TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21, 2023 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Walter Price, Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Vice Mayor
Bob Grenier, Council Member
Lori Pfister, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member

STAFF PRESENT

John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Antonio Fabre, Interim Community Development Director
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief
Phil Clark, Utilities Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Price called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He asked those who wished to speak on an agenda item to complete and submit a Request to Speak form.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Phil Clark, Utility Director

Mr. Clark provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said staff had no changes.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked to add Tab 3a – Airborne Brigade Plaque Presentation under Proclamations and Presentations.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Agenda with the addition of Tab 3a, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Erika Buigas, CEO/President of the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, provided a brief update on Chamber activities and events.

Tab 3. GFOA Award – Excellence in Financial Reporting

Mayor Price made the following presentation:

> *The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the City of Tavares by the Government Finance Officers' Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.*

Mayor Price presented the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting to the Finance Department Team, including Finance Director Lori Houghton, Accounting Clerk Judy Akerson Reid, Finance Manager Brianna Stack, Budget Analyst Brett Jones, Administrative Coordinator Bernadette Fisher, and Staff Accountant Susan Sharp.

Ms. Houghton thanked the City Council and Mr. Drury for their support.

Tab 3a. Phantom Airborne Brigade Plaque Presentation

Vice Mayor Gamble said he received a plaque on behalf of the City Council from the Phantom Airborne Brigade for the City's support. The Phantom Airborne Brigade completed a jump, including 140 veteran paratroopers, into Lake Dora on May 6, 2023. Vice Mayor Gamble presented the plaque to Mayor Price.

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt stated there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following Ordinances and Resolutions by title only:

RESOLUTION 2023-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM; MAKING FINDINGS; AUTHORIZING THE LOAN APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES FOR THE LAKE HERMOSA REGION BOOSTER PUMP STATION AND WATER TREATMENT PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT; AUTHORIZING THE LOAN APPLICATION; DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES; PROVIDING ASSURANCE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There was none.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 4. Approval of the June 7, 2023, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 5. XS Properties, LLC – Sidewalk Easement at 311 N. Joanna Avenue

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 6. SECO Energy – Utility Easement North of Slim Haywood Avenue

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 7. Resolution 2023-08 – SRF Loan Application for Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Project and Water Treatment Plant Expansion

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

Previously, the City Council authorized acceptance of a State Revolving Loan for the design of the Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Project, SRF Loan DW350980 to provide adequate water infrastructure for the hospital and charter school area. The loan document was executed on July 15, 2021. The disbursable amount of the loan is $247,416.

A timeline summary of previously approved amendments for the design loan are as follows:

- *Amendment One (1) was executed on April 28, 2022 which provided for additional time for project completion.*
- *Amendment Two (2) was executed on March 23, 2023 which provided for additional time for project completion, and changed the first loan repayment date to February 15, 2025.*

On February 28, 2023, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection provided notice to the City of Tavares that the City had been included on the funding list with FDEP for an SRF Loan for the construction of the Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Project.

On April 19, 2023, the City Council discussed the Construction Phase of the Project, and authorized application to the FDEP for an SRF Construction Loan for the Lake Hermosa Booster Pump project and the Water Treatment Plan Expansion. A copy of the agenda summary from the April 19, 2023 meeting is attached.

The FDEP has requested a Resolution to accompany the Application for the SRF Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Construction Loan. Resolution 2023-08 authorizes the Mayor to sign the application for the SRF Loan.

As indicated by FDEP and discussed by the City Council on April 19, 2023, the amount to be funded when awarded by FDEP is $7,235,190 with $5,799,152 designated for loan repayment and $1,447,038 designated for loan principal forgiveness.

When the SRF Lake Hermosa Construction Project Loan is awarded by FDEP, staff will bring the award letter and the loan document to the City Council for approval. The low-interest loan amount, loan term, loan payment, etc. will be included in the loan document received from FDEP. and brought back to the City Council.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to approve Resolution No. 2023-08 which authorizes the Mayor to execute a loan application with FDEP for an SRF Loan for the construction of the Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Project and to bring back the low-interest loan documents with all terms and conditions back to the Council at a future meeting for final approval.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer noted Council previously approved to apply for the loan and asked if the item for consideration was to add the resolution to the loan application. Ms. Houghton confirmed.

Council Member Singer asked how often the project would come before the Council before loan documentation was received. Ms. Houghton said the application and resolution would go to FDEP, who would review the funding list and approve or disapprove the application. Once approved, the City would receive an award letter with a loan document that would return to the Council.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve Resolution 2023-08, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 8. Board Appointments – Library Board

Mayor Price made the following presentation:

The Library Board currently has 5 seats open for appointment; 4 seats expiring June 2023, and one seat opening due to a resignation expiring June 2024. The City advertised the seats in the Daily Commercial and on the City website. The following requests for reappointment and new applications have been received. The open Library Board seats are for two-year terms, with the exception of one vacated seat that will expire in one year.

