



Ocala

City Council

Minutes

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

4:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Ben Marciano
Pro Tem Jay A. Musleh
Council Member Kristen M. Dreyer
Council Member James P. Hilty Sr
Council President Ire J. Bethea Sr

Excused: Council Member Barry Mansfield

2a. New Employees

- Obi Nga, Engineering
- Ronke Stallworth, Growth Management
- Mariana Prieto, Growth Management
- John Bazemore, Growth Management
- David Sablan, Growth Management
- Edwin Carreras Rivera, Growth Management
- Hope Demetropoulos, Water Resources

3. Public Notice

- **Public Notice for the February 17, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting was posted on January 23, 2026**

4. Proclamations and Awards

4a. The Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award will be presented to Kevin Christian

Mayor Marciano presented the Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award to Kevin Christian in appreciation of his community support efforts.

4b. Presentation of the Engineers Week Proclamation to Alan Garri, Vice President, Kimley Horn, and to Mackenzie Fix, President, Forest Chapter of the Florida Engineering Society

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for Engineers Week to Alan Garri. The City proclaims February 22, 2026 to February 28, 2026, as Engineers Week.

4c. Service Award - Fire Captain Anthony Ortiz - 25 Years of Service

Mayor Marciano and City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Fire Captain Anthony Ortiz in appreciation of his 25 years of service to the City of Ocala.

5. Presentations**6. Consent Agenda**

Consent Agenda items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless members of Council or the public request specific items to be removed for separate discussion and action.

RESULT: APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Kristen M. Dreyer

AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

EXCUSED: Mansfield

- 6a.** Budget Resolution 2026-127 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to accept and appropriate program income for the City of Ocala's Community Development Block Grant program in the amount of \$23,429

Presentation By: James Haynes

- 6b.** Additional expenditures under the cooperative purchasing agreement with Carahsoft Technology Corp. for Juniper support solutions through BlueAlly in the amount of \$45,551.56, for an increased aggregate contract expenditure of \$93,179

Presentation By: Kenneth Jamerson

- 6c.** Adjustment to Mayor and City Council vehicle allowances

Presentation By: Todd Swanson

- 6d.** Budget Resolution 2026-128 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to transfer funds from the General Fund Reserve for Contingencies account to increase vehicle allowances for the Mayor and City Council in the amount of \$22,400

Presentation By: Todd Swanson

- 6e.** Reappointment of Joshua DeMonte to the Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board for a new three-year term ending March 1, 2029

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6f.** Reappointment of Howard Gunn and Tanya Hanks to the Ocala Housing Authority Board for new four-year terms ending March 3, 2030

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6g.** Reappointment of Jean Floten to the Ocala Municipal Arts Commission for a new four-year term ending March 1, 2030

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6h.** Reappointment of James Hartley to the Board of Adjustment for a new four-year term ending March 1, 2030

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6i.** Reappointment of Kevin Steiner to the Municipal Code Enforcement Board for a new

three-year term ending March 1, 2029

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6j.** Reappointment of Elgin Carelock and TamBoura Jenkins to the Planning and Zoning Commission for new three-year terms ending March 1, 2029

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6k.** Reappointment of Rick Gullet to the Utility Advisory Board for a new four-year term ending November 4, 2030

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6l.** Reappointment of Robert DuMond to the Tree Commission for a new four-year term ending March 1, 2030

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6m.** February 3, 2026 City Council meeting minutes

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

7. Consent Agenda Items Held for Discussion

Should any items be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion, they will be discussed at this time.

