

LONGWOOD CITY COMMISSION
Longwood City Commission Chambers
175 West Warren Avenue
Longwood, Florida

MINUTES
April 20, 2026
6:00 PM

Present:

Mayor Brian D. Sackett

Deputy Mayor Abby Shoemaker

Commissioner Tony Boni

Commissioner Matthew McMillan

Commissioner Matt Morgan

Dan Langley, City Attorney

William Watts, City Manager

Liane Cartagena, City Clerk

David Dowda, Police Chief

Chris Kintner, Community Development Director

Magdala Ridore, Human Resources Director

Molly DeKoeper, HR Program Manager

Trisha Fuston, Payroll/HR Coordinator

Jacqueline Aubrey, Community & Media Relations Manager

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Mayor Sackett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **OPENING INVOCATION.** Harry Schenkel, Pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, gave the invocation.
3. **THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Commissioner Boni led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS.** Ms. Cartagena read the following announcements.
 - A. The City of Longwood will host a “Walk for Autism Awareness & Inclusion” on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at Reiter Park.
 - B. The City of Longwood will host the “Longwood Luau,” a Hawaiian-themed party, on Saturday, May 2, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Reiter Park.
5. **PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS**
 - A. **District #2 Nomination of the Business Person of the Month Award for May 2026.**

Commissioner Boni nominated Harvey Coleman General Manager of Huey Magoos, as the Business Person of the Month for May 2026. Nomination carried by a unanimous voice vote.
6. **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**
7. **PUBLIC INPUT**
 - A. **Public Participation.** None.

B. Presentation by Gwen Mahabir, Hometown Health Program Manager, and Lindsey Fisher, Health Marketing Manager, with Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) to recognize the City of Longwood as a 2025 Hometown Health Award Recipient.

Gwen Mahabir, Hometown Health Program Manager, and Lindsey Fisher, Health Marketing Manager, with Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) presented the City with a \$12,500 check for achieving less than 80 percent on their medical loss ratio and a participation of 60 percent of total employees in an onsite screening event. Photographs were taken.

8. MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

District #3. Commissioner McMillan read a letter from Milwee Middle School Technology Student Association (TSA) thanking the City for its support and noting the chapter earned first place in the Florida State competition with multiple category placements. He noted that Milwee TSA participated recently in a Longwood Rotary Club fundraiser and attended the last National Night Out indicating the group is very active in serving the community.

Commissioner McMillan reported on a contractor-related water main strike on Pinyon Court associated with fiber installation resulting in loss of water as well as power for himself and area residents. He commended City staff for late-night restoration, and requested that the City Attorney examine legal remedies beyond permit enforcement, including easement encroachment and heightened standards of care given repeated incidents and mapping limitations. He noted the contractor had only started work in his neighborhood hitting a water main the first time and expressed concern over the probability of them hitting another one impacting multiple houses and hours of lost water.

District #4. Commissioner Morgan addressed the water main, commenting he received 19 different calls and texts from residents in that area. He also reported a gas line strike on Grange Circle in the Barrington neighborhood near Publix that required a substantial Fire Department response. He relayed that a third-party company allegedly marked a gas main approximately two feet off from its actual location and discussed state preemption limiting local control over telecom work. He urged greater contractor care given older infrastructure in the City.

Commissioner Morgan recognized Ms. Ridore and staff for their Hometown Health Recipient Award, spoke to Lyman High School's Young Men of Excellence as well as Lyman's Young Women of Excellence clubs, attended a ribbon cutting for the Holy City Zoo BBQ, and commended Ms. Aubrey for coordinating the employee appreciation event at Reiter Park. He noted there would be free giveaways to include noise-cancelling headphones, T-shirts, backpacks, and door alarms and in addition, providers of autistic services for Q&A at the Walk for Autism event on Saturday, April 25, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Reiter Park.

District #5. Mayor Sackett commended the Orlando Sanford International Airport for short security lines and easy parking after his flight to New York, recognized Holy City Zoo BBQ's ribbon cutting, praised the employee appreciation event, and reported that ALDI's had filed permits with construction anticipated to begin by the end of August 2026. He met with residents regarding utility locating challenges in older subdivisions, thanked the City Clerk for supporting a Cub Scout visit, and noted the location of the Mayors & Managers meeting at the Longwood Community Building. He requested preparation of an

ordinance to establish a two-year, mayoral term for discussion at the next meeting and believed two years would provide better consistency than the current one year.

District #1. Deputy Mayor Shoemaker who was unable to attend the Ribbon Cutting at Holy City Zoo, thanked Ms. Cartagena and Mr. Watts for dropping off a plate of food, described a neighborhood gas line strike during fence installation as an example of contractor caution issues with aging infrastructure, and discussed budget considerations supporting competitive wages with limited capacity for cuts.

District #2. Commissioner Boni concurred that budget cuts were limited and referenced potential revenue strategies. He described a recent water main strike in his neighborhood and suggested stronger cost recovery for damages. He praised the pre-budget workshop format and the employee appreciation event, and noted a successful Longwood Rotary Club fundraiser.

Additional discussion addressed repeated underground utility strikes, legal/financial remedies, and locate accuracy. Staff indicated approximately 17–18 major incidents over three years with about 12 involving improper boring depth. Staff identified “Breakpoint” as a WOW subcontractor for locates and stated WOW had transitioned to a different locator. Standard 811 locates were noted as typically valid for 30 days. Commissioners and staff discussed paint markings’ temporary nature and the need for improved detection and accountability.

9. COMMISSION AND STAFF ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

A. ADDITIONAL ITEMS RAISED DURING MAYOR'S AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mayor Sackett directed staff to prepare an Ordinance and presentation to establish a two-year mayoral term for Commission consideration at the next meeting.

