



Ocala

City Council

Minutes

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

4:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

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

Excused: Mayor Ben Marciano

a. New Employees

- Landon Kopacz, Electric
- Mason Pieron, Electric
- Dunell Laster, Public Works
- Jose Perez, Public Works
- James Rodriguez, Public Works

3. Public Notice

- **Public Notice for the March 17, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting was posted on February 18, 2026**

4. Proclamations and Awards

- 4a.** The Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award will be presented to Brett Stanley

RESULT: PULLED

- 4b.** Presentation of the National Minority Health Month Proclamation to Levonda Goodson, Estella Byrd Whitman Wellness Chief Executive Officer

Council President Bethea presented a proclamation for National Minority Health Month. The City proclaims the month of April, as National Minority Health Month.

- 4c.** Presentation of the Ocala Lions Club Appreciation Day Proclamation to Ocala Lions Club President Barry Fies, and members LeeAnn Endicott, Diane and John Renyhart, and Garry Adel

Council Member Mansfield presented a proclamation for Ocala Lions Club Appreciation Day. The City proclaims March 17, 2026, as Ocala Lions Club Appreciation Day.

- 4d.** Presentation of the Procurement Month Proclamation to the Director of Procurement and Contracting Officer, Daphne Robinson and staff members

Council President Bethea presented a proclamation for Procurement Month. The City proclaims the month of March, as Procurement Month.

Procurement & Contracting Officer, Daphne Robinson, recognized her fellow department staff for their hard work serving the City.

4e. Service Award - Randolph Hahn - Ocala Electric Utility Chief Regulatory & Compliance Officer - 25 Years of Service

City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Randolph Hahn in appreciation of his 25 years of service to the City of Ocala.

Ocala Electric Utility Chief Regulatory & Compliance, Randolph Hahn, expressed his sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve the City and its residents.

4f. Service Award - Karen Cupp - Planning & Zoning Manager - 30 Years of Service

City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Karen Cupp in appreciation of her 30 years of service to the City of Ocala.

5. Presentations

5a. Update on Estella Byrd Whitman Wellness & Community Resource Center - Levonda Goodson, Chief Executive Officer

Levonda Goodson, CEO, provided an overview of services and recent progress at the Estella Byrd Whitman Wellness and Community Resource Center. She highlighted that the center offers comprehensive primary care for all ages, chronic disease management, telehealth visits, in-house lab work, medication dispensing at low cost, and patient transportation to appointments and specialists.

Ms. Goodson reported significant growth in patient visits:

- 2023 - 321 visits
- 2024 - nearly 3,000 visits (749 unduplicated patients)
- 2025 - nearly 4,000 visits (811 unduplicated patients)

She emphasized the importance of community partnerships with SMA, the Marion County Hospital District, Community Home Project, Marion Senior Services, Interfaith Emergency Services, the Community Paramedicine Program, and CareWise Pharmacy.

Ms. Goodson noted ongoing funding needs common to nonprofits and encouraged continued partnerships, advocacy, and community awareness to support expanded access to primary care. She stated the center now operates two locations and remains committed to providing a medical home that reduces emergency room use and strengthens community stability.

City Manager Pete Lee commended Ms. Goodson and her team for their dedicated service and unwavering support of underserved communities.

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: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

- 6a.** Award of the contract for rehabilitation of the McGirth residence located at 1941 NW Fifth Street to The Ford Design Group, LLC, for a total project cost not to exceed \$72,000

Presentation By: James Haynes

- 6b.** Award of the contract for rehabilitation of the Medina residence located at 1445 NE 22nd Street to Resipro, LLC, for a total project cost not to exceed \$55,805

Presentation By: James Haynes

- 6c.** Award of the contract for rehabilitation of the Braithwaite residence located at 2832 NE 18th Court to The Ford Design Group, LLC, for a total project cost not to exceed \$51,965

Presentation By: James Haynes

- 6d.** Appointment of Linda Wilkerson to an unexpired term ending March 1, 2029, on the West Ocala Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Presentation By: Roberto Ellis

