

Respectfully submitted to the City Charter Review Board
for inclusion in the Lake City Charter as:

[Article I \(a\) Citizens' Bill of Rights](#)

April 21, 2010

CITIZENS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(A). The Lake City government (“The City”) has been created to protect the governed, not the governing. In order to provide the public with full and accurate information, to promote efficient administrative management, to make government more accountable and accessible, and to insure to all persons fair and equitable treatment, the following rights are guaranteed:

1. *Convenient Access.* Every person has the right to transact business with the City with a minimum of personal inconvenience. It shall be the duty of the City Manager and the City Council to provide convenient times and places for registration and voting, for required inspections, and for transacting business with the City.
2. *Truth in Government.* No City official or employee shall knowingly furnish false information on any public matter, nor knowingly omit significant facts when giving requested information to members of the public.
3. *Public Records.* All audits, reports, minutes, documents and other public records of the City and their boards, agencies, departments and authorities shall be open for inspection at reasonable times and places convenient to the public.
4. *Minutes, Ordinance and Policy Register.* The Clerk of the City Council shall maintain and make available for public inspection an ordinance and policy register separate from the minutes showing the votes of each member on all ordinances, policies and resolutions listed by descriptive title. Written minutes of all meetings and the ordinance/policy register shall be available for public inspection not later than 14 days after the conclusion of the meeting. Such minutes shall be posted on the official City web site as they are completed and those not yet approved shall be posted and labeled as “draft” until such time as they are approved.
5. *Right to be Heard.* So far as the orderly conduct of public business permits, any interested person has the right to appear before the City Council or any City agency, board or department for the presentation, adjustment or determination of an issue, request or controversy within the jurisdiction of the governmental entity involved. Matters shall be scheduled for the convenience of the public and the agenda shall be divided into approximate time periods so that the public may know approximately when a matter will be heard. Nothing shall prohibit any governmental entity or

agency from imposing reasonable time limits for the presentation of a matter.

6. *Right to Notice.* Persons entitled to notice of a City hearing shall be timely informed as to the time, place, purpose and nature of the hearing and the legal authority pursuant to which the hearing is to be held. Failure by an individual to receive such notice shall not constitute mandatory grounds for canceling the hearing or rendering invalid any determination made at such hearing. Copies of proposed ordinances, policies or resolutions shall be made available at least seven days prior to the hearing, unless the matter involves an emergency ordinance, policy or resolution.

7. *Right to Public Hearing.* Upon a timely request of any interested party, a public hearing shall be held by any City agency, board, department or authority, upon any significant policy decision to be issued by it. This provision shall not apply to any body whose duties and responsibilities are solely advisory.

At any zoning or other hearing, a party or his counsel shall be entitled to present his case or defense by oral or documentary evidence, to submit rebuttal evidence, and to conduct such cross-examination as may be required for a full and true disclosure of the facts. The decision of any such agency, board, department or authority must be based upon the facts in the record. Procedural rules establishing reasonable time and other limitations may be promulgated and amended from time to time.

8. *Notice of Actions and Reasons.* Prompt notice shall be given of the denial, in whole or in part, of a request of an interested person made in connection with any City administrative decision or proceeding when the decision is reserved at the conclusion of the hearing. A statement of the grounds for denial shall accompany the notice.

9. *Managers' and Attorneys' Reports.* The City Manager and City Attorney shall quarterly make a public status report on all major matters pending or concluded within their respective jurisdictions.

10. *Budgeting.* In addition to any budget required by state statute, the City Manager shall prepare a budget showing the total cost of each program for each budget year and the salaries of all city employees by department and job title. Prior to the City Council's first public hearing on the proposed budget required by state law, the City Manager shall make public a budget summary setting forth the proposed cost of each individual program and reflecting all major proposed increases and decreases in funds and personnel for each program, the purposes therefore, the estimated millage cost of each program and the amount of any contingency and carryover funds for each program.

11. *Quarterly Budget Comparisons.* The City Manager shall make public a quarterly report showing the actual expenditures during the quarter just ended against one quarter of the proposed annual expenditures set forth in

the budget. Such report shall also reflect the same cumulative information for whatever portion of the fiscal year that has elapsed.

12. *Adequate Audits.* An annual audit of the City shall be made by an independent certified public accounting firm in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. A summary of the results, including any deficiencies found, shall be made public and posted on the official City web site. In making such audit, proprietary functions shall be audited separately and adequate depreciation on proprietary facilities shall be accrued so the public may determine the amount of any direct or indirect subsidy.

13. *Financial Disclosure.* The City Council shall by ordinance make provision for the filing under oath or affirmation by all City elective officials, candidates for City and municipal elective offices, such employees as may be designated by ordinance, and such other public officials, and outside consultants who receive funds from the City, within the City and who may legally be included, of personal financial statements, copies of personal Federal income tax returns, or itemized source of income statements. Provision shall be made for preparing and keeping such reports current from time to time, and for public disclosure.

The City Council shall also make provision for the filing annually under oath of a report by full-time City and municipal employees of all outside employment and amounts received therefrom. The City Manager may require monthly reports from individual employees or groups of employees for good cause.

14. *Representation of Public.* The City Council shall endeavor to provide representation at all proceedings significantly affecting the City and its residents before State and Federal regulatory bodies.

(B). The foregoing enumeration of citizens' rights vests large and pervasive powers in the citizenry of Lake City. Such power necessarily carries with it responsibility of equal magnitude for the successful operation of government in the City. The orderly, efficient and fair operation of government requires the intelligent participation of individual citizens exercising their rights with dignity and restraint, so as to avoid any sweeping acceleration in the cost of government because of the exercise of individual prerogatives, and for individual citizens to grant respect for the dignity of public office.

(C). Remedies for Violations. In any suit by a citizen alleging a violation of this Article filed in the Columbia County Circuit Court pursuant to its general equity jurisdiction, the plaintiff, if successful, shall be entitled to recover costs as fixed by the Court. Any public official or employee who is found by the Court to have willfully violated this Article shall forthwith forfeit his office or employment.

(D). Construction. All provisions of this Article shall be construed to be supplementary to and not in conflict with the general laws of Florida. If any part of this Article shall be declared invalid, it shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.