

City of Keystone Heights City Council

Keystone Heights Septic to Sewer Workshop May 12, 2026 530pm

ANYONE WISHING TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING ANY TOPIC ON THIS EVENING'S AGENDA IS REQUESTED TO COMPLETE A CARD AND RETURN TO THE CITY CLERK. SPEAKERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUIRED TO LIMIT THEIR COMMENTS TO THREE (3) MINUTES. THE CITY COUNCIL PROHIBITS THE USE OF CELL PHONES AND PAGERS WHICH EMIT AN AUDIBLE SOUND DURING ALL MEETINGS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE AND RESCUE OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS ON CALL. PERSONS IN VIOLATION WILL BE REQUESTED TO LEAVE THE MEETING.

"Please turn off cell phones"

Date: May 12 2026 (530 pm)

Call to Order

1. Call to Order-Mayor Nina Rodenroth

Mayor Nina Rodenroth called the meeting to order at 530 pm.

Invocation

2. Invocation-James Booth-City Manager

City Manager Jamie Booth led the meeting in an invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

3. Pledge of Allegiance-Vice Mayor Welch

Mayor Nina Rodenroth led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, as Vice Mayor Dave Welch was not in attendance.

Roll Call

4. Roll Call-James Booth, City Manager: Councilman Ryan Knight, Vice Mayor Dave Welch, Councilman Dan Lewandowski, Mayor Nina Rodenroth, Councilman Brandon Ludwig

City Manager James Booth called the roll.
Councilman Ryan Knight-present
Vice Mayor Dave Welch arrived late
Councilman Dan Lewandowski-present
Mayor Nina Rodenroth-present
Councilman Brandon Ludwig-present

Public Comment

5. Public Comments

Dr. John Zieser, 565 Palmetto Ave, Keystone Heights, FL
Dr. Zieser wished to speak regarding how well the 4th-grade field trip happened.
Dr. Zieser also made commends about the planning and zoning board not being involved in permitting for a recent party that occurred withing the residential area of Keystone Heights.
Mr. Scott Slater, Save Our Lakes President
Mr. Slater informed the City Council that SOLO was supportive of the septic-to-sewer conversion.

Action Items

[6. Open Septic to Sewer Workshop \(Open Link for details\)](#)

📎 [2012 Septic to Sewer Proposal-1.pptx](#)

City Manager Jamie Booth summarized the documents provided to the city council. The manager used a graphic from the 2012 study showing the existing system and the recommended system from the study as a backdrop for the discussion. The council was provided a summary of the state statute, which requires new construction on parcels under one acre to utilize an Enhanced Nutrient Reduction System rather than a traditional septic system. This is a requirement in Keystone Heights because we sit in the Lower Saint Johns River Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) area.

The City Manager then discussed the history of the City of Keystone Heights Sewer System. In the early 2000s, the city had no sewer system. The Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) was founded to remove blight, particularly parking constraints. To get more parking behind downtown businesses, the septic tanks had to be removed and replaced with sewer lines. The build-out of the downtown sewer system occurred between 2005 and 2010, and we believe the total project cost was 4.6 million dollars. In 2012, CCUA conducted a study on how the rest of the system within the city limits could be built out. The cost to get to a complete system was estimated to be \$6 to \$7 million. On August 6th, 2012, the City Council decided not to pursue future building due to cost. Councilman Lewandoski confirmed that the city paid for the initial sewer build-out with bonds, and he recalls that they were paid off in 2019. Councilman Ludwig discussed that the comprehensive plan in the 2012 period was written to discourage annexation. Additional septic system growth could serve as an incentive to responsible growth.

Mr. Jeremy Johnston from the Clay County Utility Authority (CCUA) spoke about the septic-to-sewer conversion. He stated they are in the middle of building their budget and capital asset plan, and does not have a formal presentation at this time. CCUA's design for the capacity expansion of the treatment plant is complete, and the cost estimate is \$9 million. This expansion of capacity would be achieved within the same footprint of the existing plant. Cost of their infrastructure is paid for by equivalent residential customers (ERC) and would be \$15,000 per ERC if not augmented. He spoke regarding the Doctor's Lake septic-to-sewer conversion. The project, \$1.5M, was paid for by the state of Florida to pay for 68 customer conversions. CCUA paid separately for the sewer mains and connections. The cost for infrastructure construction has rapidly increased over the last 5 years. At this point, he summarized the prices and overall outlook of what the project for Keystone Heights may look like. He stated that CCUA builds the plant infrastructure but all the line work to connect to the treatment plant is the responsibility of the developer or individual user.

Section 9-154 of the city code requires a duty to connect if notified by the city clerk and the property is within 200 feet of a sewer line. The Department of Health and now the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is the overseeing agency for this state statutory requirement. This cost a resident \$18,000 a few years ago. The CCUA capacity fee of \$5,000 is just for plant capacity. There are more costs for pipe extensions and valve installation, which are paid for by developers or homeowners. Local plumbing industry cost estimates are \$5,000 to abandon the septic and get a pipe to a gravity main. The cost is about \$12,000 to abandon a septic system, install a grinder pump, and get to a pressure main. There are additional CCUA fees to tap the main, and then the previously mentioned capacity fee. The CCUA fees alone can be around \$14,000. Total costs per household could be \$20-30,000. CCUA is seeing \$40-50,000 per house for some current conversions. For their portions of the costs, CCUA does work with homeowners to finance their costs over 5-10 years. CCUA costs for the doctor's lake project were \$20,000 per connection. Properties that are not close enough to connect to a sewer system will likely see a \$8-15,000 cost to replace a failing septic system with an enhanced nutrient reduction septic system.

There was a general discussion about a phased approach for conversion, where smaller portions of the system would be built out over time. Councilman Lewandoski stated that the conversion of lakefront properties should be first in a phased approach to prevent septic backup of failed or failing systems.

There was a general discussion about sewer expansion all the way out the airport in support of future airport industry growth. CCUA needs to be careful not to build infrastructure that is not fully utilized to ensure they do not have stranded assets. Councilman Lewandoski wants to make sure we are planning for this potential future growth. There is a need for Bradford County, Clay County, the City of Keystone Heights, Keystone Heights Airport Authority, and the CCUA working group to work on this issue.

CCUA is expecting a 5% per year growth rate over the next 5 years based on a recent rate study.

Potential funding opportunities to offset septic to sewer conversion costs could be Legislative appropriations, FDEP water quality grants, or community development block grants (CBDG). CCUA recommends ensuring that 50-70% of potential customers are willing to convert before construction projects are undertaken.

Key workshop takeaways:

1) City Manager works with the city attorney to confirm if the city can establish authority for annexation with

future CCUA system expansions contiguous with city limits.

2. Mr. Johnston stated that he and his team will work on scoping and cost estimating a technical study that would support grant applications. He would recommend splitting the cost for this study between CCUA, City, and County. A recent similar study was around \$150,000. Any future grants should be a united front between Clay, Bradford, the city, and CCUA before submission to the state. CCUA's budget cycle is like the city so confirmation of the budget for the study should be completed over the next few months. Resident participation rates and phasing of construction would be a second part of the study effort.

Adjournment

[7. Adjournment, Mayor Nina Rodenroth](#)

Mayor Nina Rodenroth adjourned the meeting at 7:01 pm