

CITY OF WEWAHITCHKA
BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS
109 S 2nd Street, Wewahitchka, FL 32465
City of Wewahitchka Volunteer Fire Department

SPECIAL MEETING

January 6, 2026

10:00 am

Mayor Phillip Gaskin called the special meeting to order on January 6, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. at the City of Wewahitchka Volunteer Fire Department.

Attendance

Mayor Phillip Gaskin
Commissioner Ralph Fisher
Commissioner Charlie Pettis
Commissioner Johnny Paul

Public Present

Samuel Peterson
Joe Paul
Jean McMillian
Sammy Bailey
Ray Bodrey
Shelby Howell
Amanda Lake
Roy Lee Carter

City Manager

Michael Gortman

City Attorney

Michelle Jordan(via video conf)

City Parks & Rec Director

David Paul

City Clerk

Rachel Jackson(via video conf)

City Finance Clerk

Misty Robbins

AGENDA:

- 1. Horse Arena Building – TL James Park - Mayor Gaskin** asked **City Manager Michael Gortman** to discuss what the meeting was called for. **City Manager Michael Gortman** stated the first issue was there were some questions about the ownership of the building.

Commissioner Fisher, explained that at the last meeting that he chaired the board decided to have a special meeting to find out legally where the City stands on ownership. Commissioner Fisher stated he called and spoke with the **City Attorney** and she confirmed that anything built on City property belongs to the City.

Mayor Gaskin asked everyone to introduce themselves. **Shelby Howell** introduced herself as the Gulf County 4-H agent. **Jean McMillian** stated she is has been with 4-H since 1971. **Ray Bodrey** introduced himself as the county extension director. **Sammy Bailey** represented the Cattleman's Association. **Roy Lee Carter** former county extension director. **Joe Paul** a founding 4-H member. **Amanda Lake** ARC Performance Horses.

Commissioner Fisher asked if the 4-H board was in attendance. **Shelby Howell** and **Ray Bodrey** explained that there was an advisory committee for 4-H but not an actual board.

Commissioner Fisher asked if 4-H had been upkeeping the building? **Jean McMillian** explained the history and upkeep of the Horse Arena building. She stated that the 4-H raised money and maintained the building until 2018, when the City contacted Melanie about helping with the maintenance. She stated originally there was a very small wooden building, but it deteriorated and there was a loan taken out at Wewa State Bank to build another building that was built by the inmates. **Mayor Gaskin** stated he remembered that they had built the block

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portion. He stated **Tony Price** and some of the county employees put the roof on. **Joe Paul** stated that the county had put the bathrooms on later on.

Commissioner Fisher discussed the issue that has been arising, stating that when someone wants to use the building, they are told it belongs to the 4-H and aren't allowed to use it. **Mayor Gaskin** stated it is city owned and a public building, so it needs to be resolved. He asked who carries the insurance on it. **City Manager Michael Gortman** stated the City carries the insurance on it. **Jean McMillian** stated we carry insurance on it through Gulf County extension office. **Joe Paul** explained the county carried insurance for awhile, but he remembered it had been turned over to the City. After further discussion, it was determined that the insurance Mr. Paul and Ms. McMillian were referring to was event insurance and contents insurance. **Ray Bodrey** explained that the policy was to insure that contents that the 4-H had in the building. However, they no longer carry that policy and the contents are self-insured. **Shelby Howell** stated that the University of Florida and the State of Florida will no longer allow them to maintain the building or provide insurance for the contents of the building for 4-H. **Mayor Gaskin** explained that the City has insurance on the horse arena and actual building as required.

Sammy Bailey stated that the Cattleman's Association would asked at a board meeting to be allowed to use the building for meetings and they offered to provide labor to maintain the building in return. However, since that meeting the Cattleman's Association has not used the building because of the issue that arose regarding the dispute about the building ownership.

Commissioner Fisher stated that he called the City Attorney and she told him that it doesn't matter who it is, if they build on City property it is owned by the City. He explained to the Attorney that there had been a loan taken out for the building at one point, but it has been paid off. The Attorney said that a bank should not have loaned money without contacting the city, because that is City owned property. The Attorney also pulled up the property on the property appraisers website and verified that it was not sectioned into blocks, it is one piece of city owned property, so the bottom line is that it is a city owned building.

