

# Town of Melbourne Beach

## SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING September 17, 2025 @ 1:15 p.m. COMMUNITY CENTER - 509 OCEAN AVENUE

### MINUTES

#### Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington  
Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow  
Commissioner Robert Baldwin  
Commissioner Anna Butler  
Commissioner Tim Reed

#### 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 1:17 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call

#### Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington  
Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow  
Commissioner Robert Baldwin  
Commissioner Anna Butler  
Commissioner Tim Reed

#### Staff Members Present

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 Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

None

#### 5. New Business

##### A. Interview Interim Town Manager candidates

The Commission discussed the interview process.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight confirmed there would be some differentiation between each candidate's experience and education, so some variation in questions would be okay. Suggested having a numerical order of candidates when it comes to making offers, just in case the background check is not satisfactory or if there is no agreement on the interim contract.

1) Lisa Frazier at 1:30 pm - 16:50

Commissioner Anna Butler asked what experience Lisa has in assisting a community through difficult situations.

Lisa Frazier spoke about being with the City of Sebastian, and there was a situation with annexing land where residents had concerns. They held a lot of public workshops so everyone could have their questions answered. At the end of the day, there were some who were still unhappy, but there was a great plan that came out of it that protected the community through the comprehensive plan.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked when Lisa was tasked with stabilizing an organization during a period of transition, the steps taken, and the outcome.

Lisa Frazier spoke about being the Growth Director for the City of Palm Bay. There has been a lot of discord and turnover, and the development pressure is very high. Was able to bring the approval process in line with Florida Statutes, empowered the staff and attracted more professional individuals, and ultimately brought stabilization to the organization.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about being worried about the possibility of dual office holding. If necessary, would she be willing to step down from her position on the Sebastian Inlet Special District and/or the City of Palm Bay?

Lisa Frazier spoke about running it through the Attorney to verify if that would be necessary, but does not believe it is because it is not an elected position. Has one year left as a Commissioner with the Sebastian Inlet District. Spoke about it being a difficult question and would not be able to answer that at this time.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked about the challenge of bringing the residents, the Town staff, and the Commission together.

Lisa Frazier spoke about having turnover on a council that violated Sunshine, and some went to jail. Some of the council members were backed by the residents, and the staff were in a difficult position. She was involved in a lot of the discussions, and there were a lot of healing and trust issues to be addressed. Helped the staff continue and do their job.

Commissioner Tim Reed said if Lisa is looking for a role that offers a challenge, she is in the right place. Spoke about challenges with budgets and revenue. Asked about being able to hit the ground running, and finding and applying for grants.

Lisa Frazier spoke about having a network in Florida to be able to get grants. You need to be strategic, and she has applied for and received a lot of grants.

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about open communication and trust with the Commission, staff, and residents. How did you get people interested? - 36:55

Lisa Frazier spoke about how it can be difficult to get residents engaged, but to use the online format, have open working workshops, and have a Master Plan.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about passing her time due to time constraints.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked about her position with Palm Bay and time constraints.

Lisa Frazier spoke about how she has tendered her resignation to Palm Bay, so that would not be a problem. The Sebastian Inlet Special District meets once a month.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked if she was chosen, would she be willing to stay on as the full-time Town Manager? What would she be looking for in a Town Manager?

Lisa Frazier spoke about how she has been an elected official and was part of the hiring process for the Town Manager of Indian River. Would be looking for someone with experience in public service, a proven track record, and someone who can come in with a low learning curve. Although the Town Manager wouldn't be here to assist her, she is very confident that there is competent staff to assist her with her questions. Willing to stay on as a permanent position, but would want to give this a try and make sure it is a good fit.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about Live Local, DOGE, and property taxes.

Lisa Frazier spoke about not thinking DOGE is a threat or will pay much attention to Melbourne Beach. Regarding Live Local, there is very limited commercial and industrial land, so she does not think that will be an issue here. Regarding property taxes, she compared them to an HOA. Worked on stormwater taxes in Sebastian. The redefinition of stormwater taxes allowed people to get credits, which was not necessarily a tax increase.

