



MINUTES

City Commission Meeting

6:00 PM – Thursday, April 03, 2025 – City Hall

APPROVED 4/17/2025

Invocation: Jocelyn Williamson, Central Florida Freethought Community

Pledge of Allegiance: Jermari'e Harvard, Eustis Elementary School Student

Call to Order: 6:03 p.m.

Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice

PRESENT: Commissioner Michael Holland, Commissioner George Asbate, Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Emily Lee and Mayor Willie Hawkins

1. Agenda Update: None

2. Approval of Minutes

March 20, 2025 City Commission Meeting

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

3. Presentations

3.1 Recognizing Students Who Participated in the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Commissioner Asbate left the meeting at 6:04 p.m. and returned at 6:05 p.m.

Mayor Hawkins introduced the students from Eustis Middle School who participated in the placing of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, located in Arlington National Cemetery, during a trip to Washington D.C.

Yuna Nelson reported on behalf of the four students from Eustis Middle School and described what occurred during the ceremony. Vice Mayor Ashcraft and Commissioner Holland presented Civic Pride awards to the four students: Yuna Nelson, William Graham, Rhett Woolley and Anthony Canzonetta.

3.2 Seaplane Infrastructure Presentation

Ryan Benaglio, City resident, spoke about his proposal for establishment of the Lake Eustis Seaplane Base. He commented on how the proposal would meet some of the goals of the downtown master plan. He provided a brief history of his background and noted he is the owner of Fly Umatilla Flight School.

Mr. Benaglio reviewed the types of seaplanes and bases for multiple uses including commercial, public, and private. He cited the seaplane base in Tavares and noted one of the planes used to be constructed in Tavares. He discussed adventure tourism and commented on the number of seaplanes in Florida. He explained how it could add to the City's value and

emphasized the demand for flight instruction. He stated it would work with Tavares and not against it. He noted other area airports and seaplane bases (SPB).

Mr. Benaglio explained why the City would want a SPB citing the following items: 1) Most often sea plane rating is an add-on rating to a pilot license; 2) Usually requires 4 to 6 hours of flight training and 4 hours of ground instruction for 3 days total training; 3) Seaplane tours can be from 15 minutes to full day adventures; and 4) The two nearest full time seaplane schools are Jack Browns' in Winter Haven and Jones Brothers in Tavares both of which are three to four months out to book a training. He stated there is also a delay in getting cruises. He noted that Tavares has a bird tower for public information. He indicated Tavares has 400 flights per month not counting the older planes without transponders. He commented on their recent 3-day seaplane and barbecue event.

Mr. Benaglio cited the Commission's efforts to get a cruise boat out of the City and the benefits to adding seaplanes as well. He provided some renderings of possible infrastructure and stated his request to proceed with approving a seaplane base on Lake Eustis; hiring a vetted seaplane consultant, Christopher "Doc" Bailey; and having open waterfront space and public docking for seaplanes.

The Commission asked if the purpose is to offer a seaplane training facility with Mr. Benaglio indicating he would like to have two things - a seaplane for training and a seaplane for tourism.

The Commission asked what else the City would get out of it besides more tourists with Mr. Benaglio stating his belief that it would help energize the downtown and bring in people to explore what else the City has to offer.

The Commission asked if the spaces would be leased with Mr. Benaglio responding affirmatively. The Commission asked if there would be a lot of preparation with Mr. Benaglio commenting on his meetings with City staff. He indicated it wouldn't require any extra permitting. He stated that the consultant would cost about \$25,000 and would help the City get approved through the FAA within 90 days. He indicated that gets retained until the City decides to shut it down.

The Commission asked about having fuel with Mr. Benaglio indicating that fuel would not be necessary as most planes get their fuel elsewhere. He explained what would be necessary. He noted it would add approximately five new employees.

Further discussion was held regarding the Tavares base and whether or not the flight students would stay in the City overnight. Mr. Benaglio indicated the City could charge fees to allow people to leave their planes overnight.

The Commission asked how far a plane can go on a tank of fuel with Mr. Benaglio responding that is calculated based on air time and milage. He indicated he can get to the Keys in 1.75 hours and all on one tank.

The Commission asked what it would cost to implement fuel with Mr. Benaglio indicating he did not know. He noted he has a fuel truck with a 500 gallon trailer and that cost a couple of thousand dollars. He added it would require permitting through the proper channels.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of having fly-ins and related events. It was suggested that the Commission direct staff to investigate the proposal and providing fuel. It was also noted that the tour boat needs to be moved forward.

Tom Carrino, City Manager, suggested that they set up a meeting with Mr. Bailey to discuss what it will take, what infrastructure will be required and, perhaps, to submit a proposal. He

noted that the City has a maritime engineer onboard and their suggestions are different than Trident's. He indicated they could ask Mr. Bailey for a proposal which they could bring back to the Commission. It was recommended that Trident be included in the conversations.

The Commission confirmed that their base would appear on the maps with Mr. Benaglio indicating that he would also provide publicity for the base. He reported that would be investing approximately \$550,000 in his project. He commented on how quickly he could get the planes.

The Commission asked where the City was with the tour boat with Mr. Carrino stating they have engaged a maritime engineer to design the infrastructure. He indicated that the engineer is questioning the amount of dock the company wants. It was noted that the seaplanes could be up and running sooner than the tour boat.

Discussion was held regarding what the planned infrastructure is for the tour boat, how soon the seaplane project could be completed and how the projects could be done concurrently. Discussion was also held regarding the project being part of the CRA.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to set up the meetings as suggested.

4. Audience to be Heard

No one came forward at that time.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Resolution Number 25-20: Annexation Agreement To Provide Water Service Outside the City Limits for 37121 County Road 452

5.2 Resolution Number 25-26: Authorizing Execution of Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Eustis Police Department and the United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)

5.3 Resolution Number 25-27: Authorizing Execution of Mutual Aid Agreement between Eustis Police Department and Lake County Sheriff's Office

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft,
Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

6. Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings

6.1 Explanation of Ordinances for Annexation, Future Land Use Designation and Design District Designation of Parcel with Alternate Key 2612525

SECOND READING

Ordinance Number 25-06: Voluntary Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key 2162525

Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, read Ordinance Number 25-06 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, voluntarily annexing approximately 2.86 acres of real property at Lake County Property Appraiser's Alternate Key Number 2612525, generally located on the east side of State Road 44 opposite the intersection with Lake Joanna Drive.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:43 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:43 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to adopt Ordinance 25-06 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft,
Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

6.2 SECOND READING

Ordinance Number 25-07: Assignment of Future Land Use District for Annexing Parcel Alternate Key Number 2612525

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-07 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida, amending the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 163.3187 F.S.; changing the Future Land Use Designation of approximately 2.86 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 2612525, generally located on the east side of State Road 44 opposite the intersection with Lake Joanna Drive, from Urban Low in Lake County to Mixed Commercial Residential in the City of Eustis.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:44 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:44 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-07 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft,
Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

Mr. Carrino noted that at the previous Commission meeting a member of the public asked about the mix Citywide of commercial use versus residential use. He acknowledged that the Comprehensive Plan does address an ideal mix and goals that they are trying to meet. He stated that Development Services conducted a parcel by parcel analysis of the commercial and residential uses throughout the City. The result showed that the City is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and staff will have to monitor that moving forward. He reported that about 15% of the MCR is single family residential and the Comprehensive Plan says they should have between 15 and 25%. He stated that when projects such as the North 19 project come online that will shift the percentages some. He thanked staff for their work on that report and noted that he forwarded that information to Cindy Newton.

6.3 SECOND READING

Ordinance Number 25-08: Assignment of Design District for Annexing Parcel Alternate Key Number 2612525

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-08 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; assigning the Suburban Neighborhood Design District Designation to approximately 2.86 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 2612525, generally located on the east side of State Road 44 opposite the intersection with Lake Joanna Drive.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:46 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:46 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-08 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

6.4 FIRST READING

Ordinance Number 25-01: Amendment to Chapters 102 and 109 of the Land Development Regulations

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-01 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida, amending the City's Land Development Regulations as follows: (1) Amending Section 102-11(b): Community Meeting; (2) Adding sub-sections to Section 109.4-Use Regulations Table to include definitions and requirements for the following uses: "retail smoke shop," "tattoo establishment," and "massage establishment"; Amending Section 109.4 – Use Regulations Table to add as a conditional and/or permitted use the following uses: "self-service storage," "retail smoke shop," "tattoo establishment," and "massage establishment"; providing for applicable legislative findings; providing for codification, scrivener's error, severability, conflicts, and an effective date.

Mike Lane, Development Services Director, confirmed there were no questions from the Commission.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:48 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:48 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve Ordinance Number 25-01 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

7. Future Agenda Items and Comments

7.1 City Commission

Vice Mayor Ashcraft commented about developers coming to Eustis for MCR due to Eustis considering changing the densities on single family homes. He stated the City needs to either take a break from annexing property or have a serious discussion about MCR (Mixed Commercial Residential).

Mayor Hawkins indicated he had been thinking similarly and emphasized the need to concentrate on the downtown. He added they should just let all the projects already underway to come to fruition.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft responded the City needs to focus on commercial development, jobs and businesses. He named various businesses that are either closing or relocating. He suggested imposing a moratorium on annexations or have a serious discussion on MCR. He commented on a visit he had at the Asian cultural center on the east side of town. He stated the owners spoke about the possibility of the City considering partnership with Japan. He noted the Governor has signed a proclamation on that issue.

Commissioner Holland thanked the City Commissioners for their attendance in Tallahassee and indicated he would provide an update at the next meeting. He stated that, so far, all of the City's projects have been partially funded, depending on what the Governor does and the Senate. He commented on some bills that would have hurt small cities have been drastically

changed or pulled. He thanked Continental Strategies and City staff for their assistance in coordinating meetings with the Governor's staff.

Mayor Hawkins also expressed thanks to Continental Strategies.

Commissioner Holland also thanked Charlotte Jordan working with the local office and Nan Cobb in the House of Representatives. He and Mayor Hawkins both stated that Nan Cobb is representing Eustis well.

Commissioner Lee commented on the legislative meetings. She noted that she and Commissioner Holland had stayed extra days and toured the Brownsville Preparatory School and cited their excellence in reading and writing. She expressed the hope that they would visit the City. She reported on the City's America in Bloom (AIB) activities. She stated that the AIB evaluators would be in the City during the 4th and would leave on the 7th. She thanked everyone for their assistance.

7.2 City Manager

Mr. Carrino announced staff is working with a consultant on the evaluation of the Eastern Utilities. He indicated they are having difficulties in scheduling their presentation. He stated they will need at least two hours and asked if they want it on a regular Commission agenda or do they want a separate workshop. He suggested April 17th or May 1st.

Discussion was held regarding scheduling the presentation. It was a consensus to schedule the presentation for 4:00 p.m. on May 1st as a workshop.

Mr. Carrino asked if they wanted to cancel the July 3rd meeting. He noted July does have five Thursdays and asked if they wanted to consolidate everything into one meeting on July 17th or reschedule the meeting to another date. It was a consensus to consolidate everything into July 17th and cancel the July 3rd meeting.

Mr. Carrino noted they would still be trying to schedule the budget workshops with Commissioner Asbate asking what is the latest the Commission can hold a budget workshop.

Mr. Carrino explained they don't want to go into August due to needing to get everything together for the September budget hearings. He added they can't go too early into June either due to not having the information needed to prepare the draft budget.

Lori Carr, Finance Director, responded that August is too late because they have to have the tentative millage set by August.

Mr. Carrino asked to schedule some time on a future agenda to discuss the Chamber of Commerce and their physical location. He reported there is a large picture window broken which will cost approximately \$1,600 to replace including glass and stucco. He indicated he was inclined to make the repair but the Commission and Chamber need to discuss the future of that building. He asked if there is any objection to the repair or holding the discussion.

Discussion was held regarding the cost of the proposed repair with Mr. Carrino indicating they have a quote for the repair. It was a consensus to proceed with the repair and to schedule a discussion regarding the building. It was noted that they need to also consider the history of the building in making the decision.

7.3 City Attorney: None

7.4 Mayor

Mayor Hawkins announced the Sparkle and Shine Prom for the disabled and invited them to attend on Saturday at the Community Center. He listed some of the related activities.

Mr. Carrino reminded the Commission about the master plan workshop on Saturday, followed by discussion regarding Trout Lake Nature Center.

Commissioner Asbate asked about publicity for the workshop with Mr. Carrino indicating he asked Jamie Lanford and Al Latimer to get it out on social media and possibly door-to-door. Ms. Lanford confirmed it would be placed on social media on Friday with Commissioner Asbate expressing concern regarding the timing.

Mr. Carrino indicated that a legal ad was also published in the newspaper regarding the workshop. Ms. Lanford and City Clerk Christine Halloran indicated it was also on the public notice on the City's website.

Commissioner Lee asked if she could still donate some gowns for the prom with Mayor Hawkins informing her how to provide them.

Mayor Hawkins reported the previous week he received a phone call regarding a grandmother that had just gotten custody of her two grandchildren and there was no water. She went to the Water Department and met with someone and they put her on a payment plan. They also bought food for the family and clothes for the children. He commented on how special the City's employees are and stated they are not always appreciated. He expressed appreciation for the Water Department employees.

Mayor Hawkins indicated he would like to discuss things that are in the City's purchase acquisition pipeline. He explained he had asked for a list of outstanding items and there is one that goes back to October. He asked how purchases are processed and wanted to know what could be done to speed up the process.

Mayor Hawkins then commented on the accident that occurred that claimed the lives of three local women. He noted there would be a community prayer vigil for them and encouraged people to attend.

8. Adjournment: 7:17 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*



CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk



WILLIE L. HAWKINS
Mayor/Commissioner