

LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

Legislative Committee November 3, 2025

The Legislative Committee met in the City Commission Conference Room. Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley (chair) and Commissioner Guy LaLonde (member) was present. Commissioner Chad McLeod (member) was absent. Mayor Bill Mutz and Commissioners Mike Musick, Stephanie Madden and Bill Read were present. City Manager Shawn Sherrouse, City Attorney Palmer Davis, City Clerk Kelly Koos and Lobbyist Dave Shepp were present.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley called the meeting to order at 10:48 a.m.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley reminded the Committee they were dealing with three categories: Budget Requests, Issues to Monitor, and Ongoing Activities. Committees Week started early October prior to the January start of the 2026 Session. Requests have come in from departments. The Committee is focusing on 4 issues this Session. There will be big cuts again this year

Dave Shepp explained the Legislature was in the committee process. Deadlines were November 21, 2025.

Today, staff was asking the Committee to approve the four Budget Requests:

- A. San Gully Road Drainage Stabilization Project
- B. Septic to Sewer Conversion Project
- C. P25 Portable Radio Replacement
- D. Se7en Wetlands Water Education Center

The Committee then received an update on each project.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley explained the Committee would be specific in who they asked for what. Lakeland continues to receive kudos from last session for not over asking.

Dave Shepp explained the process: We get our delegation member support. They submit the request to the system and then it is them talking with the chairs of the committees. Lakeland must convince the committee chairs of the value and the champions also work toward that. The chairman will publish the list of projects. The goal is to get on that list. The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) determines how much general revenue the State will have to spend. During session they will announce how much is available. The leadership makes the allocations of the general revenue. They then must fit the requests within those dollars. The City must sell the project in a way that benefits other regions surrounding Lakeland. That garners support.

Chief Riley gave an update on Fire Station #8. They received the numbers on Friday for construction costs. He hoped to schedule a groundbreaking soon.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley stated that if the Commission agrees, these 4 will go for appropriations. This will go before the Commission on November 17, 2025. If there is an opportunity for additional projects, Dave will be watching for that.

The Committee discussed:

- Staff has a complete list of projects, should additional funding become available.
- Dave Shepp will watch for grant opportunities.
- Deputy City Manager Rob Hernandez tracks bills that may hurt the City.
- Lakeland Day is November 17-19, 2025 and Polk County Day January 22, 2026.
- Mr. Shepp will do weekly updates.
- Get on the Florida League of Cities (FLC) calls. They do a great job.

After the Commission meeting on November 17, the Commission will go to Tallahassee. Mr. Shepp is working on a schedule.

Shawn Sherrouse explained that all departments have already sent their watch lists. Rob Hernandez has compiled those items and will meet with Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley and Dave Shepp to provide a list to the Commission.

Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley explained that the former Legislative packet will serve as additional backup. It is easier for legislators for Lakeland to present a simple bulleted list of budget requests.

Mr. Shepp explained there will be other items for funding such as FRDP.

The consensus was to support the 4 items.

The Committee adjourned at 1:28 a.m.