

CITY OF WESTLAKE



MINUTES

City Council First Budget Hearing

Tuesday, September 08, 2026 at 6:00 PM

The Lodge at Westlake Adventure Park
5490 Kingfisher Blvd.
Westlake, Florida 33470

CITY COUNCIL:

JohnPaul O'Connor, Mayor
Greg Langowski, Vice Mayor
Gary Werner, Council Member – Seat 1
Erik Gleason, Council Member – Seat 2
Charlotte Leonard, Council Member – Seat 3

CITY STAFF:

Howard W. Brown, Jr., ICMA-CM, City Manager
Zoie Burgess, CMC, City Clerk
Donald J. Doody, City Attorney
Osniel Leon, AICP, Planning and Zoning
Suzanne Dombrowski, P.E., ENV SP, Engineering

A City Council First Budget Hearing of the City of Westlake was held on Tuesday, September 08, 2026, at 6:00 PM., at The Lodge at Westlake Adventure Park, 5490 Kingfisher Blvd. Members of the public also attended the meeting through electronic means and accessed as follows:

1. Webex meeting from a computer, tablet or smartphone at the following link:
<https://cityofwestlake.my.webex.com/>

Meeting ID: 2866 235 0028

Password: hello

2. Participants also dialed in using phone with the following number:

United States Toll: +1-650-479-3208

Meeting ID: 2866 235 0028

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor O'Connor called the City of Westlake First Budget Hearing meeting of Tuesday, September 8, 2026, to order at 6:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present and constituting a quorum:

Councilman Gary Werner
Councilman Erik Gleason
Councilwoman Charlotte Leonard
Vice Mayor Greg Langowski
Mayor JohnPaul O'Connor

Also present:

Howard W. Brown, Jr., City Manager
Zoie Burgess, CMC, City Clerk
Sean M. Swartz, City Attorney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor O'Connor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR MODIFICATIONS, AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor O'Connor called for any additions, deletions, or modifications to the agenda.

Motion by Vice Mayor Langowski to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Leonard.

ROLL CALL

Councilman Werner	YES
Councilman Gleason	YES
Councilwoman Leonard	YES
Vice Mayor Langowski	YES
Mayor O'Connor	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (5-0).

FIRST BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

A. RESOLUTION 2026-25 - Approval of Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2027

Submitted By: Finance

RESOLUTION 2026-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF WESTLAKE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF _____ FOR THE CITY'S GENERAL OPERATING FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2026, ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor O'Connor introduced the item.

Mr. Swartz read Resolution 2026-25 by title into the record.

Mr. Brown provided a quick introduction of financial consultant Mr. Bloom.

Mr. Bloom explained the two-hearing budget process required by Florida law. Mr. Bloom stated that the tentative millage rate adopted at this hearing would be advertised and could be lowered, but not increased, at the final hearing.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the three millage options previously discussed by the Council 4.64, 4.59, and 4.55.

Mayor O'Connor opened council discussion

Council discussion.

Mayor O'Connor opened for public hearing.

Public Comment – Mr. Alvaro Perez – 15909 Orchard Drive - Mr. Alvaro asked why the Council would adopt 4.59 when the lower options of 4.55 or 4.56 were available, and what the specific justification was for the difference between those figures. Mayor O'Connor reminded Mr. Perez that the public comment section is not a forum for back-and-forth dialogue and indicated that staff would follow up to address his questions.

Public Comment – Ms. Alfie Aiken – 5416 Liberty Lane – Ms. Aiken asked for clarification on the current millage rate, noting she was asking a technical question. She was advised that information would be provided.

Public Comment – Mr. John Yates – 5764 Lodgepole Lane – Mr. Yates expressed concern that when he purchased his property in Westlake, he was told that economies of scale would reduce costs as more residents joined the community. He stated he saw no evidence of this in the budget materials and that costs appeared to have only gone up.

Public Comment – Mr. Bobby Farber – 4829 Saint Armands Way – Mr. Farber suggested a middle-ground approach, proposing a millage rate of 4.57 or 4.58 described informally as "splitting the difference" rather than holding at 4.59 or dropping to 4.55. He acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the November referendum and framed his suggestion as a reasonable compromise.

Mayor O'Connor closed public hearing.

Mr. Bloom stated the proposed tentative millage rate is 4.59; and that a rate of 4.59 represents 7.08 percent above the rollback rate of 4.2866.

Motion by Councilman Werner to establish the millage rate for fiscal year 2027 at 4.59 mills, seconded by Councilwoman Leonard.

ROLL CALL

Councilman Gleason	YES
Councilwoman Leonard	YES
Vice Mayor Langowski	YES
Mayor O'Connor	YES
Councilman Werner	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (5-0).

Motion by Councilman Gleason to approve Resolution 2026-25, seconded by Councilman Werner.

ROLL CALL

Councilwoman Leonard	YES
Vice Mayor Langowski	YES
Mayor O'Connor	YES
Councilman Werner	YES
Councilman Gleason	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (5-0).

B. RESOLUTION 2026-26 - Approval of Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2027

Submitted By: Finance

RESOLUTION 2026-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WESTLAKE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026 AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; DETERMINING AND FIXING THE AMOUNTS NECESSARY TO CARRY ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY FOR THE ENSUING YEAR; DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF APPLICABLE FUNDS ON HAND; ESTIMATING RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FOR ALL FUNDS, EXHIBIT "A"; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor O'Connor introduced the item.

Mr. Swartz read Resolution 2026-26 by title into the record.

Mr. Brown confirmed that the Council was being asked to approve the tentative budget on first reading, with a final hearing to follow.

Mr. Bloom clarified for the Council that, with the adoption of the 4.59 millage rate, the applicable budget document was Option B in the Council's packet found on page 6 of the budget document (page 9 of the file), captioned General Fund Based on 4.59 Millage.

Mayor O'Connor opened council discussion.

Council discussion.

Mayor O'Connor opened for public hearing.

Mayor O'Connor closed public hearing.

Motion by Councilman Werner, to approve Resolution 2026-06, seconded by Councilman Gleason.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Langowski	YES
Mayor O'Connor	YES
Councilman Werner	YES
Councilman Gleason	YES
Councilwoman Leonard	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (5-0).

PUBLIC HEARING - RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE ASSESSMENT

- A. Public Hearing on Resolution 2026-23 - Residential Solid Waste Services Annual Special Assessment

Submitted By: City Attorney's Office

RESOLUTION 2026-23

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WESTLAKE, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE SERVICES, IN THE CITY OF WESTLAKE, FLORIDA; APPROVING THE ASSESSMENT RATE FOR RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2026; IMPOSING A RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE SERVICES SPECIAL ASSESSMENT AGAINST ASSESSED PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF WESTLAKE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2026; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor O'Connor introduced the item.

Mr. Swartz read Resolution 2026-23 by title into the record.

Mayor O'Connor opened council discussion.

Council discussion.

Ms. Burgess advised that the City Clerk's office had received two letters by mail opposing and objecting to the residential solid waste services non-ad valorem assessment. Ms. Burgess noted that copies of both letters had been provided to the Council and would be entered into the public record. She further advised that the letters did not need to be read directly into the record, but that their existence and opposition were formally noted, and that copies would be available for review in the City Clerk's office.

Mr. Brown and Mayor O'Connor jointly clarified for the Council and the public the nature of the assessment. The assessment is a non-ad valorem special assessment not a new or separate bill which is levied annually.

Mayor O'Connor opened for public hearing.

Mayor O'Connor closed public hearing.

Motion by Councilwoman Leonard to adopt Resolution 2026-23, seconded by Councilman Gleason.

ROLL CALL

Mayor O'Connor	YES
Councilman Werner	YES
Councilman Gleason	YES
Councilwoman Leonard	YES
Vice Mayor Langowski	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (5-0).

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

A. Councilwoman Charlotte Leonard – No comments.

B. Councilman Erik Gleason encouraged the community to attend events taking place the coming Friday and Saturday, noting that attendees should bring running shoes for Saturday's event.

C. Councilman Gary Werner – No comments.

D. Vice Mayor Greg Langowski reminded the public of the 9/11 Remembrance ceremony to be held Friday evening at 6:30 PM outside the venue, and the 5K race on Saturday morning.

E. Mayor JohnPaul O'Connor reflected on the City's recent participation in a community fundraiser in support of the Homes Coalition, at which he personally not on behalf of the City donated a basket. He noted the event raised over \$2,000, approaching \$3,000, and that the City of Westlake received a special public acknowledgment during the program. Mayor O'Connor also reminded the public of the 9/11 Memorial and the 5K race.

REPORT - CITY ATTORNEY

No Report.

REPORT - CITY MANAGER

No Report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section of the agenda allows for comments from the public to speak. Each speaker will be given a total of three (3) minutes to comment. A public comment card should be completed and returned to the City Clerk. When you are called to speak, please go to the podium, and prior to addressing Council, state your name and address for the record. All public comments will be noted and may receive a response if necessary. Any follow-up will be handled by staff later.

Public Comment – Mr. John Yates – 5764 Lodgepole Lane – Mr. Yates expressed concern that the public could not engage in back-and-forth questioning during agenda items. Mayor O'Connor stated that questions could be asked and that staff would follow up. City Manager Brown noted that four prior budget workshops had been held and offered to speak with Mr. Yates after the meeting, explaining that the hearing format is governed by Florida law.

Public Comment – Mr. Alvaro Perez – 15909 Orchard Drive - Mr. Alvaro echoed concerns about public engagement and said he and other residents had not seen notice of the four prior budget workshops. He also reiterated his preference for a 4.55 millage rate. Mayor O'Connor acknowledged the concern, invited residents to contact him directly, and said staff would follow up.

Public Comment – Ms. Alfie Aiken – 5416 Liberty Lane – Ms. Aiken echoed concerns about notice and communication of the prior budget workshops and encouraged the City to improve outreach so more residents are aware of such meetings. She also urged the Council, before final adoption of the millage rate, to weigh both the uncertainty of the November referendum and the potential benefit of new commercial properties being added to the tax roll.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 6:29 PM.

Zoie P. Burgess, CMC, City Clerk

JohnPaul O'Connor, Mayor