



**Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes
August 11, 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: Kathy Chambers, Barnett Chenault, James Curington, Michele Lee, Jorge Gonzalez Larrnmena, Connie Meyer, J. Phillips, Asia Eichmiller, Christine Bates, Nedra Bates, Larissa Bernovich, Tray Massina, Antonette Heins, Denlonello Heins, Elliott Welker, Mike Melvin, Irena Melvin, Mandy Bucci.

STAFF ATTENDING: Robert Bonetti, Michael Carrillo, Jeanene Carrillo, Kenyata Curtis, Bernadette Fisher, Lisa Freeman, Jack Hansen, Lynn Hayes, Janet Knapp, Brent Lanier, Damon Messina, Jesse Sandusky, Donna Smith, Bryan Thomas, LeAnne 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 Walter Welch.

INVOCATION

Led by Pastor Jon Rappa, First Baptist Church.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Led by Mayor Welch.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Jennifer Ringersen moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Vice Mayor Shirley Green Brown .

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comments.

Amy Shuskack expressed her objections to the minutes from the City Commission meeting held on July 28, 2025, citing her disagreement with a decision made during that meeting.

Elliott Welker, President of the Alachua Chamber of Commerce, gave an update on the activities going on with the Alachua Chamber of Commerce and requested help with recruitment strategies.

Connie Meyer offered additional comments regarding the investigation into the resignations of the planners. Commissioner Jacob Fletcher noted that citizens would like to add this issue as an agenda item.

Passed by unanimous consent.

APPROVE READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE ONLY

Commissioner Dayna 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

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 Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

A) SENIOR RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD FEEDBACK ON COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

City Manager Rodolfo Valladares presented the Senior Resources Advisory Board's Feedback on the Communication and Engagement staff report.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Fletcher inquired about how the provided information would assist in advancing the goal of implementing livestreaming.

City Manager Valladares responded with the details.

Commissioner Williams asked whether there had been any discussions regarding how a survey would be distributed to the broader community.

City Manager Valladares replied that this plan had not yet been developed.

B) CLEATHER H. HATHCOCK, SR. COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT KICKOFF

City Manager Valladares presented the Cleather H. Hathcock, Sr. Community Center Project Kickoff staff report.

Barnett Chenault from Monarch Design Group gave an additional presentation.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Fletcher inquired whether there was enough staff to manage the completed project.

City Manager Valladares responded that this was indeed a consideration. He emphasized that the City was seeking input from the community regarding development and future use, and for the Commission to refine the ideas presented.

Vice Mayor Brown expressed her excitement about the project's progress and encouraged citizens to share their ideas with the Commission.

Mayor Welch mentioned that he would like CareerSource to have a space in the new building, as they would be a significant support to the community.

Commissioner Ringersen requested the inclusion of outdoor lighting for the new center.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

C) 2025-2026 CITY COMMISSION BOARD AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Deputy City Clerk LeAnne Williams presented the 2025-2026 City Commission Board and Committee Assignments staff report.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

There were no questions or comments.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Commission Committee Assignments; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0, by roll call.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

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

- A) ORDINANCE 25-11, FIRST READING; AMENDING CODE 38 - UTILITY RATES
STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SERVICE

City Attorney Marian Rush read Ordinance 25-11 by title only.

Public Services Director Michael Carrillo presented Ordinance 25-11, Amending Code 38 - Utility Rates, staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Fletcher asked for a further explanation about the destination of reclaimed water and future rates.

Public Services Director Carrillo and City Manager Valladares provided the information.

Commissioner Ringersen moved to Approve Ordinance 25-11 on First Reading and Schedule Second Reading on August 25, 2025; seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

V. AGENDA ITEMS

- A) RESOLUTION 25-16: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN A LAWSUIT SEEKING,

AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO DECLARE THAT SENATE BILL 180'S IMPOSITION OF A BLANKET STATEWIDE PROHIBITION ON THE EXERCISE OF HOME RULE AUTHORITY REGULATIONS OVER LAND USE AND ZONING IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND SHOULD BE ENJOINED, AND RETAINING WEISS SEROTA HELFMAN COLE + BIERMAN, PL TO PROSECUTE THE LAWSUIT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Rush read Resolution 25-16 by title only.

City Attorney Rush presented Resolution 25-16, the staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Williams and Commissioner Fletcher asked clarifying questions regarding the legislation.

City Attorney Rush addressed the concerns.

Commissioner Williams stated she would like to have City staff contact with the state legislators before joining the lawsuit.

Commissioner Williams moved to a date certain of August 25, 2025; seconded by Vice Mayor Brown.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

James Curington asked how the smaller cities were responding to this bill and expressed his concern for senior citizens.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

B) FY 25/26 RENEWAL OF COMMERCIAL AND GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE PACKAGES

Compliance and Risk Management Director Cap Wilson presented the FY 25/26 Renewal of Commercial and Group Health Insurance Packages, the staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

Commissioner Williams, Vice Mayor Brown, and Commissioner Fletcher expressed their appreciation to Compliance and Risk Management Director Wilson.

Commissioner Williams moved to renew the City Commercial insurance package with the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) at the base premium of \$792,130; the FMIT Group Health Insurance plan at the base premium of \$1,710,768.48; the Dental, Vision,

Life and Employee Assistance Program group plans at a combined base premium of \$73,668.48; the storage tank liability, law enforcement death and disability policies, including "at work" coverage for all City employees at a base premium of \$6,000 and direct the City Manager to sign appropriate contract documents; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

- C) ACQUISITION OF ALACHUA COUNTY TAX PARCEL 05900-002-029
(PINKOSON SPRINGS)

Economic Development Manager David Wisener presented the Acquisition of Alachua County Tax Parcel 05900-002-029 (Pinkoson Springs), the staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

There were no questions or comments.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to authorize and direct the Mayor to execute the vacant land contract for a purchase price \$170,000, plus buyer & seller closing costs, between Gina Cain Saunders a/k/a Gina L. Saunders, Scarlett Cain Merckel a/k/a Scarlet E. Merckel and Misty Rave Amundson-Cain a/k/a Misty R. Welsch, as Successor Trustees of the Revocable Inter-vivos Jeanette T. Cain Trust, dated October 27, 2000, and the City of Alachua for the purchase by the City of Alachua of Alachua County Tax Parcel 005900-002-029. Further, authorize and direct the Mayor to execute any and all documents necessary to close the purchase and sale in accordance with the contract documents; seconded by Commissioner Ringersen.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

- D) ACQUISITION OF ALACHUA COUNTY TAX PARCEL #03114-000-000 FOR
THE CLEATHER HATHCOCK SR. COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT.

Compliance and Risk Management Director Wilson presented the Acquisition of Alachua County Tax Parcel #03114-000-000 for the Cleather Hathcock Sr. Community Center Project, the staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

There were no questions or comments.

Commissioner Williams moved to authorize and direct the Mayor to execute the vacant land contract for a purchase price \$72,500, plus buyer & seller closing costs, between Paristamika V. Owens and the City of Alachua for the purchase by the City of Alachua of Alachua County Tax Parcel 03114-000-000. Further, authorize and direct the Mayor to execute any and all documents necessary to close the purchase and sale in accordance with the contract documents; seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

E) TARA BAYWOOD PHASE 1 - INFRASTRUCTURE ACCEPTANCE AND RETURN OF SURETY

Public Services Director Carrillo presented Tara Baywood Phase 1 - Infrastructure Acceptance and Return of Surety, the staff report, and made recommendations.

Mayor Welch invited the commissioners to ask questions or offer comments.

There were no questions or comments.

Commissioner Ringersen moved to accept the Tara Baywood Phase 1 water system, wastewater system, electric system, roadways, and stormwater conveyance system, and book the value on the City's asset lists and return the surety amount of \$337,341.92 to Tara Baywood, LLC.; seconded by Commissioner Williams.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments.

Passed 5-0 by roll call.

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 Welch opened the floor for public comment.

James Curington thanked the Commission for their attention to the item concerning feedback from the Senior Advisory Board. He presented information about the average age of residents in Alachua County, noting that Alachua has the oldest population in the county.

Kelly Harris informed the Commission that Alachua had been selected to compete in a concert series, providing details about the event. She also mentioned that Josh's Place

would offer grief counseling throughout September.

Irena Melvin expressed her concerns about her mother's home on CR 235, specifically regarding the number of trucks on the road. She requested an increased presence of law enforcement in the area.

VII. COMMENTS FROM CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

City Manager Valladares announced that the Black Florida Caucus of Local Elected Officials recognized and honored Vice Mayor Brown for her service to the community. He also reminded citizens that the new school year has started and encouraged them to be mindful of the speed limit.

VIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned the backpack giveaway with the Alachua Police Department.

Mayor Welch stated he enjoyed the backpack giveaway with the Alachua Police Department.

Commissioner Ringersen moved to waive the rules of procedure; seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Passed by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Ringersen moved to terminate the legal agreement with the Rush firm with a 30-day notice, with the direction of the City Manager to provide a formal notice; seconded by Vice Mayor Brown.

Commissioner Fletcher requested that Commissioner Ringersen and Vice Mayor Brown explain the reasoning behind the motion.

Commissioner Ringersen emphasized that, given the direction and growth of the City, it is essential to have an in-house attorney.

City Attorney Rush expressed her interest in becoming the in-house attorney.

Vice Mayor Brown mentioned that she seconded the motion to allow for discussion on the issue. She highlighted that the City was progressing positively under the leadership of City Manager Valladares, who had a clear and excellent vision for the City. She emphasized the importance of considering all aspects of the City.

Commissioner Fletcher expressed his objection to the motion being introduced at the end of the meeting without prior public notice. He then inquired of City Attorney Rush and City Manager Valladares whether they were aware of the intentions of his fellow commissioners.

City Attorney Rush and City Manager Valladares indicated that they were not aware of the situation.

Commissioner Fletcher pointed out that both the City staff and the public were unaware of the impending termination of the contract with the City Attorney, which was to occur without any plan in place.

Mayor Welch concurred with Commissioner Fletcher's observations.

Commissioner Williams agreed with Commissioner Ringersen that hiring an in-house attorney would be appropriate due to the City's growth. She mentioned that the attorney's contract includes a 30-day written notice period, allowing the City 30 days to find a replacement attorney.

Commissioner Fletcher highlighted that this timeframe—30 days—would obligate the City to advertise for the position, hire a new attorney, and ensure that they are competent in all matters relating to the City, as well as familiar with the City code. He expressed concerns about making such an important decision on such short notice to the staff. He reiterated that this matter should have been placed on the agenda for discussion. Furthermore, he found it unusual for three commissioners to agree on an issue not included in the agenda and without discussion.

Commissioner Williams disagreed with the notion that the three commissioners had prior knowledge of this item.

Commissioner Fletcher clarified that he made no such accusation, but inferred based on the actions presented to him.

Mayor Welch opened the floor for comment.

Mike Melvin expressed that he found the discussion unsettling.

Commissioner Williams - Yes
Commissioner Fletcher - No
Commissioner Ringersen - Yes
Vice Mayor Brown - Yes
Mayor Welch - No

Passed 3-2, by roll call.

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.

- A) REPLACEMENT OF HVAC UNIT SERVING THE ALACHUA POLICE DEPARTMENT (APD) BUILDING
- B) APPROVAL OF THE CITY COMMISSION BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES, JULY 28, 2025.

ATTEST:

CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
ALACHUA, FLORIDA:



Rodolfo Valladares, City Manager/Clerk



Walter Welch, Mayor