



**MINUTES**  
**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING**  
**APRIL 20, 2026**  
**4:45 P.M.**

The City of Madeira Beach Civil Service Commission meeting was scheduled for 4:45 p.m. on April 20, 2026, in the Patricia Shontz Commission Chambers at City Hall, located at 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jerry Cantrell, Chair/Commissioner  
Judithanne McLauchlan, Commissioner  
Scott Haufe, Commissioner  
Clara VanBlargan, Ex-Officio Secretary

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** James “Jim” Paul, Vice Chair/Commissioner  
Paul Tilka, Commissioner

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:** Clint Belk, Acting City Manager/Fire Chief  
Attorney Rob Eschenfelder, Trask Daigneault, L.L.P.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Jerry Cantrell called the meeting to order at 4:46 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Clara VanBlargan called the roll. Vice Chair Paul and Commissioner Tilka were absent.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. 12-02-2025, Civil Service Commission Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner McLauchlan motioned to approve the Civil Service Commission Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Haufe. The motion carried 3-0.

**5. HR REPORT**

The HR Report was provided to the Civil Service Commission at the meeting. It was not included in their meeting packet.

Chief Belk indicated there was nothing in the HR report that needed to be covered at this time. There were no comments made by the Commission.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Employee Safety and Incident-Response Protocols**

Chair Cantrell presented a letter he had written to Chief Belk, included in the meeting packet, regarding ongoing harassment and safety issues involving city parking and code enforcement employees. He explained that incidents had been occurring for over a year, with the most recent occurring approximately three months prior and a more aggressive incident over a year ago involving physical contact.

Chief Belk confirmed the timeline and explained that after learning of the issues in a casual conversation with the parking supervisor, he held a meeting with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, the parking supervisor, and staff. They established policies, including zero tolerance for physical contact, instructions not to dismiss aggressive people, and directions to call 911 rather than the non-emergency number when situations escalate.

Chief Belk reported that all five parking employees had completed Florida Department of Law Enforcement de-escalation training. The City was also exploring body cameras, having received two quotes, with a third pending. He was leaning toward the company that outfits the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for its familiarity and one-touch operation.

Chair Cantrell clarified that the harassment incidents included individuals watching and tracking the night employee and making specific statements about locations and times when they knew employees would be present. He also noted that since writing the letter, he had learned that code enforcement staff had been experiencing similar harassment at citizens' homes, including at least one employee who left a situation in tears.

Commissioner Haufe asked whether parking enforcement could be outsourced to reduce City liability. Attorney Eschenfelder explained that while the City could outsource code enforcement functions, it would require proper training on constitutional requirements and could create additional customer service issues for residents. Both in-house and outsourced approaches have benefits.

Chair Cantrell outlined four recommendations from his letter: establishing mandatory reporting and documentation protocols; ensuring that deputies understand documentation requirements; providing refresher anti-harassment training for supervisors and department heads; and exploring a memorandum of understanding to allow City employees to carry law enforcement radios for direct access to reinforcement.

Commissioner McLauchlan supported the body camera suggestion and the mandatory documentation forms. Commissioner Haufe agreed on prioritizing employee safety and suggested consulting the sheriff's office for additional recommendations.

Chair Cantrell noted that precedent existed for radio frequency sharing, citing Fort Lauderdale and Orlando as examples with memoranda of understanding with their sheriff departments.

Attorney Eschenfelder recommended that the administration conduct further research before presenting recommendations to the Board, including a factual analysis of expenses and an assessment of the technological implications. Chair Cantrell agreed to follow up with the new city manager in about a month to confirm what information would be needed to move forward.

### **B. Civil Service Commission Inquiries Regarding Personnel Policy Implementation and Compliance**

Chair Cantrell explained that the Commission was required by charter to inquire into the implementation of personnel policy to ensure compliance, but the specific method was not specified. He suggested asking the city manager to annually review the personnel policy with directors and to report any identified shortfalls.

Attorney Eschenfelder recommended simply asking the city manager during Commission meetings how the policies are working and whether any problems are being encountered. This would allow issues to flow from the manager rather than creating additional bureaucratic layers.

Chief Belk reported that employee morale was high, everyone was committed to advancing City goals, and that he had encountered only one personnel issue since September 11, 2025, when he became the acting city manager. That issue was resolved through coaching and counseling rather than formal disciplinary action.

The Commission agreed to wait for management to raise any concerns rather than proactively request reviews.

### **C. City of Madeira Beach Drug-Free Workplace Policy and Substance Abuse Prevention Program (revised 02-27-2007 through Res 07.06)**

Attorney Eschenfelder confirmed that the 2007 drug-free workplace policy was obsolete, having been replaced by the drug-free workplace policy in the new personnel policy manual. He recommended that copies of the old policy be collected and destroyed and emphasized the need to ensure that the City's drug testing contractor was operating under the current policy rather than the outdated version.

Attorney Eschenfelder provided guidance on medical marijuana, explaining that although Florida has a medical marijuana program, marijuana remains illegal under federal law. Most public employers, including the City, maintain that federal law takes precedence, and positive marijuana drug tests carry the same penalties as those for other illegal drugs. He noted a Hillsborough County trial court case that ruled in favor of an employee with a medical marijuana card, but that case was on appeal and had not changed statewide practice.

Commissioner Haufe, identifying himself as an interventional pain specialist, agreed with the attorney's position, noting that medical marijuana cards could be obtained for minor conditions

and that marijuana remained a federally controlled substance. Chief Belk concurred with the current stance.

Chief Belk agreed to follow up with the new city manager to ensure that the contractor (Concentra) was adhering to the current policy rather than the outdated 2007 policy.

#### **D. City of Madeira Beach Safety and Accident Prevention Manual**

Chair Cantrell acknowledged that he had not given Chief Belk sufficient time to review this item. Attorney Eschenfelder clarified that management was responsible for determining what should be in the safety manual and for bringing recommendations to the commission for approval.

Commissioner Haufe praised the comprehensiveness of the existing manual. Attorney Eschenfelder noted that while comprehensive safety manuals can be beneficial, they can also create liability if not properly implemented and followed. He emphasized that any adopted safety procedures must be grounded in current best practices and supported by consistent training programs.

Chief Belk observed that the current manual reads more like a standard operating procedure and might expose the City to liability because of its specificity. He suggested that a more condensed, generalized version would be beneficial.

Attorney Eschenfelder suggested that, rather than a single comprehensive document, the new manager might consider developing department-specific safety procedures tailored to each department's unique work environments and functions. He noted that the Fire Department already complies with OSHA and NFPA guidelines through annual state fire marshal inspections.

The Commission agreed to revisit this item in six months, allowing the new city manager time to review and, if necessary, restructure the safety manual.

#### **E. Hearing Officer Agreements**

Attorney Eschenfelder explained that the hearing officer process was incorporated into the recently adopted code governing post-termination appeals. When an employee appeals their termination, a hearing officer conducts a trial-like proceeding, with the City bearing the burden of proof. The hearing officer issues written findings of fact and conclusions of law, which can then be appealed to the Civil Service Commission. However, the Commission cannot revisit findings of fact, only conclusions of law.

The City Clerk noted a discrepancy between the proposed agreement and the policy ordinances adopted by the Board of Commissioners: the post-termination hearing ordinance and the personnel policy governing who serves as the hearing clerk. The agreement stated that the city manager could assign various City personnel, whereas the ordinance specified that the City Clerk (ex officio secretary to the Civil Service Commission) serves as the hearing clerk.

Attorney Eschenfelder stated that City Attorney Trask had negotiated the contract and would address the administrative language issue. The hearing officers will comply with the ordinance.

Attorney Eschenfelder said that contracting with both hearing officers would be beneficial. They are well respected in the labor and employment law field and provide balanced representation from both the plaintiff and defense perspectives.

The City Clerk said the agreements were scheduled to go to the Board of Commissioners' workshop meeting in May and to be adopted in June.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Revisit – Exit Interview for Voluntary Resignations – Developing a standardized approach**

Chief Belk reported that he and HR representative Megan Powers had reviewed the Fire Department's exit interview form for voluntary resignations, but the citywide form had not yet been updated. He preferred to table the discussion until Ms. Powers returned.

Attorney Eschenfelder expressed strong opposition to the current exit interview form, citing litigation concerns and poor design. He noted that the form appeared to have originated as a private-sector document rather than a government form and recommended either significant revision or replacement with a narrative-based approach, rather than checkbox options.

Chief Belk clarified that, to his knowledge, the citywide form was not in use. The Fire Department had implemented its own narrative-based exit interview form because no citywide process existed.

The Commission agreed that the new city manager and HR representative would work together to develop an appropriate exit interview form.

## **8. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION – PROGRESS REPORT**

### **A. 2025 – 2026 Progress Report**

City Clerk VanBlargan presented the 2025 - 2026 Progress Report, which included:

- Adoption of the post-termination hearing ordinance
- Revision to Civil Service duties
- The new employee handbook.

The Commission discussed the frequency of reporting to the Board of Commissioners. Attorney Eschenfelder cited the municipal code provision authorizing annual reports to the Board outlining the Commission's work, goals, and recommendations.

The City Clerk explained that she maintains ongoing progress tracking and can provide quarterly updates to the Board if desired. After discussion, the Commission agreed that quarterly informational updates would be appropriate, with a comprehensive annual report prepared at year-end.

The Commission also addressed scheduling for the next meeting, originally set for June 23, 2026. After considering conflicts, including a Special Magistrate meeting, Commissioner McLauchlan's availability concerns, and Mr. Eschenfelder's schedule, the Commission tentatively agreed to move the meeting to June 30, 2026, pending confirmation with absent commissioners.

**9. NEXT MEETING**

The next Civil Service Commission meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., with an alternative date of June 30, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., pending confirmation from the two Commissioners who were not present.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Cantrell adjourned the meeting at 6:11 PM.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Cantrell, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk/Secretary Ex-Officio