AGENDA MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY HALL, 501 W MEADOW STREET
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 5:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City of Leesburg Commission held a regular meeting on Monday, September 12, 2022, at Leesburg City Hall. Mayor Pederson called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Jimmy Burry
Commissioner John Christian
Commissioner Jay Connell (5:33 p.m.)
Commissioner Dan Robuck (5:41 p.m.)
Mayor Mike Pederson

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

INVOCATION

Mayor Pederson gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

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

2. PROCLAMATIONS:

A. None

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. <u>Employee Service Award Recognitions:</u>

Five Years: Lorin Neil Gaines, Wastewater Administration; Alexander Nell, Police; Ulysses Johnson, Gas Distribution; and Kem Vicks, Customer Service
Fifteen Years: Tim Smith, Street Supervisor (Public Works)
Twenty Years: Willie Kuykendall, Wastewater Lab; and Brandy McDaniel, Executive (City Manager's office)

Director of Human Resources (HR) Arriaga and **CM Minner** recognized each employee for their years of service and provided them with their service award. **Mayor Pederson** congratulated them all and thanked them for their years of service.

B. Update Regarding Power Cost Adjustment Increase (High Electric Bills)

CM Minner stated that due to all the complaints he received, he put together a presentation to report on the status of the current electric rates. By the end of the presentation, he hoped it answered the questions the customers had regarding the state of the electric fund and customer rates. There were two things he immediately wanted to bring to their attention. First, every leader will recognize and do a self-evaluation on the bad. If he were to receive criticism from the city, at the end of the day it would fall on his desk. From a public relations standpoint, we did not get out in front of this. He did not want to make any excuses, but those who follow the city knew and saw this coming back in December of 2021. If you go back through the records, you will see the records. You will see his memo to the commission, which was followed up with another memo to the commission around March of 2022. At the budget workshop meetings we had several discussions about this. From a city manager's perspective, he felt relieved that when we had to go up to fifty dollars per thousand and then to seventy dollars per thousand, his bosses knew about it. He felt he did his job. However, he did not, because if there is criticism that he would take, it is that the city did not get out in front of this with press releases informing the public that this was coming. That is probably reasonable criticism of the city. Having said that, it would not have changed anything. The situation is beyond the city's control and we cannot change this. The data will show about a thirty million dollar deficit. There is no way to make that up other than to increase the power cost adjustment. That is the bottom line. The City of Leesburg is not the only one having this problem. This is not just a regional problem, it is not just a statewide problem, it is a nationwide problem. It is rooted in how we generate electricity across the nation. The presentation will breakdown the details and show where we are and, hopefully, how we can get out of it. The only way to get out of this is to wait for the cost of natural gas to drop.

He began his presentation by asking why electric rates have to be increased dramatically? In the power generation world, when everyone receives their bill from the City of Leesburg there are five components that make up that one bill. In the electric industry, it is called a bundled bill. There are five components that go into that bill; generation, that is, when you turn on the lights somewhere in the state there is a generation facility that produces the electricity. That is called the generation component. The second component is when we generate electricity, which is made at different levels. There is a base level, an intermediate level, a peak level and what they call a reserve level. They have to create enough energy to meet all those bases plus a spinning reserve level. Next, when electricity is made and it is sitting at the plant, it has to be transmitted across the state. When you see the big high transmission wires on US 27, those lines transmit electricity at high voltage from the generation plants to the transmission substations. Recently, we had a substation catch on fire. That is a transmission substation. Those big transmission wires end up at those substations where voltage is then downgraded to distribution voltages. It goes from generation to transmission. The next leg of the electric industry is distribution voltages. When it hits the substations, the voltage is downgraded into a distribution voltage. It goes out into the system and ultimately it ends up in everyone's houses. At the end of the day, it has to be metered. We have to bill and collect your money. That is the customer service leg of it. These five components go into how everyone receives electricity and that is called a bundled bill. In the industry, we measure and compare ourselves. In the State of Florida there are three providers of electricity; Florida Power, Duke, and Teco. There are municipal electric utilities like the City of Leesburg, Lakeland Electric, KUA, Kissimmee Utility Authority, Orlando Electric, and the biggest one in the state is Jacksonville Electric. Those are municipal utilities and there are about forty-two of them. We also have cooperative electric providers. Those are animals that are foreign in the electric unification, because they function like municipal electric utilities, but instead of having a city commission or a utility authority, they have their own board of directors and the members of the co-op hire the board that manages their rates. Those are the three municipal providers throughout the United States, no matter what state you are in. That is what drives it. At the end of the day, those bundled bills, no matter what type of energy provider you have. Now, everyone that is receiving Leesburg Electric Distribution System gets their system from a municipal electric utility. Everyone has a generation component on their bill, which is bundled into that number. That number is then measured and we measure the residential rate at the first one thousand. The first one thousand kilowatts of electric usage is what everyone compares themselves to. That is how we measure the rate. Bundled in that is the generation mix, so why have our rates gone up so much? That is because the cost to produce generation over the last twelve months has skyrocketed. Why has it skyrocketed? In the State of Florida our generation mix is seventy-eight percent for natural gas. Specifically, in the City of Leesburg, this power breakdown is not typical of any provider in the state. In the City of Leesburg, there is seventy-eight percent natural gas, fourteen percent coal, five percent nuclear, one percent solar and two percent other. The other could be wind, hydro or battery, but obviously, the lion's share of the electricity that is received is natural gas. Again, that is not typical in the State of Florida. Typically, we pay two, two-fifty to three dollars a dekatherm or MMBTu. We measure a dekatherm or MMBTu and the British therma-unit is what measures natural gas. Gasoline is referred to in gallons and a dekatherm is referred to with natural gas. Natural gas goes into a generating turbine that spins copper. That copper hits and that makes electricity. We have to make that turbine spin and we do that with natural gas for the most part. To make that turbine spin we calculate that natural gas is going to cost two-fifty to three dollars per dekatherm. However, that cost has skyrocketed over the past year. Instead of paying two to three dollars, we are now paying eight to ten dollars. He showed on a chart, that from October of 2021, which was the beginning of FY 21-22 and where we are now, which is the last month of the fiscal year, we planned our power supply. We planned on spending about forty million dollars to buy power. We thought it was going to cost between two and three dollars per dekatherm.

On a slide, he pointed out a blue line and where that ended up and how the city totally missed that number. It was not missed twice, it was missed by three or four times that number. When that number is missed by that much, the power bill that the city receives is three to four times as much as what was anticipated. Why and how did the city miss that number? That can be drawn down to three major reasons. First, global conflict. We read about it in the news. The Russian Ukraine invasion had a significant impact on our local economy. Russia is a major producer of natural gas. Ukraine is a strategic spot for Eurasia. Ukraine is equivalent to the Midwest, and even though it is on the other side of the world, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the rest of the world put an embargo on Russia. We said we were not going to buy any of their commodities. So, who has to fill the gap? The United States. Who did we fill the gap with? Western Europe. This in fact had a direct impact on us. The second thing was various inflation measures. Inflation has been just about everywhere since Covid. We see it all the time every day. We see it at the pumps, it is everywhere. The third thing that is affecting gas prices is the uncertainty of power generation. He did not want to go red or blue, or who did what. He wanted to speak on the matter of fact, but there is a significant green versus fossil fuel debate that is raging. This debate has actually raged since the two thousands and it has changed our power mix. It is one of the issues that has gone into the power mix of why we are so ladened with natural gas. If we go back before the turn of the century, we will see that we had more emphasis on coal and nuclear generation, but we realized that coal was a big polluter and that nuclear energy was dangerous. We then shifted our resources to natural gas. That is why we are so natural gas heavy. Now we have seen that natural gas may not kick out as much Nox or nitrogen into the environment. However, it is still high heat, which is seen as a bad emission, and now forces are thinking that natural gas is not a green alternative. There is some confusion in the marketplace about what we should invest in and if we should bring back gas markets. When we put all these things together, we have a big supply issue; demand and supply. There is a significant demand for natural gas and a low supply of natural gas. That is what is driving the train and why the price is up.

Now, the bill is bundled with the five points of the industry. However, the bill also has two components; it has a base and a fuel adjustment. It is what they call the bulk power cost adjustment. The base bill is determined on an annual basis by the City Commission. As a municipal utility, a resolution is passed every year that sets the rate matrix. The methodology for how we calculate that rate is the cost of those five things; the generation, transmission, the cost of a lineperson, and the cost of metering all that stuff goes into the bill. It has to be reported to the Public Service Commission annually. The City Commission then sets a rate. In all honesty, the City Commission has done everything they could since he was hired in two thousand and thirteen to bring that bill down. If we look back at fiscal year two thousand and fourteen to two thousand and sixteen, we put together a five-point plan to reduce the base bill. At that time, the City of Leesburg was one of the highest providers of electricity. We brought plans before the City Commission to bring the rates from about one thirty-eight per thousand to one forty-two per thousand and they decided to reduce the rates. We have endeavored to reduce the rates over the last several years. We brought down the base rate, up until this next fiscal year. We are now asking for about a six dollar increase per thousand starting in fiscal year two thousand and twenty-three. However, this is due to inflationary measures, it is not fuel measures. It would be a six-dollar increase per month which the City Commission will be talking about on Thursday night. The base bill is reviewed by the City Commission on an annual basis and our rate tariff is filed with the Public Service Commission annually. The second part of the bill is the bulk power cost of the adjustment, or the BPCA/PCA. In the rate methodology there is a matrix that calculates everything above the base bill, that is fuel. Fuel is elastic and it flexes every month. It goes up and it goes down based on where we set the rate. We may over recover, which means the city may have made too much money because fuel was cheap that month and fuel was natural gas, or we may have under recovered, which means fuel was above what we thought the cost was that month. That is then calculated, and if we go over or under what our rate methodology says. Administratively, we can adjust that rate from month to month to collect our fuel, to collect the over or under recoveries on the fuel costs so that the city does not incur a loss. He heard a lot of talk about how the city can build a pool, put flowers in the median, build a teen center and have police officers and why doesn't the city cut back on that stuff. The bottomline is, when we adjust the fuel rate, the city does not make money. There is no surplus that goes into other funds, it is a direct pass through. What the city is billed for natural gas goes directly into what we pay our wholesale costs and that is a fund that we use directly to pay the city's power bill.

