



# MINUTES

## City Commission Meeting

APPROVED 6/19/2025

6:00 PM – Thursday, June 05, 2025 – City Hall

**Invocation: Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Michael Holland**

**Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.**

**Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Michael Holland, Commissioner Emily Lee, Commissioner George Asbate, Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft

**ABSENT:** Mayor Willie L. Hawkins

### 1. Agenda Update

Tom Carrino, City Manager, announced that due to an advertising issue Ordinances 25-10, 25-11 and 25-12 would not be heard.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

May 6, 2025 City Commission Workshop: Master Plan

May 8, 2025 City Commission Workshop: Master Plan

May 15, 2025 City Commission Meeting

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

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

### 3. Presentations

#### 3.1 America In Bloom Update

Commissioner Lee reported that staff had been touring with the America in Bloom advisors. She introduced Kristina Whitney and Michael Thompson and explained the City would receive an evaluation and report from them with suggestions for improvement.

Kristina Whitney, American In Bloom Board Member and an advisor, provided an update on the City's program. She complimented the City on the progress that has been made and cited upcoming changes to the Clifford House. She thanked them for the welcome they have received. She explained that Mr. Thompson was absent due to them getting lost so he had dropped her off to give the presentation.

Commissioner Asbate commented that the AIB advisors are volunteers and thanked them for their efforts.

Commissioner Lee noted the artwork on display in City Hall and the recent artwork on the outdoor electrical boxes. She stated there are six artists who are participating in the program and thanked them for their work. She announced that they visited The Bee Shop that day and

thanked everyone that had welcomed the advisors and all of the activities. She encouraged anyone who wants to participate or volunteer with the program to contact the City.

### 3.2 Lake Economic Area Development (LEAD)

Al Latimer, Economic Development Director, introduced LEAD representatives - Heather Shubirg, LEAD Chief Growth Officer leading regional marketing efforts; Ray Villegas, Vice President of LEAD & Stakeholder Relations and entrepreneurial development; and Mike Kelly, Director of Business Retention & Expansion, who assists existing area businesses to grow.

Ms. Shubirg explained what is the LEAD Partnership and thanked their partners. She noted the 2024-2025 LEAD Executive Committee, Board of Directors and the LEAD Team. She explained why economic development matters including job creation, higher wages, improved quality of life, business growth, stronger communities and innovation and investment. She detailed their structured approach with three pillars for economic development with business creation, business attraction and business retention and expansion for healthier communities resulting in more jobs, stronger wages, and a balanced tax base. She commented on their interest in transportation, manufacturing and agribusiness. She discussed the LEAD marketing outreach efforts, including 1 Million Cups and other events.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft and Commissioner Asbate thanked the LEAD representatives for their efforts on behalf of Lake County and Eustis.

Commissioner Lee noted AIB Advisor Michael Thompson had joined the meeting. Mr. Thompson thanked the Commission for inviting America in Bloom to the City. He complimented the Commission on what they were able to see in the City and commented on how they may be able to provide recommendations on how to leverage horticulture and other environmental initiatives to help improve their economic development.

## **4. Audience to be Heard**

Danielle Olivani, Lake County Pride President, asked the City Commission to issue a proclamation declaring June as Pride Month or a day to celebrate Pride and submitted a draft proclamation to the Commission. She asked that it be placed on the next meeting agenda for discussion.

Daniel DiVenanzo commented on the FDOT project. He stated he receives calls from residential and commercial tenants in the area regarding the FDOT project's effect on local businesses. He cited a number of multi-generational businesses. He emphasized the need for accommodations to be made for the drugstore to be able to have curbside pick-up. He also expressed concern regarding the intensity of the flashing crosswalk lights. Mr. DiVenanzo then noted the unfinished work in the downtown area and asked for a planting schedule. He expressed concern regarding some leaning streetlight poles and asked for assistance from Public Works.

Tricia Nicholson, Vice President of Lake County Pride, commented on their last four years addressing local municipalities to request issuance of a proclamation for Pride month. She cited the following cities as having issued the proclamation: Mount Dora, Leesburg, Lady Lake, Mascotte and Groveland.

