MINUTES
BREVARD CITY COUNCIL
Priority Setting Retreat
Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center
March 6, 2026 – 8:30 A.M.

The Brevard City Council met for a Priority Setting Retreat on Friday, March 6, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center, with Mayor Maureen Copelof presiding.

Present - Mayor Maureen Copelof, Mayor Pro Tem Aaron Baker, Council Members Gary Daniel, Pamela Holder, Lauren Wise, and Dean Lytle.

Staff Present – City Manager Wilson Hooper, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Dean Luebbe, Assistant City Manager David Todd, City Clerk Denise Hodsdon, Assistant to the City Manager Shawnee Cummings, HR Director Kelley Craig, Planning Director Paul Ray, Assistant Planning Director Aaron Bland, Fire Chief Chase Owen, Police Chief Christy Wentzell, Public Works Director Wesley Shook, Community Center Director Tyree Griffin, Water Treatment Plant ORC Dennis Richardson, Wastewater Treatment Plant ORC Aaron Winans.

Facilitators – Mike Brown, Silver Eagle LLC / UNC School of Government

Press – David Bradley, Transylvania Times

A. Welcome and Call to Order – Mayor Copelof called the meeting to order at 8:55 a.m. and welcomed those present.

B. Certification of Quorum – City Clerk Denise Hodsdon certified that a quorum was present.

C. Retreat Agenda

8:30	Breakfast
9:00	Mayor Copelof – Welcome & Introductions
9:05	Mayor Copelof – Recap of 2025 Priorities
10:00	Wilson Hooper – Financial Picture & Insurance Overview
10:30	Break
10:45	Mike Brown – Grading Ourselves on Our Priorities
11:15	Mike Brown – Thought Provoking Exercise
11:30	Mike Brown – What is the Role of Government in Brevard?
12:00	Lunch
12:45	Wilson/All – Determine Sacrosanct Priorities for 2026
1:15	All – Developing Our Strategic Plan for 2026
2:30	Break

2:45	All – Defining What Success Looks Like for Brevard 2026
3:15	Council & Staff – Build Action Plans for Success
4:30	Council & Staff – Report Action Plans for Success
5:00	Staff Departs & Break
5:30	All – Discussion & Editing of Proposed Priorities
6:30	All – Light Dinner
7:00	All – Discussion & Finalizing of 2026 Priorities
8:00	Mike Brown – Wrap Up & Next Steps
8:30	Mayor Copelof – Closing Remarks & Feedback
9:00	All – Depart

Retreat Materials – A complete copy of the retreat materials and information provided to Council is on file in the City Clerk's office.

Following introductions, Mayor Copelof presented a recap of 2025 Strategic Priorities and Accomplishments.

Mr. Hooper reviewed his City Manager's Report and noted it was intended to supplement the Mayor's recap on the City's *past* work with information about the current environment and how it may impact its *future* work. He identified the following list of strategic considerations for Council's consideration:

- Trail-oriented development updates/UDO
- Heart of Brevard contract expiring. New approach to Municipal Service District?
- Short, medium and long-term facility needs
- Organizational enhancements needed in every department to "comply with the big guy"
- Lean into our efforts to improve our capital planning
- Funding for and execution of CIPs, new and existing

Council and Staff participated in a series of exercises throughout the day which were intended to identify priorities for the FY 2026-2027 Budget deliberations. Mr. Hooper prepared the following summary of the results of the retreat's exercises:

Summary of Outcomes
Brevard City Council Priority Setting Retreat
March 6, 2026

SACROSANCT PRIORITIES

Sacrosanct priorities have traditionally been defined as priorities that we build our organization around and dedicate resources and organizational capacity to. For FY27 Council affirmed the following sacrosanct priorities and corresponding action steps

PRIORITY	FY27 ACTION(S)
Housing	--Progress Azalea Ave., coming up with and pivoting to Plan B if necessary --Create creative non-financial activities to maintain housing momentum
Infrastructure, w/focus on WWTP	Begin serious pursuit of funding for Phase 2

This year, Council agreed to an expanded definition of sacrosanct and directed "Economic Development" be viewed as sacrosanct in this new way. The new definition will be for staff and Council to use ED as an additional lens through which they view their actions, with the aim being to take actions that support commerce and the creation of high-quality jobs.

"CONCERNS" OF COUNCIL

Council also agreed to another new label: "concern". These are areas where Council wishes to take a position and muster the non-budgetary, non-staff resources at its disposal.

CONCERN	FY27 ACTIONS
Support for the unhoused	--Muster current community resources into official task force or committee --Endorse task force/committee --Appoint CM to committee

COUNCIL-DIRECTED ACTIONS

The retreat also saw Councilmembers identify specific actions they wish to see in the year to come.

ACTION	"VOTES"	PRIMARY EXECUTOR	MONEY or ACTIVITY
Pursue WWTP phase 2 funding[1]	4	Council and staff	Activity
Create Azalea Ave. alternatives[1]	2	Staff	Activity
Create creative solutions to keep housing momentum[1]	2	Staff, then Council	Activity
Meet basic needs of the unhoused[2]	2	Council	Activity
Enhance collaboration with TEA	2	Council	Activity
Ecusta Trail strategic planning	2	Staff, then Council	Activity
Enhanced maint. of roads and sidewalks	2	Staff, then Council, then staff	Money
Enhanced manpower for PW	2[3]	Staff, then Council	Money
Pursue grant funding for downtown master plan	1	Staff, then Council	Activity
Enhanced park maintenance	1	Staff	Money
Create a park enhancement trust fund	1	Council and staff	Money

[1] Related to sacrosanct priority
[2] Related to area of concern
[2] Subsequent conversation during the session suggests this is a priority for more than two Council members.

Develop action for City Camper site	1	Staff, then Council	Activity
Calibrate strategic plans w/County	1	Council, then staff	Activity
Complete Estatoe and plan for inner city connectivity	1	Council and staff	Money

FOLLOW-UP

Council asked for staff to perform analysis on the topics below and bring the results to the budget workshop:

- How changes to solid waste collection service (i.e., dropping commercial collection, outsourcing recycling, etc.) might free up manhours in Public Works to catch up on deferred items and, eventually, become proactive in our upkeep.
- Research how each of the various fire dept. staffing options would help us meet a.) performance expectations, or b.) industry best practices for fire departments of this type.
- Check industry averages on sanitation turnover to see if it is a "sector" problem or if the City Sanitation Dept. is an outlier.
- Research whether there are grants for CIP plans and/or CIP software.

BUDGET PREPARATION REQUEST

- Any major changes to the budget should be spelled out so that Councilmembers know exactly what is being funded, what is being foregone, and what the major changes are to funding in prior years.

D. Next steps – Mr. Hooper noted that Staff will build the FY2026-2027 Budget proposal around the identified sacrosanct priorities and corresponding action steps.

E. Adjourn – There being no further business, Council adjourned the Retreat at 8:03 p.m.

Maureen Copelof
Mayor

Denise Hodsdon, CMC
City Clerk

Minutes Approved: June 1, 2026