

The City Council in and for the citizens of the City of Lake City, Florida, met in Regular Session, on September 7, 2021 beginning at 6:00 P.M., in the City Council Chambers, located at City Hall 205 North Marion Avenue, Lake City, Florida. Members of the public also viewed the meeting live on our YouTube Channel.

EVENTS PRIOR TO MEETING: 5:00 PM Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Meeting

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION –Mayor Stephen Witt

ROLL CALL

Mayor/Council Member	Stephen M. Witt
Vice Mayor/Council Member	Chris Greene
City Council	Jake Hill, Jr.
	Eugene Jefferson
	C. Todd Sampson
City Attorney	Frederick Koberlein, Jr.
Interim City Manager	Ami Mitchell Fields
Sergeant-at-Arms	Chief Argatha Gilmore
City Clerk	Audrey Sikes

PROCLAMATIONS – None

MINTUES – None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Sampson made a motion to remove Item #18 (Discussion and Evaluation and Possible Action- Evaluation of Interim City Manager) from the agenda. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion failed on a 3/2 vote.

Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Nay
Mr. Greene	Nay
Mayor Witt	Nay

Mr. Greene made a motion to remove Items #10 (City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2200) and 11(City Council Ordinance 2021-2202). Mr. Jefferson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Nay
Mr. Sampson	Nay
Mayor Witt	Aye

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Discussion and Possible Action - Request from Woofstock Festival and Columbia County Doxie Derby to place a banner on the City of Lake City sign November 5, 2021 through November 13, 2021 to advertise the Woofstock Festival.
2. Award ITB-026-2021 Purchase of Pipe and Fittings for the Westside Fire Station to Lanier Municipal Supply Co, Inc., the sole bidder, for a total of \$32,289.12.
3. Permit application from Columbia High School to hold the CHS Homecoming Parade on Friday, October 1, 2021, from 1:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M. The parade will start at 3:00 P.M. All supporting documents including certificate of insurance have been provided.

Mr. Sampson made a motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of items 1-3 identified above. Mr. Jefferson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

PRESENTATIONS

4. Jamie Bell, Jones Edmunds

- * Bell Road Wastewater Capacity Analysis
- * Water Main Routing Study
- * 5A Water Main and Bell Road Wastewater Improvement Project Scope/Fees
- * SR47/175 Groundbreaking Ceremony

Ms. Bell presented updates for the projects listed above.

Mr. Sampson recommended using the forthcoming ARPA funds for projects.

Utility Director Paul Dyal and Ms. Bell confirmed no grant funds have been applied for at this time. Mr. Dyal is fairly confident the City will get those funds when applied for.

Members concurred by general consensus to authorize staff to apply for grants to complete these projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ron Williams Sr. addressed Council and spoke on the Bell Road corridor. He suggested extending the public utilities area along that corridor; there are 2300 acres that have been identified.

FIRE ASSESSMENT/BUDGET HEARINGS

At this time Mayor Witt closed the regular session and opened a public hearing on the Proposed Fire Protection Assessment Rates for Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2021. Mayor Witt asked if anyone wanted to be heard regarding the Proposed Fire Protection Assessment Rates for Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2021. No one asked to be heard regarding the

Proposed Fire Protection Assessment Rates for Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2021, therefore Mayor Witt closed the public hearing.

5. City Council Resolution No. 2021-129 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, constituting the FY2021-2022 Annual Fire Assessment Resolution, relating to the provision of fire protection services, facilities and programs in the City of Lake City, Florida; reimposing fire protection assessments against assessed property located within the City of Lake City for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2021; approving the rates of assessment; approving the final assessment roll; confirming and supplementing the 2021 preliminary rate resolution; providing for severability; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Greene made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-129, constituting the FY2021-2022 Annual Fire Assessment Resolution, relating to the provision of fire protection services, facilities and programs in the City of Lake City, Florida; reimposing fire protection assessments against assessed property located within the City of Lake City for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2021; approving the rates of assessment; approving the final assessment roll; confirming and supplementing the 2021 preliminary rate resolution. Mr. Jefferson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

At this time Mayor Witt opened a public hearing to accept input from all interested parties relative to the discussion, consideration, and tentative approval of the City’s 2021-2022 proposed millage rate and operating budget. Mayor Witt stated the City was offering the opportunity to all in attendance to speak in regard to the budget and ask that all speakers identify themselves by name and address. Mayor Witt stated the Finance Director would provide a summary of the budget process and address those items essential to compliance with the State of Florida Truth In Millage (TRIM) requirements.

Finance Director Donna Duncan reported the City Council proposes a tentative millage rate of 4.9000 mills and tentative capital and operating budget of \$60,625,247 for fiscal year 2021-2022. She stated Council action tonight constitutes the “tentative” budget hearing as required by state TRIM criteria and was announced to the General Public by TRIM notices mailed by the Columbia County Property Appraiser on August 13, 2021. Ms. Duncan reported during this hearing, the following agenda will be addressed:

- The Council will discuss the 2021-2022 millage and operating budget and allow citizen input as appropriate.
- The Council will direct announcement of the tentative millage rate proposed for adoption and of any increase, decrease, or no change.
- The City Attorney will read, by title, Millage Resolution No. 2021-130.
- The Council will adopt Millage Resolution No. 2021-130 on first reading.

- The City Attorney will read, by title, Budget Resolution No. 2021-131.
- The Council will adopt Budget Resolution No. 2021-131 on first reading.

Mayor Witt declared the “Tentative Budget Hearing” open for discussion for public input followed by discussion by the City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Glenel Bowden stated it was a disservice to not have public input and public comment at the Budget Workshop. He felt the police department was overfunded and that a large percentage of police officers do not live in Lake City.

Vanessa George stated there should not be raises across the board. She stated Donna Duncan and Paul Dyal were valuable employees.

Sylvester Warren stated the millage rate was not clearly communicated to the Interim City Manager. He spoke against not having public comments at the Budget Workshop.

Shawn Holmgren spoke about raises and increases proposed in the budget.

Mayor Witt asked if there were any comments of Council. Hearing none the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Mayor Witt asked the Finance Director to state for the record 1) the taxing authority, 2) the proposed millage rate to be adopted, 3) the rolled-back millage rate, and 4) any change the tentative millage rate represents to the current year’s millage.

Finance Director Donna Duncan stated the City Council of the City of Lake City, as Taxing Authority, proposed a tentative tax on all property located within the City of Lake City, Florida, at the rate of 4.9000 mills for the fiscal year 2021-2022 operating budget. The current year proposed operating millage rate is a 0.51% decrease from the 4.9253 rolled-back millage rate as defined by Florida Statutes and represents no change from the previous year’s millage rate of 4.9000 mills.

6. City Council Resolution No. 2021-130 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, adopting a millage rate for the levy of ad valorem taxes for the City for fiscal year 2021-2022; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Greene made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-130, adopting a millage rate of 4.900 for the levy of ad valorem taxes for the City for the fiscal year 2021-2022. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

7. City Council Resolution No. 2021-131 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, adopting the budget for fiscal year 2021-2022; and providing for an effective date. **Mr. Jefferson made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-131, adopting the budget for fiscal year 2021-2022. Mr. Greene seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

Mayor Witt asked if anyone wanted to be heard regarding the budget for fiscal year 2021-2022. No one asked to be heard therefore Mayor Witt closed the public hearing.

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Sylvester Warren addressed Council and handed out copies of ethics complaints he has filed on Mr. Greene, Mayor Witt, and Mr. Jefferson.

Glenel Bowden addressed Council and encouraged the Mayor to read his email.

Kelton Ficklin Jr. addressed Council and stated to honor the Fire Chief everyone should wear a mask.

OLD BUSINESS

Other Items

8. Discussion and Possible Action - Fire Pension Board Appointee

Finance Director Donna Duncan addressed Council and reported there also needs to be an appointee for the General Employee Pension Board.

9. Discussion and Possible Action - On May 3, 2021 City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2189 was passed and adopted relating to the establishment of a temporary moratorium for 180 days related to the issuance of new business tax receipts that are related to activities that include electronic simulated gaming promotion or electronic sweepstakes and excepting renewals of existing business tax receipts. The temporary moratorium is set to expire on October 30, 2021.

