

City Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 12, 2024
[Video and Agenda Packet](#)

Mayor Fred Cleveland called the meeting to order. Also in attendance were Vice Mayor Lisa Martin, Commissioners Brian Ashley, Valli Perrine and Jason McGuirk. Staff present were Assistant City Manager Ron Neibert, City Manager Kevin Cowper, City Clerk Kelly McQuillen and City Attorney Carrie Avallone.

Approval of the Agenda

City Manager asked that item 8B and 8C be removed from the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATION/RECOGNITIONS

David Ray, Maintenance Operations Manager, introduced members of FABA (Flagler Avenue Business Association) who presented highlights of the planned streetscape improvements to be made on Flagler Avenue. Highlighting local artists, with artwork on trash cans, surfing sculptures at each end of Flagler Avenue, new lighting, new self watering planters, and a lighted designation of the Banyan Tree on Flagler as a highlight.

CITY MANAGER REPORT - City Manager, Kevin Cowper

- introduced the new Finance Director, Joanne Drake.
- Reported that the traffic light at Canal and Live Oak Street which was damaged with the recent hurricane will not be replaced. The intersection will now be a 4 way stop.
- There will be a city commission work session on November 18 on the parking study with recommendations presented by the consultant.
- There will also be a public meeting on Storm Water Management Tuesday, Dec 3, at 5:30pm at the Brannon Center. Engineering consultants will be present. The county is offering grants to help with these issues and the city will participate in acquiring grants. He noted that many resources have been directed toward these efforts and the city is serious about dealing with the issues. He referenced the Storm Water Management Page on the city website where much information was available to the public to help understand the process.
- There is a city webpage with information on the Deering Park initiative for residents.
- The storm clean up drop off location which had been 7 days a week was now only open 8-5, for weekend drop off.

Public Participation

- A resident welcomed and thanked the newly elected commissioners/mayor and spoke on the issue of the need to revise the city ordinance for election primary to allow the winner with votes of 50% plus 1 to be the only candidate to move forward to the election ballot rather than have more campaigning until the November ballot.
- One resident spoke on the need to work with the county to resolve the flooding and infrastructure issues in NSB as these are not solely a city issue.
- A resident spoke on the need to review the city charter and suggested changing the mayor to a 4-year term. He felt that the 2-year term is problematic in allowing full "governance" for the position. He also supports the 50%+1 vote in primary to move forward to the general election. Some feel that 2025 could be a time to change the form of government for the city.

- Concerns were voiced on the Venetian Bay, Hidden Pines flooding issue as well as other areas of the city as a regional challenge, not just a city issue.
- A resident spoke on the airport management changes, questioning the airport advisory board and the noise abatement policy.
- Deering Park and the need to reign in on future development are immediate concerns.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda Items 7A-7N were unanimously approved.

The City Manager clarified information on the FDOT project at Corbin Park Road for a traffic signal and funds for the First Step Shelter.

Administrative Items/New Business

8A Charter Officers' Compensation and Contract Discussion

The Commission discussed contract issues, discrepancies, and salary adjustments for Charter Officers (City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk). After discussion, the motion to continue this item to March 2025 was **Approved with 3-2 vote**. Vice Mayor Martin and Commissioner Ashley voted against; Mayor Cleveland, Commissioners McGuirk and Perrine voted in favor.

ORDINANCES - SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

9A Ordinance No. 52-24: Conduct the Second Reading and Public Hearing of an Ordinance, which if adopted, would amend and restate the fire pension benefits. **Adopted unanimously.**

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

11.A Fire Pension Board: Jolene Joyce and Matthew Marteeny were unanimously reappointed to the Fire Pension Board.

11.B Historic Preservation Commission: Karen Lersner, from zone 4 was unanimously appointed to the Historic Preservation Commission.

11.C Police Pension Board: Ron Neibert was unanimously reappointed to the Police Pension Board.

MAYOR AND COMMISSION REPORTS

- Commissioner Ashley reported he enjoyed his first commission meeting as zone 4 Commissioner.
- Commissioner Martin asked to make a motion to make a salary adjustment for the city clerk. Commissioner Ashley seconded the motion. **The motion failed.** Commissioners Martin and Ashley voted in favor. Commissioners Perrine and McGuirk and Mayor Cleveland voted no.
- Commissioner Perrine thanked city staff for efforts on recent storm related activities.
- Commissioner McGuirk reported that he is happy to be re-elected. He thanked the city manager for his efforts on moving forward with water/flooding issues, and working with city, county and state on these issues. He suggested the need for future studies with information to clarify issues for the commission. He discussed purchasing land with Turnbull Watershed funds or having another referendum to see if residents would be interested in this.

- Mayor Cleveland thanked the city manager for his endeavors to work together with state, county, and city to address the issues the city faces. He congratulated newly elected commissioners and stated that he is happy to be a partner with each.

City Attorney's Report

The City attorney addressed some questions which were raised concerning the City Charter Review and special elections for ballot considerations.