in the Habitat for Humanity Female Veteran's Village in Diamond Square CRA. Authorize the City Manager to approve the budget adjustment for the amount approved by Council, on the monthly Budget Adjustment Cleanup. (2025-224). (Community Services Director)

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to approve a contribution of \$1,216.00 for Major Abby Sweetwine's sign to be located in the Habitat for Humanity Female Veteran's Village in Diamond Square**

CRA; Authorize the City Manager to approve the budget adjustment for the amount approved by Council, on the monthly Budget Adjustment Cleanup.

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

3. Direction regarding fluoridation of the Potable Water System. (2025-231). (City Manager)

Mayor Blake opened the discussion up to the audience.

Dr. Jane Benton, Merritt Island resident, shared that she is a doctor, parent and citizen. She talked about the importance of fluoride in the water and its benefits. She explained that fluoride can be safe at an appropriate level and serves as a benefit to dental and overall health. The removal of it may result in dental disease for those who cannot afford to see a dentist.

John Niland, 160 Sea Spray Lane, Orchid, FL, shared that he has been advocating for the removal of fluoride from drinking water for several years. He talked about HHS's determination that fluoride is a threat to human health. He talked about the dangers of adding fluoride to water and the dangers it poses to children. Additionally, several other cities have voted to remove fluoride from their drinking water and he hopes this Council will vote to do the same.

Dr. Mary Bruno, 1519 Clearlake Rd., Cocoa, shared that she is an educator at Eastern Florida State College and teaches a dental program there. She talked about the benefits of adding fluoride to water, particularly among children and lower income families to prevent tooth decay. She talked about a study that was done in Juno, Alaska in 2007. They removed fluoride from their drinking water and saw a significant increase in dental related procedures following its removal. She asked Council to consider voting in favor of it.

Erin Dady, 3163 Dunhill Dr., Cocoa, is a mother and wants to protect her children. She has done some research and feels that it poses a threat to her family and would like to ask Council to consider voting against it.

Dr. Gerry Bird, Rockledge resident, has lived in the area for many years, but talked about his hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is the first place to begin adding fluoride in water. He explained that unfortunately, over the last five to ten

years, several poorly conducted studies have come from other countries and are misleading. He believes that fluoride has many health benefits, especially for young people, and would like Council to consider voting in favor of it.

Michael Hosking, 5600 Porada Dr., Viera, and President of Brevard County Dental Society, is here to support water fluoridation. He talked about the importance of fluoride and pointed out that if the recommended levels of fluoride are followed, it is safe for consumption. He shared that their executive board held a meeting and while not everyone is in support of fluoride in drinking water, the majority was in favor of it.

Dr. Yoshita Patel Hosking, 5600 Porada Dr., Viera, talked about the importance of fluoride and the benefits of it for children. She shared that she is a mother and owns a dental office in Viera. She noted that every few months she receives a flyer from her children's school asking for basic hygiene items for donation because there are a lot of students who cannot afford these basic items. These items include toothbrushes and toothpaste. She encouraged Council to vote in favor of the fluoride to help prevent tooth decay and promote overall dental hygiene.

Susan Antoon, 1281 Florida Ave., Rockledge, talked about the benefits of fluoridation. Water fluoridation will affect so many people in such a positive way and will help the greater good. She noted that she is the oldest of six children and grew up drinking fluorinated water with her siblings. She added that she has never had a cavity and hopes Council will vote in favor of it.

Dr. Jim Antoon, 1281 Florida Ave., Rockledge, retired dentist and lifelong Brevard resident, talked about years of evidence that have proven the benefits of fluoride. He asked Council to base their decision on fact and not fear. He provided a list of organizations that are in support of healthy amounts of water fluoridation, and talked about several groups that are not in favor of it. He shared his work experience and feels that if fluoride is removed it will be detrimental, especially to children. He asked Council to consider voting in its favor.

Stel Bailey shared her background and what she advocates for. She spoke about the dangers of fluoride and asked Council to do their due diligence on the different types of fluoride before making a final decision.

Dr. Warren Edwards, Viera resident, is a practicing dentist of 47 years. In the early years of his career, he was very supportive of fluoridated water because that is how he was trained. When he began studying mercury, he began learning more about fluoride and its negative effects on the human body. He asked Council to

consider using the money they will save on fluoridation on overall public health instead.

Dr. Lexi Herbeck, Merritt Island resident, thanked everyone, regardless of their point of view, for participating in this conversation because it shows that they care. She noted that while the internet can be helpful at times, it can also appear as a sheep in wolf's clothing. She talked about the studies that have been done that are not in favor of water fluoridation and pointed out that none of those studies were conducted in the United States. She asked Council to consider voting in favor of it.

Angela McKnight, Satellite Beach resident, shared she is an orthodontist and asked Council to consider voting in favor of water fluoridation as it is a low-cost measure that positively affects many.

Caron McCullough, Melbourne resident, thanked Council for hearing public input. She shared several reasons why she does not believe fluoride is beneficial, and does not agree with mass medicating. Additionally, by fluoridating the water, the general public has no control over how much they do or do not receive in their drinking water. She asked Council to consider voting against it.

Dr. Gary Herbeck, Merritt Island resident, thanked Council for the opportunity to speak. He shared that his dental office is in Merritt Island and shared his credentials. He has spent many years reading over research, trying to determine what information is scientifically sound in regard to the benefits or negative side effects of fluoride. Over his many years of research, he determined that the articles that were published that were not in favor of fluoride were not entirely written based on scientifically proven data. He asked Council to vote in favor of water fluoridation.

Dr. Gail Isles, Rockledge resident, provided her analysis of the item this evening. She pointed out that she is in favor of water fluoridation, and talked about how much it costs to have the correct equipment to monitor the appropriate and safe levels of fluoride in the drinking water.

There being no further questions or comments, Mayor Blake closed the discussion to the public.

City Manager Whitten explained that staff is seeking direction from Council to either cease water fluoridation or purchase the equipment needed to safely monitor water fluoridation.

Councilmember Hearn shared that he is in favor of water fluoridation, however if there is a pushback from the State he does not want to spend the money on expensive equipment if they will ultimately demand that municipalities cease the addition of fluoride in the water. He added that he is willing to table this item until after the legislative session in Tallahassee to see what will happen.

Deputy Mayor Weeks shared that she is also in favor of fluoridating the water and has grown up drinking fluoridated water. She does not believe that it is a threat to human health at this time and is in favor of continuing it, however she is also not opposed to tabling the item if Council decides to do so.

Mr. Walsh clarified that when Cocoa fluoridated the water the levels were under the recommended amount, approximately 0.55 parts per million.

Mayor Blake shared that he is also in favor of fluoridated water. If people do not want to drink Cocoa water, they could alternatively drink bottled water.

Councilmember Koss thanked everyone for coming out and providing their input. She pointed out that several years ago Mr. Niland had come to Council to ask them to stop fluoridating the water. At that time, she was waiting for a ruling to come in, and now it has.

City Attorney Eick offered to provide some clarification. She presented the background of the ruling and explained the Court order.

Councilmember Koss shared that she is not opposed to tabling the item. She noted that bottled water and water filters can become expensive. She is aware that the optimal dosage of fluoride in drinking water is being reconsidered and would like to wait to see what the outcome of that will be before Council makes a decision.

Councilmember Goins stated that he is in favor of water fluoridation. He thanked everyone for coming to offer their input and for reaching out to Council with their comments and concerns. This issue has caused him to do a lot of research that he possibly may not have done before. He added that he is also not opposed to tabling the item tonight if Council would like to hold off on a decision.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to direct staff to continue the fluoridation capital project which will continue the practice of fluoridation of the potable water system by using 0.7 parts per million, with discussion.**

Councilmember Hearn reiterated that he is hesitant to move forward with committing such a large amount of money to this equipment if the State decides to ban it.

Deputy Mayor Weeks pointed out that this will take time and will not happen overnight. This vote will allow staff to move forward, however if anything changes then they can re-evaluate at that time.

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn

NAYES: Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED (4-1)

IX. Informational Agenda:

1. FY 2025 February Budget Adjustment Report. (2025-210). (Finance Director)
2. In accordance with City Code, Section 2-74, at the beginning of each month during the fiscal year, the City Manager shall submit to City Council data showing the relation between the estimated and actual income and expenses to date. (2025-211). (Finance Director)
3. In accordance with the Financial Operations Manual (FOM) the City Manager shall submit to City Council in the form of an agenda item any approved change orders to construction contracts that the City Council has authorized the City Manager, by resolution, to approve in excess of the City Manager's spending authority. (2025-212). (Finance Director)
4. Informational Only - The City of Cocoa's Open Board Vacancies. (2025-227). (Administrative Services Director)
5. Bi-Weekly Report for February 21 - March 13, 2025. (2025-230). (Administrative Services Director)

X. Reports:

Ms. Senger spoke about three upcoming events on April 5th. Trash Bash with Keep Brevard Beautiful will kick off at 8am, and there will be an Arbor Day Plants Sale and a Book Sale in the Village beginning at 10am. Everyone can meet at Riverfront Park.

Chief Collier also shared that he is hosting a Chief's Breakfast from 7am-9am on April 29th at the Cocoa Civic Center.

Deputy Mayor Weeks shared that since she had to leave town so quickly and unexpectedly, she did not have time to prepare a report for this evening.

Councilmember Koss shared that she will be holding her community meeting next Tuesday at Orchid Lakes for anyone who is interested in attending.

Councilmember Goins shared photos from several events he recently attended. Councilmember Hearn also talked about events he's been able to attend over the last few weeks.

Mayor Blake also shared photos from several events he recently attended.

XI. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to adjourn the Special meeting of March 18, 2025.**

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:



Monica Arsenault, CMC, City Clerk



