

MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING ZEPHYRHILLS, FLORIDA

**Monday, September 15, 2025
6:00 PM**

Call to Order — Matthew Goldfarb, Chair

Youth Council Chair Matthew Goldfarb called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Roll Call — Assistant City Clerk Eileen Mercado

Present were members Matthew Goldfarb, Mahi Nooka, Na-Kowa Ryals, Janelle Lewis, Hailey Dester, and Lydia Ragsdale. Brody Bishop, Catherine Shell, and Noah Ringeisen were not present. Staff and Mentors Present Mayor Melonie Bahr Monson, Dr. Randy Stovall, Sam Abrahami and Assistant City Clerk Eileen Mercado

1. BUSINESS ITEMS

1.1 Re-alignment of Council: Mayor Monson

- a. Council Chair and Vice Chair can be re-organized each new school year if Council chooses
- b. New members

Mayor Melonie Bahr Monson explained that each September, coinciding with the new school year, the Youth Council may reorganize its leadership positions for Chair and Vice Chair. Discussion followed regarding leadership opportunities and eligibility.

Members agreed to maintain the current leadership for this meeting and revisit potential realignment at a later date. Mayor Monson noted that senior members would transition to mentor roles upon graduation.

The Youth Council discussed recruitment needs, with at least two new members anticipated. A prospective participant, Michael Barnes, expressed interest and was encouraged to submit an application via the City website.

Members discussed strategies for recruiting new participants, including distributing flyers at local schools, contacting honor societies, and collaborating with youth programs such as FBLA, FFA, and 4-H. Mayor Monson and members agreed to update and distribute promotional materials.

1.2 Discussion of New Project: Chairman

- a. Suggestion of Projects

Chair Goldfarb invited suggestions for new community service projects. Ideas included reading programs for the elderly, blanket or quilt drives, and Thanksgiving food distributions. Discussion followed about partnering with local organizations such as Meals on Wheels, CHIPZ (Community Hope and Intervention Program of Zephyrhills), and Oasis Café to assist with feeding and outreach programs.

Members agreed that serving meals as a group at Oasis Café would be a valuable volunteer activity. Additional discussion included potential participation in Wreaths Across America in December and exploring partnerships with Habitat for Humanity and the American Red Cross to support local recovery and fire relief efforts.

The Youth Council agreed that the primary 2025-26 project should focus on assisting homeless outreach and support services through partnerships with CHIPS and Oasis. Mayor Monson will coordinate with program directors Kathy MacKenzie (CHIPZ) and Pastor Fran Stubbs (Oasis) to attend the next meeting and discuss collaboration opportunities.

1.3 Discussion of Volunteer Opportunities: Chairman

- a. Veteran's Day Parade: Nov. 8 at 10:00am
- b. Christmas Parade: Dec. 6 at 7:00pm

The Youth Council discussed upcoming volunteer opportunities, including:

- Veterans Day Parade on November 8, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.
- Christmas Parade on December 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Monson noted that City staff would request giveaways from Bauducco for the Christmas Parade and arrange candy for Veterans Day. Members will walk in both parades and carry the Youth Council banner.

Chair Goldfarb encouraged members to confirm participation and help promote community engagement through visibility at these events.

1.4 Next Meeting Date & Agenda Items: October 6th @ 6:00pm - Finalize Projects

Mayor Monson discussed the Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days, scheduled for January 26-28, 2026, in Tallahassee. The event will include visits with legislators, including Senator Burgess and Representative Maggard. Members expressed interest in attending.

Mayor Monson will coordinate travel, lodging, and chaperones for those attending, and members will discuss availability with their parents before confirming participation.

ADJOURN

6:58 p.m.

Submitted by Ricardo Quiñones (not present)