

Citizen Charter Review Committee
February 5, 2026
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.*
Leon County Main Library
Programming Room

The Leon County 2025-2026 Citizen Charter Review Committee (CCRC) met on February 5, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. in the Leon County Main Library with Committee members Mary Ann Lindley, Chauncy Haynes, Linda Bond Edwards, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Max Herrle, Darryl Jones, Howard Kessler, Henry Lewis, III, Heidi Otway, Sean Pittman, Ryan Ray, Shamarial Roberson, Temple Robinson, William Smith, Bruce Strouble, Jr., Jarrett Terry and Katrina Tuggerson in attendance. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, Assistant County Administrator Shington Lamy, County Attorney Chasity O'Steen, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives Nicki Hatch, Director of the Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships Abby Thomas, Management Analyst Cameron Williams, and Clerks to the Board, Beryl Wood and Daniel J. Antonaccio.

Absent Members: Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox.

Call to Order and Opening Mary Ann Lindley, Chair

Chair Lindley called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

Proposed Extension of Final Meetings until 2:30 p.m.*

Chair Lindley requested Committee consideration of extending the scheduled end time for the February 5th and 19th meetings until 2:30 p.m., to ensure adequate time for deliberations and completion of Committee business.

Max Herrle moved, seconded by Anita Favors, to extend the scheduled end time for the February 5th and 19th meetings until 2:30 p.m.

The motion carried 12 – 0 with Committee Members Joey Davis, Darryl Jones, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Heidi Otway, Sean Pittman, Shamarial Roberson, Katrina Tuggerson and Barry Wilcox not present.

- *Sean Pittman arrived at this juncture of the meeting.*

Consent:

Max Herrle moved, seconded by Bruce Strouble, Jr., to approve the consent agenda as presented.

The motion carried 13 – 0 with Committee Members Joey Davis, Darryl Jones, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Heidi Otway, Shamarial Roberson, Katrina Tuggerson and Barry Wilcox not present.

Approval of January 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Receipt & File of Written Public Comments

- *Howard Kessler arrived at this juncture of the meeting.*

Public Comment:

- *Tiffany Hill, 1401 Lola Drive, spoke in support of Option 2 on Agenda Item #4, stating housing issues are regional and affect workforce stability and community health. She*

supported the option as a balanced approach that creates a permanent fund while preserving the Board of County Commissioners' budget flexibility and encouraging City-County collaboration.

- Peter Butscene, 2358 Carefree Ct., spoke in favor of creating an independent Office of Inspector General, emphasizing it as a preventative measure to deter future corruption and strengthen public trust despite no current scandals. He stated existing ethics safeguards are weak, and the cost of the office would be minimal compared to the potential consequences of misconduct.
- Ernie Paine, 2006 E. Indianhead Dr., supported establishing an Office of Inspector General as a proactive step to prevent future problems and demonstrate the County's commitment to transparent and ethical government. He noted the Charter sets priorities rather than budgets and argued independent oversight protects economic reputation and public confidence.
- Ben Wilcox, 1719 Old Fort Dr., spoke in support of placing a charter amendment establishing an independent Inspector General before voters, stating independence is essential for investigating fraud, waste, and abuse. He expressed confidence the measure would receive public approval and stated anti-corruption reforms should be decided by the community.
- *Darryl Jones, Katrina Tuggerson, Heidi Otway and Shamarial Roberson arrived at this juncture of the meeting.*

General Business:

Agenda Item #1: Consideration to Establish an Office of Inspector General in the Leon County Charter

Nicki Hatch, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives, introduced the item and summarized that an Office of Inspector General (OIG) generally exists to detect, investigate, and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct, and reviewed how independent OIGs are structured in four Florida charter counties (Miami-Dade, Broward, Jacksonville-Duval, and Palm Beach), including typical functions such as complaint investigation, auditing, and contract oversight. She noted that most complaints in peer OIGs result in no action or referral elsewhere and that these offices are not small, with staffing and budgets varying significantly by jurisdiction.

