



## **Alachua County Special Meeting**

### **Minutes**

**May 19, 2025, 6:00 PM**

Present: Vice Chair Mary Alford, Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut, IV, Commissioner Ken Cornell, Chair Anna Prizzia, Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler

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#### **A. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

#### **B. Welcome**

#### **C. Introduction**

1. Walter Welch, Mayor, City of Alachua
2. Charles Chestnut, Chair, Alachua County Commission

#### **D. Adoption of the Agenda**

**Commissioner Cornell moved** adoption of the agenda as printed.

2nd Commissioner Prizzia

Chair Chestnut recognized Tamara Robbins who presented comments to the Board.

**The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Wheeler out of the room.**

#### **E. Items For Discussion**

1. County update on Roads within Alachua City Limits

Assistant Public Works Brian Kauffman presented the above item.

Mr. Kauffman advised that CR 235 is scheduled for rehab in 2026 and 2027. County Road 235A north of US 441 is scheduled for 2028. The Board adopted the plan in 2023 and is currently a \$250,000,000 funded project list.

City Commissioner Williams, City Manager DaRoza, County Manager Leiberman, County Commissioner Prizzia, and City Commissioner Fletcher presented comments.

Chair Chestnut recognized Soorya Lindberg and Tamara Robbins who presented comments to the Board.

2. Pinkoson Springs update on potential joint project between City/County City of Alachua Economic Development Manager David Wisener presented the above item.

Mr. Wisener stated that the spring has a rich history. It was first opened for public recreation in 1925 by former County Sheriff Pinkoson. It was sold in 1940 and was an African American recreation facility. It was sold again and at its height there was a restaurant, roller rink, cabins, and a dance hall. It is unknown when the operation ceased operating. This project would protect water quality as well as a historically significant site. The owner of the site is a willing seller, but his patience is running thin as the city has yet to locate funding to purchase the site. The appraisal for the site is \$170,000.00 for the 6 acres. The city submitted the project to the water management district as a water quality project. The district requested more details as to the water quality projects and a 50% match for the purchase of the site. The 50% match is not currently in the city's budget. The city is committed to finding funding for the project and hopes that the County is still committed to partnering on the project.

Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Cornell, City Commissioner Williams, City Commissioner Fletcher, City Manager DaRoza, and City Commissioner Green/Brown presented comments.

Commissioner Cornell stated that the County has a funding mechanism for water quality projects. If the City were to step up and purchase the site, he believes the city will find the County a willing partner on the water quality projects.

Public Comments:

Chair Chestnut recognized Tamara Robbins, a citizen, and Rudy Rothseiden who presented comments to the Board.

3. NW 86th Drive update

Assistant City Manager Rodolfo Valladares presented the above item.

Mr. Valladares stated that the roadway has been completed with streetlights, sidewalks, and aesthetic landscaping. This roadway will serve as the entrance to the Tech City Fire Station that the County will be constructing shortly.

Public Comment:

Chair Chestnut recognized Tamara Robbins who presented comments to the Board.

4. Alachua County Fire Rescue Station 21 and 25 update

Alachua County Fire Chief Harold Theus presented the above item.

Mr. Theus stated that Station 21 has been completed, and crews moved in last week. The Grand Opening will be May 30, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The station has 3 bays, 11,500 sq. ft. with ten beds. It is designed for 50 years of use. On May 31, 2025, will be an open house for Station 21. The community is invited, and food will be cooked and served by the fire fighters.

The next project is for a Station in Tech City. The land has been donated by Mitch Glaeser and the agreement is being drafted by the County Attorney's Office and will be before the Commission for approval in June. The Station will be designed to fit in architecturally with Tech City and will be a sustainable station. There will be solar panels and rainwater collection for reuse. There will be a fire themed playground next to the facility. This will be the first County facility with a baby box.

Mr. Theus advised that with the structures in Alachua going 3 and 4 stories high a ladder truck will be needed to service the city effectively. He stated that if the truck were to be ordered today it would cost \$2,000,000 and the build time for the truck is 36 to 48 months. So, coordination and planning between the city and county is necessary for this project.

Commissioner Wheeler, City Commissioner Ringersen, City Commissioner Williams, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Cornell, and City Commissioner Fletcher presented comments.

Public Comments:

Chair Chestnut recognized Tamara Robbins, Mitch Glaeser, Vailma Roca Fernandes, and Rudy Rothseiden who presented comments.

5. Alachua Learning Academy

City Commissioner Williams presented the above item.

Ms. Williams stated that the school is on CR 235 and there is no school zone for the facility. The speed limit is 55 mph with semi-trucks and a lot of traffic. She has been told that part of the road is under the County and part of the road is under the Florida Department of Transportation. This school is not in the city limits, but many residents have children in attendance at the school. She as a City Commissioner is willing to do whatever can be done to support a school zone before a tragic accident occurs.

Commissioner Wheeler, City Commissioner Green/Brown, and City Commissioner Ringersen presented comments.

**F. Public Comment**

Chair Chestnut recognized Asa Eichmiller, Soorya Lindberg, Vailma Roca Fernandes, Tamara Robbins, Jason Sweat, Peter Ynigo, Damon Messina, Sylvan Dore, Rudy Rothseiden, Michelle Lee, Mitch Glaeser, Mandy Bucci, and Julie Smith who presented comments to the Board.

**G. Commission General Comments and Information Discussion**

**1. County Commission Comment**

Commissioner Wheeler welcomed the newly elected Commissioners to the City of Alachua Board. She stated that she would love for the County to be informed of things in Alachua such as Swampbots so that the County can get the word out.

Commissioner Prizzia thanked the city for hosting the meeting. She also thanked the community for being so active and participatory in local government. She also stated that the public comments via phone during county meetings has not been abused and it definitely has encouraged participation.

Commissioner Alford thanked the city for hosting the meeting and stated that it was a pleasure visiting the city. She stated in preparation for the meeting she visited the city and saw Tech City as well as other spots within the city and was very impressed with the work being done.

Commissioner Cornell stated that as a member of the Children's Trust Swampbots has been one of the best projects funded by the Trust. The city of Alachua has so many great things going on and the commitment to water quality and the support of the Fire Assessment is amazing. He is

pleased to hear the commitment to preventing sprawl and encouraged the city to lean on the County when needed.

Chair Chestnut congratulated the newly elected Commissioners. He thanked the public for their participation and hoped that their questions were answered.

2. City Commission Comment

City Commissioner Williams thanked the County Commission for traveling to the City of Alachua. She looks forward to continued cooperation between the County and the City.

City Commissioner Ringersen stated that she loved the citizen participation this evening and looks forward to hearing the communities' ideas and concerns in the future.

City Commissioner Fletcher congratulated the Swampbots on their success and looks to support them in the future. He stated that he will begin working with the City Commission to ensure that the funding and time needed to acquire the ladder truck needed by the city to service the multi-story buildings being constructed within the city is properly planned for.

City Commissioner Brown/Green thanked the County Commission for visiting, the support, and the collaborative efforts to support the citizens of the City of Alachua. She stated that she understands the County has a selected a new work of art and she would like to see the city make a stronger commitment in support of the arts.

Mayor Welch stated that this has been a great learning experience for him as a newly elected official and that he truly believes we are stronger together. He looks forward to everyone working collaboratively in the future.

**H. Adjourn**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.