

City of Auburndale Commission Minutes September 4, 2025

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Auburndale held September 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Room of City Hall, after having been properly advertised, with the following members present: Mayor Dorothea Taylor Bogert, Vice Mayor Alex Cam, Commissioners: Keith Cowie, Jordan Helms, and Bill Sterling. Also, present were: City Manager Jeffrey Tillman, City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr., City Clerk Brandon Henry, and Police Chief Terry Storie.

Mayor Dorothea Taylor Bogert declared a quorum present, and the Meeting was opened with prayer by Minister Forest Antemesaris, Orange Street Church of Christ, and a salute to the flag.

Motion by Vice Mayor Cam, seconded by Commissioner Cowie, to approve Minutes of the City Commission Meeting of August 18, 2025. Upon vote, all ayes.

Greater Auburndale Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sandra Hall introduced the 2025 Ms. Auburndale and her court.

Mayor Taylor Bogert presented a proclamation recognizing Constitution Week. City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read the proclamation. Christine Page of the Ponce De Leon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution accepted the proclamation.

Motion by Commissioner Cowie, seconded by Commissioner Helms, to remove Item 6 from the agenda. Upon vote, all ayes.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked if there was public comment on any item not on the agenda.

Anonymous speaker said he is asserting his First Amendment right protected under Chapter 119 Florida Statutes. He said he is here to lodge a complaint against City employees City Manager Jeffrey Tillman, Mayor Taylor Bogert, Code Enforcement Officer Sergio Romero, Community Development Director Julie Womble, and City Clerk Brandon Henry. He said that Officer Romero under direct criminal violation per Statue 119.071 subsection 4, subsection 2, subsection A, subsection D, subsection 1 home address defined – knowingly and willfully with wanton disregard of the law after being instructed of the law by himself and Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor erected a sign bearing his personal information upon a State’s right-of-way in public view. He is here to formally request the City Commission request Chief Terry Storie to take his evidence and file a complaint with the State Attorney’s office for investigation and criminal charges against the people he said. He said he has documents if any of the Commissioners would like to see it.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked if he has those to share?

Anonymous speaker passed documents to the Commission.

City Manager Tillman said it will get entered into the record if the speaker would like.

Anonymous speaker said yes.

City Manager Tillman said he will give the documents to the City Clerk.

Anonymous speaker said right there is what he is talking about. There is a reason why the State chose to put him under Florida Statute 119. We got the general public out here, and that is his whole point. There is a reason behind it. It did not happen once. This is not a one knock-off, not a two knock-off, it was not three. It is four. Four times his personal information was posted on a state highway. It is against the law. He said he complained to City Manager Tillman. He said he came up here and the first words out of his mouth was “Mr. Tillman, what rules are we playing by around here? What laws are we following?”. He said Mr. Tillman said “We are following State law and City ordinance.” He said he responded to Mr. Tillman “No sir”. He said Mr. Tillman said he wanted examples. He said he gave Mr. Tillman examples and was verbally accosted.

Mayor Taylor Bogert thanked the speaker.

Mayor Taylor Bogert closed the Regular Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

1. PUBLIC HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2026 TAX MILLAGE LEVY & ANNUAL BUDGET

City Manager Tillman said the Public Hearing has been advertised in accordance with the Florida Statutes regarding the method of fixing tax millage. This Public Hearing is the first of two (2) required Public Hearings with the second scheduled for September 18, 2025.

The proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 is balanced with Total Revenue and Total Expenditures of \$87,303,927. Expenditures include general operating expenses of \$56,157,766, Capital Improvements of \$27,560,105, and Contingency Reserve of \$157,060. He presented changes since the last budget presentation. The Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027 Budgets includes all changes made during the Regular City Commission meetings of May 5, 2025 (Payroll), May 19, 2025 (Capital Outlay), June 16, 2025 (Expenditures), and July 21, 2025 (Revenues).

Revenues from ad-valorem taxes for Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 are estimated at \$11,640,000 and based upon the operating millage rate of 4.2515.

The Fiscal Year 2026 Budget also includes the proposed Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements (CIP) for the City's Public Safety, Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. This schedule, which is a requirement of the City's Comprehensive Plan, assists the City Commission in prioritizing future capital needs throughout the City and is updated annually during the budget process to include a "new fifth year". He presented a graphic depicting the process.

