



Ocala

City Council

Minutes

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

4:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

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

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, Assistant Finance Director Peter Brill, 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, 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, HR/Risk Management Director Todd Swanson, Chief of Staff Chris Watt, Ocala Police Dept Representative, IT Representative, The Press and other interested parties.

2a. New Employees

- Austin Cash, Engineering
- Misty Davis, Finance
- Gary Mix, Information Technology
- Wayne Ballew, Public Works
- Theran Hargrove, Public Works
- Anthony Russo, Public Works

3. Public Notice

- **Public Notice for the October 7, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting was posted on September 4, 2025**

4. Proclamations and Awards

- 4a.** Presentation of the Mayor's Citizen Lifesaving Award to Shady Hill Elementary School teachers Ms. Frances Lopez, Ms. Esther Rodriguez, and Health Clinic Assistant Miraki Johnson

Mayor Marciano presented the Mayor's Citizen Lifesaving Award to Shady Hill Elementary School teachers in appreciation of their lifesaving actions in the community.

- 4b.** Presentation of the National Arts and Humanities Month Proclamation to Jaye Baillie, Executive Director for the Marion Cultural Alliance at Brick City Center for the Arts

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for National Arts and Humanities Month. The City proclaims the month of October 2025, as National Arts and Humanities Month.

- 4c.** Presentation of the Community Planning Month Proclamation to Aubrey Hale, Planning Director and Planning Staff

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for Community Planning Month. The City proclaims the month of October 2025, as Community Planning Month.

- 4d.** Presentation of the Fire Prevention Week Proclamation to Ocala Fire Chief Clint Welborn

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for Fire Prevention Week. The City proclaims October 5, 2025 to October 11, 2025, as Fire Prevention Week.

- 4e.** Presentation of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation to Annie Marie Delgado, Founder and President of Conservative Watch USA

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk. The City proclaims October 14, 2025, as Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk.

- 4f.** Presentation of a Commendation for the Blue Seal of Excellence Recognition by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence Award to John King, Director of Facilities and Fleet Maintenance Department

Mayor Marciano presented the Commendation for the Blue Seal of Excellence Recognition by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence Award to John King, Director of Facilities, and the Fleet Maintenance Department.

- 4g.** Presentation of the Public Power Week Proclamation to Director of Ocala Electric Utility, Doug Peebles

Mayor Marciano presented a proclamation for Public Power Week. The City proclaims October 6, 2025 to October 12, 2025, as Public Power Week.

5. Presentations

- 5a.** Marion County Children's Alliance, Look Up - Put the Phone Down Campaign - by Beth McCall

Marion County Children's Alliance Executive Director Beth McCall presented the Look Up Marion, Put Down the Phone campaign, an initiative launched in response to concerns raised during a January focus group about the negative impact of excessive screen time on youth mental health. The campaign encourages community members to

reduce screen use and engage more with family and friends. Key components include: Put Down the Phone Day on November 15, promoting screen-free activities; a dedicated website, LookUpMarion.com, offering local activity ideas and resources for healthy screen habits; a countywide marketing campaign including PSAs, print, radio, and social media outreach; the Look Up Marion Summit on December 3 at the College of Central Florida, featuring national speaker Mandy Hammond of Screen Strong.

Ms. McCall thanked City leadership and community partners for their support and encouraged continued collaboration to promote healthier digital habits.

Council President Dreyer and Mayor Marciano thanked Ms. McCall for the informative presentation.

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: Barry Mansfield

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

- 6a.** Task Work Order No. 2 with Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC, for the provision of engineering services related to Lift Station No. 132 Force Main Upgrade in the amount of \$64,165

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

- 6b.** Task Work Order No. 3 with Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC, for the provision of engineering services related to Lift Station No. 87 Force Main Upgrade in the amount of \$69,050

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

- 6c.** Task Work Order No. 4 with Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC. for the provision of professional engineering services for the design of a permanent pump station for Drainage Retention Area 222 in the amount of \$69,920 and increase the aggregate expenditure threshold by \$75,000

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

- 6d.** Task Work Order No. 5 with Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC, for the provision of Professional Engineering Services for the design of a permanent pump station for Fisher Park Drainage Retention Area in the amount of \$69,920 and increase the aggregate expenditure threshold by \$75,000

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

- 6e.** Gas Service Agreement with TECO Peoples Gas System, Inc. for natural gas services for Lift Station No. 125 in an amount not to exceed \$84,107

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

- 6f. Maricamp Marketplace Developer's Agreement

Presentation By: Aubrey Hale

- 6g. Perpetual Storm Sewer and Access Easement to the Florida Department of Transportation

Presentation By: Tracy Taylor

- 6h. Resolution 2026-1 for a Perpetual Storm Sewer and Access Easement to the Florida Department of Transportation

Presentation By: Tracy Taylor

- 6i. Re-appointment of John Dozier to the Firefighters' Retirement System Board of Trustees to a new two-year term ending October 4, 2027

Presentation By: Angel Jacobs

- 6j. 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

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

- 9a. Ordinance 2025-41, amending Sec. 54-31 and 54-121, Code of Ordinances, City of Ocala, Florida, providing for maximum accumulation of waste and modifying the rate for multi-family units with roll-off compactors

Presentation By: Darren Park

Introduced By: Ire J. Bethea Sr

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

City Manager Pete Lee confirmed policy lists are not added to ordinances. Staff will send a copy of the policy to each City Council Member.

City Attorney Sexton confirmed the policy was approved by City Council on June 17, 2025, which included a list of approximately 75 entities to be allowed to continue to use a private hauler so long as they choose to use those services.

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

10. General Business

- 10a.** Agreement with General Underground, LLC, for the provision of construction services related to the SE 22nd Avenue Force Main Reroute Project for \$963,700, plus a 10 percent contingency, for a total expenditure of \$1,060,070

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

- 10b.** Agreement with Marion Rock, LLC, for the provision of construction services related to the Lift Station No. 127 Force Main Reroute Phase 1 project in the amount of \$825,550

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

- 10c.** Amendment No. 5 to the Professional Design Services Agreement for Water Treatment Plant No. 2 with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

- 10d.** Grant Agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Retrofit Installation of Nutrient Removing Filtration System™ using Bold & Gold®™ Media at the Heritage Nature Conservancy Pond in the amount of \$271,500

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

- 10e.** Budget Resolution 2026-100 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to appropriate funds from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Retrofit Installation of Nutrient Removing Filtration System™ using Bold & Gold®™ Media at the Heritage Nature Conservancy Pond in the amount of \$271,500

Presentation By: Sean Lanier

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10f.** Purchase of 15 bus shelters from Tolar Manufacturing Company in the amount of \$227,065

Presentation By: Tom Duncan

Council Member Hilty questioned if the shelters would include advertisements. Mr. Duncan stated staff have chosen not to include advertisements on the shelters, with the goal of presenting a calming shelter for the community. He noted there are advertisements throughout the SunTran routes.

Council Member Mansfield wondered who would install the shelters. Mr. Duncan explained the installation would go out for bid following procurement of the shelters, when he will have a visual on the product to know the specific foot print and vision for each planned location along the route.

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

- 10g.** Resolution 2026-2 to accept a Public Transit Grant Agreement between the Florida Department of Transportation and the City of Ocala for operational funding for the Ocala/Marion County Public Transit System, SunTran, in the amount of \$796,934

Presentation By: Tom Duncan

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

- 10h.** Budget Resolution 2026-101 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to accept and appropriate \$796,934 in Public Transportation Grant Agreement funds from the Florida Department of Transportation and \$808,934 in local matching funds to support the Ocala/Marion County Public Transit System, SunTran, for a total amount of \$1,605,868

Presentation By: Tom Duncan

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: Jay A. Musleh

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

- 10i.** Budget Resolution 2026-102 to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to appropriate funds to support expenditures incurred as a result of Hurricane Helene in the amount of \$139,672

Presentation By: Peter Brill

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

- 10j.** Budget Resolution 2026-103 to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to appropriate funds to support expenditures incurred as a result of Hurricane Milton in the amount of \$1,486,524

Presentation By: Peter Brill

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

- 10k.** One-year renewal agreement with Milsoft Utility Solutions, Inc. for utility outage

reporting, outage management and interactive voice response system in the estimated amount of \$107,100

Presentation By: Doug Peebles

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

- 10l.** Multi-award contract for emergency oil spill response cleanup to Alpha Omega Training and Compliance, Inc., Clean Harbors Environmental Services Inc., and ETC Services, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$150,000

Presentation By: Doug Peebles

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

- 10m.** Five-year contract with Granicus for the redesign, implementation, and hosting of city websites with an estimated total cost of \$549,040

Presentation By: Christopher Ramos

Director of Information Technology Christopher Ramos confirmed the proposed website redesign will allow the City to track increased usage.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

- 10n.** Purchase of citywide information technology equipment in the estimated amount of \$492,200

Presentation By: Christopher Ramos

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10o.** Utilization of Sourcewell cooperative purchasing agreement with National Auto Fleet Group for the purchase of four replacement vehicles for the Ocala Police Department in the amount of \$250,564

Presentation By: Liza Warmuth

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10p.** Marion County Standard Professional Services Emergency Solutions Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2025-26 in the amount of \$99,437.50

Presentation By: James Haynes

RESULT: PULLED

- 10q.** Budget Resolution 2026-104 to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget to accept and appropriate Emergency Solutions Grant program funding from Marion County for outreach services in the amount of \$100,000

Presentation By: James Haynes

RESULT: PULLED

- 10r.** Utilization of piggyback contract awarded to Big D Roofing Services, Inc. for the provision of roofing trade contract services for an aggregate expenditure of \$500,000

Presentation By: Gary Crews

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: James P. Hilty Sr

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

11. Internal Auditor's Report

12. City Manager's Report

- CEP new President Matt McCormick

City Manager Pete Lee reported the CEP selected Matt McCormick as the new President of the organization.

- **Solid Waste Rate Study Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 12:00 pm, in Council Chambers**
- **State of The City presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 7:30 am, at the Reilly Center**
- **2024-2025 Strategic Initiatives Milestones update**

City Manager Pete Lee reported the City agreed to provide three milestone updates to City Council regarding the 2024-2025 Strategic Initiatives. Each initiative has an individual report template, and the first update for fiscal year 2025-2026 will be presented at a future meeting in January 2026.

13. Ocala Police Department Report

- **Overview of Crime and Traffic Stops**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported on crime data for the period, September 15, 2025 to September 28, 2025: 7,678 total incidents, 5,047 proactive calls, 2,631 dispatched calls, quadrant breakdown (dispatched versus proactive), 252 crimes, 209 arrests, 1,202 traffic stops, and 182 crashes.

- **Department Highlights**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported the department successfully responded to three incidents in September regarding the following: online threats, arson, and organized fraud. The department will be hosting a meet & greet event on October 15, 2025, at 10 am, location OPD Headquarters. Furthermore, he addressed Council Member Bethea's concerns regarding vehicle window tint testing meters.

14. Ocala Fire Rescue Department Report

- **Unit Responses**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on unit responses for a two-week period, September 16, 2025 to October 6, 2025. The two busiest units: Fire Rescue Four (249-unit responses) and Fire Engine Four (162-unit responses).

- **Service calls update**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported on call type spotlights for a three-week period, September 16, 2025 to October 6, 2025: motor vehicle accidents 143, structure fires 4, and community paramedicine/core 93, and calls for service 1,511 (19,277 calls-to-date).

- **Department Highlights**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported the department successfully responded to seven incidents in September/October regarding the following: fires, motor vehicle accidents, and gas leaks.

15. City Attorney's Report**16. Public Comments****- James Cook, P.O. Box 507, Wildwood, FL, presented the Rail to Trail project proposal**

James Cook presented the Ocala Rail-to-Trail proposal, outlining a plan to convert 28.2 miles of railroad right-of-way into a multi-phase trail system. The first phase would begin at the north branch (9.1 miles), which is currently inactive and eligible for abandonment, allowing for a quick start. Subsequent phases would extend through downtown Ocala to Brick City Park and eventually to Candler. Mr. Cook noted the project's potential to connect multiple communities and mentioned ongoing efforts to prepare documentation for a presentation to CSX in late November, with the goal of negotiating right-of-way acquisition. The redevelopment would be managed under a 501(c)(3) for five years, after which assets would be returned to the City of Ocala and Marion County.

City Manager Pete Lee reported the City has a great business relationship with Mr. Cook regarding the proposed project. Chief of Staff Chris Watt noted he has been in contact with the FRA, as well as Florida Northern, and a representative plans to come out for an inspection within the first two weeks of October, or as the government shutdown allows.

Mr. Cook presented photos showing the aftermath of a train derailment, including overturned cars and environmental contamination, such as diesel fuel spills and scattered cross ties. He noted ongoing soil testing and drone inspections along the rail corridor, revealing widespread deterioration and neglect. Mr. Cook criticized CSX for poor maintenance and lack of awareness about the rail's condition. He emphasized the urgency of addressing these issues and expressed confidence in the feasibility of converting the corridor into a successful rail-to-trail project, citing past experience in Cobb County.

- Reverend Jerome Gamble, 1205 NW 4th Street, Ocala, FL, spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation

Reverend Jerome Gamble spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation. He expressed concern regarding racial discrimination.

- Reverend Reginald Willis Sr., Resident, spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation

Reverend Reginald Willis Sr. spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation. He expressed concern regarding hate speech.

- **Reverend Martin Smith, 3035 Hwy 329, Reddick, FL, spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation**

Reverend Martin Smith spoke in opposition of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation. He expressed concern regarding political involvement.

- **Jason Tolbert, Resident, commented on the Dignity House organization**

Mr. Tolbert addressed two key concerns regarding homelessness. He shared a poem to highlight the humanity and patriotism within the homeless community. He then criticized local organizations, including Dignity House, Interfaith, and the Salvation Army, for what he described as discrimination, mismanagement, and failure to effectively support those in need. He expressed frustration over being denied housing despite being drug-free and job-ready, and called on the City of Ocala to take direct control of homeless services, arguing that private organizations are not adequately addressing the issue.

Robin Ford, Office of Homeless Prevention, responded to Mr. Tolbert by confirming that he is at the top of the list for permanent supportive housing. However, there are currently no openings. She explained that Mercy Village is expected to begin accepting referrals by late December or early January, and once their process opens, he will be referred along with other eligible individuals. Final selection will be made by Mercy Village based on their criteria.

Council President Dreyer empathized with Mr. Tolbert and verified his contact information is correct on his speaker request form. Mr. Tolbert noted his phone only works on wi-fi, and thanked the City for the free wi-fi within the City parks and downtown.

Mr. Tolbert requested City Council increase funding for the Police Department to support public safety efforts.

- **Michael McAdams, 188 SE 61st Court, Ocala, FL, spoke in support of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation**

Michael McAdams, 188 SE 61st Court, Ocala, FL, spoke in support of the Day of Remembrance for Charlie Kirk Proclamation. He recognized Mr. Kirk for supporting free speech in America.

17. Informational Items and Calendaring Items

- Tuesday, October 21, 2025 - 3:30pm - CRA Board meeting - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, October 21, 2025 - 4:00pm - City Council meeting - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, October 28, 2025 - 3:00pm - TPO Meeting - Marion County BOCC Auditorium
- Tuesday, November 4, 2025 - 4:00pm - City Council meeting - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, November 11, 2025 - Veteran's Day - City Offices closed
- Wednesday, November 12, 2025 - 12:00pm - City Council Workshop Re: Solid Waste Rate - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, November 18, 2025 - 3:45pm - CRA Board meeting - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, November 18, 2025 - 4:00pm - City Council meeting - Council Chambers
- Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28, 2025 - Thanksgiving Holiday - City Offices closed

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

17b. Power Cost Adjustment Report - August 2025

17c. Monthly budget to actual report and Capital Improvement Project status report as of August 31, 2025

18. Comments by Mayor

- **Mayor Marciano recognized School Board Member Lori Conrad for attending tonight's meeting**
- **Mayor Marciano introduced Police Chaplain Joe Hassler**

19. Comments by City Council Members

- **Council Member Bethea expressed concern regarding the proclamation presented to honor the legacy of Charlie Kirk**

Council Member Bethea spoke in opposition of the proclamation presented to honor the legacy of Charlie Kirk. He expressed concern regarding past statements made by Mr. Kirk, and questioned if City Council has the authority to deny proclamations.

City Attorney Sexton confirmed that City Council cannot prohibit the Mayor from issuing a proclamation.

City Manager Pete Lee noted that City Council can issue proclamations as well.

20. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:55 pm

Minutes

Kristen M. Dreyer
Council President

Angel B. Jacobs
City Clerk

