

City of Marathon
City Council Action Minutes
August 22, 2023 5:30 pm City Council Special Call Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER - A Meeting of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on August 22, 2023 in the Marathon Council Chambers, 9805 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, Florida, Mayor Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Gonzalez introduced Armand Messina, the President of the Contractors Association and asked to let him speak at the beginning of the agenda items.

Williams explained Councilmember Landry had already had travel plans before the special call meeting was scheduled and the Council needed to vote to allow Landry to participate remotely via Zoom.

MOTION: Smith moved to allow Councilmember Landry to attend and participate remotely.

SECOND: Still

Vote of the Motion:

Yes: Smith, Still, Matlock, Gonzalez

No: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Vote on the Motion: 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

ROLL CALL - There were present:

Councilmember Landry, attending via Zoom.

Councilmember Matlock

Councilmember Smith

Vice Mayor Still

Mayor Gonzalez, comprising a quorum.

Also, in attendance were:

City Manager, George Garrett

City Clerk, Diane Clavier

Attorney, Steve Williams

Planning Director, Brian Shea

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Finance Director, Jennifer Johnson

Public Works Director, Carlos Solis

Parks & Rec Director, Paul Davis

Deputy Utilities Director, Libby Soldano

Building Official, Gerard Roussin

Code Director, Ted Lozier

Marina Director, Sean Cannon

Grants Coordinator, Maria Covelli

Monroe County Sherriff's Office, Lt. Barrios

Fire Rescue Chief Johnson, Via Zoom

Amand Messina, President of the Contractors Association introduced himself and explained the issues with closing out permits the contractors were having. They had set a date of August 31st and Messina stated he wanted the meeting recorded. Messina stated he wanted to work out the issues the contractors were bringing up together. Messina went over his qualifications and informed everyone he owned three businesses in town: Sun Masters, Sun Masters Travel and AM Electric. Gonzalez asked that the Council be provided a recap of the meeting on the September 12th Council meeting. Messina commented that another complaint was the lines of communication and that the door into City Hall is locked. Williams explained that the insurance company wants it locked in active shooter situations and they are requiring that for staff safety.

Ordinance 2023-18, Amending City Of Marathon's Code of Ordinances Section 10-5 Titled "Establishment of Special Magistrate System and Code Compliance Board."; Providing For The Repeal Of All Ordinances Or Parts Thereof Found To Be In Conflict; Providing For Severability; Providing For Inclusion In The Code Of Ordinance And Providing For An Effective Date

Williams explained the direction to dissolve the Code board and explained with will also permit the option in the future to establish or dissolve via resolution in the future. Williams informed everyone the second hearing would be on September 12th.

MOTION: Still moved to approve Ordinance 2023-18

SECOND: Matlock

Vote of the Motion:

Yes: Still, Matlock, Landry, Smith, Gonzalez

No: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Vote on the Motion: 5 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

Level of Service Discussion – Shea explained the existing level of service conditions in our code that he considers and documents for development agreements and conditional uses. Shea informed everyone if we do not have a level of service, we do not issue a permit. Smith explained his concerns regarding water and wastewater capacity and would like to know where we need to make improvements in the future to our wastewater system and the costs. Garrett explained some of the permits and projects that were coming up. Smith also stated his concerns with larger hotels having six-bedroom units and impacts of future developments. Shea informed everyone he would pull the wastewater numbers and provide estimates.

Harbor Boat Ramp Discussion – Garrett explained staff would leave the following up to the Council:
Leave parking open or not.
On certain days to raise the fees for launching
Traffic flow/management

Still commented she felt the parking should remain closed and have a tiki hut with a picnic table for the neighborhood. Smith commented that to facilitate the ramp, he would like to keep some of the parking there. Gonzalez explained that there were only four parking spots, and it makes it difficult to maneuver, the flow is better with the parking closed. Matlock suggested getting rid of the two inner spots to make maneuvering easier and he would like the fees increased for some weekends. Landry commented that the parking was only supposed to be closed at peak times and he liked the idea of a pocket park for the children. Landry suggested limiting the size of the truck and trailer that can park there. Still commented that the ramp is supposed to be limited to under 3 axle trailers, but she sees them launching all the time. Landry asked Solis to ask the company if they can fine three axle trailers for launching. Solis explained it would be difficult to see if the trailers have more than three axles, but maybe another camera could be installed, and he would check with the company further. Garrett commented that when staff are managing the ramp on the weekends, we tell those with three axle trailers to move on. Smith commented that the Council needed more feedback from the residents who live there, and we could incentivize with higher rates on the weekends. Still commented we cannot raise the rates every weekend, it has to be busier times. Garrett commented we could close the ramps on the busier holidays, but we would need an ordinance revision.

