

February 18, 2025
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street with the following members present:

President Hepfer
Vice President Davis
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Lizanich
Councilman Craig
Mayor Plaisted

Also present were City Manager Williams, City Attorney Hartley, Staff Members, and City Clerk Jackson.

The Invocation was given by Councilman Davis and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Lizanich motioned to accept the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

5)a) Ordinance 2024-844 City Utility Fees and Charges Updates – Final Adoption* with City Manager Williams stating in September 2024, Raftelis conducted comprehensive studies for potable water and wastewater rates. Commercial reclaimed water rates were not adjusted, as it was not in the study. Administration and Finance Departments conducted an analysis utilizing methods endorsed by our consultant for a recommended rate adjustment that is within state guidelines and will allow the utility to continue to balance cost recovery and customer service, while continuing the environmental benefits of providing commercial reclaimed water. Additionally, the Public Works Department seeks to update the hydrant meter deposit amount. If adopted upon final reading, necessary adjustments to the commercial reclaimed water rate would be effective on October 1, 2025. The hydrant meter deposit amount would be effective upon final reading and adoption of the Ordinance. Asst. City Manager Calascione provided an overview. President Hepfer opened the public hearing. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to have the Clerk read Ordinance 2025-844 by Title only. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

ORDINANCE 2025- 844

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, FLORIDA,
AMENDING SECTION 22-95 OF THE CITY'S CODE OF
ORDINANCES ENTITLED TEMPORARY WATER SERVICE
TO AMEND THE DEPOSIT FOR TEMPORARY METERS;
AMENDING SECTION 22-98 OF THE CITY'S CODE OF
ORDINANCES ENTITLED BASIC RATE SCHEDULE FOR**

POTABLE WATER, SEWER AND RECLAIMED WATER SERVICE TO INCLUDE A NEW COMMERCIAL RECLAIMED WATER RATE SCHEDULE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND INTERPRETING THIS ORDINANCE; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION INTO THE CODE AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

No one spoke for or against the Ordinance. **Councilman Davis motioned to adopt Ordinance 2025-844 by rollcall vote on final reading. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilwoman Bega, yes; Councilman Davis, yes; Councilwoman Lizanich, yes; Councilman Craig, yes; and President Hepfer, yes. The motion carried. The Public Hearing was closed.**

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Tracy Snipes made statements of the voting and appointments to the Library Board and voiced concerns.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 02/04/2025*
 - Recommendation - Approval
- c) Oak Ridge Cemetery Burial Space Repurchase*
 - Recommendation – Approval

Councilwoman Lizanich motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) South Highlands Septic to Sewer Project* with City Manager Williams stating this project is in the design phase of five phases. Asst. City Manager Calascione provided an overview presentation. He stated Phase One design is 100%, and recommended option to proceed designing the remaining phases. The current predicted construction cost and to borrow funds to complete the project as initially proposed, estimates of the assessments required to connect residents are cost prohibitive. Florida Department of Environmental Protection and City staff have discussed local match requirement being waived to reduce the need for the City to borrow the large sum that was required for the project's construction. The City would still bring local funding to the project, but it would not be as substantial as in the current grant terms. Councilman Davis questioned lots off Eden Drive asking if they were on septic or sewer. We all want septic off the lakes. City Manager Williams stated the majority are on sewer. Councilwoman Bega spoke of various areas already on sewer. Councilman Craig agreed with Councilman Davis regarding septic use being removed off lake properties. **Council**

consensus was to proceed with consolidated project design and request for modification of the grant terms as presented.