Referring to a chart, which is a public record, he would be happy to share it with everyone. The chart shows how the city tracks the power cost adjustment. The chart says this is how much the city purchases power for and these are the annual bills for the fiscal year. This is how many kilowatts we sold and this was our estimated cost and that is how much we sold it for. We put it into a matrix and the magic line is what the over or under recoveries were. That number shows we started off the fiscal year at seven hundred and seventy-one thousand dollars and that we are trying to adjust that in the PCA. We want to keep about three million dollars of cash on hand for fuel adjustments because fuel is elastic. We want to keep enough cash on hand to absorb fluctuations in the fuel market without changing the rate. The city endeavored to keep that around three million dollars. We tried to keep that lower to keep the rate down. Now, what happened during the course of the year is that we saw we were starting to under recover. We started losing money. We started the year out at seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars and by July we were in the hole at nine million dollars. At that point, we started adjusting the power cost adjustment. We started out at ten per thousand. In June we were at twenty-five. In July we were twenty-seven. In August we went to fifty and we are projected to go to seventy in September. If we do not get to seventy in September, our deficit will be nine-point-six million. Unfortunately, there is no relief in fiscal year twenty two to twenty three. We anticipate that the cost of gas will hover around eight dollars a dekatherm. At eight dollars a dekatherm, in order to keep the loss from really mounting, we need seventy dollars per thousand.

Moving to the next chart, he demonstrated that the City Commission's priority is to keep rates down. Referring to the blue line on the chart, he stated it represents where the power cost adjustment has been since October 15th of last year, every month. The orange line shows the balance of where the power cost adjustment and fund balance is. What the city needs to see are both lines being nice and flat. That means the power cost adjustment is not changing. We need to see that the lines are flat, around three million dollars. Back at two thousand and fifteen, we recognized that we had ten million dollars in the power cost adjustment line and we had a high power cost adjustment. We said this money needs to be returned to the customers. At that time, we dropped the power rate to zero and the money was returned to the customer. When it dropped to the level where we thought the power cost adjustment should be, we increased the power cost adjustment back to where we thought it should be sustained, so the power cost adjustment would be where we needed it to be to absorb reasonable fluctuations and we could maintain a consistent power rate. We did that from August two thousand seventeen to August two thousand nineteen. For almost two years, the power bill was pretty consistent and we kept the power cost adjustment around three million dollars. The good side was, when we hit two thousand nineteen, the gas market started getting good, so we started over-recovering. We could see the line jumping from three to five million dollars. What did the city do? We reduced the power cost adjustment again, to zero. He was trying to demonstrate that when times are good, the City Commission puts the rate first. They return the money to the customer. The key has been to give the money back to the customers. As soon as the rate was good, the City adjusted it, but when the world was hit by Covid, it changed everything. We now see the power of cost adjustment being absorbed since the beginning of the fiscal year twenty-one. The city has now absorbed a nine million dollar loss and to recover from that loss the power cost adjustment has to go up.

Referring to another slide, he stated that the city cannot sustain a loss. In order to stop the loss, the power cost has to go up to the seventy dollar mark based on the projections. That will help stop the loss and recoup only about five thousand dollars for the city. We will still hang out in a deficit. The city will not recoup all of the loss in fuel. Some people may say forget it, we do not want to pay one more dime to the city. If that happens, what do we do? What is the financial position of the city? What would happen if we did not pay the bills or made the increase? If we stayed at twenty-seven dollars where we are right now and we just stopped, the city loses. We would go down to about thirty million dollars by the end of fiscal year twenty-three. Some people may wonder where the city manager is getting all the crazy numbers. Before he gets to all the crazy numbers, there is a correlation between the power cost adjustment which they keep in a separate account to account for fuel costs and the electric fund balance. Typically, the electric fund sits around twenty million dollars in fund balance. The electric fund typically has twenty million dollars after paying all the bills. The PCA account typically has three million dollars and the city does not combine those two funds. However, moving forward we will be.

Moving on to another chart, he showed the loss the city has already absorbed. As of today, of the twenty million, it is seven point four million. That is where the loss is. If you go based off on the projections for fiscal year twenty twenty-three, seven point four million will become twenty-three million in the hole. The city's electric fund cannot absorb twenty-three million dollars in the hole. The increase, and it is a crazy huge increase, maintains us until gas rates get better. With numbers, in the power cost world, when times are good, we pay somewhere between seventy-seven and eighty dollars a megawatt. In fiscal year twenty-twenty, it was pretty decent. Mind you, most of that was pre-covid, but we paid seventy dollars. That was where we dropped the PCA back to zero. Then, in fiscal year twenty-two, that is when the world changed. We projected in fiscal year twenty-two that our power bill would be around seventy-five dollars a megawatt. This year the power bill for the city was seventy-five dollars. Next year it will be one hundred and twenty-four dollars. What does that mean in real dollars? Typically, we pay between thirty-five and thirty-nine million dollars a year for power. In fiscal year twenty-two, we planned for the city to pay forty million dollars and the actual power bill for fiscal year twenty-two, which ends this month, will be fifty-six million dollars. The power bill for fiscal year twenty-three will be sixty-seven point three million dollars. That is real cash. That is a real bill and that is from the FMPA All Requirements Project. This is not the FMPA's fault. We are a municipal electric provider. We are in a consortium with the Florida Municipal Power Agency. We are in what they call the All Requirements Project. The All Requirements is a fancy word for the five components, which is the bundled billing. We buy all our requirements from the Florida Municipal Power Agency as with thirteen other municipal electric utilities. We are one of the thirteen cities, and our power bill is based on the FMPA projections for gas, and our usage will be sixty-seven point three million dollars. Now, how much did we grow and is this based on growth? He put another chart together but he left it out. This is only assuming our load growth, which is two-point-one percent. This is not a load growth issue, this is not a capital improvement issue, this is a gas issue.

When it comes to the magnitude of the problem and cutting special projects, not building a pool, or doing other stuff, so we do not have to raise electric rates. This year we will be approving a two hundred million budget. One hundred million of that will be the electric fund and about seventy million will be the power bill. Taxes in the general fund are a totally separate item and we account for that differently. We will bring in a projected six million dollars for fiscal year twenty-three. The city needs thirty million dollars to fill this bucket. Six million dollars from property taxes does not even touch the bucket. Now, say we get rid of the fire department or the police department, which we would never do. The fire department's budget is six million dollars and the police department's is eleven million dollars. That is only seventeen million dollars. If you combine those together, it is barely half of the problem. The power purchase deficit is thirty million dollars. If we take thirty million dollars plus the forty million, that is seventy million, so raising taxes, cutting projects and doing other things is not an option. Unfortunately, the only option we have is to increase the power cost adjustment to recoup the fuel costs. This is not just a City of Leesburg problem, this is a regional problem. Frank Stanfield from the Daily Commercial wrote a really good article about this the other day. He interviewed himself and the City of Ocala. He wanted to highlight that for everyone to see. For fiscal year twenty-two, Ocala said they lost sixty-five million dollars and we lost about twenty million dollars. Their utilities are three times bigger than ours, so these numbers add up and it is fuel. There was an article in Orlando that talked about FPL. It talked about Duke and Seco. They are all filing their tariffs with the Public Service Commission. They are all talking about increasing their power cost adjustments. It is not just the City of Leesburg. This is difficult because everybody is adjusting their power cost adjustments based on how much cash they have and we were sitting on about three million dollars when this happened and every utility is a little different when it comes to how much cash they have. Even at this rate, in August we were at one-fifty-two per thousand. We were still cheaper than Mount Dora and we were still cheaper than Duke. However, we were getting beat by Sumter Electric. This is not going to stay that way for long as we get into the winter and the new year, as the other utilities increase their rates to recoup their fuel losses. He ended his presentation by saying the City Commission watches these numbers and they are sensitive to the cost price. We know this is a significant increase. Back in the fiscal year, two thousand FMEA, and if you go to, publicpower.com you will see utility rate comparisons for all utilities across the state and how we stack up. The green lines represented all the cities who participate in the All Requirements Project. He also showed an email from him to the City Commission, the FMEA CEO and the FMPA CEO, saying how the city accomplished their goal that we set out back in two thousand and sixteen on reducing the power rate and becoming a competitive utility provider. If you read the city's vision statement, number two is to be a leader in the utility industry and to provide competitive low rate utilities. He stated that we accomplished that. In the email it also said this is not a static market, it is an elastic market and we have to continue to grow. We did a fantastic job managing this up until today, unfortunately. The facts will prove that we are in crazy times. We have been incrementally increasing the power costs since January. We started out at ten dollars in January and we were now at twenty-seven dollars. In January of this year, we had the second best price in the All Requirements Project and we were still in the top quarter for all

providers in the state. The city watches the numbers. We are moving the power cost adjustment. We do return it to the customers when we can. We are in a significant crisis because of fuel. We did it before and we will get back there again.
Mayor Pederson thanked the city manager for his presentation. He opened the floor for public comments. He stated these are challenging times, we are all being squeezed and we are living on a margin. Our city has done a great job, but these are difficult times.

