

# Town of Melbourne Beach

## SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING September 6, 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 Attorney Ryan Knight  
Town Clerk Amber Brown

#### 3. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Mayor Alison Dennington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **4. Public Comments – 1:23**

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.

#### **5. Public Hearings – 2:52**

##### **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 being here tonight to vote on the tentative mileage rate and annual budget.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about getting the budget yesterday and wanting a document detailing the changes.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the changes that were made were at the direction of the Commission. They included the reduction of one police officer, moving the other police officer to be paid out of Ocean Park, addition of software for code enforcement, the addition of another part-time code enforcement officer, reduction of the millage which constituted a reduction in other line items to accommodate that, and eliminated the contingency.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked about where money was taken from.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about money was taken from several different places including the Fire Department, Law Enforcement, contingency, grounds keeping, reduced one officer and moved the other out of the Law Enforcement budget. Added money to legal fees, planning fees, and magistrate fees. Spoke about the Commission approved the Town Manager taking money from places to make the changes the Commission requested.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about how hiring an additional officer might violate the Charter. Read and spoke about provision 3.06A of the Town Charter. Adding or removing positions changes the arrangement or potentially which the Charter says you have to go to referendum.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about the key provision of 3.06A is materially change. His interpretation of that would not be that the addition or deletion of a paid police officer would materially change the existing arrangement of law enforcement. Thinks what this is referring to is if the police force disbanded, or if the powers of the police shifted to the Sheriff's office through an arrangement. Does not interpret staffing to be a material change to the police department.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about not agreeing because of the second provision. Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about staffing decisions would not need to go to the people through referendum. Staffing decisions are vested with the Town Commission to

add or get rid of a police officer. Staffing is under 3.01B Powers of the Commission. Does not think it would be a violation of the Charter and believes any court would agree with his interpretation.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about disagreeing.

**Barbara Struttman – 802 Pine St** – Spoke about being against the Town raising property taxes. Against the 11% tax increase and anyone who supports it. Requested the Resolutions not be signed.

**Tim Reed – 302 Fourth Ave** – Spoke about during the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Budget Workshop the 3 Commissioners did not request any changes. The 5% pay raise across the board is very generous of that a flat 2% merit raise is unfair to the higher-performing employees. Using Ocean Park funds for a police officer is risky because the State might take the Park back.

**Bruce Larson – 1507 Pine** – Spoke about echoing some of what Mr. Reed said. Does not think the current documents fully represent what was discussed at the last budget workshop. Due to the timeliness it is difficult to review and comment.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the document implies a decrease, but by State Law it is a tax increase.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the millage rate went down. The Town is earning more money in ad valorem taxes because of new construction.

Commissioner Corey Runte spoke about without a referendum, the Commission can increase up to 10%. The millage rate was reduced, but there is a 4.608% increase over last year.

**Jean Lewis – 506 Hibiscus Trail** – Spoke about reading it on Nextdoor and thought it was a tax decrease because of the millage rate going down.

**Gail Gowdy – 215 Ash Ave** – Spoke about the budget coming out so late and the misunderstanding that decreasing the millage means decreased taxes. Decrease it more.

## **6. New Business**

- A. Resolution 2024-06, Adopting the Tentative Millage Rate for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 –  
Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro – 32:27

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

**Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adopt Resolution 2024-06 setting the tentative 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 tentative debt service millage rate at .2350 mills.;**

Roll Call Vote by Town Clerk

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

**Resolution 2024-06 carried by a vote of 3-1 with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.**

- B. Resolution 2024-07, Adopting the Tentative Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 – Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro – 35:17

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

**Commissioner Corey Runte moved to adopt Resolution 2024-07 setting forth the appropriations and revenue estimate for the tentative budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 in the amount of \$4,582,113;**

Roll Call Vote by Town Clerk

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

**Resolution 2024-07 carried by a vote of 3-1 vote with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.**

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about voting no because she believes this violates the Town Charter because any additions or deletions of positions for the police have to go to referendum. That money is the cause for the tax increase.

**7. Adjournment**

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm.



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Alison Dennington  
Mayor

ATTEST:



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Amber Brown, CMC  
Town Clerk