Request for Reappointment
- *Kathy Cyznick*

New Applications

- *George Cook*
- *Michael Ragsdale*

The City will continue to pursue filling any vacant seats that remain open after appointments are made.

Mayor Price said he would like to appoint Kathy Cyznick, George Cook, and Michael Ragsdale to the Library Board for 2-year terms ending June 2025.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Mayor's recommendation, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 9. Extension to the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for the Provision of Library Services

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

On September 10, 2019, the City of Tavares entered into an Interlocal Agreement with Lake County, FL for the provision of library services to join other communities in providing equal access to public library services, without charge, for all residents of Lake County. Tavares is one of sixteen libraries in the Lake County Library System that provides coordinated library services throughout the county and offers consistent plans, programs, policies, and procedures in the operation, maintenance, and development of library services throughout the area.

The previous agreement signed in 2019 with the county was a three-year term, expiring on September 30, 2022. The City and County then entered into a 12-month extension on September 13, 2022, to extend the agreement. County officials are requesting to extend the agreement for an additional 12-month period while they continue to review the funding metrics of their annual appropriations. Staff is seeking approval to extend this agreement for another year. A copy of the agreement is included in your agenda packet.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 10. School Board of Lake County Letter of Intent to Purchase Fred Stover Sports Complex

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

Staff recently received a non-binding letter of intent from Lake County Schools Superintendent Diane Kornegay for the purchase of the City's Fred Stover Sports Complex. In the letter, the following points are highlighted:

- *The School Board of Lake County, FL would purchase the property for a cash sum of $600,000.*
- *Tavares would still have access to the two Little League fields for one dollar ($1.00) a year for the next five (5) years for the City's Babe Ruth League.*
- *The School Board will maintain the complex and make upgrades to the facility, such as new sidewalks and parking that would benefit both the City and the School Board.*

Staff is seeking the Council's direction on developing a Purchase & Sale Agreement with the terms identified in the letter of intent.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to direct staff to negotiate and enter into a Purchase & Sale Agreement with the School Board of Lake County for the sale of Fred Stover Sports Complex based on the terms in the letter of intent.

Mr. Drury noted current and previous Council's worked toward selling Fred Stover Field to the Lake County School Board for over a decade. A Horizon Team was established, and the Council appointed Vice Mayor Gamble to serve as Council representative on the team. He said working with Vice Mayor Gamble, Mr. Aldrich, and the school administration had moved the project forward at lightning speed. He thanked the Horizon Team members for their efforts to bring a proposal back to the Council.

Mayor Price asked for comments from Vice Mayor Gamble.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the letter of intent was a win for the City, including the stipulation the City could utilize the field for five years at $1.00 per year until the completion of the Woodlea Sports Complex. Council Member Pfister commended Vice Mayor Gamble. She recognized Robert Wolfe, past Council Member and Mayor, who initiated discussion of the sale fifteen years prior.

Council Member Singer said the sale would benefit the City and Lake County School Board. He said he was happy to enter into the partnership and was in support.

Mayor Price asked if Tavares would no longer be responsible for any maintenance at Fred Stover Field once an agreement was completed. Mr. Aldrich confirmed. Vice Mayor Price asked how much annual savings the City anticipated in maintenance and operating expenses. Mr. Aldrich said approximately $100,000.

Mayor Price asked if the Woodlea fields would handle all the various leagues. Mr. Aldrich confirmed the future build-out of Woodlea Sports Complex would be sufficient. Mayor Price asked if the sale would result in anyone losing their job. Mr. Aldrich said no.

Mayor Price noted that while the property was priced lower than the appraisal, the win was that the community and schools would benefit. He stated his support.

Council Member Singer said the school board would make 1 million dollars in improvements within five years and noted fluctuations in past appraisal prices.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Mayor Price and Council Member Singer thanked Vice Mayor Gamble and Mr. Aldrich for their efforts.

Tab 11. FY 2024 Proposed Budget Calendar

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

> *The FY 2024 Proposed Budget Calendar is attached. Currently, the schedule calls for the first City Council budget workshop to be on Wednesday, July 5, 2023, right after the July 4th holiday. Two options are provided below to adjust the July budget workshops to maximize attendance by the public:*
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> 1. *Adjust the schedule to improve public participation by shifting the July 5th Council meeting and first Budget Workshop to July 19th, 2023. This results in holding one meeting on July 19th to present the General Fund and establish the Maximum Millage Rate with further public budget workshops in August and September to further adjust the proposed budget.*
> 2. *No schedule adjustment. (Workshop on the 5th and another workshop on the 19th, 2023 with the setting of the Tentative Maximum Millage Rate.)*
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> *Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to adjust the schedule to improve public participation by shifting the July 5th Council meeting and first Budget Workshop to July 19th, 2023. This results in holding one meeting on July 19th to present the General Fund and establish the Maximum Millage Rate with further public budget workshops in August and September to further adjust the proposed budget.*

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister inquired about holding one meeting in July; July 19. Mr. Drury said many people would be on holiday during the week of July 5. Having a budget workshop on a date that is not a holiday week provides an open and transparent budget process allowing the opportunity for the public to attend.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Edd Holder, Dead River Road, Tavares, recommended the Council build a new pickleball court. He said it would be three years before pickleball courts would be completed at the Golden Triangle Regional Park at the current YMCA. Mr. Holder recommended utilizing one of the tennis courts at Aesop's Park to build a court sooner rather than later. Mr. Holder congratulated the Council on the sale of Fred Stover Field and said Mr. Stover labored many years taking care of the ballfield and would be pleased. Mr. Drury said staff would bring back pickleball court options for the Council's consideration.

Michael Watkins, 805 Summeral Avenue, Tavares, recognized the Tavares Police and Library Departments and said he appreciated their events held for the community. He asked Council to complete the West End Main Street project and inquired about possible uses for the Major St. Clair Abrams home.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 12. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury noted the previous Community Development Director left the City to further his career and wished him well. He asked Mr. Fabre to transition from Deputy Director to Interim Director. Mr. Drury said Mr. Fabre would work with the Planning and Zoning Board and Council for a seamless transition. He welcomed Mr. Fabre as Interim Director and said he would update the Council as the position was permanently filled.

Mr. Drury noted a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new Public Works Facility and included the entire Council, Lake Technical College Board Members, and most County Commissioners. He said the partnership was unique, where the future diesel mechanics for Florida would be trained. He thanked all who attended.

Mr. Clark noted plants and floating bee mats were being replaced in Tavares Ecological Park.

Mr. Aldrich said the 15 and under Babe Ruth baseball all-star season was completed. He congratulated the team for their efforts.

Mr. Aldrich said the July 4th Celebration and parade would be held Tuesday, July 4th. He noted that Chief Keith would emcee the event and asked those Council members interested in judging to contact him.

Mr. Fabre said he is excited to serve as Interim Community Development Director and looked forward to working with the Staff and Planning and Zoning Board members. He noted a preconstruction meeting for Avalon Phase II was recently held. He said the City of Eustis was included in the meeting as the development would extend to Clay Boulevard with 236 units and 78 townhome units.

Tab 13. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister

Council Member Pfister said she would like to have another discussion about moving the 4th of July Celebration from a parade on Main Street to a boat parade on the water. Mr. Drury asked the Council if there were objections to agendize a discussion at an upcoming meeting. There were none.

Council Member Pfister said she attended the Public Works Groundbreaking Ceremony. She thanked those Department Directors for attending, with special thanks to Mr. Drury. Council Member Pfister noted during the ceremony she thought of all the accomplishments achieved under Mr. Drury's direction. She stated Mr. Drury motivates staff and lets them do their jobs well, including finding ways to obtain grants. Mr. Drury said it had been an honor.

Council Member Grenier

Council Member Grenier discussed the 2007 Woodlea House fire and said the new Public Works Complex rose from its ashes. He said the Council takes pride in providing the best services possible for the citizens.

Council Member Grenier said he attended an event at the Library on June 20, 2023, where Mr. Drury and Mr. Tweedie provided a presentation on their trip to Taiwan. He said Mr. Drury and Mr. Tweedie did a great job, and everyone was excited and enjoyed the presentation.

Council Member Grenier said Tavares Historian Betty Burleigh passed on June 20, 2023. He expressed his condolences to the family of Ms. Burleigh.

Council Member Singer

Council Member Singer noted he attended the Public Works Groundbreaking Ceremony and thanked Mr. Dillon for all his efforts. He said there was a great turnout and looked forward to the facility coming to fruition.

Council Member Singer expressed his condolences to the family of Betty Burleigh.

Council Member Singer said he looked forward to the July 4th Celebration event.

Council Member Singer congratulated and welcomed Mr. Fabre to his new position.

Vice Mayor Gamble

Vice Mayor Gamble recognized Kelly Randall of the Lake County School Board Growth Planning Department in the audience. He said she represented the School Board regarding the Stover Field Complex and appreciated her contribution to the project.

Vice Mayor Gamble expressed his condolences to the family of Betty Burleigh.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he attended the tail end of the Taiwan Library Presentation and said it was fascinating. He said the summer camp children who attended enjoyed the event.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he enjoyed the Public Works Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Vice Mayor Gamble commended the Babe Ruth All-Star Teams and their efforts in representing the City of Tavares.

Mayor Price

Mayor Price expressed his condolences to the family of Betty Burleigh.

Mayor Price said he was honored to attend the Public Works groundbreaking ceremony. He thanked those who attended and said he looked forward to the project coming to fruition.

Mayor Price said he looked forward to the July 4th Celebration and hoped all present could attend.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully,

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Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk