

## CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Regular City Commission Meeting  
Monday, September 8, 2025

The City Commission meet in formal session Monday, September 8, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, and the following were present:

**1. Roll Call:** Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor/City Commissioner  
Barbara Blonder, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner  
Cynthia Garris, City Commissioner  
Jim Springfield, City Commissioner  
Jon DePreter, City Commissioner

Also Present: David Birchim, City Manager  
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney  
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk  
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager  
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager  
Corey Saykrd,  
Melissa Wissel, Director, Communications  
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief  
Jessica Joyce, Visitor Services Supervisor  
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline requested a moment of silence and Vice-Mayor Barbara Blonder led the pledge of allegiance.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

#### **2.A. Modification and Approval of Regular Agenda**

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, asked for a proclamation to be added to celebrate 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Davis Shores.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said it could be added to the consent agenda as item CA 10.

### **MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to APPROVE the Regular Agenda with the**

**modifications. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Jon DePreter and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

### **3. Special Presentations, Recognitions and Proclamations**

**3.A. Proclamation 2025-26:** Proclaims September 2025 as National Recovery Month. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

**3.B. Proclamation 2025-27:** Proclaims September 16, 2025, the 460th anniversary of the First Muster of Florida's Militia. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

**3.C. Proclamation 2025-28:** Proclaims September 2025 as Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

**3.D. Proclamation 2025-30:** Proclaims September 17th through September 23rd

as Constitution Week. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

#### **4. General Public Comments (3 minutes per individual)**

The Commission heard from the following members of the public:

- Jesse Sabo
- Heather Wilson
- Nancy Murphy
- Katherine Zoda
- Patricia Ramos
- Lenna Russell
- Tom Reynolds
- Jennifer Cushion
- Aaron Jockers

#### **5. Consent Agenda**

David Birchim, City Manager, read the Consent Agenda.

CA.1. Preview of upcoming Commission meetings.

CA.2. THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCES ARE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR SECOND READING: NONE.

CA.3. Reminder of Upcoming Meetings:  
•September 8, 2025, 5:00PM–Regular City Commission Meeting  
•September 11, 2025, 5:00PM–Community Redevelopment Special Budget Meeting  
•September 11, 2025, 5:05PM–City Commission Special Budget Meeting  
•September 22, 2025, 5:00PM–Regular City Commission Meeting  
•September 25, 2025, 5:05PM–City Commission Special Budget Meeting

CA.4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR COMMISSION MEETINGS: NONE.

CA.5. RELEASES OF LIEN FOR UNIT CONNECTION FEE MORTGAGE(S): NONE.

CA.6. PROPOSED PROCLAMATIONS, CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION/RECOGNITION. (COMMISSION APPROVAL REQUIRED). (TO BE READ AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING). NONE.

CA.7. NOTIFICATION OF PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION ISSUED: NONE.

CA.8. Ratification of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of St. Augustine and the Professional Firefighters of St. Augustine. (D. Hayes, Human Resources Director)

CA.9. Authorization for the City Manager to execute the Combined Subdivision Participation Form regarding the Opioid Litigation settlement between the State of Florida and the Secondary Manufacturers (I. Lopez, City Attorney)

CA. 10. Proclamation to Celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Davis Shores

End Consent Agenda

**5.A. Additions, deletions or modifications to Consent Agenda**

(None)

**5.B. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**MOTION**

**Commissioner Jim Springfield MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner DePreter and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

**6. Appeals**

(None)

**7. General Public Presentations, Items of Great Public Importance, and Other Items Requiring Public Hearings**



**7.A. General Public Presentations**

(None)

**7.B. Items of Great Public Importance**

(None)

**7.C. Other Items Requiring Public Hearing**

(None)

**8. Ordinances and Resolutions – Public Hearing Required.**

**8.A. Ordinances – Second Reading**

(None)

**8.B. Ordinances – First Reading (only if required by law)**

(None)

**8.C. Resolutions – Public Hearing (only if required by law)**

(None)

**9. Ordinances and Resolutions - No Public Hearing Required**

**9.A. Ordinances – First Reading**

(None)

**9.B. Resolutions**

**9.B.1. Resolution 2025-31: Approval of updated FDOT Reimbursement Agreement for the Removal, Preservation, and Replacement of the Historic Medici Lions. (J. Webber, Grants Administration Coordinator)**

Jacob Webber, Grants Administration Coordinator, reviewed Resolution 2025-31.