A balanced Fiscal Year 2027 Budget (2nd Year Budget) is also being presented for the Commission's conceptual approval. The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget will be reviewed by City Staff and the City Commission during the next Budget update process in order to accommodate needs that have arisen since the planned budget was prepared. Changes to the proposed Biennial Budget will be presented by staff during the Public Hearing and before Commission action.

The proposed Ordinances were prepared by the Finance Director and reviewed by the City Manager and City Attorney. If approved on first reading, the proposed Ordinances will be presented for second and final reading on September 18, 2025. Staff recommends approving the proposed Ordinance establishing the tax millage levy and the proposed Ordinance adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Budgets.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Mayor Taylor Bogert closed the Public Hearing and reopened the Regular Commission Meeting.

2. ORDINANCE #1835 ADOPTING 2025 TAX MILLAGE LEVY

City Manager Tillman introduced the ordinance. He said staff recommends approval.

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Ordinance No. 1835 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE TAX LEVY FOR THE YEAR 2025 ON ALL PROPERTY WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE AS SHOWN BY THE 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL: ESTABLISHING THE MILLAGE RATE AT 4.2515, WHICH IS A 3.3% INCREASE OVER THE ROLLED BACK RATE OF 4.1142, AND PROVIDING FOR THE APPLICATION THEREOF; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE,** by title only.

Motion by Commissioner Cowie, seconded by Commissioner Helms, to approve Ordinance #1835 adopting the 2025 tax millage levy, as read on first reading by title only. Upon vote, all ayes.

3. ORDINANCE #1836 ADOPTING FISCAL YEAR 2026 & FISCAL YEAR 2027 ANNUAL BUDGETS

City Manager Tillman said staff recommends approval. He said we will need two votes due to a conflict of interest. We will have a vote on the Chamber of Commerce line item individually, and another separate vote for the budget.

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Ordinance No. 1836 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET; CONCEPTUALLY APPROVING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 ANNUAL BUDGET; ADOPTING THE FIVE (5) YEAR SCHEDULE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (CIP); AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**, by title only.

Motion by Commissioner Helms, seconded by Vice Mayor Cam, to approve Chamber of Commerce expenditure line item 001-6084-579-8100. Upon vote, all ayes, with Commissioner Cowie abstaining and completing Form 8B Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and Other Local Public Officers, which is attached to the Minutes.

Motion by Vice Mayor Cam, seconded by Commissioner Sterling, to approve Ordinance 1836 adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Budgets. Upon vote, all ayes.

4. ORDINANCE #1837 AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 2-43(b) - PURCHASING GUIDELINES

City Manager Tillman said this is housekeeping in nature. In April 2022, the City Commission approved amending the purchasing guidelines to increase the threshold for competitive bids from \$10,000 to \$25,000 with City Commission approval.

Based on the City Auditor's recommendation, Staff has researched several local jurisdictions to understand their sealed bid limit, City Commission approval limits, and other purchasing policies in which City Commission approval is required. He referred to a table comparing local jurisdictions' approval limits.

Proposed Ordinance #1837 amends Section 2-43(b) of City Code by removing a purchasing threshold in the City Code and adding language for the Purchasing Guidelines of the City to be adopted by the City Commission. He summarized the proposed and current process.

The proposed Ordinance was prepared by the Finance Director and reviewed by the City Manager and City Attorney. If approved on first reading, the proposed Ordinance will be presented for second and final reading on September 18, 2025.

Following adoption of the proposed Ordinance, the City Commission will consider a Resolution adopting Purchasing Guidelines. The proposed Resolution adopts Purchasing Guidelines the City has followed for several years and updates language for budgeted items approved by the City Commission, piggyback purchases, and emergency purchases consistent with other local jurisdictions. The proposed Resolution will also increase the sealed bid and City Commission approval thresholds to \$50,000.

City Manager Tillman said this ordinance is exempt from the business impact statement requirement. Staff recommends approval of Ordinance #1837 amending Section 2-43(b) of the Code of Ordinances (Purchasing Guidelines).

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Ordinance No. 1837 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 2-43 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA RELATING TO THE CITY MANAGER'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING PURCHASING MATTERS AND AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF NEW AND UPDATED CITY PURCHASING GUIDELINES AND THE MAKING OF SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS BY RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; A REPEALING CLAUSE; AND**

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERRORS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, by title only.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Sterling, seconded by Commissioner Cowie, to approve Ordinance #1837 amending Section 2-43(b) of the Code of Ordinances (Purchasing Guidelines).

Mayor Taylor Bogert said this basically brings us up to current practice.

City Manager Tillman said yes. We worked with the City Attorney, he made some suggestions as to making sure our policies match our practices. This is what this does, it is housekeeping in nature. He appreciates the City Attorney and Finance Director Christopher Reeder – who also had a lot of input and research into this.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked City Attorney Murphy if he had any comment.

City Attorney Murphy answered no. We will still be complying with applicable state law.

Upon vote, all ayes.

5. CONSIDER DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT – GAPWAY GROVE CORP.

Community Development Director Julie Womble said in 2022, the City initiated a comprehensive review of the Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility Service Area, completed by Chastain-Skillman, which identified certain improvements required to serve and allow development in the area. The Gapway Grove Corporation intends to develop +/- 68.84 acres of property into a 45-lot estate residential subdivision within the Lakes District. The Utility Study shows that development and construction on the Gapway Grove Corp. property cannot discharge into the Regional Wastewater system until the Pace Road Utility Improvements, the Southern Force Main Re-route, and Phase II of the Gapway Force Main projects have been completed, permitted, and operational along with the planning and design phase of the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion, as identified in the Utility Study.

The proposed Developer's Agreement is between Gapway Grove Corporation and the City of Auburndale. The Agreement acknowledges that the City makes no representation or warranty as to when it will commence or complete the Utility Improvements. The proposed agreement allows the City to complete the review of all development plans and construction plan documents.

The City and Gapway Grove Corporation desire to enter into the Agreement to establish the respective rights and obligations between Gapway Grove Corporation and the City, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the proposed Utility Infrastructure and Developer's Agreement. The improvements listed in the Development Agreement plan for current and future development.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Developer's Agreement with Gapway Grove Corporation.

City Manager Tillman said the proposed Developer's Agreement was prepared by Gapway Grove Corporation and reviewed by the Community Development Director, Public Utilities Director, City Manager's Office, and the City Attorney. He said we are just discussing the developer's agreements. If you see this in the future, it would be during the preliminary plat process. Staff recommends approval.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Cowie, seconded by Vice Mayor Cam, to approve the proposed Developer's Agreement with Gapway Grove Corporation. Upon vote, all ayes.

7. INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR COLLECTION OF POLK COUNTY IMPACT FEES

City Manager Tillman said since 1989, the City of Auburndale has collected impact fees for Polk County when the development is located within the boundaries of the City. Impact fees for Transportation, Correctional Facilities, the Emergency Medical System, and the Educational System are collected by the City for the County's Capital Facility Impact Construction prior to a building permit being issued. To reimburse the City for costs incurred in the collection of the impact fees imposed by the County, the City has been allowed to retain three (3) percent of each impact fee up to a maximum of \$250.00 per impact fee.

On July 25, 2025, Polk County gave notice to the City of Auburndale that Polk County was exercising its right to terminate the existing Interlocal Agreement, effective October 1, 2025, so that a new Interlocal Agreement may be entered into prior to October 1, 2025.

The proposed Interlocal Agreement for Collection of Polk County Impact Fees is being reestablished to be compliant with changes to Florida State Statutes since 1989. In compliance with State Statute, the City shall only retain administrative charges for actual costs incurred in the collection of Polk County impact fees. The City shall also provide to the County documentation to support the actual costs incurred by the City.

The proposed Interlocal Agreement for Collection of Polk County Impact Fees was prepared by the Polk County Attorney's Office and reviewed by the Community Development Director, Finance Director, City Manager, and City Attorney. Staff recommends approval of the Interlocal Agreement with Polk County.

City Manager Tillman expressed his appreciation to staff.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

City Attorney Murphy said the other driver that moved this forward is that as of October 1, 2025, if the City charged a City transportation impact fee – it could not double charge a developer because the County also charges a County transportation impact fee. It is not applicable at the present time to the City of Auburndale because we have not established a City transportation impact fee. But if we had or if we do, we have to make sure we are only charging the applicant for the permit only that portion that would be applicable to City transportation facilities. That is spelled out in Section 8 of the Interlocal Agreement. This statutory requirement being in place by October 1, 2025 is the real driver of this.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked if this happened in legislative session regarding mobility fees?

City Attorney Murphy said yes, in the 2024 legislative session. Although Auburndale presently does not charge a transportation impact fee, it does not mean we may not in the future. For those other jurisdictions in Polk County that do, we have had to review and make sure their transportation impact fee is accurate and complies with statute.

City Manager Tillman said there is language in the agreement if we were to get into that. It is not relevant as of today.

Mayor Taylor Bogert clarified when it would be relevant.

Motion by Commissioner Helms, seconded by Commissioner Sterling, to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Polk County. Upon vote, all ayes.

8. APPROVE FEE SCHEDULE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION RATES

City Manager Tillman said City Staff is requesting adjustments to the current rental rates for various city buildings and athletic fields. The current rates have been in effect for seven (7) years (effective August 6, 2018). We are proposing to amend those rates and establish rates for Lake Ariana Park.

Parks and Recreation Director Cody McGhee presented current and proposed rates for original Parks and Recreation Department facilities (Park Street Civic Center, Senior Center, Women's Club, Rec Hall, and Historic Center).

He presented a floor plan of the new Lake Ariana Park Civic Center.

He presented proposed rates for the new Lake Ariana Park Civic Center. He presented current and proposed rates for Lake Myrtle Sports Complex athletic fields.

He presented the proposed rates in comparison to current rates at comparable facilities with other cities (Lakeland, Haines City, and Leesburg).

City Manager Tillman further clarified the proposed rates.

He said the proposed rates would take effect on October 1, 2025. As a courtesy to customers with current reservations after October 1, 2025, the City will honor the current rate, if paid before the effective date.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Facility and Park Rental Fee Schedule.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Vice Mayor Cam, seconded by Commissioner Helms, to approve the proposed Facility and Park Rental Fee Schedule.

Vice Mayor Cam said this is a wonderful starting place, being someone who is in the event industry. It is wonderful that our community, both residents and non-residents, will not only have a beautiful facility but a reasonable facility. He thinks it looks great. He expressed gratitude.

Commissioner Sterling asked for clarification regarding the alcohol policy.

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee provided clarification and explained the alcohol policy.

City Manager Tillman provided additional clarification that the City does not have a liquor license for someone to operate at the facilities. The renter would provide someone.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked what is the difference between the deposits with liquor?

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee answered 25% more. We do not allow cash bars.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked what about something like a fundraiser event?

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee said it would be something we would need to figure out.

Mayor Taylor Bogert said we are probably going to have more.

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee said it would probably be a City event where that would happen.

City Attorney Murphy said that he imagines in that scenario that a willing philanthropic sponsor might be found.

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee said this is something we have done in the past.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked if we reached out to those with reservations that they know they need to pay?

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee answered yes.

Mayor Taylor Bogert said we have nothing to base it on, but by next year, we will know how much the facilities will be utilized. We should evaluate this on an annual or biannual basis. She asked about the costs incurred and fees proposed for setting up and breaking down, such as with the dance floor.

City of Auburndale Commission Minutes September 4, 2025

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee answered that they are comparable to similar facilities within other jurisdictions. He provided clarification regarding these costs and fees.

Mayor Taylor Bogert asked how do we determine someone is a resident versus non-resident.

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee said it would fall back on the renter. There will be ways to get around the system. But whoever comes in to sign the contract will be responsible for the event. We are also moving to a new software.

Commissioner Sterling commented on his experience with liquor licenses.

Mayor Taylor Bogert commented on rental rates in relation to liquor policies.

Parks and Recreation Director McGhee said internally, we are prepared to relook at our liquor policies for the events as we get into the Lake Ariana Park opening. This will be different because we do not currently have this problem with our current facilities, but because this is a brand new facility – we do not know what we do not know.

Mayor Taylor Bogert said we will probably get a lot more weddings out there.

Upon vote, all ayes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:58:07 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Minutes are true and correct.



Brandon Henry, City Clerk