



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 6, 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, Utilities Director

Utilities Director Phil 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 the staff had no changes.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

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

Attorney Holt said there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following Resolutions by title only:

RESOLUTION 2023-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE 2023 FISCAL YEAR ADOPTED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, REPRESENTING THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE ADOPTED BUDGET, AND PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RESOLUTION 2023-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY FOR HURRICANE IDALIA

RESOLUTION 2023-19

A RESOLUTION OF CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA; AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY THROUGH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR ASSISTANCE RELATED TO THE TROPICAL STORM/HURRICANE IDALIA

**EMERGENCY UPON PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION; AND
AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE
DOCUMENTS RELATED TO FEDERAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR
THE EMERGENCY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY,
AND EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Ms. Novack noted Millage and Budget Resolutions 2023-16 and 2023-17 would be read in their entirety during the Budget Hearing at 5:05 p.m.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There were no requests.

MOTION

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

Tab 2. Approval of the August 16, 2023, City Council Meeting and Budget Workshop Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. Memorandum of Agreement with the Florida Department of Health for Facility Use

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 4. Resolution 2023-15 – Second Budget Amendment for FY 2023

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

The attached resolution represents increases and/or decreases to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2023. Appropriation increases represent capital projects, ARPA expenditures, grant expenditures, and prior year/project encumbrance rollovers. In addition, the Resolution also reflects transfers between individual accounts within adopted budgets for all departments.

This resolution represents the SECOND AMENDMENT to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Staff recommends Option 1, for Council to move to approve Resolution 2023-15, amending the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council. There were none.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Resolution 2023-15, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 5. Resolution 2023-18 – Declaration of Emergency – Hurricane Idalia

Ms. Novack made the following presentation:

The City declares a State of Emergency when it believes a disaster may be imminent and is severe enough to require State aid to supplement local resources in preventing or alleviating damages, loss, hardship, or suffering.

The week of August 28, 2023, Hurricane Idalia threatened the State of Florida, and in preparation for potential impact, a Declaration of Emergency was promulgated by the City of Tavares Emergency Management Director and the City Administrator to be signed by the Mayor.

Staff recommends the Council approve Option 1, move to approve Resolution 2023-18 Declaration of State of Emergency.

Mr. Drury noted a revised Resolution was provided to the Council at the dais. Ms. Novack stated the Resolution was revised to include the date the Mayor signed the Declaration of Emergency: August 28, 2023.

Council Member Singer noted that the Declaration of Emergency indicated a scrivener's error. He asked Attorney Holt to verify the dated Proclamation and Resolution were sufficient. Attorney Holt said the scrivener's error reflected the actual date of signing was August 28, 2023. She said the minutes and notation regarding the error would confirm that date. Attorney Holt said there was no legal deficiency.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve Resolution 2023-18, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Resolution 2023-19 – Authorization to Apply for FEMA – Tropical Storm/Hurricane Idalia

Ms. Houghton said Resolution 2023-19 followed the Declaration of Emergency previously approved and authorized the application for Federal public assistance, which requires single audit reporting as a grant.

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

On August 26, 2023, Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, issued Executive Order Number 23-171 declaring a State of Emergency for Alachua, Bay, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, and Wakulla Counties.

On August 28, 2023, in response to an increased threat of risk to the Florida Peninsula from Tropical Storm /Hurricane Idalia, Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, issued Executive Order 23-172 amending his Executive Order stating that because weather conditions were projected to constitute a major disaster, the Governor declared that a state of emergency exists in the State of Florida. The Amended Executive Order states that the Governor declares that a state of emergency exists in Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Nassau, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor Union, Volusia, and Wakulla Counties.

Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, Emergency Management provides for Local Emergencies; and Lake County was included under a State of Emergency by Governor DeSantis Executive Order Number 23-172.

When a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Lake County is issued due to the impact of Tropical Storm/Hurricane Idalia, the City of Tavares will be eligible to recover costs related to the disaster through Federal Public Assistance, FEMA.

Resolution 2023-19 provides authorization for the City Administrator to make an application for Federal Public Assistance for eligible Tropical Storm/Hurricane Idalia Disaster related expenditures. Resolution 2023-19 also provides authorization for the City Administrator to execute agreements and contracts related to and required by application for Federal Public Assistance.

Staff recommends Option 1, for Council to approve Resolution 2023-19 authorizing the City Administrator to apply for Federal Public Assistance related to Tropical Storm/Hurricane Idalia, upon eligibility by Presidential Disaster Declaration, and to execute all documents related to and required by the application for Federal Public Assistance for Hurricane Idalia.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if reimbursement for disaster preparation included items other than destruction. Mr. Drury said overtime for Police and Fire services throughout the storm would be included.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Resolution 2023-19, seconded by Troy Singer.

Ms. Houghton noted the request is predicated on the Presidential Declaration. Should the Governor's amended declaration not carry forward to the Presidential Declaration for the emergency, the City would not apply.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 7. ARPA Project Status Update

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

At the previous City Council meeting Vice Mayor Gamble requested an update on the status of the City's ARPA funded projects. An ARPA project status update report is attached to this agenda summary.

Four projects on the list are currently under design, in the planning phase for the project, or out to bid.

- *Marina Parking Area Stormwater Improvements*
- *Seaplane Base Tav-Lee Trail Bypass Stormwater Project*
- *Paint Exterior of Civic Center/Library/TRA Room*

One project is pending Lease Negotiations and Council approval for the negotiated lease contract.

- *Historic Fire Station*

Mr. Drury noted thirteen (13) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects were completed, nine (9) projects were in progress, and one (1) project was on hold. He said the project on hold was the Historic Fire Station, and a lease would come before the Council at a future meeting.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about the Woodlea Sports Complex shade structures. Mr. Aldrich said the product was on-site, and underground utilities were being relocated.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted that \$300 had not been spent on the project and asked if it was an overage. Ms. Houghton said \$300 had not been encumbered, and since the project was ongoing, it would be left in the project until it was finalized.

Tab 8. America in Bloom Discussion

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

America in Bloom is a national awards program for cities, towns, colleges and business districts that “strives to empower communities to beautify and improve the overall quality of life through their programs, grant opportunities, libraries and more.” The program focuses on seven areas of impact within the municipal, business, and residential sectors.

Tavares enrolled in the program in 2017 and has been recognized numerous times as a participant, including:

- *Coolest Place for Kids 2017*
- *Overall Impression 2017*
- *Environmental Efforts 2018*
- *Overall Impression 2019*
- *Best Innovative Project or Program 2019*
- *Champion Community 2019*
- *Tavares did not participate during 2020 & 2021, when the program was administered virtually, due to Covid 19.*
- *Overall Impression nominee in 2022*

America in Bloom advisors visited Tavares this past May. Their recommendations for awards or recognition will be announced during the National Symposium. The National Symposium offers educational sessions, informative tours, and an opportunity to network with other community leaders and share ideas for improvement and success through connection and collaboration. The 2023 symposium will be held in Spartanburg, SC with the host community being Greenwood, SC.

Registration for the full conference, airfare, and lodging is \$1218 per attendee. It has been past practice to send staff and Council members to this event.

An opportunity is provided to identify which City Council members will attend this year.

A discussion was held, and Council Members Pfister and Singer said they would be happy to attend the America in Bloom Symposium on behalf of the City.

Mr. Drury said Staff would make the arrangements and provide the information to Council Member Pfister and Council Member Singer. He noted the event dates were September 28 through 30, 2023, in Spartanburg/Greensboro, South Carolina.

Tab 9. Dispatch Agreement with Lake County Sheriff's Office for Dispatch Services

Chief Coursey made the following presentation:

The Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) provides dispatch and 911 services for the Tavares Police Department. The agreement has not changed from previous years, including the cost.

Staff recommends Option 1, for Council to approve the agreement with LCSO for dispatch and 911 services.

Council Member Singer said the agreement with the Sheriff's Office was a significant cost savings for the City. He said the cost had not changed from the previous year and noted his support.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Dispatch Services Agreement with the Lake County Sheriff's Office, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if the Council should pre-approve a Mayor's Declaration of Emergency for possible hurricane Lee. Mr. Drury said a City declaration would be made on a date and time consistent with a Presidential order. He noted a Mayor's Declaration of Emergency would be used for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement. Mr. Drury said the Mayor had authorization to issue a Declaration of Emergency on behalf of the City.

Mayor Price said he received several emails from citizens regarding golf cart laws and would like statutes and regulations clarified regarding insurance. Mr. Drury said information could be placed on the City website identifying state law.

