LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

Regular Session
January 6, 2025

The Lakeland City Commission met in Regular Session in the City Commission Chambers. Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden and Commissioners Chad McLeod, Bill Read, Sara Roberts McCarley, Mike Musick, and Guy LaLonde were present. Mayor Bill Mutz was absent. City Manager Shawn Sherrouse, City Attorney Palmer Davis, Finance Director Mike Brossart, and City Clerk Kelly Koos were present.

CALL TO ORDER - 9:00 A.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN SINE DIE

Action: Commissioner Chad McLeod moved to adjourn sine die. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

MOTION TO RECONVENE AS THE 2025 CITY COMMISSION

Action: Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley moved to reconvene as the 2025 City Commission. Commissioner Mike Musick seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM – Mike Musick

Motion: Commissioner Bill Read moved to nominate Commissioner Mike Musick. Commissioner Guy LaLonde seconded.

Commissioner Mike Musick said thank you and that he would accept the appointment.

Commissioner Stephanie Madden explained the Mayor Pro Tem position. Sometimes commissioners other than the appointed Mayor Pro Tem fill in when needed.

Commissioner Chad McLeod thanked Commissioner Stephanie Madden for serving as Mayor Pro Tem for 2024. She did an excellent job.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for any other discussion.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

Update on Affordable Housing (Ben Stevenson, President/CEO Lakeland Housing Authority)

Beautification Awards (Bill Koen)
- Residential: Michael Lombardi - 1015 Duncan Avenue
- Commercial: Prospect Lake Wire Apartments - 380 Wire Drive

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered routine by the City Commission and will be enacted by one motion following an opportunity for public comment. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a City Commissioner or Citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence. For items listed with an asterisk (*) under the Community Redevelopment Agency portion of the agenda, the City Commission shall be deemed to be acting in its capacity as the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Lakeland when approving the consent agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mike Musick seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for discussion. There was none.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (with any amendments)

* Utility Committee Minutes – 12/13/24
* City Commission Minutes – 12/13-16/24

Action: The Commission approved these minutes as part of the Consent Agenda.

REPORTS AND RELATED ITEMS

Municipal Boards & Committees 01/03/25

Commissioner Stephanie Madden gave this report to the Commission. She recognized new appointments to the various committees.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the report. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for discussion.

Commissioner Mike Musick appreciated the Mayor moving commissioners around the committees. It is a good way to learn about different efforts throughout the City.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

EQUALIZATION HEARINGS

Recess/Convene: The Commission recessed the Regular Session and convened as the Equalization Board.

Palmer Davis explained that the City Charter requires that prior to recording a lien against private property, the City Commission convene as the Equalization Board and grant those property owners the opportunity to object to the recording of the lien or ask any questions they might have. If someone present received a notice to appear before the City Commission regarding a lot cleaning/clearing or demolition assessment, this is the time to address the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the assessments. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments.

Commissioner Bill Read noticed the list is smaller. Code Enforcement is doing a good job bringing properties into compliance.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn/Reconvene: The Equalization Board adjourned and the City Commission reconvened in Regular Session.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinances (Second Reading)

Ordinance 6080; Proposed 24-061; Establishing the Wedgewood Community Development District (1st Rdg. 12-16-24)

> AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT TO BE KNOWN AS THE WEDGEWOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 190, FLORIDA STATUTES; NAMING THE DISTRICT; DESCRIBING THE EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT; DESCRIBING THE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE DISTRICT; DESIGNATING FIVE PERSONS TO SERVE AS THE INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT'S BOARD OF SUPERVISORS; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Palmer Davis read the title.

Motion: Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley moved to approve the ordinance. Commissioner Chad McLeod seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments.

Commissioner Bill Read asked about the neighbors' objections.

Chuck Barmby explained the neighbors expressed concerned about the maintenance of the area. The Community Development District (CDD) being discussed today covered 104 acres. Jere Earlywine was there to respond to concerns.

Mr. Earlywine represents CDDs in Central Florida. They have been doing CDDs for 30 years. The project has already been approved. The concerns about maintenance will be better addressed by a CDD. The CDD saves money, collects through the tax roll, and is eligible for FEMA funding. The CDD will allow them to install needed infrastructure.

Commissioner Bill Read asked how many CDDs were in Lakeland? Approximately a dozen. Polk County had approximately 80 CDDs.

Commissioner Guy LaLonde asked how the CDD would directly consider the concerns of the neighborhood. Since 2022 there have been 37 code enforcement incidents on the property. He has driven through the area and saw the grass on the sidewalks.

Mr. Earlywine explained those concerns are more directed toward the developer than the CDD. He can talk with the developer about maintenance.

Commissioner Guy LaLonde asked what the mechanism in place was to maintain the property. Mr. Earlywine stated the code enforcement issue is separate from the CDD. He does think that code enforcement is important but it is a separate discussion from the CDD. Mr. Earlywine said he will get with the developer about the issues.

Commissioner Guy LaLonde asked how they will do a better job. Mr. Earlywine explained the CDD was governed by a board and there will be management staff to handle problems like code enforcement. The public will be invited to those board meetings.

Commissioner Mike Musick appreciated Commissioner Guy LaLonde for bringing up the issue. The message does need to get back to the developer that the property must be properly maintained.

Mr. Earlywine heard the commission and will take their comments back to the developer.

Beverly Janet Oneill Copeland of 733 Carpenters Way came forward. Her HOA borders the property. This notice was published in The Ledger but was not posted on the property. On the CDD petition, it said they received approval of 100% of the owners. Nothing has been built. They still do not know if they are going to be apartments or if they will be for sale. A CDD is an extra expense and most realtors will stay away from CDDs. She also questioned the name change. How will the money come in if there are no homes built?

Mr. Earlywine explained the developer will maintain the property. As the infrastructure is installed the CDD will take over. The apartments and multifamily are excluded from the CDD. The market takes care of itself when it comes to the CDD fees. They met requirements for notice for the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden clarified the developer/CDD would bond for funding for infrastructure before the houses are built.

Ms. Copeland asked if maintenance would improve once the CDD was approved.

Mr. Earlywine stated Ms. Copeland raised some issues that are not related to the CDD. He will reach out to Mr. House as it could be taken care of right away. As soon as the CDD is up and running, management will kick in on maintenance. In the meantime, we will reach out to the developer.

Commissioner Chad McLeod asked Chuck Barmby if he had any additional comments.

Chuck Barmby gave a brief presentation on the project.

Palmer Davis explained the citizens should reach out to code enforcement with their maintenance concerns.

Shawn Sherrouse explained the ways to contact code enforcement.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley asked Chuck Barmby about the comp plan and the name change.

Chuck Barmby explained there have been some changes on the development team but it is the same developer and engineering team. He did not know why the name for the CDD changed. Sometimes the CDD name is different from the development name. He believed the key player, Mr. House, is the same.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley appreciated the public coming forward but she also appreciated the fact that code enforcement and the CDD are two different issues. Accountability is very important. A CDD will have local accountability where these types of issues can be addressed.

Commissioner Mike Musick stated the developer needs to address the issues to maintain good connections with the community.

Action: Upon roll call vote Commissioners Chad McLeod, Bill Read, Sara Roberts McCarley, Mike Musick, Guy LaLonde, and Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden voted aye. Ayes – six. Nays – zero. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances (First Reading)

Proposed 25-001; Approving a Conditional Use to Recognize Existing Outdoor Recreation and Public Services Facilities and Allow for the Development of a New 156-Bed Dormitory and Baseball Training Facilities within the Tigertown Sports Complex Generally Located East of Lakeland Hills Boulevard, South of Granada Street and West of W. Lake Parker Drive

> AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO ZONING; MAKING FINDINGS; APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE TO RECOGNIZE EXISTING OUTDOOR RECREATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES AND ALLOW FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW 156-BED DORMITORY AND BASEBALL TRAINING FACILITIES WITHIN THE TIGERTOWN SPORTS COMPLEX, GENERALLY LOCATED EAST OF LAKELAND HILLS BOULEVARD, SOUTH OF GRANADA STREET AND WEST OF W. LAKE PARKER DRIVE; FINDING CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Palmer Davis read the title and explained this was a public hearing.

Chuck Barmby gave a brief presentation on the ordinance.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the audience. There were no comments.

Resolutions

Resolution 5962; Proposed 25-001; Lots Cleaning and Clearing

> A RESOLUTION RELATING TO ASSESSMENTS; DETERMINING THE NECESSITY FOR HAVING CLEANED AND CLEARED CERTAIN PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY OF LAKELAND; PROVIDING FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF LIENS AGAINST SUCH PROPERTY FOR EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE CLEANING AND CLEARING THEREOF; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Palmer Davis read the title.

Motion: Commissioner Chad McLeod moved to approve the resolution. Commissioner Mike Musick seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

Action: Upon roll call vote Commissioners Guy LaLonde, Mike Musick, Sara Roberts McCarley, Bill Read, Chad McLeod, and Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden voted aye. Ayes-six. Nays-zero. The motion carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Public Notification of Justice Assistance Grant Application

The U.S. Department of Justice recently posted 2024 local allocations for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant. Attachment 1 in the agenda packet reflects Lakeland's $30,195 direct allocation for 2024, while Attachment 2 in the agenda packet represents the Police Department's tentative plans for utilizing these funds by funding equipment upgrades for the Police Forensics Lab. The period to expend these funds runs from October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025.

This City Commission meeting will provide an opportunity for citizens and neighborhood or community organizations to comment as mandated in Attachment 3 in the agenda packet.

Staff recommended that the Mayor and Police Chief be authorized to execute and submit the grant application on behalf of the City of Lakeland and that the City Commission approve the proposed expenditure of funds for the purposes as set forth herein.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Bill Read seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

The Commission discussed the City's allocation and if there was an opportunity for additional funding. The City's allocation is roughly the same each year.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - None

CITY MANAGER

Purchase Order to Williams Scotsman, Inc. for Two Modular Buildings at Lakeland Linder International Airport

On August 9, 2024, Avelo Airlines, Inc. ("Avelo") notified staff of its need for their exclusive use facilities as detailed in Section 2.2 of its Airline Facilities Construction and Lease Agreement approved by the City Commission on December 18, 2023. According to the Agreement, the City is required to provide Avelo with a 3,500 square foot maintenance storage facility, a 500 square foot maintenance office, and a 850 square foot operations office at the Lakeland Linder International Airport (LLIA) in connection with its passenger operations.

Staff proposed purchasing two prefabricated modular office buildings through OMNIA Partners' national cooperative contract (Region 4 Education Service Center, Houston, Texas, Contract Number R210503, Modular Buildings, Portable Storage and Relocatable Walkways). Staff has determined that purchasing one single-wide modular office and one double-wide modular office from Williams Scotsman, Inc. ("Willscot") meets the requirements of the Airline Facilities Construction and Lease Agreement. The purchase order includes the following facilities:

FACILITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE	COST
Maintenance Office	720	$99,037.20
Operations Office	1,440	$178,486.40
Total	2,160	$277,523.60

Costs include the manufacturing of the modular buildings, delivery, setup and anchoring, wood skirting, building plans, ADA ramp, ADA steps, and awning. These offices are intended to be used until LLIA constructs more permanent facilities associated with future terminal expansion. Funding for this purchase is through the Florida Revenue Note Fund, Series 2024, Project No. 017611.

Staff recommended the City Commission authorize the issuance of a purchase order to Williams Scotsman, Inc. for the purchase of two modular buildings at Lakeland Linder International Airport, totaling $277,523.60, and authorize the appropriate City officials to execute the appropriate documents.

Shawn Sherrouse presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley heard from a citizen about customer service for Avelo. They were encouraging the City to help Avelo grow.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Shortlist for RFQ No. 310 - Municipal Engineering Design Contract for Southwest Sewer Upgrades

The City has experienced significant regional growth of the southwest service area which has overburdened existing infrastructure, thereby necessitating upgrades to portions of the sewer system. Based on preliminary analysis, the City needs to install approximately 1.5 miles of 20” sewer force main south of Lakeland Linder International Airport along Pipkin Road. This project will also include design of a third pump and upsizing of the existing two pumps, generator and other equipment at the English Oaks lift station.

The City, through its Purchasing Division, recently issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 310, in accordance with the Consultant’s Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA). A selection committee, comprised of five Water Utilities employees, evaluated the seven responding firms. The overall criteria upon which the firms were evaluated included:

- Quality of the Proposal
- Experience of consultant’s personnel
- Past performance on recent similar projects
- Willingness to meet the City’s time and budget requirements
- Office location from where work will be performed

The selection committee met in the City’s Purchasing Bid Room on November 26, 2024, after independently reviewing and scoring the proposals. The seven firms listed below, in the order in which they were ranked, have been shortlisted:

Company Name	**Location**
Wright-Pierce, Inc.	Tampa, Florida
Q. Grady Minor & Associates, LLC.	Bonita Springs, Florida
CHA Consulting, Inc.	Winter Haven, Florida
CPH, Consulting, LLC.	Orlando, Florida
Baxter & Woodman	Orlando, Florida
CivilSurv	Lakeland, Florida
ChastainSkillman	Lakeland, Florida

The design will commence as soon as possible and is expected to take approximately 18 months.

Staff recommended the City Commission approve the shortlist and ranking and authorize the Water Utilities Department to proceed with the next phase of the selection process whereby a contract will be brought back to the City Commission for approval.

Shawn Sherrouse presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Bill Read moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Mike Musick seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Purchase Order to KONE Inc. to Replace Wheelchair Lift at the Beerman Family Tennis Facility

On November 19, 2024, the City received a proposal from KONE Inc. through OMNIA Partners, Public Sector National Cooperative Purchasing Contract (City of Kansas City, Missouri Contract EV2516, Elevator and Escalator Maintenance and Repair Services) for replacement of the wheelchair lift at the Beerman Family Tennis Center located at Veterans Park, 1000 E. Edgewood Drive. The lift provides access to the second level of the Clubhouse Building.

The City requested this proposal due to maintenance concerns with the existing wheelchair lift, as well as the need to upgrade the lift to meet the current Florida Elevator Safety Code requirements. The project scope includes all labor, materials, tools, and supervision to remove and dispose of the existing wheelchair lift and install a new enclosed vertical platform lift. The new enclosed vertical platform:

- Operates using a hydraulic drive system that eliminates the need for a machine room.
- Features a flexible enclosure design, enclosed with aluminum and acrylic inserts, top dome with active ventilation system, and corrosion-resistant steel components.
- Complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and incorporates all required safety features.
- Suited for outdoor applications, for commercial access and has a 750-pound capacity.

The City's Purchasing Division has approved KONE Inc., pursuant to OMINA Partners, Public Sector Contract EV2516. OMNIA Partners, Public Sector, serves as a contracting agency that enables public sector entities to cooperatively procure equipment, products and services to receive volume pricing discounts. Funding is included in the Fiscal Year 2025 Public Works' Facilities and Maintenance Operating Budget.

Staff recommended the City Commission award this Proposal with KONE Inc. to execute the purchase order with KONE Inc. and all corresponding documents for replacement of the existing wheelchair lift at Beerman Family Tennis Center in the amount of $103,854.00.

Shawn Sherrouse presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

CITY ATTORNEY

Ordinances (First Reading)

Proposed 25-002; Annual Update to the Capital Improvements Element of the Lakeland Comprehensive Plan: Our Community 2030, Including Updates to the Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements

> AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING; MAKING FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR AN UPDATE TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT OF THE LAKELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: OUR COMMUNITY 2030; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The foregoing is the title of an ordinance read for the first time by short title only. The Commission will hold the second reading and public hearing on January 21, 2025.

Miscellaneous

- **Waiver of 5:01 p.m. Hearing Requirement**

During the month of January, the City Commission will consider a City-initiated zoning ordinance approving a conditional use for the Tigertown Sports Complex. State law requires that at least one of the two hearings on this matter be held after 5:00 p.m. unless such requirement is waived by a majority plus one vote of the Commission.

Staff recommended that the City Commission waive the statutory requirement that at least one of the hearings on this matter be held after 5:00 p.m.

Action: The Commission approved this item as part of the Consent Agenda.

- **Approval of Shortlist and Authority to Negotiate a Continuing Contract for Water Utilities Rate Study Consulting Services**

The City, through its Purchasing Department, recently issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in accordance with the Consultant's Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), requesting statements of qualifications from interested consulting firms for the provision of comprehensive rate, impact fee and cost of service studies pursuant to a continuing contract for the Water Utilities Department.

The selection committee for the RFQ was comprised of five (5) Water Utilities employees, who evaluated the two (2) firms that responded to the RFQ. The criteria upon which the firms were evaluated included:

- Quality of the Proposal
- Quality of consultant personnel
- Experience and past performance
- Willingness to meet the City's time and budget requirements
- Office location where work will be performed

The selection committee met on December 4, 2024 and ranked the responding firms in the following order:

Company Name	Location
Raftelis	Maitland, Florida
Utility Accounting & Rates Specialists, LLC	Sanibel, Florida

Included in the agenda packet is a copy of the standard Continuing Contract for Comprehensive Rate, Impact Fee and Cost of Services Study that the City intends to enter into with the selected firm once approved by the Commission. The initial term of the Contract is for a period of three (3) years, with two (2) additional one (1) year renewal options upon mutual written agreement of the parties. Services will be provided under the Continuing Contract pursuant to individually negotiated task authorizations setting forth specific scopes of work and not-to-exceed costs.

Staff recommended that the City Commission approve the ranked shortlist and authorize the appropriate City officials to negotiate and enter into a continuing contract for Water Utilities rate study consulting services with the selected firm.

Action: The Commission approved this item as part of the Consent Agenda.

Joint Project Agreement with Polk County for the Fairway Avenue Drainage Improvement Project

Polk County Roads & Drainage has a project to construct drainage improvements along Fairway Avenue and Lakeview Street at the southeast shore of Lake Parker. These improvements conflict with the City's water and wastewater infrastructure at this location. Because the City's infrastructure is within County right-of-way, the City is responsible for the costs to relocate its facilities.

After completing its review of Polk County's project improvements, the City's Water Utilities Department has determined the scope of necessary pipeline adjustments to its utilities. City water facilities will be adjusted with in-house forces and will include the replacement of aging infrastructure with new piping. City forces do not have the capacity to adjust City wastewater facilities as part of this project and, as a result, wastewater relocations will need to be performed by outside contractors.

Polk County has selected Kamminga & Roodvoets (Kamminga) to perform their drainage improvements. Water Utilities has used Kamminga frequently for normal construction and emergency repairs. Due to the timeline for Polk County's project, the relocation work needs to be completed within the next two months prior to the County's construction. Water Utilities has determined that the best and most cost-effective approach will be to use Kamminga to relocate the City's wastewater facilities pursuant to a Joint Project Agreement (JPA) with the County.

The City's proposed adjustments and Kamminga's proposals for the work have been incorporated into a JPA with the County. Under the proposed JPA, the City will transfer funds to Polk County for the project as follows: $476,525.00 for wastewater utility adjustments and $50,000 in contingency funds, totaling $526,525.00. City Water Utilities will oversee the relocation work by Kamminga. This project is budgeted in the Water Utilities' FY 2025 budget.

Staff recommended that the City Commission approve the Joint Project Agreement with Polk County for the Fairway Avenue Drainage Improvement Project and authorize the appropriate City officials to execute the Agreement.

Palmer Davis presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Chad McLeod seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

HOME-ARP Loan Agreement for Gospel Village

This was a funding agreement in the amount of $685,000.00 between the City of Lakeland and Gospel, Inc. for the construction of additional permanent supportive housing at Gospel Village, located at 111 East Main Street.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 appropriated $5 billion nationwide to provide housing, services and shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable populations, to be allocated to jurisdictions who qualified for HOME Investment Partnership Program allocations in FY 2021. The City of Lakeland was allocated HOME ARPA funds in the amount of $1,401,459.00 and, on March 7, 2022, the City Commission unanimously approved an amendment to the City's One Year Action Plan (PY 2020-2021) to use the funds for the development of affordable rental housing and associated administration costs.

On January 20, 2023, the City of Lakeland issued a Request for Proposals (RFP NO. 3041), offering gap financing to qualified developers/sponsors for the development of affordable rental units, with a focus on the prevention of homelessness. The Housing Division received two applications: one for Griffin Lofts, a partnership between Carrfour Supportive Housing, Inc. and Allegre Point, LLC, and one for Gospel Village, being developed by Gospel Inc. On March 21, 2023, the applications were presented to the Affordable Housing Review Committee, consisting of representatives from the Community and Economic Development Department, Lakeland Electric, Water Utilities, and members from the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. After reviewing the applications, the Committee determined that both developers submitted qualified projects meeting the strict HOMEARP requirements for providing housing for those at risk of facing homelessness. The Committee further recommended an equal allocation of $685,000.00 to each project, with the remaining $31,459.00 (2% of the HOME-ARPA funds) to be used for administrative costs.

Griffin Lofts funding agreement was approved by the City Commission on September 18, 2023 and that project is currently under construction, with an estimated completion date in the first quarter of 2025. Griffin Lofts will consist of 60 units in a single four-story building comprised of thirty-eight (38) one bedroom/one-bathroom apartment units and twenty-two (22) two bedroom/two-bathroom apartment units. Twenty percent (20%) of the units will be available for individuals or households at or below 40% of Area Median Income (AMI), and the balance will be available for those at or below 60% AMI. Gospel Village is developing a second phase to its existing 35-unit mobile home community serving those experiencing chronic homelessness. This second phase will consist of three two-story buildings, with twenty-four (24) one-bedroom units in each, for a total of 72 units. However, the funding requested to be awarded is for 48 units only, with an initial 40 units serving those at or below 30% AMI.

Gospel Village is now ready to close on their allocation of HOME-ARP funding and recently broke ground, with an estimated completion within twelve to eighteen months of commencement. Funding under the Agreement will take the form of a deferred loan that will be subordinate to primary financing sources. The units constructed by Gospel, Inc. must be utilized for affordable housing for a minimum period of twenty (20) years. In the event this requirement is met and Gospel, Inc. otherwise meets the requirements of the Agreement, the loan will be forgiven at the end of the twenty (20) year affordability period.

Staff recommended that the City Commission approve the HOME-ARP Loan Agreement for Gospel Village and authorize the appropriate City officials to execute the Agreement and all associated documents necessary to finalize the transaction.

Palmer Davis presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Chad McLeod moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience.

The Commission discussed:

- The City's forgiveness of the debt. The City typically forgives the loans if they maintain the property as affordable housing for 20 years. Forgiving is the right way to go with the nonprofits.
- These projects take a long time to happen. The City has been aggressively looking for these types of opportunities.

Ray Stedman, Executive Director of Gospel Inc., came forward on behalf of Board of Directors and the residents and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to expand. Their goal was to address chronic homelessness.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley left the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Land Lease Agreement with SUN 'n FUN Fly-In, Inc.

This was a proposed Land Lease Agreement with SUN ‘n FUN Fly-In Inc. (SUN ‘n FUN). SUN ‘n FUN is seeking to lease approximately eleven (11) acres of undeveloped land located off Medulla Road on the south side of the Airport. SUN ‘n FUN intends to use this property for equipment laydown space and temporary automobile parking.

The Lease Agreement, subject to City Commission approval, is for a term of ten (10) years, effective January 6, 2025, and contains no options for renewal. Pursuant to the Lease, SUN ‘n FUN will pay the City annual base rent of $50,000.00, paid in monthly installments of $4,166.67. The base rent does not include utilities or any applicable taxes, which SUN ‘n FUN will be required to pay in addition to its base rent.

Staff recommended that the City Commission approve the terms of the Land Lease Agreement with SUN ‘n FUN and authorize the appropriate City officials to finalize and execute all corresponding documents consistent with the above-specified terms.

Ramona Sirianni presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Bill Read moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Chad McLeod seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

Commissioner Stephanie Madden did think the buffer was important for the adjacent residents.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried 5-0. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley was absent at that time.

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Budget Carryover - Lakeland Electric - 2023 Bond Proceeds Fund

As the Finance Department closed one fiscal year and opened another, a list of carryover projects and supplemental appropriations was compiled and submitted for approval by the City Commission. At the meeting held on November 18, 2024, the City Commission approved the list of carryover accounts/projects as requested by the Finance Department and City Manager’s Office. Approval of the list provided budgets for continuing projects which overlap fiscal years.

In compiling the list, the following project financed from the Series 2023 Bond Proceeds Fund was omitted from the list:

913.954.8501.815704.000.81.007 / CTR5704 ADA Building Modifications $536,995

The Finance Department and City Manager’s Office request that the City Commission authorize an appropriation in the amount of $536,995 from the unappropriated surplus of the Series 2023 Bond Proceeds Fund effective October 1, 2024. The balance is preliminary and will be finalized after all year-end accounting adjustments/accruals are posted.

Mike Brossart presented this item to the Commission.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Bill Read seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

Mike Brossart explained the carryovers were done in November. This was one item that missed that list in November.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried 5-0. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley was absent at that time.

AUDIENCE

Keith Power came forward concerning an article in LakelandNOW and the fluoridation of the City’s water supply. He thought this was an important decision that could seriously affect the health of the community. He wanted to know what constitutes getting additional information. He has done some reading on the issues. The commission's resources should include the American Dental Association and Association of Pediatrics. The Commission should base their decision on reliable data. The Governor's written statement should not be the Commission’s only source when making the decision. It is important to distinguish between association and actual causality. He was not sure where the Commission stood on the issue. He wanted to know how they planned to research the issue. Fluoridation has been part of American health care for 70 years but more recently in Lakeland, back to the 1980s. The Commission decision should be fact based.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for Commission comment.

Commissioner Chad McLeod felt they were in a tough spot on this one. He wanted to hear from more residents in our community. There are arguments for and against fluoridization. He invited people in the community to weigh in on the issue.

Commissioner Bill Read would welcome information from people on the issue or any issue.

Mr. Power explained the ADA put out a white paper of 100 pages on fluoridation of the water. The paper does talk about safety. He thought the Commission’s input should come from sources more knowledgeable than the citizens such as American Dental Association and the American Pediatrics Association.

Shawn Sherrouse clarified the City has not changed processes and has no plans to make changes, unless it comes as a policy direction from the Commission. He did plan to raise the issue in their one on ones.

Assistant Water Utilities Director Joe Costine came forward. Fluorine is a naturally occurring element that is on the periodic table. Fluoride is an anion of the fluorine element. The target is .70m.

Lorenzo Robinson of Paul A Diggs Neighborhood Association asked if the policy change would come from the governor or if would be made here in Polk County? City Manager Shawn Sherrouse explained the change could come from higher levels of government; however, his understanding is this is a local decision and would be a policy matter for the City Commission.

Lorenzo Robinson was concerned that the City would comply with higher levels of government without objection. Shawn Sherrouse explained the City will comply with the law. Palmer Davis added this would require a legislative act. The governor would not be able to take that action unilaterally.

Shawn Sherrouse added that depending on the desire of the Commission there could be some advocacy. However, if there is a law that the City is required to follow, they City has no option but to comply.

MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COMMISSION

City Attorney Compensation: Palmer Davis explained that the City Manager provided information related to his compensation. He was slightly above the midpoint based on the recent wage study. That would result in a 2.5% merit increase if the City Commission so desired.

Motion: Commissioner Bill Read moved to approve the City Attorney merit increase. Commissioner Mike Musick seconded. [1]

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

Commissioner Bill Read asked about Palmer Davis's staff. Palmer Davis explained his staff fell into the wage study with all other employees. Only the City Manager and City Attorney are subject to approval at this level.

Action: Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden called for the vote and the motion carried 5-0. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley was absent at that time.

Commissioner Mike Musick announced his daughter in law is in the hospital to have her baby. He is about to become a grandfather for the first time.

Commissioner Bill Read was an advocate of removing the fluoride from the water process. He hoped the City Commission would consider removing fluoride.

Commissioner Chad McLeod reminded everyone there is a Legislative Committee meeting this afternoon at 1:00 p.m. that will be chaired by Commission Sara Roberts McCarley. They will be looking at the legislative priorities for the City heading into the legislative session committee weeks that are starting soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Madden announce the 2025 Lakeland Electric calendar is out with the children's artwork. The new edition of the Lakelander is out too.

CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT – 11:03 a.m.

Kelly S. Koos, MMC
City Clerk

CITY OF LAKELAND FLORIDA
INCORPORATED JAN. 1 1885

[1] On February 17, 2025 the Commission confirmed that the City Attorney's merit increase was to be retroactive to October 1, 2024.