

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 5:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Commission held a special meeting on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at Leesburg City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Connell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Mike Pederson
Commissioner Alan Reisman
Mayor Pro Tem Jay Connell

Mayor Jimmy Burry was absent. Also present, were City Manager (CM) Al Minner, City Clerk (CC) J. Andi Purvis, Deputy City Clerk (DCC) Anna Rottermond, the news media, and others.

INVOCATION

The invocation and pledge of allegiance were previously given at the Carver Heights Montclair Area Community Redevelopment Agency meeting held prior to this meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A lady in the audience said she moved to the area about a year ago from Maryland. She had questions about her tax bill because she thought it would be more affordable to live here. **CM Minner** explained the bill and being homesteaded. He advised her to reach out to the Lake County Property Appraisers office for additional questions. He offered to look into it further after the meeting.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND NON-ROUTINE ITEMS:

A. Public Hearing on the Proposed millage and Proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

CM Minner explained that he wanted to highlight the strengths of the budget. On the tax note, we are keeping the same millage rate, which is actually a tax increase, and that will be announced shortly as part of the budget hearing process. There are three primary things that we did this year. The first thing we saw

was the incredible growth of The Villages, which really increased our revenues. We saw a jump of about 50% from about \$2 billion dollars in taxable value to about \$3 billion dollars in taxable value. That yielded a little over \$3 million dollars in new tax revenue. Now, we are spending those funds by increasing the police and fire forces, and we have shifted down the reliance on enterprise monies from the electric fund. We also lowered the transfer, which was a significant accomplishment. Those are the marquee accomplishments in the general fund. We will continue our services, and we included the Bikefest budget in the general fund. In special revenues we have \$1.2 million dollars for parking improvements and downtown stuff. Our enterprise funds remain consistent, and they will receive the COLA increase as we have discussed in years past. The last thing was discussed a little bit, but it may have been overlooked. We did have a little concern about where the electric rates were, and we were trying to keep the base rate down as low as possible. The base rate per thousand is \$107.94. That rate does not change, and it does not get a COLA increase. We also increased the power cost adjustment, but again, that was not a one for one increase. If you go to the city's website and pull up the Leesburg Rate Watch, there is a detailed explanation about how the power cost works and how it is affected. Hopefully, this fall, we will see lower bills based on usage, even though the power cost went up. The base bill is something we need to watch, which is a bit of good news because it gives us optimism moving into the fiscal year. The IT department has been working extremely hard with General Electric (GE) and Itron. We are hopeful that by the end of this fiscal year we will be able to exit the GE contract early even though there will be an exit penalty. General Electric is negotiating with us on that, and they believe that the exit penalty is not a penalty due to the time associated with changing their software and working through all the hiccups to smooth out the system to transfer from GE software and management into Itron management and software. There will be more to come on that, but if everything goes through, we will see a significant reduction in our metering costs. Hopefully, somewhere around \$1 million dollars a year, so that would provide some rate relief. That is something we need to look at before we talk about increasing base rates. That will be a discussion that they need to watch for during the fiscal year. Every effort is being made to keep our electric rates as low as possible for our customers. He could not underscore lowering the transfer. Lowering the transfer kept about \$1.5 to \$2 million dollars in the electric fund and that is significant. When we get beat up about our electric rates, please remind the customers about what we are doing on the electric side of the house to keep their rates down. The electric side of the house has more impact on our customers than what we are doing with the millage rate. When it comes to the building fund, we reduced our rates significantly. We are down 50% from what we charged a couple of years ago. We were trying to use that surplus and give it back to the contractors and builders through the lowering of building fees. We are getting to the point where we may need to increase building fees, but that will be based on load. If we stay at the pace we are at now, which is about 30 units a month, we may need to nip and tuck that in the third quarter. However, we will watch that, and report accordingly. Those were the two big issues; as we move into the next fiscal year we may have to make an adjustment on the fly. We are getting the parking study and survey stuff going, and we are getting some of the major projects done, like Susan Street and the Marina. **Mayor Pro Tem Connell** asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

1. Announce the name of the taxing authority, the rolled back rate, and the millage rate to be levied.

Budget Director (BD) Brandy McDaniel stated the name of the taxing authority is the City of Leesburg, Florida. The current year's rolled back rate is 3.2327. The proposed millage rate of 3.4752 is 7.50% higher than the current year's rolled back rate. The millage rate to be levied is 3.4752 mills per \$1,000.

2. Discuss the proposed aggregate millage rate.

BD McDaniel said on July 8th the city commission approved the tentative millage rate of 3.4752 mills per \$1,000. This is the same rate as the prior year. Whereas, the proposed budget was developed using 3.4752 mills per \$1,000. Therefore, the tentative millage rate of 3.4752 mills per \$1,000 represents a 7.50% increase from the current year's rolled back rate, which is attributable to additional expenses and is a tax increase under TRIM guidelines.

3. Request comments from the public regarding the millage rate.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell requested comments from the public on the millage rate. There were none.

4. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida tentatively adopting 3.4752 mills as the Fiscal Year 2024-25 millage rate for the City of Leesburg, Florida, representing the current year proposed aggregate millage rate of 3.4752 which is 7.50% more than the current year rolled back rate; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,893

Commissioner Reisman introduced the resolution to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the resolution by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Reisman commented that instead of piece milling some things that we do with the high school, he wanted to see how the commission felt about adding the LHS Booster Club to the civic funding in the amount of \$5,000? **Commissioner Pederson** said he was fine with that. **Commissioner Berry** commented that she would be in agreement. **Mayor Pro Tem Connell** asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Connell	Yes

Four yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the resolution.

5. Request comments from the public regarding adoption of the tentative 2024-25 budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell requested comments from the public. There were none.

6. Resolution tentatively adopting the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,894

Commissioner Reisman introduced the resolution to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the resolution by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell requested comments from the Commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Connell	Yes

Four yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the resolution.

7. Announce the tentatively adopted millage rate.

BD McDaniel announced the tentatively adopted millage rate to be levied is 3.4752 mills per \$1,000.

8. Establish and publicly announce the date, time and place for the public hearing to finally adopt the millage rate and the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.

BD McDaniel announced the date to finally adopt the millage rate and the fiscal year 2024-25 budget is scheduled for Monday, September 23, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

B. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, relating to the provision of Fire Protection Services, facilities and programs in the City of Leesburg, Florida; imposing Fire Protection Assessments against assessed property located within the City for the Fiscal Year Beginning October 1, 2024; approving the rate of assessment; approving the assessment roll; and providing for an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,895

Commissioner Reisman introduced the resolution to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the resolution by title only.

Commissioner Reisman made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell requested comments from the Commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Reisman	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Connell	Yes

Four yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the resolution.

4. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Reisman had nothing to comment on this evening.

Commissioner Pederson had no further comment.

Commissioner Berry had no comment this evening.

Mayor Pro Tem Connell had nothing to comment on.

5. ADJOURN:

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, ADA COORDINATOR, AT 728-9740, 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

F.S.S. 286.0105 "If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purpose they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based." The City of Leesburg does not provide this verbatim record.

With a motion by Commissioner Reisman and a second by Commissioner Pederson, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.