Dr. Erika Jasper, gave kudos to the City Manager and the Commission. For those who were not aware a couple of weeks ago, this was one of Commissioner Robuck's goals, he wants to implement a charter revision to decrease the rates moving forward. They have been working diligently, as you can see from the charts and graphs. They have been working to get this implemented. She resides in the City of Leesburg and she understands the frustration, but as we look around from a global standpoint, everything has been increasing. She understands the reason and the rationale for the increase. She wanted to say thank you and kudos for a job well done.

Ashten Silvis, stated she has lived in Leesburg her whole life. The house she currently lives in, she has lived in for the past twenty years. She owns it. They have changed the windows, updated and maintained the air conditioner, put on a new roof and put in insulation. They even removed an aboveground pool. Her three children know how to unplug everything from the walls. Their bills averaged three hundred on a high month. This month it was six hundred and last month it was five hundred. They have limited their usage. That is what they are asking. How are people supposed to limit use, anymore than what they already have when it is not their usage? It is the price and the way the funds are being allocated. The city's costs have gone up, but so have theirs. Six hundred dollars for average usage per family in a fourteen hundred square foot home leaves a lot of questions for everyone and that is what they are concerned about. A six hundred dollar electric bill after minimizing usage and being mindful of this stuff and the bill is still extreme. They took down the pool, and they did a lot of other things and the bill is now six hundred dollars. That does not make sense to anyone. Especially in a home where she has been for twenty years. They had a pipe bust in the wall and they lost most of their floors and walls. The crews were there using all their equipment, the doors were open for three weeks straight and the bill was not even half of what it is now and they are conserving all the resources. They would like more answers other than if the bills went up because so did theirs.

Mayor Pederson said the best answer he could give is that the city's cost went up three folds. The city absorbed it to the cost of nine million dollars over the last year. We tried. This is not just a City of Leesburg problem, we are living in very trying times. **Commissioner Robuck** wanted to add to the city manager's comments. With the FMPA, when we receive our power lease and our power bill, the FMPA is the equivalent of a co-op for cities, we actually own the generation. It is not like we are buying power from someone else, it is us and these other cities. We own power plants, gas plants, coal plants and we used to have more nuclear power. We used to get a good bit of our power from Crystal River until it reached the end of its life. The federal government has not approved a new nuclear plant for thirty years, so we do not have much nuclear left. He chairs a statewide board along side other policy-makers with utilizes and this is one of their key issues. We are constantly lobbying the federal government because we need more nuclear energy and we need more pipelines, because we have people willing to pump gas out of the ground, but they cannot get it to the east coast. We have maxed out our pipeline capacity and the City of Leesburg has fairly limited ability to do anything about that. When it comes to solar, he knows everyone wonders why we do not have more solar in Florida. Believe it or not, Florida is actually horrible for solar, because in the summer afternoons we have thunderstorms every day. We have clouds. If we went one hundred percent solar in Florida, we would have to turn a third of the state into solar farms and battery banks. We would need to store tons of power in battery banks to make up for it when it is cloudy. Solar really is not an answer, but he gets why everyone is frustrated. His power bill at his business in August was nine thousand dollars. This month it is sixteen thousand dollars. Everyone feels it, but being mad at the city is like yelling at the gas station owner when gas prices are high. We do not control that number. You should be mad and angry, but you need to talk to the federal government who has caused this problem. We would be happy to pass this message on, but these are just the facts.

Melitta Bloomer, remarked that she was seventy-five years old. She has lived in Leesburg since 1980. She is on social security and receives one thousand two hundred dollars a month. She pays six hundred and fifty dollars for rent and three hundred and fifty dollars for electricity. She has diabetes and COPD. This month she can either buy her medication or pay her electricity bill. She is not mad at the commissioners, she is just mad at the whole thing. Something has to be done to help people like her who are on social security. She cannot afford to buy her medication. She has been out of insulin for the last four days. What is she supposed to do? She does not make money. Her bill used to be one hundred and sixty dollars. It is now three hundred and fifty dollars. She needs help.

Ronda Brewer, stated she was from Leesburg Landing, a medium income mobile park. Her residents are at her door every day because of this. They are in the middle of an expansion and the City of Leesburg has demanded that they put eighty percent of their homes on natural gas. It is ridiculous. They are saying the problem is coming from natural gas, but yet they are forcing her to install them in her community. She is paying out the behind to have them installed and this is for medium-income houses that start out at forty thousand dollars. By the time she is done with everything the city wants, including the impact fees and fines, it is up to seventy and eight thousand dollars for a mobile home. These people cannot afford their electric and gas bills. Now the city is making her put natural gas into a mobile home. This is a mobile home manufacturing community. They do not even make them with natural gas. They have to tear hotwater heaters out to run gas lines.

Donald Craig Robertson, stated he resides in Corley Island Mobile Manor. He did not appreciate how they were threatening to get rid of the fire or police department. He thinks that is a ridiculous idea. He was not aware the city was buying natural gas from Russia. He thought we had enough natural gas in this country to be independent. Maybe he was wrong. If he talks too long, someone can grab a hook and get him off the microphone. How does Ukraine even have anything to do with natural gas unless the government is sending our natural gas over to Europe to make a profit? It should be staying in this country. **Mayor Pederson** said they are doing that and suggested he call Washington.

Derek Wallman, of 1017 Cottonwood Street questioned the presentation because he went on Google and found gas prices. Over the last year it has not been under four dollars and he was saying two fifty is what they adjusted it for. Maybe we need to look at the people who are making the adjustments and concerns to see if they are doing it correctly. Maybe we will not have all these deficits. You are right about the eight dollars right now, but that is only two times the national average that it was twelve months ago. That is according to the Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Pricing and anyone can Google it. The City of Leesburg is four percent higher than the state average for electric costs, which is right on Google. On the city's website, it only gave an adjustment as of October 1, 2021. It is all listed and the price is there. It was mentioned that we started out at ten, but (referring to his phone) it was twelve twenty a unit price. This has not adjusted since last year at this time. Maybe you should think about making adjustments so the public can see what is going on and there would not be all these problems coming. His bills give insight, because they went up that much. His bill in May was two hundred and sixty-nine dollars and he has a fourteen hundred square foot two-bedroom house. Two ninety-one in June and four forty-eight in July, which is one hundred and thirty-five dollars more. Five fifteen in August and six forty-seven on the last bill. Now this one is eight hundred and twenty-three dollars. That is more than his car payment. It is seventy-two percent of his rent bill. Somebody here is making some mistakes and not looking at the correct things because he can find them on Google in ten minutes.

Tonya Anste, resides at the Arbours at Silver Lake. She is a disabled single parent. Like so many people, she is concerned about the increases. Thankfully, hers has not skyrocketed like everyone else, which she is very grateful for, but knowing about the upcoming increase has her incredibly worried. Her only consistent income is SSDI. Even though she is a single parent, she receives twenty dollars in snap benefits per month for both of them. Her cost of living for SSDI at the beginning of the year went up less than her rent increased. That already, between food, rent and the cost of living, has her in a greater deficit. The big question is what can we do, because if things continue the way they are, she will end up living in her car with her daughter. Lake County is already fairly poverty-stricken, so if something does not change, it is only going to get worse. Something has to be done sooner rather than later, because citizens deserve better than this.

Gerald Ameral stated he moved to Leesburg at the end of November into a new development. He moved away from Clermont because the cost of living in Leesburg was more affordable. He could purchase a home in Leesburg because the cost in Clermont was outrageous. He has all of his electric bills. He would not bore them with the details, but he would start logging them from this point. He is going to start reading his own meters, both water and electric, to make certain they match. He saw his electric jump, but suddenly out of the blue this month, his water usage has gone from what it was to three times that with no change. He does not trust the meter and he will start checking it. The bulk power cost rez went from .15 back in February, it was maintained in March, and went up in April to .018. In May it was .018, June .025 and July it was .027. He swung by the house on his way here tonight to pick it up to find that it was .07. Now bulk power cost rez does not mean anything to him, that is not layman terms, but he can say the cost exceeds his base sales price. When he looked at his bill, it averaged two hundred dollars and it went to four hundred and thirty-one dollars. Now we are talking about more increases. He would like concrete ideas from the panel on what the plan is. Do we have a plan, or are we just along for the ride? He brought his daughter with him because he had to. He cannot afford to put her in daycare to come to these things. He is a working man just like everyone else and he has bills to pay. He would like to hear concrete answers as to what we can expect and what the plan is. He knows inflation is a thing and everyone knows gas prices fluctuate. This is not news to anybody, but he would like to know what the game plan is.

Jessy Flinn 2204 Vine Street, stated she has had the pleasure of serving along side both past and present commissioners. She is currently on the board of the Leesburg Chamber of Commerce and she was the past president last year. Her and her husband Kevin own a home and they run their business off Tally Road, Gourmet Today. It is a catering business they have owned for the last twelve years. They employ fifteen people. Like many people who have voiced concerns regarding their utility bills, she finds herself in receipt of a bill that is not sustainable for their business or home. With respect to the commission and to the others that would like to speak tonight, she has opted to submit her questions in writing. She asked that the questions be considered at the next commission meeting and answered. One question, is who supplies the power. She very recently misspoke saying that Duke Energy supplied the power and Dan Robuck clarified that for her, and she appreciates that. She knows many people think the same thing and she wants to understand better. The questions are for clarification. This is not an ideal situation for anyone, our government or our city. Action does need to be taken on our city budget as we wait for the price of the supply of natural gas to be regulated to help offset the cost of utility bills. Are there any resources to help with payments for people in the lowest poverty? What can we do as citizens to help our commission to speak at a federal or state level so that we can start making changes? Over the past few weeks, she has been given copies of utility bills from other people for this month. They include other service providers. Two examples show a difference; a sizable difference in utility cost. In one household, they had seven hundred and fifty-six kilowatts used and the breakout was included. It was sixty-three dollars, the fuel charge was thirty-three dollars and there was an asset charge. The total current charge for seven hundred and fifty-six kilowatts was one hundred and eleven dollars and fifty-nine cents. She wished her bill was for that consumption, but it was not. It was three thousand seven hundred and fifty-five, so she took those rates and she put it up for her consumption and it came to four hundred and ninety-five dollars, but just the line item of her electricity alone was six hundred and seventy-two dollars without tax, water or trash. If her home was powered by Duke Energy in Eustis, she could have saved one hundred and seventy-seven dollars and sixty-three cents this month. She loves this city. It is her home. She has always tried to be an advocate for the City of Leesburg and she will continue to do so. She hopes she can understand more in the commission meetings ahead.