No action taken on City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2189. Members concurred there is more information needed from the Police Department, Fire Department, and the County level prior to making a determination.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinances

10. City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2200 (first reading) - An ordinance of the City of Lake City, Florida, amending the official zoning atlas of the City of Lake City Land Development Regulations, as amended; relating to the rezoning of less than ten contiguous acres of land, pursuant to an application, Z-21-06, by the property owner of said acreage; providing for rezoning from Residential, Single-Family-2 (RSF-2) to Commercial, Neighborhood (CN) of certain lands within the corporate limits of the City of Lake City, Florida; providing severability; repealing all ordinances in conflict; and providing an effective date.

This ordinance was pulled from the agenda.

11. City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2202 (first reading) - An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, amending Chapter 104, entitled vegetation of the City Code of ordinances; providing for repeal of Section 40, titled creation of City Tree Board; appointment of members; terms of the City Code in its entirety; providing for severability; providing for codification; and providing for an effective date.

This ordinance was pulled from the agenda.

12. City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2204 (first reading) - An ordinance of the City of Lake City, Florida, amending the code of the City of Lake City, Florida, Chapter 70, Article IV, Police Officers Retirement Fund; providing for the addition of a Section 70-106; providing for a share account (defined contribution component); providing for severability; providing for conflicts; providing for codification; and providing for an effective date. **Mr. Greene made a motion to adopt City Council Ordinance No. 2021-2204, amending the code of the City of Lake City, Florida, Chapter 70, Article IV, Police Officers Retirement Fund; providing for the addition of a Section 70-106, and providing for a share account (defined contribution component). Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

Resolutions

13. City Council Resolution No. 2021-128 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, authorizing execution of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant with the United States of America, Department of Justice, through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; providing for the receipt of \$38,642.00; providing for the procurement of patrol rifles for the replacement of the current weapons in use; providing for the return of the current weapons to the federal grantor; providing for the receipt of a grant award of

\$38,642.00; providing for conflicts; and providing for an effective date. **Mr. Jefferson made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-128, authorizing execution of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant with the United States of America, Department of Justice, through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; providing for the receipt of \$38,642.00; providing for the procurement of patrol rifles for the replacement of the current weapons in use; providing for the return of the current weapons to the federal grantor, and providing for the receipt of a grant award of \$38,642.00. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Greene	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

14. City Council Resolution No. 2021-133 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, ratifying the execution of the Airport Rescue Grant Agreement with the United States of America, Federal Aviation Administration; providing for the receipt of a grant award of \$59,000.00 through the American Rescue Plan Act; providing for the reimbursement of operational expenses or debt service payments in accordance with the limitation prescribed in the act; providing for conflicts; and providing for an effective date. **Mr. Sampson made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-133, ratifying the execution of the Airport Rescue Grant Agreement with the United States of America, Federal Aviation Administration; providing for the receipt of a grant award of \$59,000.00 through the American Rescue Plan Act, and providing for the reimbursement of operational expenses or debt service payments in accordance with the limitation prescribed in the act. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Greene	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

15. City Council Resolution No. 2021-135 - A resolution of the City Council of the City of Lake City, Florida, rescinding an award of a project related to the purchase and installation of field fence at the Kicklighter Wastewater Treatment Facility, and awarding the project to DMC Construction, LLC; providing for a contract price not to exceed \$30,097.50; providing for the execution of the contract; and providing an effective date. **Mr. Sampson made a motion to adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-135, rescinding an award of a project related to the purchase and installation of field fence at the Kicklighter Wastewater Treatment Facility, and awarding the project to DMC Construction, LLC;**

providing for a contract price not to exceed \$30,097.50, and providing for the execution of the contract. Mr. Jefferson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mr. Greene	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Other Items

16. Discussion and Possible Action - Request from Florida Gateway College District Board of Trustees to have a joint meeting among the Lake City Council, the Columbia County Commissioners, and representative of Florida Gateway College to discuss items impacting the college and the Florida Gateway Airport. Per the letter dated August 23, 2021 from Marlin Feagle, the meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 6:00 P.M. in Room 102 at the Wilson Rivers Library. The meeting will be publicly noticed and masks and social distancing will be encouraged. The public will be encouraged to attend but no formal action will be taken at the meeting. **Mr. Sampson made a motion to meet with the Columbia County Commissioners on September 21, 2021 at 6PM in room 102 at Wilson Rivers Library, in conjunction with Florida Gateway College. Mr. Greene seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.**

Mr. Sampson	Aye
Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Aye
Mayor Witt	Aye

17. Discussion and Possible Action - Complaint by Officer on Interim City Manager
- Mr. Sampson inquired when the last time this has happened with a City Manager position.
- Mr. Jefferson felt this should be handled with an outside agency, to which Mayor Witt agreed.
- Mr. Sampson asked the City Attorney if the complaint was amended.
- Mr. Koberlein explained the timeline surrounding the complaint once he was notified and recommended outside counsel, even though the Council could perform the investigation.
- Mr. Hill suggested hearing Item #18 first.

