



CITY OF BARTOW
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026 AT 6:00 PM
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
450 NORTH WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
2. INVOCATION - Rev. Jerome Davis, St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
4. PROCLAMATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS
 - a. Issuance of a proclamation recognizing January 19, 2026 as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and George H. Gause Day in the City of Bartow. Being accepted by Mrs. Cheri Kelley, representing the Bartow Deacons and Stewards Alliance.
5. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time, the Commission will receive comments from the public regarding matters not appearing on this agenda.
6. CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS
7. REPORTS OF CHARTER OFFICERS
 - a. City Manager Communications
 1. Employee Resource Group (A-Team) Update
 2. New Employee Orientation Program Update
 3. Presentation of \$3.3M Parks & Recreation Improvements Update — Jason Hargrove Parks, Director of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts
 4. FY 25-26 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects Update — Howard Smith, CRA Director, Billy Groover, Public Works Director & Kyle Lasek, Asst. Director of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts.
 5. Update on Body-Worn Cameras and Red-Light Cameras Programs — Stephen Walker, Chief of Police
 - b. City Attorney Communications

c. Legislative Updates

8. AGENDA MODIFICATION/APPROVAL

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

At this time, the Commission will receive comments from the public regarding matters that appear on this agenda, not otherwise scheduled for a separate Public Hearing.

10. HEARINGS – FIRST AND SECOND READINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Public hearing and final reading of Ordinance No. 2025-25 — AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA; PROPOSING FOUR AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; SPECIFICALLY TO MODIFY SECTION 2.02 RELATING TO THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONERS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.03 RELATING TO THE TIMING OF ELECTIONS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.05 RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF A MAYOR; AND TO MODIFY SECTION 4.06 RELATING TO THE SCHEDULE OF CITY ELECTIONS; PROVIDING THAT UPON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT AT THE NEXT CITY ELECTION FOR A VOTE OF THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE UPON FINAL PASSAGE.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of December 15, 2025 City Commission Regular Meeting minutes.
- b. Approval of November 17, 2025 City Commission Workshop minutes (TPO update).
- c. Approval of July 17 & 18, 2025 City Commission Budget Workshop minutes.
- d. Approval of the Management Career Ladder Relocation PTO Program.
- e. Approval to reappoint Board Member Bill Bohde to the Recreation Advisory Board for a three-year term ending January 2029.
- f. Approval of City Commissioner absences for December 15, 2025 excusals: None

12. OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

- a. OLD BUSINESS
- b. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration of request by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to grant an honorary City of Bartow “Key to the City” to Retired Colonel Cynthia E. Cook.

13. RESOLUTIONS

- a. RESOLUTION NO. 26-4251-R - A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, URGING MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT THE 2026 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES' LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THIS RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER ERRORS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

14. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- a. GARY BALL
- b. LEO E. LONGWORTH
- c. TRISH PFEIFFER
- d. LAURA SIMPSON
- e. TANYA TUCKER

15. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that if you desire to appeal from any decisions made because of the above hearing or meeting, you will need a record of the proceedings and in some cases a verbatim record is required. You must make your own arrangements to produce this record. (Florida Statute 286.0105). The City Commission may continue the public hearing(s) to other dates and times as it deems necessary. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time, and place of any continuation of these or continued public hearings may be announced during the hearing and that no further notices regarding this matter will be published. If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 450 N. Wilson Avenue, P.O. Box 1069, Bartow, Florida 33831-1069 or phone (863) 534-0100 within 2 working days of your receipt of this meeting notification; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 1-800-955-8771. Posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library, the City's website: www.cityofbartow.net and Facebook page on December 31, 2025.



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, across the United States of America, hundreds of thousands of citizens are engaged in honoring the memory and legacy of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, recognition of Dr. King's lifelong contributions to justice, equality, and the quality of life for all Americans has been expressed through the establishment of a national holiday, to be observed on January 19, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the late George H. Gause made contributions to the Bartow community that mirror, on a local scale, the spirit and dedication exemplified by Dr. King on a national level; and

WHEREAS, many citizens of the City of Bartow, Florida, are taking part in commemorations honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Bartow wishes to recognize and celebrate the legacy of George H. Gause for his devoted service to the Bartow community as a Polk County political pioneer, civic leader, and member of the Bartow City Commission for seven years; and

WHEREAS, it is both fitting and proper that this day be set aside to honor the lives and legacies of these two remarkable men.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tanya Tucker, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Bartow, do hereby proclaim January 19, 2026 as:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and George H. Gause Day

in the City of Bartow, Florida, and call upon all citizens to join in appropriate observances recognizing the enduring contributions of Dr. King and Mr. Gause to our community and our nation.

DATED at Bartow, Florida this 5th day of January 2026.

CITY OF BARTOW

ATTEST WITH SEAL:

By: _____
Mayor Tanya Tucker

By: _____
City Clerk Jacqueline Poole

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Tracy Miller, Assistant City Manager
Cherie Kercher, Human Resources Director

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Employee Resource Group (A-Team) Update

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The City of Bartow created the Employee Resource Group, also known as the A-Team in the Summer of 2024. The group originated to provide a conduit between staff and leadership for key initiatives. This has included involvement in the Bright Ideas Program, Wellness Program, Employer of Choice initiative and employee recognition events. The group meets monthly and provides opportunities for collaboration among the various City departments.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The A-Team is an employee-led committee endorsed by City leadership to bring together individuals who collaborate to achieve goals, tasks, and projects that support and advance the City's strategic priorities. The A-Team's mission centers on, "Building a better future for employees."

Being inclusive and engaging with employees is essential to the City of Bartow's continued growth, innovation, and organizational excellence. The A-Team serves as an important component of the City's commitment to fostering a workplace culture where every voice matters and strengthens the sense of belonging among employees. The group is also designed to support leadership in positioning the City of Bartow as an "Employer of Choice" by developing and implementing initiatives that enhance the employee experience, strategic planning and workplace culture.

At the December 18, 2025 A-Team meeting, members completed an update to the Charter for the group. The Charter had been the subject of the last two meetings where participants discussed formalizing participation and roles as well as overall membership in the group. The Charter revision was needed to help clarify terms and roles of committee members.

Additionally, at the December 18 meeting, the group had a heartfelt conversation about the values of our organization in 2025 and going forward led by Dr. John Daly. Leadership present included City Manager Mike Herr, Assistant City Manager Tracy Miller and Human Resources Director Cherie Kercher. Dr. Daly posed the question to each member relating to why they were

drawn to public service, and why they stay at Bartow. The resulting values statement was drafted as a function of that conversation.

Bartow One Team...

Is a family-oriented organization that values work-life balance, opportunities to grow and perform challenging work assignments. We come to work committed to collaborate with our team and we love to see the positive results of our work in the community. When tested, we demonstrate our ability to be resilient and adapt to best serve the public.

The A-Team will be instrumental in finalizing the City of Bartow Values. This is an important step in assisting with the implementation of the City's Performance Evaluation program that will begin in January 2026. The A-Team will provide insight into performance evaluations over the course of January to March 2026 on our new NeoGov Human Resources Management System. Full implementation of the Performance Evaluation program will be completed by the Summer of 2026.

Additionally, these values provide a kick-off to the City's upcoming strategic planning process. While still in draft stages, the Strategic Planning process will incorporate the involvement of the A-Team as well as all staff, the Commission and the public.

Lastly, beginning in January 2026 we will work to promote openings to fill vacant spots on the committee. We have increased the size of the group to 23 members that will have two year terms based on designated timeframes for their department.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

No action required

ATTACHMENTS

1. Charter - rewrite v2

Employee Resource Group Committee Charter

AKA: The A Team

Purpose:

This charter establishes the mission, objectives, and operational framework of the City of Bartow's Employee Resource Group (ERG) also known as **The A-Team**. ERG is an employee-led committee endorsed by City leadership to bring together individuals who collaborate to achieve goals, tasks, and projects that support and advance the City's strategic priorities.

Being inclusive and engaging with employees is essential to the City of Bartow's continued growth, innovation, and organizational excellence. ERG serves as a key component of the City's commitment to fostering a workplace culture where every voice matters and strengthens the sense of belonging among employees. The group is also designed to support City leadership in positioning the City of Bartow as an "Employer of Choice" by developing and implementing initiatives that enhance employee experience, strategic planning, workplace culture, and community engagement.

A-Team Mission:

Building a better future for employees.

The A-Team Values:

Integrity, accountability, transparency, communication and compassion.

Key Objectives:

- Promote a transformational work culture.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and networking.
- Support City strategic initiatives that align with A-Team interests.
- Facilitate communication between members, employees and City leadership.

ERG Structure and Leadership Team:

The ERG Committee is limited to no more than 23 members, with consideration of all departments of the city represented based on the number of employees within the department.

Position	Term Duration	Responsibilities
ERG Chairperson	2 Years	The overall lead for the committee who works with executive leadership to set and manage the agenda.
ERG Co-Chair	2 Years - staggered with term of the Chair, if possible.	Serves in place of the Chair in their absence. Provides meeting minutes summary for approval following each monthly meeting.

Executive Sponsor (City Management Staff or HR Director) - Non-voting Committee Member	Not applicable	Provides two-way communication between City leadership and the A-Team. Ensures that the voices of the group are heard at a strategic level.
--	----------------	---

Committee & Employee Membership:

All City of Bartow employees in the Career Ladder Categories of Administrative/Technical, Operations or Supervisor are eligible to apply to serve on the ERG committee, subject to available vacancies. ERG vacancies will be promoted using the internal job openings process on the City's Human Resources Management System. Appointments to the ERG committee will take into account representation among departments, diversity of position among the committee members, and interest in serving fellow employees.

Those staff members in the Management Career Ladder Category shall not serve as members of the ERG committee, to ensure participation within the ranks of the organization. If an ERG member is promoted to the Management Ladder, they will vacate their position on the ERG Committee. Final determination of committee composition will be made by Bartow's Human Resource Director and the City Manager's Office.

ERG Committee members serve as formal voting members, and their committee positions cannot be substituted with another departmental or employee representative. A quorum consists of a minimum of 15 members in attendance. A simple majority is required to obtain an affirmative vote of the ERG Committee.

Attendance at ERG meetings is an important commitment to the group. ERG members who are not in attendance for three consecutive meetings will be removed from the committee unless authorized to remain by the City Manager's Office. Non-committee employees may attend monthly meetings, engage with ERG committee members, and will be provided opportunities to share input to promote employee growth and a positive workplace culture.

Appointments to the Employee Resource Group Committee shall be designed to allow staggering of approximately half of the ERG Committee each year, to allow retention of talent and experience among the A-Team. Appointments or reappointments to the ERG Committee align with each annual year beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31 of each calendar year and participation is a two-year commitment.

Even Year Terms by Department

- Building/Planning (1)
- City Clerk's Office (1)
- Code Compliance and Neighborhood Services (1)
- Fire Services (2)
- Human Resources (1)
- Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts (3)
- Public Works (2)
- Organization At-Large (1)

Odd Year Terms Departments

- City Manager's Office (1)
- CRA (1)
- Electric (2)
- Finance (1)
- Information Technology (1)
- Police (2)
- Utilities (2)
- Organization At-Large (1)

Meetings:

ERG will hold monthly meetings to discuss activities, updates and concerns. Ideally, a scheduled monthly day and time can be determined at the first meeting in January for all meetings to allow ERG committee members the greatest opportunity to block out this uniform time commitment of each monthly meeting.

Activities Accountability and Reporting:

The ERG Chair will submit semi-annual reports detailing their activities, achievements and challenges. These reports are due no later than June 30th and December 31st of each year. Reports should be submitted to the HR Director as well as to the City Manager's Office. Feedback will be provided by city leadership to ensure alignment with organizational objectives.

Review and Amendments:

This charter is to be reviewed annually. Amendments can be proposed by any ERG member and will be approved by a two-third's majority of the ERG committee leadership.

Code of Conduct:

Members are not allowed to breach other policies of the City and must always adhere to the code of conduct of the City.

Code of Ethics:

Members are public servants of a local entity and are responsible to adhere to the Florida State Statute governing the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees (Florida State Statute Chapter 112). Review and adherence to the City of Bartow Human Resources Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Chapter 12: Standards of Conduct is required.

This charter serves to define and guide the functions of the group, ensuring the success and alignment with the City values and objectives.

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Tracy Miller, Assistant City Manager
Cherie Kercher, Human Resources Director

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: New Employee Orientation Program Update

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The City Manager authorized an agreement with F.O.R.T.E. Services to create a City of Bartow New Employee Orientation - OnBoarding Program in January 2025. Recognizing the importance of welcoming new employees into the organization, the purpose of the program is to formalize the onboarding experience for new hires to give them the best chance of succeeding with the City. This is an important element of the Employer of Choice Initiative and, as such, has been included within the Human Resources Policies, Procedures and Guidelines that was adopted on September 16, 2025.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Tracy Miller and Cherie Kercher worked with Connie Minich of F.O.R.T.E. Services to develop a New Employee Orientation (NEO) program, following guidance from City Manager Mike Herr. The program is scheduled to go into effect in January 2026. The purpose of the NEO program is to welcome new hires to the City of Bartow, educate them on the City's mission and vision, and provide essential information and resources needed for a successful career with the organization.

As part of the Employer of Choice Initiative, the program enhances efficiency in Human Resources processes through a cohort-based model, offering two start dates per month. Each month concludes with a group luncheon and city tour for all new hires. Together, these elements "bookend" an employee's first month, promoting engagement, consistency, and successful integration into the City of Bartow.

Day One NEO incorporates the following agenda:

- 8:00AM | Employees Report to Their Department First and Then Report to NEO
- 10:00AM | NEO Kick-Off and HR Department Overview
- 10:15AM | City Mission, Vision and Values
- 10:45AM | Break

- 11:00AM | People Map Exercise
- 11:30AM | Working Lunch
 - Highlights of Employer of Choice Opportunities for City Employees: Career Ladder System, Educational Assistance, Health Fair, Bright Ideas Innovation Program, EAP, etc. Will include a member of the A-Team.
- 12:00PM | HR Team to Complete On-Boarding Paperwork with New Employees
- 1:30PM | IT Department Technology and Email Information
- 3:00PM | Employees Return to Their Departments

Day Two City Manager's New Employee Luncheon and City Tour Agenda includes the following:

- 9:00AM | Meet at the Polk County History Center and Genealogical Center for Speaker or Video
- 9:30AM | Walk to IT, Police and Fire (Load Van at Fire Department)
- 10:30AM | Load Van for City Tour
 - Drive past 555 Sports Complex
 - Park at Civic Center Walk to Library
 - Drive by Pittas Field, Sound Stage, and Soccer Fields
 - Drive through Mary Holland Park
- 11:45 a.m. | Welcome at Pro Shop and Lunch with Mr. Herr and City Leadership at Mulligan's Golf Course
- 12:45 p.m. | Load Van to Return to Parked Cars

2026 New Employee Orientation and City Manager Luncheon Dates:

January Class Dates – Jan. 12 and Jan. 26, Luncheon – January 30

February Class Dates – Feb. 9 and Feb. 23, Luncheon – February 27

March Class Dates – March 9 and March 23, Luncheon – March 27

April Class Dates – April 13 and April 27, Luncheon – May 1

May – May 11 and May 26, Luncheon – May 30

June – June 8 and June 22, Luncheon – June 26

July – July 13 and July 27, Luncheon – July 31

August – Aug. 10 and Aug. 24, Luncheon – August 28

September – Sept. 14 and Sept. 28, Luncheon – October 2

October – Oct. 12 and Oct. 26, Luncheon – October 30

November – Nov. 9 and Nov. 23, Luncheon – December 4

December – No NEO in December

The New Employee Orientation program represents a strategic investment in the City of Bartow's workforce and organizational culture. By providing a consistent, welcoming, and informative onboarding experience, the City reinforces its commitment to being an Employer of Choice while improving efficiency in Human Resources operations. This structured, cohort-

based approach ensures new employees are well supported from their first day through their first month, positioning them for long-term success and engagement with the City of Bartow.

FISCAL IMPACT

FY 2025-2026 Human Resources Operating Expenses of \$10,000

RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENTS

None

\$3.3 Million Parks Improvement Plan Completion

PRCA Director – Jason Hargrove

PRCA Assistant Director - Kyle Lasek



City of Bartow



Polk Street Community Center



- Outdoor Basketball Goals —
 - Budget **\$9,000** | Actual **\$6,389.12** | Difference **\$2,610.88**
- Concession/Press Box Painting —
 - Budget **\$4,500** | Actual **\$16,000** | **\$11,500**
- Baseball Dugouts —
 - Budget **\$9,000** | Actual **\$7,011.63** | Difference **\$1,988.37**





MLK Gazebo



- Restroom—
 - Budget \$200,000 | Actual \$127,240 | Difference **\$72,760**
- Grill
 - Budget \$12,877 | Actual \$5,000 | Difference **\$7,877**

Bartow Civic Center & Pittas Park



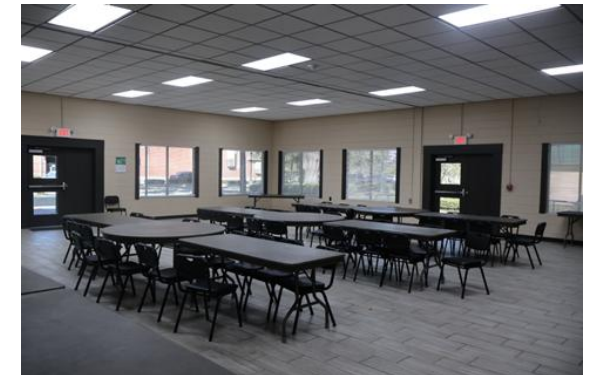


Civic Center & Pittas Budget Results

- Baseball Lighting (LEDs) —
 - Budget \$162,000 | Actual \$152,003 | Difference **\$9,997**
- Backstop Fencing —
 - Budget \$120,000 | Actual \$43,805 | Difference **\$76,195**
- Shed & Tennis Painting —
 - Budget \$10,000 | Actual \$24,500 | **-\$14,500**
- Kitchen Renovation —
 - Budget \$53,500 | Actual \$85,050.27 | **-\$31,550.27**



- Additional projects
- AC Unit
- Fire Alarm Panel
- Interior Painting
- Roof Replacement – South Building
- Playground Platforms





Carver Recreation Center

- Playground Steps & Platforms —
 - Budget \$49,500 | Actual \$48,779 | Difference \$721
- Fire Alarm Panel —
 - Budget \$23,950 | Actual \$5,127.17 | Difference \$18,822.83
- Inside Painting —
 - Budget \$12,000 | Actual \$3,500 | Difference \$8,500
- AC Unit —
 - Budget \$25,000 | Actual \$38,785 | -\$13,785
- Roof Replacement (South Building) —
 - Budget \$64,103 | Actual \$43,300 | Difference \$20,803



Bartow Sports Complex



- 555 Football Fencing —
 - Budget \$20,100 | Actual \$19,940 | Difference **\$160**
- Football Goal Posts —
 - Budget \$19,000 | Actual \$14,787 | Difference **\$4,213**
- Football Goal Posts —
 - Budget \$19,000 | Actual \$14,787 | Difference **\$4,213**
- RC Track Fencing—
 - Budget \$17,543 | Actual \$15,450 | Difference **\$2,093**

Mary Holland Park



- Main Entrance Fencing —
 - Budget \$26,000 | Actual \$18,260 | Difference **\$7,740**
- Picnic Tables —
 - Budget \$53,600 | Actual \$40,155.20 | Difference **\$13,444.80**
- Pavilions/Restroom Painting —
 - Budget \$55,000 | Actual \$13,000 | Difference **\$42,000**
- Playground Surface —
 - Budget \$20,000 | Actual \$20,000 | Difference **\$0**
- Rubber Mulch —
 - Budget \$87,000 | Actual \$37,505 | Difference **\$49,495**



Summerlin Park

- Restroom Painting —
 - Budget \$3,000 | Actual \$7,500 | **\$4,500**
- Basketball Court—
 - Budget \$85,600 | Actual \$171,121 | **\$85,521**



Restrooms



Richland Manor Park

- Playground Equipment—
 - Budget \$102,000 | Actual \$74,176 | Difference **\$27,824**
- Restroom—
 - Budget \$250,000 | Actual \$274,111 | Difference **\$24,111**
- Athletic Court—
 - Budget \$206,000 | Actual \$300,788 | Difference **\$94,788**





Richland Manor Results



**Richland Manor Park is
RENEWED AND
READY FOR PLAY!**

**Come join the party as the
City of Bartow celebrates the
reopening of**

**FREE
CookOut!**

**All are
WELCOME!**

**RICHLAND MANOR PARK,
920 Bear Creek Drive
Saturday, Jan.10
from 11AM - 1PM**

Presentation at 11:30am



City of Bartow

Polk County's Capital City



Financials to Date

Budgeted Amount

- \$3,287,958

Additional Funds Received

- CRA - \$603,189
 - (2 Restrooms)
- Kiwanis Club - \$25,000
 - (Civic Center Kitchen)

Total Funds:

- \$3,915,816.00

Final Expenses:

- \$3,659,304.47

Under Budget by

- \$256,511.53



SKATE PARK MHP



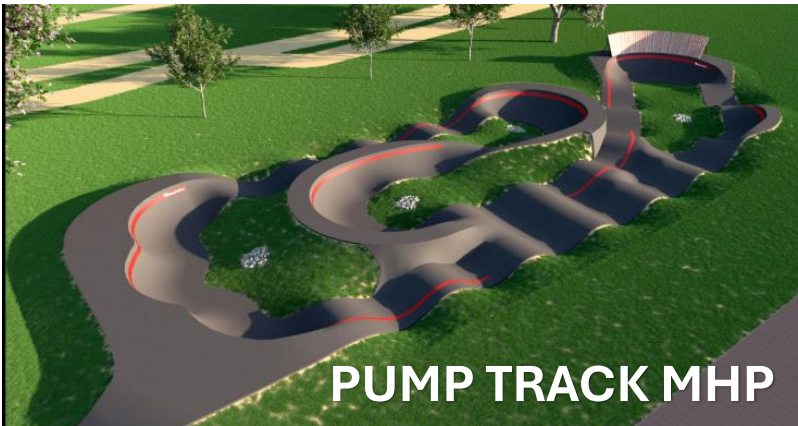
**NEW GOLF
CART BARN**



**ALL-INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND
MCLEOD PARK**



**LIGHTS AT CARVER REC
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD**



PUMP TRACK MHP

In the Works for 2026

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT

Project SAFE

SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY FOR
EVERYONE

Billy Groover Public Work Director



City of Bartow



Project Overview

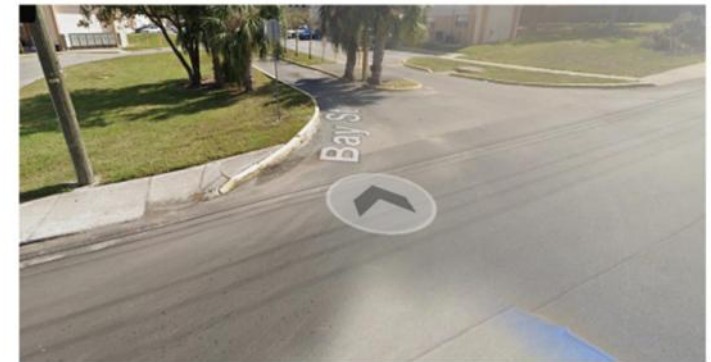
The City of Bartow Public Works Department seeks to utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to construct sidewalk and curbing improvements along Golfview Avenue from Georgia Street East to MLK Boulevard.