Commissioner Blonder asked what would happen if the cost were to increase again.

Mr. Webber replied that extensive research had been done prior to this agreement and if there were changes it should be able to be handled internally; however, this was a requirement from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Mayor Sikes-Kline pointed out that the Lions were symbols in our City and were irreplaceable. She said they were copies of the Medici Lions in Rome and the conservators were Joe Segal and Enzo Torcoletti. She said they had worked on the lions in the past and she supported them working on them now, as they knew how to care for them.

**MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Resolution 2025-31. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield.**

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES: Sikes-Kline, Springfield, DePreter, Garris, Blonder**

**NAYES: NONE**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**9.B.2. Resolution 2025-29: Naming of the Environmental Impact Award (M. Wissel, Communications Director)**

Melissa Wissel, Communications Director, reviewed Resolution 2025-29.

Commissioner Blonder said the Red Cedar was a symbol of the City and recognizable. She said these trees were beautiful and wore their scars on their trunks proudly. She said these trees provided a habitat for the rare species of Hairstreak butterflies, specific to our area, who were entirely dependent on the Red Cedar. She said this would honor people who worked hard, faced challenges, and persisted through those challenges to protect the environment.

Commissioner Cythina Garris was in support of the award name.

Commissioner DePreter agreed that Red Cedar trees were important to the City because when replacing one, it was a requirement to plant two elsewhere in its place.

Commissioner Springfield thought it was a beautiful concept to name it after the Red Cedar because of its strength.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed with her fellow Commissioners and said it was a wonderful name. She thanked Commissioner Blonder and stated she looked forward to the award presentation.

**Commissioner Blonder MOVED to pass Resolution 2025-29. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline**

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES: Blonder, Sikes-Kline, DePreter, Garris, Springfield**

**NAYES: NONE**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**10. Staff Reports and Presentations**

**10.A. Proposed changes to the St. Augustine Rider (STAR) route for Nights of Lights. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager)**

Reuben Franklin, Assistance City Manager, provided a brief presentation on the proposed changes to the St. Augustine Rider (STAR) route for Nights of Lights (NOL). He said during NOL, they wanted to use it in the beach area from November 16, 2025, until January 11, 2025. He said it would circulate every thirty minutes with a total of sixteen stops. He said this would be funded through the Florida Department of Transportation Grant

Commissioner Garris questioned if any buses would depart from the parking garage to the downtown area.

Mr. Franklin replied there would be satellite parking at the north end of town coming from the County building through San

Marco Avenue and people would be taken to the Visitors Center Parking Garage; however, there would not be any transportation from the parking garage to the downtown area. He said the buses running for the STAR circulator would be used on Anastasia Island. He said in previous years, the STAR did not run due to the long wait times in traffic downtown.

Commissioner Springfield pointed out the stops on the island were mostly at hotels. He thought most hotels had their own shuttles and asked if they spoke to the hotels to try and coordinate with their shuttles.

Mr. Franklin replied that most of those hotels used the Beach Shuttle, which was operated by Historic Tours of America (HTA) DBA Old town Trolley (OTT), who also had the contract for the STAR circulator. He said this was the primary route used by OTT during the daytime and they thought this would be a good way to shuttle people into the evening time. He said they would reach out to the hotels and residents to make sure everyone was aware of the services.

Commissioner Springfield said this service seemed to be mainly for tourists. He asked if residents would be able to utilize the service and park at the hotels.

Mr. Franklin said some of the stops were not located at hotels but were along Beach Boulevard, and the hope was to advertise St. Augustine Beach City Hall parking for residents and bicycle parking was available at this site. He said this would be a learning experience; however, felt this could be the best use of the circulator.

Commissioner Springfield agreed. He said the only other concern he had was the capacity of the buses as there were many stops and thought the bus could be full within a stop or two. He suggested using school buses instead as they were more cost effective and could hold a larger capacity, which could be another option since the School District did rent them out.



Commissioner DePreter said he was happy that this was coming to fruition, and it was being used in a larger metro area instead of just in the downtown area. He felt having the different municipalities working together was very beneficial to the community and was positive. He said as a resident he was happy that the Red Cox Intersection had been removed as it was a dangerous area. He said there was a stop at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, which had ample parking for those residents who wanted to use the shuttle. He said he thought this was very positive.

