

DeFuniak Springs City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
1350 Baldwin Avenue, City Hall
July 13, 2026

Mayor B. Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. followed by the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

The following members were present: Mayor Bob Campbell; Councilmember Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Josh Sconiers (Seat 2); Mayor Pro-Tempore Amy Heavilin (Seat 3); Councilmember Glen Harrison (Seat 4); Councilmember Danny Cosson (Seat 5). Also present were City Manager Koby Townsend, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, and City Clerk Madison Lewis.

ITEM 2 – PRESENTATION AND/OR PROCLAMATION

ITEM 3 – CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Additions/Deletions to the Consent Agenda**
- B. Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Mayor B. Campbell asked if there were any additions or deletions to the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember A. Heavilin to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 5 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

C. City Clerk M. Lewis

- 1. Minutes for Approval – June 8, 2026 – Regular Meeting Minutes
- 2. Minutes for Approval – June 15, 2026 – Budget Workshop #3 Minutes
- 3. Minutes for Approval – June 22, 2026 – Regular Meeting Minutes
- 4. Minutes for Approval – June 29, 2026 -Special Meeting Minutes

D. Finance Department

- 1. Bill Ratification June 2026

ITEM 4 – REGULAR AGENDA

- A. Additions/Deletions to the Regular Agenda**
- B. Approval of the Regular Agenda**

Mayor B. Campbell asked if there were any additions/deletions to the Regular Agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember A. Heavilin to approve the Regular Agenda as presented.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4.C. 1 City Manager K. Townsend – Resolution 2026-09 – Initial Fines for Code Enforcement

City Manager K. Townsend presented Resolution 2026-09 regarding the establishment of initial fines for Code Enforcement cases. He explained the purpose of the resolution and answered questions from Council regarding implementation and consistency with existing enforcement procedures.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by J. Sconiers to adopt Resolution 2026-09 Initial Fines for Code Enforcement.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 5 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4.C. 2 City Manager K. Townsend – RFP 2026-01-PW General Contractor Services

City Manager K. Townsend presented RFP 2026-01-PW for General Contractor Services. He explained the need to establish contracts with general contractors to support future City projects and discussed how the contracts would provide flexibility in completing various capital improvement and maintenance projects.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember G. Harrison to approve to solicit RFP 2026-01-PW General Contractor Services.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 5 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4.C. 3 City Manager K. Townsend – FPID# 452969-1 / 452969-2 SR 10 US 90 PD&E Study, Section 4(f) Coordination for Chipley Park, Concurrence Letter

This section of the minutes is provided verbatim.

City Manager K. Townsend stated thank you, Mayor. So, this might take a minute. I'm going to let Mr. Adkinson explain the letter here in a second, but ultimately if you all remember I believe back in February, Councilman Cosson had brought up an item about the path and update and I told you all that I had had conversations with FDOT's consultant and at some point we would be coming back because they needed a little they need they're going to need something when it comes to the park and particularly 4F. So FDOT believes that they will need they will end up getting federal funding in the future to build this. And so to do that, if you're going to affect, go through, or either in any way do work within a park, federal way, federal money, you got to do a 4F. You got to go through NEPA. And so they're asking for the concurrence letter. And again, I'll let him explain what it is and what it means in a minute. But more so for why this is on here, they've asked me to sign it and I could sign it, but I would like the council to have conversation about the project, put on record where we kind of stand on, what we like, we don't like, so I can provide that back to the consultant so they can take that information and consider it. So, I'm going to go through the scope here in just a second real quick. But the first let's just start with the map first. So, let's scroll down to technically be page 13 of the PDF. So, you'll see they came up with three alternatives. They began with, coming from 90 West, particularly starting at Woodyard Road, coming down 90 and then eventually ending up on First Street back on Highway 90. Obviously, you see the blue and the green or not the blue and the green, the yellow and the green paths. Those effectively were kicked out from the consultant due to cost, things of easements, things of that nature. And so the path that the consultant is going with or going to propose moving forward with and it's a little different we here to have today is coming from Woodyard which is orange running down Highway 90 headed East till you get to the intersection of Shoemaker and 90 crossing that railroad track South to the golf course running along the golf course particularly hole eight, until you hit the opening at West Live Oak, going through the West Live Oak median on the railroad track side running down the intersection at 331 South and Live Oak, crossing over to East Live Oak Avenue, running down East Live Oak Avenue until you hit Circle Drive, darting into Chipley Park to the left of the library, following existing sidewalk paths. So, replacing the sidewalk with asphalt, running down the left, hitting the loop, coming around, and then before you were to get to the uh the round area there on the Northeast corner of the lake yard, it would shoot up a new path. Basically, a new path up the hill, which point it would then run down East Main Avenue until it hit the railroad crossing at Second and East Main, at which point it would cross to the North. Then it would run east along Baldwin Avenue until it tied back into First Street on Highway 90. That is the proposed path. So the reason the 4F letter is here is because they want to run through Chipley Park. And so again, federal dollars are going to require 4F to be conducted and future potential impacts to a park specifically of significant importance, especially ours. And so that's the recommended path from the consultant based on you know pricing easements to be to be received all those different things which is in this packet as well. So before we get to the letter and I'll let him explain that again we're looking

for a little bit of conversation that we can take back to consultants and say here's where the city stands on your proposed path. So if you want to hit on the letter.

