

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

321 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
TUESDAY, JANUARY 06, 2026 – 6:00 PM



MINUTES

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag - **Bob Page**

Roll Call

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Matt Johnson, Vice Mayor Ed Gaw, Council Member Glee Glisson, Council Member Cheryl Starnes, Council Member Darren Stutts

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: L.J. Arnold, III, City Attorney, Mike Null, Interim City Manager, Kimberly Thomas, Executive Assistant

Mayor to call on members of the audience wishing to address the Council on matters not on the Agenda.

1. Larianne Stutts 25 S. Palmetto Ave. GCS with the VIA announced that artist R.L. Lewis, one of the Florida Highwaymen, will visit this Thursday. He will give a presentation at 10:30 a.m. and remain until 3:00 p.m. to display and sell his artwork and meet community members.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Proclamation - Arbor Day
Mayor Johnson reads and presents the proclamation to Stephanie Lippincott the Green Cove Springs Garden Club President
2. FMPA - January 2026 **Bob Page**
Mr. Page presents the January report.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

3. City Council approval on Second and Final Reading of Ordinance O-20-2025 adjusting Capacity Connection Fees (formerly Trust Fund / Impact Fees) for the Water and Wastewater Funds.

Scott Schultz

City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-20-2025 by title.

Water Utilities Director Scott Schultz summarized the proposed capacity connection fee updates, explaining that the fees fund capital improvements for future system capacity and cannot be used for existing infrastructure. Existing fees have remained unchanged for years due to successful wastewater grant funding but with major projects nearing completion and fewer grant opportunities for drinking water, it has been proposed to increase fees.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Council discussed how the City's capacity connection fees compare to neighboring counties and confirmed the policy of charging only actual service costs while maintaining a 25% reserve.

Motion to approve on Second and Final Reading Ordinance O-20-2025.

Motion made by Council Member Glisson, Seconded by Council Member Stutts.
Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Starnes, Council Member Stutts

4. Second and final reading of Ordinance No. O-21-2025 which amends the retirement plan for the Police Officers of the City of Green Cove Springs. *City Attorney Arnold*
City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-21-2025 by title and presents the proposed ordinance amending the Police Retirement Plan. This includes input from the plan's consulting actuary. The amendment removes language requiring benefits to be delayed and instead permits immediate payment to the beneficiary upon the officer's death in the line of duty.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve the Ordinance No. 0-21-2025 on second and final reading.

Motion made by Council Member Glisson, Seconded by Council Member Starnes.
Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Starnes, Council Member Stutts

CONSENT AGENDA

All matters under the consent agenda are considered to be routine by the city council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately. Backup documentation and staff recommendations have been previously submitted to the city council on these items.

Vice Mayor Gaw pulled item 6.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda items 5 through 11 minus 6.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Council Member Starnes.
Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Starnes, Council Member Stutts

5. City Council approval of the Black History Month Proclamation. *Erin West*
6. City Council emergency approval for a budget amendment / funding in the amount of \$57,684.84 for Lift Station #305 rehabilitation and \$51,685.62 for Lift Station #327 rehabilitation to RCM Utilities, piggybacking on the Zephyrhills Continuing Services Agreement No. 41-25-13. *Scott Schultz*
Vice Mayor Gaw Council asked how after cutting \$600,000 in maintenance from the current budget, the City has already incurred approximately \$110,000 in emergency repairs within the first two months of the fiscal year.

Water Utilities Director Scott Schultz explained that \$600,000 in planned wastewater repairs was removed during budgeting, with the understanding that some projects would be deferred and addressed through reserves if needed. Two lift stations now require immediate attention, and reserve funds will be used.

Council discussed delayed lift station maintenance, speaking about two of five previously planned rehabilitations that now require immediate repair. While the projects were removed from

the budget to reduce rate increases, it was acknowledged that critical infrastructure failures must be addressed and that deferring maintenance does not eliminate the need for repairs.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda item 6.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Gaw, Seconded by Council Member Stutts.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Glisson, Council Member Starnes, Council Member Stutts

7. City Council approval to continue utilizing Barrett Supply and Szoke Power as Preferred Vendors per Chapter 9 of the Purchasing Policies of the City of Green Cove Springs. *Scott Schultz*
8. City Council approval of funding in the amount of \$25,117 to Gresco for “Fault Indicators” to be used by the Electric department. *Marsha Lowry*
9. City Council approval of Minutes. *Erin West*
Regular Session: 11/4/2025
Special Sessions: 8/7/2025, 11/17/2025
10. City Council approval of engagement letter with the Florida Group for state government relations consulting services for the Calendar Year 2026 in the amount of \$36,000. *Mike Null*
11. City Council approval of grant agreement L2505 with the state in the amount of \$475,000 for the St. Johns River Trail, Ph I. *Mike Null*

COUNCIL BUSINESS

12. Consideration of approval on first reading of Ordinance No. O-01-2026 which is attached and will allow City electors to vote on proposed Charter Amendments. The Ballot Title verbiage cannot exceed 15 words per section 101.161, Florida Statutes. *City Attorney Arnold*
City Attorney Arnold reads Ordinance No. O-01-2026 by title and presents the proposed charter amendments previously presented, including ballot titles and summaries for voter consideration.
Joe Sobotta 212 North St. GCS spoke about his concerns regarding the proposed charter amendment allowing Council to waive the City Manager residency requirement. He advised he supported reasonable flexibility but opposed eliminating geographic limits entirely. He suggested establishing clear boundaries or distance limits rather than allowing unrestricted discretion.
Council discussed the proposed amendment to allow the waiver of the City Manager residency requirement, advising that stricter limits reduce the candidate pool while flexibility could allow hiring the most qualified individual. They advised that local residency remains preferable, but the amendment would provide discretion in special circumstances.

Motion to approve Ordinance No. O-01-2026 on first reading as to form only.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Vice Mayor Gaw.

Voting Yea: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor Gaw, Council Member Starnes, Council Member Stutts

Voting Nay: Council Member Glisson

13. Council discussion regarding proposed Spring Park Veteran's Monument. **Mike Null**

Interim City Manager Mike Null presented a proposal from the Richard Johnson to install a privately funded veterans' monument in Spring Park and requested general Council consensus before the group proceeds with a rendering. He advised the group would return with a rendering for Council review if supported.

Art Yeaman 151 West St. GCS supported honoring veterans but urged Council to protect Spring Park's natural beauty and river views. He resident asked that any monument be modest and carefully placed to avoid altering the park's open, scenic character.

Council discussed alternative locations for the proposed veteran's monument, speaking about preserving Spring Park's open space and river views. While supportive of honoring veterans, members suggested exploring placement within Clay County's Historical Triangle or another suitable location.

14. City Manager & City Attorney Reports / Correspondence

The City Manager and City Attorney made comments regarding various city activities, events, operations, and projects.

15. City Council Reports / Correspondence

The City Council made comments regarding various city activities, events, operations, and projects.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Daniel M. Johnson, Mayor

Attest:

Erin West, City Clerk