Commissioner Blonder supported the idea of using school buses as suggested by Commissioner Springfield and thought it should be looked into due to the volume of ridership, and it could help reduce traffic coming from the Island into the City.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said the map identified the route stopping at the Candlelight Restaurant; however, the other map showed it going to Gerado Street.

Mr. Franklin replied that the map was made prior to receiving all the feedback. He said what had been suggested was to move the stop back to Gerado Street, which was what they had done.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said she appreciated him listening to the feedback because she had heard the same. She felt Gerado Street made more sense and she was not supportive of the intersection in front of the restaurant as it was a busy area. She was in support of the plan, and she appreciated the flexibility, and was happy that the FDOT had approved the change.

Mr. Franklin advised that this program would be paid for by a grant from FDOT and if approved by the Commission, he would present this to the City of St. Augustine Beach City Council in October to provide a better understanding of the shuttle.

Mayor Sikes-Kline advised that public comments were not required for staff report.

Commissioner Blonder explained that public comments on staff reports were to take place during public comment at the beginning of the meeting. She said this was not typical and only allowed normally for agenda items that required a public hearing.

The City Commission gave consensus to allow public comment on the item.

The Commission heard from the following member of the public:

- Edward Westfield

Commissioner Blonder said she understood the point made by Mr. Westfield and was sympathetic. She asked Mr. Franklin to review the changes in increased traffic on Arricola Avenue and return to the Commission on whether there were options for other proposed routes.

Mr. Franklin said they were making every effort to stay on Anastasia Boulevard. He said, with the amount of congestion, they would utilize the merge lane as they moved close to the Lions Bridge. He said he would speak to the shuttle operator about making a U-turn in that area; however, he felt this was the most effective approach in trying to stay on target with the thirty-minute increments in between stops. He understood entering a residential area was not ideal, but they would do their best to stay on Anastasia Boulevard.

Commissioner Blonder pointed out these vehicles had a huge turning radius, and it was not easy for them to make U-turns.

Mr. Franklin agreed it may be difficult, but they would try to minimize traffic as much as possible

Commissioner DePreter suggested if Anastasia Boulevard was not congested,

that it could be used as the primary route and have an alternative route for when it was congested.

Commissioner Garris said she did not believe a U-turn would be able to be done near the bridge.

Commissioner Springfield felt that Flagler Avenue was a better alternative. He agreed that there would not be reasonable time or space near the bridge to make a U-turn and agreed that having an alternative route for when the congestion was bad.

Mr. Franklin said if traffic were congested, they would use Arricola Avenue to Gerado Street to get back to Anastasia Boulevard as quickly as possible.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked for this to be brought back with an updated report.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner DePreter MOVED that if the U-Turn on Anastasia Boulevard was deemed safe, no report to the Commission was needed; however, if other alternatives were needed an updated report was requested. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

#### **10.B. Amendment to the Feasibility Cost Share Agreement for the Back Bay Feasibility Study with Army Corp of Engineers. (J. Beach, Chief Resilience Officer/Utilities and Public Works Deputy Director)**

Jessica Beach Chief Resilience Officer/Utilities and Public Works Deputy Director reviewed Amendment to the Feasibility Cost Share Agreement for the Back Bay Feasibility Study with Army Corp of Engineers.

Jason Harrah, Project Manager, provided an update about the funding for the

completion of the study of the Back Bay. He reviewed the study authority, study area, and the objectives, which should be achieved within the next fifty years. He noted the schedule and total cost of the project, which was \$7.3 million. He identified different options the Army Corp of Engineers were considering moving forward with, which were floodwalls, horizontal earthen levee, natural and nature-based features. He said they were continuing with public outreach by having a website, holding monthly webinars, press releases, public meetings, and all documents were able to be found on their website.

Commissioner Springfield thanked him for the website and for providing the vast amount of information.

Commissioner DePreter thanked him for the presentation. He said he was familiar with many of the techniques identified but thought that having more of the timing and what to expect and when, would be helpful.

Commissioner Blonder said she was in support of the project and liked how the horizontal earthen levee and the natural and nature-based solutions worked well with the grey infrastructure. She said she was in favor of moving forward with this.

Mayor Sikes-Kline thanked them for working diligently to obtain a grant for the project as it would save the City close to two-million dollars. She asked what American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were being held.

Ms. Beach said the \$1.5 million dollars had been paid to the Army Corp of Engineers, which was ARPA funds; however, beyond that, the City was budgeting yearly a set amount so when the funds were due, it would be available.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Blonder Moved to APPROVE the Amendment to the**



**Feasibility Cost Share Agreement for the Back Bay Feasibility Study with Army Corp of Engineers. The motion was **SECONDED** by Commission DePreter.**

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES: Blonder, DePreter, Garris, Springfield, Sikes-Kline**

**NAYES: NONE**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**10.C. Visitor Information Center, Certified Autism Center Recertification. (J. Joyce, Visitor Services Supervisor)**

Jessica Joyce, Visitor Services Supervisor, reviewed the Visitor Information Center (VIC), successfully completed the recertification to be a Certified Autism Center. She said at least 80% of their guest-facing staff were successful in the training. She said this would be very beneficial to the VIC for the following reasons:

- Increase visitor and guest attendance
- Increase public trust and satisfaction
- Improve employee confidence and morale
- Increase in media attention and social media engagement

Ms. Joyce said this would help make St. Augustine be a more inclusive place for everyone and they were happy to play a small role in helping to welcome people to the City.

Commissioner Garris thanked them for being certified as she had a grandson that was autistic, and it was nice to visit other places and be treated the same as everyone else. She said the VIC had a lot of visitors and it was great to know that the staff was certified.

Commissioner DePreter thanked Ms. Joyce and asked if the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument had been certified too.

Ms. Joyce replied they were certified at the same time.

Commissioner DePreter said he felt that was a move in the right direction as both were places many liked to visit.

Commissioner Blonder commended Ms. Joyce and emphasized how important the certification.

Commissioner Springfield asked if the tour train operators were included in the training.

Ms. Joyce replied that the salespeople who worked in the VIC for Old Town Trolley were certified.

Commissioner Springfield asked if Ms. Joyce had received any comments from her staff about being better able to handle interactions.

Ms. Joyce replied that many staff expressed that they personally had loved ones that were autistic and found this to be even more special and this added to their own lives.

Commissioner Springfield said the VIC was always very busy and was serving the purpose it was intended for.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said she had family members that had autism and thought it was amazing with what could be done in the right environment. She thanked Ms. Joyce for saying this was to help them feel 'welcomed and understood' as well as recommending places that would be well suited.

**11. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY**

(None)

**12. ITEMS BY CITY CLERK**

**12.A. Request for one (1) appointment-Planning and Zoning Board (PZB). (D. Galambos, City Clerk)**

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, requested one appointment to the Planning and Zoning Board. She said one application was received from current board member, Dr. Ashleigh Barnes, who was eligible for reappointment.

Commissioner DePreter stated he had worked with Dr. Barnes before and felt she was very capable. He said it was a steep learning curve and if someone was volunteering for an additional three years it was a benefit.

Commissioner Springfield said this was a really important and very tough assignment and she was volunteering for the position. He stated that the Board performed effectively as evidenced by the limited number of appeals, which indicated the process was working as intended.

Commissioner Garris felt that keeping experienced board members was best.

#### **MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to REAPPOINT Ashleigh Barnes to the Planning and Zoning Board. The motion was SECONED by Commissioner Springfield and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

#### **12.B. Open Positions on Boards and Committees. (D. Galambos, City Clerk)**

For Information Purposes Only

#### **13. ITEMS BY CITY MANAGER**

David Birchim, City Manager, advised there would be severe weather that would continue throughout the week with offshore winds and King Tides. He said those living in low lying areas should expect localized flooding throughout the week and reminded everyone to plan accordingly.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked that reminders be put out about driving slow through water and being courteous to pedestrians on

sidewalks when there was extra water in the streets.

Commissioner Garris asked if City Hall would be closed if the tides were too high.

Mr. Birchim replied that he did not expect to close City Hall.

#### **14. Items by Mayor and Commissioners**

Commissioner Garris thanked the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for approving the requested \$850,000 for Nights of Lights (NOL). She felt this season would be better based on the City's new plan and with the increased amount of funds. She thanked Mr. Franklin for the presentation and having a plan for the Island to help limit the number of vehicles entering the City. She was encouraged that all five Commissioners attended the BOCC meeting and were united

Commissioner DePreter said he felt a transit lane on San Macro Avenue for shuttles was important but a complicated situation. He said during the last budget meeting, he thought the Watershed Management Plan had been completed with the Community Rating System (CRS) had increased; however, after listening to the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Direction indicated otherwise. He requested further explanation.

Mr. Birchim advised that there was not a Watershed Master Plan; however, there were a lot of the components for the plan done through other resiliency initiatives.

Commissioner DePreter said his concern was if funding was needed to complete the plan and if so, asked for it to be considered as he did not want it to be delayed. He noted that he visited the law enforcement center known as the Real Time Intelligent Center (RTIC) with Chief Micheaux and Mr. Birchim and was very impressed with



the capabilities in the area as it was very reassuring.

Commissioner Springfield questioned if there was a need for notification regarding the STAR circulator route change.

Ms. Lopez replied that there were specific requirements for Jacksonville Transit Authority or Florida Department of Transportation; however, if that was necessary, they would take care of it.

Commissioner Springfield said he was encouraged by the citizens who participated as it was very important to hear their concerns. He reminded the Commissioners about the Christmas Parade and how he wanted them to participate. He said this would not be paid for by the City and it would be an outside organization event. He felt it was very important that people recognize who they were; although, if there was no consensus, he would drop the issue.

Mayor Sikes-Kline was in support of the idea.

Commissioner Blonder was fine with it but said that was when she traveled since she was off work.

Commissioner DePreter asked what the commitment would be.

Commissioner Springfield said there would not be a huge commitment other than showing up the day of the parade at 8:00 a.m.

Commissioner Garris said she was not opposed to the idea

Commissioner Blonder was concerned about E-bikes but was reminded that there was an Ordinance that prohibited them from sidewalks. She said in the past several weeks, there had been numerous times where E-bikes were on the sidewalks and going in the wrong direction. She said she did not have a solution for enforcement

but felt something needed to be done to address the issue. She said this was a safety issue and felt with the increase in E-bikes, more awareness needed to be brought to this. She said she was not involved in this but was pleased to find out that Flagler College was now recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus. She said as mentioned by Commissioner DePreter, the San Marco Avenue transit lane was important and asked for support from the Commission to direct staff to develop a plan for a transit lane. She said she would be willing to work with anyone who needed help with the plan.

## MOTION

**Commissioner Blonder MOVED to direct staff to develop a plan for the San Marco Transit Lane. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

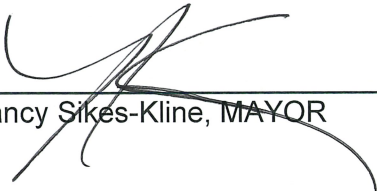
Mayor Sikes-Kline thanked Commissioner Blonder for her leadership.

Commissioner Blonder said when the City participated in the NOL discussion with the County, she felt they were being chastised for shortening the event; however, NOL was starting a week earlier in November. She said it had been stated they took away from the three-day Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. holiday by ending NOL earlier. She said this was a three-day weekend, which was supposed to celebrate MLK Jr., his life, his achievements, the challenges he went through, and overall, felt it was a call to service. She said this was to celebrate him as part of our community. She mentioned that she and Commissioner Garris attended the Black Heritage Trail, and she felt the celebration should be held locally and highlight that during the MLK Jr. weekend and throughout the year and similar to Charleston, South Carolina. She expressed her desire to keep that weekend free from NOL even though it could be controversial.

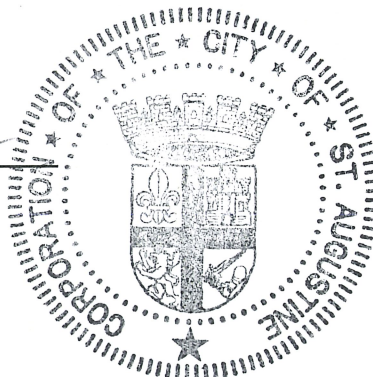
Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed and said there were plenty of activities the City could build upon during MLK Jr. weekend. She thanked the BOCC for the support for the \$850,000 in bed tax. She said the City was very affected by the bed tax, which was not related at all to the property tax. She said the Tourist Development Council (TDC) supported this and had heard the presentation from City Manager, David Birchim. She said the use of the money would be used to improve workforce parking, increased effective shutting, increased mobility for both pedestrians and automobiles in the City, and improve the visitor experience by making it safer, comfortable, better for the businesses, but most of all, making the City more livable for the residents. She said her motivation for shortening NOL was to help the residents as they had to completely change their lives during that time. She thanked the staff, as the past week had been very intense but was glad it had been successful.

## 15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 P.M.<sup>1</sup>

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann