

A Workshop Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on July 8, 2025 at 5:00 PM at the Commission Meeting Room located at 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Donna Duncan, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Interim City Manager Chris Holley, Finance Director Lee Mathes, Chief of Police Bobby Varnes, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, Attorney Dan Hartman

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash followed by invocation and pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Commissioner Elliott to adopt the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried, 5-0.

Public Comment

Brenda Wilson commented.

Capital Improvement Discussion/ Ranking

Interim Manager Chris Holley highlighted several key points:

1. The state had appropriated the first \$5 million for the city's area of critical concern needs, though the proviso language currently limits use to stormwater and wastewater projects, not drinking water.
2. The Department of Commerce had recently awarded the city \$362,000 for well retrofitting/cleaning services, which needed to be implemented quickly.
3. Several ongoing capital projects were discussed, including:
 - The original town hall renovation downtown (estimated \$300,000 to finish the second floor)
 - The Harbor Master House rehabilitation
 - Temporary city hall relocation
 - HCA building utilization
 - Historical museum project (bids opening tomorrow)
 - Water infrastructure needs (new well and storage tank)
 - Parking lot improvements

Mr. Holley also expressed that the city's capital needs were substantial, and difficult decisions would need to be made regarding funding priorities. He mentioned that the city owns numerous properties that could potentially be inventoried and considered for disposal to generate additional income for capital projects.

Discussion held.

Commissioner Elliott confirmed that the \$362,000 commerce grant had not been revoked but was merely moved to a different funding source (CDBG pot). He agreed with prioritizing water and wastewater infrastructure, noting the need to be fiscally conservative and focus on public infrastructure.

Commissioner George inquired about the timeline for submitting projects for the stewardship funding. Mr. Holly indicated they needed to set priorities relatively quickly, as he had an upcoming meeting next week.

Commissioner Grove commented on the capital improvement plan and noted that the \$5 million funding was specifically tied to the area of critical concerns state work plan, which focused on stormwater rather than potable water.

Drainage Basin Analysis - Phase II Discussion

Cindy Clark from Bay Media introduced the Drainage Basin Analysis Phase 2 discussion, explaining this was a public outreach meeting. She noted that this project expanded on work initiated in 2018, documenting stormwater characteristics and deficiencies contributing to localized flooding within 18 drainage basins totaling 310 acres in the city.

Josh Baxley from Dewberry Engineering presented findings from their field investigation. Key issues identified included:

1. In Basins 2 and 3: Clogged drainage pipes, inlets covered with sediment or overgrowth, and ponding due to blocked flow.
2. In Basins 4-9 and part of 11: Inlets full of sediment, blocked pipe inverts, and general debris.
3. In Basins 13-18: Sediment, overgrowth, inlets full of water, and blocked outlets.
4. In Basin 11: Many areas with no stormwater infrastructure whatsoever.

Mr. Baxley indicated their next steps would include creating a base stormwater model, selecting areas for internal pipe video inspection, and presenting a final report with recommendations.

Public comments regarding drainage issues included:

- Dennis Weiling (117 8th Street) requested priority for Block 60, where stormwater lines are obstructed by sewer lines that collect debris, causing flooding.
- Brian Bernard (235 Center Street) described foundation damage to his home from water flowing down from Avenue D and the Hong Kong Bistro parking lot. He

expressed concern about overbuilding in the area reducing permeable ground space.

- Mary (30 8th Street) questioned whether the existing infrastructure was intact, noting repeated repairs at intersections at 8th and C, 8th and D, and other nearby locations.

Commissioners added the following areas of concern:

- Commissioner Grove: 8th and D intersection, and Myrtle Avenue
- Commissioner Duncan: 22nd Avenue area, which floods during moderate rain events
- Commissioner Elliott requested that maintenance recommendations for clogged inlets be immediately passed along

The meeting concluded with Ms. Clark emphasizing that as stormwater conveyances are identified, it's critical to continue seeking funding to fix them as a city priority.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Brenda Ash, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sheneidra Cummings, City Clerk