Commissioner Boni moved to direct staff to prepare an ordinance and presentation to establish a two-year mayoral term for Commission consideration at the next meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Morgan and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

B. ANY ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA. None.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of the April 6, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

B. Approval of the April 8, 2026, Work Session Meeting Minutes.

C. Approve the Monthly Expenditures for March 2026.

D. Approve the Monthly Financial Report for February 2026.

Deputy Mayor Shoemaker moved to approve Items 10A through 10D as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Boni and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

11. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Read by title only and adopt Ordinance No. 26-2281, amending section 6.10b of the City Charter to revise debt authorization thresholds and voting requirements.

Mr. Langley read Ordinance No. 26-2281 by title only.

Mr. Watts presented the Item reporting two revisions: replacing CPI (Consumer Price Index) with PPI (Producer Price Index) and incorporating the change into the referendum language.

Mayor Sackett opened the public hearing. No one spoke in favor or opposition to Ordinance No. 26-2281.

Deputy Mayor Shoemaker moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Boni and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Morgan moved to approve Ordinance No. 26-2281 as presented in Item 11A. Seconded by Commissioner McMillan and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

12. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of a purchase order for \$70,998.00 to Wannemacher Jensen Architects for value engineering of the plans for Fire Station #15.

Mr. Kintner presented the Item. The report outlined a request to approve a redesign effort for Fire Station 15, representing a shift away from the FEMA hazard mitigation grant due to significant delays and cost increases. The project, originally estimated at approximately \$4.5 million, has grown to nearly \$12 million, largely due to grant-related requirements such as multiple layers of federal review. Staff evaluated alternatives and determined that moving away from the grant and eliminating certain requirements, such as the safe room component, could result in an estimated savings of approximately \$1.7 million. Approval of the item would authorize a relatively small design cost in comparison to the potential savings and allow the project to move forward more efficiently. The primary objective emphasized was ensuring that firefighters are provided with a safe and functional facility in a timely manner.

Commissioner Morgan moved to approve Item 12A as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Boni and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

13. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Watts reported 12 underground utility strike incidents in 2026, three of which were significant (two on Bearss Circle in late March and one on Pinyon Court the prior week). Incidents involved WOW, with others by Lumen and CenturyLink. Stop-work orders were issued after each major incident and staff held follow-up meetings. He outlined preparedness initiatives including proactive assessment of locates, exercising/verification of critical water valves ahead of planned underground work (Lumen, Fiber Assets, Florida Public Utilities), and documentation to allow rapid isolation during emergencies as well as a strengthened valve maintenance program with a plan to budget for system-wide valve testing twice annually next fiscal year. He also noted over 20,000 fresh water valves citywide, the inherent

uncertainty with aging infrastructure and recorded depths, and continued use of stop-work meetings to capture lessons learned.

Mr. Langley explained that state law limits the City's authority, requiring municipalities to allow telecom companies access to rights-of-way with minimal regulation. While the City has strong local controls, such as permitting requirements, stop-work orders, and potential permit revocation, there are legal constraints on restricting or charging these companies. Additional regulatory options may be explored, but accidents cannot be fully prevented, and alternative installation methods could create even greater disruption.

Discussion ensued and the Commission expressed concern about the frequency of incidents and questioned whether stronger financial penalties or cost recovery methods could be imposed.

Mr. Langley noted that while upfront fees are limited, the City may pursue damages for service disruptions or lost utility revenue, though legal costs may outweigh benefits. There was interest in exploring mechanisms to hold contractors more financially accountable.

The Commission highlighted issues with incorrect utility locates performed by third-party contractors, contributing to some strikes. Staff confirmed that in at least one case, a locating company was replaced due to errors. Additional concerns included the accuracy of underground data, reliance on subcontractors, and the visible impact of utility markings on infrastructure.

The Commission emphasized the need for stronger oversight, better coordination among contractors, and potential policy or procedural changes to reduce incidents. While acknowledging that utility expansion will continue, there was consensus on the importance of improving accountability and minimizing impacts to residents.

Commissioner Shoemaker suggested requiring permits again for new fencing to account for water or gas lines in residential back yards.

Mr. Watts reported the City is closely monitoring Florida House Bill 1329 which could significantly expand financial transparency and requirements statewide, especially for local government. He noted that Longwood is already well-positioned through its DocAccess platform, providing public access to over 900 ADA-compliant documents, recognizing the City Clerk and IT Director for their efforts. The 2026 Summer Camp has reached full capacity with a waitlist, and the Aldi project remains on track to begin construction by the end of April. Public Works continues advancing infrastructure improvements, including a \$1.6 million road resurfacing program, along with sidewalks, stormwater, and lighting upgrades. Financial planning efforts are ongoing, focusing on long-term models, fees, and revenue strategies, while the Police Department is preparing for accreditation in July.

14. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT. None.

15. CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Ms. Cartagena commended the Employee Event Committee for their hard work in organizing the Employee event last Friday. She announced this week was National Volunteer Week, and Wednesday was Administrative Professionals Day and extended her appreciation to all Longwood volunteers and administrative professionals for their time, skills, dedication, and continued service to the City. She stated the city clerk's office will be launching an online Clerk Week mystery word challenge during

Professional Municipal Clerk's Week on May 3 – May 9. This initiative is intended to promote community engagement and increase awareness of the city clerk's office and its functions. She recognized Ms. Aubrey for her support and collaboration in developing this initiative.

16. **ADJOURN.** Mayor Sackett adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Minutes approved by City Commission on 05-04-2026.





Tony Boni, Mayor

ATTEST:



Liane Cartagena, City Clerk