FRUITLAND PARK CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

A regular meeting of the Fruitland Park City Commission was held at 506 W. Berckman Street, Fruitland Park, Florida on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Chris Cheshire, Vice Mayor Patrick DeGrave, Commissioners Martina Williams, Michael Raysin, and Al Goldberg

Also Present: City Manager Karen Manila, City Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver, Police Chief Henry Rains, Human Resources Coordinator Ellen King; Finance Director Kim Gehrke; Community Development Administrative Manager Sharon Williams, Permit Tech Kelli Fielder; Interim Community Development Director Michael Rankin, Director of Community Services Barbara Fields, and Gwen Johns, City Clerk.

Total Attendance: 27

1. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order, an Invocation was given by Police Chief Henry Rains.

Police Chief Rains led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. ROLL CALL

After the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Cheshire called the meeting to order and announced decorum for the meeting. He then requested that Ms. Johns call roll where a quorum was declared present.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Approval of Minutes.

July 23, 2026, Regular City Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Goldberg to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

Mayor Cheshire called for a vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

4. REGULAR AGENDA

5. PUBLIC HEARING

(a) Resolution 2026-046, Establishing the Assessment Rate for Fire Services within The Villages of Fruitland Park Benefit Area in the City of Fruitland Park. (Second Reading – September 21, 2026, Special Meeting)

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Resolution by title only.

RESOLUTION 2026-046

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE SERVICES WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FRUITLAND PARK BENEFIT AREA IN THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK; ESTABLISHING THE ASSESSMENT RATE FOR FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Manila stated this resolution would set the rate to 0, and administration of the assessment will be moving to Lake County.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve Resolution 2026-046, as presented.

Mayor Cheshire called for public comments.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(b) First Public Hearing - Resolution 2026-047, Adopting a Proposed Tentative Millage Rate of 3.9134 Mills.

Ms. Geraci-Carver stated that this is the first public hearing for the City of Fruitland Park's Budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. The City of Fruitland Park is prepared to set the Tentative Millage Rate of 3.9134 mills, which is a 0.84% increase over the roll back rate of 3.8808. The proposed millage rate is the same rate as the last nine years. Once a tentative rate is established, the City Commission may not exceed that rate at the final rate hearing.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Resolution by title only.

RESOLUTION 2026-047

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 3.9134 LEVYING OF AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Geraci-Carver stated for fiscal year 2026-27, at 3.9134 mills which is greater than the rolled back rate of 3.8808 mills by 0.84%.

A motion was made by Commissioner Raysin and seconded by Commissioner Goldberg to approve Resolution 2026-046, as presented.

Mayor Cheshire called for public comments.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, stated that he thought the rate was too high for a number of reasons which he discussed.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, discussed the tentative millage and shared his thoughts regarding not using the rolled back rate.

Paul Carpenter, 3068 Pope Place, spoke about the millage rate and expressed concern about his high tax bill.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(c) First Public Hearing – Resolution 2026-048, Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Proposed Budget.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Resolution by title only.

RESOLUTION 2026-048

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Manila presented the final budget, reflective of amendments made as a result of the budget workshop discussions. She discussed altered hours of operation for the swimming pool and elimination of the café at the Library.

Commissioner Williams noted that she would like to see the street sweeper eliminated from the budget and those funds reallocated to the wastewater treatment plant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Rayson to approve Resolution 2026-046, with an amendment eliminating the street sweeper from the budget and reallocating those funds ($175,000) to the wastewater treatment plant.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, asked if there were alternative budget considerations that would not reduce services currently offered to residents. He said the pool provides family-oriented activity for residents.

Mayor Cheshire shared statistics from the pool use over the past year. Ms. Manila stated that she would work with Ms. Fields with regard to pool operations.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, discussed the library expansion and brought up the suggestion of extended Library hours.

Ms. Manila responded to Mr. Yauk's comments regarding the library expansion funds.

Mayor Cheshire stated it would be nice to have the library open later in the evenings and on Saturdays for children but acknowledged that such operation would mean more expense. He noted it was tried approximately ten years ago, and it was stopped after the trial period.

Commissioner Williams asked what the cost would be to operate the library for a day. Ms. Manila stated she could bring that cost back to the commission.

Jay McCallum, 101 S. Dixie Avenue, expressed appreciation for the prioritization of wastewater improvements and raised concerns regarding accumulated sand, dirt, and vegetation along Dixie Avenue. He was in support of the street sweeper. Mr. McCallum was advised that Dixie Avenue is a County-maintained road.

Mr. Dicus, Public Works Director, stated that the City could perform maintenance on a County road without the County's permission; however, doing so could create liability, and any associated costs would be borne by the City.

Sarah McCallum, 2125 Miller Boulevard and 101 S. Dixie Avenue, asked whether prior fiscal year-end fund balances carried forward were reflected in the current budget.

Ms. Manila stated that the balances were not reflected in the budget because they were not part of the appropriations.

Ms. McCallum stated that it was her understanding that year-end balances carried forward should be reflected in the budget and requested clarification as to whether they had been included.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(d) First Reading of Ordinance 2026-015, Approval of a 3% Increase in Water Usage Rates.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Ordinance by title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-015

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA AMENDING SECTION A-27 IN APPENDIX A OF THE FRUITLAND PARK CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADJUST THE WATER UTILITY RATES BASED ON JULY 2026

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Commissioner Goldberg and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve Ordinance 2026-015, on first reading.

Mayor Cheshire called for public comments.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, commented about the increase in water and wastewater utility rates.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(e) First Reading of Ordinance 2026-016, Approval of a 3% Increase in Wastewater Usage Rates.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Ordinance by title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-016

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING A-6 IN APPENDIX A OF THE FRUITLAND PARK CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADJUST THE WASTEWATER UTILITY RATES BASED ON JULY 2026 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice Mayor DeGrave to approve Ordinance 2026-015, on first reading.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, commented about the increase in water and wastewater utility rates. He asked if there were any alternatives that could be considered in lieu of increasing the fees.

Mayor Cheshire provided some history pertaining to the rate increases. He noted that the consistent increases were a consideration for the City’s CUP.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, spoke about funding for the future wastewater plant. Mayor Cheshire stated that the City of Fruitland Park tried to save the wastewater treatment plant that was built before anyone who is currently on the commission. There was an evaluation of the plant, and it was not reparable.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(f) First Reading of Ordinance 2026-011, Annexation of Approximately 25.41± Acres of Property Generally Located East of US Hwy 27/441 and South of S. Grays Airport Road. Petitioner: Fruitland Park Development V, LLC on behalf of the owners, John D. Gunter and Agnes S. Berry, Trustee– Kensington Gardens.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Ordinance by title only.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK FLORIDA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURE SET FORTH IN SECTION 171.044, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO INCLUDE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS APPROXIMATELY 25 ± ACRES OF LAND GENERALLY LOCATED SOUTH OF GRAY'S AIRPORT ROAD AND EAST OF US HIGHWAY 27/441; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO PROVIDE CERTIFIED COPIES OF THIS ORDINANCE AFTER APPROVAL TO THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT, THE LAKE COUNTY MANAGER AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR SCRIVENER'S ERRORS AND SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Michael Rankin, Interim Community Development Director, gave a presentation pertaining to the Kensington Gardens Ordinances 2026-011 (Annexation), 2026-012 (LSCPA), and 2026-013 (Rezoning).

Mr. Richard Wohlfarth, Developer, stated his preference would be to invite public comment regarding the proposed annexation and stated that he would provide a brief presentation and respond to any questions following public input.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Goldberg to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026-011.

Mike Stefonek, 36836 Skycrest Blvd, expressed concerns about traffic, and he was not in support of the project.

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, raised concerns regarding the potential for rental properties within the development and emphasized the importance of maintaining opportunities for homeownership in Fruitland Park.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, reminded the City Commission of their ability to deny annexation.

Jay McCallum, 101 S. Dixie Ave., shared his concerns about the annexation.

Stephanie Stokes-Rankler, resident of Lake County, stated that she is a farmer. She spoke about water.

Sarah McCallum, 2125 Miller Blvd and 101 S. Dixie, shared her comments about the annexation. She did not understand the reason for annexation at this time.

Richard Wohlfarth, Developer, presented the concept plan for Kensington Gardens, which would be located on South Gray's Airport Road. He stated that a traffic impact analysis had been done and submitted to Lake County, noting that there would be a traffic signal at South Gray's Airport Road and Lake Geneva Drive in the future. He stated that his team had been working with Lake County and they have committed to pay a percentage of placement of a traffic signal based on the traffic analyses.

Mayor Cheshire reiterated his previously stated position that the City should refrain from annexing additional property with Amendment 3 on the horizon.

Vice Mayor DeGrave stated that if the Commission denied the annexation, it should consider a moratorium on future annexations until the City was closer to having additional wastewater treatment capacity available.

Commissioner Raysin expressed concern regarding the additional traffic the development could generate and its potential impact on the rural character of the area.

Vice Mayor DeGrave noted that denying the annexation would not necessarily prevent future development of the surrounding properties. He stated that development permitted under existing land-use designations could occur and potentially be less desirable, and that denying the annexation would not eliminate future traffic or population growth.

Commissioner Williams stated that Lake County had expressed concerns regarding high-density development, and she acknowledged the concerns being expressed.