Recessed 2:08 – 2:11 pm

2) Gary Stevens at 2:00, started at 2:12 pm - 54:35

Commissioner Anna Butler asked what are the top three challenges the Town of Melbourne Beach is facing right now.

Gary Stevens spoke about the budget, then stormwater, and finally parks and recreation. Agrees with Commissioner Reed that the budget needs to be fiscally responsible. Regarding stormwater, there needs to be a priority list to work from. Regarding parks and recreation, we are a community of recreation. Believes that is what brings families to the Town and is supportive of that.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked when he was tasked with stabilizing an organization during a period of transition, what steps were taken, and what were the outcomes.

Gary Stevens spoke about working with the DHA when there was a transition of quickly combining the old business and the new business.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about his experience and asked about what steps he would take to learn about local government.

Gary Stevens spoke about looking into Sunshine Law, being a quick learner, and being willing to ask questions.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked about where public safety would fall in his priorities.

Gary Stevens spoke about public safety being one of the top priorities, but he feels they are fully funded now.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how if Gary is looking for a role that offers a challenge, he is in the right place. He is looking for someone who is able to hit the ground running. Asked about how he would manage projects in relation to the community.

Gary Stevens said he brought a management plan that he will leave with the Commission when he is done. Spoke about meeting with the community and letting them know what is going on. Communication is a priority with the residents and the Commission. Spoke about developing standardized reports to have measurable outcomes.

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about how this is a working Interim Town Manager position and asked how he would approach that. - 1:07:14

Gary Stevens spoke about how he would have one-on-one meetings with the department heads and staff. His focus is on being a team player. Values what people say and would listen to the people who are on the ground.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked about what his approach would be to bring the community together around his top priorities.

Gary Stevens spoke about communication, having reports available, and organization. He does not need to be the expert, but he does need to know who to ask.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about his experience, and needing someone to come in and review all of the policies and procedures, and contracts. Asked about his experience with IT, inventorying contracts, reviewing and updating policies and procedures, and AI.

Gary Stevens spoke about how, as part of DHA, they are not implementing AI because there are still security risks. Said he can rationalize software through discussions, the policy can be organized, and he can look at dates and see which ones need to be updated.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin said a quote, the urgent is the enemy of the important. Asked about his experience of managing to manage, not just putting out the fires, and not pushing other things forward.

Gary Stevens spoke about how there are some things you can let go by the wayside and other things you can't. There are reports that have to be done on a yearly basis, and there is a balance. Strategy-wise, cannot let go of looking forward. You need that 5-year plan.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how the Town's IT is contracted out. Asked if he would be able to weigh in on our IT and security.

Gary Stevens spoke about being able to help review that.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked what he would ask to review first.

Gary Stevens spoke about how the first item would be to review security. Then the next would be the nice-to-haves.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked if he would be interested in the full-time position.

Gary Stevens spoke about being interested and also happy to do the Interim position.

Mayor Alison Dennington confirmed that Gary Stevens is currently retired.

Gary Stevens provided a 90-day Interim Town Manager Plan.

The Commission scheduled a STCM on 9/25/2025 at 6:30 pm about Building Official services. Finance Manager Jennifer Kerr will reach out to the 3 companies to indicate if they are still interested and encourage them to attend. - 1:25:50

3) Colin Donnelly at 3:00, started at 2:52 pm - 1:34:04

Commissioner Anna Butler asked if Colin had experience in government and if he could talk about any challenges he faced that were associated with the Commission and his role.

Colin Donnelly said yes, he has worked for 2 municipalities in New Jersey and one in Florida. Spoke about personnel matters and an experience he had in Dania Beach, where a Commissioner wanted additional raises for employees, specifically a relative, and Colin stood his ground about what was fair and not showing favoritism.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked about a time when he was tasked with stabilizing an organization during a period of transition, the steps taken, and the outcome.

Colin Donnelly spoke about taking an assistant manager position with Dania Beach when they were switching from a Commission form of government to a Manager/council form of government. He acted as City Manager after the manager had left, and had to maintain, stabilize, and keep things moving. There was a lot of communication and coaching needed.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked what the Management in Dania Beach would say about his management style and his experience with grants.

