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City Hall 229-559-7470
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City of Lake Park
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2025
6:00 pm

Members present were Mayor Jena Sandlin, Council Member Busby Courson, Council Member Zach Fletcher, Council Member Michelle Lane, and Council Member Oscar Griffith

Staff Present: City Clerk Lisa Johnson, Deputy Clerk Laura Levesque, Chief Artavious Verdell, Asst Fire Chief Joey Perkins, Public Works Supervisor Simon Davis, Public Works Technician Jeff Patterson, Volunteer Firefighter Austin Alfaro, Volunteer Firefighter Rachel Gardiner, Municipal Clerk Amber Taylor

Mayor Jena Sandlin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jena Sandlin gave the invocation.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the pledge.

Mayor Jena Sandlin requested a review of the November 4, 2025, meeting minutes. Mayor Jena Sandlin inquired if there were any discussions or corrections.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 4, 2025, the called meeting minutes of October 20, 2025, and the called meeting minutes of November 14, 2025. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Mayor Jena Sandlin opened the forum for questions from the community.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

- Austin Alfaro (Volunteer Firefighter) – Mr. Alfaro requested information and consideration for the City Council to remove Fire Chief Matt Ryan, and they would like to nominate Assistant Chief Joey Perkins to fill the position. The City Council thanked him for his time and stated it would be addressed later in the evening.
- Jeff Patterson (503 Ricks Avenue) – Mr. Patterson would like the City Council to send a letter to the owner of the apartments located on Lane Drive. There is old furniture sitting at the curbside, and there is a litter and debris problem, doors are off the hinges, and one of the units is currently missing doorknobs, but is still occupied. In addition, the drainage area had to be cleaned out of toys and debris from that location.

- Amber Taylor (Municipal Clerk) – Ms. Taylor wanted to bring attention to the positive changes that have occurred in the office since Chief Verdell has been appointed as Interim Chief. Ms. Taylor wanted to express her appreciation of his efforts and accomplishments and wanted to commend Chief Verdell to the City Council. The City Council also expressed its appreciation for the job Chief Verdell is currently doing.
- Arthur Keckley (314 4-H Club Road) – Requested an update on the Antique Cemetery. The Administrative Office is gathering administrative records from the current owners to provide to the City Attorney. Mr. Keckley stated that the antique cemetery did require quite a bit of maintenance to pay proper respect to the residents interred at that location.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Fire Department: Assistant Fire Chief Joey Perkins

- Presented the activity report for November. (7 call responses)
- Stated that currently they are still working on getting the hose lines repaired for the air system, and that the station needs to replace the broken hose reels. The anticipated cost of this is \$300.00

Police Department: Chief Art Verdell

- Presented the activity report for November.
- Discussed some of the challenges the department has faced, but confirmed all agreements are now in place.
- Updated the City Council on the status of the open positions, candidates, and new personnel to fill the existing vacancies within the department.
- Chief Verdell also wanted to reiterate the positive changes that have occurred in the department but wanted to recognize Court Clerk Amber Taylor for her contributions towards those positive changes. He also thanked the City Council for the opportunity to support this community in this capacity. The City Council expressed its appreciation for the job he has been doing.

Maintenance/Public Works Department: Public Works Supervisor Simon Davis

- Presented the activity report for November.
- Stated the need for 8 stop-ahead signs on Long Pond Road and 4-H Club Road.
- Council Member Zach Fletcher addressed the issue of the citizen complaint regarding the Christmas Cards in the median strip. After discussion, the Public Works department will get Chief Verdell to identify which signs were a perceived safety issue, and Public Works will relocate those signs as quickly as possible.
- Council Member Oscar Griffith questioned Mr. Davis regarding Fire Hydrants and water taps, and if this could be done with existing staff and equipment. Mr. Davis stated that some of the processes could be brought back in-house, but there is a challenge when it comes to equipment. Mr. Davis stated that Public Works can begin to complete some of the process (install the saddle and pressure test), and a subcontractor would need to complete it, but this would save the city some revenue.

Administration: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Administration report.
 - Storage building has been delivered. The project plan request is currently being assembled to complete the structure for occupancy.
 - Records Retention. The administrative department is currently working on a plan to digitize records, but is requested to upgrade to an industrial shredder to handle the paper copies once digitized.
 - “Island” Annexation has been turned over to the City Attorney to commence processing. The County Clerk has been contacted and informed.
 - Drainage at Sevilla Springs. The City Clerk and Public Works are meeting with the City Engineer later this week. Public Works is still attempting to locate the remainder of the plans for the area.
 - The Old Lake Park Cemetery. Administration has requested the administrative records from the current owner to be provided to the City Attorney.
 - Policy review and updates are ongoing. The Personnel Policy has been given to the City Attorney for review.
 - Christmas Event is moving forward. DOT has approved the parade route and times. We have 29 confirmed vendors and 11 new Christmas cards.
 - There are various committee vacancies on the various City Boards. Current openings are Citizen Advisory Board (1), Planning Commission (1), Zoning and Appeals (2), and Ethics Committee (1). Council’s assistance is requested and will be required to fill the vacancies.
 - RFP for an audit firm. The city has received one responsible proposal and is currently waiting for one additional proposal. The one proposal received was provided to the City Council.
 - Audit of restricted funds is currently underway to assist with the closeout of ARPA and SPLOST VIII.
 - Submission of 2026 Calendars for approval for Regular Council Meetings, annual holidays, and Municipal Court Dates.
 - Researched the options for time clocks and the possibility of utilizing the same RFID for the time keeping system and entry access. Administration has been researching this possibility and is meeting with vendors.
 - Researched the various options for signage for stop-ahead signs for Long Pond Road and 4-H Club Road.
 - Administration is working on formalizing job descriptions for all City positions.

Financial Reports: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Financial report for September and October
- The City Clerk will request approval of the financial reports during the December 18, 2025, meeting to allow the City Council to review the documents.
- The City Clerk provided the FY2026 Proposed Budget. The Public Hearing date for the budget is December 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. The planned budget adoption meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Unfinished Business

- Additional Signage on Long Pond and 4-H Club Road. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to order 8 of the 18" X 30" reflective signs at \$73.25 each. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.
- RFP for an audit firm. City Council will wait until the December 18, 2025, meeting to allow for other responsible providers to submit a proposal.
- Chief of Police Open Position. Council Member Oscar Griffith stated the field has been narrowed down to 3 candidates. Zoom meetings will need to be set up for full council interviews. Chief Verdell requested that the City Council may want to consider candidates with TAC/LASO certification in place, as there is currently a backlog to receive that training.
- Estimates for Time Clock. Council elected to postpone the selection until the access control meetings occurred to confirm that both systems would operate on the same RFID frequency.
- Fire Department. Council discussed the history of the 501(c) status at the fire station and the pros and cons of this status within the fire department. Assistant Chief Joey Perkins provided background information on the initial filing of the 501 (c) and the current status of the Lowndes County stations regarding this subject.

New Business

- Adoption of 2026 calendars. Council Member Oscar Griffith made a motion to adopt the 2026 Regular Council meeting calendar, Annual Holiday calendar, and the Municipal Court calendar as presented. Council Member Zach Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.
- Request for Industrial Shredder. After discussing the different options presented, the City Council has requested additional information about smaller-sized shredders and a shred-on-site option.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to go into Executive Session to review Personnel, Real Estate, and Minutes Review. Council Member Zach Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council entered Executive Session at 7:08 pm.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to reenter regular session. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council reconvened Regular Session at 8:08 pm.

Council Member Zach Fletcher requested Assistant Chief Joey Perkins to approach the podium. The City Council asked Assistant Chief Perkins if he understood the requirements the City Council had previously presented to Chief Matt Ryan. The City Council also inquired if Assistant Chief Perkins was ready, willing, and able to perform the duties of the Fire Chief. Assistant Chief Perkins agreed. Council Member Zach Fletcher made a motion to remove Matt Ryan as Fire Chief and promote Assistant Fire Chief Joey Perkins as the new Fire Chief. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

The City Council has provided Fire Chief Joey Perkins with an extension until February 3, 2026 for the information previously requested of the prior Chief.

The City Council has requested a copy of the previous by-laws of the Volunteer Fire Department.

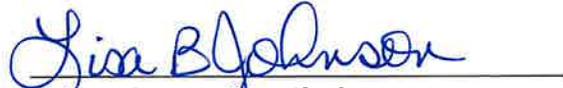
Council Member Zach Fletcher will contact Mr. Ryan regarding the personnel change and request the return of city property to the City Clerk.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

The next regular meeting will be held on January 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.



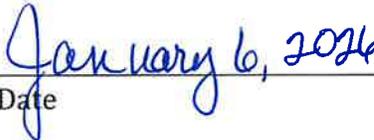
Jena Sandlin, Mayor



Lisa Johnson, City Clerk



Date



Date

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