



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

DeBary City Council

Reported by Val Bruneel

January 7, 2026

Public Participation Highlights

1. Golf Cart Safety and Enforcement

A resident raised repeated safety concerns regarding golf carts and minibikes operating on sidewalks and near the civic center. Incidents described included near collisions involving pedestrians, including children.

Key points raised:

- Golf carts operating on sidewalks created dangerous conditions.
- Difficulty identifying or reporting violators.
- Concern that lack of enforcement emboldens unsafe behavior.
- Request for clearer rules, stronger enforcement, and community discussion.

Council response:

- Clarified that golf carts are limited to under 20 mph and sidewalk use is restricted to certain arterial roads.
- Noted that permit holders agree to follow regulations.
- Multiple council members expressed concern and support for increased enforcement.
- One council member suggested mandatory education or training tied to golf cart permits.
- Staff acknowledged the concern and indicated follow-up.

LWV note:

This discussion reflects ongoing public safety and enforcement concerns affecting pedestrian access and safe use of public space.

2. Request for Disability Accommodation Related to Backyard Chickens

A parent requested a reasonable accommodation to allow chickens and roosters as therapeutic support for a child with autism. The speaker cited:

- Evidence-based benefits of animal-assisted support.
- Prior precedent in DeBary granting similar accommodations.



- Federal protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Act.

Council response:

- The mayor directed the resident to meet with the city manager to formally pursue an accommodation before a code enforcement action.
- Emphasized the importance of process while acknowledging past council compassion.
- A second speaker supported the request and urged a timely, compassionate resolution.

Council discussion later in the meeting:

- One council member supported allowing chickens citywide and noted unfinished ordinance work.
- Concerns were expressed about roosters in residential neighborhoods.
- Interest stated in revisiting and updating the ordinance without delay.

LWV note:

This issue implicates fair housing, disability accommodation, and equitable access to housing supports. No vote was taken.

Consent Agenda

The council unanimously approved consent agenda items 2 through 8, including:

- Pavement marking services for the 2025 Street Resurfacing Project.
- Amendment to the City Manager's employment agreement.
- Multiple continuous contract renewals for engineering, construction, and consulting firms.

No items were pulled for separate discussion.

Council and Staff Reports

Economic and Community Development

- Council members highlighted the official launch of the "1 Million Cups" entrepreneurship program in DeBary, noting strong attendance and community engagement.
- The program was described as a resource for small businesses and startups.



Infrastructure and Environment

- Duke Energy's green hydrogen facility ribbon cutting was discussed. It was described as the first of its kind in Florida and nationally.
- The mayor highlighted that reclaimed water, rather than aquifer water, would be used once available.
- Updates were provided on the Spring-to-Spring Trail connection and Fort Road closure timing.

Fire and Public Facilities

- Council members noted anticipation for the opening of Fire Station 39.

Observations Relevant to LWV Priorities

- Public participation was allowed, orderly, and substantive.
- Residents raised concerns related to safety, accessibility, disability accommodation, and quality of life.
- No election-related items were on the agenda.
- Council demonstrated awareness of legal obligations related to disability accommodations.
- Several issues were deferred to staff or future action rather than resolved by vote.