8. Introduction and First Readings of Ordinances

(Second and Final Reading - March 3, 2026)

- 8a.** Ordinance 2026-7 to rezone approximately 2.26 acres for properties located in the 1400 block of NE 14th Street (Parcel 26496-005-00 & 26496-005-01) from RO, Residential Office, and R-1, Single Family Residential, to R-3, Multi-Family Residential (Case ZON25-0016) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: James P. Hilty Sr

- 8b.** Ordinance 2026-8 to rezone two properties totaling approximately 30.49-acres located at 5019 W Silver Springs Blvd and the parcel adjacent to the east (Parcel 23180-000-00 & 23176-003-00) from PD, Planned Development, to M-1, Light Industrial (Case ZON25-0018) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: Kristen M. Dreyer

9. Public Hearings / Second and Final Readings / Adoption of Ordinances

- 9a.** The sale of beer, wine and liquor for on-premise consumption for 3100 College Road Holdings, LLLP, doing business as Paddock Market located at 3100 SW College Road, Unit 300 (Parcel 23735-002-00) (Quasi-Judicial)

Presentation By: Endira Madraveren

Council President Bethea opened the public hearing at 4:19 PM.

Chief Planning Official Endira Madraveren discussed an application submitted by Paddock Market for the property located at 3100 SW College Road. The applicant is requesting an alcohol permit to allow the sale of beer/wine/liquor for on-premises

consumption. She provided a brief overview of the following: property's history, business operations, service calls (seven calls during a two-year period), surrounding uses (no churches/daycares/schools within a 500-foot radius), and staff findings. Staff recommends approval.

Rod Feiner, Attorney for property owner, Coker & Feiner Law Firm, 1133 SE 4th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316, stated the applicant is requesting an alcohol permit to allow the sale of beer/wine/liquor for on-premises consumption. He clarified the restaurant licensing process through the State of Florida with Council Member Musleh. The State of Florida requires each individual restaurant to apply for a license after receiving a general location permit from the City.

No public comment.

There being no further discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED
MOVER: Kristen M. Dreyer
SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr
AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr
ABSENT: Mansfield

10. General Business

- 10a.** Purchase of Sulzer Pumps and Equipment from Hydra Services Inc., for Fiscal Year 2026 with an estimated annual expenditure of \$250,000

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED
MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr
SECONDER: Kristen M. Dreyer
AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr
ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10b.** Community Development Block Grant 2025 grant agreement totaling \$510,378

Presentation By: James Haynes

There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED
MOVER: Kristen M. Dreyer
SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh
AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

- ABSENT:** Mansfield
- 10c.** Budget Resolution 2026-129 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to appropriate the City of Ocala's Community Development Block Grant allocation totaling \$510,378
- Presentation By:** James Haynes
- There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.
- RESULT:** ADOPTED
- MOVER:** James P. Hilty Sr
- SECONDER:** Jay A. Musleh
- AYE:** Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr
- ABSENT:** Mansfield
- 10d.** Five-year lease agreement for Brick City Center for the Arts between the Marion Cultural Alliance and the City of Ocala
- Presentation By:** Aubrey Hale
- There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.
- RESULT:** APPROVED
- MOVER:** Kristen M. Dreyer
- SECONDER:** James P. Hilty Sr
- AYE:** Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr
- ABSENT:** Mansfield
- 10e.** Additional expenditures under the contract with Morse Communications Inc. for physical security equipment with an increased aggregate expenditure of \$116,929
- Presentation By:** Christopher Ramos
- There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.
- RESULT:** APPROVED
- MOVER:** Kristen M. Dreyer
- SECONDER:** Jay A. Musleh
- AYE:** Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr
- ABSENT:** Mansfield
- 10f.** Contract for the renovation and expansion of Ocala Police Department's Real Time Crime Center to FSV Construction Company in the amount of \$992,054
- Presentation By:** Michael Balken
- Council Member Musleh expressed concern about the monies coming from carry-forward from previous years' budgets, especially if they are coming from accounts unrelated to building expenses.
- Police Chief Mike Balken confirmed the carry-forward monies in the budget will be

allocated towards the project cost. He will provide a list of the carryforward items from prior years to Council Member Musleh. Chief Balken confirmed the buildout will take approximately four to six months.

Council Member Musleh informed City Manager Pete Lee the carry-forward concerns need to be addressed. He suggested big projects be put into reserve funds rather than carry-forward. He also informed Chief Balken his comments are not directed at this item specifically, but rather the bigger picture. Mr. Lee confirmed the City is evaluating the use of carry-forward monies as staff prepares the budget.