George Warren, owner of Bay Pharmacy, thanked Mr. DiVenanzo for his comments. He expressed his disappointment in not keeping open the curbside option and asked for the City's continued assistance in working with FDOT and getting the project completed. He encouraged the Commission to inform the public about how beautiful the downtown will be after the project is completed.



Vice Mayor Ashcraft commented on the amount of work left on the FDOT project. He explained the project would not be completed until about October. He stated the landscaping would be done at the end of the project.

## **5. Consent Agenda**

Vice Mayor Ashcraft pulled for discussion Item 5.1 Resolution Number 25-40 Approving an Expenditure in Excess of \$100,000 for pavement management program services.

### **5.2 Resolution Number 25-41: Orlando Health Free Standing Emergency Room (2024-SP-02DP) Extension of Time**

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Asbate, to approve Resolution Number 25-41. Motion passed by the following vote.

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

## **6. Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings**

### **6.1 Resolution Number 25-40: Approving an Expenditure in Excess of \$100,000 for Pavement Management Program Services**

Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, read Resolution Number 25-40 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; approving an expenditure in excess of \$100,000 for pavement management program services.

Rick Gierok, Engineering Director, reviewed the history of the Pavement Management Program and how it is used to analyze the condition of the City's roads and prioritize work on the roads. He stated that a road's condition drops approximately 2% each year once it is paved. He explained at what point it is recommended to redo a road and added that it is recommended that a new analysis be conducted every seven years and it has been thirteen years since the City last conducted a survey. He explained what is included in the analysis to produce the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) and how they determine the condition of each road. He noted that the City's road striping is in bad shape and stated he was unsure why some striping is failing faster than it should. He indicated he would be having them include reflectivity tests on the striping as well.

Mr. Gierok then commented on their utilization of Kimley Horn to perform the study and indicated they would provide the information in a format so it can be pulled directly into the City's GIS system.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked who paid for the previous study with Mr. Gierok explaining they piggybacked off a bid done by the MPO, but the City paid for the study. He then explained that the study would be block by block and they could color code the condition within the City's system. He noted that Kimley Horn is on a continuing engineering contract with the City. He stated they have a separate pavement management group and explained their expertise.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked why it could not be done in-house with Mr. Gierok explaining the required equipment, time and expertise involved in doing the study.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked what percentage of the roads in the previous study have been completed with Mr. Gierok explaining that the roads continue to degrade. He stated that the majority identified 12 years ago have been completed except for the concrete based roads. He further explained that the study is required to identify roads that have since degraded and require improvement. He emphasized the need for them to catch the roads

before they get into base failures. He stated the study will get the City through the next twelve years. He noted that the previous study indicated the City needed to budget approximately \$1 million per year for maintenance just to keep even. He stated they have kept it to \$400,000 per year by doing the roads inhouse.

Discussion was held regarding the cost of the study versus the need for the study with Mr. Gierok emphasizing his inability to do the study.

Mr. Carrino explained that staff is asking to spend \$300,000 in order to guide \$5 million in investment over the next ten years. He stated it will allow the City to spend its money more wisely. He noted that when the study was done previously by VHB it cost \$400,000; however, Kimley Horn has only proposed \$298,000.

Discussion was held regarding various studies done by the City that cost the taxpayers money but the information is not utilized. It was confirmed that the study is already budgeted and in the CIP.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:01 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Resolution Number 25-40. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

#### 6.2 Resolution Number 25-34: Garage setback variance for property at 501 Jackson Street

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-34 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; granting approval for a variance to the City of Eustis Land Development Regulations Section 110-4.1 to allow a primary street garage setback of approximately 11 feet to permit the construction of a garage on a legally conforming estate lot at 501 Jackson Street.

Jeff Richardson, Deputy Director of Development Services, reviewed the request for a variance to allow a garage street setback of approximately 11 feet to allow for the construction of a garage on a pre-existing, legally conforming estate lot at 501 Jackson Street. He reviewed the aerial and location map, site characteristics and lot typology and located within the Urban Neighborhood Design District. He stated staff's recommendation for approval as the request for relief meets the Land Development Regulation's requirements for a variance and the required findings for variance approval.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7.06 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Resolution Number 25-34. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

#### 6.3 Resolution Number 25-39: Acceptance of the Final Subdivision Plat for Horizon Heights Townhomes Subdivision and acceptance of Maintenance Bond

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-39 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving a final subdivision plat for the Horizon Heights Subdivision, a 32-lot townhouse subdivision, on approximately 3.68 acres located on the south



side of Orange Avenue and adjacent on the east side to the Dollar General Store (on Orange Avenue) (Alternate Key Number: 3800590).

Mike Lane, Development Services Director, reviewed the final subdivision plat for Horizon Heights Townhomes Subdivision and acceptance of the maintenance bond.

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

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Resolution Number 25-39. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

**6.4 Resolution Number 25-43: Acceptance of the Final Subdivision Plat for Connors Cove Townhomes Subdivision and acceptance of Maintenance Bond**

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-43 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving a final subdivision plat for the Connors Cove Subdivision, a 62-lot townhouse subdivision, on approximately 5.97 acres located on the west side of Kurt Street and West Charlotte Avenue (Alternate Key Numbers 2930497 and 3859180).

Mr. Lane reviewed the final plat for the Connors Cove Subdivision and explained the acceptance of the maintenance bond. He confirmed there would be a tot lot included.

Discussion was held regarding emergency access.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:11 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:11 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

**6.5 Resolution Number 25-44: Increasing water, wastewater and stormwater rates**

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-44 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; authorizing adjustment to City of Eustis rates for water, wastewater and reclaimed water to provide for the annual adjustment per Ordinance Number 16-10, to be effective June 1, 2025.

Mari Leisen, Deputy Finance Director, explained the proposed rate adjustment of 2.5% which would be reflected on the July water bill. She stated the increase is necessary to continue operations, maintain the facilities in working order and comply with regulatory mandates. She noted that the City has contracted with Raftelis for completion of a rate study which is currently underway.

Mr. Carrino indicated a mid-year increase may be recommended after receipt of the new rate study from Raftelis. He commented that a mid-year second increase may make sense depending on the results of the study.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:15 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Asbate, to approve Resolution Number 25-44. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

**6.6 Resolution Number 25-45: Acceptance of the Final Subdivision Plat for Hidden Cove Subdivision and acceptance of Maintenance Bond**

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-45 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving a final subdivision plat for the Hidden Cove Subdivision, a 43-lot residential subdivision, on approximately 13.09 acres located on the south side of E. Lakeview Avenue, just west of Fahnstock Street (Alternate Key Number 1216044).

Mr. Lane reviewed the final subdivision plat for the Hidden Cove Subdivision, including site location and final subdivision plan. He stated this project meets or exceeds the City's Land Development Regulations and the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Asbate asked about the process for approval for the project with Mr. Lane explaining that the Commission approved the preliminary plat. He commented that the adjoining property is under one owner, and they intend to build one house with two or three small cottages for their family.

Commissioner Asbate asked if there would be no dock or launch on Crooked Lake with Mr. Lane stating that the topography would preclude that occurring.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:19 p.m.

Katie McGonegal, representing the developer, confirmed they have no plans for docks and nothing was included in the preliminary plat as approved by the City.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:19 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Holland, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Resolution Number 25-45. Motion passed on the following vote:

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

Voting Nay: Commissioner Asbate

**7. Other Business**

**7.1 Discussion COPS Grant**

Craig Capri, Police Chief, explained they are asking for permission to apply for a COPS Grant. He indicated that the grant would pay for officer positions for three years after which the City would have to take over funding. He noted that when he came on board they moved five officers into the schools and those have not been replaced to date. He stated his desire to increase staffing to 50 officers, 51 counting himself. He noted that the deadline for application is June 20th. He stated he would recommend applying for three positions. He added that the City has done one of the grants in the past.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to apply for the grant.

**8. Future Agenda Items and Comments**

**8.1 City Commission**



Commissioner Holland thanked Commissioner Lee for her efforts with the team from America In Bloom. He commented on the bylaws for Greenwood Cemetery. He expressed an interest in forming a committee to update the bylaws and offered to form the committee.

**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Commission for Commissioner Holland to move forward.

Commissioner Asbate expressed appreciation for the LEAD presentation. He congratulated the Lady Panthers softball team on their season and cited the good work of the new coach. He commented on the new fire truck's push in event.

Commissioner Lee recognized Elis Forman, Marissa Cella, Rick Gierok, Michele Saxman and Greg Dobbins for their time and effort in working on America In Bloom. She complimented Chief Capri and Pastor Rene Hill for their great event to recognize first responders. She asked about the Grant Writer position.

Mr. Carrino reported that the position has been advertised as well as the Director of Events and Communication.

## **8.2 City Manager**

Mr. Carrino asked the Commission about sponsorships for the Chamber's Business Expo and what level the Commission would like to have. He indicated he would meet with Pam Rivas regarding what's available and then email the Commission. He noted that staff received an unsolicited proposal from Danelle and Joe Hoffer regarding a hotel on the community center site. He recommended holding a workshop to have them make a presentation to the Commission. He proposed holding it prior to the June 19th regular Commission meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Commission to hold the workshop at 4:00 p.m. on June 19th.

Mr. Carrino asked about placing future final plats on the agenda for discussion or on the consent agenda.

**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Commission to keep the final plats on the agenda for discussion.

Mr. Carrino reported he is working with Assistant City Manager, Miranda Burrowes, regarding trails. He indicated that Mike Stephens will be providing a presentation to the Commission, and stated they have been working with Umatilla, Tavares and Lake County regarding the trails interlocal agreement.

Mr. Carrino stated he is actively working with Trident on bringing their tour boat to Eustis at a temporary location. He added that a temporary location may not be good for business continuity. He confirmed they are also working on the design and engineering for the infrastructure.

Mr. Carrino announced that staff received the preliminary tax numbers from the Property Appraiser. He explained that the estimate for the overall taxable value is up 8.7% in Eustis which puts the City in the middle of the road compared to the other cities. He commented on the range within the county. He noted they also track new construction. He stated that Eustis is ranked #6 in new construction. He compared the City's new construction values with other local cities. He opined that the City's work with Kimley Horn on the Land Development Regulations will help attract good quality development to the City.

### 8.3 City Attorney

Attorney Garcia announced that the legislature passed the Watercraft Energy Source Freedom Act. She explained that, effective July 1st, no local government can restrict the use of watercraft based on the energy source used. She noted that the City has an ordinance that precludes the use of petroleum-based watercraft on Lake Gracie so that will have to be addressed.

Commissioner Lee commented on her visit at Trout Lake Nature Center and highlighted the changes they have made. She encouraged the public to visit the Nature Center.

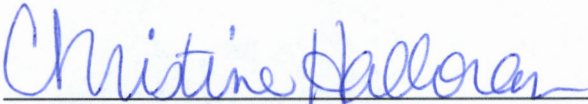
### 8.4 Mayor

Vice Mayor Ashcraft stated that fiber is being brought to his neighborhood, and they contacted him to get information. He indicated that he made calls to try and get additional information, and he was never able to get an answer from whoever is putting in the lines. He asked if the City knows the scope of a project when it is coming into town, such as the Duke Energy project. He stated he thinks the utility companies need to keep the City informed as to the scope of their projects. He expressed support for the City being informed as to the totality of a project.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft announced the upcoming First Friday and the Father-Son Field Day at Corey Rolle Field.

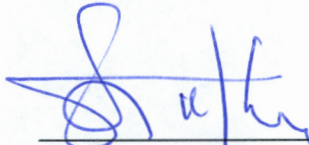
### 9. Adjournment: 7:42 p.m.

*\*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](http://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