



Ocala

City Council

Minutes

110 SE Watula Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

www.ocalafl.gov

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

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, Finance Director Peter Brill, City Projects Director Tye Chighizola, Multimedia & Communications Coordinator Danielle Dyals, 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 December 17, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting was posted on November 6, 2024**

4. Proclamations and Awards

4a. The Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award will be presented to Lynelle Fairchild

Mayor Marciano presented the Mayor's Citizen Recognition Award honoring Lynelle Fairchild.

4b. Service Award - Chad Lynch - Ocala Electric Utility - 25 Years of Service

Mayor Marciano and City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Chad Lynch in appreciation of his 25 years of service to the City of Ocala.

4c. Service Award - Fire Captain Joshua Phillips - Ocala Fire Rescue Department - 25 Years

of Service

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

4d. Service Award - Dwain Thomas - Growth Management Department - 25 Years of Service

Mayor Marciano and City Manager Pete Lee presented a service award to Dwain Thomas in appreciation of his 25 years of service to the City of Ocala.

5. Presentations

5a. Ocala Municipal Arts Commission Fiscal Year 2023-24 Report

Cultural Arts Supervisor Emily Parkman presented the Ocala Municipal Arts Commission's Fiscal Year 2023-24 Report. She provided a brief overview of grant awards and funding, approved art projects, and events.

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. Approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 tentative budget calendar

6b. Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-121 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to accept and appropriate program income for the City of Ocala's State Housing Initiative Program Grant program in the amount of \$24,003

6c. Approve a Change Order for Task Order No. 1 with Black & Veatch Corporation to provide engineering services in response to a request for additional information on SE Watula Avenue and SE Broadway Street Letter of Map Revision application for an overall project cost of \$54,450

6d. Approve a one-year renewal of Connexo NetSense Service Maintenance Agreement with Honeywell in the amount of \$64,862

6e. Approve the release of Blanket Easements granted on parcels No. 24228-003-00 and No. 24228-002-00 in exchange for Specific Replacement Easements

6f. Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-122 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to accept and appropriate grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice to reimburse overtime and operating expenses related to community policing education and programs up to \$36,531

- 6g. Approve minutes from September 11, 2024 City Council Special Meeting
- 6h. Approve minutes from December 3, 2024 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. Affordable Housing Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Director of Community Development Services James Haynes discussed the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee's 2024 Annual Report. On December 4, 2024, the Committee met to review draft incentives. He provided a brief overview of the proposed incentives. The goal is to remove affordable housing barriers in the community and create partnerships with developers to build affordable housing opportunities.

Council Member Hilty asked how many total lots within the City are available to be developed with this program. Planning Director Aubrey Hale informed him there are 61 lots that are ready to be built upon. There are other lots within the City; however, they would require much more work to get going.

Mr. Haynes noted there are lots located in North Magnolia are included on the list. He confirmed to Mayor Marciano the City conveyed seven lots last year, with an additional six lots this year and potentially working on an additional eight lots over the next year. The proposed incentives will help expedite the process.

Council President Dreyer asked about the Procurement process surrounding the lots. Contracting Officer Daphne Robinson explained the process and noted they are trying to add an initiative that includes preapproved floor plans to further expedite the process. The current process takes approximately three months.

RESULT: PRESENTED

9b. Approve the 2024 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Director of Community Development Services James Haynes discussed the 2024 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report. He provided a brief overview of the grant funding, projects, community outreach efforts, and partnerships. Rehabilitation efforts will ensure families are able to remain in their homes.

No public comment.

There being no further 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

- 9c.** 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 explained, just prior to the commencement of this meeting, the applicant requested to postpone the item to the second meeting in January. She opened the public hearing for only public comment to allow those present and unable to attend the January 21, 2025 meeting to have their comments on the record.

Ken McMurry, 6120 NW 52nd Avenue, spoke in support of the rezoning request. The zoning is compatible with the surrounding area. The proposed transitional recovery center will greatly benefit the community, and the business operations are similar to Open Arms Village.

Suzanne Khun, Open Arms Village Board Member, 720 SE 39th Street, spoke in support of the rezoning request. She provided a brief overview of Open Arms Village's program and community outreach efforts.

James Knoepfel, Principal of Saint John Lutheran School, 2024 SE 27th Road, spoke in opposition of the rezoning request. He expressed concern regarding the following: location (proximity to school and public parks), student safety, and negative community impacts.

Lori Cotton stated she will speak at the next meeting in January.

RESULT: POSTPONED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

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

- 9d.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-10 to rezone approximately 15.00 acres of property generally located in the 2000-3000 block of NW 35th Avenue Road, approximately 660 feet northwest of the intersection of NW 35th Avenue Road and NW 21st Street, (Parcel

21466-000-00) from R-1, Single-Family Residential, to B-2, Community Business (Case ZON24-45826) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: James P. Hilty Sr

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Senior Planner Emily Johnson discussed the adoption of Ordinance 2025-10. The applicant requested to rezone from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to B-2 (Community Business), to allow non-residential land uses. She provided a brief overview of the property's history, zoning, proposed use, and staff findings. The Planning & Zoning Commission and staff recommend approval.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 9e.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-11 to annex approximately 1.29 acres for property located at 4001 NW Blitchton Road (Parcel 21537-002-00) (Case ANX24-45820) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: Jay A. Musleh

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing for items 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g).

Senior Planner Endira Madraveren discussed the adoption of Ordinances 2025-11, 2025-12, and 2025-13. The applicant requested to annex, change future land use designation, and rezone the subject property. She provided a brief overview of the property's history, zoning, proposed use, and staff findings. The Planning & Zoning Commission and staff recommend approval.

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, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

- 9f.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-12 to change future land use designation of approximately 1.29 acres for property located at 4001 NW Blitchton Road (Parcel 21537-002-00) from Commercial (County) to Medium Intensity/Special District (City) (Case LUC24-45821) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: Ire J. Bethea Sr

There being no further 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

- 9g.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-13 to rezone approximately 1.29 acres for property located at 4001 NW Blitchton Road (Parcel 21537-002-00) from B-2, Community Business (County), to B-2, Community Business (City) (Case ZON24-45822) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: Barry Mansfield

There being no further 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

- 9h.** Adopt Ordinance 2025-14 to rezone approximately 15.46 acres for property located approximately 900 feet northwest of the intersection of SW College Road and SW 20th Court (Parcel 23553-003-00 and Parcel 23561-000-00) from R-1, Single-Family Residential, to R-3, Multi-Family Residential (Case ZON24-45672) (Quasi-Judicial)

Introduced By: James P. Hilty Sr

Council President Dreyer opened the public hearing.

Senior Planner Endira Madraveren discussed the adoption of Ordinance 2025-14. The applicant requested to rezone from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to R-3 (Multi-Family Residential), to allow multifamily uses. She provided a brief overview of the following: property's history, zoning, proposed use, and staff findings. To note, the Planning & Zoning Commission and staff recommend approval.

Keith Fair, Executive Director, Housing Finance Authority, clarified a deed correction in the real estate transaction. The property was granted by deed to the Central Florida Community Land Trust, to ensure the development would remain as affordable housing. He stated the plan is to build housing for seniors.

No public comment.

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

10. General Business

- 10a.** Adopt Budget Resolution 2025-123 amending the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to appropriate revenue and expenditures from the renewed Infrastructure Surtax in the amount of \$9,116,456

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

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Jay A. Musleh

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10b.** Approve the annual agreement for business creation, retention, and attraction services with the Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership in the amount of \$190,000

Council Member Mansfield spoke in support of the CEP.

Council Member Musleh stated he supports the CEP; however, he does not favor the proposed annual expense.

Mayor Marciano and Council President Dreyer spoke in support of the CEP.

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, and Dreyer

NAY: Musleh

- 10c.** Approve a two-year contract renewal for drone show services for Fourth of July events with Sky Elements, LLC in the amount of \$300,000

Recreation and Parks Special Services Division Head Amy Casaletto confirmed to Mayor Marciano that fireworks are prohibited in Tuscawilla Park, due to a chemical fertilizer substance.

Mayor Marciano noted a vendor is offering to host a fireworks show for \$30,000.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: Barry Mansfield

SECONDER: Ire J. Bethea Sr

AYE: Bethea Sr, Mansfield, Musleh, and Dreyer

NAY: Hilty Sr

- 10d.** Approve award of a contract to Florida Home Contractors, Inc., for rehabilitation services for the Terrell residence located on SW Fifth Place with a total project cost not to exceed \$114,740

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

- 10e.** Approve the purchase of electric meters from Wesco Distribution, Inc. with an estimated expenditure of \$2,000,000

There being no 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

- 10f.** Approve a one-year contract renewal with Extreme Enterprises of Marion County, Inc., for grounds maintenance services for the City's south section rights-of-way, medians, and city-owned lots with an expenditure of \$177,239

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

- 10g.** Approve a three-year contract award to Sulter Precision Cuts, LLC for stormwater grounds maintenance services for the City's northeast section in the amount of \$561,120

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

RESULT: APPROVED

MOVER: James P. Hilty Sr

SECONDER: Barry Mansfield

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

- 10h.** Approve the purchase of three Federal Transit Administration Category 3 cutaway style buses in the amount of \$561,168

Transit Administrator Tom Ducan confirmed to Pro Tem Bethea the buses are

gasoline-powered.

There being no further 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

- 10i.** Approve the purchase of two acres for \$156,000 from Ruth Still in support of the expansion project of Water Retention Area No. 222

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

- 10j.** Approve the award of a piggyback agreement to Evoqua Water Technologies, LLC, for the provision of wastewater odor and corrosion control services with an aggregate expenditure of \$4,000,000

There being no 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

11. Internal Auditor's Report

12. City Manager's Report

12a. 2025 State Legislative Priorities Draft

City Manager Pete Lee requested consensus to move forward with the proposed priorities. The priorities will be presented to the Marion County Legislative Delegation on January 8, 2025. The Legislative Session begins on March 4, 2025, and concludes on May 2, 2025.

Council President Dreyer requested staff add an offense for driving while on the phone, as a primary offense to the list of priorities.

Police Chief Mike Balken spoke on the challenges of enforcing the statute regarding texting while driving. He suggested adding hands-free to the requested phone offense language.

Council President Dreyer requested staff draft the offense language similar to Georgia's law.

Council concurred to submit the 2025 State Legislative Priorities on January 8, 2025.

- **Sanitation workshop rescheduled to February 11, 2024, at 12:00 pm in Council Chambers**

- **OFN Strategic Plan Update presented by Janice Mitchel**

Chief Financial Officer Janice Mitchel presented the OFN Strategic Plan. She provided a brief overview of the recommendations, cost savings plan, expansion plan, and community support efforts. She requested individual meetings with City Council Members to review proposed options. The final recommendations will be presented at a future City Council meeting.

- **City Staff recognition**

City Manager Pete Lee thanked City staff and Council for their hard work this year.

13. **Ocala Police Department Report**

- **Christmas Parade recap**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported the Christmas parade was a success, with only a couple of minor disturbances.

- **Annual Shop with a Cop Event**

Police Chief Mike Balken stated the annual Shop With a Cop event was well-attended, and was partnered with Target and the Children's Alliance.

- **Operation: Secret Santa**

Police Chief Mike Balken reported the department recently launched operation Secret Santa for the holiday season. He commented some videos should be posted onto the OPD social media soon.

- **Case Highlight**

Police Chief Mike Balken presented a case highlight regarding the arrest of two individuals suspected of thefts.

- **Patrol Bureau & Traffic Enforcement**

Police Chief Mike Balken confirmed to Council Member Mansfield the department has a traffic unit in place on State Road 200.

- **Update to Police Report to Council Format**

Council President Dreyer addressed the Council to inform them she had requested an update to format of the Police and Fire Department Reports to Council, and asked Council members if they had anything they would want Chief Balken to report to them.

14. **Ocala Fire Rescue Department Report**

- **Fire Chief Clint Welborn – Public Safety Opioid Response Efforts & Community Paramedicine**

Fire Chief Clint Welborn reported for the month of December, community paramedicine calls 55, OD2A calls 13, service calls 1,219, and unit response 1,921. Furthermore, he encouraged the public to attend upcoming events for the month, such as the Food and Toy Drive.

- **Update to Fire Department Report to Council Format**

Council President Dreyer requested the department break the data down by station, and asked Council members if they had any additional information they would want Chief Welborn to report to them.

15. **City Attorney's Report**

16. **Public Comments**

- **Jason Martin, 4160 SE 58th Avenue, discussed his concerns about business practices of neighboring business**

Jason Martin, 4160 SE 58th Avenue, expressed concern about the operations of a landfill operating near his home. He requested Council take into consideration the collection of uncontained landfill debris spilling onto homes and vehicles.

City Manager Pete Lee noted the property is located outside of city limits in Marion County.

Director of Public Works Darren Park clarified the landfill's permit. He confirmed the City is not the only vendor that utilizes the facility.

17. **Informational Items and Calendaring Items**

- Tuesday, December 24 and Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Eve and Day - City Offices closed
- Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - New Year's Day - City Offices closed
- Tuesday, January 7, 2025 - City Council meeting - 4:00 pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - City Council meeting - 4:00 pm - Council Chambers
- Tuesday, February 11, 2025 - City Council Workshop: Sanitation - 12:00 pm, Council Chambers

18. **Comments by Mayor**

- **Community Step Challenge**

Mayor Marciano reported the City is performing community outreach for the upcoming Step Challenge for the New Year. The Hospital is sponsoring a \$100 gift card for every team.

- **Healthy Ocala Mental Health Services website**

Mayor Marciano reported the website for Healthy Ocala Mental Health Services will launch next week and presented a preview. The program is funded by the Hospital District. As well, the City will be performing community outreach on social media to market the available services to the public.

- **Christmas Parade**

Mayor Marciano shared his wonderful experience attending the Christmas parade.

19. Comments by City Council Members

- **Council Members wished the public a Merry Christmas**

20. Adjournment

Adjourned at 5:52 pm

Minutes

Barry Mansfield
Council President

Angel B. Jacobs
City Clerk