

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

321 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM



MINUTES

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag - **Chaplain Marshall MacClellan, GCSPD**

Roll Call

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Kennedy, City Manager, Mike Null, Assistant City Manager, Erin West, City Clerk

STAFF MEMBERS ABSENT: L.J. Arnold, III, City Attorney

Mayor to call on members of the audience wishing to address the Council on matters not on the Agenda.
No comments

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

1. Retirement: Sergeant Chris Hess after 28 years of service **Chief Hines**
Chief Hines speaks and presents Sergeant Hess with a gun box.
2. Proclamation: Village Improvement Association International Service Day
Mayor Johnson reads and presents the proclamation to VIA President Larianne Stutts.
3. City Government Week – 5th Grade Essay Participants
Stella Waswick, Seth Bailey, Sailor Thompson, Emma Ratterree, Abigayle Young
Mayor Johnson speaks and presents certificates to the participants.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Second and Final Reading of Ordinance O-18-2025, dealing with illegal connections to the city water utility by amending City Code section 90-278. **Mike Null**
Assistant City Manager Mike Null reads Ordinance No. O-18-2025 by title and advised the ordinance addresses water theft and meter tampering, similar to existing rules for electricity. Offenders would face a \$200 tampering fee, plus \$100 for meter reconnection, or \$500 if the meter was damaged. This provides the city a formal way to penalize and manage water theft cases.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve ordinance O-18-2025 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

5. Second and Final reading of Ordinance No. O-19-2025, authorizing the City to lease a portion of City Hall to the Clay County Economic Development Corporation. ***L.J. Arnold, III***
Assistant City Manager Mike Null reads Ordinance No. O-19-2025 by title and advised this is an update on leasing space to the Clay County Economic Development Corporation. The project is currently in the design phase, with a contractor working with an architect. A performance bond cannot yet be issued due to the federal government shutdown, so construction won't start until the bond is in place. The construction cost is estimated under \$301,000, to be repaid over 10 years at 3.5% interest, plus \$150 per month for utilities, subject to adjustment. The final lease agreement, including exact costs and start date, will return to council for approval once the project is complete.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

Following no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve the final reading of Ordinance No. O-19-2025 to approve the lease portion of City Hall to the Clay County Economic Development Corporation.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Council Member Glisson.
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.

Mayor Johnson pulled Consent Agenda item 8 due to a blue card.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda items 6 and 7.

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

6. City Council approval of the sale and surplus of the recycling truck and remaining recycling bins, with all funds returned to the Solid Waste Fund. ***Greg Bauer***
7. City Council approval of Minutes. ***Erin West***
Regular Sessions: 8/19/2025, 9/2/2025
8. City Council approval of CDBG Grant Agreement H2617 in the amount of \$1,275,000 for the Oakridge Ave Stormwater Project. ***Mike Null***
Mike Kelter 630 Myrtle Ave. GCS spoke of his concerns about project costs, funding from stormwater fees affecting less than half of parcels, unspent loans, additional borrowing, the tight

October 2028 timeline, CDBG wetland requirements, and debris control in the pond, speaking about careful review and coordination.

Assistant City Manager Mike Null advised the stormwater project is fully designed and permitted, with approximately \$300,000 spent on design from the current \$8.5 million loan, leaving about \$1.8 million for the Clay Street project. Public input will be invited after internal review, targeted for early April. Grant funding will cover roughly 40% of construction, and additional loans may be sought at the end of 2026 to fund subsequent CIP projects, pending completion of the comprehensive review.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda item 8.

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

COUNCIL BUSINESS

9. Discussion of General Steps in a City Manager Search / Replacement *Dee Jones*

Human Resources Director Dee Jones spoke about the proposed process and timeline for filling the city manager position following Mr. Kennedy's retirement on November 14, 2025. The steps include appointing an interim manager, defining the selection criteria, posting the position internally and externally, screening and vetting candidates, conducting interviews and public meetings, selecting a candidate, negotiating the contract, and managing the transition and onboarding. Typically, this process takes three to five months, though it may extend depending on factors such as holidays and background checks.

Council discussion followed concerning making Assistant City Manager Mike Null the Interim City Manager and using a search firm for the City Manager search.

Ms. Jones advised she highly recommended using a search firm as working with a search firm, comes with a guarantee, and they have a broader reach for candidates. She also advised that in preparation for tonight, she had a discussion with Mr. Null, and they did discuss terms. At the next Council meeting, she would have the agreement ready for the Council to review, if they approved the terms. The terms are as follows:

*The appointment date for is November 15th. The next day after Mr. Kennedy's retirement date.

*15% increase over what Mr. Null is currently making will be at \$157,747.20.

*In discussion with Mr. Null, he has made it clear that it's important for him to have a guarantee as well that at the end of the interim that he will be able to go back to his position and go back to his position as is along with the pay or any increase in raises or wage adjustments.

*As well as an exclusive use of a city vehicle.

Motion for Mike Null to be Interim City Manager starting November 15th with the four terms that he negotiated with the HR Director.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Council Member Glisson.

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

Council discussion followed about using SGR as the search firm.

10. Discussion of an appointment to the Clay County Tourism Board *Erin West*

City Clerk Erin West advised she spoke with the new Clay County Tourism Director concerning the city's vacancy on the tourism board, previously held by Thomas Smith. The Council needs to appoint a member, and then she will send a letter to the director formalizing the appointment. Once the letter is sent, the tourism board will contact the appointed member.

Council Member Starnes volunteers to fill the vacant seat on the board.

Motion to appoint Council Member Starnes to the Clay County Tourism Board.

Motion made by Council Member Stutts, Seconded by Council Member Glisson.

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

11. City Manager & City Attorney Reports / Correspondence

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

12. 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 7:33 p.m.

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Daniel M. Johnson, Mayor

Attest:

Erin West, City Clerk