Colin Donnelly spoke about working on a lot of capital grants, from writing them to implementation, and even hired grant writers. Said he had a nickname of the money man. His personality style is dedicated, easy to get along with, humble, and part of the team.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked about his thoughts on Melbourne Beach and how his previous experience would be applicable.

Colin Donnelly spoke about Melbourne Beach being a nice community. Said he has a friend in Melbourne who loves the Space Coast area. Said he is not local but is not that far away. Spoke about being familiar with coastal communities and smaller communities.

Commissioner Tim Reed said if he is looking for a role with challenges, he is in the right place, but along with the challenges, there are opportunities. Looking for someone who is willing to hit the ground running. Asked if he has experience with going through any large stormwater project, and to touch on any community awareness involved in that process.

Colin Donnelly spoke about how Dania Beach had an area that had flooding. The project went through design in 2007 and is now being done. The cost estimate was 12 million dollars, but it will end up being more. Spoke about having to redesign it multiple times. Communicated with residents through smartphones and red alerts so they stay notified.

Commissioner Anna Butler asked about the logistics of living further away. - 1:51:30

Colin Donnelly spoke about not commuting every day. For the interim position, his plan would be to come up here during the weekdays and then go back home on the weekends.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked if he would relocate for the full-time position.

Colin Donnelly spoke about relocating for the full-time position.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked about a time when he had to support and develop employees and the leadership impact of their performance during that tenure.

Colin Donnelly spoke about how Dania Beach's Fire Department merged with the County Fire Department and outsourced HR. Had to coach an inexperienced individual at that time. Said to let department heads know if you have an interaction with a Commissioner.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about looking online and saw a document that spoke about his weaknesses, including delegation and getting overwhelmed, and getting behind. Asked about that, and if he is under application for other positions.

Colin Donnelly spoke about how he applied for another job in South Florida, but when he makes a commitment, he follows through. Regarding the document online, it was accurate, but old, so he has worked on things. One way is not having to go through paper, so he brushed up on Microsoft skills, uses a calendar, and uses reminders. Technology helped him manage his time. Also is a better delegator; working with more professional people has made that easier to do.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked if he is able to follow through when he delegates.

Colin Donnelly spoke about how one of his strengths is developing trust; he does not deal with dishonesty well.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked about crisis management due to hurricanes, what the priorities are, and his experience.

Colin Donnelly spoke about not going through a major hurricane yet, but he has worked with the Fire and Police Department on fundamental emergency preparedness. Dealt with flooding. Spoke about communicating and making sure everyone is informed.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the State's property tax reform, DOGE, Home Rule, and Live Local.

Colin Donnelly spoke about how he did a Master's paper about a similar program to DOGE. Put together a report; it wasn't wasteful spending, but opportunities. Home Rule means elected officials know and get to do what is best for their community. It might not be wasteful spending if it is best for that community.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the management firm hiring the full-time position.

Colin Donnelly said if he was not offered the interim position, he would not go for the full-time position. Spoke about understanding the process from reviewing the Town's minutes.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the report she touched on in the last interview and said there are some news articles about the next candidate. - 2:08:40

Recessed 3:27 - 3:32 - 2:09:54

4) Taylor Brown at 3:30 pm, started at 3:37 pm - 2:18:00

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about Taylor's experience as a City Manager and asked if he could talk about a time where he faced some challenges and touch on the delicate balance with staff, the Commission, and the residents.

Taylor Brown spoke about his experience and emphasized doing an orientation for newly elected officials to understand each person's role, and the importance of staying in our own lanes. The issue is usually a Commission member trying to direct staff or the Town Manager directly. Asks staff members to make him aware of any conversations with Commissioners. Said that when elected officials try to direct staff, it hurts morale and puts staff in an awkward position. Said he would pull aside an elected official to have a conversation, and if a Commissioner tries to direct him in his role as Town Manager, he would let them know he works for the Commission as a whole.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked about his experience where he was tasked with stabilizing an organization during a period of transition, the steps taken, and the outcomes.

Taylor Brown spoke about dealing with that a number of times. One situation was when he took a position where he had to terminate the Police Chief for malfeasance, and the Chief was married to an employee. He got to the bottom of everything, built rapport with staff, Commission members, and the County. Spoke about how if you are doing things right, people will want to join your team and do something positive.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about some articles she found on him that mention communication, reporting with the Commission, and delegation was challenging. Need someone who is willing to come in and do weekly reports.

Taylor Brown spoke about managing smaller communities, and being hands on. Takes a team approach so delegating is easy. All elected officials want to be in the loop, but each has an opinion on how much information is ideal. Tries to provide a happy medium and provide information to everyone at the same time. Always tries to respond in writing so there is a record and sends responses to everyone. We are all on the same team, and does not want anyone to be blindsided. Communication is a big deal.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about how Taylor has listened to some of the Town's meetings and asked if there are examples of what he has experienced that are close to what he has seen with the Town of Melbourne Beach.

Taylor Brown spoke about how the Town has been going through challenges. Believes the Town's biggest issue is trust. Have to get a handle on that, otherwise any other efforts will be hampered. Once you build the trust, what you can achieve is unlimited. There seem to be trust issues at all levels staff, Commission and residents.

Mayor Alison Dennington wanted to point out an email that Taylor Brown sent with 2 documents attached, his initial assessment and a 90 day action plan.

Commissioner Tim Reed said if you are looking for a role with challenges, you are looking in the right place. With that comes opportunity for meaningful impact. Looking for someone who is willing to hit the ground running. Asked about experience in securing grants, implementing tax initiatives to generate more revenue, and annexations.

Taylor Brown spoke about having a fiscal conservative approach. Recognizes that any money the Town has has been taken from residents, so he feels a high responsibility to steward the money as best he can. Has experience with taxes and keeping them low, but also making sure everything is funded well, so you do not get behind.

Commissioner Anna Butler asked about the logistics of where he is located. - 2:39:18

Taylor Brown spoke about being too far away to not relocate. It is important to live close especially for the Manager to live in the community to be subject to the same rules and taxes. Since it is an interim position, he has friends and family in Melbourne that he would be able to stay with. If it became a long-term thing, he would relocate here.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked about how he would build trust with everyone.



Taylor Brown spoke about how he would first speak with everyone to see where the mistrust is coming from, then devise a plan on how to address it. There is an upcoming election, and that is a good time to reboot to build trust. True professionals do not want to work in chaotic environments, and they would be desirable to other places. Has sent every elected official he can to the FLC IEMO because it is a training course he believes in.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked about the comment of elected officials staying in their lane. For repeated issues, some call it micromanaging, but others call it oversight. Asked if he is aware of the JLAC request to audit the Town and how he would handle that.

Taylor Brown said he was not aware of the audit, but audits should not bother anyone if you are running everything above board. Everything is public. Should put public records on the website, eliminate the gatekeepers. If there are a lot of public records requests, that's a signal of what kind of information the public is interested in that is not easily available.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked if he had any experience working with an outsourced building department and how it worked.

Taylor Brown spoke about 2 municipalities he worked for that outsourced the building department, which is common with smaller municipalities unless there is a lot of development. Gave an example of a hybrid model where they did the planning and zoning but contracted with the County for the building plans, review, and inspections.

Taylor Brown's video call ended. - 2:53:10

Mayor Alison Dennington shared the report she referenced about Taylor Brown.

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about being impressed with Taylor Brown doing his homework and understanding the dynamics of the Town. Has great experience with small cities, and wants to live in Brevard. Impressed with Colin Donnelly, has great boundaries and what is expected of his position and others, and great experience. Gary Stevens has an incredible resume, but is not sure his experience will work for this position, as he has no experience. Lisa Frazier was very impressive and well-connected. No one had any red flags.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about her initial observations. Impressed that 2 individuals provided 30-60-90 day plans. Has no concerns that Lisa could step into the interim and full position. Only hesitation with Gary Stevens is hands-on management in local government and familiarity with Florida-specific statutes, not that he couldn't learn it. Colin and Taylor are both qualified. Liked Taylor Brown's discussion on trust.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about how all candidates are well-qualified. Despite Gary Stevens not having local government experience, believes that he could be a benefit. Concerned with Taylor's comment about staying in your lane, does not believe that it will help with the trust issues. She asks a lot of questions, and previous Commissioners have used that statement on her. Liked what he said about public records requests. Top favorite for interim Mrs. Frazier and Mr. Stevens. We have a company that is going to find the full-time candidate. Concerned about the reports she read about delegating.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about Gary Steven's background and experience are not relevant. We need someone with direct government experience because we do not have the time for someone to be asking around. Lisa Frazier has good local experience. The other 2 candidates have more CEO level experience. When Taylor spoke about staying in your lane, does not think the Mayor's situation would have come up because he would have given her what she requested. Liked that Mr. Donnelly addressed the improvements he has made. Good with the three.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about it being hard to view someone as the interim and then a different person full-time. Top pick is Lisa Frazier. Has all of the qualifications, is very well spoken, and she could step in and do the job, and we would not be compromising in any way. Mr. Steven's background is not in public administration or government. After listening to him, he understands how to be a manager. Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Brown have earned their stripes in public administration. The idea for an interim is doing a 5-day-a-week thing, not sure how that will work. - 3:08:12

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about a concern with the interim versus the full-time position and the search firm. If we have someone in the interim position that is working out well and has established themselves, would it behoove us to have some continuity for the staff, Town, and Commission to hire that person on a permanent basis, rather than be concerned that we have this search firm?

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about how there are no guarantees, but anyone interested in the full-time position could go for both positions. They would be treated separately.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about a concern with Colin Donnelly stating he would not apply for the full-time position if he was not chosen for the interim position. If you have a local as an interim, then it wouldn't be as permanent as if someone moved here.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about how Brown has family in Melbourne, and Mr. Donnelly would be willing to find temporary housing, and Ms. Frazier is local, so he is not concerned with any of those.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how they have great candidates. Get an interim, and then go through the search firm for the full-time position to find the best.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about having everyone pick their top 2.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about the top 2 candidates would be Gary Stevens and Lisa Frazier. Gary Stevens is slightly higher.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about Lisa Frazier, then Taylor Brown.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about Lisa Frazier and Taylor Brown.

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about Lisa Frazier and Taylor Brown.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about Lisa Frazier and Taylor Brown.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight said they would need to select a number 1 candidate. If that person falls through, then he would be moving to the number 2 candidate.

**Commissioner Tim Reed made a motion that we identify Lisa Frazier as the number 1 candidate, and Taylor Brown as the number 2 candidate; Commissioner Robert Baldwin seconded; Motion carried 4-1 with Mayor Alison Dennington dissenting.**

Town Attorney Ryan Knight said he would communicate with the number one candidate, and it would be subject to an employment agreement between the 2 parties and a background check. Believes the police do the background check and would only do the background check on the number one candidate.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow verified that the pay would be what is in the budget. Spoke about having a 4-1 vote. Asked the Mayor to clarify that the structure of the motion was the issue over the individual candidate.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about wanting to separate the motion into two. Would have voted for Lisa Frazier.

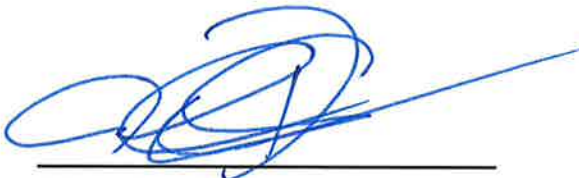
Mayor Alison Dennington asked about the retirement options and limiting them to a few. Wants to get the cost and potential options of what the Town can offer.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about getting with the Finance Manager to get those details. Said the FRS is the expensive one. Said they will go over the potential start date on the agenda for tonight's meeting, the current agreement expires in 2 days on the 19th.

## 6. Adjournment

**Commissioner Anna Butler made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Robert Baldwin seconded; Motion carried 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM.



**Alison Dennington**  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
Rachel Pembrook (Oct 9, 2025 14:32:54 EDT)

**Rachel Pembrook**  
Transcriptionist

