

**REGULAR MEETING
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
AUGUST 18, 2025
ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Council of the City of Destin met in regular session with the following members and staff present:

Destin City Council

Mayor Bobby Wagner
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt
Councilmember Terésa Hebert
Councilmember Sandy Trammell

Councilmember Torey Geile
Councilmember Jim Bagby
Councilmember Rodney Braden

Destin City Staff

City Manager Larry Jones
IT Director Andy Peters
HR Director Jaime Haynes
Finance Director Krystal Strickland
Projects/Grants/Contract Manager Jeffrey Cozadd
Community Development Director David Prichard

City Clerk Rey Bailey
Public Works Director Michael Burgess
Public Information Director Tamara Young
City Engineer Robert Tomasek
Deputy Parks & Recreation Director Ryan Reed
City Attorney Kimberly Kopp

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bobby Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Pastor Steve Farris of the First Baptist Church of Destin gave the invocation, which was then followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Agenda item 6G(3) was advanced to follow immediately after the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 6-0. Councilmember Destin was absent from the meeting.

1. PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS / SPECIAL / PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Recognition of Fort Walton Beach High School Softball Team – 2025 Class 4A State Champions

The Destin Mayor and City Council honored the Fort Walton Beach High School Softball Team for capturing the 2025 Class 4A State Championship title.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Estella Scoma, a Destin High School student, advocated for her appointment to the Destin Youth Council. She highlighted her leadership experience as class president, founder of the school's volunteering club, student ambassador, and National Honor Society member, while also maintaining honor roll and holding a part-time job. She emphasized her efforts in recruiting most of the applicants for this term and voiced support for a proposal to balance residential and non-residential youth council members.

Christopher Byron expressed concern over Ordinance 25-11-CC regarding noise regulations. He questioned whether the ordinance prohibits residents from enjoying normal activities like birthday parties. The City Attorney clarified that only noise that is continuous and injurious or disturbing is restricted, ensuring that reasonable celebrations remain permissible.

Noah Shack, a business and property owner with children in Destin schools, supported improvements to Threadgill Park and additional parking for Destin Little League. He emphasized the program's positive impact on families and urged the city to invest further for safety and community benefit.

Carrie Harbarger raised concerns about selective enforcement by city staff, particularly regarding short-term rentals, permits, and signage. She recounted her own experience with additional costs for her coin-operated ice machine and questioned inconsistencies in how temporary Certificates of Occupancy are handled. She urged fairness and equal enforcement for all businesses and property owners.

David Cowles, a student leader at Destin High School, requested consideration for Youth Council appointment, noting his long-term residency and leadership as National Honor Society president.

Brian Otto, both as a resident and Destin High School cross-country coach, praised city-run basketball programs for their management and positive community impact. He also endorsed David Cowles' leadership qualities. He also emphasized safety concerns at Joe's Bayou and describing it as a "national treasure" that has grown more dangerous with increased activity.

Tim Krueger thanked the council for addressing safety concerns at Joe's Bayou, citing the risks posed by jet skis operating near swimmers and paddlers. He urged action to reduce hazards. He also expressed appreciation for the city's quick response when a contractor disrupted internet service during a beautification project.

Daniel Danfort, representing Project Hydrarology, spoke about his company's expertise in stormwater quality using natural, chemical-free methods. He highlighted that his team recently secured a \$1 million grant opportunity (with potential for \$2 million through continuation next year) specifically targeting algae bloom reduction and other water quality improvements. He explained that his company has award-winning, proven technologies – such as bacteria-hosting hoses, floating islands, and wetland construction – that combat algae, reduce odors, and improve stormwater retention. He offered to assist the city in applying for the grant before the September 1st deadline, emphasizing the need for staff partnership to move the application forward.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to direct the City Manager to meet with Mr. Danforth immediately and evaluate the opportunity. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 6-0.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. RFP 25-11-PW, Disaster Debris Monitoring RFP for Review, Approval and Advertisement
- B. Letter of Support - Resilient Florida Grant Program - Four Prong Lake Emergency Outfall Application
- C. Approval of minutes of August 4, 2025, City Council Executive Session
- D. Approval of minutes of July 21, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting

Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to approve Consent Agenda items 3A through 3D, as printed above, passed 6-0.

Next item discussed was agenda itm 6G(3) - *Destin Little League Contributions and Match Request.*

4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- A. Livery Registration Discussion

The City Manager opened the discussion on proposed Ordinance 25-05-CC which addresses Article 8 concerning the permitting of delivery vessel rentals. The ordinance proposes changes to two sections of the code: Section 13-145(6), which relates to required safety measures, and Section 13-148, which concerns the non-transferability of permits. The City Manager recommended breaking down the review into sub-questions for clarity, noting that while formal motions could be made for each item, unanimous consent would also be sufficient to provide direction for drafting the ordinance.

