

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 6pm, at the Commission Meeting Room located at 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Fl.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner(s) Donna Knutson, Donna Duncan, Adrienne Elliott, Despina George, City Manager Chuck Anderson, City Attorney Dan Hartman, Officer Chase Richards, Grant Contracts Manager Leslie Glaze, and City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash followed by invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Adoption

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Duncan. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2nd Reading and Adoption: Ordinance 2026-01

Mayor opened the public hearing for Ordinance 2026-01. Attorney Hartman read the ordinance by title, describing it as an ordinance providing for the repeal of Ordinance 2024-01, an ordinance providing for new categories for occupational license tax, fixing amounts, and reverting to prior status Ordinance 2005-11, providing for severability repeal and providing for an effective date.

No public comments or commissioner comments were received regarding the ordinance, and the public hearing was closed.

Public Comment

Anita Grove from the Partnership provided an update on the oyster bay opening. She noted that the opening went well, with each harvester receiving 31 tags for commercial use, 153 people applied, and recreational use was at 215. She emphasized that restoration is critical for the bay, as it has been reduced from 10,000 acres to 500 acres. She mentioned that the Partnership would be requesting funding from the legislature and asked if the city could add a letter of support. She noted that the Governor had requested \$38 million for FWC restoration funding this year, compared to \$30 million requested last year (which was reduced to \$2 million).

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Donna Ingle asked when the public could expect an encroachment ordinance, noting that the Commission had directed this several times over the years. Mayor asked Attorney Hartman to address this in his comments.

New Business #1: PNC Board Member Resignation and Member Appointment

City Manager explained that the city received a resignation letter from the PNC Board Vice Chair, Chase Galloway. He recommended accepting Galloway's resignation and moving Greg Golgowski from alternate member to full-time board member. He also noted that a new alternate would be appointed at the next meeting.

Commissioner George moved to accept Chase Galloway's resignation from the PNC Board and move alternate Greg Olgowski to a board member position. Commissioner Elliott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business #2: Audit Continuing Services

City Manager presented an audit engagement letter from Moran and Smith to provide auditing services for the years ending September 30, 2025, 2026, and 2027. He noted that Moran and Smith have provided outstanding service to the city for a number of years, both in auditing capacity and other fiduciary matters. He recommended authorizing him to sign the engagement letter.

Commissioner George moved to authorize the City Manager to sign the engagement letter to extend the contract of Moran and Smith for the city's audit for fiscal years ending September 30, 2025, 2026, and 2027. Commissioner Elliott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business #1: Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 2026-01

Attorney Hartman read Ordinance 2026-01 by title for the second time.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve the second reading and adoption of Ordinance 2026-01. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Unfinished Business #2: Adaptation Action Plan

Cindy Clark presented a revised version of the adaptation action plan that was originally presented in December. She explained that the plan is the city's next step in dealing with challenges experienced from storm surge and potential sea level rise, following the vulnerability assessment completed last year. The plan provides a framework for dealing with these challenges with recommendations and strategies that can be used for infrastructure grant requests.

Clark noted that the draft was presented to DEP following the December meeting and was approved, but DEP requires formal adoption by the city as part of the grant agreement. Based on suggestions made in December, she had modified the plan to include communication recommendations that better connect the city to Franklin County EMS.

These recommendations included providing educational materials relating to resilience through the senior citizen center, coordinating with EMS officials to increase public awareness of area vulnerabilities, creating public vulnerability assessment information by focus area for the county's Special Needs Sheltering Program, and creating a page on the city's website with vulnerability assessment information and links to relevant resources.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve and adopt the revised adaptation analysis and action plan. Commissioner George seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried, 5-0.

Unfinished Business #3: Administrative Official for Plat Approval

Attorney Hartman presented Resolution 2026-01, designating the city manager as the administrative official responsible for approving, approving with conditions, or denying proposed plats or replats pursuant to Section 177.071 Florida Statutes. He explained that the planning department would still review the plats and identify any deficiencies, but the city manager would be the signatory for final approval.

Attorney Hartman read the resolution in its entirety, which designated the city planning department as the administrative authority to receive and perform initial review of plat submittals, and the city manager as the administrative official responsible for approval decisions.

Commissioner George made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-01. Commissioner Elliott seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Mayor and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Knutson mentioned that she and the City Manager had attended legislative days meetings, which she found productive. He also noted that the "call to action" document they were charged with creating at the last commission meeting had been completed, and they were discussing next steps for its distribution.

Commissioner George reported that the city's Parks and Recreation Committee proposed a formal rededication of Lafayette Park to acknowledge various improvements and particularly to honor Marie Marshall for her substantial contributions. The committee suggested a date of March 14, as Marshall would be visiting until the end of March. They would like the city to pass a resolution or proclamation for the event and could bring a draft to the March 3rd meeting. The Commission indicated support for this idea.

Commissioner George also mentioned that she, the City Manager, and various city employees had met with auditors from the auditor general's office as they began the operational audit of the city.

Commissioner Elliott had no comments at this time.

Commissioner Duncan thanked Commissioner Knutson and the City Manager for attending the legislative days, noting that it was a lot of work but appreciated.

City Manager and Attorney Communications

City Manager Anderson reported on several items:

1. He detailed his trip to Tallahassee for legislative action days with Commissioner Knutson, where they had four meetings:
 - Meeting with Alex Reed, Director of the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection at DEP, discussing resilient Florida grants and oyster ball placement.
 - Meeting with Alexis Lambert, DEP Secretary, who indicated that Phase B of the wastewater treatment plant (approximately \$15-18 million) would likely be funded by DEP.
 - Meetings with representatives from Representative Shoaf's office and Senator Simon's office to update them on DEP consent orders, judicial orders, and inspections.
1. He mentioned speaking with potential facilitators for an upcoming city visioning session.

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2. He informed the Commission that the permit section would be closed Wednesday through Friday due to staffing issues, but that a new code enforcement officer, Brandon Henderson, would start the following Monday.
3. He discussed remote participation in commission meetings, noting that the existing system does not allow for it, but a Zoom capability might be possible. He was waiting for confirmation from Howard Technologies on February 11. He asked for commissioner input on whether to pursue remote participation and recommended limiting it to public comment if implemented. After discussion, there was consensus to proceed with exploring this option, with Commissioners Knutson and George strongly in favor.
4. He reported that the city had received the final billing for the aerator and odor scrubber, which was covered by insurance and FEMA with no cost to the city beyond the \$45,000 deductible, which FEMA paid.
5. He noted that vandalism at Water Street Park had damaged the flagpole and historical sign, but a visitor named Drew Brown had donated \$1,500 to help with replacement costs.
6. He provided an update on the JLAC audit engagement, which would focus on October 2024 to December 2025, though some information going back to 2019 was being requested.
7. He mentioned work on integrating the city's procurement policies.
8. He discussed the rate study, noting he was working with Florida Rural Water to try to complete a study in about 4 months rather than 8-12 months.
9. He asked Leslie Glaze, the grant administrator, to discuss the Hill Community Revitalization Project, particularly regarding sidewalks. Glaze explained that the project had been in progress for four years and any changes would jeopardize the grant funding, which expires on September 30, 2026. She sought confirmation that the Commission still supported the current scope of sidewalks without lighting, as Commerce could potentially fully fund the sidewalks but not the lighting.

This led to extended discussion about the project's history and previous commission decisions. Commissioner George expressed concern about proceeding without lighting, which had been a priority. Leslie Glaze shared that according to previous votes, lighting was to be part of phase 2 with additional funding sought later. After discussion, the Commission agreed to proceed with seeking the Dept. of Commerce funding for the sidewalks as previously approved.

Attorney's Report

Attorney Hartman addressed the encroachment ordinance that was brought up earlier, noting that he had submitted a draft in September 2024, received comments from HAPPI, and had been directed to discuss it with them. He promised to circulate a revised draft before the next meeting.

He also reported on the Denton Cove case, stating that the judge had granted their motion to enforce the settlement agreement. Denton must pay \$70,000 or present grant approval by March 30. The judge reserved on the issue of fees, but Attorney Hartman believed they would have to pay fees if they failed to comply.

Commissioner George asked about the election ordinance, mentioning the need to address when new commissioners assume office and whether to continue runoff elections. Attorney Hartman acknowledged receiving her email and would work on it.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Commissioner Knutson seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Adjournment

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Knutson seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Brenda Ash, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Sheneidra Cummings, CITY CLERK