



Ocala

City Council

Minutes

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

3:15 PM

1. Call to Order

NOTE: Following the Call to Order, the City Council will participate in a private, attorney-client meeting for approximately thirty minutes. At the end of that meeting (approximately 3:45 PM), City Council will return to reopen the regular meeting, announce the conclusion of the private, attorney-client meeting and to address the remainder of the agenda items.

Meeting went into Recess at 3:15 pm. Meeting Reconvened at 4:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

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

Excused: Council Member Barry Mansfield

Municipal Officers/Others Present: The meeting was also attended by City Manager Peter Lee, City Attorney William Sexton, Assistant City Manager Ken Whitehead, City Clerk Angel Jacobs, Deputy City Clerk Pamela Omichinski, Fire Chief Clint Welborn, Police Chief Michael Balken, Internal Auditor Randall Bridgeman, Finance Director Peter Brill, City Projects Director Tye Chighizola, Director of Airport Matthew Grow, Planning Director Aubrey Hale, Budget Director Tammi Haslam, Community Development Services Director James Haynes, Director of Parks & Recreation Julie Johnson, HR/Risk Management Director Devan Kikendall, City Engineer & Director of Water Resources Sean Lanier, Chief Financial Officer Janice Mitchell, Director of Public Works Darren Park, Director of Electric Utility Doug Peebles, Director of Ocala Fiber Network Mel Poole, IT Director Christopher Ramos, Strategic & Legislative Affairs Administrator Jeannine Robbins, Procurement & Contracting Officer Daphne Robinson, Growth Management Director Jeff Shrum, Chief of Staff Chris Watt, Ocala Police Dept Representative, IT Representative, The Press and other interested parties.

3. Public Notice

- **Public Notice for the January 21, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting was posted on January 8, 2025**

4. Proclamations and Awards

- 4a.** Presentation of the Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award to Sandra Seibert

Mayor Marciano presented the Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award to Sandra Seibert.

- 4b.** Service Award - Lieutenant Charles Hunt IV - Ocala Police Department - 15 Years of Service

Mayor Marciano and City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Lieutenant Charles Hunt IV in appreciation of his 15 years of service to the City of Ocala.

- 4c.** Service Award - Matthew Grow - Ocala International Airport - 20 Years of Service

Mayor Marciano and City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Matthew Grow in appreciation of his 20 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: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

EXCUSED: Mansfield

- 6a.** Approve the donation of two surplus vehicles to the Estella Byrd Whitman Community Health Center with an estimated residual auction value of \$3,573
- 6b.** Approve award of a two-year contract to SG Power Pros, LLC for load-bank testing for emergency power generators with an estimated aggregate expenditure of \$86,270
- 6c.** Approve the donation of two surplus vehicles to Wear Gloves, Inc. with an estimated residual auction value of \$18,362
- 6d.** Approve the purchase of a Siemens UC150 charger from Siemens Industry, Inc., utilizing a Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Agreement in the amount of \$61,485
- 6e.** Approve a contract for the rehabilitation of the Clarke residence located at 2612 NE 22nd Ave. to Stejack, LLC for a total project cost not to exceed \$66,048
- 6f.** Approve a request from Team Delva Properties Inc. for reimbursement of fees associated with the production of an affordable housing unit in the amount of \$8,188
- 6g.** Approve a request from Habitat for Humanity of Marion County for reimbursement of fees associated with the production of an affordable housing unit in the amount of \$3,285
- 6h.** Approve additional expenditures for the purchase of firefighter bunker gear and supplies from Municipal Equipment Co., LLC in the amount of \$50,000
- 6i.** Approve minutes from January 7, 2025 City Council meeting

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.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-1 to rezone approximately 4.63 acres for property located at 1712 SE Lake Weir Avenue (Parcel 2920-010-008) from INST, Institutional to B-2A, Limited Community Business (Case ZON24-45752) (Quasi-Judicial) - Previously postponed from October 15, 2024, November 19, 2024 and December 3, 2024, City Council meetings

Introduced By: Jay A. Musleh

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Planning Director Aubrey Hale discussed the adoption of Ordinance 2025-1. The applicant requested to rezone the property from INST (Institutional) to B-2A (Limited Community Business). He provided a brief overview of the following: property's history, zoning, and staff findings. To note, staff recommends approval.

