

January 6, 2026
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 Davis
Vice President Lizanich
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Hepfer
Councilman Craig
Mayor Plaisted

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

The Invocation was given by Councilwoman Hepfer and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

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

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

4)a) 2025 State of the City with Mayor Plaisted stating the City's ongoing commitment to being a "Small Town Done Right" by balancing progress with the character that defines Inverness. Mayor highlighted various departments and the accomplishments each department had achieved and spoke of things to come in the new year. **Public Works** key infrastructure projects that support both current residents and future growth included the Annual Road Improvement Program with an increased number of resurfaced streets. Utility improvements included completion of a standby generator installation at the Citrus Water Plant to ensure continued operations during power outages, as well as replacement of a six-inch water main along Hill Street. Traffic calming crosswalks and ADA-compliant sidewalk improvements were installed near the hospital for pedestrian safety and accessibility. The Master Lift Station Rehabilitation Project began, including the addition of a permanent standby bypass pump, funded through a \$1.2 million EPA grant. An increased \$1.6 million grant supported continued progress on the Highway 41 North Septic-to-Sewer Project. Additionally, the City secured more than \$11 million in state funding, covering 100 percent of the design of phases one through five and construction for phases one and two of the South Highlands Septic-to-Sewer Project without requiring local matching funds thus reducing potential assessments. Rehabilitation of Clarifier #2 at the wastewater treatment plant continued to support ongoing compliance. Other projects included design work for the North Pine Street stormwater project, as well as improvements to the Inverness Government Center council chambers and lobby. **Parks, Recreation, Events, and Cultural Arts** had improvements that increased public use at City parks. Projects included expanded dock access and swimming at Liberty Park & Wallace Brooks Park, installation of new playground shade structures, rehabilitation of the Liberty Park boardwalk, renovation of the Whispering Pines Park administrative building, and continued progress on the new WPP entrance. City-led events continued to grow

drawing tens of thousands of visitors to Inverness throughout the year. Signature events saw strong participation, led by record attendance at Small Town Saturday Nights, the Festival of the Arts, Big Bass, Bluegrass & BBQ, and the inaugural Inverness Senior Games, which welcomed nearly 250 participants from across the state. The Market at the Depot also continues to grow, with more vendors participating than ever before. Cootertober remained a cornerstone with a month-long series of family-friendly activities made possible through strong partnerships. December featured a wide range of holiday programming through collaborations between the City, Citrus County, and the Downtown Inverness Rotary Club, including multiple community events and two Christmas tree lighting ceremonies. These efforts were complemented by completion of a joint City-County project to revitalize downtown Inverness through streetscaping improvements and restoration of features at the Old Historic Courthouse. **Public Safety** remained a priority as the Inverness Fire Department achieving a significant improvement in the City's ISO rating, moving from a 5X to a 4X, a change expected to positively impact insurance premiums for residents and businesses. The City also secured \$715,000 in federal funding through the USDA Community Facilities Program to acquire a new ladder truck, strengthening emergency response capabilities for multi-story structures within the City. **CCSO Enhanced Law Enforcement** continued with community-oriented policing, an additional substation in the City building formerly known as the CORE Center on Dampier Street, Community Resource Deputy **Sam Ruby** was named **Deputy of the Year**. The **Community Development Department** saw increased activity with permits increasing from 854 in 2024 to 936 in 2025, with permit fee revenues rising by approximately \$45,000 despite reduced construction values. Code compliance cases increased significantly, reflecting a proactive approach to maintaining community standards. Ongoing efforts continue to update the City's Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan to guide growth. **Information Technology** focused on City systems and cybersecurity compliance with the Florida Local Government Cybersecurity Act. Upgrades to email platforms, security hardware, and server operating systems improved functionality and protection, continues working with Finance to migrate the City's core financial software system to a cloud-hosted environment. **General Government and Finance** remained focused on service continuity and long-term planning. Preparations began for the 2026 City Elections, and Oak Ridge Cemetery continued to see strong demand, with nearly half of the columbarium niches sold. Records management efforts improved efficiency through compliance with state retention guidelines. The City's Independent Debt Rating and Community Reinvestment Agency credit ratings both remained at AA with a stable outlook, and the annual audit resulted in an unmodified audit report. Inverness stays true to what makes it a place people are proud to call home.

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Steve Jones spoke of the number of turn lanes from Forest Dr. onto Hwy 44. He compared the turn lanes at Pleasant Grove Rd. onto Hwy 44. City Manager Williams explained this is a FDOT roadway and the matter will be brought to the attention of FDOT. Council President Davis suggested the recent construction in that area created more traffic on the roads creating vehicle backups.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 12/16/2025 & 12/17/2025 WPP Workshop*
 - Recommendation – Approval

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

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

9)a) Resolution 2026-01 2026 City Elections* with City Clerk Jackson stating City elections are once again approaching and certain provisions must be in place to begin the process. The City Charter provides for the City Council, by Resolution, to call for all general or special elections. Resolution 2026-01 sets the date of the upcoming City of Inverness General Election for November 3, 2026 for Council Seats #1, #3 #5, and Mayor. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to have the Clerk read Resolution 2026-01 by Title only. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.**

RESOLUTION 2026 - 01

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE 2026 CITY ELECTION; SETTING THE DATES FOR SAID ELECTION(S); SETTING THE DATES FOR EARLY VOTING; DESIGNATING SEATS TO BE VOTED UPON; PROVIDING FOR FORM OF BALLOT; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATIONS OF NOTICE OF ELECTION.

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to adopt Resolution 2026-01 by roll-call vote. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilwoman Bega, yes; Councilwoman Hepfer, yes; Councilwoman Lizanich, yes; Councilman Craig, yes; President Davis, yes. The motion carried.

9)b) City Council Meeting Relocation* with City Clerk Jackson stating we have been coordinating with the Supervisor of Elections Office to schedule 2026 Early Voting and Elections for the Primary, and General Elections. The Inverness Government Center is a well-received polling location and accommodation of these activities creates a conflict with three (3) City Council meeting dates. The Primary will involve the regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2026. The General Election involves a regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 20 for Early Voting and Tuesday, November 3, 2026 Election Day, with the City Charter stating the meeting will be held the day following the Election on Wednesday, November 4, 2026. Therefore, it will be necessary to relocate the meetings to the Valerie Theatre. The purpose of this memorandum is to recognize all meeting dates affected due to the 2026 Election schedule. *No action required.*

9)c) City Clerk Employment Agreement* with City Clerk Jackson stating the current employment agreement for the City Clerk was approved on February 4, 2020 and will reach expiration February 4, 2026. Given, it is necessary to develop a new agreement should the Council desire to continue with the current appointment of the City Clerk. Historically, the

process for such an agreement would be to garner Council consensus to have the Council President meet and develop a new agreement with the City Clerk and City Attorney. The resulting agreement would be presented at a future Council meeting for consideration. **Council consensus was for the Council President to meet with the City Clerk and City Attorney to develop a new agreement as presented.**

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) Project/Program Updates (Verbal)

- Parks Director Worley highlighting upcoming events include Martin Luther King, Jr. events on January 17 at Liberty Park.
- Small Town Slam will be January 16 starting at 7:00pm at the Depot Pavilion. Small Town Saturday Night will be January 24 at the Depot Pavilion from 5:00pm – 9:00pm.
- Inverness Senior Games will be February 7 at Liberty Park for the opening ceremony and spoke of last year being the inaugural year.
- Happy New Year with City Manager Williams spoke of another successful year ahead for Inverness with the Plan-Fund-Execute approach. Noted an Ordinance for medical marijuana dispensaries and an Ordinance regarding fertilizer will be presented at the next Council meeting.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Mayor Plaisted spoke of the great event of unveiling the Caboose. Spoke of those in attendance at the unveiling including Rep. Bilirakis, County Commissioners, etc. Stated last year was a great year and spoke of progress and the future.

Councilwoman Bega appreciated the State of the City by the Mayor and found the accomplishments, caboose unveiling, etc. interesting.

Councilwoman Hepfer stated she enjoyed the caboose unveiling and spoke of tales from the past regarding the railroad and Cooter Pond. Appreciates we are holding on to history.

Councilwoman Lizanich stated the State of the City was beautifully done and spoke of the many achievements accomplished through cooperation with various agencies. Looking forward to this year.

Councilman Craig thanked everyone for their support regarding the caboose unveiling and noted the top four attendees from the Park Services department of the State. Spoke of the State of the City presentation and added various projects and accomplishments. Wish everyone a good new year.

Council President Davis stated the State of the City was astounding with the many accomplishments. It is an honor and humbling to work with this Council to do what is right for the City, we are a Small Town Done Right. He spoke of the history of the railroad and of making it a State trail. Thanked Councilman Craig for his dedication in the restoration of the caboose at the Trailhead.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Debbie Wheatley thanked City Manager Williams regarding the repaving of Forest Drive to include Silverwood easement. Understands the intersection at Forest Drive and Hwy 44 is FDOT and noted traffic. City Manager Williams explained various factors that FDOT would deal with and the difficulty of any change.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President