

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2026
7:00 P.M.

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Daniel West, Mayor
Sunshine Joiner, Vice-Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Harold Smith, Commissioner Ward 1
Scott Whitaker, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Rowena Young, CRA Director
Cassi Bailey, Deputy City Clerk
Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Mayor West called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Joiner gave the prayer for tonight's meeting.

All persons intending to address the City Commission were duly sworn.

2. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Barnebey reminded Mr. Rayan of the addition of item 5c., that was discussed at the Workshop.

MOTION: **Commissioner Whitaker moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the January 5, 2026 City Commission Agenda with the addition of item 5c.**

Danny Alfonso, Fair Manager, invited everyone to the Manatee County Fair. He shared a PowerPoint, which was included in the Minutes. The free day has changed for the first time to Thursday, the first day of the fair, January 15th. They ask that everyone bring a canned good to donate. Student day is Monday, January 19th. They

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did not raise the prices for admission again this year. They hope everyone will join them at the fair January 15-25, 2026.

3. SELECTION OF VICE MAYOR

Commissioner Cornwell nominated Commissioner Joiner as Vice-Mayor. There were no other nominations.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell nominated Commissioner Joiner as Vice-Mayor, Commissioner Smith seconded, the motion carried 5-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sonya Sanders spoke regarding paving on 2nd Avenue W.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Special Function Permit: Riverside Bed and Breakfast Weddings
- b. CRAAB Board Appointment
- c. Authorization for Wade Trim to complete the DEP principal forgiveness application grant **(ADDITION)**

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

6. APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTED OFFICIALS (DEPARTMENT HEADS)

Mayor West explained he wanted to appoint the Department Heads for the remainder of his term, which would be for three years.

Commissioner Smith expressed concern about moving forward with the item given the upcoming November 2026 election and the possibility of new Commissioners taking office. He also questioned the cost associated with Mr. Barnebey's office. Mr. Barnebey and Commissioner Smith discussed the increase, which was less than the City's increase given to the employees.

Commissioner Smith raised concerns regarding the CRA Director and asked who is responsible for activities in Ward 1. He specifically questioned who is conducting outreach in Ward 1 to inform residents about available CRA programs. He then wanted to know if Ms. Young was certified with the FRA. It was confirmed that Ms. Young is certified with the FRA. Staff also noted that a new employee will be onboarded on Wednesday to assist with CRA programs. Commissioner Smith stated that he would support approving Ms. Young for one year.

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Commissioner Whitaker thinks we have great Department Heads here in the City. He thinks they have proved themselves to him.

MOTION: Commissioner Whitaker moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion failed 3-2 to confirm the appointments of the Appointed Officials as set forth by the Mayor in the January 5, 2026, agenda memorandum for three years and authorize the Mayor to execute the letter with Blalock Walters. (Commissioner Cornwell and Commissioner Smith voted nay.)

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Smith seconded to confirm the appointments of the Appointed Officials as set forth by the Mayor in the January 5, 2026, agenda memorandum for one year and authorize the Mayor to execute the letter with Blalock Walters.

Commissioner Williams thinks that Commissioner Cornwell and Commissioner Smith to deny the Mayor's request is wrong.

Commissioner Smith doesn't believe everyone deserves the same length term.

The motion carried 4-1. (Commissioner Williams voted nay.)

7. FIRST READING ORDINANCE 2026-01: CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCES (J.BIBLER & M.BARNEBEY)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PALMETTO, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF PALMETTO CODE OF ORDINANCES, APPENDIX B RELATING TO CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 3-1 to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026-01 and authorize staff to advertise for the appropriate public hearings. (Commissioner Williams voted nay, Commissioner Whitaker was absent for the vote.)

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Mayor West recessed the City Commission Meeting to open the January 5, 2026 CRA Board Meeting at 7:49 pm.

Mayor West reconvened the City Commission Meeting at 8:30 pm.

COMMENTS:

8. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Mr. Rayan provided updates on several projects such as continuing progress on Ward 1 Phase III. They are currently in negotiations with the consultant for 10th Avenue Complete Street Projects. They will then send it to FDOT for approval. Other projects that are being worked on are the beginning phases of 8th Avenue and 10th Street turn lanes, and ongoing drainage upgrades throughout the City.

Mr. Freeman provided an update on the building next door and reported that efforts are still ongoing to pursue the CSX parcel located next to the Police Department. He also reminded the Commission that new AV equipment is expected to be installed, hopefully before the next meeting. Mr. Freeman gave an update on the 14th Avenue Park project. The project is expected to go out to bid by the end of the month, with the bidding process anticipated to take approximately 45–60 days. Afterward, it will return to the Commission for approval. Construction is tentatively expected to begin in the summer.

Mr. Barnebey thanked the Commission for the one-year extension. He also noted that a recommendation from the Charter Review Committee will be coming back to the Commission soon, likely in February.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor stated that he hopes everyone received positive feedback from the Christmas lights displayed throughout town.

He reminded the Commission that the fair will take place January 15–25, and the MLK Parade will be held on January 19.

The City's booth at the fair will focus on the 4th of July celebration, highlighting the 250th Anniversary of America.

The Mayor also expressed hope that everyone had a great holiday season.

10. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Cornwell asked who would be responsible for organizing the 4th of July 250-year celebration, and it was noted that Ms. Brown will be overseeing the event.

She also discussed a significant issue with absenteeism in local schools and stated that she is

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meeting with the Mayor and the Police Chief to discuss the matter.

Commissioner Cornwell said she generally supported multi-year contracts for most Department Heads. However, she noted that she has concerns regarding one department head that she has already discussed with the Mayor. She stated she would not discuss the matter in a public meeting and explained that this concern is why she voted against the multi-year term.

Commissioner Williams spoke about concerns raised by some residents regarding issues with large items being dumped illegally and the trash service. He also stated that he would like to have further discussion regarding the FDOT recommendation related to the connector project.

Commissioner Smith asked if preparations for the MLK parade were on track. Mr. Rayan responded that they have been in contact with the county and attended the coordination meetings.

Mayor West adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: MARCH 23, 2026

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK