MINUTES
City Commission Workshop:
5 Year CIP

10:00 AM – Friday, May 22, 2026 – City Hall

Call to Order: 10:05 a.m.

Acknowledgement of Quorum and Proper Notice

PRESENT: Commissioner George Asbate, Commissioner Willie L. Hawkins and Mayor Emily A. Lee

ABSENT: Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft and Commissioner Michael Holland

1. Workshop Item with Discussion and Direction

1.1 Mid-Year CIP Update and FY 2026/2027 – 2030/2031 CIP Review

<u>Mid-Year Budget Review, Capital Planning, and Financial Sustainability</u>

Interim City Manager Rick Gierok explained that staff completed the mid-year budget review to verify revenues, fund balances, and available resources before advancing future projects. Staff reviewed capital projects, updated costs, identified completed projects, and returned unused funds to appropriate funds. Approximately $352,000 will return to the General Fund, with approximately $3.457 million identified for return to fund balances. Projects under contract or legally obligated will continue, while others will return through the normal capital budgeting process. Staff will only recognize grant revenues after official award.

Mayor Lee questioned continued funding for the dog park. Staff clarified the $50,000 allocation is for capital improvements, including sod replacement, water feature repairs, and a fenced training area, not maintenance. Staff is exploring assistance offered by a resident for maintenance. Parks and Recreation Director Brinson noted the dog training program continues to be well attended and operates through a contracted instructor with shared revenues.

Commissioner Hawkins requested consideration of renaming a park in honor of Tim Totten, with Commissioner Asbate suggesting Sunset Park. Staff will bring forward the park naming policy for future discussion, and Commissioners expressed support for exploring an appropriate tribute.

Commissioner Asbate asked about the floating dock project. Staff explained the project involves replacement of damaged navigational lights and dock beacon equipment, with additional waterfront lighting repairs to continue. Seaplane-related improvements will be addressed through future capital discussions.

Mayor Lee asked about the Community Center roof replacement project. Mr. Gierok explained the project is paused pending evaluation of the facility's long-term use. Staff will prepare bid documents but will not proceed until the Commission determines whether the investment is appropriate. Commissioner Hawkins asked about RecTrac software, and Parks and Recreation confirmed it will replace the current recreation registration system.

Mr. Gierok reported improvements to procurement processes through standardized RFP and RFQ templates and noted strong contractor interest, including ten responses to a recent CMAR solicitation.

He discussed Transportation Fund challenges related to state gas tax dependence, growth in other municipalities, and the loss of a potential transportation funding source. Staff will bring forward a citywide striping contract to improve pricing and scheduling. Roadway replacement remains prioritized by condition, with grant funding efforts continuing, including a $1.5–$1.9 million Florida Department of Commerce resurfacing grant.

Finance Director Carr reported that flood recovery reimbursements are included in projections, including approximately $700,000 received for public infrastructure repairs. Spring Ridge reimbursement remains under review and is recorded as an accounts receivable item.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the five-year Capital Improvement Plan and noted fund balances remain the primary measure of sustainability. The Fire Station Number 3 project remains the largest challenge, with an estimated $3 million cost and projected funding gap exceeding $2.1 million. Commissioners supported keeping the project in planning while staff pursues grants, impact fees, and other funding sources. Staffing will be phased, with three firefighter positions planned initially and three additional positions the following year.

Mr. Gierok reported continued concerns with Transportation Fund projections due to declining balances and reliance on gas tax revenues. Staff noted General Fund transfers remain an option if needed but emphasized evaluating long-term sustainability.

Stormwater, CRA, and Water/Wastewater Funds remain financially stable. Staff is advancing the 21 North Grove Street (former Wells Fargo building) project through a Construction Manager at Risk process due to upcoming restrictions on building fund uses. Ten firms responded, and staff will proceed with evaluations and negotiations.

Commissioner Asbate requested review of permit, inspection, and impact fees, expressing concern that reduced development-related revenues could shift costs to existing residents and businesses. Staff will evaluate fees and present revenue options during the budget process.

Mr. Gierok explained that the Capital Improvement Plan will continue as an annual review of projects and funding capacity. General Fund projects include recreation software, Parks and Recreation storage improvements, and Women’s Club exterior improvements. Community Center funding is programmed over two years, with future investment dependent on Commission direction regarding the facility’s long-term use.

Parks, Public Safety, CRA, and Capital Planning Discussion

Mayor Lee asked about the splash pad. Mr. Gierok confirmed it remains operational but has settlement issues due to soil conditions. Staff is conducting geotechnical evaluations and evaluating stabilization options while ensuring necessary repairs are completed. He noted future capital investments should align with the City’s master planning process.

Commissioner Asbate asked about American in Bloom funding. Mr. Gierok clarified that funding is limited to capital improvements, such as design work and pocket park projects, while staffing is funded separately. He noted the recurring allocation provides a predictable source for smaller capital projects.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about a City bus purchase. Mr. Gierok explained the concept has been considered for several years. Parks and Recreation Director Brinson noted that additional CDL-certified drivers make a larger bus feasible and that the current bus is aging. Staff has obtained pricing for 50- and 77-passenger options. Commissioners discussed benefits for youth programs, community events, and site visits. Staff will evaluate purchase, lease, and financing options and return with a recommendation. Commissioners also discussed balancing transportation needs with ongoing operating costs.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the Transportation Fund allocation of approximately $420,000 for traffic signal detection camera replacements, clarifying the equipment is for vehicle detection and signal timing, not speed enforcement.

Regarding Fire Station Number 3, Commissioners supported continuing the project in planning while staff pursues grants, impact fees, and other funding sources. Mr. Gierok noted the need to capture additional revenues from growth and will return with options if funding remains insufficient. Commissioners also discussed a future public safety complex. Staff will continue evaluating long-term fire and police facility needs using response data, GIS analysis, and growth projections. Potential locations will be further evaluated, and future discussions will include all commissioners.

Mr. Gierok reported the CRA Fund remains stable, with approximately $500,000 annually available for downtown redevelopment efforts. Staff will evaluate financing options and flexibility in using CRA and General Fund resources for projects. Commissioner Asbate supported using CRA funds for additional business incentives, and staff will incorporate those priorities.

Commissioners supported initiating a formal strategic planning process, with an estimated cost of approximately $100,000.

Mr. Gierok reviewed impact fee projects, noting $250,000 was allocated for Fire Station Number 3 planning and that current apparatus costs are estimated at approximately $1.4 million for an engine and $2.2 million for a tower truck. Deputy Fire Chief Keller explained the need for additional fire facilities due to response demands and reported approximately $92,000 in fire impact fees collected year-to-date.

Mr. Gierok reported $320,000 was allocated for 21 North Grove Street (former Wells Fargo building) improvements, including Emergency Operations Center upgrades funded through police impact fees. The Lake Willie dock project includes $350,000 for structural repairs, with additional improvements dependent on grant funding. Staff noted CRA funds must comply with redevelopment requirements.

Mr. Gierok recommended proceeding with a Parks Master Plan funded through park impact fees but delaying consultant work until there is greater certainty regarding the Curt Wright property. Commissioner Asbate supported maintaining the funding.

<u>Library, Utility, and Unfunded Capital Projects Discussion</u>

Mr. Gierok reviewed the library expansion project, noting the first phase is funded through police impact fees while the second phase remains unfunded. Deputy City Manager Burrowes reported approximately $157,000 approved by the Library Advisory Board will be brought forward for Commission consideration.

Mr. Gierok identified the ERP replacement project as a major utility and General Fund initiative, with approximately $850,000 budgeted to improve billing, financial management, and asset tracking. Utility funds will also support the engineering build-out at 21 North Grove Street, with costs distributed among benefiting departments.

Public Works Director Dobbins reviewed utility infrastructure projects, including replacement of the sewer camera vehicle, the $800,000 Bates Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant generator replacement, and the lift station generator program. Staff noted approximately 16 of 48 lift stations lack permanent backup generators and will continue prioritizing installations based on risk and pursuing grant opportunities.

Mr. Gierok reviewed wastewater projects, including the future tertiary filter project, master lift station upgrades, and the Old Eastern Plant demolition. He noted the infiltration and intrusion program has reduced wastewater flows by approximately 400,000 gallons per day. Commissioners supported pursuing additional developer agreements and cost-sharing opportunities for infrastructure benefiting future growth.

Staff reviewed water system projects, including the $350,000 backhoe replacement, cast iron water main replacement program, and the $1.7 million Arnice water storage tank replacement due to structural deficiencies. Meter replacements will continue based on age and condition, while smart meter technology remains a future option.

Mr. Gierok reviewed unfunded projects, including the Seaplane Dock, Tedford Stormwater, Bay Street and Orange Avenue Stormwater (approximately $5 million), Fire Station Number 4 planning, and the North Shore Bridge Replacement project ($5.1 million). Staff will continue pursuing funding opportunities.

Commissioners discussed parks projects, including Carver Park softball lighting improvements, the $3.2 million Aquatic Center concept, and the Corey Rolle Field turf project. Staff will complete remaining lighting work when permitted and bring future aquatic facility discussions forward. Commissioner Hawkins requested staff review Sunset Park tennis court lighting. Commissioner Asbate supported elevating the hydraulic mobile stage project due to potential savings and rental opportunities, and Mr. Gierok agreed to review priorities.

<u>Downtown, Parks, Waterfront, and Community Initiatives</u>

Interim City Manager Gierok reviewed the downtown parking garage concept, estimated at approximately 280 spaces through a potential public-private partnership. Staff is evaluating options and conducting a parking study to assess demand, future locations, and redevelopment impacts. Commissioners emphasized long-term planning, walkability, and incorporating active uses into future structures.

Mr. Gierok discussed a potential FDOT landscape agreement that could provide approximately $600,000 in improvements if the City assumes maintenance responsibilities. Staff will continue evaluating options and alignment with America in Bloom efforts.

Commissioners discussed future waterfront opportunities, including a potential marina. Staff will explore private operator options, as the excursion boat concept was determined less feasible due to increased City costs.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the bandshell expansion concept and noted the need for facility improvements and enhanced programming. Commissioner Hawkins supported advancing the project when funding allows, and staff will continue evaluating options.

Commissioners discussed the $3 million Parks and Recreation facility expansion and agreed it should be evaluated through the Parks Master Plan and alongside potential acquisition of the former ninth-grade center. The potential purchase of the indoor soccer facility was also discussed, with Commissioners requesting clearer purpose, costs, and renovation estimates before further consideration.

Mr. Gierok reviewed the $1.8 million Southern Palms stormwater project and recommended assisting property owners with grant opportunities rather than City funding due to private ownership. Commissioners expressed concerns about assuming responsibility without a clear public benefit.

Commissioners supported exploring downtown public restrooms for major events and identified the Ferran Park restroom renovation as a higher priority due to current conditions and maintenance concerns.

Commissioners discussed youth activity and crowd management during First Friday events. Police Chief Capri reported incidents remain low. Commissioners supported additional structured youth programming, and Mr. Gierok directed staff to evaluate a pilot program with activities such as extended recreation hours, music, games, and supervised events.

Deputy City Manager Burrowes advised that renaming Sunset Park in honor of Tim Totten would require a public hearing. Commissioners Asbate and Hawkins expressed support for pursuing the designation.

2. Adjournment: 3:40 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. If available, the video recording may be accessible at https://www.youtube.com/@EustisComRel/streams or an audio recording may be requested from the office of the City Clerk.*

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CHRISTINE HALLORAN City Clerk	EMILY A. LEE Mayor/Commissioner