Mr. Greene stated he agreed with hiring outside legal counsel.

Mr. Greene made a motion to hire outside legal counsel to investigate the complaint and to go with the outside legal counsel that was referenced earlier for Mr. Johnson’s investigation, Allen, Norton & Blue. Mr. Jefferson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried.

Mr. Greene	Aye
Mr. Jefferson	Aye
Mr. Hill	Nay
Mr. Sampson	Nay
Mayor Witt	Aye

18. Discussion and Evaluation and Possible Action - Evaluation of Interim City Manager

PUBLIC COMMENT: Unknown speaker, addressed Council and asked how Item 18 could be taken care of if there was not an outcome for Item 17 yet.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Eddie Allen addressed Council and spoke on Item #17, he encouraged members to do the right thing.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Glenel Bowden addressed Council and stated he was concerned with the element to uproot Mrs. Fields from her Interim City Manager position.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren addressed Council and spoke about previous evaluations of the City Manager.

Mayor Witt stated Mrs. Fields resume and application conflicts with one another. There was no background check performed, and it needed to be looked into properly.

Mr. Sampson stated this was all “fake news.”

Mrs. Fields read from a script, explaining her side and what she has accomplished thus far.

Utility Director Paul Dyal spoke in support of Mrs. Fields, and stated he would quit if she was terminated.

Water Plant Director Mike Osborne spoke in support of Mrs. Fields.

Finance Director Donna Duncan spoke in support of Mrs. Fields.

Growth Management Director Dave Young spoke in support of Mrs. Fields.

Natural Gas Director Steve Brown spoke in support of Mrs. Fields.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Commissioner Ron William Sr. spoke in favor of Mrs. Fields.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Anthony Newton addressed Council and suggested tabling Item #18 until the Council can review Item #17, or for the Council to meet with Mrs. Fields weekly. He asked that Council slow down, and do not move fast.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Bea Coker addressed Council and went over the handout she presented. She stated the City Charter was violated when Mr. Sampson was allowed to make a motion to make Mrs. Fields Interim City Manager without proper steps for vetting the position.

Mr. Sampson asked the City Attorney if the term of the previous City Manager violated the Charter, to which Mr. Koberlein responded, no.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Vanessa George addressed Council and stated that the previous City Manager should have performed a background check on Mrs. Fields when she was hired as the HR Director.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sylvester Warren addressed Council and asked Mayor Witt to remove this item from the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Stew Lilker addressed Council regarding SB50. He stated there is no information on an Interim City Manager position in the City Charter and this item needed to be tabled.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Shawn Holmgren addressed Council and suggested a proper vetting of Interim City Manager Ami Mitchell Fields.

Mr. Jefferson stated he disagreed with Mrs. Fields when she stated she met with him, she did not, and with the issue of multiple complaints from employees and the community, he stated he would not present unverified concerns. In regard to the application issue and the pre-employment background, he supports having this done.

Mrs. Fields clarified for Mr. Jefferson she was speaking of meeting with Council to review the complaints.

Mr. Sampson asked what the status was on the search for a City Manager.

Mr. Koberlein reported the contract was just sent in last week.

Mr. Sampson mentioned the Snocap project and how there has been a transformative change since Mrs. Fields has taken the position.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Commissioner Ron Williams also mentioned the Snocap project and the great job Mrs. Fields was doing.

PUBLIC COMMENT: County Manager David Kraus stated he would like to continue to work together and there was a very good working relationship between the City and the County.

Mr. Hill stated he felt Mrs. Fields was doing a great job, their meeting at the Airport went great.

COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS – None

ADJOURNMENT

All matters having been handled, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM on a motion made and duly seconded.

Stephen M. Witt, Mayor/Council Member

Audrey Sikes, MMC City Clerk