- 6e.** Reappointment of Rachel Perez to a new term ending March 1, 2030, on the East Ocala Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Presentation By: Roberto Ellis

- 6f.** Reappointment of Wendy Kebrdle to a four-year term ending March 1, 2030, on the North Magnolia Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Presentation By: Roberto Ellis

- 6g.** Utilization of Sourcewell's cooperative purchasing agreement with Cummins, Inc., for the purchase of a 60kW generator for Water Resources in the amount of \$50,276

Presentation By: John King

- 6h.** Amendment to Developer's Agreement (Emerson Pointe Phase 1 and Phase 1A) to add Phase 2

Presentation By: Aubrey Hale

- 6i.** West Oak Phase 3 Residential Developer's Agreement

Presentation By: Aubrey Hale

- 6j.** Purchase of ShinMaywa pumps and equipment from Power & Pumps Inc., for Fiscal Year 2025-26 with an estimated annual expenditure of \$75,000

Presentation By: Rusella Bowes-Johnson

- 6k. Award two-year contract to Sulter Precision Cuts, LLC, for the provision of grounds maintenance services for City fire stations with an estimated aggregate expenditure of \$54,400

Presentation By: Clint Welborn

- 6l. City Council meeting minutes

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

RESULT: APPROVED

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

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

- 9a. Ordinance 2026-9 to adopt recommended changes to actuarial assumptions and methods for the City of Ocala General Employees' Pension Plan, as outlined in the 2014-2024 Experience Study

Presentation By: Janice Mitchell

Introduced By: Jay A. Musleh

Chief Financial Officer Janice Mitchell presented an ordinance recommending updates to the actuarial assumptions for the General Employees' Pension Plan, based on the required experience study. The study reviewed actual plan performance and recommended changes to ensure compliance with actuarial standards and Florida law. Recommended updates include adjusting the investment return assumption from 6.6% to 6.5%, updating salary and retirement assumptions, adopting updated mortality tables required by statute, and continuing the entry age normal cost method. The changes result in an increased employer contribution of \$287,896 beginning with the October 1, 2025 actuarial valuation. The Pension Board reviewed the study and recommends approval.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Kristen M. Dreyer

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

10. General Business

- 10a. Utilization of multiple cooperative purchase agreements for the purchase of 15 vehicles and equipment for various city departments in the amount of \$1,717,330

Presentation By: John King

Council President Bethea noted that while he initially had reservations regarding the cooperative purchase agreements for 15 vehicles and equipment across City departments, reviewing the detailed specifications clarified the necessity of the expenditure. He explained that these are not standard passenger vehicles but specialized commercial equipment, such as heavy-duty trucks for pothole repair, which accounts for the higher unit costs due to their specific utility and operational demands.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10b.** Award of contract with Bentley Pinder Construction, LLC for a rebuild of the Woodbury residence located at 826 NW Sixth Avenue with a total project cost not to exceed \$138,320

Presentation By: James Haynes

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Kristen M. Dreyer

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10c.** Purchase of Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories Protection and Automation Equipment from Power Connections, Inc., in the amount of \$124,036

Presentation By: Doug Peebles

Council President Bethea shared his appreciation for the opportunity to shadow the Ocala Electric Utility (OEU) Department, where he gained firsthand insight into their high-volume operations. He noted his deep impression of the team's dedication and the intense, complex work required to maintain reliable service for the City.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

- 10d.** First Amendment for the one-year renewal of the contract with Lewis Steel Works, Inc., for front-loading steel waste containers with an aggregate expenditure not to exceed \$385,000

Presentation By: Darren Park

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, Mansfield, and Bethea Sr

- 10e.** Award of contract to Aquatic Renovation Systems, Inc., doing business as RenoSys Corp., for pool deck resurfacing services at the Jervey Gantt Aquatic Center in the amount of \$262,580

Presentation By: William Rodriguez-Cayro

Deputy Director of Recreation & Parks, William Rodriguez Cayro, informed Council President Bethea that the contract for specialized resurfacing services has been awarded to Aquatic Renovation Systems, Inc. The project scope includes the renovation of a pool deck, the main entrance breezeway, and the adjacent restroom facilities to ensure a modernized and safe environment for residents.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Kristen M. Dreyer

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10f.** One-year renewal of contract with Southern Lawn Care Mid Florida, Inc., for ground maintenance services in an amount not to exceed \$261,900

Presentation By: Greg Vandeventer

Council Member Hilty inquired regarding the City's timeline for initiating a new competitive bidding process versus proceeding with a contract renewal. In response, Procurement & Contracting Officer, Daphne Robinson, clarified that the proposed budget increase reflects a rise in anticipated expenditures due to an expanded scope of work, rather than a rate increase from the vendor. She detailed that the amendments for Southern Lawn Care Mid Florida, Inc.-totaling an amount not to exceed \$261,900-are the result of adding multiple new maintenance sites over the life of the contract.

Assistant City Manager Ken Whitehead further explained that while the City originally contracted for 31 service cycles at limited locations, the inventory of maintained sites and the frequency of service have both grown significantly, all while the vendor has maintained its original competitive unit pricing.

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, Mansfield, and Bethea Sr

- 10g.** Award of two-year contract with Frank Fraunfelter, M.D., to serve as the Medical Director for Ocala Fire Rescue with an aggregate expenditure amount of \$110,000

Presentation By: Clint Welborn

Council Member Hilty inquired as to why medical services are currently exempt from the standard competitive bidding process. Procurement & Contracting Officer, Daphne Robinson, explained that the City's procurement policy mirrors Florida State Statute exceptions, which have long exempted medical services to prioritize continuity of care. She noted that Ocala Fire Rescue has developed specific medical protocols tied to the current provider, and maintaining this consistency is vital for public safety. While the City does not recommend forcing a bid for the Medical Director contract during this renewal cycle, Ms. Robinson confirmed that the City Council maintains the authority to request a competitive solicitation in the future.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

11. Internal Auditor's Report

12. City Manager's Report

- **Parking Garage Top Out, March 23, 2026, at 11:00 AM, location parking garage**
- **Citizen's Academy 12-week program, starts March 26, 2026, at 5:30 PM**
- **Skate Park grand opening, March 28, 2026**

City Manager Pete Lee shared the City's enthusiasm for the grand opening of the new Skate Park on March 28, 2026. Following the ribbon-cutting, the celebration will move to the Marion Theatre for a special film screening and Q&A session.

- **Fort King event on March 28, 2026**
- **No Kings protest expected March 28, 2026**

13. Ocala Police Department Report

Overview of Crime and Traffic Stops

Police Chief Mike Balken reported on crime data for the period, February 23, 2026 to March 8, 2026: 8,018 total incidents, 5,548 proactive calls, 2,470 dispatched calls, quadrant breakdown (1,804 NW, 1,627 NE, 1,940 SE, 2,393 SW, and 225 County), 316 crimes, 225 arrests, 1,261 traffic stops, and 146 crashes.

Council Member Mansfield questioned if there were any updates that could be shared about the recent homicide in the Historic District. Chief Balken explained the investigation is still ongoing, and prosecution could take upwards of a year to come to the court.

14. **Ocala Fire Rescue Department Report**

- **Unit Responses**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on unit responses for a two-week period, March 3, 2026 to March 16, 2026. The two busiest units: Fire Rescue Three (165-unit responses) and Fire Engine Four (114-unit responses).

- **Service calls update**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on call type spotlights for a two-week period, March 3, 2026 to March 16, 2026: motor vehicle accidents 96, structure fires 2, and community paramedicine/core 31, and calls for service 1,041 (5,344 calls-to-date).

15. **City Attorney's Report**

16. **Public Comments**

- **Jim Mikula, Rosewood Homeowners Association President, 3624 SE 18th Avenue, commented on public disturbances related to fiber installation vendors**

Jim Mikula, Rosewood Homeowners Association President, 3624 SE 18th Avenue, addressed the City Council to report ongoing property damage and safety concerns caused by fiber installation vendors. He highlighted a recent gas line rupture that required an emergency response from Ocala Fire Rescue, as well as numerous instances of damaged lawns, exposed cables, and abandoned lines left by unidentified crews. Mr. Mikula noted that these vendors consistently fail to provide advance notice or identification to residents, leaving the community without a clear point of contact for complaints. On behalf of the HOA, he expressed a strong desire to partner with the City to advocate for policy changes that would increase vendor liability and mandate stricter requirements for site restoration and resident notification at all levels of government.