The project will include the installation of 2,200 feet of new sidewalks within the designated CDBG area.

The total CDBG funding available for this project is \$201,413, sourced from the FY 2024-2025 and FY 2025-2026 funding cycles.



Impact Areas





CDBG National Objectives CDBG-funded projects must meet one of three national objectives:

- Benefit low and moderate-income people and areas.
- Prevent or Eliminate slums and blighted areas.
- Address urgent community development needs posing a serious threat to a Community Area.

Alignment with CDBG Priorities

This project supports the priorities of the CDBG program in the following ways:

- **Enhancing Infrastructure in Low- and Moderate-Income Areas:** The sidewalk installation will improve pedestrian access and safety in a designated CDBG area, benefiting residents who rely on walking as a primary mode of transportation.
- **Promoting Safe and Walkable Communities:** The new sidewalks will reduce pedestrian vehicle conflicts, enhance mobility, and ensure ADA compliance, making the area safer and more accessible.
- **Preventing and Eliminating Blight:** Infrastructure improvements contribute to the revitalization of neighborhoods, preventing deterioration and increasing property values.
- **Supporting Community Development Goals:** The project aligns with broader efforts to create livable, connected, and pedestrian-friendly environments that enhance residents' quality of life.

CDBG programs and projects provide communities with resources to address a wide range of community development needs. This project aligns these objectives by improving public infrastructure in a designated CDBG area



This project aligns with the City of Bartow's ongoing efforts to improve public infrastructure and enhance pedestrian safety while ensuring compliance with all necessary regulations and funding requirements.

The Golfview Avenue Sidewalk and Curbing Improvements project represents a vital investment in the City of Bartow's infrastructure, directly benefiting residents by enhancing pedestrian safety, accessibility, and neighborhood aesthetics. By utilizing CDBG funding, the City of Bartow is ensuring that federal resources are effectively deployed to support the needs of low- and moderate-income communities while adhering to all safety and regulatory requirements.

This project will not only create a more walkable and connected community but will also contribute to the long-term revitalization efforts aimed at fostering safer, healthier, and more vibrant neighborhoods for all residents. Through careful planning, procurement, and execution, the City of Bartow remains committed to utilizing CDBG funds efficiently and responsibly to maximize positive impacts on the community.

Sidewalk Dimensions and Materials

The planned sidewalks along Golfview Avenue will be constructed with the following specifications:

- **Width:** Standard sidewalk width will be 5 feet to accommodate pedestrian traffic, including individuals using mobility aids.
 - **Thickness:** Sidewalks will be constructed with a minimum thickness of 4 inches, increasing to 6 inches at driveways for durability.
- **Material:** The sidewalks will be made of reinforced concrete, ensuring longevity and resistance to weather conditions.
 - **Curbing:** Concrete curbing will be installed alongside the sidewalks to enhance drainage and provide structural support.
- **ADA Compliance:** Curb ramps with tactile warning strips will be included at intersections and key pedestrian crossings to ensure accessibility.



Safety Benefits

The proposed sidewalk improvements will enhance pedestrian safety by providing a designated, ADA-compliant walking path along Golfview Avenue. Key safety and accessibility benefits include:

- Improved pedestrian connectivity and mobility within the neighborhood.
 - Reduction of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, decreasing accident risks.
- Compliance with all Federal, State, County, and City regulations regarding safety and walkability.
- Ensuring ADA compliance at all intersections, improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- Providing a more structured and appealing community infrastructure, fostering a sense of community pride



Compliance and Procurement Process

This project will adhere to all applicable procurement and construction regulations, including:

- Meeting Federal, State, County, and City safety and walkability guidelines.
- Ensuring ADA compliance at intersections and key pedestrian access points.
- Following the City of Bartow's Procurement process to hire a qualified contractor.
- Complying with all HUD rules and operating regulations for federally funded projects.

Project Timeline

- **March 13, 2025: Submit Proposal to Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development**
 - One original and one copy of collated materials to be mailed to:
 - Housing and Neighborhood Development
 - Post Office Box 9005, Drawer HS04
 - Bartow, FL 33831-9005
- **April 2025: RFP Announcement by City of Bartow's Procurement Department**
 - RFP advertised for 30 days.
 - The review committee assembled during the advertisement period.
- **May 2025: Project Award based on RFP Process.**
- **July 2025: Installation of sidewalks begins.**



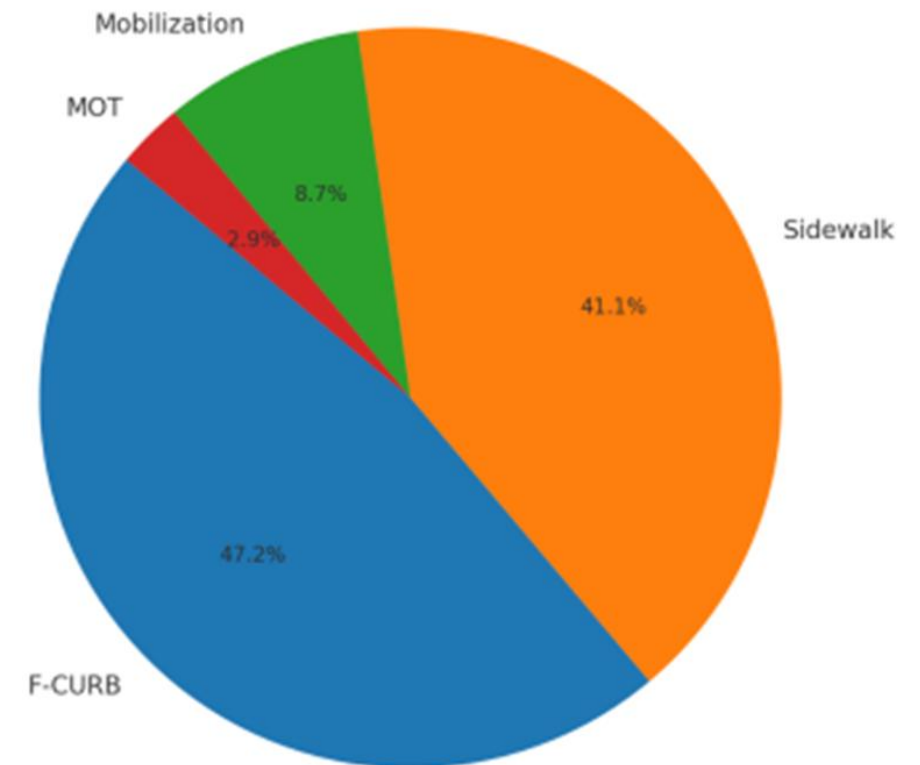
Project Budget

Golfview Ave Curbing and Sidewalk Budget Allocation

Funding & Budget

- **Funding Source:** Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - FY 2024-2025 and FY 2025-2026
- Total Project Budget: \$172,288.89

Golfview Ave Budget Expense Category	Unit Cost	Estimated Cost
F-Curb @ 2200	\$37.00	\$81,400
Sidewalk @ 122.2	\$58.00	\$70,888.89
Equipment Mobilization	N/A	\$15,000
Maintenance Of Traffic- MOT	N/A	\$5,000
Total Project Cost		\$172,288.89



Carver Recreation Center Funding Request

Presenter:

Kyle Lasek

Assistant Director

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts



City of Bartow



Description

Carver Recreation Center is located on the east side of Bartow. This facility boasts a large amount of outdoor space which includes, a large ball field, large Pavilion, and playground.

We are applying for a CDBG: Community Development Block Grant of \$216,000 to provide and improve the amenities at Carver Recreation Center, to continue to provide our diverse community with inclusive means to live an active, healthy lifestyle, while extending usage hours



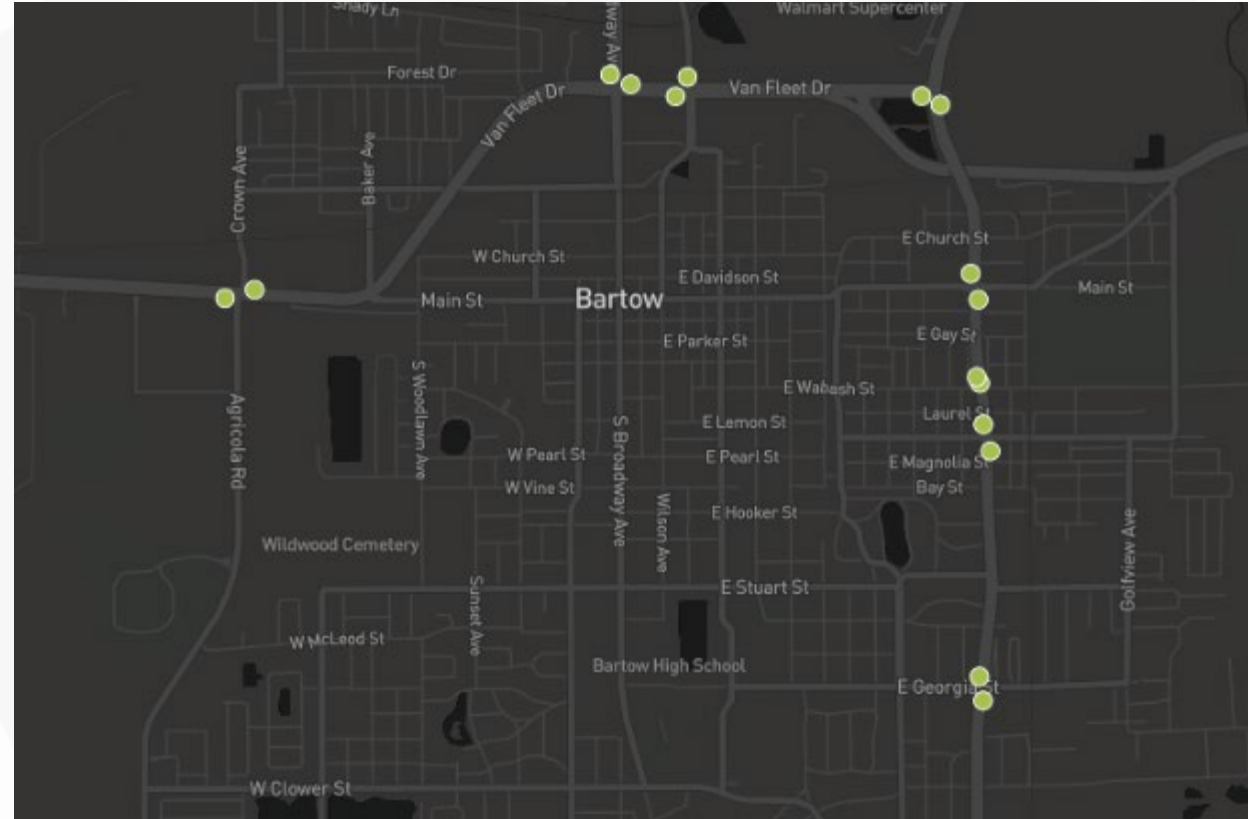


Carver Recreation Improvement Cost

- Install four (4) 1500-Watt Light Fixtures and One (1) Ballast box on each of the 8 existing poles.
- We are using the fixtures and boxes from the 555 Sports complex renovation
- Build one (1) 200amp 3-phase 120/240-volt Service
- Provide and install Hoffman box with four (4) 60amp lighting contactors adjacent to the service panel
- Extend four (4) 50amp single phase, 240 volt circuits from the contactor box to each pair of light poles.
- \$52,000.00



Red Light Camera Update 4/21/2025-12/16/2025



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – 4/21/2025-12/16/2025

• SB Wilson Ave @ SR 60	865 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• EB SR 60 @ Wilson	846 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• EB SR 60 @ Crown	350 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• WB SR 60 @ Crown	512 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• NB 17 @ E Van Fleet	770 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• EB Van Fleet @ 17	84 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• SB 98 @ SR 60	321 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
• WB 60 @ US 98	1,557 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued



Red-Light Camera Update – 4/21/2025-12/16/2025

- NB US 17 @ Main 2,520 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- SB US 17 @ Main 944 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- NB US 17 @ Wabash 1,073 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- SB US 17 @ Wabash 578 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- NB 17 @ M.L.K 1,210 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- SB 17 @ M.L.K 337 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- NB US 17 @ Georgia 70 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued
- SB US 17 @ Georgia 252 Warnings/N.O.V.'s issued

- Note: Approximately 2,597 violations left to review for Dec 2025.



Red-Light Camera Update – 4/21/2025-12/16/2025

	Warnings			Notice of Violation		
	Reviewed	Issued	% Approved	Reviewed	Issued	% Approved
Apr	180	128	71%	0	0	N/A
May	1010	839	83%	207	169	82%
Jun	53	41	77%	1077	899	83%
Jul	101	77	76%	1170	944	81%
Aug	728	336	46%	1431	1041	73%
Sep	156	67	43%	2041	1290	63%
Oct	0	0	N/A	2230	1465	66%
Nov	2150	1488	69%	2134	1490	70%
Dec	1400	904	65%	1578	1111	70%
Total	5778	3880	66%	11868	8409	73%

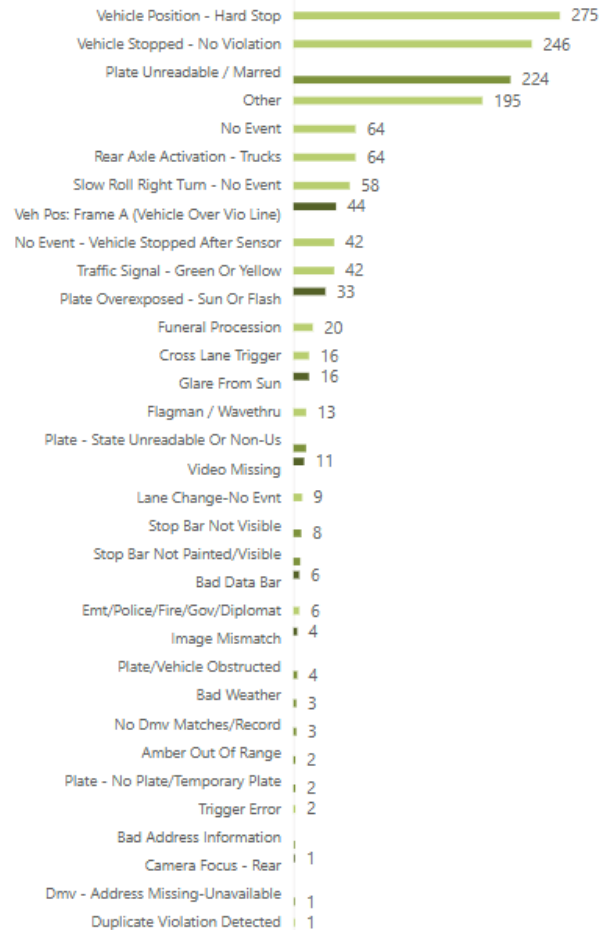
04/21/2025 through 12/16/2025



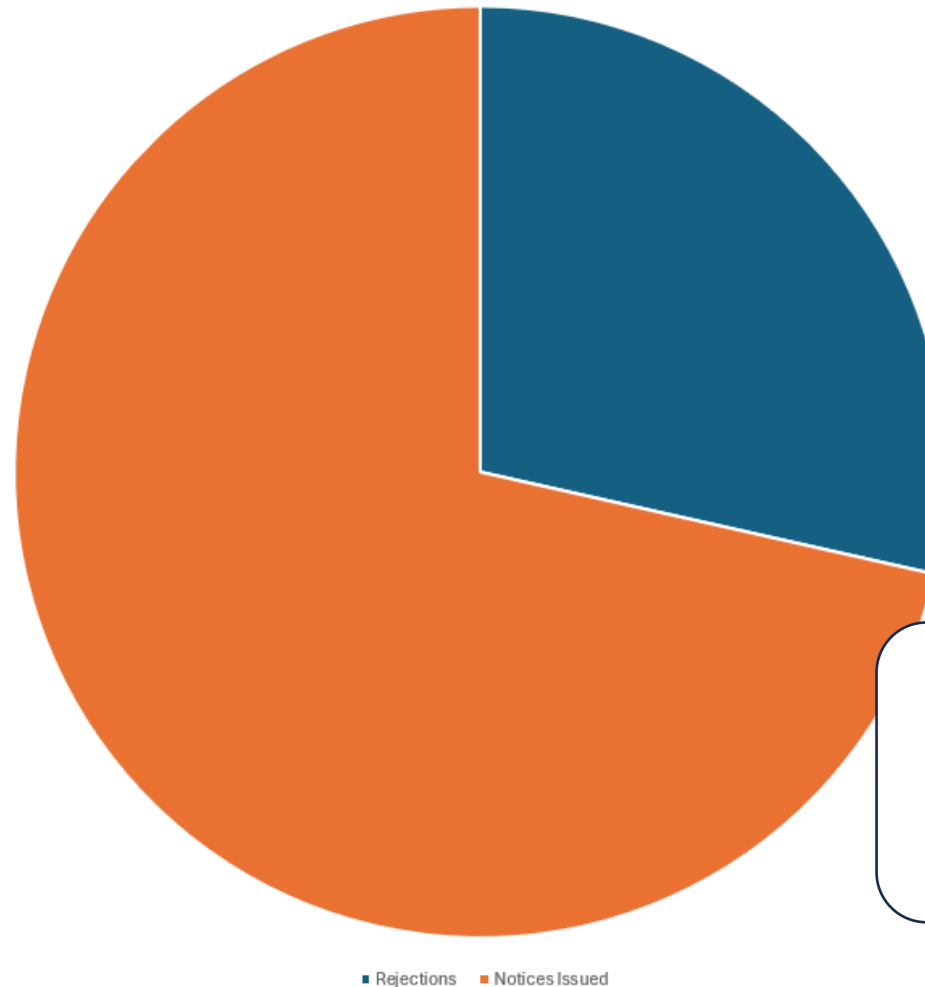
BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Rejections by Officers

TYPE ● Controllable ● Non-Event ● Not Controllable



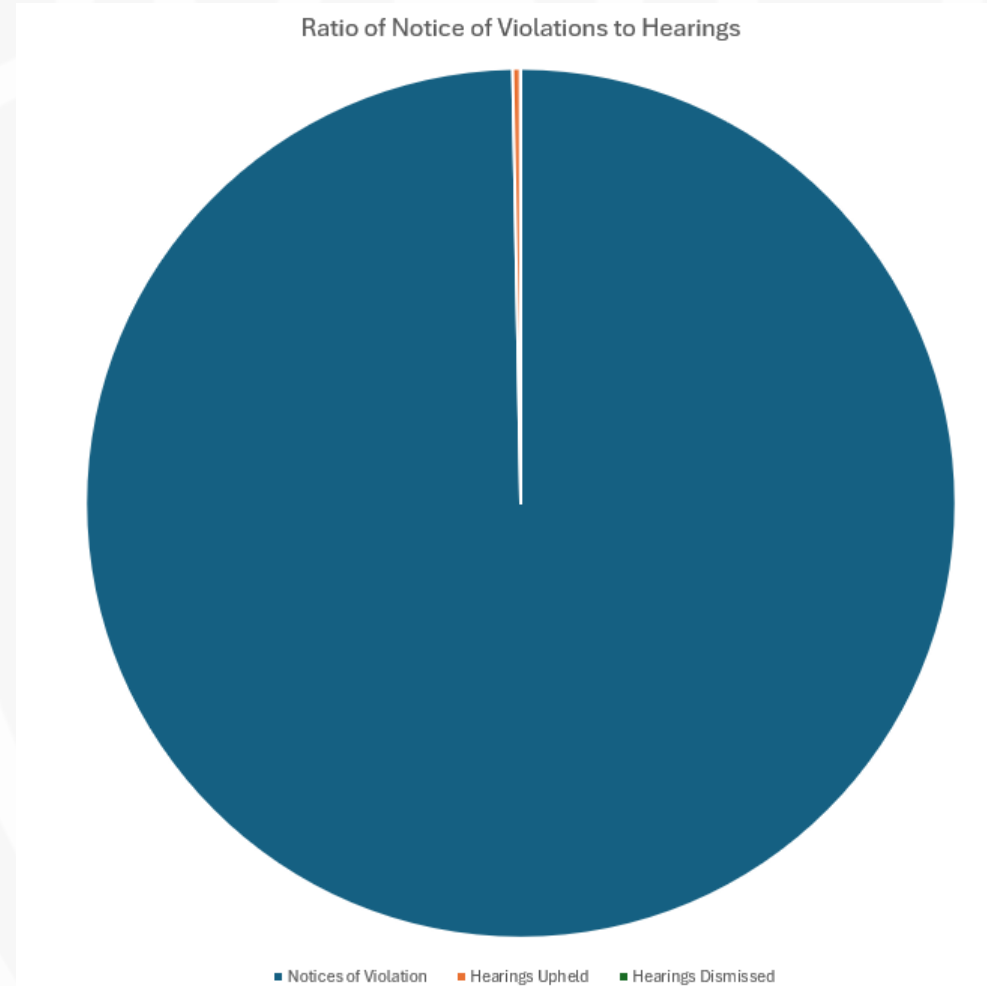
Rejections by an Officer vs Notice of Violations Issued



Approximately 73% of Violations Reviewed by an Officer Become a Notice of Violation



Magistrate Hearings – 0.3% of Notices are Contested



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Magistrate Hearings

08/26/2025 – 2 Hearings, 2 violations upheld

09/30/2025 – 3 hearings, 3 violations upheld

10/28/2025 – 3 hearings, 3 violations upheld

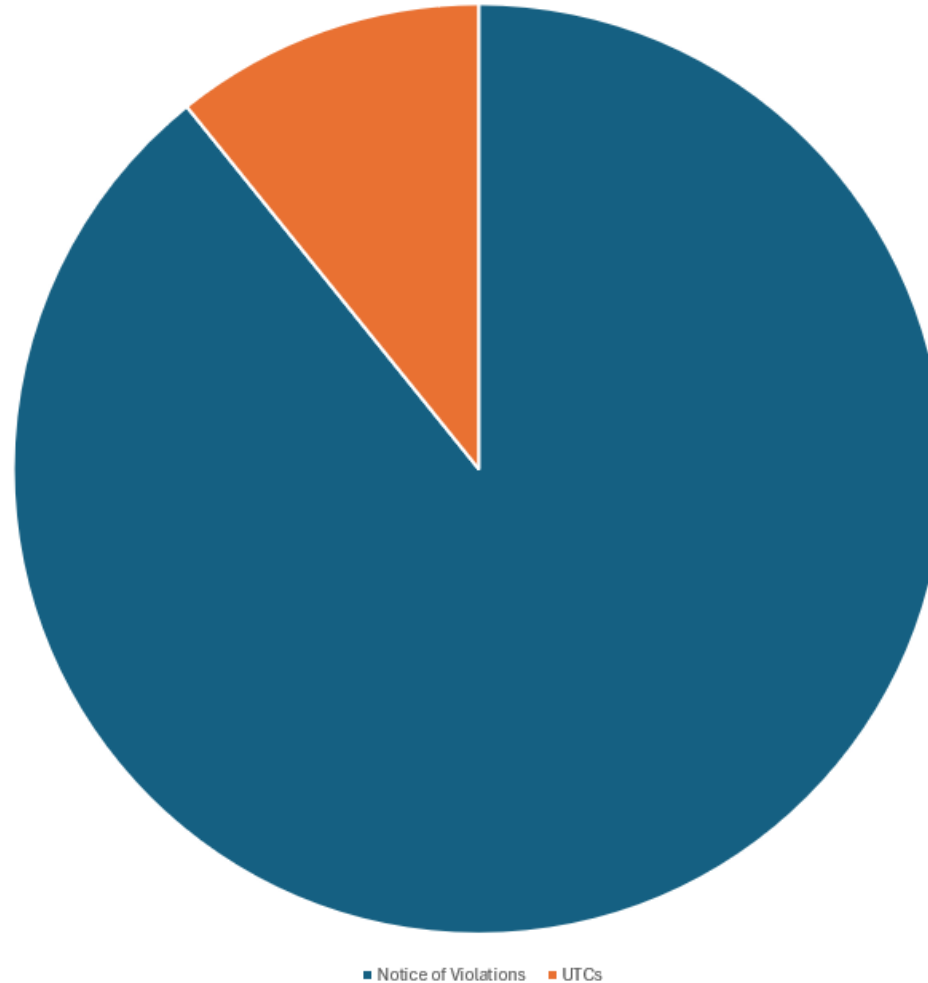
11/25/2025 – 10 hearings, 9 violations upheld, 1 dismissed

12/30/2025 – 7 hearings, 7 violations upheld



Red-Light Camera Update – Uniform Traffic Citations

Notice of Violations vs Uniform Traffic Citations



1,017 Uniform Traffic Citations have been issued.

