

Commission Workshop

Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026

(APPROVED)

1/14/2026 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Jack Hilligoss, Keith Thompson, Daniel Williams, Carol Gillespie

Members Absent: Robin Gibson

Staff Present: James Slaton, City Manager; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk; Albert C. Galloway, Jr., City Attorney

Mayor Hilligoss called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

2. City Manager Comments

3. PRESENTATION - Citrus Connection

Tom Phillips, CEO of Citrus Connection, presented an update on transit services in Lake Wales, praising the City Commission for implementing a "textbook example" of balanced socioeconomic support through the Lake Wales Circulator and the "Squeeze" golf cart service. Between October 2024 and September 2025, the city's five fixed routes saw 15,035 total boardings, with the Lake Wales Circulator emerging as the second-highest performing route in the entire network (3,229 rides) by successfully addressing local food deserts and providing access to medical care and the YMCA. The "Squeeze," a nimble, free hop-on-hop-off golf cart service, recorded 2,565 rides, providing critical support to downtown businesses by maintaining customer access during ongoing construction. Additionally, Mr. Phillips highlighted the importance of ADA door-to-door services and the state-funded Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program, which provides low-income residents with regional medical transportation. He concluded by noting that the city's municipal fair share contribution is leveraged against significant federal and state grants, ensuring that Lake Wales only pays for service miles logged within city limits.

Mr. Phillips said that the annual payment from Lake Wales is \$173,467.37 which includes the Squeeze.

4. Authorization To Expend Funds – FY 25/26 Street Resurfacing Program To Asphalt Paving System Inc. (APS)

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff is requesting authorization to expend \$937,319.03 for the FY 2025–2026 annual street resurfacing program. Work will be completed by Asphalt Paving Systems, Inc. under the City's existing resurfacing agreement.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends the City Commission consider taking the following action:

1. Approve the expenditure of \$937,319.03 for the FY 25/26 street resurfacing program using Asphalt Paving Systems, Inc.
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the appropriate documents, on the city's behalf associated with this project.

BACKGROUND The City of Lake Wales has an existing, previously approved agreement with Asphalt Paving Systems, Inc. (APS) for pavement preservation and resurfacing services. Each year, Public Works evaluates roadway conditions and identifies streets requiring resurfacing to preserve infrastructure life and prevent costly future rehabilitation. The FY 25/26 resurfacing program includes improvements along 3rd Street South, 5th Street North, Seminole Avenue, 3rd Street North, 4th Street North, Kissimmee Avenue, Tillman Avenue South, 1st Street South, Russell Avenue, as well as resurfacing within the Library parking lots. A detailed cost breakdown is shown in the attached resurfacing spreadsheet. Resurfacing will be scheduled to avoid peak school times and minimize impact to surrounding neighborhoods.

OTHER OPTIONS The City Commission may choose not to proceed with the resurfacing program at this time. Delaying resurfacing may result in accelerated pavement deterioration and significantly higher future rehabilitation costs.

FISCAL IMPACT The FY 2025–2026 budget provides \$750,000 for resurfacing activities and \$100,000 for the striping program. To fully fund the program cost of \$937,319.03, the remaining \$87,319.03 will be allocated from unrestricted transportation funds.

[End Agenda Memo]

Sarah Kirkland, Public Works Director, reviewed this item.

Commissioner Gillespie questioned the documentation supporting the specific expenditure. Sarah Kirkland clarified the following points:

- **Contract Structure:** The City is operating under an existing multi-year agreement with APS. The annual approval is not for the contract itself, but for the specific dollar amount required for the current year's scope of work.

- **Scope of Work:** A detailed spreadsheet was used to calculate the estimate based on specific street distances and widths.

- **Missing Documentation:** Ms. Kirkland acknowledged that the formal proposal from APS agreeing to the specific \$937,319.03 figure was inadvertently omitted from the initial packet but confirmed it exists and would be provided to the Commission.