CM Minner commented that it was probably better if everyone talked first and the commission would sum up with their responses. However, this is a great example of the differences between the complaints we have been receiving regarding what one utility company is doing or whether Google says this or that. Ms. Flinn brought in a bill from Duke and it is a great example of where everyone is a little different. This bill has an end date of September 2nd. It has a power of fuel charge, which is another way to say BCPA or PCA. It is a fuel charge for seven hundred and fifty-six kilowatts. The fuel charge was four-point-four-six-nine. In the language that he spoke about earlier, for the same period in August, the city's was fifty dollars and Duke was forty-four dollars and sixty-nine cents. By the way, Duke is already more expensive than the city in that area, so that is a comparable power cost adjustment. It was thirty-three dollars because it was under a thousand. That is the measuring stick. That is what he was saying. This is a regional problem, it is an all utility problem. Every utility will react to this differently based on their cash levels. That is what he was trying to say in the presentation. The Duke part caught him, but he would look at the Seco one next.

Anita Jackson, lives on Shady Acres Road and she has had the pleasure of working with some of the commissioners over the years in civic groups. She is a retired hospice nurse. Her electric bill this month was eight hundred and sixty-one dollars. Her social security check was one thousand dollars and she has a mortgage. What she does not want to see and it does not behoove anybody to do the good guy/bad guy where everyone unleashes on the city while they are trying to figure out how to pay the bills. She would like to challenge everyone by putting their heads together to get really creative to find things we can do to save the residents money because Leesburg is in serious trouble. We already have a large poverty population and thirty percent of our population is elderly, over the age of sixty-five. She does not like to be negative, but the fact that we are nine million dollars in debt without any advance notice, had she gotten advance notice she could have turned things off. She could have turned the AC off. She could have done something to mitigate that, but an oops might determine whether or not she can keep her home. She does not feel it serves a purpose for anyone to be mad at each other. Last week she called around to her friends to analyze their light bills and she is paying a high rate. If we cannot compete with Duke and Seco, maybe we need to look into forming a citizens' co-op like Seco. Maybe we can do things differently to make this better. The big companies have cost-averaging, but Leesburg does not. That was stopped so we cannot break a bill up in the event of a tragedy. We have the opportunity to be losers or leaders and she is begging to be leaders.

Seth Cromwell 406 South 12th Street, said he has been a resident of Leesburg for thirty-one years. He considers himself a native. He absolutely loves this City. He would like the panel to address the new utility poles at his direct neighbor's house located at 404 South 12th Street. Over the past three months, there have been three new utility poles put in his yard. Regarding one of the poles, he asked if there was a way it could possibly be moved. They sent someone from the city who said it took them thirty thousand dollars to engineer the light pole and to put it in so the city would be able to reroute electricity. He asked if there were any better ways to get electricity around the city without having to spend boo-koo bucks getting electricity through our transmission lines. He understands that hardening our infrastructure means that sometimes you have to move it underneath the ground. However, for someone who is paying a massive amount, even though his is the lowest of his four neighbors at four hundred and sixty dollars. His other neighbors were over six hundred. We could be doing better things with our money than putting new light fixtures on new poles. They are also putting them down South 12th Street. He appreciates that we have to grow. However, the poles that were there were carrying things just fine without having all our bills get asbolated. He asked that the city communicate with the citizens about rate increases coming down the pipe lines a little smoother because, as we heard, that did not go so well. The memos went directly to the bosses so they were notified of the rate increases coming, but the people who actually pay the bills are on the lifeline of having to weigh out buying food, paying the mortgage or even, in some cases, paying for medical supplies in order to pay the utilities.

Carolyn VanDyken 120 Palmora, stated she owns a business and a home. She understood the presentation, but when she received her bill she compared it to Duke to see if they were showing their price increases and they had. Seco also shows their price increases for their power cost adjustment. Those are all online. She took her residential bill and did the math. It looks as if she would have an eighty dollar savings if she was under Seco and a forty-three dollar savings if she were under Duke. That is before any rebates. We do not get any rebates or money back. She does not understand how that works for those two companies, but we do not do anything different other than they get the power a different way than we do. How is that, when they talk about the rates and the power conversion rate? Yes, we might be lower, but when you have a base sales rate and a sales rate of over one thousand, that is when other utilities might be one cent lower or two cents lower. Over one thousand or under one thousand, that is where the difference is. She was trying to understand that if we are all buying power from the same place, why is it that the City is hurting so much, why did we lose so much money when Seco and Duke are not. They are passing that cost on to their customers, but not as an enormous dump like we are receiving. **Mayor Pederson** mentioned that the city manager touched on that and all the power companies are currently going to the Public Service Commission for rate increases. A lot of this is timing. **Ms. VanDyken** said that they have already done that and there are articles out there. **CM Minner** stated that they have to share apples with apples. The program she was referring to was called Hotbucks. What Seco does with their over/under recoveries is the PCA, which is what they call Hotbucks. When they share the PCA or lower the PCA, they call it Hotbucks and they give it back to the consumer in Hotbucks. On the Duke number, we are still lower than Duke, but Seco has beaten us, but these are July and August bills. We have to make sure we are looking at the right months. We have to make the right power cost adjustments. **Ms. VanDyken** said she was doing the right homework. **CM Minner** told her she needed to come see him because they needed to look at cash reserves and a bunch of different stuff before judging. At the end of the day, everybody is pretty much in the same boat. If you have not seen the increase yet, it is coming. **Ms. VanDyken** wanted to know what could be done to change this, because a nineteen thousand bill is not sustainable moving forward. It is not for her. As a business company and resident, we have huge issues. Going back to the smart meter, and she was not dumping it on the city manager, because he came in after that and fixed it and she appreciated that. However, we do not have peak and off-peak times. We do not have areas where we can save money. When she lived in other states twenty-five years ago, we were learning how to conserve energy in peak versus off peak times to control our bills. **Commissioner Robuck** mentioned when looking at the Duke and Seco bills, if you look online as opposed to an actual bill, you have to add six percent because there is going to be a six percent franchise fee from any of the investors and utilities on the actual bill. It will be at the bottom.

Harmoni Swimes, 1521 Moss Avenue, stated she was not here to complain. She understands the astronomical rate and that everything is climbing, but the other utility companies offer budget plans. For people that are on a fixed income, she is not, but a lot of people are. If they could look and average their bills, which if September was going to be eight hundred dollars, but December would be two hundred dollars, they could split the difference. The bill could be three hundred and fifty dollars. That would be a more affordable rate than the eight hundred dollar bill in September. Then, in December, they will know what to expect. For people that have mortgages, mortgage companies are willing to put payments on hold for up to three months. Is there a way to make payment plans so people can pay them back when the electric bill is lower? A budget plan would make it more affordable for people who cannot afford eight hundred dollars in August. Leesburg seems to be the only utility company that does not offer that. She called the city last week asking and the only options were, that we have a ten-day grace period. That is great, because people here can pull eight hundred dollars out of their back pocket in ten days. Then, once every six months, you get two weeks. If you are on a fixed income, you are not going to get more money in two weeks. She was not exactly sure how that might help in a crisis. If someone misses a week of work because they were sick and if they did not have any sick time, they are stuck recouping that week that they missed. She understands everything is going up in price and that the City is losing money too. However, there has to be options for people that cannot afford that. Otherwise, we are going to be looking at people not paying their electric bills. Then that is going to hurt everything even more and the city cannot afford that.

Michele Gentles, 1508 Park Drive, said she was frustrated listening to the steps that one lady took trying to make her house more efficient, yet the outcome was not as good as she was hoping. Her and her husband had someone out to provide an estimate for solar panels. They are trying to be proactive and help themselves because the city has its own budget, so, rather than depend on the city or anyone else, they are trying to be more efficient and take care of themselves. They had a solar company at their house and they wanted over eighty thousand dollars for solar. They had an air conditioner guy out to look at how to be more efficient and they were told their air conditioner was eight years old and after five years it lost efficiency. They recommended that they go a half ton higher to help with that. Eight years ago, air conditioners cost four thousand dollars. Yesterday they were quoted fifteen thousand. There were no new vents, nothing, just an air conditioner and a more up-to-grade concrete pad for it to sit on. Her point was we are trying to help ourselves without relying on anyone else, but the outcome is the same and the bill still goes up. What is the answer to people, because she does not want to spend her savings to be more efficient when the outcome is the same?

