LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

Agenda Study Session
April 3, 2026

The Lakeland City Commission met for the Agenda Study Session in the City Commission Conference Room. Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley and Commissioners Mike Musick, Ashley Troutman, Guy LaLonde, Stephanie Madden, Chad McLeod, and Terry Coney were present. Deputy City Manager Rob Hernandez, City Attorney Palmer Davis, Finance Director Mike Brossart, and Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman were present.

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She reviewed Presentations, Approval of Minutes on the Consent Agenda, Reports and Related Items, and Equalization Hearings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Resolutions
Proposed 26-013; Lots Cleaning and Clearing

Proposed 26-014; Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for Financial Project No. 458048-1-94-01 to Provide Funding for the Terminal Development Program Definition Plan at Lakeland Linder International Airport.

Proposed 26-015; Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for Financial Project No. 457276-1-94-01 to Provide Funding for an Environmental Assessment for the Terminal Building Project at Lakeland Linder International Airport

Proposed 26-016; Adopting the SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) for 2026-2029. Housing Programs Manager Mike Smith will provide a presentation during Monday's Commission meeting.

Proposed 26-017; Consolidating and Restating Policies for the Appointment of Members to Municipal Boards and Committees; Repealing Resolutions 1361, 2545, 3237, 3593, 3670, 5181 and 5266. This is intended to consolidate existing rules into a single resolution for administrative convenience.

Proposed 26-018 Vacating a Portion of an Existing Public Utility Easement Located at 4430 Ewell Road. The property is located outside city limits, but within Lakeland Electric service territory.

Proposed 26-019; Intent to Vacate Public Right-of-Way Located at 1303 E. Gary Road

Proposed 26-020; Expressing Intent to Incur Costs Related to the Water System and Wastewater System and to Reimburse with the Proceeds of Revenue Bonds the Capital Expenditures Made with Respect to Such Project. Mike Brossart explained that this is a standard formality applied to other projects as well.

Commissioner Stephanie Madden arrived at 8:41 a.m.

Miscellaneous
CFTB Realty, LLC Appeal of Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board's Denial of Small-Scale Land Use Amendment and Rezoning for New Talbot House Ministries Facility at 1005 E. Memorial Boulevard. Palmer Davis clarified that the proceeding is not a de novo hearing. The Commission's initial responsibility is to review the record from the Planning & Zoning Board and determine whether the proceedings were conducted in accordance with applicable law. The Commission's review is limited to the existing record, and no new evidence is to be considered at this stage.

The grounds for appeal were outlined. If competent grounds are found, the Commission may proceed to a de novo hearing. If no such grounds exist, the appropriate action is to affirm the P&Z Board's decision.

The hearing procedure was established as follows: the appellant will present arguments supporting the appeal, followed by public comment, limited to five minutes per speaker. The appellant will then be permitted a rebuttal. No additional public comment will be taken after rebuttal, and no new evidence should be introduced during the proceedings. Commissioners were reminded that the matter is quasi-judicial in nature and must be decided based on the record established before the P&Z Board and applicable legal standards.

The City Attorney advised that legal guidance may be provided upon request but is not binding on the Commission.

Key considerations identified for evaluating the appeal included: whether the Planning & Zoning Board properly applied the Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan; compliance with statutory requirements, including written findings of fact; adequacy of supporting analyses such as traffic and compatibility; and whether the decision is supported by competent, substantial evidence, including consideration of expert versus lay testimony.

It was noted that if the appeal is denied, a one-year waiting period applies before reapplication. If granted, the matter may proceed to a de novo hearing at a later date.

The placement of the item on the agenda was discussed. The Commission ultimately agreed to retain the item in its current position. Staff and the City Attorney will provide clear instructions to the public regarding the scope and procedures of the hearing.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Affordable Housing Incentive - Twin Lakes III, LTD (Midtown). This represents the third and final phase of the Twin Lakes development and it completes the remaining available land associated with the project.

Housing Programs Manager Mike Smith confirmed that due to funding requirements, a mixed-use component was incorporated into the project. He indicated that this addition aligns with the City's affordable housing goals and would have been consistent with the project's overall development plan.

Commissioners expressed general support for affordable housing efforts and the provision of adequate housing within the community. Mr. Smith explained that the project competes with larger counties for tax credit awards, which limits the number of projects that can be funded locally. He noted that while there are restrictions on the number of tax credit awards per county, additional funding opportunities have emerged through programs such as Live Local and transit-oriented incentives.

CRA Manager Valerie Vaught clarified that the project is located within the Midtown CRA district, noting that the district boundaries in that area are irregular. Additional information on district boundaries is available if needed.

CITY MANAGER

Purchase Order with Sensus USA, Inc. for Current and Ongoing Purchases of Electric Meters. Rob Hernandez presented these items on behalf of the City Manager, noting that Shawn Sherrouse was out of town.

Commissioner Madden inquired whether the system would allow for fiber-to-the-premise connectivity to electric meters. Assistant General Manager for LE Customer Service, Korey Bush, explained that the City previously approved infrastructure upgrades, including towers and database capabilities, to support the system. The meters themselves do not utilize coaxial or fiber connections, as they communicate through an established network infrastructure.