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Mayor Gamble said that at the last budget meeting, there was a discussion regarding the St. Clair Abrams house. He noted his support for purchasing the home as long as positive action and events for the City are held at the building. He said it was his understanding the building would be used as a joint effort with the Tavares Library. Mr. Drury confirmed.

Mayor Price said he would like the City to keep the building as original as possible. Mr. Drury said the plans would be brought back to the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked Council Member Grenier if he had the original plans for the house. Council Member Grenier said he believes there was information in the Historical Research Center, including construction photographs.

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Debbi Weinert, 724 Lake Dora Drive, Tavares, stated she began a not-for-profit organization called the Triangle Community Alliance. She said the organization's flagship program was the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program. Sixty-nine (69) children had been enrolled in Tavares as of the end of August 2023 and would receive books from birth to age five (5) to foster reading. She said a scarecrow contest would be held to help raise funds for the program.

XV. REPORTS

Tab 12. City Administrator Report

Chief Keith noted a Patriots Day event would be held on Monday, September 11, 2023, on the first floor of the Historic Courthouse beginning at 8:30 a.m. The program was in remembrance of the September 11, 2001 attacks, and youth would read some of the names of those lost in the attacks in conjunction with other events and readings throughout the nation. He invited those present to attend the event.

Mr. Aldrich noted that on Saturday, September 16, 2023, the Tavares Library and Friends of the Library would host a Spanish Heritage Festival from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. He invited those present to attend the event.

Tab 13. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister commended Mr. Dillon on the Wooton Wonderland project. She said she had seen many children enjoying the playground. Council Member Pfister inquired about yellow construction tape at the site. Mr. Drury said an inspection was completed each morning, and a loose bolt was identified. He said the contractor would make repairs the following day.

Council Member Grenier said he visited Wooton Wonderland and witnessed families enjoying the park. He said he is proud of the new Wooton Wonderland and looked forward to the Splash Park opening in Spring 2024.

Council Member Grenier said the Tavares Library would have a guest speaker on September 11, 2023, at 12:30 for a 9/11 presentation.

Council Member Grenier said the Public Works project was progressing and looked forward to completion.

Council Member Grenier noted yellow lights were placed in the Chris Daniels Memorial Fountain for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and part of the Gold Ribbon Program.

Council Member Singer said he took his great-niece to Wooton Wonderland, and the children were happy and excited. He said it was nice to see participation at the soft opening. Council Member Singer said the park was great for the entire community and would be enjoyed by many generations.

Council Member Singer said he attended a recent B.E.T.T.E.R. meeting. He thanked Pastor Watkins for coordinating the event and said Chief Coursey spoke about the Police Department, community, trust, and transparency. Council Member Singer said the City, County, and State were fortunate to have great police forces.

Council Member Singer thanked Mr. O'Keefe for his hard work preparing for Hurricane Idalia. He said the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments were all hands on deck and ready for anything coming our way. He thanked everyone who had a hand in preparing for the potential storm. Mr. Drury noted sandbags were available in two locations for the first time in the City.

Vice Mayor Gamble thanked those involved in Hurricane Idalia preparations, with special thanks to Mr. O'Keefe for keeping the Council informed before, during, and after the storm. Vice Mayor Gamble noted the dedication of employees away from their families. He said he feels safe due to the protection of the Fire, Police, and Utilities departments.

Vice Mayor Gamble thanked Mr. Drury for changing the lights to yellow in the Chris Daniels Memorial Park fountain. He noted the light colors were changed at no cost to the City.

Mayor Price thanked those Department Directors and staff who manned the Tavares EOC and Lake County EOC. He said they worked 12-hour shifts. Mayor Price commended Mr. O'Keefe for his organizational efforts. He said it is a professional group that was prepared for a storm, and it was nice the damage assessment was minimal.

Mayor Price adjourned the City Council regular meeting at 4:45 p.m. He noted the Public Hearing for Tentative Millage and Budget would be held at 5:05 p.m.

Mayor Price called the Budget Hearing to order at 5:05 p.m.

XI. BUDGET HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 TENTATIVE MILLAGE & BUDGET – READING OF TENTATIVE MILLAGE & BUDGET RESOLUTIONS – 5:05 P.M.

