

CITY OF WESTLAKE



MINUTES

City Council Special Meeting

Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 5:30 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:

Ken Cassel, City Manager
Zoie P. Burgess, CMC, City Clerk
Donald J. Doody, Esq., City Attorney
Osniel Leon, AICP, Planning and Zoning
Suzanne Dombrowski, P.E., ENV SP, Engineering

A special meeting of the City Council of the City of Westlake was held on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 5:30 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: 2862 511 3588

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

Meeting ID: 2862 511 3588

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor O'Connor called the City of Westlake Special Meeting on Thursday, September 11, 2025, to order at 5:30 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:

Ken Cassel, City Manager
Zoie P. Burgess, CMC, City Clerk
Odet Izquierdo, Deputy City Clerk
Donald J. Doody, Esq., City Attorney
Osniel Leon, AICP, Planning and Zoning

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor O'Connor led the Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor O'Connor, called for a moment of silence in honor of those fallen on 9/11 and for recent tragedies the nation had endured.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR MODIFICATIONS, AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Mayor O'Connor called for a motion to approve the agenda as is.

Motion by Vice Mayor Langowski, to approve the agenda as is, seconded by Councilman Werner.

UPON 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).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

SPECIAL AGENDA

A. Determination of City Manager Selection

Mayor O'Connor opened the discussion regarding the determination of the city manager selection process.

Mr. Cassel introduced Mr. Russell Blackburn from the Florida City County Management Association (FCCMA) senior advisors' program. Mr. Blackburn provided a detailed presentation on the city manager selection process.

Mr. Blackburn explained he had previously served as the City Manager of Port Saint Lucie, worked as a City Manager in Gainesville, and as a Martin County Administrator. With 45 years of local government experience.

He described three methodologies for recruiting and selecting a city manager:

1. Professional recruitment firms - which charge between \$30,000-\$50,000 per recruitment
2. Self-conducted recruitment by the city
3. Utilizing FCCMA senior advisors' assistance at no cost

Mr. Blackburn explained that the senior advisors would:

- Help guide the process
- Assist in advertising the position
- Screen applications to identify suitable candidates
- Provide recommendations to the council

He noted two things the senior advisors do not provide that professional recruiters do:

- Background checks (though he recommended the city obtain these separately)
- Extensive knowledge of current applicant pools

Mr. Blackburn recommended the process begin with a council workshop to determine the desired characteristics for the next city manager, taking into consideration the city's projected growth and needs. He outlined the typical timeline:

- Initial workshop: 1 month
- Recruitment and selection process: approximately 90 days
- Notice period for selected candidate: 30-60 days
- Total timeline: approximately 3-6 months (with an estimated February start date)

In response to questions from council members:

- Mayor O'Connor asked about the overall timeline, with Mr. Blackburn confirming it would be approximately 3-6 months.
- Councilman Werner inquired about contract city experience among applicants. Mr. Blackburn noted that while there aren't many contract cities, managers often appreciate not having to deal with personnel issues.
- Councilman Werner also asked about application numbers, with Mr. Blackburn sharing that in a recent recruitment, they initially received 120 applications (many unqualified) through Indeed, and after readvertising more strategically, received 30 applications with 20 qualified candidates.
- Councilman Gleason asked about reference checks, which Mr. Blackburn confirmed they do not provide but could be included in background checks.
- Councilwoman Leonard inquired about the challenges for individual contractors regarding benefits like healthcare and retirement. Mr. Blackburn explained these would be negotiated as part of the employment agreement, noting that many managers come with different needs based on their situation.
- Councilman Werner asked about the interview process, with Mr. Blackburn recommending both one-on-one interviews between candidates and council members, followed by public session interviews with standardized questions.

Mayor O'Connor indicated the council had consensus to move forward with utilizing the FCCMA senior advisors' program, noting that a formal motion would be made at the next regular meeting.

B. Approval of First Amended Agreement with Inframark, Inc.

Mayor O'Connor opened the discussion regarding the approval of first amended agreement with Inframark, Inc.

Mr. Cassel explained that the amendment would remove his name from the original contract and name Zoie Burgess as the acting city manager until further modifications are made.

Mayor O'Connor called for a motion to approve the First Amended Agreement with Inframark, Inc.

Motion was made by Councilman Werner, to approve the First Amended Agreement with Inframark, Inc. Seconded by Councilman Gleason.

UPON 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).

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor O'Connor waved council comments due to time constraints, with no objections from council members.

REPORT - CITY ATTORNEY

The City Attorney had no report.

REPORT - CITY MANAGER

The City Manager had no report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 6:04 PM.

Odette Izquierdo, Acting City Clerk

JohnPaul O'Connor, Mayor