



Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Mayor Gib Coerper
Vice Mayor Edward Potts
Commissioner Shirley Green Brown
Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen
Commissioner Dayna Williams

City Manager Mike DaRoza
City Attorney Marian Rush

Meeting Location: James A. Lewis City Commission Chambers
15100 NW 142 Terrace
Alachua, FL 32615

CITIZENS PRESENT: Rudy Rothseiden, Chris Korsic, Derek Dunlop, Phyllis Strickland, Teddy Sanchez, Michele Lee, Faith Collins, Talia Williams.

STAFF ATTENDING: Diane Amendola, Robert Bonetti, Kyler Burk, Michael Carrillo, Heather Carter, Carson Crockett, Daniel Chalker, Lisa Freeman, Jack Hanson, Steve Holton, Tony Love, Andy Lindsey, Tara Malone, Damon Messina, Jason Moses, Carl Newsome, Pam Philman, Jesse Sandusky, Donna Smith, Rodolfo Valladares, Alex Watson, Kerri Watson, LeAnne Williams, Tommy Williams, Tyler Williams, Cap Wilson, David Wisener

City Commission Meeting

Notice given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes. In order to appeal any decision made at this meeting, you will need a verbatim record of the proceedings. It will be your responsibility to ensure such a record is made.

CALL TO ORDER

Led by Mayor Gib Coerper.

INVOCATION

A moment of silence was observed.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Coerper.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Dayna Williams moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

There were no comments.

Passed by unanimous consent.

APPROVE READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE ONLY

Vice Mayor Edward Potts moved to approve the reading of proposed ordinances and resolutions by title only; seconded by Commissioner Shirley Green Brown.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A) 2025 GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP PROCLAMATION

Public Services Director Michael Carrillo introduced the proclamation.

Mayor Coerper read the proclamation.

II. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS ON SUBJECTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

(Please Limit to 3 Minutes. Any citizen who is unable to speak at this time will have an opportunity to speak at the end of the meeting)

Tamara Robbins expressed her disapproval of the Bradford Pear trees, as they were an invasive species and not native to the local area. She gave suggestions for beautification.

Rudy Rothseiden stated at the last meeting that he had asked if the Commission would inquire about the three City Planners who had left. He said he had been contacted by four employees who thanked him for speaking on the issue. He mentioned the open letter from Justin Tabor and stated that when incidents like this occur in government, it creates a culture not conducive to employee retention. He said he would like to see a policy developed that prevents employees at a high level from becoming consultants to the City for a specific time limit.

Jacob Fletcher stated he was concerned about election awareness and gave statistics. He suggested the City increase Facebook posts regarding elections. He asked if the Commission was concerned about SB 1118, which the State Legislature is considering

regarding agriculture.

Garrett Dunlop discussed the issues with Bradford Pear trees.

Mitch Glaeser asked the Commission not to plant Bradford Pears. He gave an update on the businesses opening at San Felsaco Tech City. He informed the Commission of events where he had spoken. He mentioned that the Cattleman's Banquet would be March 25, 2025.

Bryan Buescher stated that he hadn't received a public records request and indicated that he would involve an attorney if necessary.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

(Presentations, other than the applicant, please limit to 3 Minutes)

V. AGENDA ITEMS

- A) RESOLUTION 25-06: AMENDING THE CITY OF ALACHUA FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET; RECOGNIZING UNANTICIPATED REVENUE IN THE SPECIAL REVENUE DONATION FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,000 AND APPROPRIATING FOR RELATED RECREATION PROGRAM EXPENSES.**

City Attorney Marian Rush read Resolution 25-06 by title only.

Finance and Administrative Services Director Robert Bonetti introduced the item and made recommendations.

Mayor Coerper asked the commissioners for questions or comments.

Commissioner Brown thanked the Alachua Chamber of Commerce for the donation.

Vice Mayor Potts stated that he appreciated the Alachua Chamber of Commerce's partnership with the City of Alachua.

Vice Mayor Potts moved to adopt Resolution 25-06 and approve the budget amendment; seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

- B) SUPPORT AND STAFF EXTENSION SERVICES FOR PLANNING &**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Assistant City Manager Rodolfo Valladares introduced the item and provided the staff report.

Mayor Coerper asked the commissioners for questions or comments.

Mayor Coerper requested that the recommended motion be repeated.

Assistant City Manager Valladares repeated the motion.

Vice Mayor Potts asked how this supports the current planning staff in business terms.

Assistant City Manager Valladares spoke highly of the planning staff as they navigated this difficult situation. He provided more information regarding the item.

Commissioner Ringersen asked if both proposed planners with Jacob Engineering Consultants would be here three days a week.

Assistant City Manager Valladares stated that one planner would be here three days a week.

City Attorney Rush stated that no one was regularly consulting with her regarding projects that would come before the Commission. She stated that she needed more than two weeks for review and said it would be wise to work one to two months in advance. She spoke about potential litigation.

Planner Carson Crockett provided an update on the current state of the planning department and expressed concerns about hiring temporary staff, who would then leave with the knowledge they had acquired.

City Manager Mike DaRoza stated the department needs help now and that he wants to build the department from the ground up.

Commissioner Brown thanked Planner Crockett for the information. She acknowledged City Attorney Rush's concerns.

City Attorney Rush stated her concerns were that more time needs to be provided for review.

Commissioner Williams asked City Attorney Rush if she had concerns about the item itself.

City Attorney Rush stated the item was fine. She was expressing her concerns about the timeline.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve moving forward with securing

professional services to support the Planning and Community Development Department by approving the Task Assignment with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc., and to authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents.; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Mr. Dunlop advised the Commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the departure of the planners.

Mr. Fletcher questioned the direction the Commission was going.

Ms. Robbins mentioned the open letter posted by Mr. Tabor and questioned whether City Manager DaRoza had directed staff not to speak with the City Attorney. She inquired about the Request for Proposal (RFP) for this item.

Tom Hubbard stated that 20 years ago, Alachua was the best community in the area, and now he was considering relocating.

Mr. Buescher stated that this wasn't mentioned at the last meeting. He asked if the City Manager would be consulting the City Attorney or the consultants provided in this item.

Mr. Rothseiden agreed with Planner Carson's comments. He stated he asked about the City's relationship with the company.

City Attorney Rush explained the contract and why they didn't need an RFP. She stated that the problem with communication was internal.

Failed 2-3 by roll call.

Dayna Williams - Yes
Shirley Green Brown - No
Jennifer Ringersen - No
Edward Potts - No
Mayor Coerper - Yes

VI. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS ON SUBJECTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

(Please Limit to 3 Minutes. Any citizen who did not speak during the Citizen Comments period at the beginning of the meeting may do so at this time.)

Phillis Strickland informed the Commission that Gloria Jones Andrews and Jacky Jones had passed away.

Ben Boukari thanked the Commission for their work. He congratulated the City on the \$50,000.00 grant they received from T-Mobil for helping with Theater Park renovations. He stated Ralph Cellon had passed away. He said he supported City Manager

DaRoza and the staff.

Tony Love expressed his support of City Manager DaRoza.

Damon Messina spoke about City Manager DaRoza's impact on him.

VII. COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

City Manager DaRoza informed Mr. Buescher that he would discuss the documents he was seeking with him and ensure that he obtained them. He addressed the comments from City Attorney Rush and stated he would work toward better communication. He said he wasn't sure which quasi-judicial item had not been sent to the City Attorney in a timely manner. He responded to the open letter from Mr. Tabor, rejecting the accusations therein. He spoke of the citizens he had communicated with. He stated that he admired Mr. Tabor as a planner and was only aware of a few occasions where tension arose between the Planning Department and himself.

City Attorney Rush gave a history of her relationship with the City. She stated her concern was the lack of communication between her and the City Manager regarding items coming from the Planning Department. She warned about upcoming items that would be contentious. She explained the difficulties with some of the items and her frustrations with the lack of communication. She gave a history on items from the past and current items. She related them to each other over the issue of "vested rights".

She mentioned letters from January that she was waiting for a response from the City Manager. She recommended that specific projects be assigned to her and David Theriaque, which would relieve the City Manager of some of the additional responsibility. She then spoke of City Manager DaRoza's strengths and rejected the idea that outside forces influence the City Manager.

Vice Mayor Potts stated that City Attorney Rush had expressed herself well and requested that City Manager DaRoza have time to respond.

City Manager DaRoza stated that he was aware of only one project that City Attorney Rush might be referring to. He explained his decision-making process and provided some details about the Tara April project.

City Attorney Rush asked for time to respond.

Commissioner Williams stated that the City Attorney had spoken enough.

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Commissioner Williams expressed her irritation with the City Attorney's comments and those from citizens.

Commissioner Ringersen asked City Manager DaRoza if Mr. Buescher received the same document that the Commission received.

City Manager DaRoza stated that Mr. Buerscher received the same document the Commission received, concerning an inventory of the planning department's projects, as well as an updated document.

Commissioner Ringersen stated she was unhappy with the comments suggesting that the Commission was taking money. She noted that the Great American Cleanup (GAC) was a great event and requested that citizens who were complaining attend the event and lend a hand.

Commissioner Ringersen asked City Manager DaRoza to answer the question of why we don't live-stream the meetings.

City Manager DaRoza stated that issues associated with live-streaming and ADA compliance made the return on investment negligible, based on the number of requests received for meeting recordings. He said cost wasn't an issue if the Commission desired to live-stream.

Commissioner Ringersen announced:

1. Saturday, March 29, 2025, was the opening of baseball.
2. GAC
3. Cattleman's Banquet, Tuesday, March 25, 2025

She asked Police Chief Jesse Sandusky to continue to keep the City safe.

Commissioner Brown thanked the citizens who spoke and Ms. Strickland for bringing the passing of Ms. Jones to their attention. She expressed her disappointment that the inquiry into the planners who left had not proceeded. She addressed the issues brought forward at the meeting, urging everyone not to take things personally but to focus on the best interests of the City of Alachua. She expressed her sorrow that the meeting lacked civility and called the Commission back to working together.

Vice Mayor Potts stated he regretted this happened in the public eye. He affirmed the City Attorney's concerns from a business perspective. He spoke about the risk of the items coming up and stated the Commission needs the advice of the City Attorney.

Mayor Coerper stated he agreed with Commissioner Williams and he supports the City Manager. He noted that the City adheres to all of the Florida Statutes.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Ringersen moved to adjourn; seconded by Vice Mayor Potts.

Passed by unanimous consent.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda items represent routine City operations and business. These items are approved

at the beginning of the Regular City Commission meeting upon approval of the meeting agenda.

A) FEBRUARY 24, 2025, CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

B) MARCH 10, 2025, CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

ATTEST:

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
ALACHUA, FLORIDA:**



Mike DaRoza, City Manager/Clerk



Gib Coerper, Mayor