Meter replacements had been delayed since approximately 2020 due to supply chain issues. With improved availability, the City now has the capacity to proceed with replacing outdated meters. The meters function as part of a mesh communication network, effectively acting as modems to transmit data to system towers. The purchase is intended to support ongoing system maintenance and modernization.

Commissioner Musick asked whether the City is purchasing the most current model. Orders are being placed in advance to ensure compatibility with the upgraded infrastructure and to secure the most up-to-date technology available. It was noted that multiple versions and upgrades have occurred since earlier models were deployed around 2010.

Commissioner Coney inquired about the lifespan of the meters. The typical lifecycle of the current meter technology is approximately 20 years. However, ongoing technological advancements and infrastructure requirements necessitate periodic upgrades. Older meters, particularly those installed around 2010, lack the capabilities required for the current system. Modern meters may not achieve the same lifespan as older analog meters but are necessary to ensure accurate readings and billing.

***Purchase Order with C&D Industrial Maintenance for the Replacement of Fleet Management Roll-Up Shop Doors and corresponding Budget Appropriation.** Mayor Roberts McCarley raised a question regarding the City's increasing use of piggyback contracts and requested a more in-depth discussion at a future Projects Workshop. Rob Hernandez confirmed that the next workshop is scheduled for April 17 and will coordinate with the appropriate departments to include this topic.

The Commission concurred to keep the item on the consent agenda.

CITY ATTORNEY

Ordinances (First Reading)
Proposed 26-007; Vacation of Public Right-of-Way Located at 1303 E. Gary Road

Proposed 26-008; Approving a Conditional Use to Convert a Nonconforming Two-Family Dwelling to a Single-Family Dwelling and Allow for the Construction of a Detached Garage and Addition to an Existing Single-Family Home on Property Located at 708, 712 and 714 Frank Lloyd Wright Way. Urban Planning & Transportation Manager Chuck Barmby provided additional details regarding the proposal.

It was noted that the intent is to clean up and unify the parcels into a single address and meter, effectively creating one compound. Additionally, no public comments have been received regarding the proposal thus far.

Miscellaneous
***Use Agreement with Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art at Florida Southern College, Inc. for the Annual Mayfaire by-the-Lake Event.** The Commission concurred to keep the item on the consent agenda.

***Agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for Axon Standards Software Subscription and Professional Services.** The Commission concurred to keep the item on the consent agenda.

Agreement with McFarland Johnson, LLC for Preparation of a Terminal Development Program Definition Plan for the Airport. Airport Director Kris Hallstrand provided additional details regarding the agreement.

Commissioner Chad McLeod left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Kris Hallstrand explained that airport funding is well-established within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant system. Revenues generated from aviation-related sources, such as fuel and registration fees, are directed into state and federal aviation funding programs. These funds are not discretionary but are distributed through established channels based on eligibility and planning readiness.

She emphasized the importance of long-term planning to position the Airport competitively at the state, regional, and national levels. It was noted that aviation projects are highly dependent on proactive planning and the ability to align with funding opportunities. Success in obtaining funding is dependent on maintaining readiness, strong relationships, and consistent communication with funding agencies.

Mayor Roberts McCarley commented on the importance of ongoing strategic communication and maintaining transparency as part of the process.

Second Amendment with Garney Companies, Inc. to Progressive Design-Build Agreement for the Western Trunk Gravity Sewer Replacement Project - Phase 3

Water Utilities Engineering Manager Matt Fowler provided a project update. A copy of this presentation in on file in the agenda packet.

The scope of the Western Trunk line replacement was reviewed, including completed work in Phase 3.1. Commissioner Musick inquired about the use of standard-length pipe segments and Mr. Fowler explained that 14-foot sections are used to facilitate safe handling and installation, although longer segments exist, the shorter sections are more practical for construction.

Updates were provided on Phase 3.2 (pipeline work) and Phase 3.3 (lift station). Phase 3.4, the final design phase, is currently on hold.

Mr. Fowler discussed the project schedule and budget. The project remains within anticipated costs, and efforts have been made to secure grants to minimize the use of City funds. The project has also been pre-approved for a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan, keeping the overall budget in good standing.

Commissioner Troutman noted the project serves the northwest quadrant of downtown, connecting to the western trunk line and pumping station toward Glendale. Mayor Roberts McCarley expressed support for the inclusion of ARPA funds in the project budget.

Construction Manager at Risk Agreement with Kokolakis Contracting for Construction of the New Solid Waste Transfer Station Facility

UTILITY

Items under this section of the agenda will be discussed in depth at the upcoming Utility meeting this morning. It will start in the Commission Chambers for the LE Power Academy graduation ceremony at 11:00 a.m. and then recess and reconvene in the City Commission Conference room for the remainder of regular business.

The Agenda Study Session adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Heather L. Bradman

Heather L. Bradman,
Deputy City Clerk