



City Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2025

A **Budget Hearing** and **Regular Meeting** of the City of Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Rees at 6:31 pm. at City Hall, 300 West Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida. An opening invocation and pledge of allegiance were given.

Present:

Mayor John Rees
Commissioner District 1 - Lisa L. Bennett
Commissioner District 2 - Iliana R. Jones
Commissioner District 3 - Chloe Johnson
Commissioner District 4 - Colin Sharman

Also Present:

City Manager - Jon C. Williams
City Attorney - A. Kurt Ardaman
City Clerk - Angela J. Grimmage

BUDGET HEARINGS

1. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS TO ADOPT PROPOSED BUDGETS AND MILLAGE RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026

- A. **Ordinance 25-30:** AN ORDINANCE LEVYING TAX UPON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, FOR THE TAX YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-30 and an excerpt from Section 1 as follows: The City Commission of the City of Winter Garden hereby adopts, establishes and levies a millage rate for ad valorem taxation of real and tangible personal property within the City of Winter Garden for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2026, at the rate of 4.8565 mills (\$4.8565 for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation) upon the assessed valuation of property within the corporate limits of the City of Winter Garden, Florida. This millage rate is greater than the rolled back rate of 4.2012 mills by 15.60 percent.

Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that Ordinance 25-30 proposes setting the millage rate for the next fiscal year to 4.8565 mills, which is greater than the current millage rate of 4.5000 mills. Furthermore, Ms. Zielonka explained that the proposed millage rate ensures that the City has ongoing revenues to cover ongoing expenditures and maintain stability in resources. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinance 25-30. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 5-0.

- B. **Ordinance 25-31:** AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING AND ALLOCATING ALL REVENUE AND FUNDS OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, FOR THE TAX YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-31 by title and the following excerpt, which states that it is anticipated that there will be available for use and disbursement from the general funds of said City, revenue in the following amounts:

Collection of Ad Valorem	\$ 30,277,220
Revenue other than Ad Valorem	<u>\$ 40,026,490</u>
TOTAL REVENUES AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURES	\$ 70,303,710

Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that this ordinance sets the total general operating budget, funded through both ad valorem revenue and other revenues. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to adopt Ordinance 25-31. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.

- C. **Ordinance 25-32:** AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING AND ALLOCATING ALL REVENUE AND FUNDS OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, FOR THE TAX YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-32 by title and an excerpt that the anticipated availability for use and disbursement from the CRA funds of the City was revenue in the following amounts:

Collection of Ad Valorem	\$ 1,742,489
Revenue other than Ad Valorem	<u>\$1,663,859</u>
TOTAL REVENUES AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURES	\$ 3,406,348

Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that this ordinance establishes the 2025-2026 budget for the CRA. She noted that the CRA Advisory Board and staff recommend approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to adopt Ordinance 25-32. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

- D. **Ordinance 25-33:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATIONS OF CITY FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 3 SECTION 30 (5) OF THE CITY CHARTER OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AND FLORIDA STATUTE 166.241 FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULFILLING THE FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE CITY

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-33 by title only. Finance Director Laura Zielonka stated that this ordinance reflects the budget as reviewed for the past several months and has been considered by the City Commission. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to adopt Ordinance 25-33. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

REGULAR MEETING

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. **Budget Hearings & Regular Meeting Minutes — September 11, 2025**

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve budget hearing and regular meeting minutes of September 11, 2025, as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.

3. PRESENTATION

- A. **Proclamation 25-11:** Proclaiming Fire Prevention Week as October 5–11 was read by Mayor Rees and presented by the City Commission to the Winter Garden Fire Department. Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Trenton Campbell spoke of the importance of fire prevention and noted a collaboration in the efforts to keep Winter Garden safe and thanked the City Commission for the proclamation. Mayor Rees addressed the firefighters and first responders, noting that the City Commission and the residents appreciate them.

4. FIRST READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE

- A. **ORDINANCE 25-35:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 26, ARTICLE II OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN CODE OF ORDINANCES REGARDING THE WINTER GARDEN CEMETERY; PROVIDING FOR REVISIONS TO DEFINITIONS, RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASE OF LOTS AND NICHES, OWNERSHIP RIGHTS, AND FEES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-35 by title only. Assistant City Manager of Public Services Stephen Pash spoke of the cemetery construction nearing its end, with surveyors laying out plots for the City to sell. He noted that staff wanted to give an update on the status concerning fees and ownership. Furthermore, he noted that the plots would be for City residents only. There was discussion on residency, fees to be removed and replaced by resolution, and the definition of immediate family. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve Ordinance 25-35 with recommended changes and a second reading and public hearing on October 9, 2025. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and Johnson simultaneously and carried unanimously 5-0.

5. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES

- A. **Ordinance 25-23**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 98, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, TO CREATE A NEW SECTION 98-1, CITY OF WINTER GARDEN CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADDRESS RELIEF CONCERNING DECLARED EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS OF SECTION 28 OF CHAPTER 2025-190, LAWS OF FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-23 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that Ordinance 25-23 amends Chapter 98 to create a new Section 98-1. The new section would address the declared emergency restrictions in the newly adopted Senate Bill 180. She explained how the ordinance would create a new city process, whereby an applicant could apply to revert to an earlier version of the City's land development code or comprehensive plan. They would provide City staff with a good-faith argument as to why an amendment is "more restrictive or burdensome" to their proposed development application. Furthermore, she noted that the ordinance would comply with State regulations while allowing the City to initiate changes to our own land development regulations. Staff recommended approval of Ordinance 25-23.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to adopt Ordinance 25-23. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

- B. **Ordinance 25-24**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL LANDS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 0.66 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 15359 EAST OAKLAND AVENUE, EAST OF TILDEN OAKS TRAIL, WEST OF GAYLE MILL DRIVE, SOUTH OF LANDRUM DRIVE, AND NORTH OF EAST OAKLAND AVENUE INTO THE CITY OF WINTER

GARDEN, FLORIDA; REDEFINING THE CITY BOUNDARIES TO GIVE THE CITY JURISDICTION OVER SAID PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinances 25-24 and 25-25 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson noted that this request is for annexation, gave the property location, and noted a request for future land use designation. She spoke of the applicant's intent for rezoning after the annexation, noted the property's current use as well as its proposed use, mentioned maintaining and renovation of an existing structure, and saving of the property's largest legacy oak trees. Staff recommended approval of the noted ordinances.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinances 25-24 and 25-25. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.

- C. **Ordinance 25-25:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE WINTER GARDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY CHANGING THE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 0.66 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 15359 EAST OAKLAND AVENUE, EAST OF TILDEN OAKS TRAIL, WEST OF GAYLE MILL DRIVE, SOUTH OF LANDRUM DRIVE, AND NORTH OF EAST OAKLAND AVENUE FROM ORANGE COUNTY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO CITY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

This item was addressed with Item 5.B.

- D. **Ordinance 25-27:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA PROVIDING FOR THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN ADDITIONAL LANDS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 5.59 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 15373 STATE ROAD 438, EAST OF TILDEN OAKS TRAIL, WEST OF GAYLE MILL DRIVE, SOUTH OF LANDRUM DRIVE, AND NORTH OF STATE ROAD 438 INTO THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA; REDEFINING THE CITY BOUNDARIES TO GIVE THE CITY JURISDICTION OVER SAID PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinances 25-27 and 25-28 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson noted that this is a request for annexation, gave the property location, also noting the applicant's desire to assign a future land use designation of low density residential. Ms. Carson described that after annexation, the applicant's intent is to submit a planning development (PD) rezoning application and plans to establish a subdivision, mansion renovation, and save the largest legacy oak trees. Staff recommended approval of the noted ordinances.

There was discussion on marking the oak trees that would be saved, hiring an arborist, and plans being brought back to the City Commission as part of the PD rezoning.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing; hearing and seeing none, he closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to adopt Ordinances 25-27 and 25-28. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

- E. **Ordinance 25-28:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE WINTER GARDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY CHANGING THE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 5.59 ± ACRES LOCATED AT 15373 STATE ROAD 438, EAST OF TILDEN OAKS TRAIL, WEST OF GAYLE MILL DRIVE, SOUTH OF LANDRUM DRIVE, AND NORTH OF STATE ROAD 438 FROM ORANGE COUNTY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO CITY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

This item was previously addressed with Item 5.D.

- F. **Ordinance 25-34:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 22-28 OF ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 22 OF THE WINTER GARDEN CITY CODE RELATING TO PEDDLERS, SOLICITORS AND ITINERANT VENDORS TO ALLOW WITH HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS TO HOLD NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS WITH MOBILE FOOD DISPENSING VEHICLES SUBJECT TO OBTAINING A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 25-34 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that this ordinance would amend section 22-28 and add a new provision under mobile food dispensing vehicles (also known as food trucks) to allow homeowners associations (HOA) to apply for a maximum of two special event permits per year. Staff feel that this ordinance would provide more opportunities for communities to hold budget-conscious community events. Also, support and protect the city's brick and mortar restaurants. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing.

Diane Hobbs, 3549 Turningwind Lane, Winter Garden, Florida, inquired about the permit and Ms. Carson responded by explaining the special event permit application process.

Hearing and seeing no other requests for public comment, Mayor Rees closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve Ordinance 25-34. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

6. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. **Resolution 25-10**: A RESOLUTION OF CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 24-05 AND RESOLUTION 24-10 TO AUTHORIZE AN INCREASE OF THE LOAN UNDER THE STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM TO FUND THE CITY'S CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, DEMOLITION AND RELATED PROCUREMENT FOR GMP NO. 2 OF THE CITY'S CREST AVENUE WWTF CAPACITY EXPANSION AND PROCESS OPTIMIZATION PROJECT AND THE COST OF DEBT ISSUANCE AND IF SUCH LOAN APPLICATION IS APPROVED, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF THE LOAN AGREEMENT, NOTE AND RELATED CLOSING DOCUMENTS; SUCH LOAN WOULD PLEDGE WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM REVENUES AND SHALL NOT PLEDGE AD VALOREM TAXES OR BE A GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Ardaman read Resolution 25-10 by title only. Assistant City Manager of Public Services Stephen Pash stated that this resolution authorizes the City Manager to enter an amended Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Loan Agreement to secure a \$20,000,000 increase to the existing CWSRF Construction Loan (WW480103). This funding is for the Final Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP No. 2) of the Crest Avenue Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Capacity Expansion and Process Optimization Project. Mr. Pash stated that the loan is at a 1.64 percent rate. Staff recommended approval.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve Resolution 25-10. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and Johnson simultaneously and carried unanimously 5-0.

- B. **Recommendation to waive formal procurement process and hire Process Control Services LLC for purchase, replacement and installation of equipment on 44 lift stations in the amount of \$113,734.45**

Assistant City Manager of Public Services Stephen Pash stated that this is an additional 44 lift stations, which would complete modem and antenna updates. He spoke of Process Control Services LLC and their prior use in updating equipment, which resulted in a reduction of overtime hours due to equipment communication failures. He gave statistics of equipment failures, status, and cost savings. Staff recommended approval.

There was discussion on the completion of all the lift stations, and it was stated that there would be no need to do this again soon.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve waiving the formal procurement process and hiring Process Control Services, LLC for purchase, replacement and installation of equipment on 44 lift stations in the amount of \$113,734.45. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 5-0.

C. Recommendation to approve Healthy West Orange Trails Connection (HWOTC) Funding Agreement for Fiscal Year 2026 with Bike/Walk Central Florida in the amount of \$20,500

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that the City is requesting approval of the funding agreement for Fiscal Year 2026 with Bike/Walk Central Florida for the City of Winter Garden's continued participation in the Healthy West Orange Trails Connection. She noted that, since its inception, Bike/Walk Central Florida has provided program facilitation services to support the initiative. Bike/Walk Central Florida anticipates that the City of Winter Garden's funding contribution of \$20,500 is needed for Fiscal Year 2026 to continue the work that has already been started. She acknowledged Patrick Panza, Acting Executive Director of Bike/Walk Central Florida, to come and provide the City Commission with an overview of the work that has been done to date and future planned activities for 2026.

Mr. Panza gave an update on the organization's progress to date, the history of working with the City and other surrounding agencies, provided information on their framework and trail connections, spoke of their planning and analysis, which included projects, events and grant program implementation, as well as some of their next steps looking forward. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees allowed resident Troy Knight an opportunity to inquire about the connection of all five cities, crime, and the impact on our Police and citizen safety. It was noted that it is a good economic driver for all the cities, the funding is earmarked for the trail only, and the initiative is a healthy West Orange. Resident Diane Hobbs inquired if other cities were contributing the same amount. Ms. Carson explained that the amounts were different due to the size of the agency and noted each agency's contribution.

Mr. Panza further expounded on the breakdown of each agency's contribution and answered an attendee question related to the amounts changing to smaller amounts in the future and clarified that the earmarked funding was for the project implementation. There was discussion about the trees and the existing tree canopy and the need to provide adequate shade. Furthermore, discussion ensued on other businesses desiring to partner in this initiative or provide sponsorship.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve Healthy West Orange Trails Connection (HWOTC) Funding Agreement for Fiscal Year 2026 with Bike/Walk Central Florida in the amount of \$20,500. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.

D. Recommendation to approve SITE PLAN for 3143 Daniels Road (Seasons 52), subject to conditions

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that this is a request for site plan approval and gave the property location; noted as the old Macaroni Grill location. She spoke of the proposed plans for the development by the applicant, Seasons 52, noting plans for

demolition of the existing structure, and construction of a new structure with associated site improvements. Furthermore, Ms. Carson indicated that the proposed development is consistent with the property's south beltway center, future land use designation, and PCD zoning requirements. Staff reviewed the application and recommended approval, subject to conditions.

Mayor Rees inquired about the size of this development compared to the other Seasons 52 locations. In response, Ms. Carson recognized the applicant to address this question. Art McIntosh, City Resident, as well as Design Manager and Project Manager for the Seasons 52 Winter Garden project, explained that this is a new smaller prototype and is the newest footprint for future projects.

Mayor Rees expressed that the City is glad they are coming to Winter Garden.

Motion by Commissioner Sharman to approve the site plan for 3143 Daniels Road (Season 52), subject to conditions. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 5-0.

E. Recommendation to approve SITE PLAN for 14001 W. Colonial Drive (WGRSC Out Parcel), subject to conditions

Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that this is a request for site plan approval and gave the property location. She spoke of the proposed plans for the development, noted certain site improvements and gave the size and direction of the proposed building. Furthermore, Ms. Carson indicated that the project is consistent with the properties' commercial future land use, and C-2 zoning. Staff recommended approval, subject to conditions.

There was discussion on what business would come to this location, and it was noted that the applicant would build as shell and review their options in the future. It was described as between Regions Bank and Captain D's restaurant.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve the site plan for 14001 W. Colonial Drive (WGRSC Out Parcel), subject to conditions. Seconded by Commissioner Sharman and carried unanimously 5-0.

7. **MATTERS FROM PUBLIC**

David W. Johnson, Sr., 310 N. Dillard Street, Winter Garden, Florida, thanked the City for the services offered at the Jessie Brock Center for seniors and stressed the importance of these services for the senior community. He read excerpts from some of the seniors' testimonials and again thanked the City Commission.

Mayor Rees assured him that the City had not cut any services at the Jessie Brock Center and wanted to address any of those rumors.

Norine Dworkin, VoxPopuli Winter Garden, shared information on their organization being

nominated in the Sunshine State Awards run by the Society for Professional Journalist.

Dillon Torres, 15514 Firelight Drive, Winter Garden, Florida, addressed the connectivity of the bike trails between neighborhoods and commercial properties, and requested that dollar amounts be given for the annexations and related expenditures and revenues.

8. **MATTERS FROM CITY ATTORNEY** - There were no items.

9. **MATTERS FROM CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Jon C. Williams thanked Finance Director Laura Zielonka and the City staff for the work they did in preparing the budget. He spoke of the early start in the year, focusing on the zero-based budget and the challenges throughout this budget process. He commended them for doing a wonderful job and again thanked them.

10. **MATTERS FROM MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Lisa L. Bennett also thanked Finance Director Laura Zielonka and City staff for the budget and breakdown of the information and the meetings.

Commissioner Iliana R. Jones echoed comments of thanks to staff regarding the budget preparations. She thanked the first responders, Police and Firefighters. Furthermore, she thanked the residents who came and addressed the City Commission.

Commissioner Chloe Johnson thanked staff for their hard work, and she noted that it was good to see the residents attend the meeting.

Commissioner Colin Sharman spoke of the impact a book he had been reading has had on him, the opportunity in life for each one to get better and learn something and shared excerpts from the book.

Mayor John Rees spoke of two successful Winter Garden events from the past weekend, thanking staff for their related efforts. He thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting.

11. **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

_____/S/_____
City Clerk Angela J. Grimmage

_____/S/_____
Mayor John Rees