Section 13-145(6) – Required Safety Measures:

The Community Development Director identified three unsettled discussion points:

- 1) Does requiring livery vessel business employee training as listed in 25-05-CC benefit the public sufficient to be mandated by ordinance?
- 2) Does requiring livery vessel rental customer training and operator identification as listed in 25-05-CC benefit the public sufficient to be mandated by ordinance?
- 3) Can the city adequately enforce the required safety measures listed in 25-05-CC? (Staff opinion is yes. Applicants will be required to verify that they have met all safety measures in accordance with city ordinances. Additionally, code compliance can periodically spot-check that vendors continue to meet the required safety requirements.)

During a brief discussion, the council generally supported all safety requirements. Consensus was that training and ID requirements are reasonable, and enforcement via affidavits and spot checks was considered adequate.

Section 13-148 – Permit Not Transferable:

The Community Development Director reviewed Section 13-148 regarding permit non-transferability, presenting the following six questions for consideration:

1. Should the city limit the number of livery vessels to 490? (Staff comment: as of August 13, 2025, there are 484 vessels permitted, permitted but unassigned, or pending a permit. Additional vessels including as yachts and boat club vessels have until February 2026 to be included per Ordinance 2024-15-CC).

2. From the effective date of the ordinance, should unassigned vessels have one year before being removed from the permit?

3. Should a buyer of a livery vessel currently under a permit be guaranteed to register that livery vessel with the city? (Staff comment: this could artificially increase the value of livery a vessel independent of the quality and condition of the vessel. Staff recommend no guarantee. The permit should not run with the vessel, but the ability to obtain a permit should be guaranteed for a replacement vessel).

4. Should the city, for the purpose of preventing the artificial inflation of sales pricing or price gouging, limit the sale price to no more than current NADA Guide value plus 10% for a livery vessel that guarantees the purchaser the ability to obtain a livery vessel permit from the city? (Staff comment: This action could be interpreted as arbitrary and capricious, by not allowing prices to reflect the true value of the vessel.).

5. Should the purchaser of a livery vessel who benefited from a guaranteed ability to obtain a livery vessel permit from the city be prevented from selling, transferring or assigning the vessel for two years? (Staff comment: This action would be problematic in terms of enforcement. The violation would likely be discovered when the new owner applied for a permit. The negative consequence would be on the innocent party if the permit is denied).

6. Should a livery vessel which has not been used in the normal course of business for at least 60 days be removed from a livery vessel permit? (Staff comment: This would be labor intensive to monitor).

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Schmidt supported setting the cap at 490–500 vessels, with annual adjustments based on renewals, and opposed city involvement in NADA pricing. He felt that vessel sales should still require city approval of facilities and that permits should remain valid for the full year regardless of use.

Councilmember Geile emphasized that the Army Corps of Engineers had found the harbor over capacity and favored reducing the number of permits over time. He supported a one-year grace period for unassigned vessels, opposed guaranteed transfers without facility reevaluation, and rejected both NADA pricing limits and restrictions on resale. He also argued that a 60-day inactivity rule was impractical given storms and enforcement limits, and he strongly opposed speculative holding of permits for profit.

Councilmember Trammell agreed that the cap should remain at 490 and then be reduced over time, noting that the so-called “medallions” were originally only stickers for tracking purposes and should not have become transferable assets. She opposed speculative resale of permits without proper facilities.

Councilmember Braden supported one-year use and removal of unused permits, thereafter, objected to inflated resale prices, and raised concerns about businesses operating without valid permits.

Councilmember Bagby suggested pairing the moratorium with a reduced cap, such as 450, and stressed the need for a fair process to issue permits once numbers fell below the cap. He opposed transfers tied to vessels, preferring transfers only with full business sales, and supported a clear one-year renewal process.

Councilmember Hebert opposed the idea of a lottery system for allocating permits, arguing that it would send the wrong message to the public. She also highlighted that Destin’s efforts could be undermined by Fort Walton Beach businesses sending large numbers of vessels into the harbor, suggesting that Destin should refrain from adding new permits until surrounding jurisdictions coordinated more effectively.

B. Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office Service Agreement FY2025

The City Manager introduced the FY26 service agreement with the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO), covering October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. He explained that the Sheriff’s Office was requesting a 7.88% increase over the previous year for the same level of service. Discussions with Captain Jason Fulghum confirmed that OCSO’s position was firm: reducing funding would result in reduced service, specifically the loss of two deputies.

