

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FLORALA
HELD OCTOBER 9, 2023 IN THE AUDITORIUM AT FLORALA MUNICIPAL COMPLEX.

Workshop was held from 5:30-6:30 PM for topics of discussion: audit review, proposal for Florala Museum, FY2024 budget changes, city attorney on retainer, and new hire compensation plan.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Pro Tem Robbins with the following members present:

Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin, Pro Tem Robbins. Absent: None.

The invocation was given by Reverend John Bryan.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by Julie Dieterlen and all present.

The first item on the Agenda was the approval of the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Council Meeting. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The second item on the Agenda was the approval of the Special Call meeting minutes of the September 25, 2023 Council Meeting. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve the Special Call minutes of the September 25, 2023 meeting and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The third item on the Agenda was approval of the accounts payable October 9, 2023 and to pay bills as needed. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The fourth item on the Agenda was approval of the request from Dealer's Choice to use the alley behind the old City Hall building, temporarily for up to six months, to store roofing materials while their building is being repaired. Their building has repairs that are needed and the building is a safety hazard in the current condition. Dealer's Choice will also install a fence around their materials and install cameras for security. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The fifth item on the Agenda was approval of filling the vacancy of District 5 seat with Evan Robbins. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Abstain: Councilwoman Robbins. Motion carried.

The sixth item of business was the Oath of Office to swear in Evan Robbins as District 5 Councilman by Court Magistrate, Aron Jenkins.

The seventh item on the Agenda was to recognize former Councilwoman Sue Mathis for her service on the City Council for the City of Florala.

The eighth item on the Agenda is to declare the vacancy of the seat of the Mayor.

The ninth item of business was to amend the Agenda to add the filling of the vacant position of Mayor for the remainder of the term. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to amend the Agenda and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Inabinett. Nays: Councilwoman Franklin. Abstain: Councilwoman Robbins. Motion carried.

The tenth item on the Agenda was to approve filling the vacancy of the Mayor seat with Councilwoman Robbins for the remainder of the term. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Inabinett. Nays: Councilwoman Franklin. Abstain: Councilwoman Robbins. Motion carried.

The eleventh item of business was to amend the Agenda to add the Oath of Office to swear in Pro Tem Robbins as Mayor of Florala. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Abstain: Councilwoman Robbins. Motion carried.

The twelfth item of business was the Oath of Office to swear in Pro Tem Robbins as Mayor of City of Florala by Court Magistrate, Aron Jenkins.

The thirteenth item on the Agenda was approval of sending Councilwoman Wallace-Patton to the National League of Cities Summit of Atlanta for registration fee of \$800 and there will be no hotel expense because Councilwoman Wallace-Patton has family she will be staying with in Atlanta. Councilwoman Franklin made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Abstain: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton. Motion carried.

The fourteenth item on the Agenda was the report on the Southeast Alabama Planning & Development Commission annual meeting report from Councilwoman Wallace-Patton.

The fifteenth item on the Agenda was the report on the Retirement Systems of Alabama orientation in Montgomery from Clerk Hendriks.

The sixteenth item on the Agenda was the approval of the library board pick for part-time fill-in at \$9 per hour. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The seventeenth item on the Agenda was approval to appoint Shelia Franklin to the Planning & Zoning board for a term of six years to end October 2029. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett. Nays: None. Abstain: Councilwoman Franklin. Motion carried.

The eighteenth item on the Agenda was approval to hire Nick Ireland as part-time Assistant Police Chief. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The nineteenth item on the Agenda was approval to hire Landon Thigpen as full-time Police Officer. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Wallace-Patton seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twentieth item on the Agenda was approval to surplus the City's old bulldozer and backhoe, and to advertise for bids to be taken. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-first item on the Agenda was approval of request by Recreation board member Evan Robbins to change the banking from Wells Fargo to Southern Independent Bank for the Recreation board funds. Councilwoman Franklin made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Wallace-Patton seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-second item on the Agenda was the request from Carol Morgan for the LEAD Steering Committee for approval of the FY2024 plan. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the

vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-third item on the Agenda was approval of request from Headstart Director, Lynda Christian, to use the auditorium on December 14th for the Christmas program, with a walk through on December 13th, and on May 21 & May 23, 2024, and the week prior to, for the end of year program and practice. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-fourth item on the Agenda was approval to mark the Municipal Complex parking spots on the Police department side for City employees and Police Officers to alleviate parking lot congestion on the Headstart side. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-fifth item on the Agenda was approval for the Choctawhatchee/Pea River group and Dr. Terry Dunn with the Youth Leadership Program, to use the Rodney J Evans building at no charge. After much discussion, this item was tabled. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Wallace-Patton seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-sixth item on the Agenda was approval to rebuild the T-pier at Lake Jackson for an estimated cost of \$2,694.92. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Franklin seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-seventh item on the Agenda was approval of the opportunity to create an application for a distillery, Fink's Milling and Distilling, from Ethan Fink, in the City of Florala. Ethan provided a business plan for the distillery and will be looking for a location in downtown Florala for the distillery. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Inabinett seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The twenty-eighth item on the Agenda was approval of the proposal of the Florala Museum and Welcome Center in the building behind the old hospital. This museum will encompass all of the history of Florala, Lockhart, and Paxton. The overall projected cost of the project is \$101,253 and \$76,000 toward this expense has already been secured and the work will be done in phases. Councilwoman Inabinett made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Wallace-

Patton seconded the motion. Pro Tem Robbins called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Councilwoman Wallace-Patton, Councilwoman Robbins, Councilwoman Inabinett, Councilwoman Franklin. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Pro Tem Robbins shared the following points of interest of city and community news:

Waste Pro picked up old trash cans and are putting out new trash cans; Street maintenance is winterizing the buildings and vehicles in preparation for cold weather; Recognize five youths in the Youth Leadership Program: Ava Blocker, Nathan Cook, Jayla Davis, Gracie McNeil, Skylar Quincey; the ACE program was highlighted in the 2023 Municipal Journal and we wanted to thank our ACE Coordinator, Samantha McDaniel; Chamber of Commerce has been advertising the Halloweentown event to be held on October 26th at 6 PM in downtown Florala; Covington County Youth Program will be having a meeting and Florala will be represented by the Chamber of Commerce President, Marvin Williford, Jr; there will be a public bid opening on October 26th at 10 AM for the Gym project that the City received a grant for to do the renovations; Airport Authority in going into the next phase of the five year plan-the airport apron is complete and the next phase is building a new terminal; the striping that the Downtown Development board had done looks great; congratulations to Clerk Hendriks on achieving her Master Municipal Clerk certificate.

District Reports were called for:

Councilwoman Wallace-Patton No complaints from the district. There are a lot of properties and buildings that need to be cleaned up; the senior center is doing great, and Ms. McGraw is doing a wonderful job. The center serves 52 meals per day-36 meals delivered and 16 served in-house. Tuesday and Thursday the center has bingo with lots of prizes. Friday is movie time for the senior center-last Friday they watched Casper, this Friday it will be Hocus Pocus and next Friday it will be Hocus Pocus II. They will be having pumpkin carving and a contest on October 18th and pictures will be posted on FB so that the community can vote on the winner. The senior center is closed today for the holiday.

Councilwoman Robbins There is now a vacancy in district two that the Council will need to vote on to fill, so if you know anyone in district two that would be interested there is that vacancy. The financial reports and City accounts report have been provided to the Council. Request to clean the street/sidewalk in front of Jacks (on highway 55 side) before next Monday because it has red dirt on it from the construction. **Chief Jones**-Recognized all of the firefighters that were in attendance and announced that the rescue boat had been received but he could not make an open announcement to the paper or social media until the decals were received and put on the boat as well as setting up an award ceremony with Firehouse Subs to officially award the boat to the City of Florala Volunteer Fire Department. The new pumper tanker is in the eleventh month since being ordered and is still waiting on the chassis. Once the chassis is delivered, it will take approximately 3-4 weeks to complete the assembly. Projected delivery to Florala is February of 2024. The \$5K grant from Wiregrass RC&D is received and will be spent on power tools for both engines. The AFG grant was not received as the government gave those funds out for another reason. The AFG grant will be applied for in the next round for FY2024. On October

26th the fire department will be giving out fire prevention items. Tonight at the meeting we will vote on the theme for the Christmas parade. We are asking the public to donate toys to give to a local family in Florala for Christmas. Councilwoman Wallace-Patton asked about the burn ban and if it was still in effect. Chief Jones said until the forestry division notifies me otherwise, yes for ban on open burning. If you are using an enclosed burn receptacle, you can burn.

Councilwoman Inabinett No complaints from the district. The lake looks awesome and thank you to all lake workers for working so hard. RV park has 63.8% capacity and for the FY2023 year, brought in \$194,411.77!

Councilman Franklin Library meeting is on Wednesday, October 11 at 9 AM. Reading and story time is Tuesday at 10 AM. Glad to say the books were removed from the storage closet and taken to City Hall. Court is Thursday at 1 PM. Street light out at Elm Street and Fourth Avenue near a vacant lot. The street at Second Ave is covered with sand and debris from Fir and Gum Street. Fir Street has a bad ditch on the right side-maybe the state could help with this issue, per Chris Jackson. Maybe we can use some street funds to fix or maybe the street sweeper could run through that area. Councilwoman Robbins suggested a committee to make recommendations to Randy, Eric and Chris.

District 5 No report.

Street Dept There are repairs and parts ordered to repair some street equipment. The grass cutting is starting to slow down.

Chief McGraw Everything is running smooth and the police department is fully staffed.

Next Council meeting is November 13, 2023

Meeting adjourned.

Gayle Robbins, Pro Tem Mayor

Gina Hendriks, City Clerk