



Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes
February 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: Ray Washington, Susan Keesling, Donna Spencer, Rudy Rothseiden, Elliot Welker, William Smith, Julie Smith, Teddy Sanchez, Ben Boukari, Trey Keesling, Nestossin Welch, Jim Curington, Gladys McMillan, Dan Wernecke, Keri Wernecke, Lilyana Hoffman, Kenneth Daye, Kate Esprit, Don Esprit, Chloe Esprit, Ivante Esprit, Laura Dampier.

STAFF ATTENDING: Diane Amendola, Robert Bonetti, Kyler Burk, Carson Crockett, Lisa Freeman, Tony Love, Tara Malone, Damon Messina, Jesse Sandusky, Donna Smith, Rodolfo Valladares, Tyler Williams, 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

Led by Apostle Terric Nattiel, Divine International Ministries.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Coerper, with Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen absent.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

City Manager Mike DaRoza stated Public Hearings and Ordinances Items A, B, and C would be deferred to a date uncertain.

Commissioner Dayna Williams moved to approve the amended agenda; seconded by Vice Mayor Edward Potts.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Tamara Robbins expressed her concerns about the follow-up on the topic from the last City Commission Meeting; the three City Planners who had resigned weren't on the agenda.

Eric Hickman, applicant for Items A, B, and C, stated he wasn't notified that the items would be deferred.

City Manager DaRoza stated City Planner Carson Crockett would inform him why it was deferred.

Passed by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Ringersen joined the meeting.

APPROVE READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE ONLY

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the reading of proposed ordinances and resolutions by title only, seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A) A.L. MEBANE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ARTIST APPRECIATION

Assistant Deputy City Clerk Diane Amendola introduced the presentation.

Mayor Coerper and Laura Dampier presented the students with certificates.

Commissioner Williams asked what inspired the artwork.

Ms. Dampier provided the information.

B) CAYDEN PARKER, EDNA M. HART KEEPER OF THE DREAM AWARD

WINNER & INAUGURAL ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Assistant Deputy City Clerk Amendola introduced the presentation.

Cayden Parker spoke of the opportunities provided for him at Santa Fe High School, his community and family support, and his accomplishments.

Mayor Coerper presented the certificate to Mr. Parker.

Commissioner Shirley Green Brown commended Mr. Parker for his successes.

C) FISCAL ANALYSIS REPORT FOR FY 2024-2025 THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2025

Accounting Manager Tyler Williams provided the presentation.

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)

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Tamara Robbins discussed the AV room equipment and her preference for the City Commission meetings to be live-streamed. She also stated that the Cleather H. Hathcock Community Center needed upgrading.

Ray Washington spoke of his mother's condition and his interactions with the Alachua Police Department.

Rudy Rothseiden spoke about coaching basketball with Commissioner Ringersen and his experiences at Legacy Park. He asked if the City had developed a policy that addresses undocumented immigrants.

Trey Keesling provided the Commission with a transportation proposal which would benefit those with disabilities.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

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

- A) FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 1 FINAL PLAT (PSP24-0007): A REQUEST BY AARON HICKMAN, PSM, OF CHW, INC, APPLICANT AND AGENT FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL PLAT FOR FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 1, WHICH PROPOSES TO SUBDIVIDE A ±21.29 ACRE SUBJECT PROPERTY**

INTO A TOTAL OF 32 SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED LOTS WITH ASSOCIATED COMMON AREAS AND ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY; CONSISTING OF TAX PARCEL NUMBER 03980-002-001 (QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING).

Deferred to a date uncertain.

- B)** FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 2 FINAL PLAT (PSP24-0008): A REQUEST BY AARON HICKMAN, PSM, OF CHW, INC, APPLICANT AND AGENT FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL PLAT FOR FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 2, WHICH PROPOSES TO SUBDIVIDE A ±5.11 ACRE SUBJECT PROPERTY INTO A TOTAL OF 42 SINGLE FAMILY LOTS (14 DETACHED, 28 ATTACHED) WITH ASSOCIATED COMMON AREAS AND ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY; CONSISTING OF TAX PARCEL NUMBER 03980-002-001 (QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING).

Deferred to a date uncertain.

- C)** FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 3 FINAL PLAT (PSP24-0009): A REQUEST BY AARON HICKMAN, PSM, OF CHW, INC, APPLICANT AND AGENT FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL PLAT FOR FLETCHER TRACE PHASE 3, WHICH PROPOSES TO SUBDIVIDE A ±17.66 ACRE SUBJECT PROPERTY INTO A TOTAL OF 37 SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED LOTS WITH ASSOCIATED COMMON AREAS AND ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY; CONSISTING OF TAX PARCEL NUMBER 03980-002-001 (QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING).

Deferred to a date uncertain.

V. AGENDA ITEMS

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.)

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Jacob Fletcher asked why the agenda items for Fletcher Trace had not been presented.

City Manager DaRoza clarified for Mr. Fletcher that the items had been deferred as the submission materials were incomplete.

VII. COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

City Manager DaRoza stated that the RFQ to design an updated Cleather H. Hathcock Community Center would soon be completed. He also announced that the Florida Municipal Electric Association has awarded the City's Electric Department the Restoring Community Award for its efforts following Hurricane Helene in our community and its assistance in restoring power to residences in Mount Dora.

City Attorney Rush requested that the rules of procedure be waived.

Commissioner Brown moved the rules of procedure to be waived; seconded by Commissioner Williams.

City Attorney Rush provided information about the investigation into the resignation of three city planners, as requested by the City Commission at its last meeting. She recommended Mark Barnaby from the Blalock Walters firm in Bradenton and shared his credentials.

City Attorney Rush recommended the City proceed with an independent investigation into the recent resignations of the Planning Director and two Principal Planners.

Commissioner Potts moved to extend a contract offer and secure an agreement with Mark Barnaby as suggested by the City Attorney; seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Mayor Coerper opened the floor for comments.

Jacob Fletcher inquired whether City Attorney Rush's point of contact had any vested interest in the investigation.

City Attorney Rush responded that the point of contact was a friend from law school and that this relationship had no relevance to City business.

Tamara Robbins questioned why this item was not on the agenda, emphasizing the need for public access to the proposed contract and the disclosure of the contact's name.

City Attorney Rush clarified that the contact's name was Administrative Law Judge Lynne Quimby-Pennock.

Mitch Glaeser agreed with the earlier comments and stated that he would like this process to focus on the future.

Rudy Rothseiden requested that the Commission proceed with the investigation.

Ben Boukari asked for the original motion for this item. He stated that what was proposed was outside the scope of the motion.

Bryan Buscher expressed his support for moving forward with the investigation.

City Attorney Rush explained that, due to the situation's urgency, she had conducted preliminary work and returned with a proposed contract.

Commissioner Williams stated that she did not believe an investigation was necessary to move forward in this matter.

Commissioner Ringersen expressed discomfort with the term "investigation," indicating that the Commission was merely requesting an interview.

Vice Mayor Potts stated that he still supported the idea of conducting an investigation.

Commissioner Brown clarified that the original intent was to conduct an independent exit interview, and she believed it would be wise to proceed with that plan.

City Attorney Rush noted that the Commission could modify the motion to focus on exit interviews if desired.

Commissioner Ringersen inquired whether someone familiar with the City Commission could conduct these interviews.

City Manager DaRoza mentioned that the City had utilized the Krizner Group for similar services in the past.

Vice Mayor Potts intended to modify his motion to reflect exit interviews.

City Attorney Rush indicated that she would update the contract to reflect this change.

Mayor Coerper noted that he regularly communicates with city staff and was unaware of any issues.

Commissioner Brown requested that the motion be restated for clarity.

City Attorney Rush stated, "We will employ Mark Barnaby to conduct exit interviews with all the planners to gather more information about the reasons for their resignations."

City Manager DaRoza expressed his desire to speak with anyone who would be involved with the interview. He mentioned that city staff had conducted exit interviews for two of the three individuals who resigned.

Ms. Robbins requested that the motion be restated.

Vice Mayor Potts amended his motion accordingly.

Vice Mayor Potts moved to amend his motion to hire or contract with Mark Barnaby to do exit interviews with the planners who have resigned; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Ms. Robbins inquired whether City Manager DaRoza had instructed the City Human Resources (HR) department not to conduct exit interviews.

City Manager DaRoza clarified this matter.

Ms. Robbins expressed concern that HR did not conduct exit interviews for all the planners, noting that the issue extended beyond what Mark Barnaby could address.

Mayor Coerper pointed out that conducting exit interviews is not mandated by law.

Rudy Rothseiden mentioned that citizens had contacted him to ask about the situation and shared why some planners had left. He also wanted to know if new planners had been hired.

Bryan Boukari stated that two exit interviews had already been conducted, which he believed was sufficient.

Jacob Fletcher expressed his gratitude to City Attorney Rush for her work and transparency. He questioned why the Commission was concerned about the potential revelations from the interviews if nothing was wrong. He argued that hiring new personnel without understanding past events would be unwise.

Ben Boukari expressed his desire to avoid Commission meetings that extend until 1:00 a.m., as they had in the past.

Mayor Coerper requested that the motion be restated.

Vice Mayor Potts restated the motion.

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

City Attorney Rush expressed her gratitude to the Commission for the opportunity to work on this item.

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Commissioner Brown stated she served on a panel at the Matheson History Museum as part of the Alachua County Remembrance Project. She congratulated Cayden Parker. She thanked:

- *Apostle Nattiel for the prayer
- * the citizens who spoke at the meeting

She stated she attended:

- * A workshop with Levon Bracey
- * Mathew Lewey Intergenerational Celebration

Vice Mayor Potts thanked the citizens who voiced their concerns at the meeting. He stated he attended:

- * The UF Eye Opener.
- * The Biz Bash at Santa Fe College
- * Alachua Womens Club, who hosted the Flapper Fling

Commissioner Ringersen thanked the citizens who spoke at the meeting. She stated she would train people on how to engage with kids, and she would be at the Florida League of Cities for training. She also stated that she had been mentoring students. She asked Alachua Police Department Chief Sandusky to keep the City safe.

Mayor Coerper stated he watched basketball at Legacy Park. He said he encourages everyone to mentor the youth.

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) APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2025, CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

ATTEST:

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

Mike DaRoza, City Manager/Clerk

Gib Coerper, Mayor