

The City Council in and for the citizens of the City of Lake City, Florida, met in Regular Session, on September 3, 2024 beginning at 6:00 PM, in the City Council Chambers, located at City Hall 205 North Marion Avenue, Lake City, Florida. Members of the public also viewed the meeting on our YouTube Channel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION – Council Member Chevella Young

ROLL CALL

Mayor/Council Member
City Council

Stephen M. Witt
Jake Hill, Jr.
Chevella Young
Ricky Jernigan
James Carter
Clay Martin
Don Rosenthal
Chief Gerald Butler
Audrey Sikes

City Attorney
City Manager
Sergeant-at-Arms
City Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Witt stated he had a request to remove Item #13 and Item #14 from the consent agenda for discussion.

Ms. Young requested to add RCC Cheer Champions funding to the agenda. Per Attorney Martin, adding an item to the agenda requires the unanimous approval of the council.

Ms. Young made a motion to add RCC Cheer Champions Funding as Item#16 to the agenda. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

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| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

Mr. Jernigan made a motion to approve the agenda as amended consisting of removal of Item #13 and Item #14 for discussion. Mr. Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

- Linda Andrews
- Sylvester Warren
- Glenel Bowden

1. Official Results from Primary Election held on August 20, 2024

At this time, City Clerk Audrey Sikes announced:

The results of the August 20, 2024 election as submitted by the Columbia County Supervisor of Elections Office, are as follows:

City Council District 12

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| Tammy Harris | 195 votes |
| Jake Hill, Jr. | 189 votes |

Total votes cast: 384

Mr. Hill made a motion to approve the results as submitted by the Columbia County Supervisor of Elections Office. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

2. City Council Resolution No. 2024-094 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, declaring Tammy Harris to have been elected City Councilmember for District Twelve in the August 20, 2024 Municipal Election; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the expiration of said term on the third Monday in November 2028; directing the City Clerk to reflect said election and expiration of term in such records of the City as is necessary and prudent; making certain findings of fact in support of the City Clerk reflecting such election and expiration of term in the records of the City; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Hill made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-094. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

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| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

3. City Council Resolution No. 2024-095 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, declaring Noah Walker to have been elected to the office of Mayor-Councilmember at-large in the August 20, 2024 Municipal Election; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the expiration of said term on the third Monday in November 2028; directing the City Clerk to reflect said election and expiration of term in such records of the City as is necessary and prudent; making certain findings of fact in support of the City Clerk reflecting such election and expiration of term in the records of the City; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Hill made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No.**

2024-095. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

4. City Council Resolution No. 2024-096 - A resolution of the City of the Lake City, Florida, declaring James Carter to have been elected City Councilmember for District Thirteen in the August 20, 2024 Municipal Election; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the expiration of said term on the third Monday in November 2028; directing the City Clerk to reflect said election and expiration of term in such records of the City as is necessary and prudent; making certain findings of fact in support of the City Clerk reflecting such election and expiration of term in the records of the City; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Jernigan made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-096. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

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| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

5. City Council Resolution No. 2024-092 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, calling for a Special Election to be held Tuesday, November 5, 2024 in conjunction with the General Election of the State of Florida; providing for a referendum on the question presented by Ordinance 2024-2288 concerning the salaries of the City Council and the Mayor; providing for the City Clerk to coordinate said Election with the Columbia County Supervisor of Elections; directing the City Clerk to publish notice of the election; repealing all resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Glenel Bowden; Sylvester Warren

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-092. Mayor Witt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye – silent vote |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Nay |

FIRE ASSESSMENT/BUDGET HEARINGS

At this time Mayor Witt closed the regular session and opened a public hearing for the purpose of hearing comments on the Proposed Fire Protection Assessment Rates for Fiscal

Year beginning October 1, 2024. After hearing public comment from Barbara Lemley, Mayor Witt closed the public hearing.

6. City Council Resolution No. 2024-097 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, constituting the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Annual Fire Assessment Resolution relating to the provision of fire protection services, facilities and programs in the City of Lake City, Florida; providing findings; providing authority; providing definitions and interpretation; providing for reimposition of Fire Protection Assessments against Assessed Property located within the City of Lake City for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2024; approving final Fire Assessment rates; approving the final Assessment Roll; confirming the 2024 Preliminary Rate Resolution; providing for effect of adoption of Annual Resolution; providing for conflicts; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Hill made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-097. Mr. Jernigan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

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| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

At this time Mayor Witt opened a public hearing to accept input from all interested parties relative to the discussion, consideration, and tentative approval of the City’s 2024-2025 proposed millage rate and operating budget. Mayor Witt stated the City was offering the opportunity to all in attendance to speak in regard to the budget and ask that all speakers identify themselves by name and address. Mayor Witt stated the Finance Director would provide a summary of the budget process and address those items essential to compliance with the State of Florida Truth In Millage (TRIM) requirements.

Finance Director Angie Moore reported The City Council proposes a tentative millage rate of 5.2410 mills and a tentative capital and operating budget of \$75,233,556 for fiscal year 2024-2025. She stated council action tonight constitutes the “tentative” Budget Hearing as required by State TRIM criteria and was announced to the General Public by notices mailed by the Columbia County Property Appraiser on August 14, 2024. Mrs. Moore reported during this hearing, the following agenda will be addressed:

- The Council will discuss the 2024-2025 millage and operating budget and allow citizen input as appropriate.
- The Council will direct announcement of the tentative millage rate proposed for adoption and of any increase, decrease, or no change.
- The City Attorney will read, by title, Millage Resolution No. 2024-098.
- The Council will adopt Millage Resolution No. 2024-098 on first reading.
- The City Attorney will read, by title, Budget Resolution No. 2024-099.
- The Council will adopt Budget Resolution No. 2024-099 on first reading.

Mayor Witt declared the “Tentative Budget Hearing” open for discussion for public input followed by discussion by the City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren; Glenel Bowden; Lester McKellum; Barbara Lemley

Mayor Witt asked the Finance Director to state for the record 1) the taxing authority, 2) the millage rate to be adopted, 3) the rolled-back millage rate, and 4) any change the tentative millage rate represents to the current year's millage.

Finance Director Angie Moore stated the City Council of the City of Lake City, as Taxing Authority, proposes a tentative tax on all property located within the City of Lake City, Florida, at the rate of 5.2410 mills for the fiscal year 2024-2025 operating budget. She reported the current year proposed operating millage rate is an 11.91% increase from the 4.6831 rolled-back millage rate as defined by Florida Statutes.

7. City Council Resolution No. 2024-098 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, adopting the Millage Rate and Tentative Levy of Ad Valorem Taxes for Fiscal Year 2024-2025; making certain findings of fact in support of the City adopting said Millage Rate and Tentative Levy of Ad Valorem Taxes; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Jernigan made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-098. Mayor Witt seconded the motion.**

Mr. Carter spoke in opposition of raising the millage rate. He suggests maintaining the current millage rate and to fund the deficit out of the general fund.

Mayor Witt reported the millage rate has been kept low for 19 years and supports staff's request for the increase.

Mr. Jernigan stated he is not in favor of raising taxes, but supports staff's request to increase.

Ms. Young stated she is not in favor of raising taxes but feels there is a need for some increase.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Nay |

8. City Council Resolution No. 2024-099 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, adopting the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025; making certain findings of fact in support of the City adopting said Tentative Budget; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Carter made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-099. Mr. Jernigan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

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| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

Mayor Witt closed the public hearing

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

9. Minutes - August 8, 2024 Special Called Council Meeting
10. City Council Resolution No. 2024-093 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, approving that certain amendment to the Animal Control and Animal Care Services Agreement for Animal Control and Care Services with the Lake City - Columbia County Humane Society, Inc, a Florida Not for Profit Corporation; making certain findings of fact in support of the City approving said amendment; recognizing the authority of the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said amendment; directing the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said amendment; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.
11. City Council Resolution No. 2024-100 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, approving the write-off of delinquent utility accounts through September 30, 2022 finding the delinquent utility accounts to be uncollectable; directing the City Manager to forward such delinquent accounts to debt collection agencies procured by the City; directing the City Manager to take other actions as are necessary and prudent to collect such debts; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.
12. City Council Resolution No. 2024-101 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, adopting the evaluation and tabulation of responses to that certain Invitation to Bid number 016-2024 for purchase and installation of a prefabricated metal building at the Saint Margarets Wastewater Treatment Plant; accepting the bid from Union Lasteel Metal Buildings, Inc., a Florida Corporation, the sole bidder; approving the agreement with said vendor; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the authority of the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement; directing the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.
13. City Council Resolution No. 2024-103 – Removed from consent agenda for discussion under approval of agenda. See item below.
14. City Council Resolution No. 2024-104 - Removed from consent agenda for discussion under approval of agenda. See item below.

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Mr. Jernigan seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Note: Item #13 and Item #14 were removed from the consent agenda for discussion under approval of the agenda. They were addressed after the remaining consent agenda items were considered.

13. City Council Resolution No. 2024-103 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, approving that certain Annual Consulting Services Agreement with NJN Consulting Services, Inc., for consulting services related to providing a long term financial overview of the City's financial circumstances; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the authority of the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement;

directing the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-103. Mr. Hill seconded the motion.

Mr. Jernigan initially expressed staff should be able to handle this task without the assistance of the consultant. However, after discussion, he supports the request.

Mr. Rosenthal spoke in support of a long-term financial plan and the importance of entering into the contract with NJN Consulting Services.

Mr. Carter spoke in support of hiring NJN Consulting Services.

Ms. Young spoke in support of staff handling this task.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

14. City Council Resolution No. 2024-104 - A resolution of the City of Lake City, Florida, approving that certain legal services agreement with Marks Gray for legal services related to proceedings arising from that certain legal action brought by Nicholas J. Albrecht against the City of lake City identified by Columbia County Case Number 24-1216-SC; making certain findings of fact in support thereof; recognizing the authority of the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement; directing the Mayor to execute and bind the City to said agreement; repealing all prior resolutions in conflict; and providing an effective date.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren; Glenel Bowden

Attorney Martin provided a brief overview of the Nicholas Albrecht case and an explanation as to why Folds Walker, LLC could not represent the City in this case.

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve City Council Resolution No. 2024-104. Mr. Jernigan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Ms. Young | Nay |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinances

Open Quasi – Judicial Proceeding

At this time Attorney Clay Martin read from a prepared script.

Preliminary Matters (Attorney Clay Martin):

The City Attorney shall read the ordinance by title.

15. City Council Ordinance No. 2024-2276 (final reading) - An ordinance of the City of Lake City, Florida, pursuant to petition No. ANX 24-01, relating to voluntary annexation; making findings; annexing certain real property located in Columbia County, Florida, which is reasonably compact, and contiguous to the boundaries of the City of Lake City, Florida, into the boundaries of the City of Lake City, Florida; providing severability; repealing all ordinances in conflict; and providing an effective date. This voluntary annexation is for Cecilia Davis and the property is located on Hwy 441 North across from the Target Distribution Center.

Disclosure by Council members of ex-parte communications (this includes site visits), if any.

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| Ms. Young | None |
| Mr. Carter | None |
| Mr. Jernigan | None |
| Mr. Hill | None |
| Mayor Witt | None |

Swearing in of applicant/appellant, staff and all witnesses collectively by City Attorney. (Glenel Bowden)

Clerk should take custody of exhibits. City staff provided documents attached as Exhibit 1.

Note: All exhibits, diagrams, photographs and similar physical evidence referred to during the testimony or which you would like the Council to consider must be marked for identification and kept by the Clerk for 30 days.

A. Brief introduction of ordinance by city staff.

B. Presentation of application by applicant.

C. Presentation of evidence by city staff.

D. Presentation of case by third party intervenors, if any.

E. Public comments. (City Attorney Martin swore in Sylvester Warren for comment)

F. Cross examination of parties by party participants.

G. Questions of parties by City Council.

H. Closing comments by parties.

I. Instruction on law by attorney.

J. Discussion and action by City Council.

Ms. Young made a motion to approve City Council Ordinance No. 2024-2276 on final reading. Mr. Jernigan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Aye |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

16. RCC Cheer Champions

Ms. Young provided a brief overview of the funding request from the Richardson Community Center Cheer Champions.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren

Mr. Carter expressed the importance of using the Mayors Matching Grant Fund Program as the mechanism for funding requests.

Mr. Jernigan spoke in support of using the application process for funding requests.

Ms. Young reported the application process was not fully intact at the time the Richardson Community Center Cheer Champions initially requested funding.

Ms. Young made a motion to approve \$5,075.00 in funding from Aid to Private Organizations, account #001.05.519080.82, payable to Richardson Community Center Cheer Champions. The motion provides for funding to be paid up front with Richardson Community Center Cheer Champions providing receipts back to the City of Lake City. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

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| Ms. Young | Aye |
| Mr. Hill | Aye |
| Mr. Jernigan | Aye |
| Mr. Carter | Nay |
| Mayor Witt | Aye |

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION – None

COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council Member James Carter – Mr. Carter expressed the importance of using the mechanism in place for funding requests.

Council Member Jake Hill, Jr. – None

Council Member Ricky Jernigan – Mr. Jernigan encouraged the council members to help with the process as it relates to an individual that has a complaint or concern about a person and/or their pay. These situations and circumstances need to be handled through the City Manager. Mr. Jernigan encouraged staff members to take ownership of their role and to focus on their department versus other departments. He stated while he supports all department heads, staff does not need to come to him with situations and circumstances. These are to be addressed with the City Manager. Mr. Jernigan expressed full support for Mr. Rosenthal and his abilities as City Manager.

Council Member Chevella Young – Ms. Young verified with staff the Mayors Matching Grant Fund Program process is now in place for future funding requests.

Mayor Stephen Witt – None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM on a motion made and duly seconded.

Stephen M. Witt, Mayor/Council Member

Audrey Sikes, City Clerk