Tim Haynes, Ackman & Hanes, 211 NW 3rd Street, spoke in support of the rezoning application. The applicant plans on building a transitional recovery facility for women. To note, the lease agreement prohibits sex offenders at the facility. He requested City Council approve the application.

Harvey Vane, Open Arms Board Member, 1240 SE 12th Court, spoke in support of the rezoning application. He believes the facility will greatly support the community.

Mark Hines, Open Arms Village Board Member, 3109 SE 21st Terrace, spoke in support of the rezoning application. He provided a brief overview of Open Arms Village's mission and community support efforts. The proposed facility will provide a safe place for women.

Jordan Raney, 828 SE 23rd Street, spoke in opposition of the rezoning. He expressed concern regarding changing the character of the residential neighborhood and public safety. He requested City Council take into consideration the residential community.

Nick Covington, graduate of the Open Arms Village Program, 1831 SE 38th Avenue, spoke in support of the program. The program has helped combat homelessness in the community. He shared his positive life changing experience as a past program participant.

Judge Lori Cotton, spoke in support of the program. The homeless community is in great need of rehabilitation treatment services. The program holds the participants accountable and helps them overcome addictions.

James Knoepfel, Saint John Lutheran Church and School, Principal, 2024 SE 27th Road,

spoke in opposition of the rezoning. He expressed concern regarding the proximity to the school, as well as public safety. He requested the applicant find an alternative location.

Andrew Dowler, Resident of Fort King Manor Apartments, spoke in support of the program. He shared his positive life changing experience as a past Open Arms program participant.

Judge Steven Rogers, 110 NW 1st Avenue, spoke in support of the proposed program. The homeless community is in great need of rehabilitation treatment services. The Open Arms program specializes in helping people overcome addictions. The facility has a lower acceptance rate due to their high compliance standards for participants.

Shirley McMurry spoke in support of the rezoning application. The rezoning will help address a need in the community for women's recovery support services. She provided a brief overview of the organization's mission in the community.

Kent Guinn spoke in support of the rezoning application. He shared his experience working with Open Arms and encouraged City Council to support the need for women's recovery support services.

Jason Job, 117 NE 16th Avenue, spoke in support of the proposed program. He shared his positive life changing experience as a past Open Arms participant.

Natalie Caban, 1208 SE 18th Street, spoke in support of the proposed program. She requested the facility install surveillance to promote public safety.

Davion Hopson, Open Arms Village, Director of Behavioral Health, 4880 NE 14th Place, spoke in support of the proposed program. The organization has great support from the community and will focus on providing needed services for women.

Council Member Hilty spoke in support of the program. He clarified issues regarding the Salvation Army. He believes the proposed use will greatly benefit the community.

Mayor Marciano spoke in support of the program's community support efforts.

Mr. Haynes confirmed the same individuals who oversee the men's facility will manage the proposed women's facility. He introduced staff members who will manage the women's facility.

Council Member Musleh spoke in support of the rezoning application. The proposed zoning is appropriate for the area. He thanked the program graduates for speaking at tonight's public hearing.

Council Member Bethea spoke in support of the rezoning application. He noted there are many organizations that operate in residential communities.

President Dreyer spoke in opposition of the rezoning application. The proposed rezoning

is not appropriate for the surrounding residential community.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

AYE: Bethea Sr, Hilty Sr, and Musleh

NAY: Dreyer

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 9b.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-15 to rezone 1.14 acres from R-2, Two-Family Residential, to R-3, Multi-Family Residential, for property located in the 700 block of SW Third Street (Parcel 2848-002-001) (Case: ZON24-0003) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: Jay A. Musleh

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Senior Planner Endira Madraveren discussed the adoption of Ordinance 2025-15. The applicant requested to rezone the property from R-2 (Two Family Residential) to R-3 (Multi-Family Residential). He provided a brief overview of the property's history, zoning, and staff findings. Staff recommends approval.

Juan Vascuz, Applicant, explained the plan is to build a multi-family development. He provided a brief overview of the site plan, which includes ample buffering for the surrounding residences.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 9c.** Adopt Resolution 2025-10 to abrogate approximately 0.06 acres of the eastern 164 feet of the alley between SW Second Avenue and SW Third Avenue (Parcel 2854-025-010) (Case: ABR23-45350) (Quasi-Judicial)

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Planning Director Aubrey Hale discussed the adoption of Resolution 2025-10. The applicant requested to abrogate a portion of the alley. He provided a brief overview of the alleyway, abrogation, and staff findings. Staff recommends approval.

Rob Batsel, Attorney representing Applicant, 1531 SE 36th Avenue, stated the location is considered one of the Marriot's largest private investments. The request will not affect property owners, as the applicant owns both sides of the alley.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 9d.** Adopt Resolution 2025-11 vacating Parcel # 22817-000-00 located in Blocks 557-559 (Saving Mercy Corporation) from the West End Ocala Plat (PLV24-0001) (Quasi-Judicial)

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Growth Management Director Tye Chighizola discussed the adoption of Resolution 2025-11. The applicant requested to vacate a parcel. He provided a brief overview of the property's history, and staff findings. Staff recommends approval.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

10. General Business

- 10a.** Termination for Convenience of the Agreement between the City of Ocala and Sky Elements

Chief of Staff Christopher Watt reviewed the history of the agreement with Sky Elements. Shortly after Council approved the agreement, an accident occurred at one of their shows in Orlando, which caused the FAA to suspend their permitted operations. Due to the accident, uncertainty surrounding Sky Elements' permission to fly their drones, as well as the additional strain that would be place upon City staff to prepare for the event, staff is recommending the termination of the agreement for convenience.

Mayor Marciano spoke in favor of terminating the agreement.

Mr. Watt confirmed pilot error has been cited as the cause of the accident with Council Member Hilty.

Council Member Hilty spoke on the expense challenges associated with drone shows. He favors terminating the agreement.

Council Member Musleh spoke in favor of terminating the agreement. He suggested letting the County take responsibility for hosting drone/firework events.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10b.** Approve award of a three-year contract to Dragonfly Pond Works, LLC for stormwater ground maintenance services for the City's southeast section in the amount of \$343,980

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10c.** Authorize the City Engineer to issue a change order to the Construction Services Agreement with Commercial Industrial Corp. to facilitate the construction of a roundabout on SW 44th Avenue and increase the contract value by \$1,025,808

Council President Dreyer questioned the proximity of crosswalks from the entrance/exit of the roundabout, and asked to ensure there was adequate space to ensure pedestrian and driver safety. City Engineer & Director of Water Resources Sean Lanier clarified the design standards for roundabouts and crosswalks. She suggested considering alternate designs if space allows. He will follow up on the proposed project design regarding pedestrian crossings.

City Manager Pete Lee spoke on the traffic movements in the design.

Mr. Lanier confirmed the project will be completed in April 2025.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10d.** Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-125 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to appropriate funds from the Infrastructure Surtax Reserve to support the construction of a roundabout on SW 44th Avenue in the amount of \$1,025,808

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10e.** Approve expenditures for utility services provided by Duke Energy, Inc. for Fiscal Year 2024-25 with an estimated expenditure of \$130,000

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10f.** Approve the purchase of five vehicles for various City departments in the amount of \$278,602

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10g.** Approve Marion County's standard professional services agreement for Emergency Solutions Grant Program funding for outreach services in the amount of \$100,000

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10h.** Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-126 to approve and appropriate the City of Ocala's Emergency Solutions Grant program funding for outreach services in the amount of \$100,000

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10i.** Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-127 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to accept and appropriate funding for the City of Ocala's Home Investment Partnership Program in the amount of \$256,344

Director of Community Development Services James Haynes clarified the 35% HUD reduction with Mayor Marciano.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10j.** Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-128 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to accept and appropriate 2024-25 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program grant funding in the amount of \$125,519

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10k.** Adopt Resolution 2025-12 to accept a Federally Funded Subaward and Grant Agreement for Hurricane Helene, DR-4828, Agreement Number Z4947 and approve the delegation of authority to City Manager, Peter Lee, to execute funding agreements with any

amendments as the authorized agent and sign compliance documents

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10l.** Adopt Resolution 2025-13 to accept a Federally Funded Subaward and Grant Agreement for Hurricane Milton, DR-4834, Agreement Number Z4977 and approve the delegation of authority to City Manager, Peter Lee, to execute funding agreements with any amendments as authorized agent and sign compliance documents

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10m.** Approve one-year renewals of the contracts with PFM Asset Management, LLC, Sawgrass Asset Management, LLC, and Seix Investment Advisors, LLC for the provision of investment manager services for the City's treasury funds with an estimated aggregate expenditure of \$180,000

Council Member Musleh spoke in support of renewing the contract with the investment firms, citing his experiences with their representatives during Investment Committee meetings. He stated they are actively involved and engaged with discussions.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

- 10n.** Approve expenditures under contract with CenturyLink/Lumen Technologies for internet bandwidth/metropolitan area network circuits for the City and its customers in the amount of \$293,063

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

ABSENT: Mansfield

11. Internal Auditor's Report

12. City Manager's Report

- **Parking Garage No. 2 public meetings scheduled for January 30, 2025, at 12:00 pm and 5:30 pm**
- **Solid Waste Industry meeting scheduled for February 5, 2025, and solid waste workshop scheduled for February 13, 2025**
- **Winter weather advisory update**

City Manager Pete Lee reported there is a winter advisory for freezing rain. The schools will be open, as the worst of the weather is expected to pass in the early morning, and the City will monitor SunTran. The City is prepared for any storm outages that may arise.

13. Ocala Police Department Report

- **Overview of Crime and Traffic Stops**

Deputy Police Chief Biondi presented the Police Departments quadrant crime data and traffic stop (1,300 traffic stops during a two-week period) efforts.

- **Department Highlights**

Deputy Police Chief Biondi spoke on the successful arrest of the graffiti artist who vandalized the water tank. He will follow up with Mayor Marciano on the traffic stop numbers for last year.

14. Ocala Fire Rescue Department Report

- **Unit Responses**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn presented the unit responses data for January 6, 2025 to January 19, 2025. Fire Station Four is one of the busiest stations with 149 unit responses.

- **Call Type Spotlights**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on call type spotlights: motor vehicle accidents 90, structure fires 1, and community paramedicine/core 59. The department received 950 calls for service from January 6, 2025 to January 19, 2025, and 1,297 calls for service from January 1, 2025 to January 20, 2025.

- **Department Highlights**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported Ocala Fire Department Public Information Officer Ashley Lopez was recently recognized at the Florida PIO Symposium and twenty-one

employees participated in the OPS Drill. Several employees attended the Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium.

15. City Attorney's Report

16. Public Comments

- **Natalie Caban, 1208 SE 18th Street, proposed an initiative to address transportation barriers for low-income single mothers**

Natalie Caban, 1208 SE 18th Street, requested City Council support an initiative to address transportation barriers for low-income single mothers. She discussed the financial hardships single mothers face when trying to purchase a vehicle and mission of the program.

- **Kent Guinn, 320 NW 3rd Avenue, commented on Art Rojas v. City of Ocala case**

Kent Guinn, 320 NW 3rd Avenue, provided a brief overview of the legal case regarding religious freedom. The Art Rojas v. City of Ocala case has been ongoing for ten years. He urged the Council to continue and not give up.

- **Robert Reed, 5851 SW 63rd Street, commented on a vehicle accident**

Robert Reed, 5851 SW 63rd Street, requested the Police Department file his report regarding a vehicle accident at his home.

Council President Dreyer requested Mr. Reed attend Marion County's Commission meeting, as the City of Ocala does not have jurisdiction.

17. Informational Items and Calendaring Items

- Tuesday, January 28, 2025 - 3:00pm - TPO Meeting - Marion County Commissioners Auditorium
- Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - 4:00pm - City Council Meeting - Council Chambers
- Thursday, February 13, 2025 - 12:00pm - City Council Workshop: Sanitation - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, February 18, 2025 - 3:45pm - CRA Meeting - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, February 18, 2025 - 4:00pm - City Council Meeting - Council Chambers

17a. Monthly budget to actual report and Capital Improvement Project status report as of November 30, 2024

17b. Executed Contracts Under \$50,000

18. Comments by Mayor

- **Step Challenge Update**

Mayor Marciano reported the Step Challenge participants are doing a great job.

- **Planning Department recognition**

Mayor Marciano recognized the Planning Department for their great customer service.

19. Comments by City Council Members

- Council Member Bethea commented on the Martin Luther King Jr. Day events

Council Member Bethea thanked everyone who participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day events. The event turnout for the march to honor Martin Luther King Jr. was very successful.

- Council President Dreyer thanked Assistant City Manager Ken Whitehead for replacing the American flag in the City Council Chambers

20. Adjournment

Adjourned at 6:12 pm

Minutes

Kristen M. Dreyer
Council President

Angel B. Jacobs
City Clerk