

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

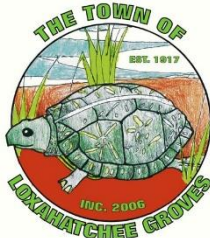
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

155 F. ROAD, LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FL 33470

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 18, 2025



Detailed Summary of the November 18, 2025 Town Council Meeting

1. Call to Order, Pledge & Roll Call

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence, during which the Mayor announced that the town's **local fireworks restriction bill** passed unanimously at the Legislative Delegation and is now moving to Tallahassee—a significant win for the community.

Roll call showed all council members present (one joining slightly late).

2. Health Insurance Renewal Presentation (The Garing Group)

Presenter: Melissa Mley, Garing Group (town's health insurance broker)

Key points of the renewal recommendation:

- **Medical (Florida Blue):** Remain with Florida Blue, but move from *age-banded rates* to a *composite rate* for 2026.
 - Composite rate decreases overall town cost by about **\$7,000**.
 - Employees pay a single uniform rate, rather than age-based tiers.
 - Increase under composite: **7.2%** vs. **11%** under age-banded.
- **HRA:** Continue the Health Reimbursement Arrangement linked to wellness activities.
- **FSA:** Continue voluntary Flexible Spending Accounts.
- **Dental & Vision:** Small dental increase; small vision decrease—roughly net neutral.

- **Life, STD, LTD:** No increases; each remains under rate guarantee for another year.
- **Alternative carriers:**
 - United Healthcare would be ~30% higher.
 - FMIT/League of Cities coverage was not competitive in prior years.

Council elected to **review the materials** and take action at the **December 2 meeting**, consistent with the original intent of presenting this item only.

3. Consent Agenda

- **Item #2** (contract updates for a state resiliency grant) was **removed** due to incomplete contract documents.
 - **Item #3** had backup materials added late; council expressed ongoing frustration about **late or missing agenda backups**.
 - The remaining consent item was approved **4–1**.
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4. Regular Agenda

4.1. Ordinance 2025-09 (Second Reading) – Lien Reduction & Release Process

This ordinance restructures the town's code-enforcement lien reduction system.

Key provisions:

- Establishes two tracks:
 - **Special Magistrate** may consider reductions for routine cases.
 - **Town Council** must hear cases involving life/safety/health violations.
- Council decisions require **at least four votes**, unanimous among those present.
- Applicants must pay a **\$5,000 filing fee** to have council consider a lien reduction.
- Manager (or designee) determines whether a violation implicated health/safety.

Discussion highlights:

- Debate over whether the Town Manager is the appropriate official to determine health/safety implications.
- Clarification that the process does **not** alter code-enforcement procedure, only post-lien reduction requests.
- Question raised as to whether the \$5,000 fee could be considered punitive; attorney explained it is consistent with existing thresholds.
- Minor typographical errors were identified in the memo (not the ordinance).

Outcome: Passed **4–1** after public hearing.

4.2. Ordinance 2025-19 (First Reading) – Charter Amendment: Town Manager Removal Vote

This referendum ordinance proposes placing the following question on the March 2026 ballot:

Should the charter be amended so that the Town Manager may be removed by a simple majority vote, rather than a supermajority (4 votes)?

Council discussion:

- Some members argued **supermajority** better protects stability and prevents politicized turnover.
- Others stressed the need for **consistency**—since hiring requires 3 votes, firing should match.
- Public comment noted the current supermajority requirement is uncommon and unnecessarily restrictive.

Outcome: Approved **5–0**, to appear on the 2026 referendum ballot.

4.3. Ordinance 2025-20 (First Reading) – Charter Amendment: Town Attorney Contract Review

This referendum measure proposes clarifying that the Town Attorney’s required contractual review duties be defined **by ordinance or resolution** rather than solely by charter language.

Discussion was minimal; council supportive.

Outcome: Approved **5–0**, to appear on the 2026 referendum ballot.

4.4. Item 7 – Postponed Items

Due to time constraints, Item #7 (not read into the record during the meeting) was postponed to **December 2**.

5. Transition to Workshop Session

After adjournment of the business meeting, the Council immediately reconvened for its scheduled workshop.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

6. Workshop Opening & Agenda Setup

The Mayor outlined several ongoing themes carried over from prior sessions:

- Actuate Consulting Organizational Assessment
- Prioritizing the 165-item staff work list
- FEMA/FDAs, agricultural exemptions, and tree mitigation conflicts
- Public concerns about code enforcement consistency
- Parade planning (Wellington Holiday Parade)

Council agreed to take up **Actuate Consulting, parade planning, and priority development**.

7. Discussion: Actuate Consulting Organizational Assessment

The consulting report highlighted issues including:

- **Inconsistent communication** and mixed messages from council.
- **Agenda overload** and council repeatedly violating its own direction (e.g., adding items late).
- **Lack of clear priorities** for staff.

- **Inefficient processes**, duplicated responsibilities, and inconsistent use of available tools (e.g., Asana).
- **Low staff morale and high turnover.**

Council discussion themes:

7.1. Communication & Structure

- Council acknowledged a pattern of approving agendas with numerous late items.
- Strong sentiment that council must “**stay in its lane**” and avoid micromanaging.
- Desire to set **predictable, enforceable rules** for agenda creation.

7.2. Project Management Tools

- Asana is underutilized; council wants improved tracking, deadlines, and transparency.
- Proposal: require measurable goals and define expectations without micromanaging.

7.3. Customer Service Tracking

- Suggestion to implement:
 - Automatic service-request updates
 - 30-day status texts/emails
 - Customer satisfaction surveys
- Goal: measurable performance and improved public trust.

7.4. Staff Training & Certifications

- Council split on spending money for leadership coaching.
- General agreement that **staff training** is a higher priority than council training.
- Council training (League of Cities EOM/EMO courses) encouraged as low-cost, high-value.

7.5. Succession Planning

- Need for clear departmental structures so staff see internal opportunity for promotion.
- Avoid burnout by reducing multi-hat roles where possible.

8. Parade Planning – Wellington Holiday Parade

Theme: “**Celebrating the Season Through the Years.**”

Council collaboratively designed a multi-era Loxahatchee Groves historical display:

1. **Early settler era:** Marge in a rocking chair with rustic décor.
2. **Old Florida hunting:** Council Member Paul as a “hunter” with inflatable alligator.
3. **Citrus era:** Todd as an orange farmer with tree props.
4. **Farm-to-table era:** Mayor Kane representing modern small-farm agriculture.
5. **Equestrian present day:** Council Member Remy, possibly with a miniature horse or horse-themed setup.

Additional decisions:

- Use lightweight **picket fencing** instead of hay bales to maximize float space.
- Seek community loaned props (without violating ethics rules).
- Staff to coordinate assembly and logistics.

9. Public Comment During Workshop

Several residents provided feedback on:

- **RV permit rules:** Confusion over annual inspections vs. 5-year site inspections; inconsistency between the code and application forms.
- **Chronic code-enforcement violators:** Especially properties on Hyde Park; cases closed prematurely; requests for greater consistency.
- **FDA (Flood Development Application) challenges:** Paperwork unclear; process costly; requests for a streamlined checklist.
- **Dacs/DEP/District permits:** Residents urged cross-checking of solid-waste permits and agricultural exemptions.

10. Council Priority Setting Exercise

After discussion, the Council identified common priority areas (overlapping across members):

10.1. Code Enforcement Reform

- Improve consistency, speed, communication, and case tracking.
- Address long-standing chronic violators.
- Shift focus away from BTR policing and toward safety and quality-of-life issues.

10.2. Infrastructure – Drainage & Mobility

- Okeechobee Blvd culvert replacements.
- Neighborhood drainage projects.
- Trail connectivity, safety signage, and equestrian mobility improvements.

10.3. Solid Waste / Debris / Manure Management

- Prepare early for the upcoming Coastal Waste contract renewal.
- Evaluate cost-saving options for debris, recycling, and organics.

10.4. Strategic Planning

- Reduce the 165-item work list into “Top 5/Top 10” actionable items.
- Create measurable goals and timelines.

10.5. Home Rule, ULDC & State Law Alignment

- Review impacts of **SB180** on future code changes.
- Tree mitigation fairness (especially re: agricultural exemptions and clear-cutting).
- Vested rights and predictable development standards.

10.6. Improved Agenda & Contract Management

- Establish **four-month lead time** for major contract renewals.
- Earlier council briefings on development applications and major decisions.

11. Closing

After nearly three hours of workshop discussion, the council adjourned with plans for staff to consolidate the priority list and return with a structured format for ranking and implementation.

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,
FLORIDA**

ATTEST:

Signed by:
Valerie Oakes

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Town Clerk

Signed by:
Anita Kane

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Mayor Anita Kane, Seat 3

Signed by:
Margaret Herzog

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Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Seat 5

Signed by:
Todd McLendon

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Councilmember Todd McLendon, Seat 1

Signed by:
Lisa El-Ramey

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Councilmember Lisa El-Ramey, Seat 2

Signed by:
Paul T. Coleman II

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Councilmember Paul T. Coleman II, Seat 4