5. Approval Of Airport Ford F-250 Vehicle Purchase

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff is recommending City Commission approval for the purchase of one (1) Ford F-250 truck for the Airport, which was budgeted for in the adopted fiscal year budget but was inadvertently omitted in the prior vehicle procurement memo on November 4, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended that the City Commission take the following action(s):

1. Approve the sixty (60) month lease-purchase of the vehicle listed on the attached Bancorp Lease Schedule. 2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents on behalf of the City.

BACKGROUND During the recent vehicle procurement agenda, one Airport-assigned vehicle—a Ford F-250—was inadvertently not included in the list presented to the City Commission. The vehicle was identified

as part of the Airport's fleet needs and was included in the adopted budget; however, due to the timing and compilation of the vehicle list, it was omitted from the prior agenda item.

This item is being brought forward separately to ensure transparency and to obtain formal Commission approval for the Airport vehicle purchase.

The City Commission approved funding for vehicle lease-purchases in the FY 2025–2026 adopted budget. The following vehicle is included in this request: One (1) 2026 Ford F-250 SuperCab XL Trim 4X4, Airport Division This vehicle will support both capital and operational needs at the Airport and contributes to fleet standardization, improving service reliability and maintenance efficiency. Staff recommends the Commission take the following actions; authorize the city manager to sign all documents pertaining to this purchase and authorize the lease-purchase of these vehicles for the following reasons:

- A direct purchase of the vehicle under the Sourcewell cooperative contract would total \$69,536.00. Utilizing The Bancorp's lease-purchase agreement allows the City to finance the acquisition over five (5) years at an estimated annual cost of \$13,907.20, minimizing the impact on current-year cash flow.
- While purchasing outright would avoid financing charges and lower the total long-term cost, lease-purchasing helps preserve cash reserves and provides greater budgetary flexibility.
- All vehicles will be procured through the Sourcewell cooperative contract, exempting the transaction from competitive bidding requirements under Purchasing Ordinance Sec. 2- 418. Cooperative purchasing offers cost advantages and expedites procurement.

OTHER OPTIONS The Airport requires a truck with sufficient hauling capacity to transport the tractor and support airfield operations. The alternative option is to purchase the vehicle outright for \$69,536.00, which would require a larger single-year cash capital outlay.

FISCAL IMPACT The estimated annual lease payment for the Airport vehicle is \$13,907.20 over a sixty (60)-month term. Funds for this lease-purchase were allocated in the FY 2025–2026 Airport budget.

[End Agenda Memo]

Sarah Kirkland, Public Works Director,

6. Southside Force Main Cleaning

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff is recommending the approval to expend funds for \$51,399.60 for the force main cleaning services provided by Professional Piping Services.

RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends the City Commission consider taking the following action:

1. Approve the expenditure of funds for \$51,399.60 for force main cleaning performed by Professional Piping Inc.

BACKGROUND The Southside force main requires cleaning on a periodic basis due to the distance this line must travel to reach the wastewater treatment plant, the low flow conditions, and the drastic topographical changes that exist in the south side force main service area. Sediment such as sand, plastics and paper tend to settle to the bottom of the pipe due to the low velocities of the liquid pushing the sediment. The method proposed for the cleaning of the force main is called the progressive poly pig procedure. Staff recommends the commission take the following action, approve staff to piggyback on the Manatee County Annual contract with Professional Piping Services and accept the price quote submitted by Professional Piping Services in the amount of \$51,399.60 for the necessary cleaning of the force main.

FISCAL IMPACT \$225,000 was budgeted in the Wastewater Division's FY '25'26 M & R Lines and Mains operating budget for this purpose.

OTHER OPTIONS None. Without this required annual cleaning, the force main would become plugged and become inoperable. This in turn would cut off the sewer service for the subdivisions being serviced by this forcemain.

[End Agenda memo]

Sarah Kirkland, Public Works Director, reviewed this item.

Commissioner Gillespie raised a question regarding the documentation of the specific costs and deliverables for the project. Public Works Director Sarah Kirkland clarified the following:

- **Pricing Structure:** The contractor operates under a bid packet originally submitted to a partner municipality (Ormond Beach), which establishes set "per foot" pricing for cleaning services.
- **Cost Verification:** To determine the Lake Wales quote, the contractor applies those established per-foot rates to the specific footage of the Southside force main.
- **Documentation:** Ms. Kirkland confirmed that the quote from Professional Piping Services—showing the exact footage multiplied by the contract rate—was included in the meeting attachments along with the original bid documents for verification.

7. Staff Is Recommending The Approval To Expend Funds For \$87,865.32 For The Force Main Cleaning Services Provided By Professional Piping Services

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff is recommending the approval to expend funds for \$87,865.32 for the force main cleaning services provided by Professional Piping Services.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends the City Commission consider taking the following action:

1. Approve the expenditure of funds for \$87,865.32 for force main cleaning performed by Professional Piping Inc.
2. Approve entering into a Piggyback agreement with Professional Piping for forcemain cleaning.

BACKGROUND The Eagle Ridge Mall Force Main, which includes Chalet Suzanne, Dinner Lake, Lake Ashton and Harding Avenue, requires cleaning due to the distance this line must travel to reach the wastewater treatment plant and the low flow conditions that exist during non-peak hours. Sediment such as sand, plastics, grease and paper tend to settle to the bottom of the pipe due to the low velocities of the liquid pushing the sediment. As a result, the force main would be clogged, crippling the collections system for the service area. The method proposed for the cleaning of these sections of force main is called the progressive poly pig procedure. Each time staff has gone out to bid for these services, the number of responsive bidders has become less each year. In addition, Professional Piping Services (PPS) has performed this cleaning for the past several years. Staff has been satisfied with both the performance and the reports submitted, which are a required component of this contract. Staff is recommending the City Commission take the following action, approve entering into a piggyback agreement with Professional Piping Services for forcemain cleaning and approve the expenditure of funds for \$87,865.32 for the cleaning of the Eagle Ridge Mall Area Force Main which include Chalet Suzanne Dr, Dinner Lake, Lake Ashton and Harding Avenue.

OTHER OPTION None. Without this required annual cleaning, the force main would become plugged and become inoperable. This in turn would cut off the sewer service for the businesses and subdivisions that are in the Eagle Ridge Mall Area.

FISCAL IMPACT \$225,000.00 is budgeted in the Wastewater Division's FY '25-26 M & R Lines and Mains Operating Budget for this purpose.

[End Agenda Memo]

Sarah Kirkland, Public Works Director, reviewed this item.

8. Staff Proposes To Install Approximately 1100 Linear Feet Of 6-Inch Forcemain To Assist In The Expansion Of The Sanitary Sewer System Along Masterpiece Road, Burns Avenue And Buckmoore Road.

[Begin Agenda memo]

SYNOPSIS: Staff proposes to install approximately 1100 linear feet of 6-inch forcemain to assist in the expansion of the sanitary sewer system along Masterpiece Road, Burns Avenue and Buckmoore Road.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended that the Commission take the following action:

1. Approve expending funds of \$368,240.00 to Lopez Underground Construction, Inc. for labor and \$116,943.00 to Hayes Pipe Supply for the purchase of materials to extend the force main along Masterpiece Road, Burn Avenue, and Buckmoore Road.
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the appropriate documents, on the City's behalf.

BACKGROUND As a part of serving the residents of the City of Lake Wales, and expanding the sanitary sewer, the City frequently looks for properties within the City's service area that does not currently have sanitary sewer service. The purpose of this project is to install 1,100 (eleven hundred) linear feet of 6-inch forcemain by directional drill along Masterpiece Road to support the expansion of the sanitary sewer system as a part of the Masterpiece Forcemain Extension. This improvement is intended to increase system capacity, enhance service reliability, and accommodate the anticipated future growth within the area. The proposed installation will help ensure efficient wastewater conveyance and provide the necessary infrastructure to meet long-term community needs. To save time and money this project is a labor only contract. Given the current industry and lead times for material staff will purchase material through a city vendor and supply material to the contractor for installation. Staff solicited quotes and allowed the contractor to determine the method for installation. The lowest bidder provided a bid for directional drill installation. Staff recommends the Commission take the following action, approve expending funds of \$368,240.00 to Lopez Underground Construction, Inc. for labor and \$116,943.28 to Hayes Pipe Supply for the purchase of materials for the forcemain extension on Masterpiece Road and authorize the City Manager to execute the appropriate documents, on the City's behalf. We chose to go along with Hayes Pipe Supply, although they are the highest bidder once Hayes reviewed the submitted plans for this project, Hayes addressed parts and items, we had missed on the initial quote submittal.

OTHER OPTIONS The Commission could deny the expenditure of funds to facilitate the expansion of the sanitary sewer system along Masterpiece Road. If the proposal to install approximately 1,100 linear feet of 6-inch forcemain for the Masterpiece Forcemain Extension is denied, the planned expansion of the sanitary sewer system will be delayed, limiting the system's ability to accommodate future growth and improve service reliability. Existing infrastructure may continue to experience capacity constraints, potentially increasing the risk of operational inefficiencies or service interruptions. Staff may need to explore alternative solutions or revisit the project scope, which could result in higher future costs and extended timelines for addressing the community's long-term wastewater needs.

FISCAL IMPACT The funds of \$116,943.28 for material and \$368,240.00 for labor, totaling \$485,183.28 will come from FY'25-'26 Capital Improvements Force Main Upgrades budget line item.

[End Agenda Memo]

Sarah Kirkland, Public Works Director, reviewed this item.

9. Approval Of Application For Florida Department Of Agriculture And Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry Grant

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS: The City Commission will consider approval of FDACS grant application to enhance storm resiliency by performing preventative tree maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended that the City Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry grant application.
2. Authorize the Mayor to execute the necessary documents on behalf of the City.

BACKGROUND In September 2022, Hurricane Ian struck peninsular Florida with extensive wind, flood, and storm surge impacts, causing significant damage to the urban forest. Hurricane Ian impacted most of Florida, with urban forest damage stretching from Fort Myers to Jacksonville. This grant program aims to restore and enhance urban forests across Florida. Its central objective is to strengthen the resilience of these forests against future storms.

The City of Lake Wales is pursuing a grant application under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Community Forestry – Hurricane Ian Recovery (CF-HIR) Program, funded federally by the USDA and Forest Service. The City intends to pursue funding under the Tree Maintenance project category to enhance storm resiliency by performing preventative tree maintenance, including structural pruning and hazard reduction, on public trees in areas vulnerable to storm impacts. CF-HIR application preparation and submittal will be completed by Hale Innovation in coordination with the City. The application submission deadline is January 30, 2026. The maximum grant amount is \$75,000 and would require a 25% match.

The project areas will include:

- Central Avenue (Hwy. 27 to Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.)
- Central Avenue (Scenic Hwy. to South Lakeshore Blvd.)
- Crystal Lake Park
- Spook Hill (along 5th Street)
- North 3rd Street (Lake Alta)

LAKE WALES CONNECTED PLAN ACTION STEPS

Action # Description

13 Pursue funding/sponsorship for Olmstead streetscapes

49 Install Olmstead streetscapes focusing initially on E. Park Ave from Scenic Highway to Lake Wales; continue implementation throughout Downtown and Northwest Neighborhood as funding is available.

59 Continue to pursue funding/sponsorship for Olmstead streetscapes

OTHER OPTIONS Do not approve the FDACS grant application.

FISCAL IMPACT There is a 25% match required with a \$75,000 maximum grant amount.

[End Agenda memo]

Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager, reviewed this item.

Commissioner Gillespie asked how this is currently addressed? James Slaton, City Manager, said funds for tree maintenance is in the budget but these funds will supplement our resources. They look for any grant to help us with our projects.

10. Special Event Permit Application: Spring Friday Series February - May 2026

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS This is a request from the City of Lake Wales Communications Department to host a series of 4 Friday events in Downtown Lake Wales. The dates are February 6, March 13, April 24, and May 1. This event includes the serving alcohol.

RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends

1. That the City Commission approve the permit application request to host Spring Friday Series on the following Fridays: February 6, March 13, April 24, and May 1.

2. That the City Commission approve the alcohol designated areas shown on the site plan.

BACKGROUND The City of Lake Wales Communications Department has applied to host a series of events on 4 Fridays this spring. The dates are: February 6, March 13, April 24, and May 1. Each date will have a different theme. The events will run from 4:30-8:30 p.m. This event will feature live music, various activities, food and alcohol sales. No roads will be closed.

OTHER OPTIONS Do not approve the permit.

FISCAL IMPACT The City will cover the cost of the additional presence of officers.

[End Agenda Memo]

Eric Marshall, Communications and Engagement Director, presented the vision for the Spring Friday Series, noting that the goal is to build on the success of the Park Avenue ribbon-cutting with "creative engagement" and themed activities. The planned themes include:

- **February:** A Masquerade Party featuring the New Orleans Nighthawks jazz band, local catering from Emerson, and authentic old-school carnival games.
- **March:** The Blarney Ferry Beer Festival, featuring Irish garb contests, specialty beers, and the Lake Wales Islander dancers.
- **April:** A "Mad Hatter Tea Party" with unique interactive elements.
- **May:** A "Cinco de Mayo" celebration in partnership with local businesses like Bullfrog.

Mr. Marshall highlighted that the city is partnering with local NGOs, including Lake Wales Main Street, the Arts Council, and the Little Theater. He also announced that the series has already secured sponsorships from South State Bank and Republic Services.

Commissioner Gillespie asked when the Mardi Gras parade is. Mr. Marshall said February 14th or Valentines Day

Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk, reviewed this item.

11. Special Event Permit: Cork And Keys April 9, 2026

[Begin Agenda Memo]

SYNOPSIS This is a request by Main Street to have a wine walk event called Cork and Keys on Thursday, April 9, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The event will include alcohol.

RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends

1. That the City Commission approve the permit request to allow Main Street to host an event in the downtown on Stuart and Park Avenue and Scenic HWY and First Street to include the serving of alcohol on Thursday, April 9, 2026 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

BACKGROUND Lake Wales Main Street is planning to host a wine walk type of event on Thursday, April 9, 2026 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. This event will allow participants to stroll through downtown with alcohol. Police officers will be present for the event. No streets will be closed.

OTHER OPTIONS Do not approve the Special Event Permit.

FISCAL IMPACT None. Lake Wales Main Street will cover the cost of off-duty officers.

[End Agenda Memo]

Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk, reviewed this item.

12. CITY COMMISSION AND MAYOR COMMENTS

Commissioner Williams said he is excited about all the positive buzz in the City of Lake Wales.

Commissioner Thompson reminded everyone about the upcoming Dr. M L King Jr Day events.

Commissioner Gillespie expressed high praise for Eric and his team regarding the publicity for the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. Day events. She noted that the city's website provided a comprehensive and reliable list of times and details, which she used to inform residents during her recent announcement at Lake Ashton.

Lake Ashton Community Involvement

- Food Drive: The Black Heritage Club at Lake Ashton will host a food drive on January 19th (Martin Luther King Day). Collections will take place in the parking lot adjacent to the clubhouse.
- Community Unity: The Commissioner emphasized the importance of residents supporting activities across the entire city, urging Lake Ashton residents to participate in the broader Lake Wales festivities.

Event Highlights

- Gospel Service: Commissioner Gillespie highlighted the Gospel Singing Service as a particularly inspiring event from previous years and encouraged attendance for the upcoming Sunday service.
- City Identity: She commended the organizers for establishing a strong reputation for Lake Wales' MLK festivities, suggesting that the city's robust commitment to these celebrations may be a unique and defining characteristic compared to neighboring municipalities.

Mayor Hillgoss commended the Lake Wales Live and said that was a good event. He said he appreciated the presentation by Citrus Connection and the positive comments about Lake Wales.

13. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk