Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Auburndale held August 17, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Room of City Hall, after having been properly advertised, with the following members present: Mayor Alex Cam, Vice Mayor Jordan Helms, Commissioners: Travis Avery, Sean Levy, and Crystal Tijerina. Also, present were: City Manager Jeffrey Brown, City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr., City Clerk Brandon Henry, and Police Chief Terry Storie.

Mayor Alex Cam declared a quorum present, and the Meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Gene Bassham, New Hope Fellowship, and a salute to the flag.

Motion by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to approve Minutes of the City Commission Meeting of August 3, 2026. Upon vote, all ayes.

City Manager Jeffrey Brown announced that Thursday is Commission Day, and the Commission should wear their yellow shirts. On September 3rd from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., there will be a Land Development Code public engagement workshop by the Community Development Department at the Senior Center. The recreation soccer opening ceremonies will be on September 12th at 8:30 a.m. at the Orlando Health Stadium located at the Lake Myrtle Sports Complex.

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

Steven Brennan, 729 Daphne Drive, said he comes before the Commission to be thankful for participating in the Citizens Academy. He said he has not had the opportunity to publicly thank everyone and the organization behind the program. He said he had a great time visiting the various places. The Police Chief was wonderful, and the Fire Chief and so on. He said he was in the 2025 program, and his wife was in 2026. He was so excited to go home and tell her all the great things they were doing in the City of Auburndale. And himself coming from a big city, never having this opportunity – it was a great opportunity. So he wanted to come out today and say thank you. He appreciates all the cooperation that went into it. He knows there are a lot of plans to get everybody on schedule. Commission Tijerina was one of his classmates. One thing that stood out to them was the hot dogs during Parks and Recreation Department Day that Parks and Recreation Director Cody McGhee brought out – they were the best hot dogs. He is here to say thank you. He presented City Clerk Brandon Henry a token of his appreciation for his work behind the Citizens Academy.

Mayor Cam thanked Mr. Brennan for his kind words. Mayor Cam spoke of his time shadowing Mr. Brennan's Citizens Academy class as a liaison of the City Commission – it was wonderful getting to know him.

Mary Cruz Ruiz, 1021 Suffragette Circle, Haines City, said this year she finished a 50-foot mural in Haines City for her family's flower business. It has had a really beautiful impact and a lot of attention from three different news outlets including Fox, Telemundo, and Citrus Tea. We have been able to be a part of local organizations like Visit Central Florida, Mural Passport – we have just had a really great experience in the community and also had more movement in our business because of this. So she is coming as an artist and wanted to introduce herself as a resource, and also wanted to ask whether there are any incentives or programs with the City or Community Redevelopment Agency towards investing in public art.

City Manager Brown referred Ms. Ruiz to Deputy City Manager Amy Palmer, she serves as the Community Redevelopment Agency director.

Ms. Ruiz said she wanted to say hi and make known she is a resource. She is a muralist and a painter and on a mission right now to beautify Polk County and use murals as a way to storytell the history and culture and the beautiful groups of people who have made a great impact here.

Mayor Cam thanked Ms. Ruiz.

Mayor Cam closed the Regular Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

1. PUBLIC HEARING – VACATING RIGHT OF WAY – LAKE ARIANA DRIVE

City Manager Brown said some of the land that Lake Ariana Park sits on is located in the Interlochen Subdivision, platted in 1926 and containing a right-of-way dedicated to the public, known as Lake Ariana Drive. Lake Ariana Drive used to be a paved road that ran through the park, parallel to the shoreline of Lake Ariana, that had been vacated as a through-road in the park years ago. With the construction of the new Civic Center, there is no longer a need for this right-of-way and the City is requesting to vacate it.

The petition to vacate, abandon, discontinue and close the right-of-way, is subject to the reservation of any other rights and interests the City of Auburndale may have in such lands as recognized under applicable Florida law. Further, vacating the right of way is intended to also allow the City to confirm its rights and interests in the lands in conjunction with the issuance of an opinion of title regarding said lands. City Manager Brown provided additional background regarding this right-of-way.

The proposed Resolution was prepared by the City Manager's Office and was reviewed by the City Attorney.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Mayor Cam closed the Public Hearing and reopened the Regular Commission Meeting.

2. RESOLUTION #2026-04 VACATING OF RIGHT-OF-WAY – LAKE ARIANA DRIVE

City Manager Brown said staff recommends approval of Resolution #2026-04 Vacating Right of Way – Lake Ariana Drive.

City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. read Resolution No. 2026-04 entitled: **A RESOLUTION VACATING, ABANDONING AND DISCONTINUING PORTIONS OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE (General Location: Lake Ariana Park),** by title only.

Motion by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Commissioner Tijerina, to approve Resolution #2026-04 Vacating Right of Way – Lake Ariana Drive, by title only. Upon vote, all ayes.

3. AGREEMENT WITH LAKELAND AREA MASS TRANSIT FOR BUS SERVICE

City Manager Brown said the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District is the legal entity responsible for the operation and management of the public transportation system within Polk County. For several years, the City of Auburndale has agreed to participate in funding a portion of the fixed-route services currently being operated through the municipal boundaries of Auburndale.

The proposed Service Agreement is for two (2) years, through September 30, 2028, and sets the allocation of $84,790.69 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 and $88,182.32 in FY 2028. Funding for the bus service is included in the tentative FY 2027 Budget.

The proposed Service Agreement was prepared by the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District and reviewed by the City Manager and City Attorney.

Staff recommends approval of the Service Agreement.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Tijerina, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve the Service Agreement. Upon vote, all ayes.

4. APPOINTMENT TO THE GENERAL EMPLOYEE'S PENSION TRUST FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

City Manager Brown said the General Employee's Pension Trust Fund Board of Trustees consists of five (5) members. The Board consists of two City residents, appointed by the City Commission for a term of two years; two full-time employees that are elected by a majority of the City employees who are members of the Plan for a term of two years; and the fifth member is chosen by a majority of the previous four members and approved by the City Commission, for a term of two years.

Mr. Chris Reeder is no longer able to serve on the General Employee's Pension Trust Fund Board of Trustees. Shirley Brennan and resident of the City has offered to serve on the Board. Shirley would serve the remainder of the unexpired appointment through January 2028.

Staff recommends approval of Ms. Brennan's appointment and has no objections to the appointment.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Avery, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to appoint Shirley Brennan to the General Employee's Pension Trust Fund Board of Trustees. Upon vote, all ayes.

5. DISCUSSION OF FIRE ASSESSMENT FEE

City Manager Brown summarized the function of a fire assessment fee.

Vice Mayor Helms asked City Manager Brown to list the cities in Polk County that have implemented a fire assessment fee.

City Manager Brown listed the cities in Polk County that have either implemented or are considering a fire assessment fee.

Vice Mayor Helms asked if we have an estimated completion date for Fire Station #2?

City Manager Brown answered about two years.

Vice Mayor Helms asked if we have not yet completed a budget that includes operation expenses at the new fire station?

City Manager Brown said that is correct.

6. CONSIDER PROPOSAL FOR BUILDING DEPARTMENT FEE STUDY AND FIRE ASSESSMENT FEE STUDY

City Manager Brown said City staff requested a proposal from Raftelis to conduct a building department fee study and a non-ad valorem fire assessment fee study. Raftelis is currently reviewing the City's Utility Rates and Connection Fees.

The Building Department Fee Evaluation is required because of recent legislation, House Bill (HB) 803 and HB 399, which place limits on how and how much local governments can charge building permit fees. The Study will determine the revenue sufficiency of the building permit fees and miscellaneous fees for other services the Community Development Department provides, such as zoning requests, site plan reviews, and inspections.

The Fire Assessment Study is a result of discussion held by the City Commission during the July 20th Special Workshop regarding the loss of property taxes should Constitutional Amendment 3 be approved. Raftelis proposes to evaluate potential fee levels based on the Fire Department's cost allocations and will work with City Staff on a methodology for determining an appropriate fee schedule. Study findings would be presented to the City Commission following preliminary analysis, and prior to public outreach, adoption, or finalizing the non-ad valorem tax roll for the Property Appraiser and Tax Collector's Office.

The fee to complete the Building Department Fee Evaluation is $98,250 and the fee to complete the Fire Assessment Study is $48,955. The City is able to "piggyback" on a contract between the City of West Palm Beach and Raftelis, which was procured utilizing a competitive bid process. The scope of services for the two proposed studies for the City of Auburndale is similar to the scope of services provided in the West Palm Beach contract. Raftelis has agreed to provide the "piggyback" services using the same terms and conditions as those offered to West Palm Beach.

The lump sum contract to perform both studies is $147,205. The Fire Assessment Study is described as Phase II of the contract. It would not be performed and the City will not be charged if the City Commission decides not to proceed with the Fire Assessment Study.

Staff recommends approval of the General Piggyback Purchasing Agreement and the Proposal from Raftelis to Conduct a Building Department Fee Evaluation and Fire Assessment Study and authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement and Proposal.

Mayor Cam asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Avery, to approve the General Piggyback Purchasing Agreement and the Proposal from Raftelis to Conduct a Building Department Fee Evaluation and Fire Assessment Study and authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement and Proposal.

Vice Mayor Helms said he understands what the City Manager is saying – that if Amendment 3 does not pass that we do not proceed with the study. But he does not know if he would actually say that yet. He thinks we should have that discussion after November. It is either an automatic yes or we should we at least pay the money and see how this will affect our City and analyze the numbers and values. We discussed in our workshop that maybe this is a more equitable way to cover fire service rather than through property tax. He does not think that it is automatic, that if Amendment 3 passes that we are not doing this. We should bring that back for discussion.

City Attorney Murphy outlined the steps necessary to use the non-ad valorem assessment process and place this fee on the tax bill.

City Manager Brown further outlined steps to be undertaken by City staff. He explained that if we get this work done, it will be in the books, and we would not have to repeat the process if years down the road we wanted to implement the fire assessment fee.

City Attorney Murphy said if we do this now, we are done with it. It does not lock us into doing the assessment – it just sets the stage if that is what the Commission wishes to do. There are a lot of things that have to be considered. It is best to be armed with information and facts, so the Commission can make the best decision possible.

Commissioner Levy asked if we are saving money by joining in with West Palm Beach? What would this study cost if we did it on our own at some other point in time?

City Manager Brown said around the same.

City Attorney Murphy said what you are saving is staff time necessary for procurement and advertising costs.

Commissioner Levy said that is what he was getting at, what are our savings by piggybacking onto this?

City Manager Brown said staff tries to piggyback as much as possible. Some of it is direct costs, some of it is indirect costs such as preparing requests for proposals and advertising.

Commissioner Tijerina asked if we vote and pass it, does the agreement become null if Amendment 3 passes?

City Attorney Murphy said his analysis is that the agreement gives the opportunity to not move forward. It would be a choice.

Commissioner Tijerina said with there not being a budget right now for Fire Station #2 – if we do this study, she is assuming there are some assumptions to project those costs.

City Manager Brown said correct. He explained how this would look like.

Commissioner Avery asked if we have an idea or a budget for the survey that is required in this process.

City Manager Brown said we probably did not, but we will look and see based upon expenditures this year if there are some other locations that will be able to absorb it.

Mayor Cam thanked staff.

Upon vote, all ayes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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

Brandon Henry, City Clerk