Mark Senmartin – explained he owns vacation rentals next to the ramp and suggested parking should be kept closed and charge \$200 in and out for the ramp fees at the Harbor Drive Boat Ramp. Senmartin also commented that the traffic flow pattern was unsafe, and the ramp attendant should stack only three boats and send the rest down the road.

Garrett and Gonzalez commented that the traffic flow works, and Gonzalez asked if we have had conversations with the vendor if the fee could be a different price on certain days. Solis commented that he had not had that conversation, but he would speak with Flow Bird. Solis also commented that they are looking into a Spanish option for the meters.

Sara Matthis – questioned what the fee would be.

Still asked Williams if it was legally a possibility to change the fee at this ramp. Williams explained since we accepted a grant from FWC, they would have the right to review. A smaller fee for non-permanent hours would most likely be okay, but the higher/more often fee change would get more scrutiny explained Williams. Williams asked Solis to approach the firm to find out what their flexibility and dollar limits would be and report back at the September 12th meeting. Still and Gonzalez commented that we can wait until the 12th to make that decision. Smith commented he was fine with keeping the parking closed and having signage in English and Spanish and making the fee in the \$75 to \$100 range. Gonzalez suggested in and out for \$50 for \$100 total. Landry agreed with Gonzalez and suggested getting the information out to owners and agents of vacation rentals and having the agents forward to their tenants. Still suggested having the information sent to the vacation rentals with ramp information and fees. Matlock suggested also sending a list of dos and don'ts as someone he knows who cleans pools for vacation rentals has seen conch shells out of the water and suggested a map of how to get out of the canals.

Senmartin suggested a higher fee for the boat ramp to disincentivize the use of the Harbor Drive boat ramp, otherwise, you will not send anyone down the road.

Garrett informed everyone the parking area at the Harbor Drive boat ramp will be closed.

Vacation Rental Update – Lozier gave an overview of his written report and commented that a lot of the vacation rentals are ignoring the seven-night minimum stay rule. Smith questioned what we were working on for after hours and weekend issues. Garrett explained that we would have to create another emergency number for code calls, and for complaints they must identify themselves legally. Lozier commented that we do have an online complaint form. Gonzalez questioned what we were doing differently now to have so many code cases going to the special magistrate. Lozier responded additional staff, weekends, increased coordination, and familiarity with the computer program to catch unlicensed vacation rentals. Landry commented that sometimes it takes fines to get compliance and asked if we could send an email to every licensed vacation rental and use that platform to educate. Garrett responded that we have done that recently.

Capital Infrastructure and Budget Discussion – Johnson gave an overview of the budget, explaining the different funds, special revenue, debt service, capital projects and enterprise funds and commented that the CPI did go down to 6% in June and asked for direction on the COLA. Matlock commented that locals were struggling to live here, there are some people who make well past six figures, and we are losing people because they are struggling to live here.

Smith commented that there was not a business that gives 10% every year, the wage increase in South Florida is trending down, we are not that far out of whack and 6.9% is fair.

Landry agreed with Smith and suggested a higher CPI for lower paid workers and a merit raise for some.

Johnson commented that we could use the 6.9 percent June CPI or look at the number in September on the 13th when the August CPI is published.

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Still commented that we know what the COLA is here, we have to compete with other places and could lose quality employees and we are understaffed. Still asked Lozier how long the position was open that he just filled. Lozier responded it was posted in May of 2022.

Gonzalez commented that Johnson could move to 6.9% plus merit pay. Gonzalez informed everyone the school board is taking very good care of their employees. Smith stated he would like to look at the number in September. Johnson explained that she needed to advertise a number. Gonzalez stated he was good with 6.9%. It could be 8.2 if they get merit increase as well.

The Mayor called for speakers.

Diane Scott – commented that Jesse Hobbs park does not have a fence or tiki hut that was budgeted last year. The church windows are broken, and the City won't replace them, and she would like a pavilion at the park.

Landry commented he was okay with the 6.9% with a merit increase but he would like to see the August numbers when they come out in September. Matlock and Still also agreed with Landry. Gonzalez thanked Johnson.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm by unanimous consent.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the regular Council meeting of August 22, 2023

Diane Clavier
Diane Clavier, City Clerk

September 13, 2023
Date