



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING APRIL 21, 2026 2:00 P.M.

The City of Madeira Beach Board of Commissioners held a special meeting at 2:00 p.m. on April 21, 2026, in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor
Eddie McGeehen, Vice Mayor/Commissioner District 3
David Tagliarini, Commissioner District 1
Charles "Chuck" Dillon, Commissioner District 2
Housh Ghovae, Commissioner District 4

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

CHARTER OFFICERS PRESENT: Clint Belk, Acting City Manager
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk
Thomas Trask, City Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brooks called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Clara VanBlargan called the roll. All were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. CITY MANAGER EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT – MICHAEL HELFRICH

A. City Manager Employment Agreement – Michael Helfrich

The City Attorney provided a comprehensive overview of the draft agreement's key terms. He noted a couple of blanks in the agreement that need to be filled out. The blanks are the date of today's meeting, the date the candidate will take office as city manager, and the three-year termination date from the start date.

- The agreement is for an initial three-year term.

- The agreement sets an annual starting salary of \$185,000, with a provision for review after six months of employment. If Helfrich satisfactorily completes the six-month probationary period, his salary would increase to \$190,000 annually. If the Commission fails to conduct the evaluation within seven months, the salary increase becomes automatic.
- The benefits package includes the same benefits provided to all city employees, with 25 workdays of vacation leave annually and an advance of 10 vacation workdays in the initial year of employment, which would be charged against future accruals.
- The City will pay 100 percent of health, dental, and vision insurance premiums for Helfrich and his dependents, as well as provide long-term disability coverage and a term life insurance policy equal to his annual salary.
- Additional provisions include 12 sick leave days per calendar year, a \$600 monthly vehicle allowance, City contributions to his retirement plan, and an annual City budget of \$6,000 for professional travel, conferences, and seminars. The City will also cover professional dues and subscriptions.
- The termination provision on page 4 of 6 of the agreement specifies that if terminated without cause, Helfrich would receive 20 weeks of severance pay, whereas termination for cause would result in no severance.
- Performance evaluations will occur at the six-month mark and annually thereafter.
- The City will provide a cellular telephone, a laptop computer, and other necessary technology, and maintain a blanket bond and a liability insurance policy, but will not provide moving expenses, relocation costs, or temporary housing.
- The agreement requires Helfrich to adhere to the ICMA code of ethics as a condition of employment.

Mayor Brooks opened public comment.

Bill Karns, 400 150th Avenue, Madeira Beach, thanked Chief Belk for his hard work during the transition and expressed appreciation for assistance with several ongoing projects. Mr. Karns welcomed Mike Helfrich to the City, stating that he believes Helfrich will be a great addition to the organization.

Mayor Brooks recommended that Helfrich begin his employment with the City the following morning (April 22, 2026), noting that conversations with the new city manager confirmed his readiness to start immediately.

Commissioner Tagliarini identified a minor typographical error in the agreement, noting the absence of "BOC" references on page 4, in Paragraph A, Charter Process and Due Process Hearing, and in Paragraph B, Termination and Severance, within Section 7, Suspension, Termination, and Severance Conditions. The City Attorney confirmed that the corrections will be made.

Commissioner Dillon raised questions about the six-month evaluation period, recalling previous discussions about a three-month review instead of six months, but indicated acceptance of the six-month timeline. He also expressed initial concern about the immediate start date but noted that he received an email yesterday indicating that Helfrich had requested a one-on-one meeting tomorrow, which alleviated his concerns about getting to know the new manager.

Commissioner Ghovae inquired about the contract's consistency with other city manager contracts on the beaches. The City Attorney explained that this agreement was based on the previous city manager, Robin Gomez's, contract, with some tweaks, but it had not been compared to other beach city contracts.

Commissioner Ghovae sought clarification on the six-month evaluation process, asking what would happen if the Commission was not satisfied with Helfrich's performance after six months. The City Attorney explained that the \$190,000 is not automatic. The salary would remain at \$185,000, or the Commission could terminate the city manager, with or without cause, with the corresponding severance implications.

Vice Mayor McGeehen expressed appreciation for Helfrich's joining the organization and stated that he looked forward to working with him.

Commissioner Dillon moved to approve the employment agreement for Michael Helfrich, as stated, with a start date of the following day (April 22, 2026). Vice Mayor McGeehen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Dillon	"YES"
Vice Mayor McGeehen	"YES"
Commissioner Ghovae	"YES"
Commissioner Tagliarini	"YES"
Mayor Brooks	"YES"

The motion carried 5-0.

5. RESPOND TO PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

The Mayor said there were no public comments to address.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Before adjournment, Mayor Brooks thanked Chief Belk for his service during the transitional period and acknowledged his work with the Commission, the City, and all employees. It was appreciated.

The Mayor also wished Belk a happy birthday, noting that Friday was Belk's birthday. Chief Belk said it was a great birthday present and that he was happy to return to the Fire Department.

Mayor Brooks adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

Anne-Marie Brooks, Mayor

Clara VanBlargan, MMC, FCPC, MSM, City Clerk