Jose, Lake Denham Estates stated he has lived in Florida since 2007. He lived in Miami, Clermont, Winter Garden, he has pretty much lived all over Central Florida and it was not until he moved here a month ago that he noticed the entirety of the situation that people are describing. His bill this month was five hundred dollars. It is ridiculous. He wants to know as citizens, can we petition to have a third party audit the numbers being portrayed because he does not believe them to be true. If the city believes them to be true, then there should not be a problem with them asking for that. Right now, there is no soluble solution to the problem and he cannot afford to pay six thousand dollars a year in utilities. He pays more in utilities than he does for his car and insurance. That is not okay. **Mayor Pederson** mentioned that the city is fully transparent with everything we do and the city is audited at year-end. **Jose** said in 2019 North Carolina had the same problem with Duke Energy and they signed petitions to prevent the increase. He wanted to know what actionable steps were to prevent the increase from happening. **CM Minner** commented that what he was doing right now was the first step. This is the body that you would bring your concerns to. They set the rates. **Jose** wanted to know who he could sit down with and have a conversation with to know what the actionable steps were that he needed to take to make that happen, because he did not see anyone answering his question. He sees him saying he is speaking to the correct body, but so far, he has been listening to them for an hour and he has yet to hear a soluble solution. **Mayor Pederson** reminded him that the Commission would answer questions at the end. The Commission does not debate individually nor do they go back and forth with every speaker. **Jose** said he was not here to debate or complain, he was book smart and educated. He wanted to see the numbers himself. He wants to cross-reference everything that has been talked about. He will sit here and spend a whole month making sure the numbers are correct. **Mayor Pederson** pointed out that he was welcome to meet with the city manager and he would provide him with all the information he ever wanted to see.

Stephen Gregg, of 700 Nuzum Street, stated that what he has heard so far is grief from people and the Commission is sitting there objectively not caring. What that solves is absolutely nothing. People are literally on the street potentially dying and not getting medication while you sit there having a side Johnson. You are talking and not even giving full attention to the person talking. These people's lives are on the line here. He does not appreciate the demeanor or how they are approaching everyone. This is important stuff that they should pay attention to. It does not matter what our standing is, it does not matter who we are. We are bringing a voice concern and it should be taken seriously. It seems it is being laughed off and you are fighting back at us while we express our concern. That is not how you handle yourself as a person in your seat. With the price increase, he himself cut things back. They increased the temperature to seventy-eight, and yet his bill was almost two hundred and seventy-eight. He understands there is all this analyst stuff and you wasted all our time with this, but the most important thing here today is to have people talk to come up with a solution and so far there is no solution. He heard check the numbers, check the audits, but no one cares and that is the whole point. All they want is to be heard and know there is a solution being worked on, but everyone is sitting there unopposed, unapologetic and not caring at all. That is what is showing in your face and that is clear as day.

Josh Coffin 30344 Redtree Drive, said he had three solar companies come out and give him quotes on getting solar. He could eliminate his bill with solar and a Tesla wall, but Leesburg will not offer a one to one for purchasing power back from residents. Is there something that can be changed to do that? **Commissioner Robuck** answered he could disconnect from the grid, then he would not have a bill. **Mr. Coffin** remarked that was not the point of solar. **Commissioner Robuck** mentioned that you want the city to provide you with electricity. You want us to pay the lineman and the generation, so you can have a back up that all costs real money yet you want a service for free. **Mr. Coffin** stated that Duke and FPL do it. **Commissioner Robuck** replied that right now they are required to provide that by the state. They try to get it changed every year and it will change. It is insane that they would pay someone the same rate that they charge a customer when they are paying the lineman, the customer service, and the generation. Again, if you want a zero dollar bill, all you have to do is disconnect from the grid, put in the power wall and solar and you will have a zero dollar bill. **Mr. Coffin** said it would work. He would have a Tesla wall that would run his power whenever he did not need the city. **Commissioner Robuck** stated he would have to disconnect because you are asking everyone else to subsidize you.

Gerald Ameral said he had another concern he wanted to bring up. With The Villages expanding into Leesburg and that being a fairly large development, will that be included in this power consumption? **Mayor Pederson** answered yes. **CM Minner** mentioned The Villages has several different suppliers. In general, City of Leesburg customers will be receiving a seventy dollars per thousand kilowatt cost adjustment. **Mr. Ameral** questioned if we already have a supply problem from a power generation standpoint, allowing more development in this area and continuing at the rate we are and with twenty-seven projects currently in the works, do you see our problem getting better, staying the same or getting worse? **CM Minner** replied that his question is noted, lets finish the public input and we will wrap it all up.

Gary Winhym commented that he was not a city resident, but he is on city power. He questioned if Leesburg power was part of a co-op that buys the power, fuel and natural gas to generate the power. On the chart, the prices went up and down every month. Is that price not negotiated? Is it not something that can be planned out for a long term or do you just pay whatever that source says you have to pay that month? It all boils down to planning for the future and what those costs could be. The other graph shows where the rates were lowered a couple of times over the years. When you get a surplus and then you drop the rates, you drop that surplus. Then you are raising the rates higher to get that surplus up again. Why not just go to a rate that is consistent and stop trying to, drop it back down and look like you are saving everybody money when in the long run you are not.

Mayor Pederson closed the public hearing. He said comments earlier may not have been delivered correctly. What he tried to say is that the city's costs have gone up three fold this year. The city absorbed nine million dollars. We burned through that nine million dollars in cash in an effort to hold the rates down. However, we cannot do that any longer because the rates have gone up. We tried to say over and over that we do not control natural gas prices. This is not just a Leesburg problem, it is not just statewide, it is a national problem. Everyone thinks this is just Leesburg and we are the bad guys. We have a history of running a really good utility company. He has received a lot of complaint calls and emails this week, so if he came across as being a little frustrated, he apologized. He has a day job and he has spent this past week on this subject, which is fine. That is his role and he is happy to do it. He lives in Leesburg and his rates have skyrocketed too. He is just as frustrated as everyone else. He is frustrated when he goes to the grocery store and the gas station. He gets it. Historically, Leesburg has been competitive. We run a really good utility company. We tried to say that this was an unusual time. He senses the frustration and he does not mean to come across as insensitive. His comment did come across as a smart comment, but what he was trying to say was in the presentation it showed how the costs went up three folds and the city cannot absorb that. We are not the federal government. We run a balanced budget. We cannot go borrow money and the citizens would not want us to go borrow tens of thousands of dollars to subsidize electric rates. The city has done a great job and this is frustrating. The modeling was based on the gas prices staying up and he is trying to be optimistic that natural gas prices will come down. There is the whole Russia and Ukraine situation along with other issues, but he would like to think that the rates will come down. However, the modeling shows natural gas staying up for the next year. He hopes that is not true. It will be bad for Leesburg and it will be bad for this country.
Commissioner Robuck commented that there were a few questions brought up in terms of the gas and why we cannot look at forecasting that out. We do that to an extent through the FMPA. We have a hedging program where, when gas falls to a certain point, we go out and buy future contracts to try and keep it down. Of course, if we had known prior to the Ukraine War that gas would go up to ten dollars we could have made a whole lot of money, but so could everyone else. It spiked overnight, so everyone got caught and that was one reason why we were able to put it off for so long, because we did have some hedge out going forward. Where prices are now, if we look at the future curve, we are going to be a little hesitant to go out and hedge a lot of costs at eight to ten dollar gas rates. Right now is not the time to hedge. In the future, if gas prices fall below four dollars and from the discussions with the FMPA, we will be a little more aggressive with hedging. We have learned from this. That is something that we will be looking at. Now, if we have enough natural gas in the United States, yes we do. Do we export it to other countries? Yes, we do. We would have more if we did not do that. In fact, it was either late July or early August. If you look at the natural gas prices, you will see where they fell really sharply and that was because of a fire at a liquefied natural gas facility in Louisiana that stopped the exports of natural gas from that facility, so we had more for domestic consumption. We saw a two dollars per therm drop in price. It was significant, but companies are trying to export every bit they can. We talk about our prices going from two to four to ten. In Europe they are looking at forty. They can sell it for four times more in Europe right now. If you look at the future curve in France a couple of weeks ago, their futures curve was out to four hundred dollars. Until the federal government steps in and says we have to keep it for domestic consumption, companies will continue to max out their exports of liquefied natural gas. If you look at the LMG prices versus natural gas, it is a huge difference. He is frustrated about this, we are all frustrated.
Nine times out of ten when someone comes to the city with a problem, we can do something to make it a little better. We can do something to try and fix it. We are frustrated because we can do that with this issue. We are talking about thirty million dollars. If we only needed to find three million dollars, that would be tough, but we could do it. We could cut stuff, but we could do something. If we had a money printer that would be great. We could just print out the thirty million dollars, but we do not have that. The

frustrations we have are that we are not angry at the residents, it is that we are in the same situation. We are paying the same rates and we do not have a good solution. He wished we had one. If someone could tell him how to find thirty million dollars, we would all be happy. It is just not there. When it comes to solar, he gets worked up. He was a little short on that earlier, but he does get worked up on that because net metering is a subsidy for rich people. We talked about eighty thousand dollars for solar panels on their house and what net metering allows you to do is, if you can afford that eighty thousand dollars, you can have a zero-dollar bill. However, for everyone else that cannot afford solar, their bill goes up. So, yes, he gets real frustrated and he apologizes for that.
Commissioner Christian commented that he hopes no one leaves the room thinking the commission did not care and that their concerns were not heard. We all live here, we have businesses here, we work here. We have friends and family that live here in the City of Leesburg. Ms. Bloomer attends his church and she takes insulin, so he was wondering how his church could assist her with the insulin, so we are all concerned. He does not want anyone leaving thinking they are not concerned. As Commissioner Robuck said, everyone is a little frustrated. Everyone is asking about the plan. He has friends in Jacksonville and they are complaining about their prices. He has friends in Ocala and they are complaining. He keeps calling the city manager and he is probably sick of him texting because he keeps asking how to get the bills down. We have eight million dollars of American Recovery Act money. We could disperse, but that would only give each person about twenty-five dollars a month in relief. That would not do so much for helping people. We are looking at ways to help. Some utilities are returning parts of the deposits to the residents. We are looking for ways too, so if you find anything while you are googling, please let us know. Google what other utilities are doing to see if we can make it manage. Thirty million dollars we just cannot sustain that type of hit on our utility. For those who have not been watching online, that has been the city managers and Commissioner Robuck's thing. They have been the biggest supporters of lowering utility costs. They want to be competitive. We cannot build, we cannot transfer. We have to reduce the electricity transfers in the general fund just so we can keep our rates low. He does not want anyone to leave, thinking the Commission does not care because they are concerned. This is not just a year. We have been doing this for three or four years and the city manager looks at those numbers. He knows those numbers may not mean a whole lot to some people, but when they get the utility bill, that is when it matters. The city manager took a lot of blame because he did not get the information out to the consumers to let them know this was coming down the pipe. He did tell the commissioners and we have been hearing about it for months. At the end of the day, what people care about is when they go to the mailbox to get that utility bill, they want to know how much they need to pay. We are at a point where we need to figure out how to reduce that cost. The city manager is here every day and he is the one that you should be talking to. If anyone has questions, you need to make an appointment with him because he has a lot more information to share. However, this did not catch the Commission off guard. We knew it was coming. If you look around at other utilities, they are experiencing the same thing. We now need to look at how to reduce that. With the question about fluctuating. When we get more money, we want to return it to you. We do not want to keep the money. We try our best to return that. If it was incremental, you may see a one hundred dollar decrease on your electric bill. It would be minimal. There are things going on globally with Russia and Ukraine, and even though that seems so far away, it does affect how we do business here. Please do not take it that we are deaf and not concerned. We do want to solve this the best we can. Unfortunately, this is nothing we can do overnight. We will continue to work and put our heads together, so we can get some relief as quickly as possible. He is sure the city manager heard all the concerns and he will continue to work on a regular basis. **Stephen Gregg** stated that if the Commission is concerned, why are the citizens caught unaware of the price hike? That is the whole problem. If he knew his bill was going to shoot up almost two to three hundred dollars, he could mentally prepare himself. This came right out of left field. If they want to say they are concerned, this should have been negotiated with them beforehand. You have been sitting on it for months.
Commissioner Burry remarked that we could sit here and discuss the same stuff over and over, but people have to be aware. Right now, the United States is the largest producer of natural gas in the world.

The second largest producer is Russia. Due to the war, we are trying to turn off their pumps and their ability to sell gas to affect what we consider an evil movement. This is a direct result of that policy. When people ask what can I do, you can help change policy. However, it is a two-edged sword. Right now, you are saying we should just let Russia do what they want so we can have our own air conditioning. That is the reality of the situation. Eighteen percent of natural gas comes from Russia, which is almost one fifth of the world. The manufacturers locally in the United States have an opportunity to sell. We are capitalists. They can sell that product to England and Germany. They can sell it all over Europe for a lot higher than they can sell it to us. They are business people. We are paying that price. It is a world problem and it is affecting us locally. That is just a fact and we cannot control it right now. He knows there are frustrations concerning the fact that we do not seem to have a plan, but it is hard to plan when a worldwide calamity occurs that affects our gas prices. The increase in costs is why our bills are going up. It is just a fact and we cannot change that.

Mayor Pederson wrapped up by thanking everyone for coming out. The commission and city manager heard all their comments and they appreciated all their input. They will do their best to address this. This is a very difficult and challenging time.

He called a five minute recess at 7:15 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

This section is reserved for members of the public to bring up matters of concern or opportunities for praise. Issues brought up will not be discussed in detail at this meeting. Issues will either be referred to the proper staff or will be scheduled for consideration at a future City Commission Meeting. Comments are limited to three minutes.

Rhonda Brewer, of Leesburg Landing, 86 Dockside Drive, stated she was fairly new to the community. She has been here three years. She has met a lot of wonderful people throughout the city, including the city manager. She had some issues and he helped her resolve them. There is a big sign outside that says, Leesburg is business friendly. She is here to say that it is anything but. She has problems all the way around. Her biggest problem right now that she would like to address is the permitting department. There are some wonderful people, like Eric and Amanda. They are always kind, but there is no consistency. She applies for permit after permit. She has one that was done over the last few weeks. Everything passed except she had a gas issue, a discrepancy between the gas installer and themselves. Everything was great except for fixing two problems and bolting down some stairs, which was ironic because she had installed about forty mobile homes and this was the first time she ever heard anything about bolting down stairs. Everytime she thinks she has gotten to the end, they hit her with something new. It gets pulled out of left field. It is getting ridiculous. They have four years to install one hundred and eight homes, but it takes three months just to get one inspection passed. She just had an inspection. The plumbing passed without an issue. She had the head of the permitting department come down and she turned around and failed it. She left a neat little note in her box. Then there was an issue over the holiday weekend. One of her residents received a stop work notice on their door because she had a roofer there. They were in the subdivion working on two other roofs, but they seized her work. She is a resident and the roofers were just doing a repair. Her plumbers helped her with plumbing and some issues with the roof, so they put a hold on all her permits for those units and left a notice on her residents' door. The notice was for a new roof even though he was not getting a new roof. She wanted to know what the city was doing in her park on a Saturday? This was the permitting department, it was not even code enforcement. She called before because someone was installing an air conditioner and letting freons leak all over. She called the permitting department and they told her she had to call code enforcement because that was not on them. However, this holiday weekend it all came from the permitting department and not code enforcement. There are a lot of blurred lines here. **CM Minner** informed the commission that Ms. Brewer has been in his office before. They have a standing appointment tomorrow at 11am. Ann Kinsley, the Building

Official, and Ryan Gerdon, the Deputy Public Works Director, will be there. **Ms. Brewer** mentioned that Ryan is absolutely wonderful. He calls her every step of the way whenever she has an issue. **CM Minner** said Ms. Brewer had an issue with inspections from Public Works on how we adopt and issue CO's. He believes we have ironed that out. She brought two issues this evening. One is mixed with the gas issue and electric. Tomorrow they will meet with her about the issues presented. We will look at the mandatory hookup to mobile homes which is new to him and make sure the inspections are correct. We will double check the service she is receiving from the building department.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If the Commission/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) vote on remaining items with one roll call vote, (3) discuss each pulled item and vote by roll call

Items pulled for discussion:

5.C.2 - Execute a Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County, the City of Leesburg, and the Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc., for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds for Fiscal Year 2021-22 for the Pine Street improvement project
5.C.3 - Execute a Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County, the City of Leesburg (Agency), and the Community Redevelopment Agency for the Carver Heights/Montclair Area (Property Owner), for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Coronavirus funds for the repurposing of an existing builidng for a food pantry
5.C.4 - Execute a Lease Agreement, between the City of Leesburg and Lake County, Florida, for the purpose of extending the term and revising the rental composition, for the Lake County Sheriff's Aviation Unit Hangar
5.C.5 - Approving the Conveyance of a vacant lot to Jodine Brown for development of a single-family home as part of the In-Fill Housing Program
5.C.11 -Execute a Vacant Land Contract and Pre-Closing Occupancy Addendum to Vacant Land Contract with Junias Desamour and Marie Perpetue Desamour for the purchase of vacant land located on Center Street to accommodate stormwater treatment improvements

Commissioner Christian moved to adopt the Consent Agenda except for 5.C.2, 5.C.3, 5.C.4, 5.C.5 and 5.C.11, and Commissioner Burry seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the Consent Agenda, as follows:
(Each item has its coordinated resolution number listed below the header)

A. CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

1. **Regular meeting held August 22, 2022**

B. PURCHASING ITEMS:

1. **None**

C. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Transfer of $90,000.00 to the C.U.R.E. (Citizens Utility Relief Effort) Voucher Program to aid with Customer Utility Bills; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,156

2. **Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County, the City of Leesburg, and the Community Development Corporation of Leesburg, Inc., for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds for Fiscal Year 2021-22 for the Pine Street improvement project; and providing an effective date.**

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,164

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

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

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Christian stated he needed to abstain from voting on this item. **Commissioner Connell** said he spoke to the city manager earlier about this item. He wanted to know what portion was coming out of the city? **CM Minner** apologized for not being able to get back to his question. He asked PWD Kelsey what the estimated cost was for the Pine Street lot. **PWD Kelsey** replied the parking lot by itself was about eight hundred thousand dollars. **CM Minner** asked if that was in addition to the two million dollar estimate for the project. **PWD Kelsey** answered that it was one point seven million. **CM Minner** remarked that the total Pine Street Project would be one point seven plus the point eight, which is two point five. The CDC will kick in the CDBG grant funds of two hundred and fifty to bring our costs down to two point two five. **CM Minner** wanted clarification on how many parking spots would be in the parking lot. **PWD Kelsey** said sixty nine spots. **CM Minner** questioned how many acres of this property. **Commissioner Christian** said maybe two acres. **CM Minner** stated that at the intersection of Pine and Canal on the Southside we have the lot from the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and the next lot over between the CAC and that building is all the CDC that would be the parking lot. We allocated two million from the ARP for the Pine Street Project. Depending on the bids, we are sitting now with a project of two point eight with two point two five million in funding, so we will see how bids come back. We are two and a quarter to half a million short depending on bids. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to know who owns the property. **CM Minner** replied that it is the CDC. **Commissioner Connell** stated that it would cost the city three hundred to five hundred thousand to put up a parking lot. **CM Minner** answered half a million dollars less the CDC/CDBG funds. **Commissioner Connell** wanted to clarify that we are going to spend half a million dollars for sixty-nine parking spaces. **CM Minner** responded yes. **Commissioner Connell** said that sounds like a tremendous amount of money for some additional parking. That is a lot of money for parking anywhere. **Commissioner Christian** commented that they thought it was a great thing because it was already kind of funded, so with additional funding from the county where the city wrote the grant and, we lobbied hard for the county to give us the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to help offset some of the costs. What this allows is, if you were to go down Pine Street now on a Saturday, the pool parking lot is full. Once the other businesses get online, we will have additional parking and we will not have people walking across the street on an already busy road. We thought it was a great addition to the widening of Pine Street to have seventy parking spaces where people can access it. **Commissioner Connell** asked if part of the widening was to include some street parking. **Commissioner Christian** replied there is already street parking. It would just be legal street parking. He mentioned that he should come out on a Saturday so he could experience the pool parking lot being full. If we have six operational businesses, we will have an additional thirty to forty cars easily. That would be without the city having anything major going on at the pool. **Commissioner Robuck** asked who would own the lot when it was done. Will the lot stay with the CDC? **Commissioner Christian** said yes, with the grant, it has to stay that way for at least five to ten years. It is public parking and it is for business on Pine Street. **Commissioner Robuck** said that would be his only hold back because we definitely need more parking, because he drives past the pool during the summer in the daytime when we have buses and all sorts of stuff. He was amazed by how many people there were. However, as long as the intent is for it to remain a public lot, he is good. **Dr. Erika Jasper** stated this is a great addition to Pine Street. We need those additional parking spaces.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	No
Commissioner Christian	Abstain
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Three yeas, one nay, one abstain, the Commission adopted the resolution.

3. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a subrecipient agreement between Lake County, the City of Leesburg (Agency), and the Community Redevelopment Agency for the Carver Heights / Montclair Area (Property Owner), for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Coronavirus funds for the repurposing of an existing building for a food pantry; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,165

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

Commissioner Christian made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Robuck seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Connell commented that he spoke with the city manager earlier today about this. He wanted to know where this was located. **Commissioner Christian** said it is located at McCormack and Bradford. When you pass the Century Link building, it will be the building that housed all the broken-down semi-trailer trucks. It is a little white building before you turn into Berry Park. **Commissioner Connell** questioned who owned it. **Commissioner Christian** replied it is the CRA. **Commissioner Connell** said two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars is a lot of money to refurbish an existing building for a food pantry. **Commissioner Robuck** mentioned that he had just renovated an old thrift store on Main Street and he wished it had only cost him two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars. Costs are insane right now to do anything. **Commissioner Connell** remarked that it seemed like a tremendous amount of money to renovate a building for a food pantry. He has nothing against food pantries, but two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars for a food pantry just to renovate an existing building is excessive. **Commissioner Christian** mentioned that he did not know if the plans would change and maybe Ms. Wilson, the Housing Director, could help, but when Ken Thomas initially talked about the food pantry, he also talked about having a large sidewalk for Saturday mornings where they could hold Farmers' Markets so people could come, put up tents so people could have a place to walk. He does not know if that was a cost, but hopefully it is enough to do it the right way. He would like this to look like a city-owned facility. It is a concern of his when they do these buildings that it looks like the City of Leesburg owns them and not John Christian, cutting a few corners to make them work. Two hundred and forty-five thousand at today's costs and once the permitting department gets involved, it is maybe two hundred and forty-five. **Commissioner Robuck** wanted to clarify that all the money was coming from the county. **Commissioner Christian** replied yes. **CM Minner** stated this project would be funded with CDBG monies. **Mayor Pederson** remarked this is one hundred percent funded thus far. **Commissioner Christian** answered that the CRA purchased the building. **Dr. Erika Jasper** asked if everyone had the opportunity to drive by because if they did, they would see that the building needed a lot of work. **Allyson Berry,** 900 McCormack Street, asked about the neighborhood or the area that is being talked about. Would that be considered a favorable area for a food bank with cars? **CM Minner** replied that it would be favorable zoning, and it would be a permitted use. **Commissioner Christian** remarked that he owns the house right across the street. He thanked the city staff, Ken Thomas, who wrote the grant, and Habitat for Humanity for donating the lot adjacent to the park from Bradford all the way to Berry Park. They own all of that now and Habitat for Humanity was a huge contributor thanks to that vacant lot going around that curve. He wanted to put it on the record that we do have partners whose sole vision is to help us out.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	No
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Four yeas, one nay, the Commission adopted the resolution.

4. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Lease Amendment,

between the City of Leesburg and Lake County, Florida, for the purpose of extending the term and revising the rental composition, for the Lake County Sheriff's Aviation Unit Hangar; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,166

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

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Christian inquired if this was just voted on a few months ago. **CM Minner** remarked that they may want to open the floor to the chairman of the airport board, but first he wanted to provide a little background on this item. This item came before us a few months ago when we were still at the venetian center. There were some concerns that we did not get enough money from the sheriff's office when renewing the lease. We took the comments to the airport board. At that time, the commission either tabled or rejected the lease. In any case, we went back to the sheriff's office and negotiated a new lease. We got some perspective and pretty much everything the commission asked for. There was a little tweak from the sheriff's office in the agreement. There is a spot in the agreement where they would be required to potentially rebuild the hangar in an act of god. The staff's position was that we needed to get this sewed up for time purposes, and bring it back to the commission. We felt that the sheriff's office did everything they wanted from the city staff perspective. There was not a material issue with not requiring the sheriff's office to rebuild in the act of god. The airport board has concerns that the county could make an insurance claim and pocket a couple hundred thousand dollars of value for the building. They could stick that money in their pocket and not rebuild the hangar facility at the airport. They could potentially then go somewhere else. From the staff position, that is an immaterial worry for the airport. Even if they went somewhere else, the only other alternative is Umatilla. If they left that area, it is valuable property and someone else would rebuild in that spot. At the end of the day, he thinks we have the flesh out of the sheriff's office. Also, from a political standpoint, we need to cut the sheriff's office a break. They are partners with us and we got what we wanted out of them. He has been at several functions with the sheriff's office, and the sheriff has quipped about us extracting a pound of flesh out of the sheriff's office. This does affect taxes at their level and we need to work together. We just sat through two hours of trying to be community friendly and he knows that was a whole other fund, but these are the things that we can do to show that we are friendly. If the chairman of the airport board would like to add to that, he can, but city staff recommends approval of the lease so we can get on down the road. **Alan Reisman**, Airport Board Chairman, stated there is not an issue with the lease, it is with protocol. This item did not come back to the airport board for review. They originally started this in January and it bypassed the board. **CM Minner** asked if he had issues with the lease. **Mr. Reisman** said he did not. He did have an issue with the insurance clause, because they have to have the city listed as an additional insured, so if the building gets destroyed in an act of god, the city gets the insurance money. Why does the sheriffs department not have to do the same? **Mayor Pederson** remarked that his understanding is, if it was destroyed and not rebuilt, we still have the lot and we will give it to someone else. **Mr. Reisman** said that is correct, but we would not receive the insurance money from the building. **Commissioner Connell** asked if it was standard at the airport for the leases to have the clause that says the city is listed as an additional insurer on the building. **Mr. Reisman** said his understanding is yes. **Commissioner Connell** asked if he knew why it did not come back to the advisory board. **Mr. Reisman** said he asked the airport board manager about this item and she felt everything had been met. However, it did not give anyone on the board time to review. He only caught it because he saw it on the agenda on Wednesday and they had an airport board meeting on Thursday. They have had discussions before on protocol and things were sent back to the airport board because it did not come before them. That is why he asked to have this pulled by Commissioner Connell. **Commissioner Christian** inquired if we own the sheriff's building or if they were leasing it? **CM Minner** replied they own it. They built it. It's one of those leases where they built it and they are paying us a land lease. **Commissioner Christian** then said additional insurance means that if he goes out there and slips and falls, the city is covered. It is not that the building gets knocked down, he gets a check for that. **CM Minner** answered yes. We did not follow protocol, we did not go back to the airport board. We were trying to get this sewn up. He does not think the city has a material problem with the structure of the lease and the recommendation if you approve the lease. **Commissioner Christian** said he is more on the partnership side and that if the sheriff is okay with the lease he is good with it.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	No
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	No
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Three yeas, two nays, the Commission adopted the resolution.

5. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida approving the conveyance of a vacant lot to Jodine Brown for development of a single-family home as part of the In-Fill Housing Program; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,167

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

Commissioner Christian made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Connell seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Robuck stated that Homes in Partnership is a customer of his, so he needs to abstain.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Abstain
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

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

6. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida,

appointing one Library Advisory Board member to an unexpired term, said term ending 30 September 2023; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,157

7. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida accepting a Right-of-Way Deed to the City of Leesburg from Village Community Development District No. 14, for the purpose of dedicating all roadways located within Villages of West Lake Unit No. 47, and Unit No. 48 as described therein; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,158

8. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida amending Civic Funding to the Leesburg Cemeteries Inc. in the proposed FY 23 budget and to provide a $25,000 payment from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to replace aging equipment; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,159

9. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, amending Resolution No. 11,151 correcting a utility service fee that was approved at the August 22, 2022 City Commission meeting; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,160

10. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, accepting a Temporary Access and Utility Easement to the City of Leesburg from Lake County, for the purpose of granting the City a Temporary Access and Utility Easement over the property described therein; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,161

11. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Vacant Land Contract and Pre-Closing Occupancy Addendum to Vacant Land Contract with Junias Desamour and Marie Perpetue Desamour for the purchase of vacant land located on Center Street to accommodate stormwater treatment improvements; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,168

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

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

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Christian stated he appreciates that we are buying this, but are we going to do anything on Center Street once we purchase this land? Right now, it is wooded and it is used for a passage for homelessness. Once we purchase this property, is there anything we can do facing Center Street as it comes into Carver Heights? Something decorative like a fence or a sign, anything that could make it look beautiful? **PWD Kelsey** replied the purpose of this purchase is for a stormwater retention pond to help control the flooding that takes place on Center Street. They received a grant from the Lake County Water Authority, which is eighty percent covered by them. They can incorporate that into the project and get some costs for that and run it up for approval. **Commissioner Burry** asked how big the retention area is. **PWD Kelsey** answered it will be the entire property because it goes back into the wetlands. It is just under an acre and a half. The retention pond will be properly sized and engineered based on the runoff that is created. They do not have that yet, but he would estimate an eighth of an acre. **Commissioner Robuck** wanted to know if it had standing water in it at all times. **PWD Kelsey** replied that the runoff has no where to go. They will put some storm drains in along with some catchbasins that will provide some direct flow. They will do some pretreatment to the wetland area. **Commissioner Robuck** said that will help with some of the transit issues. He remembers the one behind Circle K on US-27 and Dixie Avenue that used to be a pond.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

