

**REGULAR MEETING
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 20, 2026
ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:00 PM**

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 Terésa Hebert
Councilmember Sandy Trammell

Councilmember Dewey Destin
Councilmember Jim Bagby
Councilmember Rodney Braden

Destin City Staff

City Manager Larry Jones
Projects/Grants/Contract Manager Jeffrey Cozadd
Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth
Public Information Director Tamara Young
Public Works Director Michael Burgess
Community Development Director Tina Deater
HR Director Jamie Haynes
City Attorney Kimberly Kopp

City Clerk Rey Bailey (Outgoing)
City Clerk Lisa Wallace (Incoming)
Building Official Noell Bell
City Engineer Robert Tomesek
Finance Director Krystal Strickland
IT Director Andy Peters

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

Agenda item 4F – *Crab Island Dolphin Tours Request* was pulled from the agenda.

Motion by Councilmember Hebert, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to approve the agenda, as amended, passed 5-0. (Councilmember Schmidt was absent.)

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

A. Request to Increase Wrecker Fees - Stan Nikolov

A representative of local towing companies in Destin requested the City Council to increase towing fees for non-consensual/private property tows, noting rates haven't changed since 2022. They cited rising costs - especially fuel, truck prices, and insurance (increasing from \$66k to \$98k annually)—as major financial pressures. They also highlighted higher operating costs in Destin

compared to other areas and recent business closures. The proposed base towing fee would increase from \$175 to \$230, slightly higher than Okaloosa County's updated \$200 rate, to better reflect local expenses and sustain operations.

Councilmember Hebert asked about their current rate and the requested increase. Mr. Nikolov reported that the current base rate is \$175 and the proposed rate is \$230. Councilmember Hebert noted that the proposed rate for Destin is \$30 more than the one for Okaloosa County.

Councilmember Bagby noted for the record that some people appreciate having towing companies located in Destin, as it reduces long wait times for assistance. He acknowledged the benefit of quicker service and thanked the presenter for sharing his presentation.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ricky Lynn Grant Jr. addressed the council about an incident at the library. He claims he witnessed a high school girl dressed inappropriately speaking with a librarian about sexual topics. He says the situation escalated into him being accused of staring at women and eventually being trespassed from the library. He believes the situation was mishandled. Mr. Grant emphasized that he recently got out of prison, is trying to live independently, and does not want the situation to escalate.

The following candidates for Interim City Councilmember gave a brief statement about their qualifications and their reasons for seeking this appointment: John Stephens, Ryan Holloway, Alan Osborne, Chatham Morgan, Matthew Pace, and Ross Haynes. Mayor Wagner was very appreciative of the number of applicants seeking to serve the City of Destin.

Ms. Madison Wallace, a United States Coast Guard licensed captain and local charter business operator, addressed the Council regarding concerns with the City's regulation of bareboat charters. She stated that the City's classification of bareboat charters as livery conflicts with state and federal definitions, noting that such charters are recognized as a distinct and lawful operation when properly structured.

Ms. Wallace expressed concern that Destin is the only city in Florida to both classify bareboat charters as livery and cap the number of permits, which she stated limits compliant businesses without reducing congestion or improving safety. She emphasized that existing constraints such as slip availability and parking already regulate vessel activity.

She further noted that responsible operators using licensed captains are being restricted, while self-operated rentals remain widely available. She highlighted the economic and workforce impacts on local captains and emphasized the demand from visitors for captained experiences, particularly for larger groups.

Ms. Wallace requested that the Council consider revising the ordinance to align with state and federal law, provide a clear path to compliance, and support both safety and fair business practices.

Mr. Joe Fitzpatrick provided an update on an easement agreement reporting that comments have been received and responded to, and that the easement agreement is nearing finalization pending final review. He provided a handout for context but did not revisit prior details regarding the Indian Trail drainage concerns. He summarized his research, including a review of historical council actions, noting a consistent pattern of stormwater infrastructure directing drainage through the City's system. He stated that a culvert at the head of his property is identified as part of the City's MS4 system,

resulting in ongoing erosion and land loss where no easement or energy dissipation measures currently exist. Mr. Fitzpatrick indicated his desire to move toward resolution and inquired about next steps, including whether the City will initiate further study, engage an engineering firm, involve staff review, or hold a working session to determine a path forward. He expressed willingness to assist and meet to expedite the process.

Mr. Alan Osborne concurred with Ms. Wallace who spoke about bareboat charters and the conditions in the harbor adding that while federal and state regulations may permit certain activities, they often do not account for local conditions. Mr. Osborne suggested that future action may be needed, such as restricting or permitting commercial operators, to manage harbor capacity and prevent conflicts as usage continues to grow.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Request for Approval of Temporary Parking Fee Waiver at Marler Street Parking Lot for Destin High School Senior Activities
- B. Re-Striping of Commons Drive and a portion of Kelly Street
- C. Approval of minutes of April 7, 2026, Regular City Council meeting

Motion by Councilmember Hebert, seconded by Councilmember Trammell to approve Consent Agenda items 3A through 3C, passed 5-0.

4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- A. Appointment of Interim City Council Member

The City Manager explained that there were a total of 11 applicants who applied to fill the role of interim City Councilmember adding that their names and qualifications were provided in the Council packets. He further explained that the appointment will be from when they're sworn in at the next meeting to the November general election.

Councilmember Bagby moved to appoint Chatham Morgan as the Interim City Council Member, seconded by Councilmember Trammell. Motion passed 5-0.

- B. Update - Holiday Isle Park Property Recently Acquired by State of Florida

The City Manager reported that the Board of County Commissioners will consider the City's resolution requesting to serve as lessee and manager of the Holiday Isle Park property at their meeting scheduled for tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. The proposed management approach emphasizes minimal commercialization and consistency with the existing 14-acre park area. City Attorney Kopp added that based on prior discussions with County representatives, it is anticipated that the County may propose certain conditions for consideration.

Councilmember Hebert encouraged anyone who could attend to be at the meeting tomorrow including any prospective councilmembers. Mayor Wagner noted that he received widespread feedback from residents opposing what they perceive as county overreach and actions taken without sufficient public support and highlighted the importance of municipal government in advocating for residents and ensuring their voices are heard.

C. TDC FY27 Expenditure Plans for the Promotion of Tourism

The City Manager submitted a request to allocate funds as follows: \$750,000 for an advanced funding agreement payment, \$884,922 for beachfront park operations, and \$70,000 for beach access improvements. After these allocations, approximately \$1.2 million will remain available for future allocation.

Councilmember Bagby made a motion to prioritize the use of the remaining approximately \$1.2 to \$1.3 million in unallocated and unrequested funds and to submit a request that those funds be authorized for use by the City of Destin for improvements at Norriego Point, in addition to the three previously recommended funding requests. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 5-0.

D. RFB 26-01-PW, Community Center Roof Replacement, consideration of contract

The City Manager provided an update on the roof replacement contract previously awarded to ICE. At the prior meeting, Council requested clarification regarding warranty coverage. It was confirmed that the contractor will provide a 2-year workmanship warranty, and the manufacturer will provide a 20-year material warranty. Both warranties will take effect upon completion of the installation.

Councilmember Destin moved to approve the construction contract with Inland Construction & Engineering Inc. for RFB 26-01-PW, Community Center Roof, and to issue a full Notice to Proceed when materials are ready and the contractor is prepared to begin the project. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hebert and passed 5-0.

E. Resolution 26-07 Amending Thrift Plan

The City Manager reported that this amendment closes the plan to new participants, provides full vesting to all employees enrolled as of January 1, 2026, and allows current participants (approximately 20 employees) to continue in the plan with ongoing City matching contributions. This action represents the next phase of the plan, with additional updates anticipated in the future.

Councilmember Bagby moved to approve Resolution 26-07 amending the city's current Thrift Savings Plan document; seconded by Councilmember Hebert. Motion passed 5-0.

F. Crab Island Dolphin Tours Request

Consideration and discussion of this item have been postponed and will take place at the May 18 council meeting.

G. Capital Project Status - Informational Only

H. Operations Financial Report - Informational Only

I. Quarterly Investment Report - Informational Only

J. TDC Monthly Report - Informational Only

K. Minutes of Boards & Committees – Informational Only

L. Board and Committee Appointments – Informational Only

M. Announcements

- 1) The city received an engineering report addressing soundproofing, fencing, and landscaping along the Crosstown Connector; however, the report did not include an evaluation of safety concerns. Staff has requested that the engineer revisit the analysis and incorporate safety considerations, which may include adjustments such as additional trees or revised spacing. An updated report will be presented once it is completed.
- 2) Discussions with the school board regarding their health clinic are progressing positively and have led to additional opportunities for collaboration, including potential involvement with initiatives supported by the sheriff's association. Additionally, a constitutional officer is coordinating a meeting with the school board clinic representatives to explore the possibility of establishing an additional clinic. City staff will attend an upcoming meeting to gather further information and evaluate potential opportunities.
- 3) Staff met with Dr. Cherry to discuss ongoing concerns in the Crystal Beach area, particularly related to parking and short-term rentals. The city is evaluating possible solutions, including adjustments to staffing or resource allocation, improved identification of unregistered rentals, and enhanced signage to clearly communicate parking and occupancy limits. Enforcement actions have already been taken at 66 Cobia Street, where a cease-and-desist notice was issued for violations related to advertising and excessive parking. Staff will continue to monitor and address these concerns.
- 4) The Fire Department has reviewed the concerns and images presented at the previous meeting and is evaluating applicable fire code requirements, including access for stretchers and fire suppression equipment. They are currently assessing what actions may be necessary to ensure compliance and enforce safety standards.
- 5) The City Manager will be out during the first full week of May. During that time, meeting coverage will be provided by the City Attorney to ensure continuity of operations.
- 6) The city will host its Arbor Day celebration on April 24 at 10:00 a.m. at Buck Destin Park. The public is invited to attend and participate in the scheduled tree planting activities.
- 7) A ribbon cutting ceremony for Norriego Point will take place on April 28. Members of the public are invited to attend and participate in the event.
- 8) A town hall meeting will be held on May 14 at 5:00 p.m. at the Annex to provide an overview of the city's permitting and plan review processes. The meeting will also address compliance requirements, clarify procedures, and offer an open forum for contractors to ask questions and provide feedback. Invitations have been distributed to many local contractors to encourage participation.
- 9) Significant progress has been made on the pickleball courts, including the installation of restroom facilities and the completion of asphalt work for the courts. The project remains on schedule, with completion anticipated by the end of May.
- 10) The City successfully hosted its first vertical oyster garden workshop, with over 30 participants in attendance and more than 75 oyster gardens constructed. Appreciation was extended to CBA for their partnership and to John Stephens for sharing his expertise and experience with oyster gardens.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Second reading of Ordinance 26-13-LC - Amending Section 11.05.00, "Marina Siting" of the Land Development Code to require staff level review of single-family residential docks; removing the requirement for review by Harbor and Waterways Board of single-family residential docks; and removing the requirement for city council review of single-family residential docks.

Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Hebert to adopt Ordinance 26-113-LC on second reading passed 5-0.

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

- A. Councilmember Braden
- B. Councilmember Trammell

Councilmember Trammell asked about the status of the Beach Dr./4th St. Right-of-Way. The City Manager requested an opportunity for staff to look into it and report back to Council.

- B. Councilmember Destin
- C. Councilmember Bagby

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to add the tow truck fees discussion to the next meeting agenda along with more comparisons (Crestview, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville were suggested). The motion passed 5-0.

Councilman Bagby encouraged the candidates who were not selected to apply for vacancies on City boards and committees, noting multiple openings, including the Board of Adjustment and Harbor and Waterways Board. He emphasized that serving on a committee provides valuable insight into City operations and is an important way to get involved.

Councilmember Bagby then announced he will submit his resignation tonight to the City Clerk, Rey Bailey, as he pursues a campaign for Walton County Commissioner. He stated he will remain in his position through the first two budget workshops to fulfill his commitment to fiscal responsibility, after which he will step down and ask the Council to appoint a replacement. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve the City of Destin and its residents.

- D. Councilmember Hebert

Councilmember Hebert encouraged continued involvement from the interim council candidates noting that another member will be selected in approximately two months. She urged attendees to stay engaged and attend the upcoming BCC meetings to better understand community participation.

Councilmember Hebert inquired about the status of the "Welcome to Destin" sign that had been ordered the previous year, specifically whether it had been removed from storage and installed. Following discussion, she requested that staff schedule the installation as an annual task to occur on April 1 each year.

E. Councilmember Schmidt

F. Mayor Wagner

Mayor Wagner reported feedback from multiple board chairs and committee members expressing uncertainty about next steps after completing work plans. Despite improved processes following recent training, there is confusion between staff and boards regarding responsibility for advancing items and asking for a clear outline of next actionable steps. Some discussion followed and Councilmember Trammell reported that items requiring budget allocations should be provided to their staff liaison to be submitted as recommendations during the budget process. Further discussion followed. Mayor Wagner then thanked everyone for providing education on the topic.

G. City Attorney

City Attorney Kopp reported that the City will be closing on 446 Calhoun on Wednesday.

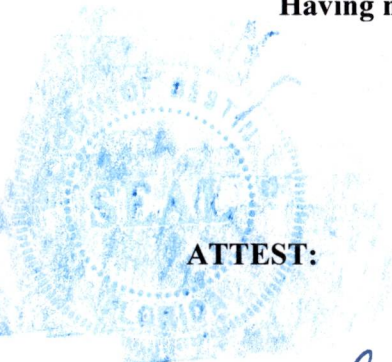
7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. John Stephens talked about next steps with the committee work plans noting that while he can estimate costs at a general level, he is unable to determine precise costs. He stated that additional support is needed to move work plans beyond the preliminary stage and fully develop them.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 PM.

ATTEST:



Lisa Wallace

Lisa Wallace, City Clerk


Bobby Wagner, Mayor