Council Member Hilty discussed how the carry-forward option allows unspent, unobligated funds from one fiscal year to move into the next, preventing the loss of budgeted money and enhancing fiscal efficiency.

Council Member Dreyer suggested allocating carry-forward (or carryover) funds from the City's operating budget to a reserve fund to maintain financial stability.

Mr. Lee discussed the changed staff is making in budgeting and auditing practices.

Council Member Musleh explained how allocating carry-forward money, unspent funds from a previous budget period moved to a new one, is generally considered not helpful for determining which specific projects saved money, because it obscures the true performance of the current budget cycle.

There being no further discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Kristen M. Dreyer

AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10g.** The purchase of six 250 kVA regulators from Sunbelt Solomon Services, LLC in the amount of \$105,084

Presentation By: Doug Peebles

There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Kristen M. Dreyer

AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10h.** Sourcewell cooperative purchasing agreement with Alan Jay Fleet Sales for the purchase of a 2026 Ford T-350 van for the Ocala Police Department in the amount of \$148,885

Presentation By: Liza Warmuth

Fleet Division Head Liza Warmuth confirmed the ambulance has approximately 180,000 miles with Council President Bethea. Furthermore, outfitting charges are inclusive of the quote from Alan Jay Fleet Sales.

There being no further discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Kristen M. Dreyer

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10i.** Resolution 2026-14 amending the Public Transportation Grant Agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for design and construction of fuel farm, wash rack, and parking concrete pads to increase funding in the amount of \$478,285

Presentation By: Matthew Grow

There being no discussion the motion carried by roll call vote.

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

AYE: Musleh, Dreyer, Hilty Sr, and Bethea Sr

ABSENT: Mansfield

11. Internal Auditor's Report**12. City Manager's Report**

- **Sculpture Scroll, Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 11 AM to 5 PM**
- **Fire Station 8 groundbreaking ceremony, Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 10 AM**
- **State Road 40 discussions with FDOT Update**

City Manager Pete Lee discussed recent meetings with FDOT regarding State Road 40 and Downtown connectivity. The City proposed a speed limit change to 25 miles per hour, which FDOT issued a notice confirming a speed study was performed and speed limits will be modified from US441 to west of Tusawilla Avenue to 25 miles per hour, within two to three weeks. The City is working on implementing a comprehensive plan for State Road 40 and will continue discussions with FDOT.

- **Skate Park grand opening**

City Manager Pete Lee reported the Skate Park will be opening this week to the public.

- **Draft letter for discontinuation of curbside recycling**

City Manager Pete Lee discussed the draft fact sheet for discontinuation of curbside recycling. He requested feedback from Council regarding the draft document and method of outreach (mail notice to residents with utility bill/press release).

Council Member Musleh favors mailing the notice with the utility bill.

Council President Bethea spoke on the importance of Government City transparency, which is essential for building public trust, ensuring accountability for tax dollars, and fostering civic engagement.

Council Member Dreyer favors the draft letter. She noted that the media failed to mention that the City is going to establish recycling centers around the City.

Council Member Musleh expressed disappointment regarding the poorly released news media article.

Mayor Marciano discussed how the new process will decrease the contamination rate. Furthermore, he favors issuing an informational letter to the public.

Mr. Lee stated the City will evaluate the placement of the recycling centers to ensure easy access for the public.

13. **Ocala Police Department Report**

- **Overview of Crime and Traffic Stops**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported on crime data for the period, January 26, 2026 to February 8, 2026: 7,829 total incidents, 5,473 proactive calls, 2,356 dispatched calls, quadrant breakdown (dispatched versus proactive), 274 crimes, 214 arrests, 1,105 traffic stops, and 158 crashes.

- **Department Highlights**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported the department successfully managed a double homicide related to domestic violence within three hours, due to the efforts of the real-time Crime Center.

14. **Ocala Fire Rescue Department Report**

- **Unit Responses**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on unit responses for a two-week period, February 3, 2026 to February 16, 2026. The two busiest units: Fire Rescue Four (164-unit responses) and Fire Engine One (127-unit responses).

- **Service calls update**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on call type spotlights for a three-week period, February 3, 2026 to February 16, 2026: motor vehicle accidents 66, structure fires 6, and community paramedicine/core 37, and calls for service 986 (3,308 calls-to-date).

Department Highlights

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported for a two-week period, February 3, 2026 to February 17, 2026, the department responded to several vehicle accidents and fires. The department recruited a new Firefighter/EMT named Emil Henry. Furthermore, he invited the public to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for Fire Rescue Station #8, on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 10 AM.

15. City Attorney's Report

16. Public Comments

17. Informational Items and Calendaring Items

- Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - City Council meeting - 4:00pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, March 17, 2026 - CRA Board meeting - 3:45pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, March 17, 2026 - City Council meeting - 4:00pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, March 24, 2026 - TPO meeting - 3:00pm - Marion County Board of County Commissioners Auditorium
- Tuesday, April 7, 2026 - City Council meeting - 4:00pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, April 21, 2026 - CRA Board meeting - 3:45pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, April 21, 2026 - City Council meeting - 4:00pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, April 28, 2026 - TPO meeting - 3:00pm - Marion County Board of County Commissioners Auditorium
- Thursday, April 30, 2026 - City Council Strategic Planning Session - 8:00am - Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place

17a. Fully Executed Contracts Under \$50,000

18. Comments by Mayor

- Status update for the intersection located at 7th and 42nd

Mayor Marciano requested an update on the status of the intersection of SW 7th Ave and SW42nd St/SW 32nd St.

Chief of Staff Chris Watt stated the proposal is hopefully moving forward in a Senate reconciliation package.

City Manager Pete Lee and City Engineer & Director of Water Resources Sean Lanier debriefed City Council on the intersection design. The City is waiting for a quote and construction schedule from Marion Rock. The street median will not be removed, as there is enough room for vehicles to perform a U-turn at the intersection.

Council Member Hilty discussed a concern about the intersection at SW 42nd St and SW 36th Ave. Mr. Lanier explained the County's lane expansion project for 27th Avenue

should improve traffic in the area.

- **Past Florida League of Mayors event hosted by the City**

Mayor Marciano recognized the City for hosting a successful Florida League of Mayors event. The event drew eighty Mayors from the State of Florida.

- **April 2026 Government Step Challenge**

Mayor Marciano reported the City will be competing against other municipalities for the April 2026 Government Step Challenge.

19. Comments by City Council Members

- **Council Member Hilty commented on the PCA rate**

Council Member Hilty reported following the extreme cold weather, Leesburg announced rate increases to \$137.97 (approximately \$8 increase for households) and gas increases to \$2.50 per month. He lauded the City's ability to absorb the costs through the PCA fund, keeping rates for Ocala residents steady.

- **Council Member Hilty commented on the Marion County Veterans Hall of Fame**

Council Member Hilty invited City Council and the Mayor to the Marion County Veterans Hall of Fame event.

- **Council Member Dreyer commented on a past meeting at Ft. King Middle School regarding traffic concerns in the neighborhood**

Council Member Dreyer debriefed Council on a past meeting at Fort King Middle School regarding traffic concerns in the neighborhood. The City received complaints from residents of Heritage Hills regarding parents creating a secondary car lane within the neighborhood, which is obstructing the flow of traffic. Fort King Middle School's principal has engaged with the parents to remedy the matter. She explained the school will be expanding the AI Magnet Program to create openings for three hundred new students, which will increase traffic, and the City is actively working on finding a solution to address the traffic concern.

City Council unanimously agreed to direct the City Manager to meet with the school's Interim Superintendent to request they inform the City of future capacity expansions.

20. Adjournment

- **Adjourned at 5:09 PM**

Minutes

Ire J. Bethea Sr.
Council President

Angel B. Jacobs
City Clerk