Tab 10. Approve Resolution 2023-16 for Tentative Millage Rate for FY 2024 – First Reading

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2023-16 in its entirety as follows:

RESOLUTION 2023 - 16

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 6.5950 FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024; SETTING FORTH THE PERCENT BY WHICH THE MILLAGE RATE IS GREATER THAN THE "ROLLED-BACK" RATE.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida on September 6, 2023, adopted the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Tentative Millage Rate following a public hearing as required by Florida Statute 200.065.

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida, following due public notice as required by law, held a second public hearing on September 20, 2023, as required by Florida Statute 200.065 on the 2023-2024 Millage Rate; and

WHEREAS, the gross taxable value for operating purposes not exempt from taxation within Lake County has been certified by the County Property Appraiser to the City of Tavares as \$1,498,440,782.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida, that:

- 1. The City of Tavares Fiscal Year 2023-2024 operating millage rate to be levied is hereby set at 6.5950 mills, which millage rate is greater than the rolled back rate of 6.1590 mills by 7.08%.**
- 2. The voted debt service millage rate is set at .1817 mills for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.**
- 3. This Resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.**

PASSED AND RESOLVED this 20th day of September 2023 by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City Administrator and staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2024 for Council's consideration totaling \$61,687,849 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY 2024 includes, among many other items, the following:

- 1. Similar level of service.*
- 2. Decreased the General Fund millage rate for the 5th year in a row from 6.6590 to 6.5950 (which is 7.08% above the rollbacked rate).*
- 3. Debt Service millage rate decreased (from .2074 to .1817).*
- 4. Estimated reserve balances that exceed GFOA recommendations.*
- 5. Fire Assessment level funded (no rate increase).*
- 6. Employee raises of 6.0%.*
- 7. Two new part-time Police Officer reserves, and three new SAFER grant funded Firefighter/Paramedics.*
- 8. Street paving \$250,000.*
- 9. Expanded programs are cut.*

Previously, the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget at the following public meetings:

- 7/19/2023 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General Fund Budget)*
- 7/19/2023 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Set Maximum Tentative Millage rate)*
- 8/02/2023 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General, Utility, and Special Revenue Fund Budgets)*
- 8/16/2023 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Capital Improvement Plan Presentation)*
- 8/16/2023 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Discussion on FY 2024 Proposed Budget)*

A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council. During the last Budget Workshop City Council voted to add the following items to the proposed budget:

- 1. CCTV Security Improvements - \$100,000.*
- 2. West Main Street Gateway Feature - \$206,500.*
- 3. Design and Construct Sidewalks and Street Lights Along the Southern Part of Slim Haywood Road - \$125,000.*

All three items were added to the Infrastructure Sales Tax fund budget by utilizing updated State revenue estimates for Infrastructure Sales Tax revenue.

The Final Public Hearing to adopt the FY 2024 Millage Rate and the FY 2024 Budget will be held at 5:05 p.m. on September 20, 2023, at which time the final millage rates will be adopted.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to take public input and approve the Tentative Millage for Fiscal Year 2024 as reflected in Resolution 2023-16.

Mayor Price asked for public input from the audience.

Debbi Weinert, 724 Lake Dora Drive, Tavares, said seeing the millage rate decrease and a balanced budget was impressive. She thanked the Council for doing a great job.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer said \$522,797 in infrastructure sales tax was not appropriated. He said the Council added security cameras, the West Main Street Gateway sign, and the Slim Haywood sidewalk and lighting project at \$431,500, with \$91,000 remaining. Council Member Singer asked to use the remaining funds for road repaving.

Mayor Price said an extra \$221,368 remained in Reserves and would like someone to make a motion to take those monies to lower the millage rate further.

Council Member Pfister asked how much the \$221,368 would affect the millage rate. Mr. Drury said that amount would come from reserves to lower the millage rate from 6.5950 to 6.4473.

Council Member Singer asked if it would affect the current recommended GFOA Reserves. Ms. Houghton said it would meet the GFOA minimum balance and bring Reserves from 2.67 months to 2.5 or 2.4 months. She said the use of Reserves would be used for one-time expenditures. Brett Jones, Budget Analyst, said if \$221,000 were taken out of Reserves and reduced the millage rate to equal the same amount, with the assumption the homeowner's house was valued at \$200,000 in the current year, the following year's millage rate would decrease the property tax by \$2.00 per month or \$24.00 for the year.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted his concern regarding unknown situations where Reserve funds may be needed, such as fuel price increases or storm damage costs. He said he feels comfortable with the funds in Reserves.

Council Member Pfister said while she would like to get to a rollback rate, she felt more comfortable keeping the funds in Reserves. She noted many items were removed from the budget and preferred a healthier Reserve level for the unknown.

Council Member Singer asked for the GFOA recommendation. On a national basis, Ms. Houghton said the GFOA suggested a minimum of two months of Reserves. She advised revenues for the General Fund generally come in mid to late December and 2.5 months from the start of the fiscal year. Council Member Singer said while he likes to try to get the millage rate as low as possible, the City had worked for several years to get Reserves up, and this was one of the first years the City exceeded the GFOA recommendation. He said he would like to see the millage lowered at some point.

Council Member Singer reiterated the infrastructure sales tax could only be used for specific projects and had no effect on the millage rate. Council Member Singer said he would feel comfortable moving forward with the \$91,000 expenditure for road repaving.

Council Member Grenier concurred with Vice Mayor Gamble and Council Member Pfister. He said the funds were needed in Reserves and supported lowering the millage rate for the fifth year.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted Hurricane Lee could cause significant damage, and FEMA may not reimburse the City for a year or two. Those Reserve funds would come into play during that type of scenario. Mr. Drury and Ms. Houghton confirmed.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve Resolution 2023-16 as presented, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 11. Approve Resolution 2023-17 for Tentative Budget for FY 2024 – First Reading

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2023-17 in its entirety as follows:

RESOLUTION 2023-17

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 - 2024.

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES,
FLORIDA:**

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the tentative 2023-2024 budget was held at the Tavares City Hall Council Chambers in the City of Tavares, Florida, Lake County, Florida on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 5:05 p.m., as required by Florida Statutes 200.065; and

WHEREAS, the general public was given an opportunity to express its views pertaining to the tentative budget, and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved the tentative budget for 2023-2024, and

WHEREAS, a second public hearing on the proposed 2023-2024 budget was held in the Council Chambers at the Tavares City Hall, 201 East Main Street in the City of Tavares, Florida, on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 5:05 p.m.,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Budget for 2023-2024 fiscal year for the City of Tavares, Florida is hereby adopted by the Tavares City Council in the amount of \$61,687,849 at the public hearing this 20th day of September 2023.

This resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Mr. Drury said the public hearing was for the Council to take public input on the tentative budget, after which the discussion brought back to the Council to discuss the \$91,000 request made by Council Member Singer to place in the Road Fund.

Mr. Drury said, as indicated in the companion agenda summary, a balanced budget had been created for the next fiscal year that provides a similar level of service: Library, Garbage Collection, Police Services, Fire Services, et al. While maintaining that similar level of service that the Public was offered, the millage rate decreased for the fifth year from 6.6590 mils to 6.5905 mils. The debt service rate also decreased, and Reserves were increased to above GFOA standards. The Fire Assessment was not increased, employees were taken care of, Police Officers were added under the Reserve Program, and three new Firefighters were added. \$250,000 was allocated to continue to pave streets. Five public budget workshops were held for the Council to create a balanced budget with a reduced millage rate of \$61,687,849.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Public.

Michael Watkins, 805 Summerall Avenue, Tavares, said he enjoyed participating on the Tavares Library Advisory Board for the past couple of years. He said the money the Library asks for would be well spent, and the available resources were valuable for the youth. Mr. Watkins asked the Council not to allow the St. Clair Abrams house to be used to cause division among the citizens.

Council Member Singer said it was a great budget and was proud of the hard work the Staff, Finance Department, and Mr. Drury did to put it together. He said the budget hits the highlights the Council requested. Council Member Singer said he was happy to reduce the millage rate for the fifth year, take care of employees, add to Reserves, and include many wonderful projects. He said the City was under budget each year in road paving and would like to use the additional \$91,000 from Infrastructure Sales Tax for street repaving.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to have funds left from Infrastructure Sales Tax in the amount of \$91,000 to go to street repaving, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve Resolution 2023-17 with the change [of \$91,000 from Infrastructure Sales Tax to be used for street repaving], seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk