



MINUTES City Commission Meeting

6:00 PM - Thursday, October 23, 2025 - City Hall

Invocation: Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner George Asbate

Call to Order: 6:02 p.m.

Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice

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

1. Agenda Update

Ordinance Numbers 25-31, 25-32 and 25-33: Annexation of Parcels with Alternate Key Numbers 1743320 and 1407940 and affiliated future land use designation and design district designation

Tom Carrino, City Manager, noted that Ordinance Numbers 25-31, 25-32 and 25-33 were heard on first reading on September 18, 2025. He stated the applicant has requested that second reading of the ordinances be moved to 11/20/2025.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to move Ordinance Numbers 25-31, 25-32 and 25-33 to November 20, 2025. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

2. Approval of Minutes

September 18, 2025 City Commission Workshop: Impact Fees

September 29, 2025 City Commission Workshop: Impact Fees

September 29, 2025 City Commission Special Meeting: Impact Fees

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

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

3. Presentations

3.1 Recognition for Retirement of Jobey Jones

Mayor Hawkins read the recognition plaque for the retirement of Jobey (Joseph) Jones, Deputy Director of Public Works.

The Commission, Mr. Carrino and Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, thanked Mr. Jones for his 27 years of dedicated service.

3.2 Fire Department Meritorious Award for Positive Outcome for a Critical Traumatic Call

Mike Swanson, Fire Chief, recognized Eustis Fire Department staff on B-shift with an award for a call on 06/29/2025 in Grand Island. He thanked the hospital workers, dispatchers, and Lake County staff for their help on the call for a critically injured youth.

The following EFD personnel were presented the Lifesaving Award: Lt Paramedic Michael Peckham, Lt Paramedic Michael Buschor, Sr Eng Paramedic Kyle Bateman, Eng Paramedic Sammy Rimes, Firefighter EMT Alexis Anderson and Firefighter Paramedic Iman Mencia.

The following Lake County Fire Personnel were also recognized: Fire Battalion Chief Robert Fickett, EMS Battalion Chief Steven Wheeler, Firefighter/EMT Christopher Richter, Firefighter/EMT Daniel James and Firefighter/Paramedic Josh Kibler.

The following Arnold Palmer Hospital Children's Emergency Department & Trauma Center personnel were also recognized: Emergency Medical Services Liaison Ernest Weishaupt and Trauma Center Director Julie Frev.

Sunny Wysap and Julie Frey from Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital thanked the staff on the call and gave each a challenge coin.

3.3 Events Department: City of Eustis Sunsational Awards Recognition

Mr. Carrino introduced Cheri Moan, the City's new Events and Communications Director.

Ms. Moan introduced her Events team as follows: Carl Saenger, Events Manager; Christine Guiffre, Vendor and Community Relations Coordinator; Anne Heslop, Events Coordinator; and Teagan Ferrin, Events Aide.

Mr. Carrino announced that the City had received six first place awards, one second place and one third place, which may be the most first place awards they have won.

Recognition of Eustis Police Department Accreditation

Craig Capri, Police Chief, stated this was the City's fourth cycle in the accreditation. He commented on the findings of the accreditation team and noted they were impressed that the Mayor and City Manager attended the accreditation ceremony.

Mayor Hawkins expressed appreciation for the work done with the department by Chief Capri.

4. Audience to be Heard

Mr. Carrino explained that Daniel DiVenanzo had submitted Request to Speaks cards for Items 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 however, the City does not normally take public comment on items under Other Business.

Daniel DiVenanzo, nonresident and City business operator, expressed concern that the City Manager is proposed to receive a 5% increase. He noted the salaries for other City Managers in the area and stated that the current manager is overpaid. He commented on the increase in impact fees. He then noted Items 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4. He expressed support for the City hiring an onboard City Attorney.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Resolution Number 25-78: Annexation Agreement and Developer's Agreement To Provide Water Service Outside the City Limits for a Real Property (addressed unassigned) on Honey Blossom Drive (Alternate Key 1407591)

- 5.2 Resolution Number 25-79: Authorizing Multiple Annual Purchases in Excess of \$100,000 for Products and Services Essential to the Daily Operations of Public Utilities
- 5.3 Resolution Number 25-80: Approving an Expenditure in Excess of \$100,000.00 for Construction Phase I of the Greenwood Cemetery Improvements and the Veterans Memorial
- 5.4 Resolution Number 25-81: Authorizing an Expenditure in Excess of \$100,000 for the Eastern Wastewater Treatment Plant Reuse Pump Station Project
- 5.5 Resolution Number 25-84: Police Department FY 25-26 Drone Grant

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

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

6. Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings

6.1 Resolution Number 25-75: Refinancing of CRA Community Redevelopment Loan

Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, read Resolution Number 25-75 by title: A resolution by the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, approving a promissory note to document interfund financing from the City's General Fund to the Eustis Downtown & East Town Redevelopment Agency, authorizing execution of said note, and providing for an effective date.

Lori Carr, Finance Director, reviewed the financing options previously discussed with the Commission and following the direction provided by the Commission. She explained the resolution would formalize the loan between the City's General Fund and the CRA.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:30 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:30 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Commissioner Holland, to approve Resolution Number 25-75. The motion passed on the following vote:

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

6.2 Resolution Number 25-83: Preliminary Subdivision Plat for Tealwood Estates (2025-S-03) with Alternate Key Numbers 1215013, 1215544, 1094828, 1215536, and 1215005

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-83 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving a preliminary subdivision plat for Tealwood Estates Subdivision (2025-S-03), a 61-lot townhome single-family residential subdivision, on approximately 8.44 acres of property located on the north side of Orange Avenue, east of Glover Street and west of Cardinal Street (Alternate Key Number 1215013, 1215544, 1094828, 1215536 and 1215005).

Jeff Richardson, Deputy Director Development Services, reviewed the proposed preliminary subdivision plat for Tealwood Estates (2025-S-03), a 61-lot townhome single-family attached residential subdivision, on approximately 8.44 acres of property located on the north side of Orange Avenue, east of Glover Street, and west of Cardinal Street (Alternate Key Numbers 1215013, 1215544, 1094828, 1215536, and 1215005). He stated the net density would be 7.23 units per acre with approximately 42% open space provided. He indicated they would be providing 1.1 acres of dog park, walking paths and passive park. He noted they would also be

providing an additional 32 parking spaces for guest parking. He provided a history of the project application and a description of the location of the project. He reviewed the surrounding land uses and provided a map of the proposed plat. He stated staff's recommendation for approval.

The Commission asked if there would be parks or tot lots with Mr. Richardson identifying the locations of a pavilion, walking trail and other park areas. He explained the location of the dog park.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 6:37 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 6:37 p.m.

Mayor Hawkins asked for a motion to allow discussion.

The Commission discussed wanting to see the development be more kid friendly. It was noted that the City's code does not require tot lots or playgrounds.

David Klutz, developer, noted there is room to do that and added that most of their developments have wound up with those amenities. He confirmed that the condos are two and three-bedroom.

Attorney Garcia explained that the preliminary plat approval is primarily ministerial at that point unless it does not meet existing code. It was noted that due to Senate Bill 180, their hands are tied.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Holland, to approve Resolution Number 25-83. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

6.3 FIRST READING

Ordinance Number 25-37: Residential Backyard Chickens Program

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-37 on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida, creating Chapter 14, entitled "Animals and Fowl," and adding Article II, entitled "Residential Backyard Chickens Program," and creating Section 115-11.8 of the Land Development Regulations, entitled "Backyard Chickens Program Standards"; providing for legislative findings and intent; establishing definitions; providing for permit requirements; providing for standards of care; providing for enforcement and penalties; providing for program review and automatic continuation; providing for severability; providing for conflicts; providing for codification; and providing for an effective date.

Attorney Garcia explained the purpose is to establish a two-year pilot program allowing for the limited keeping of hens as an accessory use to single-family residential properties within the City of Eustis. She provided an overview of the specifics of the program including criteria, limitations, fines for noncompliance of the permits and benefits of the program. She stated staff's recommendation for approval of the ordinance and establishment of the backyard chicken pilot program.

Discussion was held regarding the proposed ordinance with the following issues or questions:

1) Requirements for the structure and health benefits; 2) Issues with someone having to deal with a neighbor having chickens; 3) Additional responsibilities for Code Enforcement; and 4) Who will monitor the number of chickens at one location and whether or not they are sold.

Attorney Garcia reviewed the specific limitations within the ordinance including what is the responsibility of the applicant. She cited what might result in denial of the application. She noted that a denial can be appealed to the City Manager and the Commission. She explained what would require Code Enforcement to go out and how they would determine if the \$75 fee is sufficient. She commented on what would occur if there were to be a health advisory regarding poultry health. She then cited what would be included in the Land Development Regulations pertaining to the chickens.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Pam Rivas spoke in support of the ordinance and cited numerous cities and counties that allow backyard chickens.

Daniel DiVenanzo noted the limitation of 15 permits with three chickens per permit totaling 45 chickens.

Karen LeHeup-Smith spoke in support of the ordinance and the limitation of 15 permits..

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:09 p.m.

The Commission noted that the ordinance is strictly for a pilot program to determine if it will work with Attorney Garcia confirming that it is for a two-year pilot program. She noted that, if there are five verified complaints within twelve months, then staff will bring it back to the Commission.

The Commission commented on the amount of effort that went into development of the ordinance, the fact that there is an educational requirement in the ordinance and the benefits to the community.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Asbate, to approve Ordinance 25-37 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

Voting Nay: Commissioner Holland, Commissioner Lee

RECESSED: 7:14 p.m. RECONVENED: 7:20 p.m.

7. Other Business

7.1 City Manager's Annual Evaluation

Karen Crouch, Human Resources Director, noted that the City Manager's evaluation was completed by the Commission. She stated staff is recommending that Mr. Carrino receive a 5% salary increase, which is the same as the other employees, plus \$1,000. She added that the other cities' managers' salaries that were provided were as of October 1st.

Commissioner Holland confirmed he had met with Mr. Carrino regarding his evaluation and expressed support with him receiving the same increase as the other employees.

Commissioner Lee confirmed that she had also met with Mr. Carrino.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft indicated he had also met with Mr. Carrino. He commented on the challenges facing the City and stated he would not be in favor of a 5% raise.

Commissioner Asbate indicated he had met with Mr. Carrino and HR. He commented on a comparison of City budgets between Eustis and other area cities, and Mr. Carrino's experience as a City Manager compared with other cities. He cited his concerns regarding City finances

and expressed opposition to the 5% increase plus the \$1,000 additional. He noted he had asked Mr. Carrino for his response on some items and indicated he had not yet received that back. He suggested that the Commission could re-visit the City Manager's compensation in less than one year.

Mayor Hawkins confirmed he had also met with Mr. Carrino. He noted that some of the challenges have been caused by the Commission and added that Mr. Carrino has saved the City from some situations where the City might have been sued. He expressed support for Mr. Carrino receiving the same increase as other employees.

Commissioner Holland commented that the City Manager and Assistant City Manager are only as good as the City Commission and the Commission has given mixed signals.

Mr. Carrino stated his intent is to listen to the Commission's comments. He commented on the years of experience that other City Managers in the area have.

Mayor Hawkins noted the downtown development projects have consumed the City for years and Mr. Carrino has been following Commission direction.

Mr. Carrino noted that the City Manager's contract has included a \$200 monthly vehicle allowance since 2015 and added that he included in the budget a request to increase that allowance to \$400 per month.

Discussion was held regarding the need to provide more concise direction to Mr. Carrino and how they conducted their individual reviews with Mr. Carrino and HR. It was suggested that they hold a workshop to discuss the City Manager and their direction.

Mayor Hawkins polled the Commission regarding the salary increase with Commissioner Holland agreeing to the same as the rest of the staff, and Vice Mayor Ashcraft asking for less.

The Commission discussed the delays held due to things being postponed to hold workshops rather than action taken. Discussion was also held regarding the need for a new evaluation process.

Mayor Hawkins finalized the poll with a consensus for the City Manager to receive the 5% plus \$1,000 increase with Vice Mayor Ashcraft supporting a 2.5% increase and Commissioner Asbate supporting a 1% increase.

7.2 Staff seeks Commission direction on a policy to guide the sale or transfer of surplus City-owned residential lots, including both CRA and non-CRA properties. Discussion will focus on options to prevent speculative resale and ensure community benefit, such as reverter clauses, deed restrictions, or performance-based mortgages. Direction is needed on preferred safeguards and criteria to apply in future dispositions. (City Attorney)

Attorney Garcia requested direction on development of a policy on the sale or transfer of surplus City-owned residential lots, both CRA and non-CRA. She stated staff is looking for direction on what safeguards and timeframes they would like to have. She noted there are state statutes that would affect the policy as well. She explained that a uniform policy would support transparency, fairness and defensibility. She reviewed the benefits of having an adopted policy and provided an overview of the different types of safeguard mechanisms that could be used. She summarized the request for direction on the preferred protective mechanisms, preferred timeframes for development and resale restrictions, and whether to apply different standards for CRA vs. non-CRA lots. She reviewed her recommendations for a tiered approach for non-CRA lots and her recommendation for the CRA lots.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft expressed concern regarding the ability for mortgages to be obtained based on the restrictions.

Attorney Garcia explained that, based on the Commission direction, she would bring back a draft resolution for consideration along with templates for the various types. She suggested that Vice Mayor Ashcraft could assist with drafting the resolution due to his concerns.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for Attorney Garcia and Vice Mayor Ashcraft to work on a resolution to bring back to the Commission.

7.3 Staff requests Commission direction to bring forward a resolution adopting the City's standardized Public Records Exemption Request Form and administrative procedures. These tools implement expanded protections under Section 119.071(4)(d), Florida Statutes, and Senate Bill 268 (2025) for qualifying officials, employees, and family members. Adoption will ensure legal compliance and consistent processing of exemption requests. (City Attorney)

Commissioner Holland asked if the City isn't subject to state statute regarding the next two discussion items - Public Records Exemption Form and Public Records Compliance and Due Diligence Form.

Attorney Garcia explained her reason for recommending they adopt the forms. She further explained her decision to bring forward to the Commission certain items for discussion only prior to bringing them forward for consideration unless it is something that is required.

Commissioner Asbate questioned the need to approve the forms when it is governed by state statute. He asked for it to be tabled until he has a chance to read some of the information.

Attorney Garcia explained the City doesn't currently have policies in place with Commissioner Asbate further asking both items to be tabled. He asked the Mayor to poll the Commission about tabling.

Mayor Hawkins began polling the Commission regarding tabling the discussion with Attorney Garcia explaining that Senate Bill 268 expands the exemptions. She explained the additional exemptions and stated that staff needs a form to assist with the handling of those exemptions and to confirm the individual actually qualifies for the exemption. She confirmed that other cities do have similar forms.

Further discussion was held with a consensus to table both items and have them brought back in two weeks as discussion items.

7.4 Staff requests Commission direction to advance a resolution adopting a standardized acknowledgment form for use when public records requests involve personal devices or accounts of City officials or employees. The form affirms the individual's legal duty under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, to exercise due diligence in identifying, preserving, and producing responsive records. It also provides written documentation of compliance efforts to protect the City and individual from potential liability. Adoption will enhance transparency and reduce legal exposure. (City Attorney)

This item was not heard due to the determination to table Items 7.3 and 7.4 for two weeks.

8. Future Agenda Items and Comments

8.1 City Commission

Commissioner Holland congratulated the Fire and Police Departments and expressed appreciation for both departments' command staff. He noted the upcoming Halloween holiday

and encouraged everyone to be careful. He cited an upcoming event with Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Lee expressed pride in all of the awards won by the City.

Commissioner Ashcraft requested that the agenda be published on Thursday rather than Friday to allow more time for Commissioners to ask questions of staff. He asked for the City to reimburse him for his travel expenses to attend a conference in Japan. He noted that they would be meeting with some companies interested in coming to Florida.

The Commission asked how much is budgeted for travel for each Commissioner with Mr. Carrino responding that they budget \$2,000 per Commissioner for the League of Cities conference and \$1500 per Commissioner for the Legislative Days in Tallahassee. He indicated they also budget for the Florida Redevelopment Association but that is in the CRA budget. He noted they also budget for other, smaller local events. He noted those funds are in the Travel and Per Diem under those specific events.

Discussion was held regarding Commissioners being allowed to travel to other conferences that may be beneficial to the City utilizing the funds already in the budget versus the benefits in all of the Commissioners going to specific conferences.

Discussion was held regarding what benefits would be gained from Vice Mayor Ashcraft attending the conference in Japan with a suggestion that Economic Development Director Al Latimer also attend. It was noted that they needed additional information regarding the purpose of the conference and benefit to the City.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked the Mayor to poll the Commission.

Commissioner Lee declined to comment, Commissioner Holland expressed opposition. Commissioner Asbate expressed support. Vice Mayor Ashcraft noted he had a copy of the itinerary if anyone wanted to see it.

Attorney Garcia suggested they consider adjusting the travel policy. She noted that the Charter does have some restrictions. She indicated that, if there is found to be some public benefit, there could be reimbursement. She suggested he attend the conference and bring back information regarding the public benefit and then the Commission can consider doing a budget amendment to allow the reimbursement.

Mayor Hawkins indicated he would need more information to be able to make a decision. He asked if Vice Mayor Ashcraft was open to Attorney Garcia's suggestion with Mr. Ashcraft concurring.

Chief Capri announced that retired sergeant Phil Livingston recently passed away. He noted that Mr. Livingston had asked for certain things for his funeral. He provided information regarding the planned services and procession to the Lakeside Memory Gardens. He invited the Commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Asbate raised the issue of parking concerns for local businesses. He noted that some people are parking in front of the businesses for hours, and sometimes days, at a time. He indicated that he doesn't allow employees to park in front of his business.

Mayor Hawkins indicated that he and Chief Capri would be meeting with the downtown businesses. He noted that business owners are also parking in the customer parking.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft noted the problem with tenants residing above the businesses as well.

Commissioner Asbate commented on the upcoming services for Aaron Bellaire. He then commented on the inter-relationship among the Commissioners.

8.2 City Manager

Mr. Carrino announced Dr. Levey has been engaged and he has met with a Commissioner and members of the leadership team. He noted the need to schedule additional meetings with individual Commissioners and to schedule the workshop sometime in early December. He reported staff is working with the State on the Evaluation and Appraisal Report and explained that is for evaluation and modification of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that has been complicated by Senate Bill 180; therefore, staff is working with a consultant. He indicated that the City is coming up on some deadlines but they are also experiencing delays due to SB 180. He explained that it may affect their ability to approve some comprehensive plan amendments and annexations in the future. He thanked everyone for the time they put into his evaluation and indicated he would put time into working on those comments. He expressed appreciation for the Commission and how they have to serve the dual role of being an employer and a steward of the public funds.

8.3 City Attorney

Attorney Garcia reported on the Community Center property and stated they did receive a revised title commitment which shows that the City does hold fee simple clear title to the property. She added that it is no longer subject to any deed restrictions or reverter clauses. She said they can move forward with the existing legal description; however, the title insurer did recommend having a new boundary survey. Costs for that were found to be pretty high. She recommended that whoever gets the property should pay for the survey to insure they have exact delineations on that conveyance. She indicated that would save the City unnecessary expense and noted it would need to be included in the advertising. She explained the process to be used for advertising the City's intent to dispose of the property.

The Commission asked if that would be done this year with Mr. Carrino indicating it could be on the next agenda. The Commission expressed concern regarding the City not having a plan for relocation of the community building.

Attorney Garcia explained the information that would be included in the advertising with Commissioner Lee noting they need to also tell what their plans are for replacement of the community building.

Attorney Garcia confirmed that the RFP is not mandated by law with Mr. Carrino indicating that 30 days' notice is required.

The Commission asked about the unsolicited proposal the City received with Attorney Garcia indicating they will be able to submit an application once the Notice of Intent goes out. She indicated that the City has no obligation to respond to the proposal. She confirmed she told their attorney she would notify him once the Notice of Intent is issued.

Attorney Garcia asked if the Commission wants the content of the advertising to be brought back to them with Commissioner Asbate asking for them to receive a copy of it and for them to be told when and how it would be advertised. He also asked that the responses be opened in public.

Attorney Garcia indicated it would be brought back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Attorney Garcia reported on the charging stations. She indicated a draft contract was submitted for her to review. She stated it would need to be revised and negotiated. She noted

that the current draft includes a lot of control for the vendor and limits flexibility for the City and does not include clear performance standards. She added that it is an exclusivity agreement and she would like the ability to negotiate other locations and providers.

Attorney Garcia reported that the City received notification that two property owners have filed lawsuit with Lake County and reached out to Development Services seeking an appellate process for Resolution 25-55 which granted approval of the Huddle 44 site plan including the drive through. She explained the City does not have an appellate process for that; therefore, they would need to seek recourse through the courts. They are alleging the City did not comply with provisions of the Land Development Code. She stated that no damages are being sought but is essentially a review of the City's process. She explained why a shade meeting was not needed as she is only providing them information that is already a public record not discussing legal strategy.

Attorney Garcia explained that the court has conducted the review and issued an Order of Initial Cause. She explained the City will have 30 days to prepare a response and they will be coordinating to get a certified record. She indicated that, if necessary, she will request to hold a shade meeting.

8.4 Mayor

Mayor Hawkins confirmed that the groundbreaking will be held at 9:00 a.m. He provided a statement regarding serving in public administration and what it entails. He stated that what they do is not about controlling outcomes but about creating conditions where good outcomes remain possible. He emphasized that they have work to do for the people and it is not about them. He stated they need to be focused and get the work done.

9. Adjournment: 8:44 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