County Attorney Chasity O'Steen provided clarification on Leon County's ethics enforcement framework, distinguishing state-level complaints filed under Chapter 112 with the Florida Commission on Ethics from complaints made under the County's Code of Ethics. She explained that the County Code includes provisions addressing investigations and prosecution of alleged violations and referenced the ordinance-based penalty structure applicable to violations of the standards of conduct.

William Smith requested examples of what would constitute financial mishandling.

County Attorney O'Steen explained that allegations of financial impropriety may be reported to the Clerk of Court, which maintains an independent office, or submitted through the County's Fraud and Abuse Hotline, in which case, the Human Resources Department would lead the investigation.

~~Henry Lewis, III, inquired about the total number of cases that have come before the County.~~

County Attorney O'Steen responded that there had been one such case, which was resolved through the County's waste, fraud, and abuse process.

Max Herrle referenced the City's process regarding petty cash.

County Administrator Vincent Long explained that the County undergoes an independent audit conducted by the Clerk's Office, which focuses on internal controls. He noted that the audit findings are presented to the Board along with a corrective action plan.

Sean Pittman stated that he was interested in the fiscal implications of the proposal and noted that, based on what he had observed, the associated costs could be significant.

Mrs. Hatch referenced the Office of the Inspector General in Duval County, noting that their Charter requires minimum funding of \$400,000; however, their recent adopted budget was \$1.5 million.

Linda Bond Edwards inquired about the County's responsibility to consider fiscal impacts and whether a cost analysis would be included as part of the ballot process.

County Attorney O'Steen addressed the use of departmental language regarding fiscal impacts and explained that it had been determined that fiscal impact information could not be included on the ballot.

Chair Lindley asked who would be responsible for hiring the Inspector General.

Mrs. Hatch stated that the matter would depend on the structure adopted and could require approval by the Board.

Darryl Jones commented on the current structure and safeguards already in place and explained the School Board's process as a point of reference.

Mrs. Hatch recalled that there are existing processes already in place, including the Fraud and Abuse Hotline administered by the Clerk's Office.

Shamarial Roberson inquired whether the Office of the Inspector General would consist of a single individual or include staff. She spoke on the importance of autonomy for the position and emphasized the integrity of the program.

Howard Kessler requested the Chair allow Ernie Paine to address questions from the Committee regarding the purpose and structure of his proposed Office of Inspector General. Chair Lindley concurred.

Ernie Paine stated that, while he understood the role of the Clerk's Office in addressing issues related to fraud and financial matters, he believed there should be a dedicated office where complaints could be submitted. He discussed the importance of having appropriate infrastructure in place to handle such matters.

County Attorney O'Steen explained that the County does not have authority over the Clerk, noting that both the County and the Clerk retain a statutory auditor. She referenced corrective updates and findings that are addressed through the Clerk's audit process. She shared an update that the audit will be coming back to the Board at the next BOCC Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 10.

Howard Kessler moved, seconded by Bruce Strouble, Jr., to direct staff to prepare a proposed charter amendment to establish an Office of Inspector General with funding determined by County Government.

The motion failed 4 – 14 with Chair Mary Ann Lindley, Chauncy Haynes, Linda Bond Edwards, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Darryl Jones, Henry Lewis, III, Heidi Otway, Sean Pittman, Shamarial Roberson, Temple Robinson, William Smith, Jarrett Terry and Katrina Tuggerson in opposition. Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox were not present.

Darryl Jones called the question since there was confusion on what the previous vote was for.

Darryl Jones moved, seconded by Sean Pittman, to call the question.

The motion carried 18 – 0 with Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox not present.

Howard Kessler moved, seconded by Bruce Strouble, Jr., to direct staff to prepare a proposed charter amendment to establish an Office of Inspector General with funding determined by County Government.

The motion failed 4 – 14 with Chair Mary Ann Lindley, Chauncy Haynes, Linda Bond Edwards, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Darryl Jones, Henry Lewis, III, Heidi Otway, Sean Pittman, Shamarial Roberson, Temple Robinson, William Smith, Jarrett Terry and Katrina Tuggerson in opposition. Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox were not present.

Darryl Jones moved, seconded by William Smith, to approve Option #1: Accept this report and table this issue.

The motion carried 16 – 2 with Committee Members Max Herrle and Ryan Ray in opposition. Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox were not present.

Agenda Item #2: Consideration of a Policy Recommendation on Unified Street Renaming

Mrs. Hatch introduced the item and explained that, at the Committee's request, staff prepared a draft policy recommendation encouraging the County and the City to work together to align street renaming policies and procedures in order to prevent public safety and emergency service issues. She noted that, if approved, the recommendation would be included in the Committee's status report to the Board in March and in the Committee's final report later this summer.

Vice Chairman Haynes moved, seconded by Temple Robinson, to approve Option #1: Approve the draft policy recommendation encouraging unified street renaming policies and procedures.

The motion carried 18 – 0 with Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox not present.

Agenda Item #3: Consideration of Revision to the Preamble in the Leon County Charter

Mrs. Hatch introduced the item and explained that, at the Committee's request, staff prepared proposed charter amendment language revising the Preamble of the Leon County Charter to reflect the shared humanity among County residents. She noted that a simple majority vote would be required to recommend the amendment to the Board of County Commissioners and, if approved, the Board would consider whether to advance it to a public hearing later this summer.

~~Darryl Jones moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Haynes, to approve Option #1: Approve the proposed charter amendment for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners, revising the Preamble to reflect the esteemed humanity among residents of Leon County.~~

The motion carried 18 – 0 with Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox not present.

Agenda Item #4: Consideration to Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Leon County Charter

Assistant County Administrator Shington Lamy introduced this item. As requested by the Committee, this item provides a proposed amendment to the Leon County Charter with ballot language to establish an affordable housing trust fund in the Charter.

Vice Chairman Chauncy Haynes moved, seconded by Liz Ellis, to approve Option #1: Approve a policy recommendation encouraging the Board to continue the County's longstanding commitment to increasing and preserving the stock of affordable housing in the community.

The motion was not voted on.

Bruce Strouble, Jr., commented on what he described as the affordable housing crisis within the County and emphasized the importance of protecting residents through structural and sustainable measures.

Max Herrle discussed elements he believed were not fully reflected in the County's proposed language and raised concerns regarding governance and structural oversight provisions.

Henry Lewis, III, inquired whether there were any affordable housing funds currently available that the County was not drawing down.

Mr. Lamy responded that staff continuously pursues available funding opportunities, including programs through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and confirmed that the County actively seeks and utilizes available funding sources.

County Attorney O'Steen addressed the Committee regarding potential modifications to the existing Trust Fund framework. She emphasized the importance of drafting language that would codify the fund while preserving sufficient flexibility for the Board of County Commissioners to modify or adjust the fund structure in the future as circumstances evolve.

Bruce Strouble, Jr., made a substitute motion, seconded by Max Herrle, to approve Option #2 as amended: Approve the proposed charter amendment for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to ~~establish~~ amend the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Leon County Charter.

The motion carried 12 – 6 with Vice Chairman Chauncy Haynes, Linda Bond Edwards, Liz Ellis, Darryl Jones, Howard Kessler and William Smith in opposition. Committee Members Joey Davis, Slaton Murray and Barry Wilcox were not present.

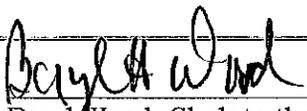
Adjournment:

Chair Lindley adjourned the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

ATTEST:



Mary Ann Lindley, Chair
Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee



Beryl Wood, Clerk to the Board for
Gwen Marshall-Knight, Clerk of Court