

CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025
7:00 P.M.
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
675 E EAGLE AVE
EAGLE LAKE, FLORIDA 33839

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Coler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION

Commissioner Metosh gave the Invocation.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commission and audience said the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

ABSENT: Billings

City Clerk Wright advised Commissioner Billings notified staff that he was not able to attend the meeting tonight.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Metosh and seconded by Commissioner Williams to excuse Commissioner Billings from the meeting.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

V. AUDIENCE

Esther Garcia, 210 Varnadore Road, expressed concern regarding the frequency of water service interruptions and the color of the water when service is restored.

City Manager Ernharth stated this is in the Green Acres area and the county is relocating lines out of the swells to the middle of the road; the county is repaving roads in the area. Mr. Ernharth stated the city is investing approximately \$500,000 in the area and having new laterals installed when the pipes are moved. There was discussion that the city is still working to acquire property needed to complete Green Acres Water Plant.

Mayor Coler stated the project Mr. Ernharth discussed should alleviate most of the issue residents are experiencing.

Public Works Director Fletcher stated the discoloration of the water is air bubbles when service is restored.

VI. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS, REQUESTS

A. Staff Reports

Lt. Kevin Smith updated the Commission regarding the events that have occurred in the city.

B. City Manager Report

City Manager Ernharth stated the Patriotic Celebration is on June 28th.
City Manager Ernharth discussed possibly having a drone show next year instead of a fireworks display.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Consideration of the second reading of Ordinance No. O-25-08, An Ordinance of the City of Eagle Lake, Florida Extending the Corporate Limits of the City of Eagle Lake, to Include Therein Additional Territory Lying Contiguous and Adjacent to the Present Boundaries of the City of Eagle Lake; Describing Said Additional Territory; Herewith and Providing an Effective Date. (General Location: Two parcels of land totaling approximately 4.2 acres in size, lying east of Highway 17 N and north of Windsor Reserve Dr with a street address of 4930 HWY 17 N and US Highway 17 N, Bartow, Florida 33830) Thornton Property effective upon second reading**

Attorney Maxwell read Ordinance No. O-25-08 by title only.

Ryan Barren, 225 E Lemon St, Lakeland, FL 33801, the attorney on behalf of the applicant and is available to answer any questions.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Metosh and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve Ordinance No. O-25-08.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAYS: None

- B. Consideration of the second reading of Ordinance No. O-25-09, An Ordinance Amending the City of Eagle Lake Florida 2030 Comprehensive Plan by Revising the Future Land Use Map series to Assign Neighborhood Activity Center Future Land Use to Two (2) Annexed Parcels; Amending the City of Eagle Lake, Florida Zoning Map to Apply General Commercial (CG) Zoning to the Same Certain Parcels; Repealing all Ordinances in Conflict herewith; and, providing an effective date. (General Location: Two parcels of land totaling approximately 4.2+ acres in size, lying east of Highway 17 N and north of Windsor Reserve Dr with a street address of 4930 HWY 17 N and US Highway 17 N, Bartow, Florida 33830) Thornton Property effective upon second reading**

Attorney Maxwell read Ordinance No. O-25-09 by title only.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Metosh to approve Ordinance No. O-25-09.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAYS: None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Eagle Lake Farmers Market Business Plan from Zoey Forehand

Mr. Ernharth stated he had not heard back from Florida Midland Railroad. He advised the city is unable to authorize until clearance from the railroad is received.

Zoey Forehand, 485 S 3rd St. proposed to move event to side of park that has fencing separating the park from the railroad; she listed a trial period of June 14th to August 16th.

The Commission discussed Ms. Forehand's LLC status and what liability coverage would be needed. Attorney Maxwell stated she would need a policy naming the city as an insured and a hold harmless from the entity holding the event. She advised the city could require insurance from each vendor.

The Commission discussed holding event on private property for the trial period.

It was the recommendation of the City Attorney to allow the City Manager additional time to contact the railroad and bring back to a future meeting.

B. Discussion of the Polk Regional Water Cooperative

The Commission discussed the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC), and the date water will be available keeps getting pushed out.

Manager Ernharth stated the city is working with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to get additional permitted capacity from abandoned agricultural wells.

The Commission discussed the cost of water moving forward, the need to raise rates and to discuss at the next meeting to meet advertising requirements for the increases to go into effective Oct. 1st.

The Commission discussed the conservation efforts of the city, such as no longer offering irrigation meters and participating in the Water Star program.

Steve Shealey, Pennoni Associates, stated the city is doing a great job with water conservation and that per capita water usage in the city is lower than other municipalities. He discussed the PRWC needs to break out the capital costs versus the actual water cost when giving costs as capital costs can come in part from impact fees. Mr. Shealey discussed a water rate study and an impact fee study. He stated the city applied for state grant funding for the receiving facility at Green Acres Water Plant. When the money was allocated the PRWC decided to keep the funding to reduce the costs for all participants. Mr. Shealey discussed the PRWC project was initially projected at \$500 million now we are looking at \$1 billion. He advised the target date to receive water was 2028 but it could be 2030 or later.

The Commission discussed that the water purchased from the PRWC must be used before the City may pump its permitted capacity.

Ed Chaney, 790 N 8th St. discussed the grants and suggested asking the PRWC for audit report of those allocated funds.

The Commission discussed other municipalities not accepting water from the PRWC and not allowing additional growth.

The Commission discussed that around 2008 the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) reduced the city's permitted capacity.

Ed Chaney 790 N 8th St. expressed concern for continued development, the need for new facilities and for everyone to work together.

Esther Garcia, 210 Varnadore Rd. expressed concern regarding new developments.

C. Discussion of new City Hall

The Commission discussed the need for a new City Hall. There was discussion to identify the needs of staff and to determine if the old plans can be used or if the city needs to start over. Attorney Maxwell stated she will review.

The Commission discussed having multiple buildings and potentially combining the library, the senior center, community and event centers in one building. The Commission discussed building the new facilities in stages, so staff is not displaced.

There was discussion regarding the Florida Statutes 287.055, Consultants Competitive Negotiations Act when hiring professional services such as engineers and architects.

There was discussion regarding a procurement department for the city.

Attorney Maxwell will work with the City Manager and bring back a recommended procurement method to the next meeting to keep project moving forward.

Ed Chaney, 790 8th St. asked who would perform the In-House Government Estimate (IGE). Attorney Maxwell stated the city would follow all legal processes to complete the project.

Mr. Ernharth discussed the most recent project estimate was \$21 million; he advised the city has \$3 million in the public facilities impact fees that can be used toward the cost of the facility. He advised the Polk County Library Cooperative expressed an interest in moving their offices to this location and they have impact fees available to contribute towards their space and would also pay rent.

The Commission discussed the existing facilities, the cost of retrofit and uncertainty of obtaining historical designation and grants due to changes made to the building over time.

D. Discussion/Consideration of the purchase of the Earl Rice Property

The Commission discussed the appraisal on the property and the negotiated price of \$275,000. There was a consensus that it would be beneficial to the city to own the property. The commission expressed concern regarding the price of the property. There was discussion that this appraisal was paid for by the city.

MOTION was made by Mayor Coler and seconded by Commissioner Metosh to authorize the City Manager to execute an option contract with Mr. Rice for \$275,000. The contract will be contingent on Commission approval and the closing will be scheduled to occur within the current fiscal year.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAYS: None

E. Discussion of CRA Budget

The Commission discussed the CRA. It was discussed that the increase in the amount of the façade grants has generated interest with businesses within the CRA. It was discussed to no longer have CRA pay the city for staff time. It was discussed to have money available in the CRA in the event of development on US 17.

City Manager Ernharth stated based on the discussion he will adjust the CRA budget.

City Attorney Maxwell clarified there was no past impropriety regarding transferring funds from the CRA to the General Fund for staff time and this was reviewed by the City's Financial consultant.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of the Task Authorization for Consulting Engineering Services – Hurricane Ian Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Generator Project

City Manager stated that because of Hurricane Ian the city was awarded a hazard mitigation grant to obtain generators.

Steve Shealey, Pennoni, stated this is a 75/25 grant match and their fees are included in costs. He advised this is a federal grant with additional requirements. He stated the grant will purchase generators for two lift stations, one for the Green Acres Water Plant, and one for new city hall. The intent is to purchase the generators off the Sheriff's Office state procurement contract by direct purchase with no sales tax.

MOTION was made by Mayor Coler and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the Task Authorization for Consulting Engineering Services – Hurricane Ian Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Generator Project.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAY: None

B. Approval to go to bid for the Retention Pond along 3rd St.

The Commission discussed the retention pond. The retention pond is needed to address the flooding issues in the area. Manager Ernharth advised this project will be paid with stormwater impact fees.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Metosh to approve going to bid for the Retention Pond along 3rd St.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The roll vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAYS: None

C. Consideration of the engagement letter with Deborah Ruster of Peterson Myers for condemnation case

Attorney Maxwell advised Deborah Ruster has experience with condemnation cases and is currently working for the PRWC on similar cases. Attorney Maxwell stated the city and property owner are not close with regards to price.

Steve Shealey, Pennoni, stated the city needs the property sooner than later, so that they can be ready to receive water from the PRWC.

There was discussion on requesting an expedited Order of Taking for public necessity and reaching an agreement on the cost later.

Attorney Maxwell advised in these cases the city pays for both the city's attorney, engineer and appraisers as well as the property owners.

There was discussion on the property owners' appraisals.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Metosh to approve engagement letter with Deborah Ruster of Peterson Myers for condemnation case.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: Williams, Metosh, Pita, Coler

NAYS: None

X. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of the Regular City Commission Minutes -----06/02/2025

MOTION was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Metosh to approve the Regular City Commission Minutes of 06/02/2025.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

B. Approval of Financials

MOTION was made by Mayor Coler and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the Financial.

Mayor Coler asked for audience and commission discussion; there was none.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

XI. **CITY ATTORNEY**

Attorney Maxwell had no report.

XII. CITY COMMISSION

Commissioner Pita asked who bought the Earl Rice property on US17 and what was going there. Mr. Ernharth stated the owner of the Chevron purchased the property but hasn't notified the city of what he intends.

Commissioner Williams stated he attended the Florida League of Cities Institute for Elected Officials. He stated the classes were very interesting. He stated great advice was to ask questions of staff prior to the meeting and work together. He discussed the average length of meetings, average commission salary, parliamentary procedures, charter reviews and freedom of speech.

Commissioner Metosh had no report.

Mayor Coler had no report.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION was made by Commissioner Metosh and seconded by Commissioner Williams to adjourn at 8: 4 p.m.

The vote was as follows:

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0



MAYOR CORY COLER

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK DAWN WRIGHT