City Manager, Pete Lee clarified that while fiber installation vendors must obtain permits and notify the Engineering Department of their projects, the City is not provided with specific start or end dates. He emphasized that vendors are prohibited from entering private property without homeowner consent and noted that the City may seek legislative changes to address these issues.

Council Member Musleh expressed deep frustration regarding the negative impact these vendors have had on local residents.

Mr. Lee stated that it is unacceptable for fiber installation vendors to cause gas leaks, damage residential lawns, or leave cables exposed.

Council Member Hilty inquired whether the City could mandate that vendors inform Homeowners Associations (HOAs) prior to beginning a project. City Attorney William Sexton explained that current statutes prohibit the City from requiring vendors to notify residents or HOAs of their planned projects.

Council President Bethea requested that the City contact state departments to explain these ongoing issues and seek formal assistance. Mr. Lee confirmed that the City will reach out to both State and Federal offices for support.

Council Member Mansfield reported receiving numerous public complaints regarding fiber vendors, including an incident where a vendor struck a gas line and disrupted local business operations. He voiced support for multi-level government intervention and suggested the City explore developing its own cable infrastructure as a long-term solution.

Mr. Lee stated the City will conduct research to determine the total time and financial resources spent addressing disruptions like electrical outages and gas leaks, noting that vendors are responsible for the costs of any damages they cause.

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported that the department has been documenting the manpower and time required to respond to vendor-related incidents for several months and will provide a detailed report on the costs associated with gas leak responses.

Council Member Mansfield expressed concern regarding the significant City time and funding currently being spent to rectify problems caused by these vendors.

Council President Bethea informed Mr. Mikula that the City will engage with State and Federal government officials to address these concerns.

Assistant City Manager, Ken Whitehead, stated that vendors are required to obtain a right-of-way permit and post a \$500,000 bond.

City Engineer Sean Lanier noted that most vendors have filed these bonds with the City, which remain active until a project is completed. He explained that the City can file claims against these bonds on behalf of impacted residents.

Mr. Whitehead advised that the City is assisting homeowners with property damage by directing them to file claims through the City, which then coordinates with vendors to ensure repairs are funded.

Council Member Dreyer requested that the City work directly with the Rosewood Homeowners Association residents to facilitate their damage claims.

Council Member Mansfield urged the City to take a proactive stance in advocating for governmental changes to protect the public.

Mr. Lee informed Council Member Dreyer that these vendor projects are typically completed within a few days.

Director of Electric Utility, Doug Peebles, advised Council Member Mansfield that utility "locates" are only valid for 30 days and noted that underground installation is necessary because the City's utility poles are currently at capacity.

Mr. Lee stated that this matter has been added to the City's Legislative Priorities List for the year and that a draft letter will be provided for City Council review tomorrow.

Mr. Sexton reported that the City has already sued one vendor to recover \$110,000 in damages for a sewer line break and suggested partnering with other affected municipalities to lobby state and federal officials for relief.

17. Informational Items and Calendaring Items

- Tuesday, March 24, 2026 - TPO meeting - 3:00pm - Marion County Board of County Commissioners Auditorium
 - Wednesday, April 1, 2026 - Joint Planning Workshop with the Marion County School Board, Board of County Commissioners and Municipalities - 9:00am - Southern Livestock Pavilion 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.** Monthly budget-to-actual report and Capital Improvement Project status report as of January 31, 2026
- 17b.** Executed Contracts Under \$50,000
- 17c.** Information item regarding the Cooperative Purchasing Agreement for the Provision of Building Inspection and Plan Review Services with M.T. Causley, LLC

18. Comments by Mayor

19. Comments by City Council Members

20. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:27 PM

Minutes

Ire J. Bethea Sr.
Council President

Angel B. Jacobs
City Clerk