10)b) Festival of the Arts 2025* with City Manager Williams stating since 1971 this two-day festival has brought fine art to the downtown historic square. Over the years the festival has gone through changes, shifted dates, and contracted consultants to manage the Festival. This year's Art Festival, on November 15 & 16, 2025, will focus on interactive and immersive opportunities for the visitor experience while maintaining a differential to the juried art show. The art show will offer free registrations to Fine Arts and Fine Craft Vendors with no juried format but rather a people's choice award. The City will partner with local schools for poetry, speeches, and stage performances. Live art demos, live entertainment, live music, interactive and immersive art will be throughout the festival. Additional partnering with the County would bring activities to the historic Courthouse, etc. Parks Director Worley and Program Coordinator Brown spoke of the success of 2024 festival and what to expect for 2025. City Manager Williams highlighted the shift in the upcoming festival regarding juried artists. Coordinator Brown spoke of judging, and it will now be a People's Choice award. Mayor Plaisted confirmed the City staff will be managing the event. Councilwoman Lizanich confirmed there will be more community participation art events. It was stated that the theme will emphasize community involvement. Councilwoman Bega stated the interacting art is great and questioned why the event dates were changed. City Manager Williams stated so this festival does not compete with other festivals. ***No Action Required – Update only.***

10)c) Annual Road Improvement Program – Professional Services Proposal (FY 25 & 26)* with City Manager Williams spoke of the City's Annual Road Resurfacing Program. The Public Works Department obtained a proposal for design and engineering services from Lochner Engineering that covers a two-phased plan for FY25 and FY26 of approximately 8 miles of City roadways and minor drainage improvements. Lochner would provide CEI services for fiscal year 2025 and inspect all work while under construction and up to 24 core samples to assess existing roadway conditions. The total proposal is \$156,004.53. Public Works Director Pell presented the overview and the 2-phase project. Councilman Davis questioned core samples, confirming they will be done prior to the project. Director Pell explained the services CEI will be providing. City Manager Williams stated 25% of ad valorem taxes go to this project. 4 miles will be completed each year. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the proposal for professional services with Lochner Engineering in the amount of \$156,004.53 as presented and authorize the City Manager to execute the document. Seconded by Councilman Davis. The motion carried.**

10)d) Project/Program Updates (Verbal)

- Intersection of Zephyr and Ella – Proposed temporary solution to intersection may be presented at the next Council meeting. Traffic calming treatments will be mostly on Zephyr Street.
- Big Bass Bluegrass and BBQ will be bigger and better this year. Over 60 participants have registered early for the Big Bass Classic. Director Worley noted this is a multi-day event and has partnered with the Chronicle for their outdoor expo to be at the same time. Friday will be free bluegrass music, Saturday will have the bass classic, expo, and bluegrass music. There will

be 8 bands, youth, line dancing, etc. The BBQ competition will have a limited number of participants to be judged on pork ribs. The event is March 7 and 8, 2025 in Liberty Park and the Depot Pavilion.

- West Inverness Trail Connector is still on the table. Looking at state grants and other opportunities coming the future.
- Other included budget development is starting, spoke of property taxes, etc. The City will look at cost constraints for the future. Thanked Mike Arnold for the article he had written regarding the history of Railroad Street.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Councilman Craig spoke of high school mountain bike competitions across the state and possibly bringing it to Inverness.

Councilman Davis stated he was recently at Whispering Pines Park when there was a travel ball tournament. People from all over the state spoke highly of the park and of the possible RV park in the future.

Councilwoman Lizanich spoke of a grant committee on March 27 for CCCCCF and the library board appointments. She stated she had reviewed the applications and nominated who would be best suited to serve on the Library Board.

Councilwoman Bega spoke of nightly rehearsals at the Valerie Theatre for the upcoming Wedding Singer performance. Looks forward to the Big Bass, Bluegrass and BBQ event. Stated that Councilwoman Lizanich considered what was best for the Library Board overall.

Mayor Plaisted commended Councilwoman Lizanich regarding the Library Board vote. Noted the recent gala at the Valerie Theatre was outstanding. Spoke of a new restaurant downtown. We are a Small Town Done Right.

President Hepfer stated no one can ever please everyone, it is always best to vote your conscience.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Debbie Wheatley spoke of a recent article in the Chronicle of Paul Hertensen and highlighted the error of using an incorrect name.

Michael Puzino questioned the varying cost of gasoline throughout Citrus County.

Neal Carr commented on his concerns with Councilwoman Lizanich and the Library Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President