



CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
May 20, 2025
City Hall 510 N. Baker St.
Mount Dora, FL 3275

CALL TO ORDER

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor James Homich called the Regular Session of City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Mount Dora Council Chambers.

MOMENT OF SILENCE & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag were led by Mayor Homich.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

James Homich, Mayor
Dennis Dawson, District 3
Marc Crail, District 4
Nate Walker, District 5
Doug Bryant, At-large

Also Present

Vince Sandersfeld, City Manager
Patrick Brackins, City Attorney
Jeanann Hand, City Clerk

Members Not Present

John Cataldo, Vice-mayor
Cal Rolfson, District 2

PRESENTATIONS

1. Community Hero Award Fire Department

Fire Chief Joseph Hightower spoke to Council about the three Lowe's employees who successfully administered life-saving procedures for a cardiac arrest that occurred in their store. The three employees, Jimmy Givens, Robyn McDonald, and Rafael Valdez were present and received a Community Hero Award presented by the Mount Dora Fire Department.

2. Presentation of Eagle Scout Chris Starcher's Completed Project

Library Director Cathy Lunday introduced Chris Starcher, who spoke about his work in the Butterfly Garden, including refurbishing a bench and building a trellis, all without City funding or nonprofit support.

3. Create Conservatory-Nikki Duslak

Councilmember Dawson introduced Nikki Duslak, who founded and is head of school at Create Conservatory. The conservatory provides STEM education through arts integration. They are building a new building and are partnered with the Mount Dora Art League.

4. Forvis Mazars, LLP Audit Presentation

Finance Director Jennifer Gates introduced Bill Bland and Grant White to present information related to the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The presentation is attached to the minutes as Exhibit A.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Homich opened public comment.

Roy Miller, Leesburg, spoke about issues he is having with his property on Thrill Hill Road related to drainage. Mr. Sandersfeld told those present what the City is working on related to this issue.

Paul Ritter, Eudora Chase, spoke about the sidewalks in Eudora Chase and about material that could be used when they are replaced.

Mayor Homich closed public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WALKER TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AMENDED TO REMOVE THE REQUEST FOR ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2025-25, APPROVING AERIAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY AT THE JULY 26, 2025, LAST CALL MOUNT DORA SUMMER CONCERT EVENT; COUNCILMEMBER DAWSON SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Request Approval of Agreement Between the Mount Dora Christian Academy and the City of Mount Dora for a School Resource Officer Program
2. Request Approval of Agreement Between the School Board of Lake County and the City of Mount Dora for the School Resource Officer Program
3. Request Approval of Memorandum of Understanding Central Florida Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force
4. Request Approval to Apply for the Abandoned African-American Cemeteries Grant for the Historic Edgewood Cemetery in the Country Club Development
5. Request Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER CRAIL TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA; COUNCILMEMBER WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Request Approval of Grant Application to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five for the Public Transit Service Development Program funding

Economic Development Director Misty Sommer spoke to Council about the grant opportunity. The City considered applying before the Freebee shuttle was contracted, but the timing did not work. The City requests now applying for expansion of the Freebee service area. It can be applied to new or expansion of service areas. The purpose of this item is just to approve the grant award. Further discussion about the program will take place during budget season. If the City sees it does not need this funding, the City can turn down the award.

Council and staff spoke about fixed routes versus on-demand and about expansion beyond the CRA. The new funding could be used for a new service within the CRA or expanding beyond it.

Council and staff discussed CRA boundaries. The Northeast CRA cannot fund it because it is not in their current plan. Northeast doesn't have the funds for it. Council thanked staff for the recent Freebee quarterly report.

Council and staff discussed Seminole County's recent adoption of Freebee service, fixed routes for the United Methodist Church (UMC) parking lot, and the reports provided on Freebee usage.

Mayor Homich opened public comment. No one spoke. Mayor Homich closed public comment.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER BRYANT TO APPROVE THE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) DISTRICT FIVE FOR THE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDING; COUNCILMEMBER CRAIL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

2. Request for Code Enforcement Fine Reduction for 2719 W. Old Highway 441 Mount Dora

Planning Director Adam Sumner introduced the item. The property was a shopping center, and the code case started circa 2013, beginning with a violation related to a change of use without proper permits. The issue was not resolved, and 1.5 years later there was a lien. The City's total cost incurred to date is \$2,490.00.

Joseph Kovecses, an attorney representing the property owner, was present. The owner didn't understand violation was still standing until the tenant left. The owner is not contesting the finding but is asking the City to waive the entire fine or reduce it to just the administrative costs the City has incurred. Council and staff discussed the justifications for reducing or waiving the fines, going over the processes by which the property owner and tenant are notified of violations, fines, and opportunities for compliance.

Mr. Brackins reminded those present that code enforcement is not about revenue, it is about compliance.

The property owner has no other Mount Dora properties.

Stated expenses include attorney time.

Council and staff discussed the inaction of violators who have appeared before Council, and about the safety issues resulting from code violations.

Mayor Homich opened public comment. No one spoke. Mayor Homich closed public comment.

Council and staff discussed amounts by which the fines might be reduced, and the reasons fines are imposed. Council made clear that safety is a primary concern.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WALKER THAT, IN CODE COMPLIANCE CASE # 2023-0166, THE CITY REDUCE THE FINE BY 25% TO \$5,175 TO BE PAID WITHIN 30 DAYS, OR, IF NOT PAID WITHIN 30 DAYS, THAT THE OBLIGATION REVERT TO THE FULL AMOUNT; COUNCILMEMBER BRYANT SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-0 ROLL CALL VOTE.

YES Dawson

Homich

Walker

Bryant

Crail

NO None

PUBLIC HEARINGS - RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

1. Request Adoption of **Resolution No. 2025-24**, Approving Aerial Fireworks Display at July 3, 2025 Freedom on the Waterfront Event

Mr. Brackins read Resolution No. 2025-24 by title only.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO THE 2025 FREEDOM ON THE WATERFRONT EVENT; PROVIDING FOR LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT; PROVIDING AUTHORIZATION FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAY AND DOCK CLOSURE; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY TO THE CITY MANAGER FOR IMPLEMENTING ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The event is scheduled for July 3rd, and the fireworks launch from Grantham Pointe begins at 9:15 p.m. The City has complied with all requirements and procedures for the fireworks display related to this event. This item is presented to Council because Section 50.250, City of Mount Dora Code of Ordinances requires City Council approval of any fireworks launched in the City.

Mayor Homich opened public comment. No one spoke. Mayor Homich closed public comment.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER CRAIL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-24, APPROVING AERIAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY AT JULY 3, 2025 FREEDOM ON THE WATERFRONT EVENT; COUNCILMEMBER DAWSON SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-0 ROLL CALL VOTE.

YES	<i>Crail</i>
	<i>Dawson</i>
	<i>Walker</i>
	<i>Bryant</i>
	<i>Homich</i>
NO	<i>None</i>

2. Request Adoption of **Resolution No. 2025-26**, Approving New Employee Handbook

Mr. Brackins read Resolution No. 2025-26 by title only.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA, REPEALING AND REPLACING THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE REFERENCE GUIDE IN ITS ENTIRETY; ADOPTING A NEW EMPLOYMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE REFERENCE GUIDE (2025); INCORPORATING REVISIONS TO REFLECT CURRENT EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES, APPLICABLE LAWS, AND THE EXPIRATION OF THE GENERAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT THEREIN; PROVIDING FOR LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT; PROVIDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING

FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The City of Mount Dora Employee Handbook has not received an update in several years. Over time, multiple resolutions and policy changes related to employee matters have been passed independently. This update consolidates all prior employee-related resolutions into a single, streamlined document, ensuring consistency and clarity for both employees and management.

Additionally, with the expiration of the City's General Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), key provisions previously governed by that agreement have been incorporated directly into the handbook. This ensures continued alignment with current practices and legal requirements while providing employees with a single, comprehensive reference for workplace policies and procedures.

This resolution will formally adopt the updated handbook as the governing document for City personnel policies moving forward.

The City's Labor attorney reviewed the new handbook. It was also reviewed by the City Attorney. The new handbook fits the strategic goal of maintaining and retaining the employees the City currently has.

Mr. Sandersfeld said that, if passed, each employee will sign an acknowledgment they have received the new handbook.

Mayor Homich opened public comment. No one spoke. Mayor Homich closed public comment.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WALKER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-26, APPROVING NEW EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK WITH CHANGES TO INFORMATION ON CITY ELEVATION, THE NUMBER OF AT-LARGE COUNCILMEMBERS AND A CORRECTED SCRIVENER'S ERROR; COUNCILMEMBER CRAIL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-0 ROLL CALL VOTE

<i>YES</i>	<i>Walker</i>
	<i>Dawson</i>
	<i>Bryant</i>
	<i>Homich</i>
	<i>Crail</i>
<i>NO</i>	<i>None</i>

3. Request Adoption of **Resolution No. 2025-27**, Donating Mount Dora Police Department Surplus Assets

Mr. Brackins read Resolution No. 2025-27 by title only.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-27

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA APPROVING THE DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS ASSETS WITH NO COMMERCIAL VALUE VIA DONATION; PROVIDING FOR LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY TO THE CITY MANAGER FOR IMPLEMENTING ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY TO THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE; PROVIDING FOR A SAVINGS PROVISION; AND PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS, CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

Chief Gibson explained that certain items and equipment previously used by the Mount Dora Police Department are no longer needed by them. There is no commercial value associated with the items, and it is necessary to dispose of the property. Donating the surplus equipment to the Eatonville Police Department is a practical and efficient way to dispose of equipment that has exceeded its useful life at the Mount Dora Police Department.

Mayor Homich opened public comment. No one spoke.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER CRAIL TO ADOPT REQUEST ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2025-27, DONATING MOUNT DORA POLICE DEPARTMENT SURPLUS ASSETS; COUNCILMEMBER WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-0 ROLL CALL VOTE.

***YES Bryant
Homich
Walker
Crail
Dawson
NO None***

PRIORITY PROJECT UPDATES

1. Odor Issues

Mayor Homich opened public comment.

Mandy Richardson, 30313 Gidran Terrace, spoke about water contamination and called the landfill a nuisance.

Mayor Homich closed public comment.

Mr. Sandersfeld told those present the City is conferring with County representatives and an environmental attorney. A joint representation may be possible to communicate with FDEP and the landfill. It is still being determined whether their interests are aligned. There will be another meeting on Thursday afternoon. It would be beneficial to act jointly.

Council expressed support for the City Manager to sign the engagement letter with the environmental attorney. Extension of the engagement would reach an amount that may require Council approval.

2. Parking Downtown Improvements

Mr. Sandersfeld reported that the City is working toward scheduling a community meeting for one-way parking. The City is reviewing concepts that will be brought forward to stakeholders.

The mayor spoke about the Planning and Zoning Commission working on changes to the Land Development Code.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Steve Langley will be Acting City Manager while Mr. Sandersfeld attends the Florida City/County Manager's Conference the week following the meeting.

An invitation was received for a County meeting regarding fire service updates.

Fire Department Chief Joseph Hightower spoke about fire hydrant flushing and testing.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Brackins spoke about SB 1388, the Energy Source Freedom Act which will become effective on July 1st, and provided an update on the AMCO suit.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Councilmember Dawson spoke about last month's East Central Florida Regional Planning Board regarding trails and the Memorial Day ceremony at Pine Forest Cemetery. Cultural and Special Events Manager Chris Carson provided more information about this inaugural event.

Mayor Homich spoke about a letter received from the Water Authority. He announced his vacation dates.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:54 p.m.



JAMES HOMICH, MAYOR
CITY OF MOUNT DORA



Jeanann Hand, City Clerk
City of Mount Dora