



**City Commission  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

January 8, 2026

A **Regular Meeting** of the City of Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Rees at 6:30 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

**Also Present:**

City Manager - Jon C. Williams  
City Attorney - A. Kurt Ardaman  
Interim City Clerk – Ronisha Martin

**Absent:**

Commissioner District 4 - Colin Sharman

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2025

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 11, 2025. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.**

**2. PRESENTATIONS**

A. **PROCLAMATION 26-01**: Proclaiming Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists Week of January 18-24, 2026, was read by Mayor John Rees

B. Bloom N’ Grow Presentation (Pollinator Plants in the Butterfly Garden)

Katy Moss Warner stated that the Bloom and Grow Garden Society was grateful to partner with the City of Winter Garden and highlighted the 2021 donation of the Flora butterfly sculpture. Miss Warner and members of the Bloom and Grow Society recognized Parks and Recreation Director Laura Coar for her leadership and presented the city with a \$3000 check to support pollinator plants in the Butterfly Sculpture Garden, with a commitment to donate annually.

**3. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE**

A. **ORDINANCE 26-05**: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 74, “TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES,” ARTICLE I, “IN GENERAL,” TO REVISE SECTION 74-2 GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF BICYCLES AND OTHER WHEELED DEVICES, CREATING A NEW SECTION 74-5 REGULATING THE OPERATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES, AND RECODIFYING AND AMENDING SECTION 50-154 GOVERNING

MOTORIZED SCOOTERS TO SECTION 74-6; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Ordinance 26-05 by title only. Planning Director Kelly Carson stated that Ordinance 26–05 amends Chapter 74 of the City Code to regulate the use of electric bicycles, motorized scooters, and other wheeled mobility devices on city streets, trails, and sidewalks, with the goal of improving safety and reducing conflicts. She noted that minor revisions were made to clarify a 10-mph speed limit for motorized scooters on sidewalks and off-road paths, require yielding to pedestrians with an audible warning when passing, remove language allowing scooters on the West Orange Trail, and clarify age and safety gear requirements consistent with e-bike regulations. Staff recommended approval.

Mayor Rees opened the public hearing.

Lauren, a longtime Winter Garden resident, shared her background as a former nationally ranked competitive cyclist with extensive riding experience. She expressed concerns that the ordinance may be unclear and felt additional time and discussion would be helpful before adoption. She acknowledged that safety issues exist, particularly with some motorized devices, but emphasized the importance of considering responsible cyclists. Furthermore, she noted that existing laws may already address some concerns. She encouraged the commission to seek more input and study the issue further before moving forward.

John Gibbs, 751 Reflections Lane, Winter Garden, Florida, spoke about serious safety concerns in his neighborhood. He stated that children ride electric bikes at high speeds and perform dangerous maneuvers on residential roads. He expressed support for the ordinance and noted that additional measures may be needed. Furthermore, he emphasized that the issue affects residential neighborhoods, not just trails, and urged the commission to consider community safety.

Rebecca Carpenter, Glen Harbor Circle, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that her son uses an e-bike to travel to school because bus service is unavailable. She explained that he rides responsibly and expressed concern that restricting trail access would force him onto unsafe roads with no sidewalks. She noted that this would create safety and transportation challenges.

Staff confirmed he could safely use the trail, which is under county jurisdiction.

Dennis Jones, owner of Wheel Works, 101 West Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida, expressed support for the ordinance. He emphasized that education is key, as many young riders do not understand traffic rules, and encouraged clear guidance so everyone could enjoy their e-bikes responsibly.

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

public hearing.

There was discussion on what qualifies as a valid ID for a fifteen-year-old to ride an e-bike. Ms. Carson clarified that government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license, passport, military ID, or other comparable ID showing name, birth date, and photo, is required.

**Commissioner Bennett** noted that while new measures may not be perfect, the main priority is safety. She spoke about near misses and incidents involving children, noting the importance of addressing these risks.

**City Manager Jon C. Williams** stated that the ordinance addresses immediate safety concerns, with potential updates following the Florida Legislature Session, which the county is also reviewing.

**Mayor John Rees** stated that the state should preempt the ordinance and empathize safety concerns with young riders traveling at high speeds.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to adopt Ordinance 26-05 with staff changes. Seconded by Commissioners Jones and Johnson simultaneously carried unanimously 4-0.**

#### 4. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. **RESOLUTION 26-01**: RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A GOLF CART DISTRICT PURSUANT TO §74-4 OF THE CITY OF WINTER GARDEN CODE OF ORDINANCES; IDENTIFYING STREETS UPON WHICH GOLF CARTS MAY BE OPERATED; PROVIDING FOR SIGNAGE; AND PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman read Resolution 26-01 by title only. Assistant City Manager of Public Services Stephen Pash stated that this resolution amends the golf cart district to include the majority of streets on the north side of the city following citizen requests, staff analysis, and public survey. He noted that speed limits were lowered in November based on survey results, and a revised map was presented. Staff recommended approval of Resolution 26-01.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve Resolution 26-01. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- B. **Recommendation to approve INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT with Orange County for transfer of jurisdiction of portions of certain roads**

Assistant City Manager of Public Services Stephen Pash stated that this is an Interlocal Agreement with Orange County to transfer Winter Garden Vineland Road (SR 535) from the southern city boundary to the south right-of-way of 429 under city jurisdiction. He noted that the road was recently repaved, and staff recommend

approval.

**Mayor John Rees** stated that the sidewalk along Sunridge is only four feet from the road and should have reduced speed limits.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT with Orange County for transfer of portions of certain roads. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- C. Recommendation to approve addendum for Orange County Public Schools School Resource Officer and authorize Mayor to sign agreement

Police Chief Graham stated that Orange County Public Schools is requesting an addendum to the School Resource Officer (SRO) agreement to add a sign-in log for audit purposes, which is already in practice. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve addendum for Orange County Public School Resource Officer and authorize Mayor to sign agreement. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- D. Recommendation to approve purchase of weapons and ammunition from law enforcement trust fund in an amount not to exceed \$65,000

Police Chief Stephen Graham stated that the department is transitioning from .40 caliber to 9mm Glock firearms and is requesting approval to purchase all weapons and ammunition at once due to supply concerns, with training to be phased in. Staff recommended approval.

There was discussion clarifying that the new Glock firearms will replace the current .40 caliber weapons, which will be traded in.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve purchase of weapons and ammunition from law enforcement trust fund in an amount not to exceed \$65,000. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- E. Recommendation to declare vehicles and equipment as surplus and authorize sale or disposal in a manner to be determined by the City Manager

Fleet Division Manager Dudley Watson stated that the city has several inoperable or decommissioned vehicles and equipment designated as surplus and is requesting authorization to sell them. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to declare vehicles and equipment as surplus and authorize sale or disposal in a manner to be determined by the City Manager. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.**

**Items 4F through 4I were presented together.**

- F. Recommendation to approve procurement of two front-load garbage trucks under the Florida Sheriffs Association contract number FSA25-VEH23.0 in the amount of \$764,000
- G. Recommendation to approve procurement of one rear-load garbage truck under the Florida Sheriffs Association contract number FSA25-VEH23.0 in the amount of \$334,900
- H. Recommendation to approve procurement of one fifty-five-yard grapple/claw truck under City of Tallahassee contract number 5073 in the amount of \$359,323
- I. Recommendation to approve procurement of two 28-yard grapple/claw trucks under the National Cooperative Procurement Partners contract number PS24140 in the amount of \$409,800

Fleet Division Manager Dudley Watson stated that the city is requesting to purchase six vehicles for the Solid Waste Department in the amount of \$1.8 million financed through Magnolia Bank at 4.49% over a five-year lease with a \$1 buyout. Staff recommended approval and authorized City Manager to execute the lease.

**Motion by Commissioner Jones to approve the purchase of six vehicles for Solid Waste Department in the amount of \$1.8 million. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- J. Recommendation to approve purchase of one K-9 vehicle in the amount of \$61,850 and five-year lease-to own agreement for one unmarked investigative vehicle

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**Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve purchase of one K-9 vehicle in the amount of \$61,850 and five-year lease-to own agreement for one unmarked investigative vehicle. Seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously 4-0.**

- K. Recommendation to approve designating Interim City Clerk Ronisha Martin as the Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) for the City of Winter Garden  
Interim City Clerk Ronisha Martin stated that in accordance with Florida Department of State requirements, the interim city clerk is appointed as the Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) by the city commission. Staff recommended approval.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to approve designating Interim City Clerk Ronisha Martin as the Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) for the City of Winter Garden. Seconded by Commissioner Bennett and carried unanimously 4-0.**

**5. MATTERS FROM PUBLIC**

Ken Brown, 434 New Hearth Circle, Winter Garden, Florida, spoke of including a small section of Crest near Glen Oakland Estates in the golf cart map, relocating an unsafe school crosswalk on Division Street, and adding a speed bump on a dangerous hill near Hennis Road. Mr. Brown also spoke about converting a city-owned property between Plant and Division into a passive nature park to benefit residents and visitors and address safety and trespassing concerns.

**6. MATTERS FROM CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney Kurt Ardaman wished the City Commission a Happy New Year.

**7. MATTERS FROM CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Jon C. Williams wished everyone a very happy new year and noted there were a few items to address. He stated that the first was a walk-on agenda item requesting approval of a purchase order for adjustments to eighteen sanitary sewer lines as part of the East Winter Garden Drainage Project. It was noted that City Engineer Jim Monahan would present the item.

City Engineer Jim Monahan stated that the city is working with Orange County on drainage improvements along Christopher and East Bay Street in East Winter Garden. He explained that during construction, conflicts between the sanitary laterals and the stormwater system were discovered, which were not identified in the original design. To avoid further delays, he recommended awarding a purchase order to Dale Beasley Construction in the amount of \$168,347.42.

**Motion by Commissioner Johnson to award purchase order to Dale Beasley Construction in the amount of \$168,347.42. Seconded by Commissioner Jones and carried unanimously 4-0.**

Mr. Williams reminded everyone of the MLK Parade and celebration event on Monday, January 19, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He noted that the city is seeking additional parade participants and has also opened participation to outside groups.

Mr. Williams recognized Assistant City Manager for Administrative Services Frank Gilbert on his retirement, noting this was his last city commission meeting.

Assistant City Manager for Administrative Services Frank Gilbert expressed gratitude after 21 years of service to the City Commission, City Manager John Williams, the leadership team, and all city employees, praising their dedication, teamwork, and commitment to Winter Garden. Mr. Gilbert highlighted the city's employee culture as a "family," acknowledged the leadership's focus on citizen service, financial responsibility, and efficient operations, and

recognized the contributions of staff who keep the city safe, well-managed, and beautiful. He also shared personal appreciation for the friendships and support he received throughout his tenure.

Mayor Rees thanked Mr. Gilbert for his many years of service, expressing appreciation for all he has done, noting he will be missed.

**8. MATTERS FROM MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioner Chloe Johnson** wished staff and residents a Happy New Year, congratulated Frank on his retirement, and thanked staff for their hard work in keeping the city beautiful, safe, and a great place to live and work.

**Commissioner Jones** thanked everyone for attending, wished a Happy New Year, and expressed appreciation to staff, including the police department and fire department, for making the city a beautiful place.

**Commissioner Bennett** thanked staff for their hard work during the holiday season, expressed appreciation for Frank's services, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

**Mayor John Rees thanked** staff for creating a wonderland during the holiday activities and expressed appreciation for their efforts and dedication.

**9. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor John Rees

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_  
Interim City Clerk Ronisha Martin