LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF VOLUSIA COUNTY

OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

DeBary City Council

Reported by Val Bruneel

October 7, 2026

Public Participation

Bonnie Beal spoke on behalf of Not Their Fault Feline Foundation and the DeBary TNR program. She reported that from January 1 through October 5, 160 community cats had been trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated as appropriate, recovered, and returned. The organization also completed 65 adoptions, helped reunite a cat with its family after about five years, and spent about $3,500 on additional medical care beyond basic TNR services.

During the data center public hearing, Jonathan King spoke in strong opposition to an AI data center being built in DeBary. He supported the moratorium and said his preference would be a permanent ban, citing concerns about electric rates, water use, emissions, limited job creation, and resident opposition seen in other communities.

Minutes Approved

Council approved the minutes from September 2, 2026, regular City Council meeting and the September 9 and September 23, 2026, special City Council meetings. The vote was 4-0.

Presentations

Senator Tom Wright presented $1.75 million in state funding for Alexander Island and stormwater and drainage improvements. Staff noted that, since 2020, Senator Wright has helped DeBary secure nearly $7 million in state appropriations for projects including stormwater pipe repairs, Fire Station 39, Fort Florida Road Bridge improvements, and Alexander Island.

The city also recognized Wharton Smith for receiving the Associated Builders and Contractors 2026 Excellence in Construction Pyramid Award for DeBary Fire Station 39. The mayor issued a Red Ribbon Week proclamation for October 23 through October 31 at the request of the Volusia Young Marines. Stuart Scott, chair of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board, gave an update on the board's work, including strategic planning, the Arcadia Publishing history project, UCF History Harvest materials, outreach materials, and ongoing inventory of city historical items.

Consent Agenda

Council approved consent items 4 through 6 by a 4-0 vote. The approved items included a $54,566.38 work authorization to Fausnight Stripe and Line, Inc. for permanent pavement markings and striping for the 2026 Street Resurfacing Project; a two-year

Federal Grant Services Agreement with Becker and Poliakoff, P.A. at $3,800 per month, already included in the FY 2026-27 budget; and an Operation and Maintenance Agreement with Volusia County Utilities for sanitary sewer and wastewater facilities serving Alexander Island Park.

The federal grant services agreement is tied to the city's Complete Street Initiative for Highway 17-92, including the Safe Streets for All study, future utility undergrounding, curb relocation, wider sidewalks for pedestrians, bikes and golf carts, and pedestrian crossing improvements.

Public Hearings

Growth Management requested approval of the second reading of Ordinance 10-2026, establishing a six-month moratorium on development orders and permits for artificial intelligence data centers. Staff said data centers are not currently listed as authorized use in the city's Land Development Code. The moratorium would give the city time to study and draft regulations.

The city manager said DeBary is in a different position from some other jurisdictions because it has two major power generating properties with industrial zoning, railroad access, and potential interest to data center developers. Discussion focused on electric demand and possible rate impacts, water and reclaimed water use, environmental concerns, sound and vibration, legal risk, and possible state preemption during the next legislative session.

Council Members Stevenson and Butlien raised concern that the ordinance language referred specifically to AI data centers and might not cover other large load data centers. After discussion with staff and the city attorney, Council agreed to add language covering AI and other data centers. Council approved Ordinance 10-2026 as amended by a 4-0 vote.

Council then considered Resolution 2026-16, which extends the moratorium adopted by Ordinance 10-2026 for an additional six months, to October 7, 2027. Staff said the extension would allow the city to monitor the upcoming legislative session and continue working on local standards. There was no public comment on this item. Council approved Resolution 2026-16 as amended by a 4-0 vote.

Board Committee Appointment

Council appointed Kelly Russell-Hild to fill a vacancy on the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. The vote was 4-0.

Council and Staff Reports

Mayor Chasez noted that mail-in voters would receive ballots before the next Council meeting and encouraged residents to vote and review the state referendum questions and the DeBary land bank referendum information available on the city website.

The city manager reported on the DeBary Plantation Community Association code enforcement matter. He said the special magistrate ruled in the city's favor on five code enforcement cases, the association repaired the sites, the city sent a demand letter for fines owed, a judge ruled that the city had jurisdiction, and a motion for reconsideration was denied on September 25, 2026. He also said two active code enforcement cases involving Donald Smith Boulevard and Brandywood are scheduled for November 12 at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded after Council and staff reports.