

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Auburndale held September 15, 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, Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor, 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 Stephen Stover, Central Assembly of God, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

City Manager Jeffrey Brown reminded the Commission regarding the next Ridge League of Cities' meeting on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

Police Chief Terry Storie presented Property & Evidence Custodian Naiomi Acevedo with her longevity plaque for five years of service.

Parks and Recreation Director Cody McGhee presented Service Worker III Jeffrey Wall with his longevity plaque for five years of service.

Community Development Director Julie Womble presented City Planner Jesse Pearson with his longevity plaque for 20 years of service.

City Manager Brown introduced Human Resources Manager Felipe Garces.

Mayor Cam welcomed Mr. Garces. He congratulated staff who were recognized for their longevity.

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

Dennis Young, 2092 Summerlake Drive, said this is regarding the proposed fire station. He cited cost estimates and cost sharing regarding design, engineering, and construction. The total cost for the entire project is expected to not exceed \$8,910,000. Maintenance and utilities costs of the facility is set to 75% Auburndale share and 25% County share except for the shared and/or common spaces which will be split 50/50. Mr. Young said the question he has is does this include all the monies required for a fully functional fire department? He said he knows the costs. He said in the past, he dealt with fire departments, especially equipment. That is not cheap stuff, with very long leads – sometimes a year and a half to two years. The other thing he would like to mention is that he has been a resident of Auburndale or surrounding Auburndale for 27 years, and has been involved in numerous development opportunities and challenges. He said he wanted to comment on City Planner Jesse Pearson and Deputy City Manager Amy Palmer in regards to their help, forthrightness, and tenacity in dealing with himself, who can sometimes be a little difficult. Mr. Pearson and Ms. Palmer helped him and explained details regarding construction. As a resident, he feels the both of them, as well as Community Development Director Julie Womble (who has since taken Ms. Palmer's place) have been a godsend to himself and the community of Auburndale.

City Manager Brown said he would defer to Fire Chief Brian Bradway. He knows some of the equipment that we currently have at the main station will also move to the second station.

Fire Chief Bradway said lead times have gotten shorter on trucks, but for the sake of the station – that cost includes the station and furniture and everything in it. It does not include the fire truck – which we did just take delivery of a new fire truck. A 2018 apparatus that is currently running out of our current station will move to the new station, and the new truck will remain at the existing station – which will give us two reserve trucks. Somewhere down the line, five years or so, will be to purchase another engine and the 2018 truck replacing a

reserve truck. We will also be moving out to the new station one of the newer brush trucks, and a 2010 water tanker.

Mayor Cam presented a proclamation recognizing Constitution Week. Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor read the proclamation. A representative of the Ponce De Leon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution accepted the proclamation.

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

## **1. PUBLIC HEARING – FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026 TAX MILLAGE LEVY & ANNUAL BUDGET**

City Manager Brown 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 second of two (2) required Public Hearings.

Revenues from ad-valorem taxes for FY 2027 are estimated at \$12,256,180 and based upon the operating millage rate of 4.2515. The rollback rate is 4.2500.

The proposed Budget for FY 2027 is balanced with Total Revenue and Total Expenditures of \$124,945,355. Expenditures include general operating expenses of \$57,543,759, and Capital Improvements of \$62,063,165. City Staff will present changes to the budget.

The FY 2027 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".

Changes to the proposed 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. The proposed Ordinances were approved on first reading September 3, 2026, and are being presented for second and final reading.

City Manager Brown presented a slide depicting the City's revenues and expenditures. He presented a slide outlining changes to the budget since the previous public hearing. He presented a slide depicting the ad-valorem revenue and the proposed millage rate.

Dennis Young, 2092 Summerlake Drive, said the only question he had is that this is a millage increase. What is the projected revenue increase of this millage rate, and how does it affect the overall operating budget?

City Manager Brown said keeping the millage the same brings in an additional \$660,000 over last year.

Mr. Young asked can the debt affect some of the shortfall that we may experience with the vote in November.

City Manager Brown said no. We get our money based upon the total number that comes from the Property Appraiser of all values. The Property Appraiser will then, if Amendment 3 passes, submit to the City a number which includes our residential minus the \$150,000 value. At that point, it is projected somewhere between \$2 to \$2.5 million will be our shortfall next year with those homes that are paying an assessed value less than \$150,000 paying absolutely zero to the City, and those that are above the \$150,000 pay that balance.

Mr. Young said the other question he has is Florida has been in the top three to five that have seen major increases in population because of the changes that were actually happening with some of the other states, because of our low income tax and favorable weather. What has been the actual growth in housing development in the last five years. His subdivision has 54 houses, Lake Mattie has almost 800 houses going in. There has been

quite a bit of new construction houses – so he is looking at impact fees that are revenue sources, and also those homes that will not be affected, basically to a large extent because the \$150,000 exemption does not come into play for new residents to the state. He has heard a lot of conversations but no one is talking about the actual growth increase that we have had in the State of Florida. And he is sure we have had a lot of growth here in Auburndale that can help balance somewhat that shortfall over the last five to six years. It is something to figure out.

Community Development Julie Womble said the last five years the City has seen an increase of 23% every year. The City is roughly just under 22,000 residents. In 2011, the City was around 11,000 residents. Polk County has continuously been in the top 10 counties of growth in the nation, and Florida being in top five. We are not the only ones in Polk County feeling the growing pains. But as we have development coming in for residential, we look at all of the growth and how that affects all of our departments and our budget and roads – we have 4,900 houses in the pipeline right now with site plan approvals, and those are not in construction – they are in various stages – either the ground has not been graded yet, or the permits are still pending with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. But we have 4,900 homes in the pipeline, and then after that – it would just be the other units that are allowed based on density and zoning.

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

## **2. ORDINANCE #1853 ADOPTING 2026 TAX MILLAGE LEVY**

City Manager Brown said staff recommends approval of the proposed Ordinance establishing the tax millage levy.

Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor read Ordinance No. 1853 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE TAX LEVY FOR THE YEAR 2026 ON ALL PROPERTY WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE AS SHOWN BY THE 2026 ASSESSMENT ROLL: ESTABLISHING THE MILLAGE RATE AT 4.2515, WHICH IS A 0.04% INCREASE OVER THE ROLLED BACK RATE OF 4.2500, AND PROVIDING FOR THE APPLICATION THEREOF; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**, by title only.

**Motion** by Commissioner Avery, seconded by Commissioner Tijerina, to approve Ordinance #1853 establishing the tax millage levy, as read on second and final reading by title only. Upon vote, all ayes.

## **3. ORDINANCE #1854 ADOPTING FISCAL YEAR 2027 ANNUAL BUDGET**

Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor read Ordinance No. 1854 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING 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 Tijerina, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve Ordinance #1854 adopting the Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Budget.

Vice Mayor Helms expressed his gratitude to staff.

Upon vote, all ayes.

## **4. RESOLUTION #2026-05 FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT**

City Manager Brown said the City and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) first entered into an Agreement in 1993 where the City is compensated for maintenance services performed on State roads within

the City. These services include mowing, edging, sweeping, and litter removal on SR-544 (Havendale Blvd.) and US Highway 92. The agreement was subsequently renewed in 2023.

The current Agreement expires in September 2029. The proposed three (3) year Agreement provides annual compensation of \$26,686.07 in each of the three years. This revenue amount is provided in the proposed FY 2027 Budget.

The proposed Resolution authorizes the City Manager to execute the current Agreement and subsequent replacement agreements.

Staff recommends approval of the Resolution # 2026-05.

Assistant City Attorney Seth Claytor read Resolution No. 2026-05 entitled: **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF AUBURNDALE AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CERTAIN STATE ROADS**, by title only.

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

**Motion** by Vice Mayor Helms, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to approve Resolution No. 2026-05. Upon vote, all ayes.

## **5. CONSIDER DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACT – PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

City Manager Brown said in the FY 24/25 Budget, the City Commission began setting aside funding for improvements to the Public Works facility located at 915 Charles Avenue. The scope of the project includes the remodeling of existing offices, improvements to the fleet maintenance bays, and structural repairs to existing storage bays located on property. In March, a Request for Qualifications was advertised for Design-Build firms to submit proposals for professional design and construction services. On June 15, 2026, the City Commission approved the rankings of Design-Build firms for the Public Works Facility Improvements Project and authorized the City Manager to commence negotiations with the top-ranked firm of Springer Construction.

The Design-Build Contract with Springer Construction addresses a phased approach to the project – a “Design Phase” wherein the Design-Build team will perform all engineering and architectural services to produce all design documents, and a “Construction Phase” wherein Springer will perform all construction services to the Public Works Facility. The proposed contract sets a lump sum design price of \$204,603.78 and both parties acknowledge the RFQ identifies approximately \$1,800,000 allocated for design and construction. The design phase costs were formulated utilizing the architect-engineering fee guidelines created by the Florida Department of Management Services. A Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) Amendment will come back before the City Commission for approval before Springer Construction can proceed to the Construction Phase. If a GMP cannot be agreed upon, the Design Work will be completed and paid for, and the Contract will terminate.

The project is funded in the FY 26/27 budget. The contract has been reviewed by the City Manager’s Office and approved by the City Attorney. Staff recommends approval of the Design-Build Contract with Springer Construction and authorize the commencement of design services in the amount of \$204,603.78.

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

**Motion** by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Commissioner Tijerina, to approve the Design-Build Contract with Springer Construction and authorize the commencement of design services in the amount of \$204,603.78.

Commissioner Tijerina said she wanted to say for the record that this project is at least a decade overdue. She knows we are in times where financial spending is maybe not the most popular thing we can do up here. They

are due for an upgrade. It has been put off for a while. This particular facility provides services to so many other areas. It is worth saying and pointing out how necessary and well deserved the Public Works Department staff is of this upgrade.

Commissioner Avery said he wants the public to understand that this is much needed now since we are taking over fleet services and this will help with that.

Commissioner Tijerina said and any additional staff that we will be bringing into that building.

## **6. FIRST AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT FOR LEGAL SERVICES**

City Manager Brown said the City of Auburndale signed an Agreement for Legal Services with Boswell & Dunlap LLP on September 3, 2020. No amendments have been made to the Agreement since the signing of the Agreement. The initial retainer for legal services was \$81,000 annually. Since then, the retainer has risen with pay raises given to city employees and is currently \$98,604 annually. The proposed amendment would raise the retainer to \$120,000 annually. The amendment also raises the compensation for litigation services as for the City Attorney from \$170.00/hour to \$225.00/hour. The proposed amendment has been included in the FY 27 Budget.

Staff recommends approval of the Amendment and authorize the Mayor to sign the amendment.

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

**Motion** by Commissioner Avery, seconded by Vice Mayor Helms, to approve the First Amendment to Agreement for Legal Services.

Mayor Cam said we are fortunate to work with a professional firm such as Boswell & Dunlap. Having spent a lot of time speaking on behalf for the City Manager contract negotiations, he spent hours talking to City Attorney Frederick J. Murphy Jr. and Assistant City Attorney Drew Crawford, we are very fortunate to be working and being represented by such professional attorneys.

Upon vote, all ayes.

## **7. CONSIDER DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT – BERKLEY CHARTER SCHOOL SEWER UPGRADES**

City Manager Brown said in 2022, City initiated a comprehensive city-wide review of its existing sanitary sewer system by Chastain-Skillman, which identified certain improvements required to serve the development. The improvements were identified by the City's Utility Study as necessary to allow future development in the area of the subject site. The study showed that development and construction could not discharge into the City's wastewater system until the Gapway Force Main, Southern Force Main Re-route Utility Improvements were 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 Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc., 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 developer intends to develop a charter school and is currently in the Lakes District.

The City and Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc. desire to enter into the Agreement to establish the respective rights and obligations between Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc. 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.

The Developer's Agreement was prepared by Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc. and reviewed by the Community Development Director, City Public Utilities Director and the City Attorney.

Staff recommends approval of the Developer's Agreement with Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc.

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

**Motion** by Commissioner Levy, seconded by Commissioner Tijerina, to approve the Developer's Agreement with Berkley Accelerated Middle School, Inc.

Vice Mayor Helms asked Community Development Director Womble to clarify the location and ownership of the property and nearby properties.

Community Development Director Womble clarified.

Commissioner Levy expressed concern about traffic management for the project site.

Upon vote, all ayes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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



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Brandon Henry, City Clerk