Mayor Cheshire stated that Lake County had indicated that the existing roadway infrastructure was not prepared to accommodate additional development and had asked municipalities to limit further development.

Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it failed by a vote of 4-1. Mayor Cheshire, and Commissioners Raysin, Williams and Goldberg dissented).

Ms. Geraci-Carver advised the City Commission to Table Items G & H be tabled and brought back to a future meeting once second reading has been done on the annexation.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Raysin to TABLE the following items G, First Reading of Ordinance 2026-012, and H, First Reading of Ordinance 2026-013. Mayor Cheshire called for a vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

(g) This QUASI-JUDICIAL Hearing is the First Reading of Ordinance 2026-012, Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Approximately 71.27 ± Acres to be Considered for Property Generally Located East of US Hwy 27/441 and South of S. Grays Airport Road. Petitioner: Richard Wohlfarth on behalf of the owner, Joseph C. Burke, Jr., Trust. Kensington Gardens - TABLED

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR A LARGE-SCALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT BY AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION FROM CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY AND LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL OFFICE TO CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK SINGLE FAMILY MEDIUM DENSITY OF 58.16 +/- ACRES AND FROM LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL COMMERCIAL TO MULTI-FAMILY LOW DENSITY OF 13.11 +/- ACRES OF PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED EAST OF U.S. HWY 27/441, SOUTH OF SOUTH GRAYS AIRPORT ROAD AND NORTH OF REGISTER ROAD; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO TRANSMIT THE AMENDMENT TO THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 163, FLORIDA STATUTES; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO AMEND SAID COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS AND SCRIVENER'S ERRORS; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

(h) First Reading of Ordinance 2026-013, Rezoning of Property Generally Located East of US Hwy 27/441 and South of S. Grays Airport Road. Petitioner: Richard Wohlfarth on behalf of the owner, Joseph C. Burke, Jr., Trust. Kensington Gardens - TABLED

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, REZONING 71.26 +/- ACRES OF PROPERTY FROM CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD), CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK SINGLE FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-2), LAKE COUNTY RURAL RESIDENTIAL (R-1), LAKE COUNTY AGRICULTURE (A), AND LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (C-2) TO CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK RESIDENTIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF FRUITLAND PARK; GENERALLY LOCATED EAST OF US HWY. 441/27 AND SOUTH OF GRAYS AIRPORT ROAD; APPROVING A MASTER DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE PROPERTY; DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER OR DESIGNEE TO HAVE AMENDED THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS AND SCRIVENER'S ERRORS; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

(i) First Reading of Ordinance 2026-017, Pertaining to the EMS MSTU with Lake County for the provision of Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services.

Ms. Geraci-Carver read the Ordinance by title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-017

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, CONSENTING TO THE INCLUSION OF THE CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLORIDA, WITHIN THE COUNTY-WIDE MUNICIPAL SERVICE TAXING UNIT (MSTU) OF THE PROVISION OF AMBULANCE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, AS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR THE CITY TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN SAID MSTU FOR A SPECIFIED TERM OF YEARS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

David Kilbury, Lake County Fire Department, apologized for getting this item to the City staff at the last minute. He noted that nearly every other municipality has an automatic renewal clause in the agreement.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, expressed concerns about the agreement.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor DeGrave and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026-017. Mayor Cheshire called for a roll call vote on the motion and declared it carried unanimously, 5-0.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING

6. (a) City Manager

Nothing to report.

(b) City Attorney

Nothing to report.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mitchell Langley, 101 S. Valley Road, thanked the City Commission for listening to residents' concerns.

Carl Yauk, 1123 Ritter Road, requested a status update regarding the wastewater treatment agreement with the Town of Lady Lake.

Stephanie Stokes Rinkle commented on incorporating drought-tolerant and Florida-native landscaping requirements into new development.

Sarah McCallum, 2125 Miller Boulevard and 101 S. Dixie Avenue, thanked the City Commission and commented regarding the budget and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

9. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

(a) Vice Mayor DeGrave - Nothing to report.

(b) Commissioner Goldberg – Nothing to report.

(c) Commissioner Williams – Nothing to report.

(d) Commissioner Raysin – Nothing to report.

10. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Cheshire announced the following important dates:

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays	**Indoor Aerobics Classes at the Gardenia Center 9:15 a.m.**
Monday, September 7th	**City Hall Offices will be Closed in Observance of Labor Day**
Saturday, September 12th	**Daddy Daughter Dance at the Gardenia Center 7:00 p.m.**
Thursday, September 24th	**City Commission Meeting and 2nd Budget Public Hearing**

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Gwen Johns, MMC, City Clerk

Chris Cheshire, Mayor