City Attorney C. Adkinson said I'm going to actually let them talk because I think there's got a lot there are a few things y'all are going to have to decide before we even need to talk about doing this letter. So rather than me spending 20 minutes of my time perhaps, let's go ahead and let them have their conversations because they we know we've got to take some questions back and comments.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked okay, Koby, who is this consultant you're referring to?

City Manager K. Townsend responded oh, I'll have to find the name of the consultant, but they are they're contracted by the Florida Department of Transportation. So, let me see if I can find the company.

Councilmember A. Heavilin said okay. Now my next question is the pathway negotiable by us to them or?

City Manager K. Townsend stated yes and no again we are in planning. So, they're in planning. So based on the email conversation they had with me it seems that the funding has been awarded and approved through the state budget for the fiscal year 2031. So we're still you know at this point four five years out from even designing the path. Then I would assume you're probably talking another two years after that before you ever got construction dollars to do it. So, you're probably looking 2033 2034 by the time you actually went to construct it. So again, when we had the initial conversation with the consultant when they brought back alternatives that was my number one thing that there was a day this was coming you all were going to have input on this of what we how we see this going. Again, the three alternatives you've seen them I don't think from Shoemaker to Woodyard is a big deal to anyone. I don't think from the golf course to 331 south going down West Live Oak. I think we all expected that one to occur, especially from West Live Oak. I don't think we initially thought was going to cross over to East Live Oak. Um, I think the initial assumption was going to go through downtown on Baldwin Avenue. Again, as you go through this, if that's something council do, we can go to that, and we've had different conversations that some council I'm sure will weigh in on a minute on alternative paths to get there. But that's their that's their layout right now based on all the factors they have.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked so, just for clarification, is that yes or no or maybe?

City Manager K. Townsend said I would say it's a maybe. And it's in terms of your ability to dictate where it goes. I think it's very important that we put our opinion in because they're going to take that in consideration.

Councilmember A. Heavilin said right. Okay. Thanks.

City Manager K. Townsend said especially because it's our park.

Mayor B. Campbell asked but what you're talking about now is how it's going to affect Chipley Park?

City Manager K. Townsend said yes. And no. I mean, yes, Chipley Park is one of them, but the other one is also just a general pathway. Again, I think the biggest one with the most interruption of the entire path is a section between 331 South and Circle Drive on East Live Oak. That's going to be your biggest impact uh to residents because you're talking about a 12ft wide path and you can expect DOT to want to do at least a two or three foot, I would assume, buffer on the size for right away.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum stated so it's my understanding that we pretty much need to kind of weigh in on either the brown, the magenta, or the blue line because that that's where it's kind of deviating. I'm definitely opposed to the blue line bringing that down through Live Oak and into Chipley Park. I think it's going to be highly disruptive, especially it being a 12 foot wide path. So, I really think that we need to just to say stick with the original plan, which is the brown line, which is running it down beside the train tracks, crossing over 331. Either they can improve the existing road bridge that's there to accommodate the pedestrian traffic or the multi-use traffic, or what was originally discussed was building a third bridge there to accommodate that multi-use trail. To me, that's what we need to tell them we want to see happen, utilize that space on the side of the train tracks on either north or south side of the train tracks and put a multi-use path there. That to me is the most logical way to do this and least disruptive.

Mayor B. Campbell stated yeah, I condition that with a back probably back in 2016 or somewhere along in there, they had uh we were looking at taking four lane all the way into Florala, Alabama. And at that time, they were saying that 331 could be six lane. He said the only problem with the first portion between Highway 90 and Live Oak could not have a bike path nor a sidewalk, but they could be routed one block away on either side. In other words, it wouldn't do away with the access with a bike pathway. It just would not. That first block would have to be detoured around. So the point I'm making is that the structure as it is right now would not hinder a six lane. So, you know with the conditions of whatever improvements they do but keep that in mind because you know Crestview they had 85 that they could not six lane and it's been a nightmare for them for years. They're getting a bypass around there now but that's going to not be near as nice had they been able to six lane. But right now we can still six lane if we take care of it. So, I'm just saying if that becomes part of the map, that needs to be kind of locked down. Did you have your hand up? Okay, go ahead.

Councilmember G. Harrison asked Councilman Bierbaum, you're talking about a pedestrian walkway on Baldwin. Is that what you're talking about?

Councilmember T. Bierbaum answered correct. Over 331.

Councilmember G. Harrison stated you know, Koby and I talked about this the other day, and I've mentioned this probably before. I think that is the safest alternative because you know with

331 when that bridge was built it was built I'm sure with federal dollars and state dollars and I don't county I don't know I don't know how it's paid for but it's a US highway is my point and up top where pedestrians cross I was driving by there today we've had a conversation I've seen people in wheelchairs literally turn over on the crossing that bridge where it slopes down where they go have to go up to the actual bridge. It's got a bad slope on both sides of the bridge. And so, I I've witnessed that for years, you know, and today, in fact, I was on my way here for our four o'clock meeting. There was a lady pushing a baby stroller and she was on this side of the bridge and she tipped just like that. Of course, I don't think it was about to turn over, but had she not been paying attention or been going too fast, that child could have spilled out right in front of me, but I saw her and moved over, but it's an accident waiting to happen for somebody to be hurt right there. So, I doubt if that meets ADA compliance because the age of it. So, I think we have a strong case to get that corrected and have this bike path this multi-use path go where we would like to see.

Mayor B. Campbell said that was put in in ' 66.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said wow.

Councilmember G. Harrison agreed wow. Yeah.

Mayor B. Campbell said yeah, I had just got my driver's license. I remember it well.

Councilmember G. Harrison said yeah, and you're right on I'm sorry.

Councilmember D. Cosson said no, go ahead. Go ahead. Finish.

Councilmember G. Harrison stated in the circle be very destructive for 12 foot path down through there. But if we have no other choice, I get it. East Live Oak is another question. 12 foot there would have to be some trees removed there we know for it to go through there.

Councilmember D. Cosson asked is the reason that they wanted to run it down Live Oak East and skirt the Lake Chipley Park is because then we would qualify for federal dollars, but on the original route we wouldn't.

City Manager K. Townsend stated no, so the reason they shifted from going down Baldwin Avenue to crossing at 331 from our conversation with the consultant that day was when the consultant for DOT, which by the way is VHB, VHB is the consultant, when they had conversation with the railroad company about downtown, so Baldwin Avenue, particularly the parking, which is in railroad right of way, that the railroad had told them that that was a lease for parking and if the city was to do anything other than parking that we may not get the lease back. So again, I'm just telling you what the consultant had a conversation with them about. And that's why the consultant has changed the path based on that response from the railroad company.

Councilmember D. Cosson said okay.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum asked can Clay opine on the whole thing about the survey and what we believe to be our area versus the railroads interpretation of right of way please so that we correct the record and make sure that that record is correct.

City Attorney C. Adkinson stated we've looked at this many times. Our continued position has been that downtown the railroads right of way stops at effectively where that wall is not on the into the actual roadway. The railroad's entire right of way they have if you look has meandered based on where the railroad has been situated over many many years. You can look at aerial going back as far as the state maintains them and it's very clear that the railroad has not always been in the exact same location. They've adjusted those track locations various times including in the downtown area when the actual crossings were put into effect. in terms of improvements, but we believe from what we have looked at many times over that the actual right of way of the railroad does not cross into Baldwin Avenue. If you center, if you take a 100 foot right of way and you put the railroad track in the dead middle of it, yes, it does come into Baldwin Avenue. That is wholly inconsistent with where the 100 foot right of way would have been 70 years ago. There's not been anything that moves that North South. When you look at Circle Drive, our position and we've gone through this with both our title insurer and with a prior surveyor, we are very confident that the original Van Kirk map depicts where Circle Drive is adjacent to downtown. That's what all of our property lines are based off of. And we know where the railroad was relative to that. And we can see that and we can look at where Circle Drive was relative to the railroad. If you look at where those buildings sit, you have a very compressed amount of land to what would be the South side of the railroad going up against Circle Drive. That is consistent with the 100 foot right of way not being centered on where the current tracks are but having been further to the south originally. And I know the mayor is nodding and I think we talked to multiple people when we started looking at this back in 16 or 18 who all had the same position that even where the depot is was a later addition after the tracks were relocated. So where the depot is is probably more akin to where the tracks actually were closer to to start with because of where that offloading platform was. So that's our position. We remain of that. Um, I know the railroad may disagree with it, but I can tell you we definitely don't believe that this shoots all the way up and takes all the parking off of Baldwin. If it crosses that wall, it's not crossing by 20 foot. It's minimal. And we've had at least one surveyor give us that same opinion.

Mayor B. Campbell stated and that's not unusual. I mean when you look at the overlays particularly on our property appraisers map a lot of inaccuracies and don't ever base everything off center line of street or railroad because a lot of them are very far off skew and I was a land surveyor for a while. I know that personally.

City Attorney C. Adkinson said yeah. And you know exactly what we have up here in this area where you have some of these lines that don't run equidistant with one another as you go East to West based on the North South call creates jogs and there areas North of the city where you actually have entire section lines shift just across one track of land. But the biggest thing I'd point out to everybody, if you're ever looking at this map and you ever want to look at what you're

dealing with here, just look at as you go down on this section, look at where the railroad lies and the property that how far it sits further South. Look at where Main runs before it comes into Baldwin is a good example over there around where the water tower is. You can see that it sits much much further south is where Main Avenue should actually be, West Main Avenue. And that would not be have ever been platted that way. That's on the original map. That would have never been platted that way if the railroads right of way ran 30 ft further north, which is what the contention would have to be. And then you can see the geometric shapes on the property appraiser site actually shift as we come through there. But we have always believed based on what the surveyor's opinions were and otherwise that that's why you do see so much property on either side of the railroads, they've always acknowledged it. I mean, there are large trees planted on the north side of Circle Drive South of that railroad when you get right down to it. And if that was by their view part of their right of way, they would not have had that there. So we we're pretty consistent in what we have seen. We've taken that position going back many many years. Every time we've pushed back with our documentation while our initial response from the railroads been, well, we don't agree, they've never been willing or able to respond with anything that contradicts it. And we've just said, "Show us what you're relying on. Certainly you have a survey somewhere. Certainly, you have some pins or markers, and we'll have our surveyor go back out and look at it. And the answer they've always given is silence. So, I think this is one where we take the continued position that if nothing else, we know on Baldwin Avenue, the city's been responsible for that street. We've striped those parking places. People have parked there. The top part of that wall that's on the city. The railroad doesn't come up there and maintain it. That's been true now for over 70 years. At a certain point in time, if they wanted to assert a claim of Baldwin Avenue, they probably should have come and done it. But I would also note that if you look at the areas around the actual railroad crossings and the areas that they have refused I believe the notable one is there on 7th that has the big dip in it. They've never been willing the railroad has never been able to come improve that because they said that's on us. Well, why would that be on us if that was their right of way? So we've asked them for improvement on that going back the whole time I've been here 20 plus years. So that's our position. Don't know that that makes a huge difference for this today. I'll briefly just touch on the letter. So, this is an official with jurisdiction letter that we have to execute basically allowing them to proceed with the PD&E and moving forward. I believe we are going to still need um there've had been some a little bit of back and forth. The state historic preservation officer is considered a joint official with jurisdiction given the contributing resource status of Chipley Park and the site there and the fact that it is listed within the DeFuniak Springs Historic Place Registry number. So, we're basically asking Koby for the authority to sign it. I agree with Koby having it presented tonight so you could talk about the other thing is I'd have him sign the letter and transmit it along with the council's comments of its preference.

Councilmember D. Cosson asked Mayor?

Mayor B. Campbell said yes sir.

Councilmember D. Cosson asked so, is it the council's consensus that we maintain the brown line and that we keep pushing for that pedestrian bridge on Baldwin that crosses 331?

Councilmember T. Bierbaum stated yeah.

Councilmember D. Cosson asked do we need a motion for that?

City Attorney C. Adkinson said just make that form of the motion along with authorization to sign the currency letter.

City Manager K. Townsend stated let's make it even cleaner. Let's just take the map they have out for that. Let's just use what they have. So it seems that you're referring to what they have as West Alternative A and East Alternative A. The West Alternative A is orange line. East Alternative A is the brown line. Is that is that accurate? That way I can just confer something that's visual.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said yes.

Mayor B. Campbell said yeah, it's hard for anybody make out that brown line.

City Manager K. Townsend agreed yeah, they all stack together. It runs down Baldwin.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum stated it's sandwiched in between the magenta and the blue line.

Mayor B. Campbell said with the red yeah, and the blue.

City Manager K. Townsend said the brown would run from West Live Oak all the way down.

Mayor B. Campbell agreed right between the red and the blue for those that can't make it out.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked so the brown will stay out of circle?

City Manager K. Townsend stated correct. The brown will go from West Live Oak all the way down Baldwin until it ties back in on First Street.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum asked can they zoom in on the red and the blue line?

Mayor B. Campbell said blow it up. Yeah.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum asked a little more.

Mayor B. Campbell asked a little more.

City Manager K. Townsend said and then pull it over. Yeah.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said it is literally sandwiched in between. You can see the brown there where the magenta looks out.

City Manager K. Townsend said so, we're talking about orange and brown. That's West Alternative A and East Alternative A.

Mayor B. Campbell asked okay. So, your motion?

Councilmember D. Cosson said I think he's got a comment before.

Mayor B. Campbell said okay. Go ahead.

Councilmember G. Harrison said so, I understand the block between seventh and eighth wider there, you know, multi-use, not a big deal, but it continues east on Baldwin on the Fisher pharmacy block, which is much narrower.

City Manager K. Townsend said all the way through until you get back to 90.

Councilmember G. Harrison asked so, they don't have a problem with that?

City Manager K. Townsend said they're going to run I mean, you're going to replace all the parking with the path.

Councilmember G. Harrison asked oh, so we lose all that parking on Fisher Pharmacy block?

City Manager K. Townsend said yeah. I because they never made the option, but I highly doubt they're going to run the path or stripe the path with any existing roadway, right? Because the whole point is to get them out of the roadway. Alternative transportation.

City Attorney C. Adkinson stated so, almost assuredly you're going to lose the South Park.

City Manager K. Townsend said it's going to run it all through South Park.

Councilmember G. Harrison asked on all those blocks?

City Manager K. Townsend said yes.

Councilmember J. Sconiers said now, we do.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked does that mean train stop where that little new business is? They're going to lose all their parking?

City Manager K. Townsend said to the South. Not on the North.

City Attorney C. Adkinson stated not right next to their building but that's where most people park.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked but on the railroad side?

City Manager K. Townsend said yeah. Southside of Baldwin.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked how many is that? Because they're jam-packed a lot.

City Attorney C. Adkinson stated that's over 70% of their parking because there are at least two handicap spots right there on the North side of that. So, they don't have that. They have what, three or four going back towards the lot, where the old warehouse was.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said I say we stick to the either the brown or the magenta line. Force them to develop that and show us what that's actually going to look like. We can always say no.

Councilmember A. Heavilin said just refresh me again. What's the magenta line?

City Manager K. Townsend said it's the same path.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum stated same path, but instead on the other side, it's the same path, but instead it would zigzag around the bridge right here and go down and then come back up. But I say we force them to develop that and show us what that's actually going to look like. We can always say no.

Councilmember D. Cosson made a motion to approve.

Councilmember J. Sconiers said second.

Mayor B. Campbell said all right. We have a motion and a second.

City Manager K. Townsend stated so to clarify, we are approving me to sign this concurrent letter concurrence letter and then to provide to FDOT the minutes of this meeting along with the council's preferred layout which is West Alternative A and East Alternative A.

Councilmember D. Cosson said yes, I believe that's the consensus.

City Manager K. Townsend asked is that the motion?

Councilmember D. Cosson said correct.

Mayor B. Campbell asked question or comments?

Councilmember G. Harrison said just clarification, so, which color is the one where we would lose the southside parking?

City Manager K. Townsend answered the brown and the magenta or purple.

City Attorney C. Adkinson stated both. And it looks like 19 spots would be lost in the area. There's one that's not really a spot everybody uses. So, 18 plus that one. And then on the north side, they only have right now they have eight except for the food truck parks which is another three.

City Manager K. Townsend said and you we're only talking about that section. We're not talking about the entire section, entire street.

Councilmember G. Harrison said I really don't think that bicycle traffic is going to replace car traffic for those businesses. I mean there's another alternative if we turned it back on 11th Street and then Live Oak to the library, but that puts us back in the lake yard.

City Manager K. Townsend stated so they initially were going to run the path rather than dipping it into the lake yard, they were going to turn it left and stay on the what you consider what we all call the outer sidewalk of Circle Drive. Right. Well, at that point you affect more businesses and homes that are there than you do running through the park. So they that's when they shifted it again.

Councilmember G. Harrison said right.

Mayor B. Campbell asked so we're trying to stay out of the lake yard?

City Manager K. Townsend stated that's what it seems like. Well, I mean, I'm thinking if we went around the lake, that would take care of your downtown problem. You wouldn't have all that parking go away. You know what I'm saying? You go in on the west side of the lake, go around it, and now you're going to come out over there on the East side, and you won't mess up three blocks of parking or four.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked is it possible on that main street that turns into part of Circle Drive there? Can that parking spaces that we lose, can those people park down there on the Presbyterian Street?

City Manager K. Townsend said I mean, it's technically all public parking. I think the council previously discussed putting in actual parking spaces. We haven't done that, but yeah, they could technically.

Councilmember A. Heavilin asked can you park both sides? Left and right. I mean, I see people doing it, but there's no marked.

City Manager K. Townsend answered it's not striped, but yes.

Councilmember D. Cosson said okay. Well, the safety net is this isn't in stone, right? It's not in stone.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said well, the engineering is for 2031.

City Manager K. Townsend said correct.

Mayor B. Campbell said yeah, Miss Mindy.

Dr. Melinda Henderson stated after nine years, we're closer than ever before, but we're not finished in terms of designating a national historic landmark, which would be a subset of our historic district. it would be called the Chautauqua campus. If that comes to be the feds can't do anything within that area and that's the only restriction. You can, homeowners can, but the feds can't you know do anything there. I agree with Mr. Bierbaum, and I don't think the citizens have said they want more things to do in Chipley Park. We need not deny that. We need not deny the veterans what they want. But what will we allow? I think that needs to be looked at. And I

question if we could really jazz up our alleyway and run them down that and get some federal dollars to help us with that.

Mayor B. Campbell said thank you. Anyone else?

Councilmember G. Harrison said I like that.

Mayor B. Campbell said okay. So, you did get a second on your motion, right?

Councilmember T. Bierbaum said yessir.

Mayor B. Campbell said okay. All right. So, we have a motion. Second. All in favor say Aye.

Councilmember A. Heavilin voted Aye.

Councilmember G. Harrison voted Aye.

Councilmember D. Cosson voted Aye.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum voted Aye.

Councilmember J. Sconiers voted Aye.

Mayor B. Campbell said Ayes Carried. Thank you very much.

City Manager K. Townsend stated thank you, Mayor. Unfortunately for Miss Lewis, these will be verbatim. This section will be verbatim of the minutes.

Mayor B. Campbell said okay.

Motion made by Councilmember D. Cosson and seconded by Councilmember J. Sconiers to authorize the City Manager to execute the concurrence letter and transmit Council's preferred alternatives (West Alternative A and East Alternative A) along with the meeting minutes to FDOT.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Council D. Cosson, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye. 5 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4.D. 1 Community Development Director C. Wallace – 2024-SD-02, Alden Springs Subdivision

Community Development Director C. Wallace presented a request for acceptance of the subdivision's completed infrastructure, including water and sewer utilities, lift station, roads, and sidewalks. He confirmed all required inspections had been completed, applicable standards had been met, required capacity fees had been paid, and a one-year maintenance bond had been provided. The retention ponds would remain under HOA ownership.

Councilmember G. Harrison discussed the proposed landscaping plan, expressing concerns that live oak trees planted within narrow rights-of-way could create future maintenance issues involving sidewalks, curbing, roadways, and underground utilities.

Community Development Director C. Wallace advised the developer was willing to revise the landscape plan and substitute a different tree species if requested.

The City Attorney C. Adkinson advised that while the City was obligated to accept infrastructure meeting adopted standards, Council could impose conditions addressing future maintenance responsibilities associated with the landscaping.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum discussed evaluating future policies regarding acceptance of subdivision streets for public maintenance and referenced practices used by neighboring municipalities.

Motion made by Councilmember J. Sconiers and seconded by Councilmember T. Bierbaum to approve acceptance of the subdivision infrastructure with the condition that, if live oak trees remain as shown on the landscape plan, the developer shall remain responsible for future damage caused by the tree root systems to City infrastructure or substitute an alternative tree species acceptable to the City.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Nay; Council D. Cosson, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye. 4 Ayes. 1 Nay. Motion carried.

4.D. 2 Community Development Director C. Wallace – A Request to Transfer Ownership of the Retention Ponds Located Within the Bay Springs Commercial Development

Community Development Director C. Wallace presented a request to transfer ownership of the retention pond property located within the Bay Springs Commercial Development from the City back to the developer. He explained that the transfer would place responsibility for maintenance, required state recertifications, and all associated costs with the developer, reducing future maintenance obligations for the City.

City Attorney C. Adkinson discussed ensuring that all existing permits, liabilities, obligations, and maintenance responsibilities associated with the retention pond would be transferred to the developer upon conveyance of the property.

Motion made by Councilmember J. Sconiers and seconded by Councilmember T. Bierbaum to approve the transfer of ownership of the retention pond property to the developer, contingent upon

the developer assuming all existing permits, liabilities, obligations, and maintenance responsibilities associated with the property.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 5 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.

ITEM 5 - PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCES

5.A. 1 City Attorney C. Adkinson – 1st Reading – City Finance Director Ordinance

City Attorney C. Adkinson presented the proposed ordinance establishing provisions related to the position of Finance Director. He reviewed the purpose of the ordinance and explained the proposed amendments to the City's Code.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember J. Sconiers to approve the 1st Reading for the City Finance Director Ordinance.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Nay; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 4 Ayes. 1 Nay. Motion carried.

