

**AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025 5:20 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg, Greater Leesburg Community Redevelopment Agency held a regular meeting on Monday, September 22, 2025, at Leesburg City Hall. Chairperson Reisman called the meeting to order at 5:26 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Allyson Berry
Commissioner Jimmy Burry
Commissioner Jay Connell
Commissioner Mike Pederson
Commissioner Samantha Ponder
Commissioner John Sokol
Chairperson Alan Reisman

Also present were City Manager (CM) Al Minner, City Clerk (CC) J. Andi Purvis, City Attorney (CA) Grant Watson, Deputy City Clerk (DCC) Anna Rottermond, the news media, and others.

INVOCATION

The invocation and the pledge of allegiance were conducted at the Carver Heights Montclair Area Community Redevelopment meeting which was held prior to this meeting.

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular meeting held September 11, 2025

Commissioner Burry made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 11, 2025, and Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Chairperson Reisman asked if there were any comments. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Ponder	Yes
Commissioner Sokol	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes

Commissioner Burry	Yes
Chairperson Reisman	Yes

Seven yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the meeting minutes as submitted.

3. RESOLUTIONS:

- A. **Resolution of the Greater Leesburg Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing approval of the Facade, Sign and Landscape Grant with Dance Dynamix; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 65

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

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

Chairperson Reisman requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Berry asked about Dance Dynamics and if it was located right next to the Prime 3 Restaurant? Would they be utilizing the bottom and top floors? **Chairperson Reisman** indicated that they own the whole building. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to verify that it included the stage, practice area, and everything for the kids. **Chairperson Reisman** agreed. **Commissioner Berry** said she wanted to make sure because when she looked at it, it did not look that big. **Chairperson Reisman** pointed out that the inside was actually pretty big. He then asked if there were any further comments by the commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Berry	Yes
Commissioner Ponder	Yes
Commissioner Sokol	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Chairperson Reisman	Yes

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

4. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Pederson had nothing to comment on.

Commissioner Berry had no comment.

Commissioner Ponder had no further comment.

Commissioner Sokol said he wanted to bring an item up for consideration. He apologized for not knowing the correct procedures for introducing an item. He provided it to the city manager, and he explained how it should be done. However, he was asking for \$15,000 for the Downtown Leesburg Business Association (DLBA). For over three decades, it used to be a super-strong organization, but towards the end, they were convinced that they should partner with the Leesburg Partnership. So, they became a committee of the Partnership, and they were promised a seat on the board. However, as we all know, the Partnership dissolved and the DLBA was going to dissolve with it, so they pulled the DLBA back out of the Partnership. They were also smart enough to keep their nonprofit status, and at that time they only had about \$5,000 in the bank. They are now starting with nothing, but the downtown in Leesburg is growing by leaps and bounds. We have a lot of new restaurants, businesses, and retail. The DLBA has always been the voice of the downtown, and to be the voice, they need a little help with funding this year. They are not asking to be a part of the regular funding each year. He presented their budget along with a couple of projects that are in the works. They are in the process of putting out a local map of the downtown, and they are selling space on that. At this point, they do not require dues because they are still trying to rebuild their membership. Starting next year, the dues will be \$100, so they will require dues which will help bring some money in. However, right now, in order to keep things rolling and to move forward, they are asking for help with funding. They are revamping their website, and they are working on some new projects, which include the map. They have been a supporter of the downtown market, and they would like to continue doing that. In the budget they did not include a dollar amount, but somewhere down the line they would like to have a gazebo in the square so that the DLBA can support bands on Friday and/or Saturday nights. It would include lighting, electricity and fans for nighttime entertainment. However, at that time they did not have a dollar amount included for that. They also handle the scarecrow build, which they are in the process of doing now. They would like to expand that event to include a fall festival. They will not be doing the fall fest this year, but they would like to have two huge events annually. They used to be in charge of the chili cookoff, which the Chamber has now absorbed, along with the Blues and Barbecue. Right now, they do not have any real funding except for the map and the potential of annual dues. That was why they reached out to the CRA for a one-time funding of \$15,000.

Another thing that a lot of people did not realize is that for the last two years, there has been an AM informational station running in the background. It is channel AM 1690. If they turned it on right now they would hear it, but it basically talks about the downtown. It informs people about where they can park, it describes the different types of businesses downtown, and what is happening around downtown. That channel could be expanded to include almost anything. It is literally limitless. He included a list of things that could be handled by that radio station in the proposal. The DLBA would like that radio station to be a part of the DLBA. It could be used as a tool to inform people about upcoming events and the happenings in the downtown. Residents and visitors would just dial into www.downtownleesburg.com to stream it, or dial it in on their radio station. It would provide information on a real-time basis. The total amount they are asking for is \$15,000, and it would only be a one-time funding. It would be a one-time funding to help the DLBA get back on their feet.

Commissioner Berry wanted to know how many businesses were a part of the DLBA and how many businesses pay dues. **Commissioner Sokol** replied that currently they have twenty-four different business members, and they are still trying to rebuild their organization. They have not reached out to every business yet because they are still putting together packets that explain the benefits of the DLBA and why they should become a member. At one time, they had over fifty members, but covid came and put an end to that. There were mixed feelings when the decision was made to become a committee with the Partnership. Some wanted to remain a standalone. **Commissioner Berry** wanted to know if the businesses were a part of the Chamber. **Commissioner Sokol** responded yes; some of them are. However, the DLBA focuses strictly on the downtown. Their focus is to market and cover the downtown.

The Chamber covers all of Leesburg, the downtown is only one small portion of what the Chamber covers.

Commissioner Burry pointed out that in the items listed he did not mention the billboard.

Commissioner Sokol apologized for forgetting about that. He explained that for a long time, the DLBA had the billboard located near the intersection of SR 44, CR 468, and West Main Street. That billboard was theirs for a long time, and they were constantly updating it to help entice and invite people into downtown Leesburg. It was a great location to have that billboard because as folks drove from The Villages, they could not miss that billboard. However, when they became part of the Partnership, the Partnership absorbed that billboard. Then, when the Partnership dissolved, that billboard was not kept up with. He was not sure what was even on that billboard right now. That billboard was a great way for the DLBA to present downtown because it really grabbed people's attention. **Commissioner Burry** wanted to know if that was a yearly expense? **Commissioner Sokol** answered yes. It would be a yearly expense of \$6,000. **Chairperson Reisman** said that he knew it was a permanent structure. He wanted to know if they have considered going to a digital billboard. **Commissioner Sokol** replied not at this time. When he put the proposal together, he found out that Lamar did allow leniency for nonprofits, so they could run some stuff. However, he was not sure what they would run. He would reach out to Lamar to find out.

Commissioner Pederson said he appreciated his efforts. The DLBA did a great job prior to covid, and before the merger with the Partnership. He is pro-downtown and for \$15,000, to help keep the downtown going in the right direction, he would definitely support it. **Commissioner Berry** asked about the radio station sponsorship. Is that \$2,000 per year? **Commissioner Sokol** answered yes. It would be annually and that was the figure they came up with, since someone has to continuously update it with the new stuff happening. It would include new events, businesses, and anything happening or changing downtown. It would also include any new parking regulations, because they want it to be real-time current.

Commissioner Berry mentioned that she thought they were doing that now. **Commissioner Sokol** explained that the information currently on it is outdated. It basically just says to come downtown, come shop, and dine in downtown Leesburg. It is very generic. It could be utilized way more than it is now. It is just there, it is always on the air, it is on the air 24/7. Again, it is radio station AM 1690, and it covers a one-mile radius. It covers all the downtown plus a little bit more. It is an informational radio station. If you are driving down the main highway, you will see a sign that tells people to tune into AM 1640 for emergency information. Even if the commission only approves part of it, anything is better than nothing. They would utilize whatever amount they approve, and they would use it to the best of their ability. **Commissioner Pederson** said the billboard jumped out at him, which jogged his memory because he remembers seeing it. It was a good billboard, and it was good for downtown.

Commissioner Burry wanted to know more about the funding availability. **CM Minner** pointed out that they could easily fund \$15,000. They have about \$518,000 left in FY 26 revenues, plus a reserve of about \$119,000. **Commissioner Burry** wanted to verify that this would not be a recurring funding.

Commissioner Sokol agreed. They were only asking for one-time funding. It would basically be seed money. **CM Minner** said they had about \$118,000 left for FY 26, and they are sitting on \$518,000.

Commissioner Berry pointed out that this fund would now include the DLBA, the Chamber, and the special events division. It would cover all functions for the city. She then asked if this organization supported the Chamber and city staff. **Commissioner Sokol** answered that they work regularly with the special events division and the Chamber. They come to their meetings, and they go to their meetings. They work as a team, but they have to fund themselves. In past years, they were the ones that put on the chili cookoff, which was a huge event. However, the Chamber took that and they are now handling that event. To begin, they are only planning for one event, which is the scarecrow build. They are already doing it, and it is a lot of fun. People come downtown just to see them. They are hoping to expand on that more to include a fall festival. They would build on that to give people more of a reason to come

downtown.

Commissioner Berry said, the more, the merrier. However, the Chamber already does events, and the special events division does events and now the DLBA wants to hold events. **Commissioner Sokol** clarified that events are great because they bring people downtown. They are all working together. They talk on a regular basis with the Chamber and have regular meetings with the special events division. They are in constant contact with what each organization is doing. They also cross-promote what each other is doing. **Chairperson Reisman** said with regard to the billboard he would like them to work with city staff on it. **Commissioner Sokol** said that would not be a problem at all. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to verify that he was asking for \$15,000, because in the proposal it asked for \$15,100. He did not know if it mattered, but he wanted to point that out.

Commissioner Ponder asked again about the funding and if any of the funds could be used for her side of town to do homeownership grants? Could any of that money be used? **Chairperson Reisman** agreed that funding would come from this CRA. **Commissioner Ponder** said she was looking to see if any part of the funds could be divided and moved. She would like some of the funding to be used for the homeownership grants. She was trying to understand how it worked. **CM Minner** explained that funds are not divided within the CRA. The funds are divided between the general fund, the Carver Heights CRA, the Greater Leesburg CRA, and the US Highway 441/27 CRA. However, funds are not divided within the Greater Leesburg CRA, which is this body. **Commissioner Ponder** wanted to know if he was asking for part of the funds to be used? **CM Minner** answered yes. **Commissioner Pederson** wanted to clarify that when money comes in, fifty percent of it automatically goes to the CDC. **Chairperson Reisman** asked with regard to the radio station, what currently plays downtown, is it the radio station? **Commissioner Sokol** answered that the DLBA used to be the one that played the music. However, the city picked that up and started using their own music. It is possible to switch back, so the downtown radio station could be heard throughout the downtown. That can be handled down the line.

Commissioner Sokol made a motion to allocate \$15,100 to the DLBA to come from the Greater Leesburg CRA funds, and Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Chairperson Reisman asked if there was any further discussion or comments. **Commissioner Burry** wanted to make it clear that this would be a one-time funding, and it would not be reoccurring.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Ponder	Yes
Commissioner Sokol	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Pederson	Yes
Commissioner Berry	Yes
Chairperson Reisman	Yes

Seven yeas, no nays, the Commission approved the motion.

Commissioner Connell had no comment.

Commissioner Burry had nothing to comment on.

Chairperson Reisman had no comment.

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 Pederson and a second by Commissioner Burry, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.