

JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025
JACKSONVILLE CITY HALL EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
315 S. RAGSDALE
12:00 PM

[IGNORE_INDENT]
Meeting Items

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 PM

Present: Mayor Randy Gorham, Councilman Rob Gowin, Councilwoman Mindy Gellock, Councilwoman Letitia Horace

Absent: Mayor Pro tem, Tim McRae

INVOCATION

Mayor Randy Gorham

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Francisco Luna came forward to discuss the permit he would like to obtain for a hay ride on Halloween night.

Ernest Higginbotham came forward to discuss the damage done to his property by the buzzard problem.

PRESENTATION BY USDA WILDLIFE ON BLACK VULTURE NUISANCE AT LAKE JACKSONVILLE

Brandon with the USDA Wildlife gave a presentation on the deterrents that could be used to solve the black vulture problem. Loud noise, sprinklers, fence mounting spikes, pyrotechnics with the proper training. He stated the USDA could come out for a fee and have a two-week dedicated effort to push the vultures out of the lake area. He advised the City to clear the underbrush and to cut down dead trees to provide less habitable areas for the vultures to nest.

PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION ON PARKS MASTER PLAN PRESENTED BY MHS PLANNING & DESIGN

Hunter Rush, Principal Planner, MHS Planning & Design presented the plan for the Parks Master Plan. The plan will help guide park improvements, funding priorities, and grant competitiveness. The goal is to update the 2014 plan to reflect current needs, population trends, and future growth. Community engagement will include citizen surveys, pop-up events, focus groups, and town halls. Timeline: Completion by March 2026 to align with the FY 2027 budget cycle. Jacksonville currently has 10 developed parks totaling approximately 245 acres, exceeding the state average of 10 acres per 1,000 residents (Jacksonville is at ~17 acres per 1,000). Survey questions will assess maintenance, park usage, desired amenities, barriers to access, and community satisfaction. Councilmembers suggested clarifying “recreational facilities” to include both indoor and outdoor amenities and to add questions about the need for an indoor recreation center or reopening the Stacy Hunter facility. Council recommended adding clear definitions for “bond” and “tax-supported” funding options to improve public understanding. Council requested inclusion of a summary comparing accomplishments from the 2014 plan to current goals.

DISCUSSION OF MOBILE FOOD TRUCK REGULATIONS AND THE FOOD TRUCK FREEDOM BILL (HB 2844)

City Manager, James Hubbard reviewed implications of the Food Truck Freedom Bill (House Bill 2844), effective July 1, 2026. The law preempts local authority on several regulations. Cities cannot:

- Limit the number of food truck licenses.
- Restrict hours of operation.
- Regulate distance from brick-and-mortar restaurants.

The state will issue food truck permits; cities may only ensure proper zoning (commercial areas) and may retain limited authority over distance from residential zones. Staff will begin drafting ordinance amendments and land use schedule updates accordingly.

DISCUSS LOVES LOOKOUT TREE TRIMMING AND REMOVAL

City Manager, James Hubbard presented photos showing tree growth obstructing the horizon view at Loves Lookout. He expressed that volunteers have requested trimming to restore visibility. Staff intends to partner with contractors or loggers to selectively remove obstructing trees at little or no cost. The consensus is to proceed cautiously, balancing scenic visibility with residents’ privacy and environmental sensitivity.

APPROVE THE TEMPORARY EVENT ALCOHOL PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE MONSTER TRUCK FESTIVAL ON OCTOBER 24, 2025 AT THE RODEO ARENA

POLICE DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY REPORT
PRESENTED BY POLICE CHIEF STEVEN MARKASKY

REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE AGENDA FOR REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING 14TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2025 (SEE ATTACHED PROPOSED AGENDA) NO ACTION TO BE TAKEN

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, DISCUSSION

ADJOURN

City Manager, James Hubbard let the Council know about the intentions the Jacksonville Rodeo Association had to sell beer at the Monster Truck Event on October 24-25, 2025. The event will be held at the Rodeo Grounds, jointly managed with Hylite Reel Entertainment. The approval is needed by Council to have beer sold at the event which is on City property.
A motion was made by Councilman Rob Gowin to approve the temporary alcohol permit.
Second by Councilwoman Letitia Horace.
Three Ayes
One Nay
Motion Carries

Police Chief Steven Markasky presented the quarterly police report. He discussed National Night Out with the largest turnout to date. The success attributed to volunteers and interdepartmental collaboration.
Training & Equipment will transition to new pistol-mounted optics fully funded by Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association through raffles. Vendor, SIG Sauer, providing free transition training and is hosting multiple no-cost training sessions, including defensive tactics, legal updates, and patrol management at the TPCA Command School in May 2026.
The Police Department is fully staffed in dispatch and patrol; two cadets in the academy to graduate in January 2026. The only vacancy is the newly approved traffic officer position.
New equipment includes, G3 Yamaha patrol boat for Lake Jacksonville; a 30–50 hour break-in period; a new patrol unit; an additional two on order, with new Police Vehicle Graphics and a simplified design that reduces cost and maintenance; a department-wide rebranding approved by staff vote (20–2).
The Special Investigative Unit (SIU) with a Jacksonville detective assigned full-time to Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office Annex. 2025 results include 20 major investigations, 30 search warrants, 8.5 lbs of methamphetamine seized, \$500K in assets pending forfeiture, 30 firearms confiscated. Joint operations with Homeland Security, FBI, DEA, and DPS.
Code Enforcement continuing clean-up operations with before-and-after photos of blighted properties shown.

City Manager James Hubbard reviewed the proposed agenda with the council. No action was taken.

City Manager, James Hubbard let Council know he is drafting an ordinance regulating vape and specialty tobacco stores, modeled after the City of Tyler's standards. The ordinance is to be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission on October 21, 2025 and Council will see it on the agenda in November or December of 2025. The ordinance will establish spacing requirements from parks, schools, and similar businesses.

1:54 PM

Randy Gorham, Mayor
City of Jacksonville

Dianah Surber, City Clerk