5.A. 2 City Attorney C. Adkinson – 1st Reading – Chapter 12 Licenses, Permits and Taxation

City Attorney C. Adkinson presented the proposed amendments to Chapter 12 of the City Code regarding licenses, permits, and taxation. Staff reviewed the proposed revisions and their intended administrative and regulatory purposes.

Councilmember A. Heavilin suggested that additional funding could be considered.

Motion made by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember J. Sconiers to approve the 1ST Reading for Chapter 12 Licenses, Permits and Taxation Ordinance.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Aye; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Nay; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 4 Ayes. 1 Nay. Motion carried.

5.A. 3 City Attorney C. Adkinson – 2nd Reading – Master Service Assessment Ordinance

City Attorney C. Adkinson presented the Master Service Assessment Ordinance for second reading. He explained that adoption of the ordinance would establish the legal framework necessary for the proposed non-ad valorem fire services assessment.

Following the public hearing and Council discussion, the ordinance was approved on second reading.

Motion made by Councilmember G. Harrison and seconded by Councilmember D. Cosson to adopt the Master Service Assessment Ordinance.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Nay; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Aye; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 4 Ayes. 1 Nay. Motion carried.

5.A. 4 City Attorney C. Adkinson – Resolution 2026-08 – Initial Assessment Resolution for Non-Ad Valorem Fire Services Assessment

City Attorney C. Adkinson presented Resolution No. 2026-08, the Initial Assessment Resolution for the proposed non-ad valorem fire services assessment. He explained that the resolution established the initial assessment process and maximum assessment rates but does not set the actual assessment to be levied. He also noted a revision to the hardship exemption process for the first year, explaining that eligible applicants would be reimbursed if they applied within 30 days after October 1 due to the timing of adoption.

City Manager K. Townsend reviewed the proposed preliminary assessment rates and estimated revenues. He explained that the maximum residential assessment at 100% assessable cost would be \$397 per dwelling unit, with corresponding commercial, industrial, institutional, and vacant land rates. He stated the estimated gross revenue at the maximum rate would be approximately \$2,228,850, with an estimated net revenue of approximately \$1,582,656 after exemptions. He further explained that approval of the initial resolution was necessary to continue the assessment process and that the final assessment would be considered following the required mailed notices and public hearing in August.

Councilmember D. Cosson asked whether the maximum rate could be reduced at this stage.

Councilmember J. Sconiers explained that the advertised maximum rate could not be increased later without restarting the statutory process and what the reason for the fire assessment.

City Manager K. Townsend discussed the previously identified 60% funding scenario, under which the estimated residential assessment would be approximately \$238 per dwelling unit and would generate approximately \$947,539 in net revenue.

Councilmember J. Sconiers clarified that the final assessment adopted in August could be set at any amount up to the advertised maximum. He emphasized that the maximum advertised assessment was not the amount intended to be imposed and that the public should be educated regarding the purpose of the initial resolution and the subsequent budget process.

Councilmember G. Harrison discussed the uncertainty surrounding state legislative action on property taxes and noted that the worst-case funding scenario would be 100% funding.

Mayor B. Campbell discussed a previous Walton County proposal for fire protection services and its potential benefits to the City.

Donna Arnold spoke in support of retaining the City's fire department, stating that municipalities typically subsidize fire services through their general funds and noting that a county-operated system would also require a fire assessment.

Donald Graham addressed the Council regarding potential negotiations should fire services ever be transferred to Walton County, expressing support for retaining the City's firefighters, Fire Chief, and department identity.

Motion made by Councilmember D. Cosson and seconded by Councilmember A. Heavilin to approve Resolution No. 2026-08 - Initial Assessment Resolution for Non-Ad Valorem Fire Services Assessment.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Nay; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Nay; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Aye; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 3 Ayes. 2 Nays. Motion carried.

ITEM 6 - REQUEST TO BE ON THE AGENDA

ITEM 7 - CITIZEN COMMENTS

Dr. Melinda Henderson representing Forward DeFuniak, thanked the Council for its support of the Historic Preservation 101 Workshop and recognized representatives from the Florida Department of State for their presentations.

Shirley Gillery expressed concerns regarding the maintenance of Magnolia Cemetery, stating that overgrown grass and vegetation created an unfavorable appearance during recent funerals. The Mayor acknowledged the concern and stated staff had recently discussed the issue.

Anna Coston expressed concerns regarding the lack of directional signage for the new medical facility located near Interstate 10. Council indicated staff would contact the facility regarding the concern and determine whether additional signage could be installed.

Donald Graham requested an update regarding plans for a park on the east side of the city and encouraged continued communication with residents as planning progresses. He also discussed the role of City Council members when representing the City in public and the importance of communicating consistent and accurate information to the community.

ITEM 8 - CITY ATTORNEY

ITEM 9 - LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

9.A. 1 Councilmember A. Heavilin – Discussion/Direction on Potential Reduction of the CRA Rate in Order to Fund Certain FY27 General Fund Activities

Councilmember A. Heavilin discussed the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Tax Increment Financing (TIF) percentage and the potential impact of reducing the City's contribution to provide additional revenue for the General Fund.

City Attorney C. Adkinson advised that any adjustment to the TIF percentage would need to be approved prior to receipt of the DR-420 forms and incorporated into the upcoming budget process.

Councilmember D. Cosson discussed the City's financial priorities, including employee compensation, maintaining service levels, and funding future capital projects.

City Manager K. Townsend reviewed the financial analysis of various TIF percentage scenarios and explained the estimated revenue impacts to both the General Fund and the CRA. He also discussed the implications for future capital projects, including the downtown alleyway project, and explained that the TIF percentage established for the fiscal year would remain in effect for that budget cycle.

Councilmember G. Harrison discussed the importance of balancing employee compensation with continued investment in CRA projects. He expressed support for employee raises while emphasizing the need to complete major infrastructure projects and suggested pursuing additional funding opportunities, including grants, for the alleyway project.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum emphasized the importance of preserving CRA funding for redevelopment projects and cautioned that reducing the TIF percentage could permanently reduce future CRA revenues and the County's contribution. He stated that the CRA provides long-term

benefits through infrastructure improvements, neighborhood revitalization, and assistance programs for property owners.

Councilmember J. Sconiers stated that CRA funding should continue to be utilized for eligible infrastructure and redevelopment projects rather than reducing the TIF percentage. He discussed the possibility of using CRA funds for eligible community policing positions, which could offset General Fund expenditures while preserving CRA revenues for future projects.

Donna Arnold encouraged the Council to maximize the use of existing CRA funding by prioritizing infrastructure projects and utilizing allowable CRA funding for eligible law enforcement positions, rather than reducing the TIF percentage and decreasing the County's contribution to the CRA.

City Marshal J. Hurley discussed the potential use of CRA funding for four police officer positions as an eligible redevelopment expense that could reduce General Fund costs.

Dr. Melinda Henderson agreed with keeping the CRA funding at 95% because the money all belongs to the city and can be used for all city projects.

Motion made by Councilmember A. Heavilin and seconded by Councilmember D. Cosson to reduce CRA funds from 95% to 75%.

Vote: Councilmember T. Bierbaum, Nay; Councilmember J. Sconiers, Nay; Councilmember A. Heavilin, Aye; Councilmember G. Harrison, Nay; Councilmember D. Cosson, Aye. 2 Ayes. 3 Nays. Motion failed.

ITEM 10 - EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

City Manager K. Townsend reported that the City's application for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Florida Boating Improvement grant for Lake Stanley met eligibility requirements but was not funded due to insufficient grant funding. He stated the City intends to reapply during the next funding cycle. He also provided updates on the airport hangar design bid, upcoming apron construction bids, the anticipated presentation of the 90% design plans for the Twin Lakes Drive improvements, an upcoming meeting with FDOT regarding transportation projects, and ongoing renovations at the Chautauqua Hall of Brotherhood. He reminded Council that the next budget workshop would be held on Thursday at 4:00 p.m. and would focus on the General Fund.

ITEM 11 - COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember G. Harrison commented on the importance of maintaining objectivity when making Council decisions. He referenced previous votes regarding the fire assessment and stated he would continue evaluating future CRA funding discussions based on the information presented before making a final decision.

Councilmember T. Bierbaum discussed a recent report projecting a nationwide labor shortage in several skilled professions, including aircraft mechanics. He noted the City's continued focus on airport development and stated the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) plays an important role in recruiting employers and workforce opportunities to the community. He expressed continued support for the EDA's mission and economic development efforts.

Councilmember D. Cosson agreed with Councilmember Bierbaum's comments regarding workforce development and discussed the value of pursuing aviation-related educational and workforce opportunities within the community.

Councilmember J. Sconiers clarified his earlier vote regarding the fire assessment, stating his vote reflected feedback he had received from constituents rather than his personal opinion. He noted he was representing the concerns expressed by members of the community.

ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

Mayor B. Campbell adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.



ATTEST:

Madison Lewis

Minutes taken by Madison Lewis, City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given

Approved:

Bob Campbell
Bob Campbell, Mayor