Approximately 12% of Violations have become UTCs.



Red-Light Camera Update – State Payments

Per F.S.S., “One hundred fifty-eight dollars for a violation of s. 316.074(1) or s. 316.075(1)(c)1. when a driver failed to stop at a traffic signal if enforcement is by a county or municipal traffic infraction enforcement officer. Seventy dollars shall be remitted by the county or municipality to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, \$10 shall be remitted to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the Department of Health Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund, \$3 shall be remitted to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund, and \$75 shall be retained by the county or municipality enforcing the ordinance enacted pursuant to this section.”



Red-Light Camera Update – Light Red for 11.9 Seconds



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Almost Traffic Crash



510191901



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Almost Traffic Crash

BARR012

12/03/2025 05:13:00 PM



508731455



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Solid Red Light



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Almost Traffic Crash

BARR013

12/17/2025 12:46:49 AM



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Red-Light Camera Update – Solid Red-Light

BARR012

12/16/2025 09:36:59 PM



BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT – FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE



BODY WORN & IN CAR CAMERAS

BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT

FLEET 3



- EVIDENCE CAPTURE
- DUAL CAMERA VIEW
 - 160° DIAGONAL FIELD OF VIEW
 - 60° FOR 12X ZOOM
 - THREE INTEGRATED MICROPHONES



AXON BODY 4

- 13+ HOUR BATTERY LIFE
- 30 FRAMES PER SECOND
- 160° DIAGONAL FIELD OF VIEW
- IP68 RATING
- LCD DISPLAY
- AXON RESPOND

FLEET 3-TRAINING

- **37 VEHICLES HAVE IN CAR CAMERAS**
- **OFFICERS RECEIVED HANDS ON TRAINING ON THE BASIC OPERATION OF THE IN CAR CAMERA**
- **8 MORE IN CAR CAMERAS ARE PENDING INSTALLATION**



AXON BODY 4- TRAINING



- **3.5 HOURS IN-HOUSE HANDS ON TRAINING**
- **2 IN-HOUSE INSTRUCTORS**
- **26 OFFICERS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR BODY WORN CAMERAS**

- **REAL-TIME TRANSLATION**
 - **PENDING TRAINING (JANUARY 26)**
- **EVIDENCE.COM**
 - **DIGITAL EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT**

WHAT TRANSLATION LANGUAGES ARE SUPPORTED?

- THE FOLLOWING 56 TRANSLATION LANGUAGES ARE SUPPORTED (ENGLISH AS BASE LANGUAGE):

AFRIKAANS, ARABIC, ARMENIAN, AZERBAIJANI, BELARUSIAN, BOSNIAN, BULGARIAN, CATALAN, CHINESE (MANDARIN), CROATIAN, CZECH, DANISH, DUTCH, ESTONIAN, FINNISH, FRENCH, GALICIAN, GERMAN, GREEK, HEBREW, HINDI, HUNGARIAN, ICELANDIC, INDONESIAN, ITALIAN, JAPANESE, KANNADA, KAZAKH, KOREAN, LATVIAN, LITHUANIAN, MACEDONIAN, MALAY, MARATHI, MAORI, NEPALI, NORWEGIAN, PERSIAN, POLISH, PORTUGUESE, ROMANIAN, RUSSIAN, SERBIAN, SLOVAK, SLOVENIAN, SPANISH, SWAHILI, SWEDISH, TAGALOG, TAMIL, THAI, TURKISH, UKRAINIAN, URDU, VIETNAMESE, WELSH

EVIDENCE.COM



Evidence

Evidence

Cases

Community

Reporting

Redaction

Performance

TASER

Fusus

ALPR

Standards

Draft One

Help

Messages

Kathryn Jones

Evidence

+ Import Evidence



Search ID, Title, Tag, Category, Users/Groups, and Transcripts. Use " " for exact match.

Saved: My evidence

[Reset](#)

[Save](#)

Filters (3)

ID

Owner

Jones, Kathryn (B515)





Recorded on

Start



12/26/2025 11:5



Category









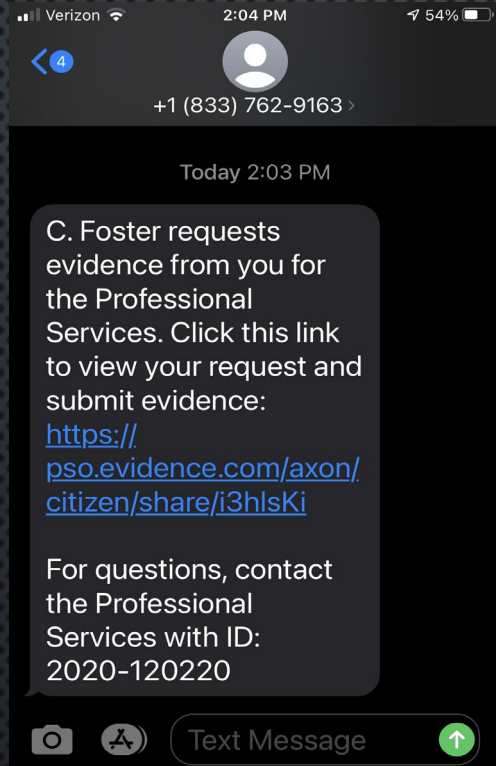


7 results

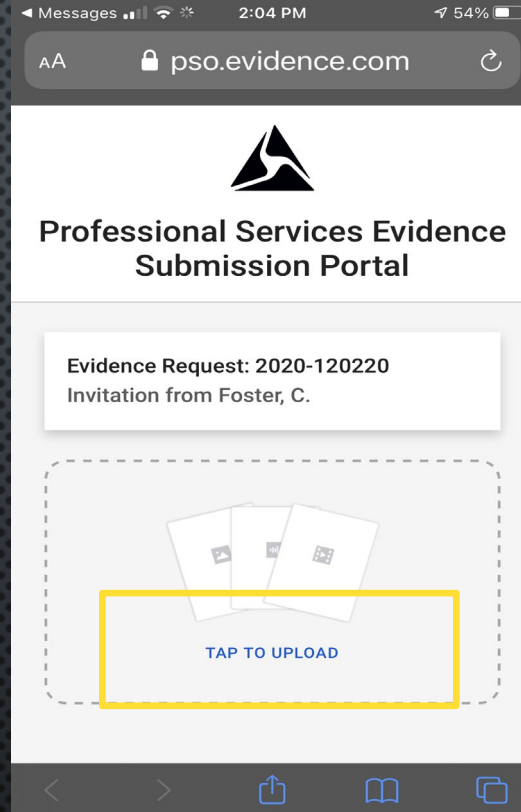
[Refresh](#)

☐	ID		Title		Owner	Uploaded by	Uploaded on		Recorded on		Duration		Category	Status	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 18, 2025 10:52 AM		Dec 18, 2025 10:49 AM		40s		Training Demo/Test, Fals...	Active	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 17, 2025 4:30 PM		Dec 17, 2025 4:27 PM		1m 5s		Training Demo/Test	Active	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 17, 2025 4:30 PM		Dec 17, 2025 12:45 PM		20s		Training Demo/Test	Active	
☐	test		Test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 9, 2025 12:07 PM		Dec 9, 2025 9:35 AM		52s		Training Demo/Test	Active	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 9, 2025 12:43 PM		Dec 9, 2025 9:25 AM		1m 0s		Training Demo/Test	Active	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 9, 2025 12:07 PM		Dec 9, 2025 9:25 AM		1m 0s		Training Demo/Test	Active	
☐	test		test		Jones, Kathryn (B515)	Jones, Kathryn (B...	Dec 9, 2025 12:42 PM		Dec 9, 2025 9:25 AM		1m 0s		Training Demo/Test	Active	

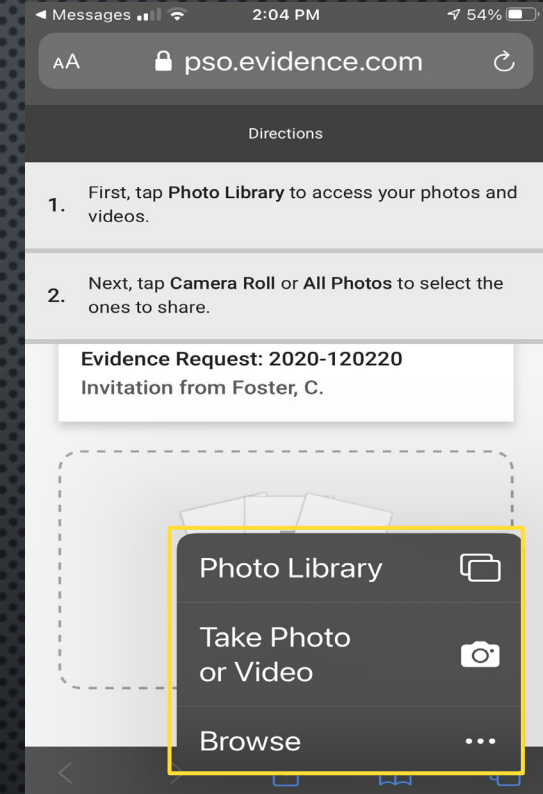
COMMUNITY REQUESTS



The citizen receives a request

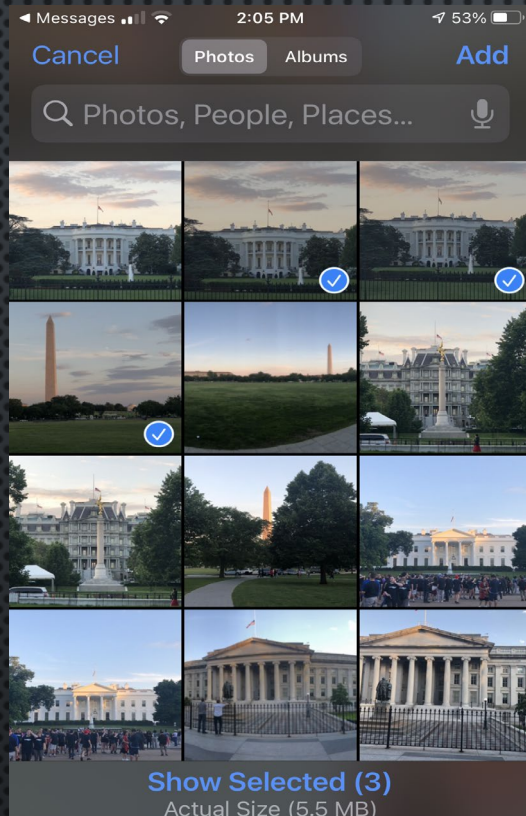


Citizen can TAP TO UPLOAD

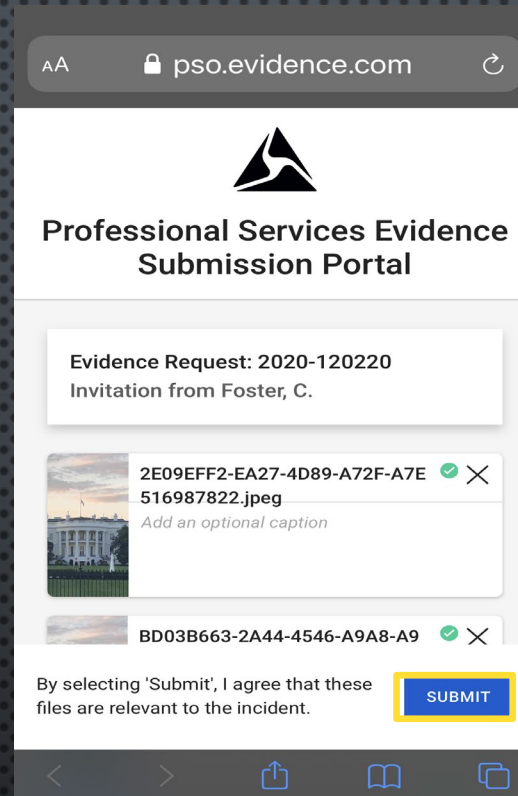


Citizen enters their photo library

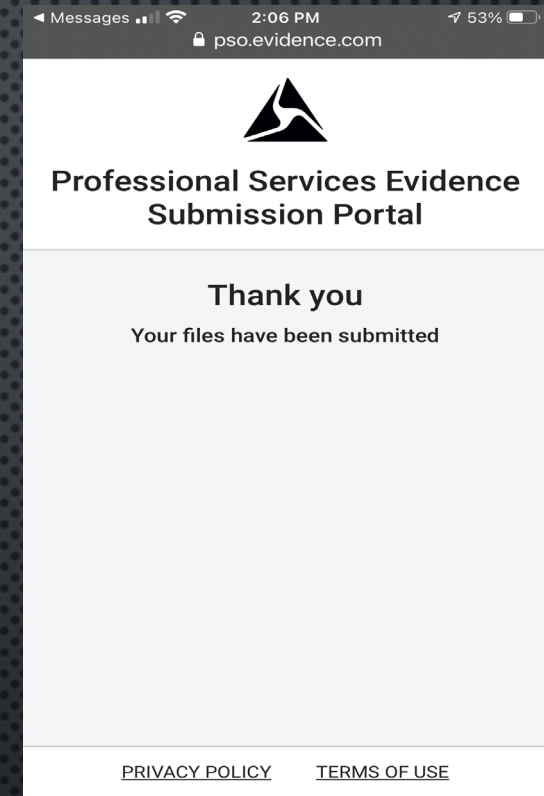




Citizen adds/selects
evidence

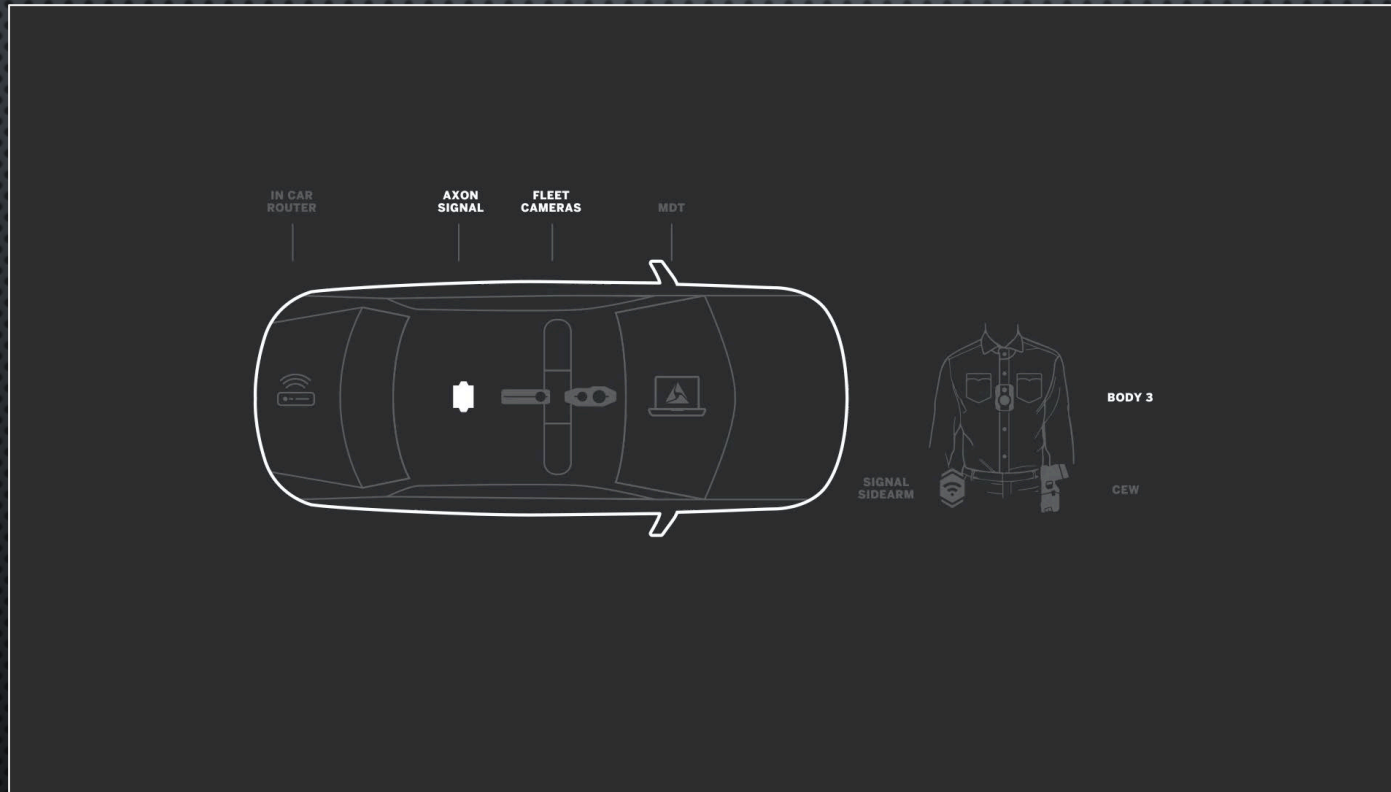


Citizen taps SUBMIT



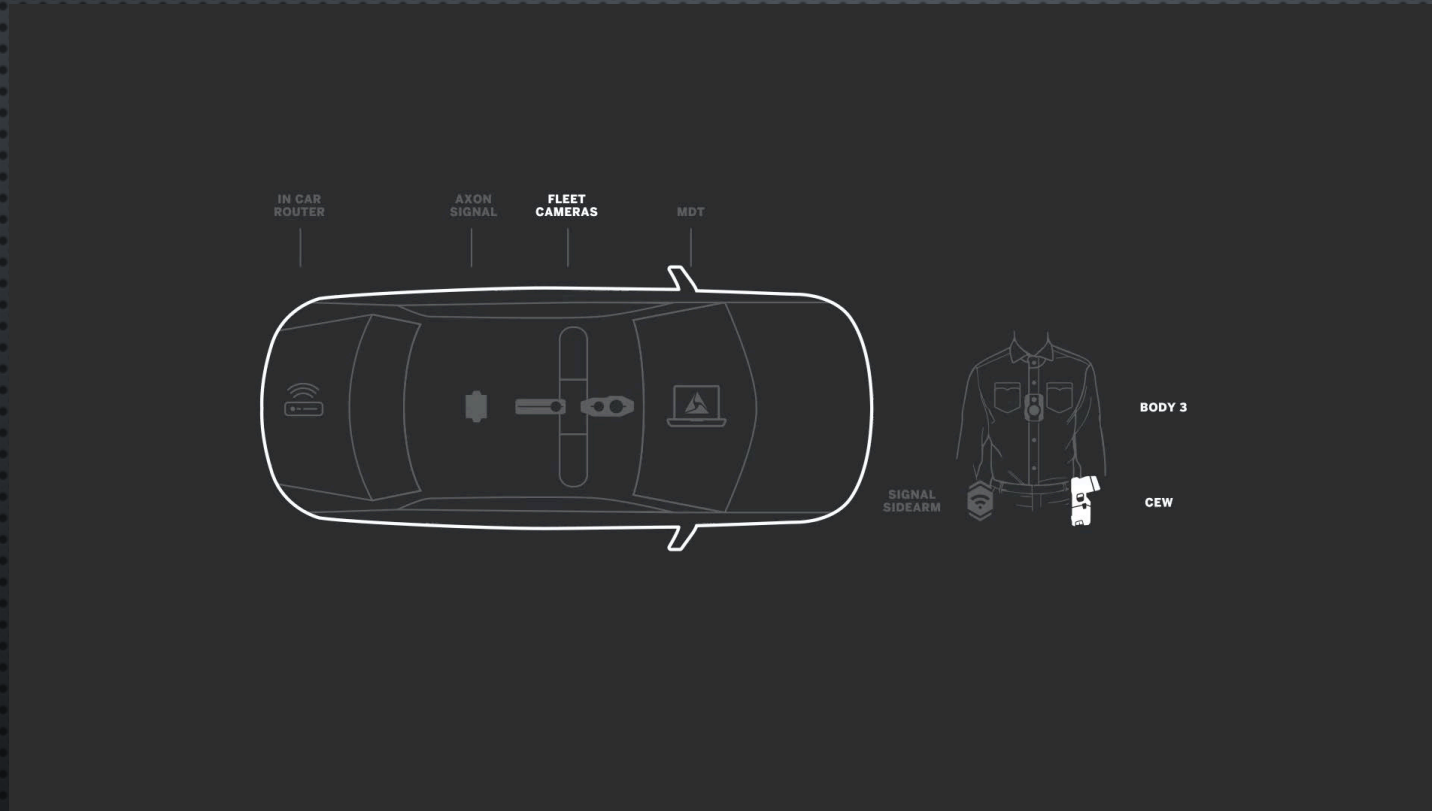
Citizen receives
confirmation

SIGNAL VEHICLE



When activated by agency vehicle input, a signal is sent out from the ASU for 30 seconds and then stops.

