



Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Mayor Walter Welch
Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown
Commissioner Jacob Fletcher
Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen
Commissioner Dayna Williams

City Manager Rodolfo
Valladares
City Attorney Marian Rush

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

CITIZENS PRESENT: Pamela Blasetti, Phyllis Strickland, Faith Collins, Kelly Sweet, Diana Carlson, Claudia Rasnick, Michele Lee, Bonnie Burgess, Soorya Lindberg.

STAFF ATTENDING: Diane Amendola, Robert Bonetti, Jeanene Carrillo, Michael Carrillo, Heather Carter, Daniel Chalker, Carson Crockett, Brenda Flieger, David Floyd, Vicki Floyd, Lisa Freeman, Jack Hansen, Steven Holton, Tony Love, Tara Malone, Damon Messina, Jason Moses, Jesse Sandusky, Billy Shishkin, Donna Smith, Thomas Stanfield, Bryan Thomas, Rodolfo Valladares, LeAnne Williams, Thomas Williams, Kerri Watson, 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 Walter Welch.

INVOCATION

Led by Pastor Josh Moon, River of Life Church.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Welch.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Dayna Williams.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for comments.

Tamara Robbins, City of Alachua, stated she believed the moving of Ordinance 25-05, which was advertised for this agenda, wasn't legal. She questioned the re-advertising of the Planning and Zoning Board appointments. She requested an update on the proposed investigation regarding Planning staff departures.

City Attorney Marian Rush explained that the ordinance may have been advertised, but it was never an item on the published agenda.

Passed by unanimous consent.

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 Jacob Fletcher.

Passed by unanimous consent.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A) ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION IN ALACHUA- AWARENESS

Deputy City Clerk LeAnne Williams introduced the proclamation.

Donna Lee of the Alzheimer's Association provided the presentation.

Commissioner Fletcher asked if they had considered coming to the 4th of July event to increase their visibility.

Ms. Lee stated that she had booked other cities for the 4th of July, but she would add Alachua to the rotation.

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)

Elliott Welker, President of the City of Alachua Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Commission for their support.

Travis White, Vice Chair of the Education Task Force, invited citizens to attend the next meeting on June 17, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. and requested that the Commission keep education as a high priority at the upcoming Strategic Planning Retreat.

Carol Richardson, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Board, encouraged the Commission to adopt a culture plan and a public art plan as part of the strategic plan. She mentioned a grant that the city could apply for from the Alachua County Arts Council for \$5,000.00. She informed the Commission that July was National Parks and Recreation Month and requested a proclamation.

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 25-09: AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET FOR THE RECEIPT OF UNANTICIPATED REVENUE; INCREASING THE CRA SPECIAL REVENUE FUND TO APPROPRIATE REVENUES AND EXPENSES RELATED TO THE T-MOBILE HOMETOWN GRANT PROGRAM.**

City Attorney Rush read Resolution 25-05 by title only.

Finance and Administrative Services Director Rob Bonetti introduced the item and provided the staff report.

Commissioner Williams moved to adopt Resolution 25-09 and approve the budget amendment: seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for comments.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

B) APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Mayor Welch introduced the item.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that this item was essential to maintain trust with the citizens. He noted the nominee needed to be someone who was operationally competent and was untainted by controversy.

Commissioner Williams, referring to an email sent by Commissioner Fletcher, stated she had never seen a sitting commissioner blind copy an email to other commissioners on how they intended to vote on a future and potential agenda item. She stated this act lacked transparency. She noted that the accusations in the email called the trustworthiness of the City Attorney, who had held the position for over 20 years, into question. She stated that the email attempted to tarnish the character of Assistant City Manager Rodolfo Valladares and had the potential to slander each commissioner. She quoted the conversation with Assistant City Manager Valladares to prove it was in no way polling. She spoke highly of Assistant City Manager Valladares and his qualifications.

Commissioner Williams moved to appoint Assistant City Manager Rodolfo Valladares as Interim City Manager, and for a contract to include a duration of 12 months, terminable upon hiring a City Manager, 10 percent increase in salary, option to return to prior position at the end of the contract, and appointment approval effective immediately, with a contract to come back to the City Commission for approval at the next scheduled meeting; seconded by Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown.

Commissioner Fletcher stated his concerns as laid out in the email. He said he was confused by the suggestion that he could not blind copy the Commissioners, as he did not see it as a violation of the Sunshine Law. He noted the concerns in the email were not addressed. He stated that Assistant City Manager Valladares oversaw both the Public Services and Planning Departments. He said he wanted someone who was not involved in the issues raised by former Planner Justin Tabor in the interim City Manager role.

Commissioner Williams stated she had always been open and transparent. She noted that the comments assume that Assistant City Manager Valladares was guilty of some wrongdoing and must be proven innocent. She reminded the Commission that Assistant City Manager Valladares was the natural choice for the interim position, and it was not permanent. She spoke of how the Commission needs to work together to move the City into the future, and that spreading negative talk through the media was not unity or moving forward. She said there were things Commissioner Fletcher had mentioned that she would like to work with him to accomplish, but only if he refrains from continually impugning her character.

Commissioner Ringersen expressed her admiration for Assistant City Manager

Valladares. She stated she was hurt over the negative comments made about him.

Vice Mayor Brown expressed her disappointment in the email and stated she had always had the City's best interest at heart. She noted the Commission could disagree, but they had always come together for the City in the past. She expressed her appreciation for Assistant City Manager Valladares.

Commissioner Fletcher stated he didn't understand why the comments were being interpreted as potentially being slanderous. He read his email. He said he was confused by the suggestion that it may have violated the Sunshine Law. He stated his email wasn't an attack on the Commission.

Mayor Welch said his goal was for the Commission to have unity and respect. He stated the comments in the email would plant bad seeds: bad news could never be good news. He said Assistant City Manager Valladares was an excellent choice and spoke highly of him.

Citizens spoke in favor of appointing Assistant City Manager Valladares:

Elliot Welker
Kim Vermillion
Annie Welch
Julie Smith
Diana Carlson
Michele Lee

Citizens with concerns about appointing Assistant City Manager Valladares:

Amy Pringle

Other Comments:

Katherine Weitz informed the Commission about how the City of High Springs appointed its City Manager.

Tracy Masinelo stated that Commissioner Fletcher wanted transparency.

Mayor Welch asked if there were any other nominations.

There were no comments.

Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen - Yes
Commissioner Jacob Fletcher - No
Commissioner Dayna Williams - Yes
Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown - Yes
Mayor Walter Welch - Yes

Passed 4-1 by roll call.

Mayor Welch asked if the nominee agreed to the terms and the position.

Assistant City Manager Valladares stated he agreed and was honored to be chosen.

City Attorney Rush stated she would work with Assistant City Manager Valladares on a contract and bring it to the Commission at the next meeting.

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.)

Citizens requested that the interviews with the planners who resigned continue:

Sara Younger

Bryan Buescher

Faith Collins

Pamela Blasetti

Carol Keys thanked the Commission for holding an open meeting. She requested a nationwide search be done for a City Manager. She requested the Commission have an item to discuss all phases of the Tara projects.

Ms. Robbins, City of Alachua, stated that one-way communication was not a violation of the Sunshine Law. She requested that City Manager Valladares become a member of the International City Managers Association and for the commission to initiate the search for a new City Manager. She expressed her displeasure with fireworks on the Fourth of July.

Soorya Lindberg requested an item for each meeting as an update on the City Manager's activities.

Bryan Buescher commented on the email from Commissioner Fletcher.

Montey Williams mentioned that the last seven people who spoke were from High Springs, and they were trying to influence the City of Alachua unduly.

Commissioner Williams asked City Attorney Rush to provide an update on the progress of the interviews of the former Planning staff.

City Attorney Rush stated she started immediately, but she had to place it on hold as she had to work on the Interim City Manager item. She clarified that not one commissioner had said to her that they did not want this item to move forward.

VII. COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

City Manager Valladares stated that on May 20, 2025, the City of Alachua received a

letter from Kim Barton, Supervisor of Elections, notifying the City that nine individuals had registered to vote and/or voted in the 2025 City Commission Election, but those individuals were ineligible. He noted that this does not alter or invalidate the results of the election. He stated he was honored and humbled to be selected as the Interim City Manager, and he thanked the Commission.

City Attorney Rush added that the City of Alachua gets the voter role from the Supervisor of Elections, and the City had nothing to do with registration.

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Commissioner Fletcher thanked City Attorney Rush for her work on the item for the Interim City Manager and the planner interview process. He explained that his email was intended to ensure that the law was followed. He felt he had been misunderstood. He congratulated City Manager Valladares. He stated he would continue to focus on transparency.

Commissioner Ringersen congratulated City Manager Valladares on his appointment as Interim City Manager. She stated summer was here and to remember to watch for kids. She stated she attended:

- * Graduations

- * The ribbon-cutting of Fire Station 21

She encouraged City Manager Valladares to look into the arts grant from Alachua County. She expressed concern for those with Alzheimer's Disease and those who were struggling with mental health. She stated there were places to turn to for help. She thanked Chief Sandusky and his officers for keeping the City safe.

Commissioner Williams congratulated City Manager Valladares on his appointment as Interim City Manager. She thanked the citizens who spoke. She reiterated that the Commission needs to be unified, and she looked forward to working together. She thanked Chief Sandusky and his officers for keeping the City safe.

Vice Mayor Brown thanked Pastor Moon for the invocation and the citizens for their comments. She stated she attended:

- * The City of Alachua Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

- * Alachua Elementary Graduation

- * The Veterans Memorial in Newberry

- * The ribbon-cutting of Fire Station 21

She invited the citizens to the Juneteenth celebration on June 21, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Hal Brady Center. She congratulated City Manager Valladares on his appointment as Interim City Manager. She wished all the fathers a Happy Father's Day.

Mayor Welch congratulated City Manager Valladares on his appointment as Interim City Manager. He thanked the citizens for their comments and Commissioner Fletcher for his questions. He stated he attended the graduation at A.L. Mebane Middle School. He

mentioned that Careersource was working to have an Alachua outpost.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Ringersen moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Williams.

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.

ATTEST:

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

Rodolfo Valladares, City
Manager/Clerk

Walter Welch, Mayor