City of Marathon
City Council Workshop Minutes
September 22, 2026 5:30 pm City Council Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER - A Special Call Meeting of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on September 22, 2026, in the Marathon Council Chambers, 9805 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, Florida, Mayor Del Gaizo called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL - There were present:

Councilmember Landry

Councilmember Matlock

Councilmember Still

Vice Mayor Struyf

Mayor Del Gaizo, comprising a quorum.

Also, in attendance were:

City Attorney/City Manager, Steve Williams

Deputy City Clerk, Mariah Muino

Deputy City Manager, Brian Bradley

Planning Director, Brian Shea

Finance Director, Jennifer Johnson

Senior Planner, Dan Gilizio

HR Director, Evie Engelmeyer

Code Director, Ted Lozier

City Engineer, Carlos Solis

Parks Director, Scott Williamson

Deputy Utilities Director, Libby Soldano

Marina Director, Sean Cannon

Public Works Director, Paul Bartnik

Grants Coordinator, Maria Covelli

MCSO Capt. Derek Paul

Fire Rescue Chief Rogers

Approval Of Agenda and Consent Agenda

MOTION: Still moved to approve the agenda.
SECOND: Struyf

With no objection from the members of the Council, Mayor Landry declared the agenda approved by unanimous consent.

Final Public hearing to adopt tentative budget and millage rate:

Johnson presented the proposed FY 2026-2027 budget. The proposed millage rate was 2.3231 mills, 18.82% above the 1.9552 rollback rate. She explained that the General Fund was already projected to deficit spend approximately $2 million and that the deficit could approach $4 million without a tax increase. Revenue adjustments included $100,000 in additional EMS revenue, $135,000 in additional Code revenue, and a 20% increase in parking fees, bringing projected General Fund revenue to approximately $23.75 million. Johnson explained that 2.1507 mills would be 10% above rollback and would provide approximately 11 months of reserves, compared with the City's 12-month target, while still resulting in approximately $2.3 million in deficit spending. Councilmembers expressed concern about the size of the tax increase and discussed reducing the increase to approximately 7%. The Council also discussed the 3.8% COLA, the 2% merit budget, employee performance reviews, and whether compensation adjustments could be structured to provide greater benefit to lower-paid employees. The Council continued discussion regarding COLA and merit increases. Landry explained that the City's practice had been to use the June CPI rate, and staff explained that the difference between 3.4% and 3.8% was approximately $20,300 for eligible employees. Councilmembers discussed maintaining the 3.8% COLA while looking for reductions elsewhere. The Council reviewed the merit program and performance evaluation process. Hr Director Engelmeyer explained that supervisors complete performance reviews, which are reviewed by administration before being provided to employees. The Council also discussed the $500,000 Capital Infrastructure Fund. Johnson clarified that the fund is supported by discretionary sales tax revenue rather than property taxes.

Johnson explained that the City's Key Colony Beach EMS calculation is generally based on projected actual costs from the prior fiscal year. Based on projected FY2026 actuals, the payment would increase approximately $125,949; using the FY2027 budget would result in an increase of approximately $279,356. Councilmembers supported bringing Key Colony Beach current on its share of EMS costs and reviewing the interlocal agreement annually. Fire Chief Rogers explained that Marathon would continue providing mutual aid when the County was unavailable because Marathon is approximately three to four minutes away compared with approximately ten minutes or more from the County station. Mutual-aid responses would not generate payment to the City.
By consensus, the Council supported the approximately $125,949 increase and requested that the agreement return for review in October.

The Council continued discussing reductions necessary to bring the millage increase closer to 7%. Council also discussed professional services, vehicles, staffing, departmental expenditures, and the Moffner budget, with a potential $50,000 reduction discussed. Councilmembers emphasized the

need to reduce the projected deficit while maintaining necessary services. The Council also discussed future costs associated with the deep well project and potential funding through rates, assessments, or other sources.

Public Comment:

Daniel Samess - representing the Greater Marathon Chamber of Commerce, urged the Council to reduce the proposed tax increase and noted concerns regarding the rising cost of living and doing business. He encouraged the Council to review expenditures and reduce costs for property owners and tenants.

Andrew Leird - a Marathon resident, spoke in opposition to the proposed 18% increase and expressed support for a lower increase.

Mike Millard - presented an analysis of the City's budget and identified areas he believed warranted additional review, including Information Technology, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, General Services, EMS, revenue projections, and investment earnings. He suggested that expenditure reductions and additional revenue could reduce the projected deficit.

Jeff Smith- discussed historical budget-to-actual spending, staffing levels, employee compensation, and departmental efficiency. He encouraged the Council to review staffing and expenditures in relation to current workloads.

Ben Daughtry - encouraged the Council to reduce expenses and review staffing, vehicles, and other costs. He also noted that tax increases affect businesses, homeowners, and renters.

Following public comment Council discussed the projected deficit and the relationship between the millage rate, expenditure reductions and considered 7%, 6%, and 5% millage options and discussed the additional reductions that would be required at each level. Council discussed the City Attorney budget and a proposal to reduce it by approximately $100,000. Williams cautioned that a significant reduction could affect the City's ability to obtain qualified legal services. Councilmembers also discussed future City Attorney staffing and agreed to leave the budgeted salary amount unchanged at that time. Council then discussed staffing levels, City vehicles, departmental workloads, and whether additional savings could be achieved without reducing essential services. Revenue sources were also reviewed, including Code enforcement and parking revenues. Williams explained that increased Code revenue could not necessarily be relied upon indefinitely because improved compliance could reduce future revenue.

Council continued reviewing the impact of various millage rates and expressed concern about both the tax burden and the projected deficit. Johnson explained that a 6% increase would result in a millage rate of approximately 2.0727 mills, approximately 11 months of reserves, and a projected spending deficit of approximately $2.564 million. Councilmembers discussed whether additional reductions could bring the millage rate to 6% or 5% and also discussed the City's previous compensation increases following COVID-19, including COLA and merit adjustments, and the need to respond to the City's current financial position.

Johnson read Resolution 2026-92 into the record: Resolution 2026-92, a resolution of the City of Marathon, Florida, adopting the final millage rate and levy of ad valorem taxes for the City of Marathon of Monroe County, Florida, for fiscal year 2026-2027, providing for an effective date.

Johnson read section two of the resolution into the record: The fiscal year 2026-2027 final millage rate for the City of Marathon is 2.0927 mills, which is $2.0927 per $1,000 of taxable assessed value, and the final millage rate is greater than the rollback rate of 1.9552 mills by 7.03%

MOTION: Still
SECOND: Struyf

Vote of the Motion:
Yes: Still, Struyf
No: Landry, Mattlock
Absent: None
Abstain: None
Vote on the Motion: 2 Yes, 2 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

Mayor Del Gaizo did not vote, stating that four affirmative votes were required for passage. Resolution 2026-92 failed.

Council continued discussion of the millage rate and the projected budget deficit. Johnson explained that a 5% increase would result in a millage rate of approximately 2.0527 mills and a projected spending deficit of approximately $2.67 million. A 5.5% increase would result in a millage rate of 2.0627 mills and a projected spending deficit of approximately $2.617 million. Councilmembers discussed the City's reserve policy and the importance of maintaining approximately one year of reserves due to the City's vulnerability to hurricanes and the time required to receive FEMA reimbursements. Johnson noted that after Hurricane Irma, the General Fund became negative within approximately 20 days, reinforcing the importance of maintaining adequate reserves. Williams noted that the City had increased from approximately 112 full-time equivalent employees in 2022 to approximately 143 in 2025, in part due to bringing certain services in-house. Council discussed the need to continue reducing expenditures and avoiding placing the entire burden on taxpayers. Some Councilmembers expressed support for a 5.5% increase and directed staff to continue identifying potential departmental reductions while recognizing the difficulty of addressing the deficit in future years. Council ultimately discussed maintaining the same millage rate as the prior year, which would result in an overall increase of approximately 5.52% due to changes in taxable property values. Johnson stated that the resulting millage rate would be 2.0631 mills, compared to the rollback rate of 1.9552 mills, representing a 5.52% increase over rollback.

Johnson read Resolution 2026-92 into the record: Resolution 2026-92, a resolution of the City of Marathon, Florida, adopting the final millage rate and levy of ad valorem taxes for the City of Marathon of Monroe County, Florida, for fiscal year 2026-2027, providing for an effective date.

Johnson read section two of the resolution into the record: The fiscal year 2026-2027 final millage rate for the City of Marathon is 2.0631 mills, which is $2.0631 for each $1,000 of taxable assessed value. The final millage rate is greater than the rollback rate of 1.9552 mills by 5.52%
MOTION: Still
SECOND: Struyf

Vote of the Motion:
Yes: Still, Struyf, Mattlock, Del Gaizo
No: Landry
Absent: None
Abstain: None
Vote on the Motion: 4 Yes, 1 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

Johnson read Resolution 2026-93 into the record: Resolution 2026-93, a resolution of the City of Marathon, Florida, adopting the final budget for fiscal year 2026-2027, authorizing the expenditure of funds established by the budget and providing for an effective date.

MOTION: Still
SECOND: Mattlock

Vote of the Motion:
Yes: Still, Struyf, Mattlock, Del Gaizo
No: Landry
Absent: None
Abstain: None
Vote on the Motion: 4 Yes, 1 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

Council Comments:

Still - thanked staff and the public for participating in the budget process and acknowledged the need to continue addressing the budget deficit and controlling expenditures.

Matlock - noted that the city had added services and facilities in recent years, including parks, parking-related improvements, and the skate park, and stated that those additions require ongoing staffing and maintenance. He acknowledged that there may be opportunities to improve efficiency but stated that there was limited room remaining for reductions after reviewing the budget.

Del Gaizo - expressed concern regarding the condition of City streets and the need for future improvements but acknowledged the current economic environment and the need for the City to tighten expenditures and expressed confidence in City staff and stated that the Council would continue monitoring the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Del Gaizo adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the City Council Meeting of September 22, 2026.

Mariah Muino, Deputy City Clerk

10/14/26
Date