AXON SIGNAL CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPON (CEW)



When the CEW is armed, arc button is pressed or trigger pulled, a signal is sent out from the CEW for 30 seconds and then stops.

BODY 4-ACTIVATION

- **DISPATCHED FOR A CALL FOR SERVICE**
- **WHEN SPEAKING ON THE TELEPHONE DURING A CALL FOR SERVICE OR COMMUNICATING WITH SOMEONE IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY.**
- **ANY OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY WHICH THE OFFICER BELIEVES COULD BENEFIT FROM THE USE OF A BWC.**
- **VEHICLE SEARCHES**
- **WHEN DIRECTED BY A SUPERVISOR**
- **FIELD INTERVIEW TYPE CITIZEN ENCOUNTER**
- **PRISONER TRANSPORTS**
- **TRAFFIC STOPS**

BODY 4-ACTIVATION

- PURSUITS-VEHICLE OR FOOT
- POTENTIALLY CONFRONTATIONAL CITIZEN CONTACTS
- PHYSICAL ARRESTS
- RESPONSE TO RESISTANCE SITUATIONS
- SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE/PERSON CALLS
- IN-CUSTODY MIRANDA RIGHTS ADVISEMENT AND INTERVIEWS
- ALARM RESPONSES AND BUILDING CHECKS
- SEARCHES
- RESPONDING TO A CITIZEN COMPLAINT

BODY 4/FLEET 3 IN ACTION





BODY WORN & IN CAR CAMERAS

BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners
THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager
FROM: Sean R. Parker, City Attorney
DATE: January 5, 2026
SUBJECT: **Consideration and Approval of Ordinance 2025-25 – Charter Update Ordinance of 2025**

SUMMARY

Shortly after new Supervisor of Elections, Melony Bell, was elected and took office, the topic of municipal elections became a discussion among the SOE office and many municipalities that currently have elections in April. The general gist of the conversation is the possibility of moving those with April election cycles to the November cycles in odd-numbered years, to align with several other Polk municipalities on the more traditional “election day.” Some of the rationale is centered on cost efficiency of having one major municipal election cycle every other year, as opposed to having one every year. The other big rationale is the hope for improved voter turnout. Historically, turnout for April elections is very low. The hope of moving more elections to November is to increase awareness and hopefully have higher turnout.

BACKGROUND

The Supervisor and her staff have held conversations, luncheons, workshops, etc. to provide data and information to the various “April” municipalities. Bartow enjoyed a visit from Supervisor Bell back in October of 2025. She indicated her thoughts regarding the pros and cons of the two cycles. While she is not mandating any particular schedule, she does see great benefit of moving to the November cycle. However, she said the ultimate decisions are up to each local government.

Bartow has traditionally held elections in April, and that is currently codified in the City’s Charter. If a change is to be made, it will require amending the City Charter – which leads to the consideration of this proposed ordinance. The ordinance, if approved, would move the proposed Charter amendments forward to be considered by the voters of Bartow at the April 2026 election date.

STAFF ANALYSIS

In order to effect the necessary Charter changes related to this topic – there are 4 separate sections of the City’s Charter that require a change. Those are spelled out in the ordinance and are all related to updating the election date to the November cycle. This impacts when new commissioners would formally take office (January as opposed to May) and when the commission would take up the question of Mayor and Vice-Mayor (January as opposed to May).

Most notably, the other issue at hand when considering a November of odd-numbered years election cycle, is the term of office for a commissioner. For a long time the City has had 3-year terms, which results in at least one seat being up for election every year. In order to move to a November of odd-numbered years cycle, it is necessary to move to an even numbered length of term, and 4 years makes the most sense.

A logical question becomes “what happens to the current commissioners and current 3-year terms?” The answer is fairly simple and is rooted in statute. Florida Statute §166.021 (2025) gives the commission the power to extend existing terms of office as might be necessary to effectuate any changes made to the Charter. If the Charter amendments were to be approved, the Commission would take up the question of extending terms at a later date and the extensions would look something like this:

Simpson and Tucker – Current Terms expire 5-3-2027 – Extend to January 2028

Pfeiffer – Current Term expires 5-1-2028 – Extend to January 2030

Ball and Longworth – Seats up for Election April 2026 – Extend to January 2030

One detail for consideration here is the date of taking office/reorganization meeting. Some cities take office immediately following the November election (December), while others wait until the first meeting in January. The suggestion here is to go with January which would leave the December window open for the potential need for a run-off election.

Also for consideration by the Commission is the question of whether or not to approve these proposed changes at all. You may recall that the Florida Legislature had a bill in 2025 that would have mandated that all municipal elections align with the November cycles in even-numbered years. That bill failed but there is talk of it coming back again. If that were approved, we would have to modify the Charter in response to it, and it would be the flip side of what is being proposed here in this ordinance.

Also of note is how other local municipalities are reacting to this topic. At last check, the City of Lake Alfred was moving forward with a proposed change to the November cycle. Many others have considered it and have either postponed the decision, continue to discuss it, or have rejected it outright in favor of staying with the April elections.

FISCAL IMPACT If the Commission stays with the April election cycle, there should be no significant fiscal impact insofar as we currently budget for and expend routine election expenses each year. If the Commission were to switch to the November cycle, there would definitely be savings through the combination of less frequent elections and consolidation with other cities and economies of scale by joining in with a larger election slate through the SOE.

RECOMMENDATION

City staff makes no specific recommendation in this instance. This is purely within the purview and discretion of the City Commission and staff will move forward with whatever decisions are made in this regard.

ATTACHMENTS

Ordinance 2025-25

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-25

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA; PROPOSING FOUR AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; SPECIFICALLY TO MODIFY SECTION 2.02 RELATING TO THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONERS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.03 RELATING TO THE TIMING OF ELECTIONS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.05 RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF A MAYOR; AND TO MODIFY SECTION 4.06 RELATING TO THE SCHEDULE OF CITY ELECTIONS; PROVIDING THAT UPON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT AT THE NEXT CITY ELECTION FOR A VOTE OF THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE UPON FINAL PASSAGE.

WHEREAS, in 2009, electors of the City of Bartow, Florida adopted the *Charter of the City of Bartow*, and the same has been amended from time to time as needed, and most recently pursuant to the convening of the Charter Review Committee resulting in proposed changes as documented in Ordinance 2022-21; and

WHEREAS, Section 5.01 of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* permits amendment of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* by the method established in general law, and

WHEREAS, Subsection 166.031(1) of the Florida Statutes states “***The governing body of a municipality may, by ordinance, or the electors of a municipality may, by petition signed by 10 percent of the registered electors as of the last preceding municipal general election, submit to the electors of said municipality a proposed amendment to its charter, which amendment may be to any part or to all of said charter except that part describing the boundaries of such municipality. The governing body of the municipality shall place the proposed amendment contained in the ordinance or petition to a vote of the electors at the next general election held within the municipality.....***”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bartow’s municipal elections have historically, and by the terms of its current *Charter*, been held on the first Tuesday in April of each year. This timing is similar to that of many other medium to smaller sized cities in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, with the election of Melony Bell as the new Supervisor of Elections for Polk

County, several discussions and workshops have been conducted related to the possibility of moving the elections for those municipalities current slated for the April election calendar to the month of November in odd-numbered years. The primarily rationales behind this potential change center upon the potential cost-savings relating to holding the elections during a time when many other cities are also holding elections, and the potential for larger voter turnout to encourage greater participation in local elections; and

WHEREAS, if the electors of the City of Bartow were to approve moving the election cycle to the November elections of odd-numbered years, that would also necessitate a change in the terms of office of the City Commissioners from an odd-numbered term (currently 3 years) to an even numbered term and staggered such that the terms of office would align with the new election cycle, if approved; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Bartow finds it in the best interests of its citizens to initiate an ordinance proposing an amendment to the *Charter of the City of Bartow* to provide for more efficient elections, encourage greater voter turnout, and align terms of office with many of our neighboring cities to accomplish these goals;

NOW THEREFORE, be it enacted by the people of the City of Bartow:

SECTION 1: This Ordinance proposes charter amendments and ballot questions to be proposed to the people of the City of Bartow in referendum for approval. The operative section or sections of this Ordinance, if approved by the people of the City of Bartow in referendum, shall become effective in accordance with Section 7 herein.

SECTION 2: This Ordinance contains four single-subject proposals to amend the *Charter of the City of Bartow*. Each is divided into the proposed amendment to the city's charter using underlined text for language additions and ~~striketrough~~ text for language deletions. Each proposal to amend also contains ballot title and a ballot summary of the amendment consisting of an explanatory statement not exceeding 75 words in length, as required by § 101.161(1) of the Florida Statutes (2025).

SECTION 3: Amendment Number 1:

Section 2.02 of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* shall be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2.02. – Composition, number, term, qualifications.

The city commission shall consist of five electors of the city, elected at large. A commissioner shall hold office for a term of ~~three~~ four years to begin with the first commission meeting in ~~May~~ January following the regular municipal election. Only qualified electors of the city with a minimum of eighteen consecutive months of prior residence in the city as of the qualifying deadline that meet such other requirements as may be established by ordinance shall be eligible to be members of the city commission. Each seat on the commission shall be numbered, one through five. Candidates for seats two, three and five must reside in districts of the city, such districts to be established by ordinance. Each commissioner shall serve until his or her successor is duly elected and inducted.

Ballot Title for Amendment Number 1:

Terms of Office for City Commissioners

Ballot Summary for Amendment Number 1:

Revises the term of office for a city commissioner from three years to four years in order to align terms with an election cycle in November of odd-numbered years. Revises the timing of formally taking office from May to January.

Shall the above Charter Amendment be adopted?

YES _____

NO _____

SECTION 4: Amendment Number 2:

Section 2.03 of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* shall be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2.03. – Election of commissioners.

The regular election of city commissioners shall be held on the first ~~Tuesday in April~~ Tuesday following the first Monday of November of each odd-numbered year commencing in the year 2027, in the manner provided for in Article IV of this Charter. If a run-off election is required by Article IV of this Charter, the run-off election shall be held on the first Tuesday of the following ~~May~~ December. No election shall be required to be held for an open seat if only one eligible elector duly qualifies for that seat's candidacy during the applicable qualifying period.

Ballot Title for Amendment Number 2:

Election Dates for City Commissioners

Ballot Summary for Amendment Number 2:

Revises the dates for city elections from every April, to November of odd-numbered years starting in 2027.

Shall the above Charter Amendment be adopted?

YES _____

NO _____

SECTION 4: Amendment Number 3:

Section 2.05 of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* shall be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2.05. – Mayor.

- (a) *Selection.* At its first meeting in ~~May~~ January of each year, the city commission shall elect from its membership a mayor and vice-mayor. The mayor and vice-mayor shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.

Ballot Title for Amendment Number 3:

Timing of Selection of Mayor

Ballot Summary for Amendment Number 3:

Revises the timing of the annual selection of a Mayor and Vice-Mayor to align with the change of election dates to November of odd-numbered years. Aligns the selection of Mayor and Vice-Mayor with the updated 4-year terms of office with the formal taking of office to occur in January.

Shall the above Charter Amendment be adopted?

YES _____

NO _____

SECTION 6: Amendment Number 4:

Section 4.06 of the *Charter of the City of Bartow* shall be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 4.06. – Schedule.

- (a) *Regular.* The regular election of city commissioners shall be held on the first ~~Tuesday in April~~

Tuesday following the first Monday of November of each odd-numbered year commencing in the year 2027. At all elections the candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast for the seat voted upon shall be elected. In the event that more than two candidates run for any particular seat and the candidate receiving the highest votes does not receive a majority of the votes cast, then in such event the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast will have a run-off election to determine the winner by a majority of the run-off votes cast. The run-off election shall be held on the first Tuesday of the following ~~May~~ December. In any election between two candidates for a seat, if there is a tie vote for the winner the tie shall be resolved by drawing lots.

Ballot Title for Amendment Number 4:

Schedule of Elections

Ballot Summary for Amendment Number 4:

Revises the schedule of elections from the April cycle to the November cycle in odd-numbered years. Updates the provisions for any necessary run-off election to be moved from May to December.

Shall the above Charter Amendment be adopted?

YES _____

NO _____

SECTION 7: After final passage of this Ordinance, each of the proposed amendments shall be placed on the ballot for a vote of the electors at the next general election held within the City of Bartow. The City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney are instructed to take all administrative actions necessary to ensure the same. In accordance with § 166.031(2) of the Florida Statutes (2025), each of the provisions of this Ordinance amending the City Charter in Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 shall only take effect upon adoption and approval of the amendment by a majority of the electors voting in referendum. The effective date of each section of this ordinance containing an approved amendment to the City's Charter shall be the date of the referendum election where such approval was given.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED on first reading at the Regular meeting of the City of Bartow City
Commission held this ____ day of December, 2025.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on second reading at the Regular meeting of the City of Bartow City
Commission held this ____ day of January, 2026.

ATTEST:

CITY OF BARTOW:

City Clerk

Mayor

Approved as to correctness and form:

Approved as to substance:

City Attorney

City Manager



CITY OF BARTOW
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M. (EST)
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE
BARTOW CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS
450 N. WILSON AVE, BARTOW, FL 33830

MINUTES

The City Commission of the City of Bartow met at a Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bartow City Hall, Commission Chambers, 450 N. Wilson Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830. Notice of this meeting was posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library, and on the City's website www.cityofbartow.net and Facebook page on December 11, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tucker called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

City Clerk Poole called the roll; attendance was as follows:

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Gary Ball, Commissioner Leo E. Longworth, Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer, Vice Mayor Laura Simpson and Mayor Tanya Tucker.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Members Present: City Attorney Sean Parker, Planning Director Bob Wieggers, Asst. City Manager Tracy Miller, Finance Director Peter Lear, PRCA Director Jason Hargrove, Fire Chief Jay Robinson, Police Chief Stephen Walker, Communications Director Laurie Hayes, Electric Utilities Director Michael Poucher, Water/Wastewater Utilities Director John Hall, Asst. Electric Utilities Director Tony McDuffie, City Librarian Christina Hielscher, Public Works Director Billy Groover, Code Compliance & Neighborhood Services Director Tray Towles, Officer Paul, Admin. Asst. Angel Ruse, and City Clerk Jacqueline Poole.

2. INVOCATION

Pastor Jesse Maxwell, Bible Baptist Church of Bartow gave invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commissioners and audience gave the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

4. PROCLAMATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a. **Presentation on City of Bartow - Polk County Library Cooperative (PCLC) Partnership, Gladys Roberts, PCLC Coordinator.**

Gladys Roberts, Coordinator of the Polk County Library Cooperative (PCLC), provided a slide presentation highlighting the 28-year success of the County/Municipal partnership and emphasizing the City of Bartow's longstanding role as a key partner. Ms. Roberts reviewed the origins of public library service in Polk County, noting that municipal libraries historically served city residents while approximately two-thirds of the population in unincorporated areas lacked comparable service. She explained that changes in state law allowed counties to qualify for State Aid to Libraries through a cooperative rather than by building and staffing a full county library system, leading Polk County and the 13 municipalities with public libraries to form the Polk County Library Cooperative effective October 1, 1997. She stated after the formation the priority was hiring a part-time cooperative coordinator, a position that required a master's-degreed librarian, and that the City of Bartow agreed to allow her to serve simultaneously as Assistant Library Director and Cooperative Coordinator and to house the PCLC office at the Bartow Public Library. Ms. Roberts credited Bartow's willingness to "go above and beyond" as a major factor in stabilizing the cooperative in its early years, including providing office space and administrative support. Ms. Roberts described the early challenge of coordinating among member libraries before widespread computer use, noting that the cooperative's first equipment purchase was a fax machine to improve communication. She recounted that the County's Elderly Services division transferred a surplus Ford cargo van to the cooperative for one dollar to move materials, and the City of Eagle Lake then entered an interlocal agreement to provide delivery drivers, establishing the long-standing division whereby office staff are contracted through Bartow and delivery staff through Eagle Lake. She stated that, once the interlocal agreement was signed and the cooperative formed, all Polk County residents gained access to all materials at all member libraries, supported by County funding and avoided diluting existing municipal service levels. With the cooperative in place a single library card valid was implemented for use at all locations, the PCPC also became eligible for State Aid to Libraries and additional grants, which began coordinating countywide services on behalf of the member libraries. Ms. Roberts explained that PCLC coordinates and supports local library operations while member libraries remain departments or divisions of their respective cities. She reported that countywide services now include a shared automation system, five-day-a-week delivery, Books-by-Mail, pop-up libraries in unincorporated areas (replacing the traditional bookmobile), outreach programs, "lending library" vending machines, 24/7 e-resources, and hold pick-up lockers at multiple locations. For the most recent year, she noted that Polk County public libraries recorded approximately 1.6 million in-person visits and 2.9 million checkouts, including about 848,000 digital items. She observed that the cooperative's structure has enabled Polk County libraries collectively to secure millions of dollars in additional funding over 28 years that would not have been available without a countywide system. Ms. Roberts summarized the cooperative's major funding streams, explaining that in 2005 the County

established a Library Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) for unincorporated areas, with proceeds dedicated to public library service. She stated that the PCLC Governing Board is comprised of a voting representative from each of the 13 member cities and the County allocates MSTU funds, with the largest share distributed through a funding formula based on each city's library operating expenditures and share of total system circulation. She noted that State Aid to Libraries provides matching funds, currently at a relatively low per-dollar match, and that PCLC has also received federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants administered through the state, totaling more than \$1 million over the life of the cooperative. In addition, she reported that participation in the E-Rate telecommunications discount program has returned more than \$2 million to member libraries and the cooperative for technology and connectivity over 28 years. Ms. Roberts outlined current PCLC contract positions provided through the City of Bartow, including the Cooperative Coordinator, Outreach Services Librarian, PCLC Assistant, and two IT Specialist positions, along with contracted delivery drivers through the City of Eagle Lake. She emphasized that the Governing Board regularly reviews operations for efficiency, mindful that all funding sources are taxpayer supported. She reported that a recent cost-efficiency study led to significant changes in outreach services, including retiring the large traditional bookmobile previously operated under contract by member cities and transitioning to smaller, more nimble pop-up library vehicles at a lower operating cost. She added that the former large bookmobile is slated to be renovated for use as a small branch facility at Hunt Fountain Park in the Kathleen area in partnership with County Parks and Recreation, expanding access for that community. Ms. Roberts further explained that the Books-by-Mail program, originally centralized under contract with the City of Lake Wales, has been decentralized and integrated into the circulation operations of six member libraries, including Bartow, using features built into the shared automation system. Under this model, PCLC centrally funds postage, equipment, and supplies while the participating libraries incorporate mailing into their regular workflows, making the program more sustainable and less staff-intensive at any single location. She stated that, to support these new outreach and homebound service models, the Governing Board has created two new job classifications: Outreach Services Specialist and Outreach Services Assistant and has authorized three new positions, which will be added to the existing PCLC staff. Homebound services previously managed through the centralized Books-by-Mail office have been reassigned to the PCLC team along with responsibility for pop-up outreach sites. Ms. Roberts concluded by reiterating that the cooperative's success is closely tied to its longstanding relationship with the City of Bartow, both as her original municipal employer and as the contracting agency for PCLC office staff. She stated that local and county officials frequently cite PCLC as one of the most successful city/county partnerships in Polk County and as a strong example of how local governments can collaboratively provide services that cannot be delivered effectively at the state or federal level.

Commissioner Pfeiffer thanked Ms. Roberts for what she characterized as an excellent and informative report and commented on her career progression from Bartow staff member to Cooperative Director. She remarked on the enduring value of books, expressed concern about children relying solely on tablets, and noted recent reports that some schools are returning to print textbooks, which she supports.

In response, Ms. Roberts stated that circulation of physical materials remains strong and that many of the borrowers are younger patrons who, like those rediscovering vinyl records, are rediscovering print books, a trend she described as gratifying.

Commissioner Pfeiffer agreed and commented on the evolution from early technologies such as fax machines to current services, thanked Ms. Roberts and the staffs of all member libraries for their work, and described the cooperative as a “jewel” for Polk County, stating that the community is fortunate to have PCLC and its member libraries.

b. **Presentation on City of Bartow — Fisheries Enhancements to Lake Ruth and Hack Lake by Matt Swerdfeger, Fisheries Biologist for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation.**

Jason Hargrove, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture Arts, introduced Matt Swerdfeger, Fisheries Biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Mr. Swerdfeger presented a slideshow on proposed fishery enhancement projects for several Bartow lakes, including Lake Ruth, Hack Lake, and possibly Lake Azalea. He explained that the project would be fully funded by FWC and involve several phases: removal of invasive fish species, planting of native aquatic vegetation to improve habitat, and fish stocking to enhance recreational fishing opportunities. He noted that Lake Ruth, approximately two acres in size, has low visibility and little vegetation, making it an ideal candidate for habitat restoration. Invasive species such as armored catfish and tilapia would be selectively removed using electrofishing methods to protect native fish populations and reduce shoreline erosion. Native vegetation will be introduced to support aquatic life, improve water quality, and establish nursery habitat for game fish. Once habitat improvements are complete, the lake will be stocked with sport fish, including species such as hybrid striped bass. Mr. Swerdfeger highlighted similar successful projects at Apollo Beach Sports Complex and Mary Holland Park, where native vegetation and stocked fish populations have flourished. Plans may include additional work at Lake Hack and Lake Azalea, involving similar habitat enhancements and fish management practices.

Commissioner Pfeiffer recalled that Lake Ruth was previously stocked by FWC with bass around 2015 and asked what became of that population.

Mr. Swerdfeger responded that the lake was likely stocked with Florida Bass (formerly largemouth bass), but limited habitat and forage base may have prevented reproduction.

Commissioner Pfeiffer also remarked that Lake Azalea is shallow and occasionally dries up, asking if dredging might be needed.

Mr. Swerdfeger stated that FWC does not fund dredging projects and that Lake Azalea's small size makes significant investment unlikely, though it could support species such as catfish if conditions allow. He added that if the lake completely dries up, FWC would not be able to implement any fishery project there.

5. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

At this time, the Commission received comments from the public regarding matters not appearing on this agenda.

City Attorney Parker reminded all speakers addressing the City Commission that while making comments during any time set aside for public comments or public hearings to refrain from making any personal attacks, derogatory comments, commenting on any items in litigation or under investigation, or any other matters that do not fall within the purview of the City Commission. Public speakers are limited to three minutes. Yielding of time is not customary during public comments. General public comment is the public's chance to speak and be heard and is not a time typically for questions and answers. Refer to the agenda to seek the appropriate time to make comments. Speaker cards are located on the tables to the left of the room and with the City Clerk. Fill out the speaker card and give it to the clerk when you come to the podium. Before you begin your remarks, state your name and address for the record."

Mayor Tucker opened the public comment period.

Gerald J. Cochran, 1615 North St., Bartow. Mr. Cochran wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He then read into the record the standard public comment statement attributed to City Attorney Parker regarding refraining from personal attacks or derogatory comments, avoiding discussion of items in litigation or under investigation, limiting remarks to matters within the City Commission's purview, adhering to the three-minute time limit without yielding of time, recognizing that general public comment is not typically a question-and-answer period, and following the established speaker card procedures and requirement to state one's name and address for the record. Mr. Cochran expressed concern that these guidelines restrict his ability to voice opinions, ask questions, and receive answers during meetings, which he felt infringes on his freedom of speech and is a disgrace to the Commission. He stated that many of his questions relate to how budgeted funds are spent and urged the Commission to provide clear answers. Mr. Cochran also thanked whoever was responsible for changing his water meter, noting that after the meter change his usage dropped from "thousands" of units to "hundreds."

He maintained that he had no leak at his residence and believed he had paid for water he did not actually use but stated that his meter and readings now appear to be correct and again expressed appreciation to the staff responsible.

Mayor Tucker wished Mr. Cochran Gerald a Merry Christmas and a good New Year.

With no further comments, Mayor Tucker closed the public comment period.

6. **CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Pfeiffer announced that the new Bartownian community magazine was released last week and additional copies are available on the table. She noted that the publication focuses entirely on Bartow, features several articles highlighting current events in the community, and will be published quarterly, with the next issue scheduled for March. She expressed appreciation to everyone who supported the magazine.

Commissioner Pfeiffer thanked the City's A-Team for organizing an outstanding employee recognition luncheon held last Friday and specifically commended the A-Team for the impressive balloon arch and for showcasing the group's considerable talent. She concluded by publicly thanking the A-Team for their efforts in hosting such an enjoyable luncheon for employees and elected officials

7. **REPORT OF CHARTER OFFICERS**

a. **CITY MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS**

1. **Update — Sports Marketing - Jason Hargrove, PRCA Director**

City Manager Herr introduced Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Director Jason Hargrove to provide an update on a sports marketing study conducted by Tourism and Sports Marketing, Polk County Government. The study reviewed the economic impact of the Bartow Sports Complex's new softball fields located on County Road 555.

Director Hargrove reviewed the history of the Bartow Sports Complex and described conditions prior to the recent improvements. He stated that the complex previously included two youth football fields and two adult baseball fields with very old dugouts, one of which did not even have an outfield fence. He added that the concession and restroom building was outdated and that all four fields required new fencing. He reported that the improvement project began in January 2024 and that construction has now been completed. He noted that the project is aesthetically pleasing, heavily used, and has become a popular facility for both residents and visitors. Director Hargrove explained that the City partnered with the Polk County Board of County Commissioners and Visit Central Florida Sports to construct four new fields suitable for both youth and adult play, eight new batting cage lanes, eight bullpen areas, and two new restroom facilities. He stated that the complex reopened in October

2024. He reported that the total construction cost was approximately \$5.64 million, with the City and Visit Central Florida Sports each contributing approximately \$2.82 million. Director Hargrove then presented the projected versus actual economic impact figures for the period of October 2024 through September 2025. He reported that out-of-county adult participants were projected at slightly more than 2,200 but actual attendance was approximately 3,300. Out-of-county youth participants were projected at just over 6,600, while actual youth participation was nearly 8,200. Out-of-county spectators were projected at approximately 12,200, with actual attendance just under 16,000. He further reported that projected room nights were approximately 7,500, whereas the actual number exceeded 13,100, nearly doubling the original estimate. He stated that the projected overall economic impact was \$7.92 million; however, the study documented an actual impact of approximately \$11.94 million. He commented that the participation, room-night, and revenue figures collectively demonstrate the strong success of the project. Director Hargrove advised that Neal Duncan of Visit Central Florida Sports was unable to attend the meeting but asked that his appreciation for the partnership and the City's customer service be read into the record. Mr. Duncan's statement emphasized that the project has extended the life and usefulness of the complex, was much needed, and now serves its intended purpose daily.

Commissioner Pfeiffer commented that these results illustrate why a new hotel is needed in the community.

Vice Mayor Simpson thanked Director Hargrove and Tourism and Sports Marketing staff for the follow-up data, stating that while the Commission was excited about the grand opening and ceremonial first pitch, the quantitative information presented represents the "nuts and bolts" needed to demonstrate the importance of such projects to the City's economic health. She addressed local businesses and organizations, stating that if they are not finding ways to convert "heads in beds" into "feet on the street," they are missing an opportunity. She encouraged Main Street Bartow and the Greater Bartow Chamber of Commerce to work with area hotels and businesses so that they can capitalize on the more than 13,000 room nights generated by these events, noting that visiting teams and families are looking for places to eat and shop between games. She reiterated her appreciation for the data and described the project as "economic development at its best."

Commissioner Pfeiffer noted that a list of local restaurants is posted at the complex and that, when the list is updated, it is provided to Director Hargrove, who ensures it is displayed so visitors can see all 66 restaurants in the City and decide where to dine.

Vice Mayor Simpson agreed that the lists are helpful and a good starting point but suggested that additional marketing initiatives by Main Street, the

Chamber, and other entities could help individual businesses further distinguish themselves and draw more visitors through their doors.

City Manager Herr sought clarification on the study methodology and asked whether the nearly \$12 million in economic impact reflected only bed tax revenues, with no inclusion of sales tax from restaurants or other local spending.

Director Hargrove replied that Mr. Duncan had specifically referenced bed tax revenues and that, while he did not want to speak inaccurately about the details, he understood that most of the documented impact was derived from bed tax.

Commissioner Ball commented that it was encouraging to see the parking lot full over the course of three consecutive days during a recent tournament. He noted that the success of the facility has generated interest in additional tournaments and that organizations that have hosted events there are now planning to return with even more teams and are booking dates for future years. He stated that the complex is expected to become even busier over time. Director Hargrove reiterated that the facility is functioning exactly as intended and continues to meet the City's goals for the project.

Vice Mayor Simpson asked how many weekends during the past year the complex was not in use.

Director Hargrove responded that there were a few weekends with no events, as staff intentionally scheduled occasional breaks to allow the fields to rest and to complete needed maintenance. He stated that if the complex is dark only one weekend out of every eight, staff consider that a success and noted that there are periods when events are scheduled for three consecutive months. He praised the parks staff for their dedication, stating that they take pride in the fields, view them as their "pride and joy," and strive to maintain the best fields in the county.

Commissioner Pfeiffer asked whether local users could access the facility during the week.

Director Hargrove confirmed that they are and that staff are mindful of balancing tournament use with local needs.

Commissioner Pfeiffer inquired about the status of the Bartow Royals basketball program.

Director Hargrove stated that he expected an update at an upcoming managers' meeting and would forward the information by email to the City Clerk for distribution to the Commission. He added that he would also provide

data regarding the RC track's usage, noting that he had never seen it as busy as it has been recently.

Commissioner Longworth asked whether the Royals' season was currently underway and requested that the game schedule be shared.

Mayor Tucker stated that the schedule is posted on the team's Facebook page.

Commissioner Longworth then asked for an update on the youth football season at the 555 Sports Complex.

Director Hargrove reported that he had recently spoken with a league representative and learned that two teams advanced to the playoffs before being eliminated. He stated that the league had a successful season overall and is now in its offseason. He noted that offseason conditioning and related activities will resume in the February–March timeframe. In response to a question from Commissioner Longworth regarding prior concerns with the football facilities, Director Hargrove confirmed that the issues have been addressed. He explained that the league practices both at the Bartow Sports Complex and at Carver Recreation and that a storage facility has been provided at the Bartow Sports Complex as part of the City's approximately \$3.3 million improvement program. He reported that new goal posts, a new scoreboard, and new fencing have been installed, along with two new restroom facilities, one at the softball complex and one at the football complex. He added that, when football games are not underway, the football restroom building is used for overflowing during large tournaments.

City Manager Herr stated that the study and related data provide an opportunity to rethink the City's overall parks and recreation program, noting that "there is money in sports" and that tournaments can generate revenue for the community, as demonstrated by the reported economic impact. He said staff intend to share the study results with the Governmental Affairs Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Bartow, and the Bartow Economic Development Council (BEDC). He acknowledged that BEDC traditionally focuses on industrial recruitment but suggested that the City and its partners should also consider other forms of economic opportunity where Bartow has identified strengths. He stated that the City is at a point where it does not need to limit itself to traditional forms of recruitment but can instead pursue new economic opportunities. He noted that the evening's agenda includes a budget amendment that provides approximately \$137,100 for a scope of services with Catalyst Design Group for preparation of a Parks Master Plan, which will function as a tourist-oriented sports destination planning document. He stated that the area of focus is Clear Springs and that, early in the new year, staff intends to meet with Patrick Carroll and his trustees to discuss the master plan. He said that while he has considered asking the property owner to fund a portion of the study, he does not want to

delay the City's efforts while waiting for a decision and instead prefers to proceed and then present the resulting opportunity. He explained that the heart of the planning effort is the concept of a Sports Village, a destination-type complex offering a mix of recreational opportunities and tournaments that draw families to Bartow. He stated that the Sports Village would serve as an attraction, complementing the existing 555 complex. He further noted that the timing is appropriate given the anticipated roadway improvements, including the Central Polk Parkway connection to State Road 60 and U.S. 17, which will enhance regional access to the site. He stated that a Sports Village would be expected to include commercial and retail components as well as lodging and that private-sector companies specialize in operating such facilities. He outlined next steps, stating that the City will first complete the plan, then meet with Tourism and Sports Marketing Director Mark Jackson and Mr. Duncan to explore implementation. He indicated that he intends to speak initially with Mr. Duncan, a Bartow resident, and then with Mr. Jackson at the appropriate time. He added that the Sports Village concept could help jump-start development within the Clear Springs Community Development District, where residents will pay assessments that can be incorporated into a broader financial plan. He emphasized the importance of having a clear vision to present to the private sector and expressed his desire for BEDC to participate in that process, noting that the City's mission and vision for parks and recreation have expanded beyond maintaining the existing system to create new, complementary opportunities. He also stated that Clear Springs "needs some help" and that pursuing the Sports Village concept is the right direction for Bartow. He clarified that the proposed Catalyst Design Group contract in the budget amendment is separate from the firm's ongoing work evaluating the existing park system. He noted that, as the City enhances facilities such as Mary Holland Park and completes projects like the Reading Trail connection, it will be responsible for maintaining a larger inventory of parks and amenities. He stated that part of the evaluation will include identifying under-utilized parks that the City may no longer wish to operate, acknowledging that there may be public resistance even when actual daily use is minimal. He said Catalyst will conduct interviews and surveys to assess park usage and help the City determine how best to allocate limited resources, particularly if future property tax relief reduces the taxable value of homesteaded properties. In that scenario, he stated, the City will need to focus more on valued commercial, retail, industrial, and high-quality residential development.

Commissioner Pfeiffer expressed support for the Sports Village concept and requested that any future presentation to the Commission include information on Clear Springs' original development plan from approximately 25 years ago compared to its current vision. She noted that the property has long-standing entitlements for development on the south side and that several significant opportunities were declined by them over the years. She questioned whether the property owners are truly interested in pursuing development, given their past reluctance, and said it is time for the public to understand the existing,

approved growth potential. She commented that the concept outlined by the City Manager may be preferable to a more intensive, seven-day-a-week development pattern and would likely result in a better overall outcome. She referenced a prior meeting that included discussion of potential solar facilities at Clear Springs and stated that the City needs a clear understanding of the owners' current plans so that information can be shared with the public. She observed that some residents believe the City Commission is unwilling to approve new development, when in fact many projects such as Wind Meadows and Square Lake were approved years or even decades ago and are only now being built out. She agreed that "quality residential" is essential, noting that the Commission is effectively approving people's future homes and does not want to see them deteriorate quickly. She said this expectation should be reflected in the owners' planning going forward.

Commissioner Longworth stated that it is important to know the owners' current plan for Clear Springs because the Commission has not received any recent formal updates and much of what is discussed in the community is hearsay. He recalled that the project has been under discussion since "way back" in his earlier tenure on the Commission yet remains largely dormant. He agreed that many residents are unaware that significant portions of the property have long been entitled for development and that the question now is how much the original plan has changed and what steps are needed to move forward. He stated that obtaining updated information and bringing it back to the Commission is a good approach so that everyone can better understand "what is going on" and how best to proceed.

b. **CITY ATTORNEY COMMUNICATIONS**

City Attorney Parker briefly revisited the topic of redistricting, noting that he and the City Clerk periodically remind the Commission to consider it as population growth shifts district balance. He explained that he had consulted with Lakeland, which recently updated its districts in house using mapping software, primarily by adjusting boundary lines to equalize population. He remarked that Bartow's recent growth, particularly to the north and possibly east, makes its situation more complex and that planning should occur before new neighborhoods create significantly uneven districts. He also acknowledged that while there is no single correct approach, many growing communities eventually consider adding commission seats, and that such a change could be an appropriate topic for future discussion, though he was not proposing it at this time.

c. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Commissioner Pfeiffer reported that the City is continuing to monitor property taxes and the issue of enterprise fund transfers. She noted that a bill has been filed proposing to limit municipal transfers to 10%, which would have a significant negative impact. She stated that local governments would be opposing this legislation. The bill is being sponsored by a different legislator than in previous

years, which is somewhat concerning. Regarding housing, Commissioner Pfeiffer stated that the Florida League of Cities will be supporting legislation aimed at addressing the state's urgent housing shortage. She noted that in Bartow, Green Mills remains the only developer willing to construct affordable housing, but they are awaiting tax credit approval, leaving the City in a period of uncertainty. The League is advocating for maintaining reasonable limits on related legislation rather than outright opposition. She further reported that the League will also be monitoring legislation concerning Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) and expects to oppose any provisions that negatively affect them. Additional legislative topics of concern include extraterritorial surcharges which impact Bartow due to the City's large service area in unincorporated areas for water and electric services and proposed changes to municipal elections. The League is opposing any measures that would restrict municipal voters' authority to establish election dates.

City Attorney Parker stated that if the proposed legislation passes regarding municipal elections, its effective date would typically be July 1 or October however, there is typically a one-to-two-year phase in period. He has not yet reviewed this year's version or the accompanying committee materials. He noted that if enacted, the legislation could potentially require the City to adjust its' elections to comply with state law, particularly if municipal elections were required to be held in even-numbered years.

Commissioner Pfeiffer concluded by announcing that a legislative webinar is scheduled for January 7 and reminded the Commissioners to sign up for the Monday morning legislative call-ins if they wish to participate.

Vice Mayor Simpson reported that the Greater Bartow Chamber's new Government Advisory Council is developing its first legislative action plan to bring the business community's voice into legislative issues affecting local government, quality of life, and doing business in Bartow. The Council is not yet taking pro or con positions but is focusing on educating businesses and residents on workforce development, education, workforce housing, trade standards, property tax reform, and support for City appropriation requests. It also plans to monitor property tax reform proposals, host educational forums, and support the City's appropriation requests by engaging with the legislative delegation.

Commissioner Longworth noted prior efforts for chambers and the Ridge League of Cities to speak with one voice to the Legislature and suggested that a representative of the new committee contact Ridge League of Cities Director Bobby Green to explore collaboration for greater effectiveness with legislators.

8. **AGENDA MODIFICATION / APPROVAL**

MOTION was made by Vice Mayor Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Ball to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

At this time, the Commission received comments from the public regarding matters appearing on this agenda, not otherwise scheduled for a separate public hearing.

Mayor Tucker opened the public hearing.

With no comments, Mayor Tucker closed the public comment period.

10. HEARINGS – FIRST AND SECOND READINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Public hearing and adoption of Resolution No. 25-4250-R - A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE CITY OF BARTOW.

City Attorney Parker read the resolution by title only:

“A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE CITY OF BARTOW.”

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ball, seconded by Vice Mayor Simpson to adopt Resolution No. 25-4250-R, a resolution amending the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget of the City of Bartow.

Finance Director Lear reviewed the proposed budget amendments. He explained that one of the items previously discussed by the City Manager concerned the sports marketing component of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Additionally, four new positions are being added: a Deputy Building Official, funded through the Building Fund; a Code Enforcement Officer focused primarily on solid waste issues, funded through the Solid Waste Fund; and a Customer Service Specialist to support increased customer service needs, particularly during the implementation of new software systems Cartograph and the replacement of the outdated Incode system. This position is expected to improve efficiency within the Electric Department and the Billing Division by facilitating work order management. He also noted that a new position is being added at the library, funded by matching revenue from the County. He further explained that an adjustment related to the City's red light camera program is also included in the amendment. While revenue from the cameras was budgeted, the monthly lease expenses for the cameras, costing approximately \$3,300 per camera, were not. These expenses total approximately \$633,000 for all cameras and are being

funded from prior-year reserves. The City expects to generate more than \$1.25 million in revenue from the red-light camera program, which will more than cover these costs, but the expense must be formally reflected in the budget.

Vice Mayor Simpson inquired whether the omission of the camera expenses was previously known or simply not budgeted.

Director Lear responded that the costs had not been included in the budget because staff were unaware of the requirement. While some employees had prior knowledge of the obligation, those individuals are no longer with the City. He apologized for the oversight and confirmed that the issue was identified early upon receipt of the first monthly invoice of approximately \$20,000+.

Vice Mayor Simpson commented that it was good the error had been caught early.

Director Lear agreed, noting that the first installment had just been processed and that the expense was included in the existing contract but not carried forward into the current budget cycle.

Mayor Tucker opened the public hearing.

With no comments, Mayor Tucker closed the public hearing.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

- b. **Public hearing and first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-24 – AN ORDINANCE OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TEXT AND MAPS OF THE BARTOW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENT WITH THE 2024 EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL (EAR) LETTER; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL TO FLORIDA COMMERCE FOR REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

City Attorney Parker read the ordinance by title only:

“AN ORDINANCE OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TEXT AND MAPS OF THE BARTOW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENT WITH THE 2024 EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL (EAR) LETTER; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL TO FLORIDA COMMERCE FOR REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ball, Vice Mayor Simpson to pass on first reading Ordinance No. 2025-04, an ordinance of Bartow, Florida, amending the Text and Maps of the Bartow Comprehensive Plan Consistent with the 2024 Evaluation and Appraisal (EAR) Letter; providing for transmittal to the Florida Commerce for review and compliance; providing for severability; providing for conflict; and providing for an effective date.

Central Florida Regional Planning Council Executive Director Jennifer Codos-Salisbury delivered a slide presentation highlighting proposed administrative amendments to the City's 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Codos-Salisbury previously met with the Commission several weeks earlier to provide an overview of the amendment process. This public hearing was being conducted for transmittal of the proposed amendments to the Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Community Planning. She noted that updated maps, including the city airport, were added to the comprehensive plan map series and would be included in the transmittal package. She emphasized that these maps are not new but are part of the regular updates made in connection with land use amendments or annexations. She explained that the amendments are primarily administrative and statutory housekeeping changes, intended to ensure consistency with current Florida Statutes, including Senate Bill 180, and to maintain the plan's compliance. The updates are organized by comprehensive plan element:

Future Land Use Element: Updates include revising the planning horizon to the year 2050, removing outdated references to greenhouse gas emissions (no longer required by statute), and confirming compliance with 10-year and 20-year planning horizons. The city's existing transit-oriented development policies remain in place.

Transportation Element: Updates include revised transportation maps and consistency with the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Roadway listings have been updated via the Polk Transportation Planning Organization database. References related to the former Old Florida Plantation DRI were removed, and new strategies supporting multimodal travel and reducing automobile dependence were added. Objectives consistent with FDOT's vision to reduce transportation-related injuries and fatalities were also included.

Housing Element: Administrative updates reflect statutory compliance and emphasize affordable housing strategies, including accessory dwelling units. Consistency is maintained with Community Redevelopment Area goals to improve housing and infrastructure in older neighborhoods.

Infrastructure Element: Updates include map revisions (aquifer recharge and topography), planning horizon extensions, and compliance with state mandates for septic-to-sewer conversion planning in neighborhoods exceeding one unit per acre.

Conservation, Recreation and Open Space, and Intergovernmental Coordination Elements: Revisions focus on statutory references, planning horizons, and organizational terminology. A new policy continues the city's participation in Polk County's Local Hazard Mitigation Working Group.

Capital Improvements and Schools Elements: Housekeeping updates align level-of-service standards with current interlocal agreements among the School Board, municipalities, and the County.

Property Rights Element: Updates include a revised planning horizon and cross-reference to the relevant statute.

Ms. Codos-Salisbury concluded that the proposed amendments primarily serve as administrative updates to maintain compliance and consistency across all elements of the comprehensive plan.

Mayor Tucker opened the public hearing.

Gerald Cochran, 1615 North St., Bartow. Mr. Cochran stated that he would like to see a detailed built-out map showing planned development, road expansions, and corresponding infrastructure. He expressed concern that the plan discussions lacked visible documentation and questioned how future growth including road improvements, school expansions, and utilities such as water and sewer would be funded. He emphasized that these practical issues should be discussed as part of the plan rather than just projected decades into the future. Mr. Cochran noted that proposed tax cuts could affect the city's ability to finance growth and stressed the need for transparency in presenting development and infrastructure plans to the public.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

- c. **First reading and consideration of Ordinance No. 2025-25 — AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA; PROPOSING FOUR AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; SPECIFICALLY TO MODIFY SECTION 2.02 RELATING TO THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONERS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.03 RELATING TO THE TIMING OF ELECTIONS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.05 RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF A MAYOR; AND TO MODIFY SECTION 4.06 RELATING TO THE SCHEDULE OF CITY ELECTIONS; PROVIDING THAT UPON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BE PLACED ON**

THE BALLOT AT THE NEXT CITY ELECTION FOR A VOTE OF THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE UPON FINAL PASSAGE.

City Attorney Parker read the ordinance by title only:

“AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA; PROPOSING FOUR AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; SPECIFICALLY TO MODIFY SECTION 2.02 RELATING TO THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONERS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.03 RELATING TO THE TIMING OF ELECTIONS; TO MODIFY SECTION 2.05 RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF A MAYOR; AND TO MODIFY SECTION 4.06 RELATING TO THE SCHEDULE OF CITY ELECTIONS; PROVIDING THAT UPON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT AT THE NEXT CITY ELECTION FOR A VOTE OF THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF BARTOW; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE UPON FINAL PASSAGE.”

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ball, seconded by Vice Mayor Simpson to pass on first reading Ordinance No. 2025-25, an ordinance relating to the Charter of the City of Bartow, Florida; proposing four amendments to the Charter of the City of Bartow; specifically to modify Section 2.02 relating to the terms of office of city commissioners; to modify Section 2.03 relating to the timing of elections; to modify Section 2.05 relating to the selection of a mayor; and to modify Section 4.06 relating to the schedule of city elections; providing that upon final passage of the ordinance for the proposed amendments to be placed on the ballot at the next city election for a vote of the electors of the City of Bartow; providing for an effective date upon final passage.

City Attorney Parker explained that the proposed ordinance stems from the Commission's October work session, during which Polk County Supervisor of Elections Melony Bell and her staff addressed the Commission. He noted that Supervisor Bell, who took office earlier this year, has been meeting with various municipalities particularly those that hold elections in April to discuss transitioning all local elections to the November cycle. The proposed shift is intended to reduce election costs and potentially increase voter turnout. He added that since those initial discussions, several nearby cities have held November elections, but voter turnout was not significantly higher. While several municipalities have been considering the change, only the City of Lake Alfred has voted to proceed so far; others have either declined or delayed action. He stated that approval of this ordinance on final reading would allow the City to prepare for the upcoming April election, during which voters would decide on proposed charter amendments related to election timing. Under the current charter provisions, newly elected or re-elected commissioners assume office at the first City Commission meeting in January. This schedule accommodates a potential December runoff election, as the charter revision approved a few years ago introduced runoffs for races with

more than two candidates where none receive a majority of votes. City Attorney Parker emphasized that one of the most significant proposed changes is to extend Commission terms from three years to four years, aligning with an every-other-year election cycle. He explained that, if the changes are approved, Florida law allows the City Commission to adjust current commissioners' terms administratively to match the new election sequence without requiring an additional referendum or charter amendment. He also referenced state legislation introduced last year though not enacted that could in the future influence how municipalities schedule their elections.

Vice Mayor Simpson asked why some cities that had considered the change decided not to proceed.

City Attorney Parker responded that Supervisor Bell had made it clear the change was optional; the Supervisor's Office would continue to manage April elections for any city choosing to retain that schedule. He reiterated that while November elections could save money, they do not always lead to higher voter turnout.

Commissioner Pfeiffer commented that if this year's seats go uncontested, turnout might be minimal since voters would only be casting ballots on charter amendments. She asked how passage of the referendums would be determined.

City Attorney Parker explained that each measure would require approval by at least 50 percent of the voters casting ballots. He added that the City could lawfully encourage voter participation and promote the cost-saving aspects of the proposed changes. He clarified that all related referendums would have to pass for the transition to move forward.

The Commission continued to discuss possible revisions to ballot wording, ways to communicate potential cost benefits, state restrictions on even-year elections, proposed legislative trends, projected voter turnout, ballot length, and other pros and cons of the proposal.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker
NAY: None

Motion carried.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of December 1, 2025, City Commission Regular Meeting minutes.**
- b. **Approval of City Commissioner absences for December 1, 2025, excusals: None**

c. **Acceptance and Approval of Warranty Deed from James A. Clements for 10 Acres on Sand Lake Road for Future Electric Substation Location.**

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ball, seconded by Vice Mayor Simpson to approve Consent Agenda as presented.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

12. **OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS**

a. **OLD BUSINESS – NONE**

b. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Consideration and approval of Application No. S-25-10-PSP — The Terraces at Stuart Crossing Preliminary Subdivision Plat, a 400 lot, single family and single family attached residential development. The development area consists of 58.9 acres (+/-) of the overall Stuart Crossing project, which is 692 acres (+/-) in size. The property is owned by JK Stuart Properties, LLC, and is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Ernest M. Smith Jr. Blvd and Osprey Blvd., in Sections 29-32, Township 29S, Range 25E, Polk County, Florida.**

MOTION was made by Vice Mayor Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Ball to approve Application No. S-25-10-PSP, The Terraces at Stuart Crossing Preliminary Subdivision Plat, a 400 lot, single family and single family attached residential development. The development area consists of 58.9 acres (+/-) of the overall Stuart Crossing project, which is 692 acres (+/-) in size. The property is owned by JK Stuart Properties, LLC, and is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Ernest M. Smith Jr. Blvd and Osprey Blvd., in Sections 29-32, Township 29S, Range 25E, Polk County, Florida.

Planning Director Wieggers reviewed the staff report and stated that the subject area is designated as Parcel G within the Stuart Crossing planned development and that previous amendments allowed it to develop with either commercial or residential uses, including townhomes, single-family attached, and zero-lot-line detached units under alternative design standards. He reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission had held a public hearing, received no public comment, and voted unanimously to recommend approval with staff-recommended conditions. Planning Director Wieggers explained that the preliminary subdivision plat is a comprehensive submittal, with multiple

sheets detailing site layout, phasing, typical lots, street cross-sections, utilities, drainage, and environmental features. The project is proposed in two phases: Phase 1, nearer Bartow Ford, with 207 units, and Phase 2, nearer Osprey Boulevard, with 193 units, collectively providing 400 dwellings comprised of 216 zero-lot-line lots and 184 townhome lots. He outlined that Parcel G previously carried an option for C-3 commercial, multifamily, or single-family/attached residential, and that the most recent planned development amendment specifically anticipated this residential configuration. The amendment authorized use of private streets, alternative right-of-way widths, private sidewalks, smaller lot sizes (including minimum 1,800 square feet and 20-foot widths for townhomes and 2,700 square feet and 30-foot widths for zero-lot-line units), and other design flexibilities subject to Commission review at the preliminary plan stage. He described existing environmental features within the site, including areas previously mapped as surface waters and two conservation-type areas. He stated that certain nonfunctional wetlands or surface water areas would be removed pursuant to Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) review, while approximately 1.85 acres of functional wetland would be preserved, incorporated into the design, and supported with stormwater inflows and invasive species removal to improve its performance. He noted that, as a residential development, a minimum of 14.7 acres of open space is required, and that the plan provides more than 20 acres when including water bodies and conservation areas, exceeding minimum standards. Residents would also have access to the existing major amenity and recreation facilities at The Grove at Stuart Crossing, ensuring recreation needs are met on an area-wide basis within the planned development. Planning Director Wiegers presented a graphic illustrating pedestrian and bicycle connections, explaining that the project is bordered on three sides by existing or planned trail and path facilities. A multi-use bike/ped trail exists along J.K. Stuart Boulevard to the north, a trail along Osprey Boulevard connects to the hospital and a pedestrian signal at Ernest M. Smith Jr. Boulevard, and a future segment of J.K. Stuart Boulevard will complete an additional trail segment to the west, ultimately tying into the broader Fort Fraser Trail network. Within the project, sidewalks are proposed along most internal streets, supplemented by off-street pedestrian connections in green corridors located behind lots, around stormwater ponds, and along the conservation area. In some locations, sidewalks are not on both sides of the street, to reduce right-of-way width while maintaining overall pedestrian connectivity through a combination of on-street walks and off-street paths. Planning Director Wiegers stated that internal streets intended for primary access or higher traffic volumes will utilize wider right-of-way and pavement sections, while shorter internal cross-streets will use narrower cross-sections. He noted that the typical internal travel lane width would result in a 22-foot pavement section, with sidewalks not counted in this dimension. To address driveway length, he described a design in which the building maintains a 20-foot front setback, but the sidewalk is shifted closer to the edge of pavement, effectively increasing the usable driveway depth between garage and sidewalk. Under

this approach, the sidewalk functions more as an extension of the roadway edge, placing landscape area on the far side of the sidewalk and allowing vehicles particularly longer trucks to fit in the driveway without blocking pedestrian travel. Planning Director Wiegiers reported that the development will connect to utilities previously extended as part of the broader Stuart Crossing project and that preliminary analysis indicates adequate water and wastewater capacity to serve the 400 units without overburdening the system. Solid waste and electric service demands are also expected to be accommodated within existing and planned system capacities. Regarding public safety, he stated that fire protection will benefit from the planned fire station on Smith Lane near the Spessard L. Holland Elementary School, which is currently in design and expected to be under construction soon. He explained that police and fire service needs will continue to be evaluated as growth occurs, and that the School Board's concurrency and impact fee requirements will apply, with the development projected to generate 58 elementary, 34 middle, and 46 high school students based on current generation rates. Final concurrency determinations, including a binding concurrency letter from the School Board, will occur prior to final plat approval, and impact fees will be paid at building permit. Planning Director Wiegiers stated that staff and the Development Review Committee found the application consistent with the City of Bartow Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code and compatible with surrounding and planned uses in the Stuart Crossing area. He referenced specific comprehensive plan policies related to planned development integration, housing diversity, and open space provision that are satisfied by the proposal. Staff recommended approval subject to three primary conditions: (1) development in substantial accordance with the plans and materials submitted; (2) compliance with all City rate resolutions and ordinances for water, wastewater, electric, and solid waste service; and (3) retention of internal roads as private facilities not contributing to the City's public roadway network, with final plat dedication language and HOA/CDD documents clearly addressing ownership, maintenance, and access rights, including City access for essential services.

During Commission discussion, Commissioner Pfeiffer stated that the proposal represents a high level of intensity and density and compared the layout to the previously approved First Avenue townhome project. She asked how wide those earlier town homes were.

Planning Director Wiegiers advised that they were approximately 20–25 feet in width with about a 20-foot front setback.

Commissioner Pfeiffer expressed significant concern that the same 20-foot front setback standard is being used again, observing that it has led to recurring problems with on-street parking and sidewalk blockage in existing neighborhoods. She described 20-foot setbacks as contributing to "clogged" streets and "cram and jam" parking environments and stated that, in her view, these design standards have proven problematic and should be discontinued.

going forward. She questioned how the proposed design would prevent larger vehicles, such as Commissioner Ball's Ford F-250 with a hitch extending several inches, from intruding into the right-of-way or onto sidewalks. She cited existing townhome areas where parking routinely covers sidewalks, forcing pedestrians into the street, and expressed skepticism that shifting the sidewalk closer to the pavement would resolve this issue.

Planning Director Wieggers explained that by maintaining a 20-foot building setback but relocating the sidewalk to the edge of pavement, the design effectively provides additional driveway length between the garage and the pedestrian path. He stated that this configuration has been used in other projects to accommodate larger vehicles and that the HOA or CDD is expected to strictly manage and, where appropriate, prohibit on-street parking to keep streets clear.

Vice Mayor Simpson noted that, regardless of the private-community setting, the Commission already has experience with 20-foot setbacks in conventional neighborhoods where multifamily or attached units generate more vehicles than driveways can contain. She stated that garages are often not large enough for full-size trucks such as F-150s and emphasized that the Commission has repeatedly seen that a 20-foot front setback is inadequate for typical modern vehicle sizes and household car counts. She further stated that the Commission is especially concerned about parking congestion directly in front of units and not only the technical location of sidewalks or private streets. She stressed the need for additional designated guest parking throughout the development, not concentrated solely near the park or amenity area, because those spaces will likely be heavily used by visitors to those facilities, leaving little capacity for overflow from individual units.

Commissioner Ball asked staff and the applicant to confirm the location and extent of townhome units along the northern perimeter of the site, as shown on the plan, and whether those units were subject to 20-foot zero-lot-line standards. He inquired whether driveways for those units were designed for two vehicles per household and whether the "additional parking" described in the staff report translated to one extra space per unit or a shared pool of spaces.

Civil Engineer Victor Barbosa, representing the developer, confirmed that the townhome and zero-lot-line product types along the northern portion of the site are designed with 20-foot setbacks and are intended to accommodate four vehicles per unit, typically two in the garage and two in the driveway. He stated that additional parking is provided along streets and adjacent to the amenity center, but these spaces are not assigned individually to each unit and function as shared guest parking. Mr. Barbosa acknowledged that he was not the project manager and appeared as a last-minute replacement and therefore did not have all detailed information available. He indicated that, as

this is only the preliminary subdivision plat stage, there will be an opportunity at the construction plan stage to refine and potentially increase guest parking if the site can accommodate it without undermining other design requirements.

Commissioner Pfeiffer argued that, given typical household vehicle ownership patterns such as a husband, wife, and teenage driver three vehicles per household are common, which results in at least one vehicle inevitably being parked in the street under the current design assumptions. She questioned how an HOA or CDD can effectively manage and enforce rules when the physical design does not provide enough off-street capacity to begin with.

Planning Director Wiegers asked the Commission whether it wished to apply any revised standards consistently throughout the city, noting that if 20-foot setbacks and similar configurations are considered problematic here, then the same logic suggests the problem exists elsewhere in Bartow. He stated that staff is willing to rely on the commitments of the HOA or CDD to manage on-street parking and that some communities enforce such restrictions very strictly, including prohibiting or citing vehicles parked on the street.

City Manager Herr confirmed, in response to Mayor Tucker, that the Commission may request specific modifications and require the applicant to return with a revised plan.

Planning Director Wiegers emphasized that any conditions or requested changes must be clearly articulated, such as specifying the desired number of additional guest spaces or minimum distribution standards, rather than simply expressing general dissatisfaction and sending the applicant away.

Commissioner Pfeiffer stated that the Commission has been discussing parking for an extended period and that parking is the exact issue to be addressed. She reiterated that 20-foot setbacks and current street configurations produce “jammed” streets and blocked sidewalks and that she does not support perpetuating that pattern in new developments.

Vice Mayor Simpson summarized that the Commission is seeking more guest parking distributed throughout the development, not merely around the park or amenity center. She observed that spaces near the amenity will be heavily used by people visiting that facility and suggested that when residents are cited for parking violations, there needs to be reasonably close alternative parking available somewhere within the neighborhood.

Commissioner Ball concurred with Vice Mayor Simpson, stating that a better distribution of additional parking is necessary to provide residents and guests with realistic options other than parking in the street and to avoid situations where someone might have to park a considerable distance figuratively

described as “20 acres away” from their unit. He also asked whether the approximately 20 acres of open space identified on the plan includes pond areas.

Planning Director Wiegers confirmed it is inclusive of the water bodies as well as the conservation area. Then they also have the right to utilize the major recreation area that is open at The Grove.

Mayor Tucker commented that enforcement of illegal parking in public streets would ultimately fall to law enforcement, not code enforcement.

Commissioner Pfeiffer expressed concern about creating a design that is difficult to enforce in practice.

Mayor Tucker suggested that the applicant should revisit the plan, look for opportunities to add and more evenly distribute guest parking areas, and recognize that achieving an acceptable design may require the loss of one or more units to free space for additional parking.

Mr. Barbosa stated that the team would review the plan considering the Commission’s comments and consider additional guest parking as part of the forthcoming construction plan submittal, to the extent it can be accommodated within site constraints.

MOTION was made by Vice Mayor Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Ball, to **MODIFY** the prior motion and continue Application No. S-25-10-PSP, The Terraces at Stuart Crossing Preliminary Subdivision Plat, to allow the applicant to submit a revised plan addressing parking supply concerns identified by the Commission.

VOTE TO THE MODIFIED MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. **Consideration and approval of agreement for the transfer of roads from Polk County to the City of Bartow.**

Public Works Director Groover reviewed the staff report and explained that staff negotiated an agreement with Polk County to transfer ten specific road segments to the City of Bartow. He noted that the County’s original list contained around sixteen segments, but the number was narrowed to ten after determining that several did not make sense for the City to assume. The ten roads being considered are logical choices based on their locations fully or mostly within city limits, their alignment with future growth areas, and their

potential inclusion in future annexations. He stated that the transfer will give the City full maintenance, operational, and emergency response control, eliminating confusion over jurisdiction during emergency or maintenance situations. He displayed maps identifying the ten road segments under consideration:

- Cedar Ridge Road
- Clear Springs Mine Road
- E F Griffin Road
- Ernest Smith Boulevard
- Finger Lane
- Gaskin Road
- Lyle Parkway
- Mann Road
- Old Bartow Eagle Lake Road (from Ernest M. Smith Boulevard to Wilson Avenue North)
- Smith Lane

Director Groover explained that Polk County will pay the City \$1.3 million as part of the transfer agreement, representing the estimated current cost needed to bring all ten segments up to City of Bartow roadway standards. The additional roadway miles will also result in an annual increase of about \$80,000 in gas tax revenue, although that amount may vary slightly each year based on the countywide distribution formula. He emphasized that assuming ownership of these roads will allow the City to plan and budget for maintenance within its own system, manage operations more efficiently, and provide faster and clearer response by emergency services. He recommended approval of the transfer agreement.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ball, seconded by Commissioner Longworth to approve and authorize execution of agreements for the transfer of ten roads from Polk County to the City of Bartow.

City Manager Herr added that, regarding the \$1.3 million payment, staff had discussed with TPO Director Jay Jarvis the need to resurface Main Street from Highway 17 to State Road 60, running east to west through downtown Bartow. He explained that a portion of the \$1.3 million could be dedicated to resurfacing this corridor, allowing the City to maintain its existing \$1 million annual resurfacing program for other streets citywide without interruption.

Director Groover further detailed how the \$1.3 million would be allocated: approximately \$1 million for new asphalt and curbing improvements on Main Street from US 17 to SR 60, \$200,000 for minor improvements on Ernest Smith Boulevard and Lyle Parkway, and \$100,000 for additional striping throughout the City.

Vice Mayor Simpson said that Commissioners frequently receive calls and concerns from residents regarding sidewalks in certain areas including those on these roads. She asked how these issues could be addressed in advance.

Director Groover explained that in the past, the City had no authority over sidewalks in those areas. The proposed change would allow the City to require new developments to include sidewalk segments that could eventually connect into a broader network.

Vice Mayor Simpson then asked how existing areas without sidewalks could be retrofitted, to which Director Groover responded that doing so would require funding.

Vice Mayor Simpson noted that while the \$1.3 million allocation is appreciated and needed, it would not resolve all sidewalk concerns. She emphasized the need for residents to understand that assuming maintenance of these roads does not mean the City has the financial capacity to install sidewalks immediately.

Mayor Tucker cited EF Griffin Road as an example, noting that the City does not currently own the roadway and would need to obtain rights-of-way from property owners, who have not been cooperative with the County. She stated that even with available funding, such circumstances could prevent sidewalk construction.

Vice Mayor Simpson expressed appreciation that the City will now be able to establish design standards for these roads but cautioned that doing so also brings responsibility for long-standing issues.

Director Groover agreed, acknowledging the challenges particularly along EF Griffin Road. He noted that the transportation department has been proactive in reviewing budgets mid-year to identify and fund projects that close sidewalk gaps, such as those at Mariposa and Clower. He stated that pedestrian and bicycle safety is a City priority, whereas the County's broader jurisdiction limited attention to such details.

Vice Mayor Simpson reiterated her support for the City assuming responsibility for these roadways but stressed the importance of prioritizing funding to fill sidewalk gaps, as this continues to be a major concern among residents.

VOTE TO THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYE: Ball, Longworth, Pfeiffer, Simpson, Tucker

NAY: None

Motion carried.

13. **RESOLUTIONS – NONE**

14. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

a. **GARY BALL**

Commissioner Ball had no comments.

b. **LEO E. LONGWORTH**

Commissioner Longworth wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

c. **TRISH PFEIFFER**

Commissioner Pfeiffer wished everyone happy holidays!

d. **LAURA SIMPSON**

Vice Mayor Simpson wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

e. **TANYA TUCKER**

Mayor Tucker wished everyone a safe Merry Christmas.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Tucker adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Mayor Tanya Tucker

ATTEST:

City Clerk Jacqueline Poole

(City Seal)



CITY OF BARTOW
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025, AT 5:00 P.M. (EST)
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE
BARTOW CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
450 N. WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

MINUTES

The City Commission of the City of Bartow held a Workshop on November 17, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at Bartow City Hall Commission Chambers, 450 N. Wilson Ave., Bartow, FL 33830. Notice of this meeting was posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library, and on the City's website www.cityofbartow.net and Facebook page on November 13, 2025.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tucker called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

City Clerk Poole conducted the roll; attendance was as follows:

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Gary Ball, Commissioner Longworth, Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer, Vice Mayor Laura Simpson and Mayor Tanya Tucker.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Members Present: City Manager Mike Herr, City Attorney Sean Parker, Finance Director Peter Lear, Asst. City Manager Tracy Miller, Communications Director Laurie Hayes, Planning Director Bob Wieggers, IT Director Frank Canovaca, Asst. City Clerk Kaylee Fussell and City Clerk Jacqueline Poole.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

a. Update to the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Ryan Kordek, Executive Director, Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)

Director Kordek gave an overview of the 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan. He reported that the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is currently in the open public comment period on its draft Long-Range Transportation Plan, which the TPO Board adopted in draft form at its October 2025 meeting and is scheduled to consider for final adoption on December 9. He stated that his presentation would cover key projects and concepts in the plan and provide related background information and materials. He noted that it had been some time since he last appeared before the Bartow City Commission and began with a brief overview of the Polk TPO, explaining that it has existed for about 50 years and is composed of a 23-member voting board representing all cities and local governments in Polk County, with membership apportioned by population. He explained that Lakeland has the largest representation, followed by Polk County

and the other municipalities, and he recognized Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer for her service as TPO Chair over the past two years. Director Kordek explained that the purpose of the LRTP is to provide a coordinated strategy for securing and leveraging state and federal transportation funding for Polk County, establishing the framework for investing billions of dollars in transportation infrastructure so local projects can be properly funded and prioritized. He encouraged the commission to focus on long-term transportation needs rather than present conditions, emphasizing that Polk County is one of the fastest-growing counties in one of the fastest-growing states. He stated that the LRTP looks 20 to 25 years into the future and addresses multiple modes, including highway, transit, and freight, and that each included project must show existing or anticipated funding. He indicated that the updated plan would return to the TPO Board for adoption on December 9 and highlighted several ongoing projects in Bartow and across the county, such as the Central Polk Parkway and the Fort Fraser Bridge and Trail Extension, noting the significant role and investment of the Florida Department of Transportation in advancing these initiatives. To illustrate long-term funding challenges, Director Kordek reviewed historic needs and revenues, noting that in 2005 total state roadway needs were estimated at \$2.5 billion with state revenues of \$1.52 billion, while local roadway needs were \$2.15 billion with local revenues of \$1.45 billion. He then presented 2025 data showing that total state and local roadway needs have grown to \$13.5 billion, compared with only \$4.1 billion in identified revenues, leaving a significant gap that will be difficult to address for both state and local projects. He observed that the state has recently made substantial investments, citing approximately \$3 billion in construction along the I-4 corridor in and around Polk County and noting the Governor's Moving Florida Forward initiative and announcements regarding major I-4 projects. He explained that once these projects are completed, there will be relatively little additional state investment currently programmed in Polk County, underscoring the magnitude of the remaining unfunded need. Director Kordek explained that the LRTP also incorporates cost-feasible roadway projects through 2050 and referenced a slide showing these improvements. He mentioned that Citrus Connection has recently adopted its 10-year transit development plan, reflecting ongoing efforts to coordinate transit investments with the LRTP. He also noted a current study by Orlando, Orange County, Osceola County, and FDOT evaluating a corridor from Orlando International Airport to I-4, stating that this alignment could be a "game changer" for Polk County because it would provide the path for future high-speed rail and commuter rail services. He indicated that both SunRail and Brightline could use this corridor, making it important for Polk, Hillsborough, and Tampa that jurisdictions to the east determine the route. Director Kordek stated that transportation safety is an area where the county needs improvement and emphasized that all users—drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists of all ages—share responsibility. He presented data showing Polk County's rankings among Florida's 67 counties, including a fatality count rank of 7th (146 fatalities), a serious injury count rank of 12th (437 serious injuries), a combined pedestrian/bicycle fatality and serious injury count rank of 13th (86), a fatality rate rank of 17th at 1.86 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and a serious injury

rate rank of 45th at 5.53 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. He reported that since 2021 the number of serious injuries and fatalities on Polk County roads has fallen by 23 percent, from 636 in 2021 to 487 in 2024, but that risks remain high. He noted that in 2024 the Lakeland-Winter Haven area was listed as the 21st most dangerous metropolitan area in the United States for pedestrians and that 167 bicyclists and pedestrians were killed on Polk County roads between 2019 and 2023. He added that in the last five years about \$41 million has been invested in bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Polk County, along with approximately \$31 million in multi-use trail projects. Director Kordek concluded by describing the LRTP's structured public comment process, which includes online surveys, interactive project maps, and both in-person and virtual meetings hosted by the Polk TPO. He said that public participation would continue through workshops and hearings scheduled through December 2025 to ensure that transportation priorities reflect current trends and anticipated future needs across Polk County. He added that additional information, including project videos and supplemental materials, is available online and through public engagement platforms to help residents understand the plan's scope and importance. He encouraged ongoing community involvement as the LRTP moves toward adoption and implementation.

In response to Mayor Tucker's question about how 2050 traffic counts are estimated, Director Kordek explained that a technical advisory committee composed of city planners, public works directors, and some city managers from across Polk County relies on local comprehensive plans and future land use maps from each jurisdiction. He said those data form the basis for countywide population and employment forecasts that feed a regional travel demand model, clarifying that the projections are not full build-out forecasts but represent anticipated conditions over the next 25 years.

Commissioner Pfeiffer stated that the material had been presented to the TPO Board in October and that she invited Director Kordek to brief the commission and leadership team so they would better understand the county's direction. She observed that FDOT, the County, and the cities do not have sufficient resources to keep pace with current growth and noted that approximately \$365 million in resurfacing projects are currently underway in Polk County. She briefly spoke about several topics that were covered in the presentation.

City Manager Herr reflected that transportation patterns, like history, tend to repeat themselves and cited his experience as Winter Haven's city manager in 2017, when the City sought traffic relief to support the planned Field House and Conference Center. He praised FDOT District One Secretary L.K. Nandam as one of the most responsive district secretaries Polk County has had and described successful collaboration to improve the intersection serving the Field House and to widen 7th Street as well. He gave the Lake Silver project as an example of a "complete street" coordinated with major CRA investments at Lake Silver Park. He remarked that the Lake Silver corridor now supports enhanced connectivity for walking, jogging, biking and features slower vehicular speeds,

and he briefly referenced other roadway projects undertaken during his tenure as county manager that illustrate the benefits of coordinated state and local transportation planning

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Tucker adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Mayor Tanya Tucker

ATTEST:

City Clerk Jacqueline Poole

(City Seal)



CITY OF BARTOW
**CITY COMMISSION CITY COMMISSION
BUDGET WORKSHOP**

JULY 17 & 18, 2025, AT 9:00 A.M. (EST)
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
450 N. WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

MINUTES

The City Commission of the City of Bartow held Budget Workshops on July 17 & 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Chambers located at City Hall, 450 N. Wilson Ave., Bartow, FL 33830. Notice of this meeting was posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library and on the City's website www.cityofbartow.net, and Facebook page on July 9, 2025.

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Tucker called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

City Clerk Poole called roll, attendance was as follows:

Commissioners present: Commissioner Ball, Commissioner Longworth, Commissioner Pfeiffer, Vice Mayor Simpson and Mayor Tucker

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: All department heads, managers and City Attorney Parker.

2. BUDGET OVERVIEW FOR FY 2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

a. CITY MANAGER'S BUDGET MESSAGE FOR FY 2025-2026 BUDGET

City Manager Herr presented the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Proposed Budget and Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2025–2026 through 2030–2031. He noted that as this represents his third budget cycle, the City continues advancing its commitment to organizational modernization, operational efficiency, and long-term strategic priorities. He outlined the eight primary strategic goals guiding the budget: becoming an employer of choice; enhancing quality of life; maintaining and improving infrastructure and facilities; promoting responsible redevelopment and growth; creating safer and cleaner neighborhoods; expanding technology and innovation; fostering a customer-centric culture; and maintaining strong financial health. He discussed the City's ongoing fiscal challenges due to the high proportion of non-taxable government property within the city limits and emphasized the need for a sustainable financial model that promotes strategic reinvestment and capacity building. The proposed budget of \$135,934,528 seeks structural balance between revenues and expenditures while maintaining the current millage rate of 6.1080, reflecting no change from the previous year. Property value growth of 15.28% provides the capacity to sustain services without

a millage increase. Key budget highlights include funding for the Employer of Choice Initiative, development of new cost allocation methods, continued investment in technology and innovation, and the addition of 13 new full-time positions across multiple departments. The plan also commits approximately \$15.5 million from reserves for major capital improvements, including the municipal pool and aquatics facility, a co-located fire substation, public works facility renovations, and park facility upgrades. He noted a redesigned program-based budget format and creation of new dedicated funds including Building, Fleet Management, Employee Benefits, and Impact Fee Funds will enhance transparency and fiscal accountability.

The City Manager further reported that the five-year Capital Improvement Plan totals \$66.47 million, with \$22.9 million programmed for FY 2025–2026, focused on key infrastructure, safety, and parks projects. He highlighted continued investment in public safety facilities, transportation infrastructure, utility upgrades, and quality-of-life amenities. He reviewed the City's progress in aligning its budget practices with the Government Finance Officers Association's standards, implementing new management technology, and launching the Strategic Planning and Performance Dashboard. He emphasized the planned community engagement and strategic planning process to redefine the City's vision and mission in the coming year. In closing, the City Manager acknowledged the Commission's leadership and staff's efforts in developing a balanced, forward-focused budget, and reaffirmed the City's commitment to innovation, collaboration, and prudent financial stewardship in advancing Bartow's future.

Asst. City Manager Miller and Finance Director Lear presented the FY 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, noting a total proposed budget of approximately \$135.9 million, including operating and capital expenditures across all funds, excluding transfers. The Commission received an overview of major assumptions, including a proposed millage rate of 6.1080, an approximately 15% increase in ad valorem taxes, updated user and impact fees, and key capital projects such as the municipal pool and aquatics center, joint fire station, and public works administration building.

Citywide Context (Demographics, Organization, Strategy) - Staff reviewed city demographics, utility service demographics, and organizational staffing levels (377 FTEs, including 352 full-time and 50 part-time positions) as context for the proposed budget. Major accomplishments, technology initiatives, and strategic planning efforts (including the Employer of Choice Initiative, performance dashboard, and future citywide strategic planning process) were outlined as drivers for the FY 2025-2026 work program and funding requests.

Employer of Choice and Workforce - The Commission received an overview of the Employer of Choice Initiative, including goals to establish a minimum \$15/hour wage, competitive market pay, modern HR practices, and technology-enabled HR systems. Staff summarized implementation of the market rate study, parameters for salary adjustments (minimum 2.75% increase, class-based adjustments, step progression), and the projected fiscal impact of approximately \$2.83 million, fully funded within the proposed budget.

Capital Improvement Program (Citywide) - Staff presented the formalized five-year Capital Improvement Plan (FY 2025-26 through FY 2030-31), totaling approximately \$66.5 million for 47 projects, including both large construction projects and R&R programs. The Commission reviewed key projects such as road resurfacing, CRA Smart City initiatives, park improvements, stormwater and utility projects, and facility renovations, as well as the planned use of General Fund reserves for high-priority infrastructure and safety projects.

General Fund Overview - Staff summarized General Fund major revenues (ad valorem, utility taxes, franchise fees, charges for services, state revenue sharing, fines, and transfers) and reviewed trends in taxable value, millage rate history, and property value composition. Departments funded from the General Fund were identified as the City Commission, City Clerk, City Manager, Finance, Human Resource, Information Technology, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts, Planning, Police and Public Works.

b. **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS – GENERAL FUND**

Department Directors gave slide presentations to include each department's purpose, staffing, funding, key services, strategic initiatives, quantitative performance indicators and major initiatives.

City Commission - Tracy Miller, Asst. City Manager

Staff presented the City Commission budget, noting changes in personnel and operating costs, as well as grants and aid to local non-profit organizations and interfund transfers supporting the CRA and the General Fund portion of Fire Services. The Commission discussed the continued inclusion of travel, training, legal services, and non-profit funding within its budget, and staff highlighted the removal of prior negative interfund transfers through a new cost allocation approach.

City Clerk's Office - Jacki Poole, City Clerk

The City Clerk presented the department's mission, vision, goals, and core services, including records management, agenda preparation, minutes, elections, public records, business tax receipts, cemeteries, and support for boards and proclamations. Key performance measures were reviewed (agendas prepared, minutes transcribed, proclamations, records processed, and records requests), and the Commission reviewed the FY 2025-26 budget by category, including funding for an electronic records program and removal of negative interfund transfers.

City Manager's Office - Tracy Miller, Asst. City Manager

The City Manager's Office summarized its leadership and communications functions, including strategic direction, policy implementation, community engagement, and oversight of the organizational performance/dashboard. Staff reviewed key performance and communication metrics (web, social media,

newsletter) and the proposed budget, which shifts away from negative interfund transfers and funds strategic planning and transparency initiatives.

Code Compliance and Neighborhood Services - Tray Towles, Director

The department presented its mission, goals, and dual functions (code compliance and neighborhood services), with emphasis on voluntary compliance, neighborhood aesthetics, safety, and community partnerships. Performance data on inspections, violations, abatement activities, citizen contacts, and magistrate actions were summarized, and the Commission received an overview of the proposed budget and planned initiatives, including code compliance accreditation and a proposed assistance grant (“Angel Fund”).

Finance Department - Peter Lear, Finance Director

Finance staff outlined departmental goals and services, including budgeting, financial reporting, accounts payable, payroll, debt management, procurement, customer service, and utility billing. Performance measures on call volumes, payments by type, procurement activity, and purchase orders were discussed, along with a restructured budget for Administration, Customer Service, and Purchasing divisions, reflecting cost allocation changes, staffing shifts, and the planned ERP replacement.

Human Resources - Cherie Kercher, HR Director

HR presented its mission, vision, goals, and key service areas such as recruitment, benefits, labor relations, safety and workers’ compensation, training, and policy development. The Commission reviewed vacancy and separation statistics, the restructuring of retiree medical costs into the Employee Benefits Fund, and the FY 2025-26 initiatives including wellness, service awards, HRMS implementation, and enhanced onboarding and orientation.

Information Technology - Dan Franceour, Asst. IT Director

IT staff described infrastructure, cybersecurity, help desk support, telecommunications, and digital transformation responsibilities, with emphasis on system availability and customer service metrics. The proposed budget consolidates major technology platforms under IT, funds a laptop lease program and Innovation Fund projects, and supports future projects such as commission chambers A/V, security upgrades, Wi-Fi refresh, and network improvements.

Mayor Tucker recessed the workshop at 12:00 p.m.

Mayor Tucker reconvened at 12:36 p.m.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts (PRCA including Golf Club & Mulligans) - Jason Hargrove, PRCA Director and Golf Course Manager, Tami Waring

PRCA presented its mission, goals, and program offerings, including facilities, athletics, community events, senior programs, and health and wellness initiatives. Golf Course and Mulligans performance (rounds played, food and beverage sales) and budgets were reviewed, including efforts to reduce subsidy, support the Employer of Choice Initiative, and deliver planned capital projects such as the cart barn and other facility improvements.

Bartow Public Library and Library Cooperative - Jason Hargrove, PRCA Director and City Librarian Christina Hielscher

Library staff presented service and programming goals focused on literacy, lifelong learning, outreach, and access to collections and digital resources. Performance measures (circulation, visits, programs, attendance) were reviewed, along with the budgets for the City Library, the Polk County Library Cooperative contributions, and State Aid, including capital reductions and technology/space projects such as the Story Trail.

Parks and Recreation Division (within PRCA) - Jason Hargrove, PRCA Director and Parks Manager Kyle Lasek

The Parks and Recreation division overviewed its facilities and program mix, including athletics, tournaments, events, senior activities, and wellness programming, and highlighted strong growth in participation and social media engagement. The Commission reviewed the division's budget, which includes Employer of Choice costs and significant reductions in new capital due to prior CIP investments, along with upcoming projects such as ADA playground improvements, Mary Holland Park enhancements, and various facility upgrades and equipment purchases.

Planning Department - Bob Wiegers, Planning Director

Planning staff presented their mission, goals, and role in managing development review, comprehensive planning, land development regulation updates, public hearings, and customer service for applicants and the public. Performance metrics (population growth, residential and non-residential approvals, new development projects, and customer contacts) were reviewed along with the FY 2025-26 budget and cost allocation changes tied to agenda workloads; the ongoing comprehensive plan update was noted as a major initiative.

Police Department - Stephen Walker, Police Chief

The Police Department summarized its mission, vision, structure, and services, including patrol, investigations, communications, community policing, and specialized units. The Commission reviewed performance measures (citations, community contacts, daily activity mix, recruiting and hiring statistics), the proposed budget including Employer of Choice impacts and capital investments in body/dash camera and Taser lease programs, and current recruitment strategies and facility upgrades.

Enterprise Funds - Electric Department - Michael Poucher, Electric Director

The Electric Utility presented its mission, goals, service territory, customer base, and operational responsibilities, including distribution, tree trimming, and lighting. Staff summarized performance indicators (outage restoration time and service orders), the FY 2025-26 budget with reduced capital and interfund transfers, and major initiatives including a new Southeast Area substation and system improvement projects.

Enterprise Funds - Fiber Optic - Dan Franceour, Asst. IT Director, Michael Poucher, Electric Director and Asst. City Manager Tracy Miller

The Fiber Optic operation was presented as a citywide connectivity and SCADA backbone, supporting municipal facilities and partner agencies, with a focus on smart city applications and future broadband opportunities. The budget reflects an unfunded position, reduced operating costs, and capital for fiber R&R, alongside ongoing planning work through the Fiber Master Plan and related smart city concepts.

Mayor Tucker recessed the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Mayor Tucker reconvened the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

Enterprise Funds - Wastewater - Water Utilities Director John Hall and Wastewater Plant Manager Wiley Pratt

Wastewater staff presented their mission, goals, and operations at the Water Reclamation Facility and lift stations, emphasizing environmental compliance and reliable service. Performance measures (flows, meter readings, groundwater levels) and the proposed budget were discussed, including shifts in capital expenditures to the Wastewater Impact Fee Fund, changes to interfund transfers, and the status of lift station generators, solids handling expansion, and system improvement projects.

Enterprise Funds - Water - Water Utilities Director John Hall and Water Plant Manager Tony Martinez

Water staff described plant operations, treatment processes, regulatory compliance, and performance, including no water quality violations over the last 10 years and increased demand. The Commission reviewed performance measures (gallons pumped, billed, water loss, meter connections) and the budget reflecting reallocation of capital, interfund transfer changes, and upcoming projects such as roof work, a 24-inch transmission line, interconnect with Polk County and Lakeland, and lead service line replacement.

Special Revenue Funds - Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) - Executive Director, Howard Smith

CRA staff presented mission, goals, and activities related to blight reduction, economic development, housing, infrastructure, and placemaking within the CRA district. Performance data on grants and engagement, and the FY 2025-26

revenue and expenditure budgets (including debt issuance for projects and R&R programs such as flood mitigation, sidewalk enhancement, and smart city work) were reviewed, with priority projects and support for one police position noted. There was further discussions about blighted conditions in the City, the cigar factory, the cement factory and possibly relocating the Girl Scouts and a round about.

Mayor Tucker recessed the meeting at 4:35 p.m. and continued the meeting until July 18, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Vice Mayor Simpson called the **July 18, 2025 City Commission Budget Workshop** to order at 9:09 a.m., she dispensed with the roll call. Attendance was as follows:

Commissioners present: Commissioner Ball, Commissioner Pfeiffer, Vice Mayor Simpson and Mayor Tucker (arrived at 9:14 a.m.)

Commissioners absent: Commissioner Longworth

Staff present: All department heads, managers and City Attorney Parker.

City Manager Herr provided handouts of the FY 25-26 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) as well as the projects that are being carried forward into the following year.

Special Revenue Funds - Building - Building Official Brian Wells & Permit Specialist Cindy King

The Building Department explained its code enforcement and permitting responsibilities and performance trends in permits, new homes, and inspections. The Commission reviewed the creation of a separate Building Fund to segregate permitting revenue as required by statute, the associated budget, and capital support for a City Hall remodel or customer service center, along with technology projects for e-permitting and code enforcement.

Special Revenue Funds – Fire Services - Chief Jay Robinson and Deputy Chief's Byron Moore and James Schall

Fire Services presented its mission, goals, call volumes, response times, and prevention/education activities funded in part by the fire assessment. The Commission reviewed revenue sources (including state appropriations and fire assessment), budget changes due to reduced capital and revised interfund transfers, and major initiatives such as the joint fire substation, apparatus replacement, facility improvements, and hiring of three firefighters.

General Fund - Public Works (Professional Services & Facilities) - Public Works Director - Billy Groover

Public Works staff presented their mission, goals, and General Fund responsibilities, including facilities maintenance, GIS, asset management

support, construction management, and infrastructure coordination. Performance measures on work orders, repair costs, vehicle replacements, and system condition were discussed, and the budget reflects the completion of major capital (Public Works Administration Building) and upcoming work such as the City Hall remodel and AC unit R&R program. There was a discussion regarding the swimming pool. The new estimated cost is more than anticipated. It was budgeted at \$3.2M, but current cost is now \$6.2M. Other options for use of the spend down it to build an outdoor venue, make improvements at Mary Holland Park and connect it to the Reading Trail or update Mulligans. There is also the possibility to get sponsorship from Baycare to help with costs. The pool will never pay for its operation. City Manager Herr suggested having a workshop to further discuss.

Mayor Tucker recessed the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Mayor Tucker reconvened the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Enterprise Funds - Solid Waste - Public Works Director Billy Groover and Solid Waste Manager Mike Davis

Solid Waste staff reviewed residential and commercial collection services, including garbage, recycling, yard waste, bulk, and roll-off services, and outlined division goals consistent with citywide public works objectives. The Commission received the FY 2025-26 budget summary showing one new position, Employer of Choice impacts, reduced capital, and the status and timeline of the Solid Waste facility site renovation project.

Enterprise Funds - Stormwater - Public Works Director Billy Groover and Stormwater Manager Jeff Barr

The Stormwater division outlined its mission, goals, and services, including ditch and pond maintenance, inlet cleaning, street sweeping, and capital improvements funded by the stormwater assessment. Staff reviewed performance measures (street sweeping tonnage and catch basins cleaned), reductions in capital expenditures, and key FY 2025-26 initiatives such as CCTV inspection, Floral Avenue pipe replacement, and R&R programs for inlets and related infrastructure.

Enterprise Funds - Underground Utilities (TCS) - Public Works Director Billy Groover and Stormwater Manager Robin Casselman

Underground Utilities staff presented goals and performance related to manhole rehabilitation, valve replacement, and support for water and wastewater transmission and collection systems. They also spoke about the new TCS building. The Commission reviewed the allocation of TCS expenses between Water and Wastewater Funds, project status for the TCS building and red-zone sewer inspections, and planned FY 2025-26 projects including sewer force main repairs and water/wastewater relocations at Highway 60/17.

Internal Service Funds - Fleet Services - Public Works Director Billy Groover and Fleet Services Manager Matt Mensing

Fleet Services presented its mission, goals, and responsibilities for maintaining the city's vehicles, equipment, and related assets, including specifications, procurement support, and surplus disposition. Staff reviewed fleet age, repair costs, work orders, and vehicle replacement volumes, along with the creation of a Fleet Maintenance Fund supported by charges for service and planned vehicle/equipment replacements in FY 2025-26.

Special Revenue Funds - Transportation - Public Works Director Billy Groover and Jeff Barr

Transportation staff presented their mission, goals, and core services (roadway and sidewalk maintenance, resurfacing, signs, and curbing) along with performance measures (miles paved and PCI). The budget reflects revised revenue and impact fee treatment, cost allocation changes, and completion of prior resurfacing programs, with a continued annual resurfacing program planned for FY 2025-26.

A copy of the full presentation is attached to these minutes.

City Manager Herr thanked staff and the Commissioners for their time in reviewing the proposed budget. He said he was proud of our staff and he enjoys working with this team. He said the residents are to have the staff that Bartow does. He reviewed the City Commission budget meeting schedule.

- July 21, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. – Set Millage Rate
- September 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. – Public hearing and adoption of the Proposed Tentative Millage Rate and Proposed Tentative Budget
- September 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. – Public hearing and Adoption of Final Millage Rate and Final Budget

Mayor Tucker thanked City Manager Herr for giving staff the opportunity to shine.

Collectively the commissioners were thanked and grateful.

3. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Tucker adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Mayor Tanya Tucker

ATTEST:

City Clerk Jacqueline Poole

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Tracy Miller, Assistant City Manager
Cherie Kercher, Human Resources Director

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Approval of the Management Career Ladder Relocation PTO Program.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

As an Employer of Choice, the City of Bartow recognizes the need to provide additional relocation Paid Time Off to Management Career Ladder employees who are exempt and are moving to the area from distances beyond 60 miles.

STAFF ANALYSIS

This Administrative Directive establishes the Management Career Ladder Relocation Paid Time Off (PTO) Program. The program provides up to 160 hours of Paid Time Off to eligible new employees during their first year of employment to support relocation activities.

Eligibility for the program is limited to newly hired Management Career Ladder employees who relocate to Polk County, Florida, and whose previous residence was 60 miles or more from the City of Bartow.

Eligible employees include:

- In-state employees who relocate 60 miles or more, and
- All out-of-state employees, regardless of distance.

Relocation PTO must be used within the employee's first year of employment and is intended solely to support relocation-related needs. This is a use or lose benefit in the first year of employment and is not paid out if the employee ends their employment with the City.

Objectives:

The objective of this Administrative Directive is to establish an Employer of Choice policy to aid Management Ladder employees in their relocation transition upon being employed by the City of Bartow.

Guidelines:

Relocation can often be challenging when beginning a new position, particularly because new employees do not have access to standard Paid Time Off during their first three months of employment with the City. Recognizing this challenge, the City of Bartow offers up to 160 hours of Paid Time Off to eligible employees for relocation purposes only.

Relocation Paid Time Off may be used for activities directly related to relocation, including but not limited to the sale or purchase of a home, moving and packing activities, medical enrollment, and school enrollment. These hours may not be used for non-relocation purposes such as vacation, personal time, or sick leave.

Eligible employees will have 160 hours credited to their leave balance under the “Relocation” category. These hours are available for use for one year from the employee’s date of hire and must be used solely for relocation-related activities. Any unused relocation hours will expire at the end of the one-year period. If the employee ends their employment with the City, these hours will not be paid out.

Whenever possible, relocation Paid Time Off should be scheduled in advance and submitted through the City’s standard leave approval process. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that relocation Paid Time Off is used only for approved relocation purposes.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the Management Career Ladder Relocation PTO Program

ATTACHMENTS

1. AD 01-003 - Management Career Ladder Relocation PTO

CITY OF BARTOW, FL ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE No.: 01-003		
Subject: Management Career Ladder Relocation PTO Program		
Effective Date: January 5, 2026	Originally Issued Date: January 5, 2026	Previous Revision Date: Not Applicable
City Manager Approval:		Date Approved:

Authority:

City of Bartow, FL Charter, Section 3.03A, “City Manager, Qualifications, Compensation, Powers and Duties, Office of City Manager.”

Purpose:

This Administrative Directive establishes the Management Career Ladder Relocation Paid Time Off (PTO) Program. The program provides up to 160 hours of Paid Time Off to eligible new employees during their first year of employment to support relocation activities.

Eligibility for the program is limited to newly hired Management Career Ladder employees who relocate to Polk County, Florida, and whose previous residence was 60 miles or more from the City of Bartow.

Eligible employees include:

- In-state employees who relocate 60 miles or more, and
- All out-of-state employees, regardless of distance.

Relocation PTO must be used within the employee’s first year of employment and is intended solely to support relocation-related needs.

Objectives:

The objective of this Administrative Directive is to establish an Employer of Choice policy to aid Management Ladder employees in their relocation transition upon being employed by the City of Bartow.

Guidelines:

Relocation can often be challenging when beginning a new position, particularly because new employees do not have access to standard Paid Time Off during their first three months of employment with the City. Recognizing this challenge, the City of Bartow offers up to 160 hours of Paid Time Off to eligible employees for relocation purposes only.

Relocation Paid Time Off may be used for activities directly related to relocation, including but not limited to the sale or purchase of a home, moving and packing activities, medical enrollment,

and school enrollment. These hours may not be used for non-relocation purposes such as vacation, personal time, or sick leave.

Eligible employees will have 160 hours credited to their leave balance under the “Relocation” category. These hours are available for use for one year from the employee’s date of hire and must be used solely for relocation-related activities. Any unused relocation hours will expire at the end of the one-year period.

Whenever possible, relocation Paid Time Off should be scheduled in advance and submitted through the City’s standard leave approval process. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that relocation Paid Time Off is used only for approved relocation purposes.

Responsibilities:

1. **City Leadership Team:** review and confirm leave requests and approve time off based on the stated relocation activity.
2. **City Manager:** Authorize use of the relocation leave category based on the submitted Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form.
3. **Deputy/Assistant City Manager:** The Deputy/Assistant City Manager will review the Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form along with any other documentation. Upon signature of approval, the Deputy/Assistant City Manager will correspond to the City Manager for the final approval.
4. **Human Resources Director:** The Human Resources Director will review the Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form and upon decision will provide approval through signature. The Human Resources Director will then communicate and process the form to the City Manager’s Office for approval.
5. **Department Director:** The Department Director must consult with the Human Resources Director upon request for the Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form. Once the form has been approved through signature, it will be processed to the Deputy/Assistant City Manager. Department Directors will work with the employee to complete a Signing Bonus Agreement with the individual employee and will provide that form to Human Resources for records retention.

Procedures:

1. Determine if potential new hire meets relocation requirements and eligibility.
2. Prepare Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form for approval by Human Resources Director, Deputy/Assistant City Manager, and City Manager.
3. HR/Finance to add relocation hours to employee time management in the City of Bartow NeoGov HRMS system.

Attachment:

- Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form



City of Bartow Management Ladder Category Relocation Leave Approval Form

Please complete and return to Human Resources Department

Name: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

Division: _____

Position: _____

Title: _____

In State Relocation: ☐ Out of State Relocation: ☐

Relocation Distance in Miles: _____

Must be 60 miles or more for in state relocation

Current Address: _____

New Address: _____

Department Director Signature

Print Name

Date

HR Director Signature

Print Name

Date

Deputy/Assistant City Manager Signature

Print Name

Date

City Manager Signature

Print Name

Date

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Jacki Poole, City Clerk

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Approval to reappoint Board Member Bill Bohde to the Recreation Advisory Board for a three-year term ending January 2029.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The City Commission is asked to consider the reappointment of Mr. Bill Bohde to the Recreation Advisory Committee for a new three-year term ending January 2029.

Established by Ordinance No. 1042-A on October 7, 1974, the Recreation Advisory Committee serves to:

1. Advise the City Commission and City Manager on recreation-related matters and prepare reports as requested.
2. Perform other recreation duties as assigned, consistent with the City Charter.
3. Establish bylaws, rules, and fee schedules governing recreation facilities, subject to City Commission approval.

The Committee is composed of five members serving staggered three-year terms. Meetings are held monthly as needed, on the second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at City Hall. No special qualifications or financial disclosure requirements apply to members.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Committee Member Bill Bohde has expressed interest in continuing to serve. Mr. Bohde has served on the Committee since September 2022 and has maintained good attendance, with three absences in the last 30 meetings. No additional applications have been received. Reappointment is necessary to maintain a quorum for upcoming meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Commission reappoint Mr. Bill Bohde to the Recreation Advisory Committee for a three-year term ending January 2029.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Bohde Bill Rec Board reappointment application



CITY OF BARTOW BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

APPLICATION

Thank you for your interest in serving on a Bartow board or committee!

Before You Begin.

Please read this form carefully. Fully complete all sections. Applications remain active for one year from submittal date.

Return completed application to:

City Clerk's Office, Bartow City Hall, 450 N. Wilson Avenue, Bartow, Florida 33830; or FAX to: 863-534-0409; or email to: jpoole.clerks@cityofbartow.net

Choice of Board or Committee.

Please review the attached descriptions & qualifications for the board or committee that interested in joining.

List the name of the board/committee for which you are applying

Note: that you may only belong to one board or committee at a time.

Recreation Board

Contact Information: Please print legibly.

Note: this application, and all information you provide, may be viewed by the public upon request.

Bill Bohde

Name

725 Wildwood Drive

Business/Organization Name (if applicable)

Bartow

FL 33830

Mailing Address

863-559-9233 same

City

billbohde@outlook.com

State

Zip

Home Phone Number

Cell Phone Number

Email Address

Why are you interested in serving as a member of your selected board or committee?

I am a lifelong resident and grew up enjoying the cities parks. We are experiencing a surge in growth and I want to make sure adequate recreational opportunities

Briefly describe prior board or committee service and/or special qualifications: are provided to support

Past Bartow Kiwanis Board of Directors, Current Rec Board member, Cit. Polk County Citrus Advisory Board Member, CADF Board Member Citrus Research & Development Foundation

Section 760.80, Florida Statutes, requires certain reporting of minority representation on statutorily created boards to be filed on an annual basis. Please complete the following:

Race: ☐ Native American ☐ African American ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian ☒ Caucasian ☐ Other

Gender:

☒ Male

☐ Female

Physically Disabled:

☐ Yes

☒ No

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please explain:

☒ I do hereby acknowledge the following:

1. This application, when complete and filed with the Office of the City Clerk, is a Public Record under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and is open to public inspection.
2. I am responsible for keeping the information on this form current and that any changes or updates will be provided to the Office of the City Clerk
3. I consent to filing the Statement of Financial Interests (FORM 1) if required for this board/committee.
4. If appointed, I acknowledge that it is my obligation and duty to comply with the following:
 - a. Code of Ethics for Public Officials (F.S. Chapter 112, Part III)
 - b. Florida Sunshine Law (F.S. Chapter 286)
 - c. Florida Statutes www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/
5. I understand the responsibilities associated with being a board or committee member, and I will have adequate time to serve on the board or committee I have selected.

Bartow Residency. Bartow residency is a requirement for Bartow boards and committees.

☒ I attest that I reside within the incorporated limits of Bartow.

Home Address: 725 Wildwood Drive Bartow, FL 33830

Home Address is required and will be used to verify Bartow residency

Truth and Accuracy.

I certify that the information contained on this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

William F. Wade

Date

12/31/25

Important Public Records Information. Please note that the city receives requests from the public to review documents, such as this form, provided to the city and the city is obligated to release these public records, including all information contained on the form, upon request. Please call the City Clerk at 863-534-0100, if you have questions or concerns about the disclosure of specific information.

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Jacki Poole, City Clerk

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Consideration of request by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to grant an honorary City of Bartow “Key to the City” to Retired Colonel Cynthia E. Cook.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The City Commission is asked to consider issuing a proclamation and an honorary Key to the City to Retired Colonel Cynthia E. Cook at the February 2, 2026 Regular City Commission Meeting.

Each year, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requests that the City issue a proclamation and an honorary Key to the City in conjunction with FDOT’s Annual Black History Month Recognition Ceremony. The City has historically granted these requests.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The City Commission’s Policies and Procedures for proclamations and Keys to the City, last updated on May 16, 2025, provide the framework for this request. Proclamations are ceremonial documents used to honor events or increase public awareness of issues of local, state, or national significance, and are scheduled under the “Proclamations and Presentations” section of a Regular Meeting agenda. Proclamations are not issued for commercial purposes, must be requested with draft language at least 14 calendar days prior to presentation, are subject to staff editing, require the presence of a requestor at the meeting, and may be denied or excepted at the City’s discretion; they may also be presented outside a Regular Meeting at the discretion of the Mayor or any Commissioner.

Requests for an honorary Key to the City are presented to the City Commission for consideration at a Commission meeting, unless time constraints require action by the City Manager and Mayor, who are authorized to decide such requests and report their decision at the next Commission meeting. FDOT’s request to honor Retired Colonel Cook is consistent with these established practices and the City’s prior participation in FDOT’s Black History Month recognitions.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Commission approve FDOT's request to issue a proclamation and an honorary Key to the City to Retired Colonel Cynthia E. Cook to be presented at the February 2, 2026 Regular City Commission Meeting. If approved, the City Clerk's Office will notify FDOT and provide the date, time, and location for the presentation, and will assist FDOT with preparation of the proclamation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. FDOT Request for Key to City
2. Key to City Bio Retired Colonel Cynthia Cook Bio USAR with Picture

Jacki Poole

From: Ruth, Caryn <Caryn.Ruth@dot.state.fl.us>
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 2:44 PM
To: Jacki Poole
Subject: [EXTERNAL]"Key to the City " Award

This Message Is From an External Sender

This message came from outside your organization.

Good afternoon Ms. Poole,

I pray this email finds you in a joyful spirit as Christmas is fast approaching.

On behalf of the FDOT Black History Committee, we would like to request that our 2026 Black History Honoree, Cynthia Cook receive the "Key to the City " Award. Our date of presentation is February 25, 2026, at 12pm. Please advise what is needed to make this possible. I do know that you will need a bio and I'm working on getting that as soon as possible.

Thank you!

Caryn Ruth

Training Coord./Time Keeper/Senior Clerk

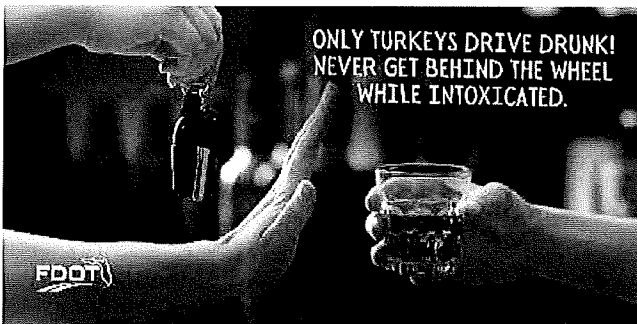
Bartow Operations, FDOT

2740 State Road 60 West, Bartow, FL. 33830

Office: 863-519-4302

[CTQP Home Page](#) [Self Study \(fdot.gov\)](#)

[SharePoint Site](#)





Biography

Department of the Army



Colonel Cynthia E. Cook (Retired) United States Army Reserves

Colonel Cynthia E. Cook (Retired) career culminated as the Chief of Staff and Acting Deputy Commander, for the 364th Expeditionary Sustainment Command in Marysville, Washington on December 5, 2020. Colonel (Retired) Cook was commissioned in August 1990 as a second lieutenant at Officer Candidate School, Florida National Guard Military Academy, Camp Blanding, Florida. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from the University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida and a Master's in Business Administration, Florida Metropolitan University, Clearwater, Florida. Upon commissioning, she attended the Quartermaster Officer Basic Course, Fort Lee, Virginia and completed her second branch in 1994 at the Finance Officer Basic Course, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. COL Cook (Retired) served her country honorably for over 33 years respectively as an enlisted soldier (4 years) and as a commissioned officer (29 years).

Colonel Cook (Retired) served in a myriad of key senior executive leadership positions and developmental positions during her career while serving on Active Duty, in the Florida Army National Guard, and the United States Army Reserves, respectively.

Throughout her military career those positions include Quartermaster Platoon Leader, Personnel Management Officer, Executive Officer and Military Pay Officer (53D SPT BN, St. Petersburg, FL) with the National Guard; and Platoon Leader/ Quartermaster Observer Controller and Trainer, HHC Commander with 3-347th Training Support Battalion, 87th Division, Orlando, FL; Supply and Services Officer (32d TRANS GRP), Battalion S4 and Battalion S3 (332d TRANS BN, Tampa, FL) Supply Management Officer (143d TRANSCOM FWD KUWAIT), Assistant S3 (32D TRANS GRP Rear Element SPT, Tampa, FL), Operations Officer, Supply Staff Officer, Resource Manager, and Chief of Programs (J5 USCENCOM, MacDill AFB, FL), Battalion Commander (3-347th CS/CSS (TSBN), Orlando, FL), J4 Logistics Plans Officer (J4 USCENCOM, MacDill AFB, FL) and Brigade Commander (321st Sustainment Brigade, Baton Rouge, LA). She has one combat tour overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with follow on assignments CONUS in support of OPERATIONS Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, and New Dawn.

Colonel Cook (Retired) is a graduate of the Quartermaster Officer Basic Course, Finance Officer Basic Course, Quartermaster Officer Advanced Course, Combined Arms and Service Staff School Course, (CAS3) Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Reserve Component Multi-Functional Combat Services Support School (RCMCSS), Advanced Joint Professional Military Education (AJPME), Phase II, Defense Institute of Security Management – International Programs Security Requirements Course, Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC), Joint Operational Contract Support Planning and Execution Course (JOPEC), various Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Courses and completed one year as a student of the United States Army War College (AWC) Department of Distance Education (DDE).

Her awards and decorations include: Legion of Merit (Retirement Award), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (w/1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Joint Service Commendation Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Joint Service Achievement Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Achievement Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award (3), Good Conduct Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and Army Service Ribbon.

She has been married to Michael E. Cook from Leesville, Louisiana for 27 years and they have one daughter, Brenda. Page 131 of 137

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, City of Bartow City Commission

THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager

FROM: Jacki Poole, City Clerk, Sean Parker, City Attorney

DATE: January 5, 2026

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. 26-4251-R - A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, URGING MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT THE 2026 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES' LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THIS RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER ERRORS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The Florida League of Cities (FLC) annually adopts a Legislative Platform outlining priority issues for the upcoming session of the Florida Legislature. The platform provides cities with a unified voice on matters impacting municipal home rule authority, financial sustainability, and quality-of-life services.

During its Legislative Conference held December 5, 2025, FLC members adopted the 2026 Legislative Platform, emphasizing key municipal priorities concerning property taxation, housing policy, enterprise fund transfers, sovereign immunity, and clarification of certain provisions enacted under Chapter 2025-190, Laws of Florida (SB 180).

Resolution No. 26-4251-R expresses the City of Bartow's formal support for the FLC's 2026 Legislative Platform and authorizes the City Manager or designee to take necessary actions to advocate for these positions throughout the 2026 Legislative Session, which convenes January 13, 2026.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The 2026 FLC Legislative Platform aligns closely with the City of Bartow's interests in preserving local decision-making authority and maintaining financial flexibility to meet community needs.

Key issues on the platform include:

- **Property Taxes:** Supports local authority over property tax decisions essential for funding municipal operations, public safety, and quality-of-life services.
- **Enterprise Fund Transfers:** Maintains city discretion to manage and utilize utility revenues responsibly, including funding transfers to the general fund to support core services.
- **Housing:** Encourages balanced housing solutions that address affordability while preserving each city's authority to plan responsibly and engage the public in land use decisions.
- **Revisions to SB 180 (2025):** Seeks legislative clarification to limit the law's applicability and ensure local governments retain necessary powers to manage post disaster recovery and flood control.
- **Sovereign Immunity:** Upholds current liability limits for governmental entities to safeguard taxpayer resources.

Additional FLC policy areas of alignment include community redevelopment, municipal election procedures, extraterritorial utility surcharges, and privacy protections for municipal staff.

Adoption of this resolution strengthens the City's relationship with the FLC and demonstrates solidarity with municipalities across the state in advancing local self-governance and fiscal responsibility.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this resolution. City staff participation in advocacy efforts through the FLC or legislative meetings would be covered under existing budget appropriations for intergovernmental relations and professional memberships.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Commission approve Resolution No. 26-4251-R, urging members of the Florida Legislature to support the 2026 Florida League of Cities Legislative Platform and authorizing the City Manager or designee to take all actions necessary to advocate for these priorities.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 26-4251-R Supporting 2026 FLC Legislative Platform

RESOLUTION NO. 26-4251-R

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, URGING MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT THE 2026 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES' LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THIS RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER ERRORS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature will convene the 2026 Legislative Session on January 13, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the Florida League of Cities adopted the 2026 FLC Legislative Platform during the FLC Legislative Conference on December 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bartow supports the 2026 FLC Legislative Platform, which includes the following priorities:

- **Property Taxes** - The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** local authority over equitable property tax decisions that fund essential services like public safety, infrastructure, parks, and programs that define a community. Reducing or eliminating this revenue without a reasonable replacement would destabilize city budgets, threaten city creditworthiness, and undermine local priorities. Cities are created by residents to protect their communities and residents' quality-of-life, and local tax decisions are essential to fulfilling that responsibility.
- **Enterprise Fund Transfers** - The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** preserving municipal authority over the use of utility revenues to ensure equitable cost recovery and financial sustainability, including the ability to reinvest in system maintenance and transfer funds to the general fund. Maintaining this flexibility enables municipalities to sustain essential services and manage budgets responsibly for their community.
- **Housing** - The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that addresses Florida's urgent housing shortage while preserving the authority of local governments to manage growth consistent with each community's capacity to ensure public safety, resilience, and financial stability. Cities must retain the ability to decide where housing is located to preserve their unique identity without additional state preemptions or expanded administrative approval requirements that erode public participation and residents' freedom to influence how their cities grow.
- **Revising Sections 18 and 28 of Chapter 2025-190, Laws of Florida (SB 180 – Emergencies)** - The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation to clarify Sections 18 and 28 of SB 180 (2025). The law goes far beyond assisting storm-damaged properties and prevents responsible community planning and flood control. Legislative clarification should: limit the law's applicability to jurisdictions that experience measurable impacts from hurricanes; provide definitions for overbroad and vague

terms; limit its scope to storm-damaged properties; and clarify provisions relating to standing, pre-suit notice, and opportunity to cure.

- Sovereign Immunity - The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS maintaining reasonable limits or 'caps' on monetary damages recoverable in negligence claims against government entities. These protections are crucial to safeguard Florida's taxpayers.

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Bartow also supports the FLC policy positions relating to:

- Community Redevelopment Agencies
- Extraterritorial Surcharges
- Municipal Election
- Public Records Exemption for Municipal Clerks and Staff

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BARTOW:

SECTION 1. The City Commission of the City of Bartow will work with our local legislative delegation in support of these and other issues affecting Florida's cities, towns and villages during the upcoming 2026 Legislative Session.

SECTION 2. A copy of this resolution shall be provided to members of our local legislative delegation and the Florida League of Cities, Inc.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 5th day of January, 2026.

CITY OF BARTOW

ATTEST:

By: _____
Mayor Tanya Tucker

By: _____
City Clerk Jacqueline Poole

(seal)

Approved as to correctness and form:

Approved as to substance:

By: _____
City Attorney Sean R. Parker

By: _____
City Manager Mike Herr



PRIORITIES:

Property Taxes

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS local authority over equitable property tax decisions that fund essential services like public safety, infrastructure, parks, and programs that define a community. Reducing or eliminating this revenue without a reasonable replacement would destabilize city budgets, threaten city creditworthiness, and undermine local priorities. Cities are created by residents to protect their communities and residents' quality-of-life, and local tax decisions are essential to fulfilling that responsibility.

Enterprise Fund Transfers

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS preserving municipal authority over the use of utility revenues to ensure equitable cost recovery and financial sustainability, including the ability to reinvest in system maintenance and transfer funds to the general fund. Maintaining this flexibility enables municipalities to sustain essential services and manage budgets responsibly for their community.

Housing

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation that addresses Florida's urgent housing shortage while preserving the authority of local governments to manage growth consistent with each community's capacity to ensure public safety, resilience, and financial stability. Cities must retain the ability to decide where housing is located to preserve their unique identity—without additional state preemptions or expanded administrative approval requirements that erode public participation and residents' freedom to influence how their cities grow.

Revising Sections 18 and 28 of Chapter 2025-190, Laws of Florida (SB 180 – Emergencies)

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation to clarify Sections 18 and 28 of SB 180 (2025). The law goes far beyond assisting storm-damaged properties and prevents responsible community planning and flood control. Legislative clarification should: limit the law's applicability to jurisdictions that experience measurable impacts from hurricanes; provide definitions for overbroad and vague terms; limit its scope to storm-damaged properties; and clarify provisions relating to standing, pre-suit notice, and opportunity to cure.

Sovereign Immunity

The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS maintaining reasonable limits or 'caps' on monetary damages recoverable in negligence claims against government entities. These protections are crucial to safeguard Florida's taxpayers.



POLICY POSITIONS:

Community Redevelopment Agencies

The Florida League of Cities **OPPOSES** legislation limiting the authority or operation of Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs), which are vital tools for revitalizing neighborhoods and driving local economic growth. CRAs fund critical projects such as infrastructure, public safety, affordable housing, roads, drainage, and public spaces that improve communities statewide. The League supports accountability and transparency, but opposes weakening or eliminating CRAs.

Extraterritorial Surcharges

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** maintaining municipal authority to establish reasonable extraterritorial surcharges that reflect the actual cost of providing services outside city limits. These surcharges protect municipal residents from subsidizing outside customers, promote efficient regional service, and often originate as municipal initiatives to assist counties and unincorporated residents. Statutory notice and public hearing requirements provide transparency and accountability, ensuring municipal utilities remain fair, open, and responsive to their communities.

Municipal Elections

The Florida League of Cities **OPPOSES** legislation that restricts municipal voters' authority to set municipal election dates.

Public Records Exemption for Municipal Clerks and Staff

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that provides a public records exemption for the personal information of municipal clerks; as well as investigative personnel and employees who perform municipal elections work.