Councilmember Trammell made a motion to approve the 2025 Law Enforcement Service Agreement to provide law enforcement services to the City of Destin by the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office from October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. Councilmember Hebert provided a second to the motion

Capt. Fulghum clarified that of the 7.88% increase, approximately 6% was allocated to a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). For comparison, the city provided just under a 3% COLA to its staff. The county-wide OCSO budget was cited at about \$67 million, and the Tourism Development Department (TDD) contributed roughly \$800,000 to local enforcement efforts, funding beach units, marine units, spring break overtime, and summer traffic management near the Destin Bridge.

During general discussion, Capt Fulghum presented slides comparing per-call costs. Under the FY26 proposal, Destin would pay \$3,355,558, or about \$92.66 per call for service. In comparison, Niceville’s \$4.5 million police budget covers 32 officers and 29,000 calls, equating to \$152 per call. Panama City Beach spends \$17.2 million for 85 officers, South Daytona Beach allocates \$4.5 million for 24 officers at \$267 per call, and Atlantic Beach funds 29 officers at \$8 million. Capt Fulghum emphasized that Destin benefits from supervisory staff—captains,

lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, dispatchers, crime scene analysts, legal staff, and finance staff—whose costs are covered largely by county taxes rather than the city’s contract.

Councilmember Geile pressed on the disparity between the City’s 3% COLA and OCSO’s requested 6%, questioning why Destin should approve a higher increase for contractors than it gives its own staff. He also inquired about how much Destin taxpayers contribute through millage and TDD funding. He suggested that the city should consider establishing its own police department to gain control over enforcement priorities, particularly code enforcement, despite high startup costs. Fulghum responded that a 2010 study estimated \$11 million in setup costs before hiring staff, and he argued that sworn deputies should not be diverted from public safety to code enforcement tasks. He further explained that TDD-funded deputies, not under the Destin contract, often lack training in city codes, which explains frustrations when beach code violations are overlooked.

A central debate emerged over COLA. Capt Fulghum argued that a 6% increase was necessary to remain competitive with agencies such as Walton County, otherwise Destin risks losing deputies to higher-paying jurisdictions. Councilmember Geile countered that starting salaries matter more than annual COLA for retention. Capt. Fulghum insisted both are critical since deputies move for even small hourly pay differences.

The mayor and others raised concerns about beach coverage. Capt Fulghum explained that only three beach units are available in total – two funded by TDD and one from OCSO’s regular budget – and these are shared between Destin and Okaloosa Island. On certain shifts, only one deputy covers both areas, creating service gaps. He stated he had previously requested an additional deputy so that each side of the pass would have coverage.

Councilmember Bagby acknowledged Destin’s significant contribution to county taxes and noted that ticket revenue distribution leaves the city with less than \$50,000 annually from citations. He also suggested reconsidering the creation of a Destin police department, despite having opposed it in the past. He also proposed linking contract increases to the greater of CPI or property value growth – 5% this year compared to a 2.8–3% CPI – resulting in about \$3.2 million and the likely loss of only one deputy rather than two. Capt Fulghum agreed to carry these ideas back to OCSO command staff but emphasized that the Sheriff ultimately decides on acceptable service levels.

Councilmember Braden stressed that tourists drive the majority of service calls and should bear more of the cost. He suggested raising paid parking rates substantially, pointing out that \$15 per day is far below what is charged in major cities, where \$45–\$65 is common. He also advocated for higher fees on short-term rentals, noting that they primarily serve tourists, not locals.

Councilmember Schmidt echoed the view that tourists should pay more, observing that residents alone cannot be expected to cover services consumed disproportionately by visitors. He expressed frustration at the “take-it-or-leave-it” dynamic of the annual contract but acknowledged that OCSO is essential for public safety. He supported exploring alternatives in the future, such as a city police department, but stressed the need to maintain OCSO in the short term.

Capt Fulghum explained that code officers could file affidavits directly with the State Attorney’s Office to initiate arrests without requiring deputies to handle routine code enforcement. Debate over the contract language also surfaced: the City interprets the contract as giving it authority to direct service levels, while Capt Fulghum maintained it only empowers OCSO to act but does not obligate deputies to prioritize city codes over public safety.

Motion passed 5-1, with Councilmember Geile dissenting. Councilmember Destin was absent from the meeting.

C. Legal Representation - ERISA Specialist for Thrift Plan- City of Destin

The City Manager explained the need to engage the law firm Lewis, Longman, and Walker to restate the City's thrift plan. This engagement involves an ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) specialist who serves as special outside counsel to ensure the city remains in compliance with current statutes and IRS/tax regulations.

The City Attorney clarified that this is a periodic requirement, not a continuing service, and recommended reinstating the firm for this specific task.

Councilmember Bagby moved to authorize the City Manager to execute an engagement agreement with Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A., to provide ERISA legal services related to the restatement of the City's Thrift Plan and the transition to the Florida Retirement System, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed by a vote of 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

D. RFP - Short Term Rental Compliance Solution Provider

The City Manager explained that this item concerned the potential issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a short-term rental compliance solution provider. He noted that this step may be premature given the recent approval of the city's application to join the Department of Revenue's RISE information-sharing program in coordination with the tax collector's office. While the RISE program should provide access to compliance information, there remains some uncertainty about whether the city will receive the level of detail necessary to fully meet its needs. The proposed RFP would therefore serve as a contingency measure, ensuring that the city has an option in place should the RISE program not deliver as anticipated. The City Manager further clarified that the RFP would not obligate the city to award a contract, and that vendors not the city would be responsible for providing lists of names for compliance tracking. He emphasized that issuing the RFP would simply create a mechanism for the city to move forward if needed in the future.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to accept the RFP as written and move forward with the procurement process for a Short-Term Rental Compliance Solutions provider. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Trammell and passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

E. Resolution 25-17 Restated Schedule of Fees Adoption - Mobility Fees

The City Manager explained that this item is a restatement of the city's fee resolution. Its purpose is to formally codify the mobility fees that were approved in May. These fees stem from the mobility plan adopted in September of the previous year, which itself followed a March 2021 decision to replace impact fees with mobility fees. He noted that implementing the fees now is timely because state law provides only one year after adoption of the mobility plan to put the associated fees in place. This action ensures compliance with that timeframe. In practical terms, the measure simply adds the previously approved fees into the official fee schedule without making changes to the substance of the fees.

Motion by Councilmember Schmidt, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to adopt Resolution 25-17 – Restated Schedule of Fees Adoption – Mobility Fees, passed 5-0. Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent.

F. Resolution 25-17 Restated Schedule of Fees Adoption - Public Records, Library Fees, and Credit Card Processing

The City Manager explained that this item involves updating and restating the city's fee schedule to reflect three specific changes. First, the hourly charge for public records requests will be increased to the amount permitted under state statute. Second, the library service fees will be modified from a fixed replacement fee of one to three dollars to instead reflect the actual replacement cost of lost or damaged materials. Finally, a three percent service fee will be added to cover processing costs for credit card transactions. These adjustments were discussed at the prior meeting and are intended to ensure compliance with statutory allowances and recovery of service costs.

Motion by Councilmember Schmidt, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to adopt Resolution 25-17 – Restated Schedule of Fees Adoption – Public Records, Library Fees, and Credit Card Processing Fees, passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

G. RFB 25-10-PW, Concrete Continuing Services Contract, Update and requested RFB

The City Manager explained that the city's continuing services contractor for concrete recently requested a fee increase; however, after council pushed back, the contractor agreed to honor the existing rates through the end of the year, when the current contract expires. He noted that the contractor provides quality service, is responsive, and delivers good work. The council has two options moving forward: they may choose to go out for bids, with October being the recommended timeframe, or they may extend the current contract for an additional year at the same rates. He added that staff is satisfied that the city is receiving good value under the present arrangement, leaving the decision to council's discretion.

Motion by Councilmember Schmidt, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to continue the Miscellaneous Concrete Continuing Services Contract with S.H. Hayes Enterprises LLC at the current unit prices passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

H. Destin Youth Council - Membership Appointments

The City Manager explained that there were 11 applicants: six non-residents and five city residents. The policy allows up to 14 members on the council, with no more than five non-residents, and also requires that a majority of members present at a meeting be city residents in order to establish a quorum. This creates challenges since appointing all current applicants would risk failing to meet quorum requirements. The City Manager outlined several options: reduce the number of non-resident appointments to three or four while accepting the five resident applicants, remove the residency-based quorum requirement, or increase outreach to area schools to recruit more resident students.

Councilmember Schmidt commented that the process for forming the Youth Council had become overly complicated. He emphasized that youth participation should not be hindered by restrictive rules, and that interested students should be encouraged rather than discouraged.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to appoint all 11 applicants and for staff to prepare an amendment to the bylaws that would remove the residency-based quorum requirement. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert.

Councilmember Bagby disagreed with removing residency restrictions and stressed that the real issue was insufficient outreach to schools outside of Destin High School. He noted that many resident students may not have been given the opportunity to apply. He added that non-resident students should not outnumber resident members on the council, as that would undermine its purpose.

Councilmember Bagby moved to appoint the 5 resident applicants (Eleanor Remm, David Cowles, Briana Demeter, Annalyn King, and Deacon Martin), and one non-resident applicant (Estella Scoma), and for staff to make additional efforts to encourage more resident applicants, and at the next meeting have staff bring back the list of applicants so the council may consider appointing additional non-residents to the Youth Council. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trammell.

Councilmember Geile expressed support for allowing a two-week period to expand outreach and recruit more resident applicants, emphasizing that residents should have priority in serving. He also voiced concern that surrounding communities often benefit from Destin's resources without annexing into the city and sharing its responsibilities. He suggested revisiting the matter if no additional resident applications were received.

Motion passed 5-1, with Councilmember Braden dissenting. Councilmember Destin was absent.

H. Boating Safety Zones

This item was moved to the September 3rd council meeting.

J. Bridge Design

The City Manager is seeking direction from council regarding assistance with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on the new bridge project. He explained that Bradley Touchstone, an experienced bridge architect specializing in aesthetics, had volunteered to assist the city and could work with FDOT to help ensure the bridge design is visually appealing. The City Manager referenced Councilmember Trammell's recommendation that the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee and the Harbor & Waterways Committee jointly meet with Mr. Touchstone to develop design recommendations for council consideration, especially since FDOT's first public input session is scheduled for March of next year.

Councilmember Trammell then made a motion to formally assign the task to both committees, noting that they are already collaborating on another project and that there is overlap in membership between them. This approach would only add a few more participants to the effort.

Councilmember Bagby questioned why the matter was not being directed to the Public Works and Public Safety Committee, as that group has members with expertise in the flow and process of such projects beyond aesthetics. After discussion, it was agreed to also include Public Works and Public Safety in the effort, resulting in three committees being involved.

Councilmember Trammell moved to assign the task of working with bridge architect Bradley Touchstone, in coordination with FDOT on the aesthetic design of the new bridge, to the Harbor and Waterways Board, the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee, and the Public Works/Public Safety Committee, with the committees working together to consider Mr. Touchstone's input and to bring recommendations back to the city council. Councilmember Herbert provided a second to the motion, which passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

K. Operations Financial Report - Informational Only

L. Capital Project Status - Informational Only

M. Draft Minutes of Volunteer Board & Committees - Informational Only

N. Announcements:

1. The City Manager announced that a list of projects for upcoming legislative appropriation requests will be distributed to members for review. The list will also be emailed to members who were not present. The intent is to identify priorities in four key categories: an infrastructure project, a recreation/parks project, a water project, and a resiliency project. Council members will be asked to narrow down at least one or two projects in each category, and the city's lobbyist Kelly Horton will provide leadership and guidance on where the best funding opportunities may be available in the upcoming legislative session.
2. The Public Information Director reported that the groundbreaking for the new pickleball courts is anticipated to take place around August 25, 2025, with play expected to begin in the spring of 2026. While there will be no groundbreaking ceremony, a celebration will be planned once the facility is complete. In addition, renovations at Clement E. Taylor Park are scheduled to begin in two weeks, when fencing will be installed to secure the site. Updates were also provided on the Crosstown Connector and the Azelia Drive Extension project, which is currently on day 14 of a 180-day contract. Construction officially began with an estimated duration of 18 to 24 months. Flyers have been distributed to impacted residents, and survey layout has commenced, followed by clearing and grubbing for the installation of drainage chambers.
3. The Chief Building Official developed an informational piece outlining gutter installation requirements, which has been distributed to approximately 250 roofing contractors. New signage for the harbor area has also been prepared, highlighting three key rules: no mooring, no commercial activity, and subject to video enforcement. Parks and Recreation staff will install the signs this week, with additional signage projects planned for the future to reduce confusion in the harbor area.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. First reading of proposed Ordinance 25-19-CC - Amending Chapter 2 - Administration of the Code of Ordinances relating to city membership in the Florida Retirement System (FRS); providing for membership in FRS for the benefit of City of Destin employees.

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-19-CC by title and then presented it to the city council on first reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 2-ADMINISTRATION, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATING TO CITY MEMBERSHIP IN THE FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM ("FRS"); PROVIDING FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM ("FRS") FOR THE BENEFIT OF CITY EMPLOYEES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The mayor open a public hearing to receive comments for or against the proposed ordinance.

Matthew Dolman, representing Benjamin F. Edwards & Company, provided an extensive overview of the City of Destin's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), which his team has managed for over 35 years. He highlighted the plan's structure, with the city contributing 7.5% automatically and matching up to 5% of employee contributions, resulting in one of the most generous retirement offerings compared to similar-sized organizations. Mr. Dolman stressed that since 2013, the TSP had paid out nearly \$7 million to employees while still growing to over \$8.8 million in assets. He contrasted this with Social Security, which he argued is financially unstable, and warned that shifting to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) would increase annual city costs by \$410,000 to \$700,000 while undermining the long-term viability of the TSP due to a lack of new contributions. He cautioned that once new employees were placed into FRS, the TSP would eventually decline as existing participants retired or withdrew funds, forcing the plan into conservative investments with lower returns.

The HR Director followed with a presentation comparing the TSP to FRS. Under the TSP, the city currently contributes 7.5% in lieu of Social Security plus a 5% match on employee 457 contributions, with a seven-year vesting schedule. FRS, by contrast, requires a mandatory 3% employee contribution, offers a choice between a pension plan (eight-year vesting) or investment plan (one-year vesting), and includes Social Security participation. Employer contributions would rise to 13.63%, costing the city approximately \$700,000 more per year. She noted that employees favored FRS for its portability across Florida agencies and the ability to draw from both FRS and Social Security in retirement.

Councilmember Bagby moved to approve Ordinance 25-19-CC on first reading, seconded by Councilmember Trammell.

Councilmember Bagby questioned Mr. Dolman on the "4% rule," pointing out that to replicate a \$24,000 annual Social Security benefit, an employee would need approximately \$600,000 in retirement savings. Mr. Dolman acknowledged only a few employees had achieved this, citing the largest payout of \$796,000 and the second-largest of \$458,000, though he emphasized employees also had other retirement accounts. Councilmember Bagby further noted that while Social Security rules have changed, its payments have never decreased and are indexed to inflation, unlike investments that can fluctuate in down years. Mr. Dolman reiterated concerns that without new contributions, the TSP would eventually become unsustainable and force investment shifts that would reduce returns for remaining participants.

Councilmember Schmidt stated that he could not support spending an additional three-quarters of a million dollars of taxpayer money on FRS, especially when employee salary increases were a greater concern. He emphasized that employee surveys showed limited buy-in and that the costs would reduce funds available for other city services. Councilmember Hebert echoed these concerns, noting that she did not believe there was sufficient staff support for such a significant change and felt it was not the council's role to make this decision for employees.

Motion failed 2-3 (Council members Bagby and Trammell voted “yes”; Council members Schmidt, Hebert, and Geile voted “no”; Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent.

- B. Second reading of proposed Ordinances 25-14-LC – Creation of Design Standards for Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV) Parking on City-Owned Property

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-14-LC

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA; CREATING DESIGN STANDARDS FOR LOW SPEED VEHICLE (“LSV”) PARKING; DEFINING LOW SPEED VEHICLES CONSISTENTLY WITH STATE LAW; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The mayor opened a public hearing to receive comments for or against the proposed ordinance. Having none, the mayor closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the city council for their discussion and consideration.

Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Hebert to adopt Ordinance 25-14-LC passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

6. COMMENTS / PRESENTATIONS FROM MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITY ATTORNEY

- A. Councilmember Braden
- B. Councilmember Trammell

Councilmember Trammell moved to direct staff to review parking within the Harbor CRA district and identify any potential opportunities for additional parking spaces. Motion seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 5-0. Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent.

Councilmember Trammell noted that at a recent Parks and Recreation Committee meeting, the committee raised the idea of exploring options for indoor pickleball facilities. She suggested that the vacant Joann’s Fabrics building, though located just outside the city, might be a potential site and asked if the legislative sponsor could reach out to the county or local athletic groups to gauge interest. The mayor, serving as the executive sponsor, agreed to follow up and noted that this idea had also been supported by a pickleball association representative. Councilmember Trammell pointed out that while the community center currently offers three indoor courts, the space is limited and heavily subsidized by the city, so a private business providing additional facilities would be beneficial.

- C. Councilmember Destin
- D. Councilmember Bagby
- E. Councilmember Hebert

Councilmember Hebert requested that the City Manager look into ways to improve enforcement and public awareness regarding the ordinance requiring garbage cans to be removed from the curb within 24 hours after trash pickup.

F. Councilmember Geile
1) Projects Status/Updates

Councilmember Geile moved to direct staff to seek potential options for generating revenue for the Harbor CRA so that the Harbor CRA can operate effectively. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Trammell and passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

Councilmember Geile requested that the topic “Raising the Speed Limit on Airport Road” be placed under his name on the next council meeting agenda.

G. Councilmember Schmidt
1) 446 Calhoun Avenue Property for Parking

Councilmember Schmidt discussed the city’s parking needs, introducing the possibility of acquiring a parcel at 446 Calhoun Avenue, adjacent to Threadgill Park. He explained that the property had become available again, and its purchase could support parking expansion for the park and potentially other nearby access points. While acknowledging possible challenges such as wetlands and drainage, Councilmember Schmidt suggested that the parking fund – holding more than \$2 million – could serve as a funding source. He added that the current tenant on the property could provide rental income during any design phase.

Councilmember Geile supported the effort but also recommended looking into converting an easement on the north side of Hickory as an additional parking option without wetland issues. The council then discussed details about drainage challenges and how wetlands might affect both the appraisal and purchase negotiations. The City Attorney and staff clarified that appraisals typically account for such conditions, and the council would still have final approval on any purchase. Councilmember Geile also noted that even if wetlands were present, the city could designate other unused properties as wetlands to mitigate the impact, thereby still making the project feasible.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to direct the City Attorney to negotiate a purchase agreement for the parcel at 446 Calhoun Avenue within reason of the city’s appraisal, and to have the City Manager work with staff on any limitations, wetland issues, and cost estimates to bring the parcel into use as a parking lot. The motion also included staff simultaneously evaluating the potential of converting the drainage easement across the street for parking. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 5-0 (Councilmember Braden had departed the meeting, and Councilmember Destin was absent).

2) Interlocal Agreement with Okaloosa County School District and Crossing Guard Update.

The Deputy Parks & Recreation Director reported that staff is currently working on finalizing the lease agreement with the school district. A separate agreement will be established regarding the crossing guard, in coordination with the school board and its designated safety representative. Once all documents are completed, they will be compiled and provided to the City Manager as well as to the council for review.

3) Destin Little League Contributions and Match Request.

Mr. Matthew Dolman, Treasurer of the Destin Little League (DLL) Board, presented a proposal requesting the city’s partnership on two major improvement projects at Threadgill Park: the upgrade of field lighting and the installation of synthetic turf on the infields. Mr. Dolman

explained that the organization had raised significant funds through sponsorships and registrations and secured a generous in-kind donation from Eagle LED (also referred to as EA Lighting), who offered to donate all lighting fixtures and equipment for the park. The value of the donation was approximately \$60,000. The only cost to the city would be an estimated \$22,000 for the installation of the lights. DLL proposed to contribute \$100,000 in funding toward both lighting and turf improvements and requested the City to match that contribution to jointly fund the entire \$300,000 project.

The second part of DLL's request involved the installation of synthetic turf on the infields of the two main fields at Threadgill Park. Mr. Dolman cited the growing trend toward turf in similar facilities across the Southeast, particularly for infields, due to improved drainage, reduced maintenance, and better year-round usability. The quote provided was approximately \$229,000–\$230,000 for turfing both infields, with ForeverLawn identified as the turf vendor.

The proposal was met with a mix of support and concern from the Council. Council members expressed gratitude for DLL's initiative and funding commitment but raised questions about the scope and timing of the project, particularly the turf portion. Councilmember Trammell asked if DLL had considered other lighting vendors, like Musco Lighting, to match existing infrastructure. Staff clarified that Musco had provided a prior quote in the \$200,000–\$300,000 range, but no official RFP was issued since Eagle LED was offering a donation.

Questions were also raised about whether the lighting fixtures would match those used in other city parks and who would be responsible for ongoing maintenance. It was clarified that under the current lease arrangement, the city maintains the park, although DLL's assistance with installation would expedite the upgrade.

Concerns were voiced regarding the turf component, specifically around long-term maintenance, potential injury liability, and stormwater drainage. Councilmember Guile referenced a podcast in which professional athletes warned of the dangers of turf in football, prompting questions about whether the city would need to include liability waivers or other safeguards. City staff and the City Attorney explained that DLL's insurance, sovereign immunity protections, and existing agreements would provide coverage, but additional liability waivers could be explored. Councilmember Trammell also pointed out the importance of resolving stormwater drainage issues before installing turf, citing past instances where infrastructure work was done out of order, causing delays and unnecessary costs.

During the discussion, staff clarified that lighting improvements at Threadgill Park were already included in the City's 2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), with a budgeted amount of \$334,000 to replace eight lighting poles. Additionally, \$36,000 had been earmarked in the CIP for infield clay replacement—not turf—which was viewed as a maintenance-level improvement. Any installation of synthetic turf would require additional funding from another source.

This prompted council discussion of leveraging the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), a state grant program that could reimburse up to \$400,000 in recreational facility improvements. The mayor and council members noted that projects like the one proposed by DLL, which involve nonprofit partnerships and fall within designated improvement districts, would score well under the program's points-based application system. While the FRDAP application deadline was approaching (September 30), the project could potentially begin now and be reimbursed later. It was noted that this could provide a way to reduce the city's actual expenditure.

Councilman Geile made a motion directing staff to ensure compliance with all ordinances and league requirements, while the city and the Destin Little League would each contribute 50 percent of the costs for both the lighting improvements and the turfing of the infields. This motion also included direction for the city to pursue a FRDAP grant for possible reimbursement of the project expenses. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert.

During further discussion, Councilmember Bagby expressed concern that the turf installation had not undergone a formal bidding process and proposed a substitute motion.

Councilman Bagby offered a substitute motion to approve splitting only the cost of the lighting installation, with the city covering up to 50 percent of the estimated \$22,000, and to direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the turf installation to seek competitive bids. Substitute motion was seconded by Councilmember Trammell.

Councilmember Schmidt noted that he is an unpaid board member of the nonprofit; and so to avoid the appearance of impropriety, he's withholding from voting

The substitute motion failed 2-3 (Council members Bagby and Trammell voted “yes”; Council members Geile, Hebert, and Braden voted “no”; Councilmember Schmidt abstained from voting; Councilmember Destin was absent).

Councilmember Geile’s Original Motion: Direct staff to ensure compliance with all ordinances and league requirements, while the city and the Destin Little League would each contribute 50 percent of the costs for both the lighting improvements and the turfing of the infield; and to direct the city to pursue a FRDAP grant for possible reimbursement of the project expenses.

Councilmember Schmidt announced that he is an unpaid board member of the nonprofit; and so to avoid the appearance of impropriety, he's withholding from voting

Motion passed 5-0 (Councilmember Schmidt abstained from voting and Councilmember Destin was absent).

Next, the mayor recommends referring the project to the Parks and Recreation Committee to review the lighting and turf proposal and provide feedback in support of the FRDAP grant application.

Councilmember Braden moved to bring the turf concept and the FRDAP grant proposal to the Parks and Recreation Committee for information and support of the grant application process, seconded by Councilmember Hebert. Motion passed 6-0.

Next item discussed was agenda item 4A - Livery Registration Discussion

H. Mayor Wagner

1) Pompano Beach Access Concern - ECL Violation

The mayor raised concerns about beachfront property owners and vendors at the Pompano Beach access encroaching 10-30 feet past the State-established Erosion Control Line (ECL), which legally defines public beach access. He noted that this overreach – particularly by a known beach chair rental company – restricts public use of the beach and creates a negative image for Destin.

The mayor asked the council and staff to ensure that code enforcement or direct outreach addresses this issue, potentially through updated surveys, discussions with vendors and

homeowners' associations, or additional signage. He requested that the council support efforts to reclaim the public beach space west of the Tarpon Beach access and ensure vendors remain behind the ECL, so residents and visitors can fully enjoy the expanded public shoreline.

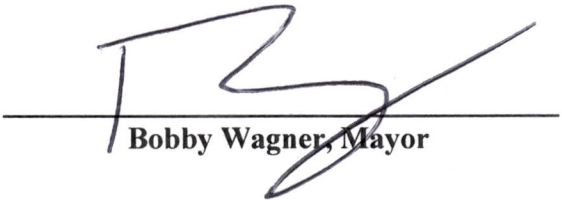
I. City Attorney

1) **Call for Executive Session in CITY OF DESTIN V. KYLE M. COLEMAN dba KYLE COLEMAN ICE CREAM aka GULF STREAM ICE CREAM, OHANA GELATOS LLC; and WOUNDED WARRIOR COMMISSARY, LLC to be held on September 3, 2025, at 5:30 PM.**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 PM.



Bobby Wagner, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rey Bailey, City Clerk

APPOINTED OFFICERS (continued)

- A copy of the form must be provided immediately to the other members of the agency.
- The form must be read publicly at the next meeting after the form is filed.

IF YOU MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE DECISION EXCEPT BY DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING:

- You must disclose orally the nature of your conflict in the measure before participating.
- You must complete the form and file it within 15 days after the vote occurs with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who must incorporate the form in the minutes. A copy of the form must be provided immediately to the other members of the agency, and the form must be read publicly at the next meeting after the form is filed.

DISCLOSURE OF LOCAL OFFICER'S INTEREST

I, Kevin Schmidt, hereby disclose that on 8/18, 2025:

(a) A measure came or will come before my agency which (check one)

- inured to my special private gain or loss;
- inured to the special gain or loss of my business associate, _____;
- inured to the special gain or loss of my relative, _____;
- inured to the special gain or loss of _____, by whom I am retained; or
- inured to the special gain or loss of _____, which is the parent organization or subsidiary of a principal which has retained me.

(b) The measure before my agency and the nature of my conflicting interest in the measure is as follows:

Vote was to have City match Destin Little League funding for certain improvements to baseball fields at a city park. I am an uncompensated member of the governing board of the Destin Little League non-profit organization, as well as a City Council Member. Per Commission on Ethics Opinion 21-7 (6-4-2021), I am abstaining from the vote per section 286.012, Fla. Stat. when there appears to be a possible voting conflict in the interest of fostering transparency in government.

8/18/25
Date Filed

[Signature]
Signature

NOTICE: UNDER PROVISIONS OF FLORIDA STATUTES §112.317, A FAILURE TO MAKE ANY REQUIRED DISCLOSURE CONSTITUTES GROUNDS FOR AND MAY BE PUNISHED BY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING: IMPEACHMENT, REMOVAL OR SUSPENSION FROM OFFICE OR EMPLOYMENT, DEMOTION, REDUCTION IN SALARY, REPRIMAND, OR A CIVIL PENALTY NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000.