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

12. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with Leesburg Aquatics Club, Inc for usage of the Leesburg's H.O. Dabney Aquatic Center; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,162

13. Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Leesburg, Florida authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Fifth Amendment to the Amended and Restated Ground Lease between the City of Leesburg and Ski Beach Bar & Grill, LLC; and providing an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,163

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND NON-ROUTINE ITEMS: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INFORMATION SIGN-UP SHEET (YELLOW) AVAILABLE

A. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES

1. **An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida annexing certain real property consisting of approximately 99.72 +/- acres, and being generally located east of U.S. Highway 27 and north of Windmill Road, lying in Section 36, Township 20 South, Range 24 East, and Section 30, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; providing that said property so annexed shall be liable for its proportionate share of the existing and future indebtedness of said city; providing that such annexed property shall be subject to all laws and ordinances of said city as if all such territory had been a part of the City of Leesburg at the time of passage and approval of said laws and ordinances; providing that such annexed territory shall be placed in City Commission District 3; and providing an effective date. (Mar-Jo Pines)**

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 22-44

CA Watson asked anyone present giving testimony on items 6.A.2 and 6.A.3 to stand. He swore them in.

Commissioner Robuck introduced ordinances 6.A.1, 6.A.2 and 6.A.3 to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinances by title only.

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Connell seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

PZD Miller stated they are looking at ninety-nine point seventy-two plus or minus acres. This property is located on the east side of US 27 just north of Windmill Road. They are calling it the MarJo Pines project. He is not sure what the actual name will eventually be. They are looking at a large scale comprehensive plan, estate and the zoning is for PUD. These will be detached single family residential units. The density would be two point seven units per acre. There will be a mix of lot sizes; fifty, sixty, and seventy feet wide, which will include six thousand, seventy-two hundred and eighty-four hundred square foot lots. The minimum house size will be eighteen hundred under the roof. Right now, they are working with all the developers in that area on access points along US 27. The development is required to have a boulevard style entrance. They are required to have twenty-five foot landscape buffers around the entire property with trees in every yard and dark-sky lighting. They will have one point two-five acres of recreational area. The property is currently undeveloped. He noted that the property is adjacent to the Whispering Hills development and is surrounded by potential development of the same density. City staff have no issues with this. Mike Rankin of LPG out of Mount Dora is here if there are any further questions. **Mike Rankin**, LPG, stated he appreciated what the commission did tonight with the public hearing earlier. That was a tough job. They are asking the commission to accept the recommendation of city staff and to move their project forward.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

2. An Ordinance amending the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Leesburg, changing the Future Land Use Map Designation of certain property containing 99.72 +/- acres from Lake County Rural and Lake County Rural Transition to City of Leesburg Estate Residential, for a property generally located east of U.S. Highway 27 and north of Windmill Road, lying in Section 36, Township 20 South, Range 24 East, and Section 30, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Mar-Jo Pines)

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 22-45

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

3. An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, changing the zoning on approximately 99.72 +/- acres from Lake County A (Agriculture) to City of Leesburg PUD (Planned Unit Development) to allow a single-family residential development for a property generally located east of U.S. Highway 27 and north of Windmill Road, lying in Section 36, Township 20 South, Range 24 East, and Section 30, Township 20 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (Mar-Jo Pines)

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 22-46

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience. There were none.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

4. An Ordinance of the City of Leesburg, Florida, modifying the zoning on approximately 4.64 +/- acres, for a property generally located south of County Road 44, west of Whitney Road, and east of Executive Boulevard, lying in Section 19, Township 19 South, Range 24 East, Lake County, Florida; and providing an effective date. (T T Storage)

ADOPTED ORDINANCE 22-47

Commissioner Robuck introduced the ordinance to be read by title only. CC Purvis read the ordinance by title only.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission.

CA Watson reminded staff that they would remain under oath. He asked for anyone wishing to provide testimony to stand and he swore them in.

PZD Miller stated that this property was known as T T Storage. It would be located on the south side of CR 44 just east of the Sumter County line. It is four point six acres. The previous owner had the same PUD on it for several years. He believes it goes back to an ordinance during the 2016 recession and then covid pushed him out. They came back with the same ordinance as in 2016 and the permitted uses are to be office, retail and mini-warehouse. However, this time they made a few changes. They prohibit thrift stores, tattoos, tobacco, check cashing, pawn shops and adult uses specifically. They added in the dark sky standards that they are putting in all PUDs. There are some buffers around the property and design requirements for the building facade. Permitted uses are; office, retail, mini-storage, things like that. He believes Mr.Springstead is here if there are any questions.

Michael Springstead, representing the owner, thanked the commission for considering this item. They believe their project would benefit the city. It will be very well done. They have had a few projects like this down south, but if there are any questions he would be glad to answer. **Commissioner Burry** wanted to clarify if this was a storage facility. **Mr. Springstead** said yes. **Commissioner Burry** asked if it was just a garage or a combination. **Mr. Springstead** answered that it is a larger concrete block storage facility. They presented this to the planning department. He apologized for not having renderings with him. They are confident they will approve of their appearance. It is very esthetically done. It would be a more upscale type of storage facility and the units are quite large. They are fifty by twenty-four. **Mayor Pederson** asked if they were targeting contractors versus individuals. **Mr. Sprinstead** remarked they are targeting individual car collectors. The units are big enough to store cars. They are built with 3R firewalls between each unit. They are concrete blocks with twenty-foot eaves.

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Burry	Yes
Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

Five yeas, no nays, the Commission adopted the ordinance.

B. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES

1. None

C. NON-ROUTINE ITEMS

1. Public Hearing for Fire Assessment Program

a. 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, 2022; approving the rate of assessment; approving the assessment roll; and providing for an effective date.

ADOPTED RESOLUTION 11,169

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

Commissioner Robuck made a motion to adopt the resolution and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion.

Mayor Pederson requested comments from the Commission and the audience.

Commissioner Connell asked if the rate was staying the same as it is now. **CM Minner** stated we would generate a couple of extra dollars for new growth, but the rate stays the same. It is eighty-seven dollars per residential unit. For the non-residential unit, it is five cents per square foot for commercial, two cents per square foot for industrial warehouses, fifteen cents per square foot for industrial and then four cents per square foot for churches. Also, remember there are the same exemptions. The exemptions are for low-income persons. The exemptions for sanctuaries and everything else is the same.

The roll call vote was:

Commissioner Robuck	Yes
Commissioner Connell	Yes
Commissioner Christian	Yes
Commissioner Burry	Yes
Mayor Pederson	Yes

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

7. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:
The following reports are provided to the Commission in accordance with the Charter/Ordinances. No action required.

A. Financial Reports as of June 2022

There were no comments.

B. Financial Reports as of July 2022

There were no comments.

8. CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS:

A. Request Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss legal strategies Associated with current litigation (Sunnyside, LLC v. City of Leesburg)

CA Watson commented on the pending Sunnyside Lake Land Holdings LLC. case that was filed against the city. At the last meeting, he made a request for a closed attorney client session to be held with Brionez & Brionez. Unfortunately, because of scheduling issues, the attorneys from Brionez & Brionez were unable to do it. He is requesting that the closed attorney client session be moved from tonight until the September 26th meeting. The closed session will occur following the standard agenda items. If that works, he will get everything rolling. They would request a court reporter be present for that meeting and advertise the closed session. That advertisement would include the names of the parties present for that meeting, so that will be in the open.

9. CITY MANAGER ITEMS:

CM Minner had no further matters to discuss.

10. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Connell had no comment.

Commissioner Robuck commented on the budget billing that does not save any money. It will cost the city money, but it is something that people value. He did ask about it when he first started on the commission and at the time it was cost prohibited because our software did not allow it. He doubts it now, but maybe we could get a number for that and find out if our software even allows for it. If the software does not allow for it, find out how much it would cost to be able to offer that service. He knows Ocala offers that. **CM Minner** asked what he was referring to. **Commissioner Robuck** said it was where they smooth out customer's bills over the year, where if they were paying more in the winter and less in the summer it would be averaged out. **CM Minner** remarked that he was going to mention that during his comments but forgot. However, that is something we need to look into. **Commissioner Robuck** said to be clear, this will cost us money, it will not save us money. However, he does think it will be worth it. **Mayor Pederson** asked for clarification even though it would not have helped today. Would it have accomplished much today? He was wondering about that for all the people who came out tonight. **Commissioner Robuck** said no, but it would be good customer service.

Commissioner Burry had no further comment.

Commissioner Christian thanked the commission for the two items that were approved tonight. Even though it came from the CDBG, it is great that the money is coming back to Leesburg and we are able to do these projects. We heard from residents tonight who talked about Leesburg's poverty and those less fortunate. This is an opportunity to provide food in a desert place where we can do great things for the Carver Heights community and the rest of Leesburg. He hopes that we expand it, not just the food bank, but maybe we can provide people with fresh produce. Maybe people can sell it or give it away on Saturday mornings. It can provide our residents with healthier foods so they can start eating healthier in our city. With the Pine Street parking lot, that will be a benefit to the entire City of Leesburg. He thanked the entire commission for two big votes. The money came from the county and he has been lobbying them from so many angles to get more money into Leesburg. The city manager has been helping too to try to pull more dollars down from Lake County to hit Leesburg.

Mayor Pederson had no comment.

11. 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.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.