



CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA
CRA BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 16, 2025
Mount Dora City Hall
510 North Baker Street, Mount Dora, Florida 32757

CALL TO ORDER

Having been duly advertised as required by law, at 6:14 p.m., Chairperson Homich called to order the CRA Board meeting in the Mount Dora City Hall Council Chamber.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

James Homich, Chairperson
John Cataldo, Vice-chair
Cal Rolfson, District 2
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
Misty Sommer, Economic Development Director

Guest

Jason Spiegel, Co-founder and Managing
Partner, BEEFREE/Freebee

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ACTION ITEM

1. Request Approval of Master Services Agreement with BEEFREE (doing business as Freebee for Parking Shuttle Transportation Services

Ms. Sommer provided background information on Freebie Parking Shuttle Transportation Services, and Jason Spiegel from Freebie, who appeared via Zoom, presented the year-in-review data.

Ms. Sommer explained the history of the parking shuttle service and the grant application for service development. She informed the Board that the shuttle was recommended in the Downtown Parking Study and was awarded via an RFP, with the agreement covering an initial one-year term and options for additional two-year terms.

The current service involves two vehicles, operating from Friday to Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m., within a CRA geo-fenced area. The annual cost is approximately \$217,000 to maintain the current scope.

The City submitted an FDOT Service Development Grant application (May 2025) to expand Freebee beyond its current footprint. If awarded, funds would be available in 2027; staff estimates that up to 50% of eligible expansion costs (estimated at \$163,000 over three years, based on an estimated \$326,000 expansion) would be covered. Award notices are expected to be issued in Fall 2025.

Ms. Sommer spoke about the business survey distributed July–Aug 2025, which received approximately 26–27 responses. Data reflected by survey results include:

Indication that 81% of downtown employees do not use the shuttle; 77% of downtown merchants felt it is not convenient/beneficial for employees.

The merchant's response indicated that 69% of customers use the shuttle, and 70% felt it was convenient/beneficial for them.

Fifty-three percent of respondents reported that the shuttle service has a positive impact.

Merchants requested expansion of the service area (5 respondents), expansion of days (3 respondents), construction of a parking garage (3 respondents), and exploration of a railroad option (1 respondent).

The survey was promoted and distributed by the City in concert with the Chamber of Commerce. There will be an upcoming utility bill insert promoting the free parking availability at the First United Methodist Church (FUMC). A video is in production to inform the public about Mount Dora's parking options.

Mr. Spiegel presented information about the Freebee service, stating that they had serviced over 23,000 passengers, operating only on Fridays through Sundays with two vehicles. The average wait time was approximately five minutes, and customer ratings expressed 99.6% satisfaction. The peak months for ridership were November through May, with the largest age bracket of users being those aged 51–65. The most popular usage areas were the Downtown core, parks, and off-site public lots, including Palm Island, Liberty/Highland, 106 N. Highland, and the FUMC lot.

Mr. Spiegel stated that the cost to the City per rider was an estimated "\$9 and change" for Year-1 in Mount Dora.

Interior/exterior advertising is an option to offset the cost to the City.

Board members discussed their considerations related to contract renewal.

Mr. Brackins confirmed that termination could take place with 90 days' notice; payment would be due only for services performed up to that date. The presented amendment would extend one (1) additional two-year term; the Master Agreement allows a second two-year renewal if mutually agreed.

The Board discussed cost-per-rider calculations.

They requested that staff provide a zip code breakdown for shuttle usage. Staff and the vendor would provide upon follow-up. It was noted that wave-downs and dispatch calls lack app profile data. The vendor will separate app vs. wave-down counts.

Board members and staff discussed whether CRA funds can support trips that begin or end within the CRA boundaries while crossing outside. Mr. Brackins would research examples and report back; current practice is to limit expenditures so that they are within CRA boundaries.

Board members and staff discussed the possible split of expansion funding. If service were to expand into Northeast CRA and General Fund areas (via the FDOT grant), staff will propose a cost-allocation methodology.

Board members and staff discussed private provider considerations, mentioning Mount Dora Transit as an example. Staff noted that prior attempts to formalize a contract had encountered concerns related to ADA compliance and the tips-based model. Any future shuttle procurement would require competitive solicitation and adherence to insurance/ADA standards.

Mr. Spiegel spoke about Freebee's licensing and insurance, noting that Freebee conducts background checks, pre-employment, and random drug testing. Drivers are required to operate with a Department of Transportation medical card. Their shuttles carry insurance covering up to \$1 million in auto liability, \$3 million in general liability, and \$1 million in workers' compensation.

The CRA Board and staff discussed marketing and education about the shuttle service and other parking options. Staff announced their intention to continue/expand public education by using wayfinding signs to direct visitors to the FUMC and Baptist lots, as well as provide tutorials on how to utilize the City's parking options. Advertising on vehicles would be re-evaluated as staff considered the balance between branding/aesthetics and revenue.

The Board expressed to staff the desire to receive quarterly reports and bring a post-peak season update after the winter season.

Chairperson Homich opened public comment.

Frank Kirwin, 1110 East Fifth Avenue, praised the Freebee model but expressed concern with the cost and the limited service area. He suggested the City promote a local company that can serve all of Mount Dora. He believes per-ride costs are high.

Josh Hemingway, 1177 East Fifth Avenue, spoke about his observations related to shuttle use. He stated that many Airbnb guests are unable to use the service due to its boundaries and hours. He supported working with the local provider, and without CRA subsidization.

Chairperson Homich closed public comment.

The Board expressed the general sentiment to continue the proposed shuttle service as part of a multifaceted parking strategy, including one-way conversions, paid parking, enforcement of restricted parking hours, use of off-site lots, and shuttle service.

The Board's decision would affect the grant award. The Board expressed its desire to determine whether the grant will be awarded to the City.

The Board mentioned the local vendor could operate at the same time as Freebee.

MOTION BY MR. ROLFSON TO APPROVE THE MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENT AMENDMENT WITH BE FREE, INC. D/B/A FREEBEE FOR PARKING SHUTTLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AS SET OUT FOR THE CRA, EXTENDING SERVICE PURSUANT TO THE AGREEMENT; MAINTAIN TERMINATION-FOR-CONVENIENCE CLAUSE; AND TO DIRECT STAFF TO RETURN WITH THE REQUESTED DATA, EVALUATE VEHICLE ADVERTISING OPTIONS, AND SCHEDULE A POST-PEAK SEASON PERFORMANCE REVIEW; MR. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED WITH A 7-0 ROLL CALL VOTE.

**YES Dawson
Crail
Homich
Cataldo
Bryant
Walker
Rolfson**

NO None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chairperson Homich adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.



JAMES HOMICH, CHAIRPERSON
City of Mount Dora



Jeanann Hand, City Clerk