Mayor Gaskin said ok, so we've established that the City owns and the property and the building so what does the 4-H expect and want from the City. **Ray Bodrey** asked if they need a MOU between the County and City to use the building. **Mayor Gaskin** stated he would need to schedule it with the City Manager and have it on a calendar. **Shelby Howell** asked about having a calendar on the County website that shows all of the scheduled events and presented and discussed the 4-H upcoming events.

Mayor Gaskin said he thought it was a great idea to have an TL James Park advisory committee with members from the city, 4-H, baseball, football, etc., to work together to plan usage and events.

Jean McMillian gave further explanation as to the history and intended use of the horse arena and 4-H program. She explained that when people contacted her about renting the building, she told them it was a city property and that it wasn't for anyone to rent and make money from, it was for building and maintaining the 4-H program.

David Paul stated that **Amanda Lake** is going to do a scholarship for the kids from her holding rodeos at the horse arena. **Amanda Lake** stated that she has also donated to 4-H, and will be willing to do \$1,500.00 in scholarships for the kids as she discussed at the previous City

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meeting. **Mayor Gaskin** asked her how much she made off of the last rodeo? She stated it cost \$25,000 for the last rodeo and she split the profit of \$8,000 with Bo Campbell.

There was further discussion regarding the advisory committee members. The City Commission would have the final decisions, but the advisory committee members would make recommendations for the board to consider.

Additionally, obtaining more land for the park and relocating the horse arena was discussed. **Commissioner Paul** stated that he had **City Clerk Rachel Jackson** to write and send out certified letters to the property owners on the west side, since the price that Teal Timber wanted was so much. She has sent the letters out and found an email address that she sent an email also, but hasn't received response back yet.

City Parks & Rec Director discussed redoing the whole building and asked that the 4-H move their contents in order to make the repairs. The board stated the 4-H could move their contents into the old city hall on 7th Street, but could possibly budget for a storage building in the future. Shelby Howell stated that they would get everything moved and handled and had no events planned for the next year that would require those items, so they will take care of it and move it back at a later date.

Mayor Gaskin said on the advisory committee the city representatives will be **Michael (Chair)** and **David Paul**, **Misty** is on the baseball board and can represent them. **Shelby Howell and Amanda Lake, Sammy Bailey** will also be on the committee. **City Manager Michael Gortman** stated he would try to reach **Earnest** since he is on the football board. Meetings will be held at the Senior/Community Building, time and date TBD.

Amanada Lake stated she would like to ask for permission to hold May 2, 2026 and October 10, 2026 to hold rodeos at the next regular board meeting if those dates were good with the 4-H and Cattleman's Association.

Mayor Gaskin asked if anyone had anything else to discuss.

City Parks & Rec Director David Paul stated everyone was invited to come to meet at the horse arena at the park at 1:00 if they would like to come.

Commissioner Ralph Fisher thanked everyone for working to make things better for the kids.

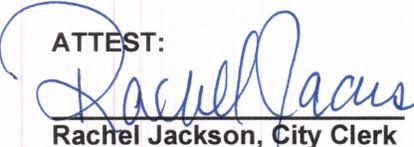
Commissioner Paul said he appreciated everyone's efforts and all they are putting into it and it is moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Pettis agreed and said he feels like it is going to be a good thing.

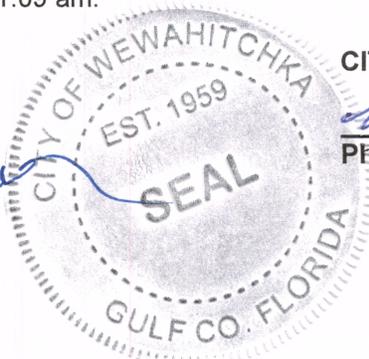
Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 am.

ATTEST:



Rachel Jackson, City Clerk



CITY OF WEWAHITCHKA



Phillip Gaskin, Mayor