

**REGULAR MEETING  
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 15, 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 Dewey Destin  
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  
Deputy Comm Dev Director Steve O'Connor  
Senior Planner Jesse Hernandez

City Clerk Rey Bailey  
Public Works Director Michael Burgess  
Public Information Director Tamara Young  
City Engineer Robert Tomasek  
Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth  
Comm Dev Director David Prichard  
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**

**Motion by Councilmember Hebert, seconded by Councilmember Geile, to approve the agenda passed 7-0.**

- 1. PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/SPECIAL/PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Carolyn Yvos, a condo owner at Sundestin, expressed frustration over the passage of a short-term rental registration ordinance (Ordinance 24-23-CC). She stated that her husband sent a letter of disagreement to the city back in March, but no vote was held, and the ordinance was passed without their input. She emphasized that they, as out-of-state owners from Mississippi, were not notified of any public meetings or the ordinance prior to receiving a recent postcard about the new

fees. She described the process as unfair and questioned whether this was the correct and legal way to implement such changes, especially when many condo owners were unaware.

Ms. Sheridan Gibson, a resident of Destin, addressed concerns about the city's overall decline in beautification, particularly along the Destin Harbor where she walks daily. She described the conditions as "atrocious" and disappointing given the city's importance as a tourist destination. Gibson questioned the budget allocation for maintenance and beautification and asked who to speak with regarding city funding priorities. In response, city officials informed her about the budgeting process and encouraged her to participate in strategic planning sessions, consider joining a city committee, or email the council directly to share her concerns.

Ms. Eva Rodriguez, who lives on Gulf Shore Drive, voiced two major concerns. First, she spoke about ongoing trash and cleanliness issues along her street. She and her husband regularly clean up trash themselves, including diapers, fishing debris, and overflowing trash bins. Despite calling the city weekly, they have seen no improvement and are unsure who to escalate the issue to. Second, she echoed her mother's complaints about the short-term rental registration ordinance. She stated they received no notice before the ordinance passed and only learned about it the day of the meeting. She described the process as "taxation without representation," adding that condo owners already pay substantial taxes and should not be subjected to additional surprise fees. She felt the ordinance was passed in a "sly" and non-transparent way. Rodriguez also asked for an update on Noriega Point, which had been closed since Labor Day, and requested more information on when it would reopen.

Mr. Steve Napier, a local resident, shared a broader concern about civic responsibility and respect for local governance. He criticized a previous council meeting where, after passing a resolution about Facebook and social media conduct, a question was raised about what the consequences would be for violating it. He stated that he found this disrespectful, stating that once the council votes on and passes a resolution, it should carry enforceable consequences. He urged the city to implement stronger accountability and encouraged citizens to be more involved in local government, referencing his father's sacrifice as a prisoner of war as a reminder of the cost of American freedoms.

### **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Resolution 25-19: 41st Annual Christmas Parade
- B. Official Name of Norriego Point Park - Resolution 25-09
- C. 2025 Destin Seafood Festival, Use of City Parking Lots
- D. 4133 Belcourt Dr, Residential Marine Construction, HWB-001654-2025
- E. Approval of minutes of August 18, 2025. Regular City Council Meeting

**Motion by Councilmember Hebert, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to approve Consent Agenda items 3A to 3E, as printed above, passed 7-0.**

### **4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

- A. Food for Thought — Request to Renew Lease

The City Manager introduced the matter of the lease for the city-owned building at 908 Airport Road, currently occupied by Food For Thought Outreach, Inc., a nonprofit that provides food to children in Okaloosa County. The original five-year lease, which began in March 2020, expired in March 2025 with an option for a five-year renewal. However, the organization missed the deadline to formally request the renewal. Despite this, conversations had since occurred with

Tiffany Nelson, the Executive Director, who was present to request an extension or renewal of the lease under the existing terms.

Ms. Nelson then explained the mission and impact of Food For Thought. She shared the organization's origin story, starting in 2010 when she was a single mother, and how it has since grown to serve over 3,600 children across two counties through partnerships with 36 schools. She emphasized the transformative effect the Airport Road location had on their operations, allowing them to establish roots and nearly double their capacity. She acknowledged the lease renewal oversight but reaffirmed the organization's commitment to the location and requested a continuation of the lease to fulfill their mission. She also noted the support they receive from the community, including volunteer hours and in-kind donations such as lawn care services.

Council members responded with strong support expressing appreciation for the site visit and the valuable services provided. Councilmember Braden praised the organization's work and emphasized his commitment to supporting it, although he noted that Destin may not receive broad recognition for hosting a hub serving two counties. Ms. Nelson assured him that the city's support is acknowledged and celebrated. Councilmember Schmidt mentioned his role in bringing the missed renewal to attention and stressed its importance. Councilmember Hebert recounted her personal volunteer experience and praised the program's discreet method of providing food to children in need. The mayor and council members commended the compassionate and empathetic way the organization serves the children, especially the discreet backpack delivery model that preserves the dignity of recipients.

**Councilmember Trammell moved to extend the lease agreement for Food for Thought under the same terms and conditions through March 1, 2030. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 7-0.**

#### B. E-Bikes Update

The City Manager announced that although a draft ordinance had originally been anticipated for presentation at this meeting, it has been postponed. The Okaloosa County Health Improvement Partnership is holding a meeting on October 1st to address the topic of e-bikes, and the city expects that the county may act or draft an ordinance that the city could use as a model. The city will have representation at this meeting and will gather the information presented. Following the meeting, staff will bring forward a recommendation through the Public Works/Public Safety Committee. The City Manager emphasized that this approach ensures coordination with the county's efforts before moving forward.

The City Manager provided an informational update regarding the ebike ordinance. A draft ordinance had been expected for the current meeting, but further action has been delayed. The delay is due to an upcoming meeting on October 1st hosted by the Okaloosa County Health Improvement Partnership, where ebikes will be a key topic. The city anticipates the county may draft its own ordinance, which could serve as a model to ensure consistency between city and county regulations. City representatives will attend the meeting, and any recommendations will be brought back through the Public Works and Public Safety Committee. The goal is to align enforcement and policy across jurisdictions before finalizing a city ordinance. No immediate action is required from the council at this time.

#### C. Code of Ethics for Officials — Update

The City Manager reported that, following a previous discussion about adopting a code of ethics, the city obtained Jacksonville Beach's code of ethics for elected officials last week. Copies have

been provided to council members for reference. The City Manager and City Attorney are currently reviewing the document, comparing it to Destin's city charter and existing resolutions, and will bring a customized version back for the council's future consideration.

D. 446 Calhoun – Update

**Councilmember Schmidt made a motion to direct the City Manager and City Attorney to execute a Florida Bar Contract to purchase the property located at 446 Calhoun Avenue for \$400,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert but failed by a 1–6 vote, with Councilmember Schmidt casting the lone affirmative vote.**

During the discussion, council members inquired about the number of parking spaces that could be created on the site, with an estimate of approximately 70 spaces. Concerns were raised about stormwater management, the steep grade of the property, and whether a gravel lot would be feasible, or if paving and extensive grading would be necessary. Suggestions were made to explore alternative materials such as permeable concrete or pavers, which could help reduce stormwater retention requirements and potentially increase parking capacity. Cost was a significant point of concern, with improvement estimates ranging from \$500,000 to \$600,000, prompting questions about dedicating nearly half of the parking fund's \$2 million balance to a single project. Council members also discussed alternative parking opportunities along Hickory Street and Calhoun Avenue as options to evaluate. Additional concerns were raised regarding the need to notify adjacent property owners and the potential impacts of installing lighting in the proposed parking lot. Several council members requested the opportunity to review the property's appraisal, engineering report, title review (including any encroachment issues), and a formal cost estimate before making a final decision.

**Councilmember Destin moved to direct the City Manager to engage one of the city's continuing contract engineers to prepare a plan showing the maximum number of parking spaces that could be constructed on the 446 Calhoun property, as well as to evaluate additional parking opportunities along Hickory Street and Calhoun Avenue so the council could compare options. The motion also specified that if the cost of the engineering work exceeded the city manager's spending authority, it must be brought back to the council for approval. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 5-2, with Council members Schmidt and Braden dissenting.**

E. Property and Casualty Insurance – Update

The City Manager provided an update regarding the city's property and casualty insurance renewal, which also covers workers' compensation. At the last meeting, a 5% rate increase – about \$28,000 – had been approved. However, thanks to the efforts of the HR staff, particularly HR Director Jamie Haynes, they were able to secure an 8% rate reduction instead. This change will save the city approximately \$44,000 compared to last year's rate. The council expressed gratitude to the HR Director for her work in achieving this savings.

F. Minutes of Standing Board/Committees — Informational Only

G. Announcements

- 1) The Destin Seafood Festival will take place September 26–28 and will kick off the Destin Fishing Rodeo, which runs throughout the entire month of October.
- 2) As part of Florida City Week, the City of Destin will host its annual City Open House on Wednesday, October 22, at the Destin Community Center. The event

will feature a Mardi Gras theme, with a free lunch starting at 11:30 a.m. This is an opportunity for city staff to thank citizens and community members, and several partners—including the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, Waste Management, Destin Fire, Destin Water Users, the Chamber, and others—will have informational tables set up. The city will also provide its annual shred truck service, available at City Hall from 9 to 11 a.m. and at the community center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- 3) City's Christmas Parade is scheduled for Saturday, December 13, at 10 a.m. This year's theme is "Seashells and Sleigh Bells," and applications for those wishing to enter a float in the parade are now available at the community center.

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Second reading of Ordinance 25-20-CN - Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Millage Rate25

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-20-CN by title and then presented it to the city council on second reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE CITY OF DESTIN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026; 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 discussion and consideration.

**Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to adopt Ordinance 25-20-CN on second reading adopting a proposed Fiscal Year 2026 millage rate of 1.6150 mills which is more than the rollback rate of 1.5463 by 4.44% passed 6-1, with Councilmember Schmidt dissenting.**

- B. Second reading of Ordinance 25-21-CN - Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-21-CN by title and then presented it to the city council on second reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN EXPENDITURES, EXPENSES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND CERTAIN INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026; 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 discussion and consideration.

**Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to adopt Ordinance 25-21-CN on second reading to provide for a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2026 passed 7-0.**

- C. Second reading of Ordinance 25-05-CC - Relating to livery vessels; amending Chapter 13, Article VIII "Registration of livery vessels" of the city Code of Ordinances; amending provisions related to transferability of permits; providing for additional required training and safety measures.

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-05-CC by title and then presented it to the city council on second reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA RELATING TO LIVERY VESSELS; AMENDING ARTICLE VIII "REGISTRATION OF LIVERY VESSELS" OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES; AMENDING PROVISIONS RELATED TO TRANSFERABILITY OF PERMITS; PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIRED TRAINING AND SAFETY MEASURES; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT; 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 discussion and consideration.

**Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to adopt Ordinance 25-05-CC on second reading passed 7-0.**

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

### **A. Councilmember Braden**

Councilmember Braden addressed the process for presentations at council meetings. He observed that in the past, presentations were listed on the agenda, but recently they have been occurring under the city manager's report without prior notice. He expressed concern that if multiple councilmembers and the city manager invite presenters without agenda listings, meetings could become excessively long. He suggested reinstating a process where presentations are included on the agenda so councilmembers and the public are aware in advance of who will be speaking and what topics will be discussed.

The City Attorney confirmed that the council is responsible for setting its own procedures and recommended circulating the council's existing procedures resolution to members via email for review. This would allow councilmembers to suggest changes or discuss revisions with the city manager and attorney before the next meeting. The attorney further noted that the resolution could be brought back to the next council meeting for consideration, at which time the council could add language requiring presentations to be placed on the agenda and establish appropriate time limits, such as a 10-minute maximum for each presenter.

### **B. Councilmember Trammell**

Councilmember Trammell spoke about Destin High School's fishing class and its partnership with Okaloosa County in building artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico. She shared that she had recently placed a memorial reef for her husband and expressed gratitude to Alex Fogg from the county for spearheading the program. She explained that the cost to place a reef is approximately \$3,500, with families paying \$1,000 for a memorial reef and the county covering the remainder. She highlighted the involvement of Destin High School, led by Mike Parker, which organized fundraisers for many fishermen who also had reefs placed. She described a unique memorial reef created by a couple from Ohio in memory of their son that included skateboards, BB

guns, and deer antlers, calling the project one that Destin can be proud of. She noted that the reef site is located in 60 feet of water, making it accessible for both diving and recreational fishing, and encouraged the city to voice its support for the program whenever possible.

#### C. Councilmember Destin

Councilmember Destin requested a report for the next meeting on the status of business license collections. Specifically,

- The number of business licenses for which payment has been successfully collected.
- The percentage of overall licenses that have been collected.

He expressed concern over the current process for business license applications, noting that there appears to be no pre-population of license data. He also commented that, based on his understanding, every applicant is required to apply as though they are a new licensee, which he found surprising and inefficient.

Councilmember Destin requested confirmation that the city council is receiving all motions made by advisory committees. He asked that staff, under the direction of the City Manager, verify that no motions are being missed and that all committee recommendations are properly transmitted to the council.

#### D. Councilmember Bagby

Councilmember Bagby asked for a public update on the status of Norriego Point project:

Staff/City Attorney update: The project was deemed substantially complete about a week ago, beginning the 30-day punch list period. After this, the adjacent private property owner must complete landscaping, irrigation, and the final asphalt lift for the road and parking area. They currently have the project completion by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Bagby announced that the city will receive its first batch of data from the Florida Department of Revenue regarding short-term rental owners and property addresses. The goal is to analyze missing and new data and report findings by the next council meeting in October.

Councilmember Bagby requested an update on condo milestone inspections required by law for building 30-plus years old.

The Deputy Community Development Director provided the following updates:

- 51 total reports required, 48 have been submitted.
- Three are still outstanding.
  - Two were returned due to invalid email contacts.

Councilmember Bagby stressed the importance of compliance to avoid city liability and asked staff to send him the names of the three non-compliant condos so he could help contact their managers.

E. Councilmember Hebert

Councilmember Hebert explained that she personally observed a boater at Joe's Bayou who was about to launch without paying. She reminded him of the \$25 honor box fee, and he eventually agreed to pay. Councilmember Hebert asked if the city could use the new cameras to track people who fail to pay, including verifying license plates, and whether the cameras could be used to monitor such violations.

The Parks & Rec Director clarified that the cameras do not track vehicles or follow them around to verify payment. Additionally, some boaters have pre-purchased stickers that exempt them from paying at the honor box, which would make camera monitoring less straightforward. She mentioned that new parking cameras will be part of future improvements, which will help enforce compliance more effectively.

Councilmember Hebert relayed questions from residents asking why money were spent on another pier/bridge project when Joe's Bayou needs attention.

The Grants/Project Manager explained that the county is leading the Joe's Bayou upgrade project. Permitting is at the 60% design stage and will progress to 90% before bidding the project. He cautioned that construction may not begin next year due to permitting delays. He will get an updated schedule from the county or DEP for a clearer timeline.

Councilmember Hebert requested that an update on Joe's Bayou's permitting and construction timeline be placed on the agenda for the next meeting so residents can be informed of the project's status.

F. Councilmember Geile

**Councilmember Geile moved to approve the expenditure of no more than \$20,000 from the City Council Contingency Fund to refurbish the basketball courts at Buck Destin Park. The refurbishment will include filling cracks, leveling, recoating, and related repairs. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 7-0.**

Councilmember Geile asked to include his appointment of a member to the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee on the next council meeting agenda.

F. Councilmember Schmidt

Councilmember Schmidt praised the Parks & Rec Director and her staff for their excellent work maintaining the Destin Elementary School football field. He noted that after traveling to other cities for pee-wee football games, the Destin field stood out for being significantly nicer and well-kept. He shared a personal anecdote about his seven-year-old expressing excitement and pride upon arriving at Destin's first home game, reinforcing how well-maintained the field is compared to others.

Councilmember Schmidt shared that he is taking a new approach to life and encouraging others to reflect on James 1:19, which calls for being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. He emphasized the importance of applying this principle daily and in council work, acknowledging that while members may not always agree, working together for the good of the city is crucial. He expressed his commitment to improving in this area and looks forward to serving for several more years.

H. Mayor Wagner

I. City Attorney

- 1) Pursuant to Section 286.011(8), Florida Statutes, the City Attorney desires the advice of counsel at an executive session on October 6, 2025 at 5:30 PM in the following litigation: 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; Case No. 2025-CA-002412A0010F, in the Circuit Court of Okaloosa County, Florida. Present at the litigation will be the City Attorney Kimberly Kopp, Litigation Counsel William Warner, City Manager Larry Jones, the Mayor and all members of the City Council.

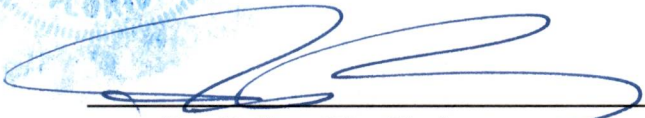
**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.**



**ATTEST:**

  
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**Rey Bailey, City Clerk**

  
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**Dewey Destin, Mayor Pro Tem**