

The Break Room with Barb Moore, General Services Deputy Director, December 16, 2025

Narrator:

You tuned in to another edition of. *The Break Room*. A weekly conversation about how the City of Saint Augustine works from those who do the work every day hosted by the City of Saint Augustine 's communications director Melissa Wissel *The Break Room* offers a closer look at the different city departments and provides updates on current and upcoming projects and events and now your host Melissa Wissel.

Melissa Wissel:

Welcome back to *The Break Room* thanks for tuning in we're in the home stretch of 2025 and with the end of the year comes the end of projects that have been going on all year long or sometimes even longer. I've invited General Services deputy director Barb Moore to join us for a 3rd time this year. She's here to give us a final wrap up of all the historic preservation grant projects that we have completed Barb welcome back.

Barb Moore:

thank you so much for having me.

Melissa Wissel:

3rd time's a charm.

Barb Moore:

it surely is.

Melissa Wissel:

I couldn't believe that I was looking back over this past year and you came in earlier this year to talk about the grants and you came in with Jessica

Barb Moore:

I did.

Melissa Wissel:

for the VIC and here we are so give us the lowdown of actually I'm going to pause on that question before we talk about all the projects. Can you talk to us and share with us the process? There's a lot that goes into this?

Barb Moore:

There is so it all starts with the money.

Melissa Wissel:

Doesn't everything?

Barb Moore:

So we either get a grant funding from the outside or it's a line item in our budget that we've planned for whether it's a long term CIP project or just doing a one off. In this case it was a line item in the state 's budget that would be July first of 2023 so.

Melissa Wissel:

OK OK. 23?

Barb Moore:

23. 2 and a half years and we received 3,620,000. So we've been working on 5 different projects with that money. So by a process we got the money OK now we know we have 5 things to do where do you start?

Melissa Wissel:

In two and a half years.

Barb Moore:

Two and a half years. It was actually supposed to be 2 years, we we applied for and received a 6 month extension. So the the funding runs out December first or 31st of this year but we're finished.

Melissa Wissel:

Yay.

Barb Moore:

We've done everything we we've needed to do.

Melissa Wissel:

Congratulations.

Barb Moore:

Thank you it's been great it's been a long 2 and a half years. So the 5 projects we had given that it was all grant money that's just the beginning then you have to plan each of the projects. Does that project need to go before HARB, our historic architectural review board? if it has to go before HARB, you know we went before HARB on 3 of our projects, 2 or more times each.

Melissa Wissel:

And why would you have so when you say go before HARB? that's historic architecture review review board what are they looking for?

Barb Moore:

They want to see your plan. They want to know that it's historically accurate and they want to know that it fits within the parameters their guidelines they want to know everything, everything you're going to do and we had to go back multiple times you know the windows especially which we'll get to in a minute.

Melissa Wissel:

But you have to follow rules that HARB sets like the color of the roof or the style of the window or the wood wood facade or the material that you're using the color of the paint.

Barb Moore:

Yes, And and they have all the documentation we have to do what any average citizen or business in the city has to do we have to follow the same rules so we have to fit what the HARB you know says we need to do. So we have to present them with plans. So I kind of want it to go project by project I'll kind of let you. Know what we had to do. At the same time the money you can't just pick whoever you want to do these jobs our threshold is 50,000 if the job is going to be what we think will be over 50,000 we have to do a formal solicitation we have and that's a whole project by itself.

Melissa Wissel:

It's a whole nother that's a whole nother episode.

Barb Moore:

It is. So you're going out to find the lowest qualified bidder who could do the job based on all the scope and specifications you give them so that's kind of the process in a nutshell these 5. I'll go through one by one kind of. Let you know what we had to do. Starting with the

Pena Peck house here on Saint George street. We had 2 grant projects one was to paint the exterior so starting there we went out we talked to people I got more than one quote and that project was finished in February of 24 so it's already been over Almost a year and a half finished. We awarded the contract to Certa Pro Painting it did not have to be a solicitation. Because it was under 50,000 got it cost \$33,425.00 to completely paint the exterior.

Melissa Wissel:

OK.

Barb Moore:

We talked to HARB we didn't have to present to HARB because we painted the exact same color it was. Done, finished. That was the easy one.

Melissa Wissel:

Next.

Barb Moore:

Sticking with the Pena Peck House the next project was the roof replacement we budgeted of that 3,620,000 we estimated It would be 605. And that's what we ended up paying for the roof that was completed in July of this year. It did go before HARB. We proposed a copper roof. We went back and forth we have to include the state because since it is a grant everything we do every contractor we have every contract we make has to be approved by the State. All HARB findings have to be approved by the State. So we've presented everything in the final and we did a copper roof beautiful it was done by Childers Roofing who won the contract and painted it red to match what it used to be and.

Melissa Wissel:

Oh you couldn't keep the copper roof?

Barb Moore:

We could not that that was a HARB requirement.

Melissa Wissel:

OK that's part of the HARB requirement.

Barb Moore:

Right. Is it depends on the zone you're in, the corridor as we call it in Saint Augustine, but that was a HARB presentation more than one and a solicitation. Going on to the 3rd project which when I was here before with Jessica we were in the middle of the VIC floors. VIC being visitors Information Center. So that project was completed in February of this year it did not need to go before HARB because it was an inside project.

Melissa Wissel:

Uh interior interior.

Barb Moore:

Interior.

Melissa Wissel:

Not an inside job but an interior one.

Barb Moore:

Right we only have to go up before HARB if it's on the exterior of the building so the VIC floors and we awarded the contract which was a solicitation to a company called Blue CS Construction. That ended up at 98,475. That was a job closing the visitor Center for 2 weeks in Saint Augustine was a feat.

Melissa Wissel:

And that was in February no.

Barb Moore:

It was in January February. So we relocated our employees we had to move everything out we had to completely rip out the main floor replace it we sanded down and and stained the side galleries. And then had to put everything back and in and amongst that we found the termites or the remnants of termites. So in September of this year after you put in a brand new floor for \$98,000.00 you don't want to see the termites again so we shut down the VIC another 5 days and we didn't tent but we gassed the building.

Melissa Wissel:

So quick let me ask this question and So with something like the termite damage that you then had to address is. That part of the grant money or does that something that you have to go into. The budget and say. Oh

Barb Moore:

Budget. We knew it was coming it had been a very long time kind of like City Hall right you know we we knew it needed to come that was the time you put in new wood let's do it So what was the budgeted item and that is completely we won't have to do it again For a very long time. The 4th project would be the waterproofing and I know we've talked about it before when I was on here waterproofing is a simple word but it was a huge project. Terracotta repair, crack repair, applying an invisible shield to a building that nobody can see that you've done.

Melissa Wissel:

And by the way you did a Presentation if anybody wants to go back and see what that was that you did the city Commission presentation from December 8th it's in the presentation and you've got little video of pouring water to show the

Barb Moore:

Well if you're using taxpayer money you need to be able to show that you've got your money's worth or the job is complete and then it's invisible on the waterproofing part you have to be creative and we did we made sure that this building was done.

Melissa Wissel:

Kind of like when you get your car. Text till it rains you don't know whether it whether you really had it done so until it starts to rain and even then on City Hall you wouldn't necessarily see it. The naked eye wouldn't see it.

Barb Moore:

That's a great point.

Melissa Wissel:

Because it doesn't bead up.

Barb Moore:

On City Hall it does. So a fun fact if anyone wants to try it on the City Hall portion because remember we didn't do the Lightner building it's just the City Hall if you walk by and you take a cup of water you throw it on a column it will bead and roll off.

Melissa Wissel:

OK.

Melissa Wissel:

On City Hall not on the Lightner

Barb Moore:

On City Hall only Not on the Lightner. It will suck right into the building .

Melissa Wissel:

OK So don't do it on the Lightner.

Barb Moore:

No please don't. We need to be able to test it and show that we got our \$1,350,000 worth. Our contractor was Childers Roofing and Blanchard Coating and Caulking ended up being the the professional who did it OK great people they did a great job that project started Before nights of lights in. Last year in August and given we light up our building. Thing you had the plan was started in August you had to go through nights of lights you had to go through all the weddings in the courtyard scaffolding up in the courtyard for 3 months ended up being 4 so there was a lot of shifting a lot of timelines a lot of movement but in the end. We finished that project in September of this year.

Melissa Wissel:

now before you're about to do the 5th one the last one OK so real quick if you're just now tuning and you're listening to *The Break Room* Barb Moore is with us she's our deputy director of General Services talking about the preservation grant project funding. Funding projects that were completed this year and the final big project was.

Barb Moore:

The City Hall and Lightner windows and that was the big one so we have a couple very small things to do painting the last 2 windows that are original every other window in the entire structure has been replaced we were able to save two. And we're painting those now so those are the original windows the Alcazar hotel it's very cool.

Melissa Wissel:

Which ones are they? do you remember?

Barb Moore:

I do it's on the it's on behind if you're looking where the cafe is second floor you'd have to stand back on the street and look up but it's above the loja the connecting roof between the Lightner Lobby and where the museum starts. we were also able to save 35 exterior trim windows just the trim the exterior on the main ballroom floor we saved what we could. But the windows in the Lightner had had already been replaced that none of them except a couple were original. All of the windows in the building were aluminum they were not

original except those 2. We had to go before HARB more than one time. This was phase 4. There were windows that had been replaced we didn't know where. Except if you saw yellow one it was done. That left a lot of windows to do. This job came in the window cost was 721,000.

Melissa Wissel:

Just for the windows?

Barb Moore:

Just for the windows. The contractor which was DeMare it was a solicited project their cost came in at 777,000. We totaled 1,498,000. But that's the whole structure well. We did every window at the Lightner Museum.

Melissa Wissel:

That's incredible

Barb Moore:

Whether it was a new window or reglazing an existing. Huge job.

Melissa Wissel:

Now before we go we have just a quick few minutes left tell us real quick you found windows behind walls. That internally were closed off so we actually now have a couple of stairwells.

Barb Moore:

With a window.

Melissa Wissel:

with a window

Barb Moore:

we did so we started this we had no maps, no drawings, nothing I think there were some back in the day, but we had to start from fresh. Number every window, look at every window at least a half a dozen times measure them all. What we found is there's 4 elevators abcd there's there's a window more than one window in every elevator shaft there's also more than one window in every stairwell. You can see the window on the outside you cannot see it on the inside. Huge challenge, the windows we have are to be installed from the inside. So our contractor DeMare Construction had to get very creative and cut through coquina it's it's a coquina building that does is not flexible in the opening and make a window fit where it used to be concrete block so now we we were able to do a couple of really cool things from the outside. Looks like 3 windows from the inside is 2. Light in the hallways. The east side of the building does not match the West. Side of the building it was a very fun project to do and our contractors all did a great job and a person like I know I've mentioned all of our vendors who I really want to thank because they were all great to work with David Bagnell the director of the Lightner Museum, was amazing to work with he was accommodating and flexible he went and bent over backwards to accommodate us and they never closed.

Melissa Wissel:

That's amazing that they never had to close.

Barb Moore:

They. The museum and he and his staff had to move everything and put it back so shout out and thank you so much to him.

Melissa Wissel:

Well. I'm going to have to say we got to end now we didn't even get to talk about what's next.

Barb Moore:

next time

Melissa Wissel:

really OK next time.

Barb Moore:

Yes next time OK.

Melissa Wissel:

Hold that thought was there more?

Barb Moore:

no no I'm done.

Melissa Wissel:

all of that all of that all of that so now everybody's on the edge of their seat what what's coming next very. OK give us a really quick 2 words.

Barb Moore:

Will a really quick project we're going to be working on is remodeling the City Hall bathrooms in the courtyard. not grant money though budgeted.

Melissa Wissel:

OK we'll come back and. Talk about that

Barb Moore:

that sounds Great thanks for having me.

Melissa Wissel:

thanks for coming back Barb it's sounds like a great year and now you can start the new year with a fresh slate and so a whole bunch of new projects.

Barb Moore:

Thank you so much.

Melissa Wissel:

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Narrator:

You've been listening to *The Break Room* a weekly program addressing projects and programs offered by the city of Saint Augustine join us each week as the city 's communications director Melissa Wissel has in-depth conversations with the people who make our town work to meet the needs of our community. See you at this time next week for another edition of *The Break Room*.