



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 18, 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
Amanda Boggus, 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

Phil Clark, Utilities Director, 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

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Erika Buigas, President/CEO of the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, provided a high-level update on Chamber activities. She noted the Taste of Tavares event would be held on November 30, 2023, in Wooton Park with vendors and participating restaurants.

Tab 3. Debi Weinert Presentation on Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Debi Weinert will be providing a summary of what she is doing to bring the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program to Tavares and Lake County. By way of background, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five, through funding shared by Dolly Parton and local community partners in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and the Republic of Ireland. It is a book gifting program which mails high-quality, free books to 2.6 million children around the world each month.

Debi Weinert's goal is to offer this program to children of Lake County, Florida and to get children in Lake County registered in the program, beginning first with the children of Tavares.

Ms. Weinert provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Triangle Community Alliance, Inc. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Lake County, Florida program.

Tab 4. Recognition of Awards from Florida Events and Festivals Association (FEFA) for City of Tavares Special Events

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

The Florida Festivals & Events Association (FFEA) is a not-for-profit association dedicated to supporting and promoting more than 5,500 festivals, events, and fairs in the state of Florida through education, networking, and dissemination of information and the cultivation of high standards. FEFA recently announced the winners of its annual SUNsational Awards during its 29th annual convention and tradeshow. The Program recognizes members' innovation, individuality, and creative collaboration.

Nominations were accepted in ten categories, including Printed Materials; Outdoor Advertisement; PR / Media Campaigns; Photos; Promotional Items; T-shirts; Broadcast Media; and Multimedia Marketing. Events and Programming. Each category included three budget levels. Over 200 events submitted their materials for consideration.

The City of Tavares Economic Development Department was proudly recognized in multiple categories;

*2nd Place – Rocktoberfest Event Guide / Brochure designed by Cheri Moan
3rd Place – Planes, Tunes & BBQ Promotional Mailer designed by Cheri Moan
3rd Place – Planes, Tunes & BBQ Radio Ad copy written by Cheri Moan & produced by CJ Voices*

Representing the City of Tavares at the conference was Cheri Moan, Special Events and Operations Manager.

Mr. Tweedie commended and congratulated Ms. Moan for her hard work on City events. Mayor Price and the Council presented the Florida Festival & Events Association awards to Ms. Moan and Mr. Tweedie.

Mayor Price moved Tab 9 to be heard next on the agenda.

Tab 9. 2023 America in Bloom Update

Traci Anderson, Parks Operations Manager and America in Bloom Program Coordinator made the following presentation:

At this year's America In Bloom Symposium, Councilmembers Lori Pfister and Troy Singer, Director of Public Works James Dillon, Parks Operations Manager Traci Anderson, and Cemetery Sexton and ISA Certified Arborist Clay Moffis represented Tavares at the Awards Celebration that took place from September 28th through 30th in Spartanburg, SC. The symposium provided an excellent opportunity to network, learn, and acknowledge outstanding communities.

Tavares was recognized as the Champion Community in the Population Category of 20,000-25,000, which is the most coveted and top honor. Additionally, we were awarded the "Coolest Downtown" and recognized for

Overall Impression. These awards complement our 2017 "Coolest Place for Kids" win. Furthermore, our advisors, Sue Amatangelo and Ed Hooker, who visited us in April, nominated Tavares for the Youth Involvement Special Award and Outstanding Achievement for Community Vitality at the 2023 National Symposium. Tavares is a trailblazer in the America in Bloom cohorts, having established the first AIB chapter in the country within Lake County. This achievement has inspired others, and the first is now being replicated in Washington, DC, and the greater Chicago area.

The Department of Public Works Team is grateful to Council, our City leadership team, and the community for their unwavering support, without whom these successes would not have been possible. City staff would also like to take a picture with Council, City Administrator, and AIB awards to commemorate this momentous occasion.

Ms. Anderson recognized the following staff and community members who participated and assisted in the America in Bloom program:

- Lake County Commissioner Kirby Smith was instrumental in establishing the Lake County chapter of America in Bloom, the first chapter in the nation.
- Veronica Dau, Keep Lake Beautiful and the facilitator of Lake County Chapter of America in Bloom.
- Rebecca Campbell, Library Director
- Patrick Walsh, Covanta Area Assistant Manager
- Ponch Elkins, Fleet Operations Supervisor
- Katrina Aho, Adventure Outdoor Paddle
- Scott Bisping , FWC Regional Fisheries Administrator
- Nick Trippel, FWC Freshwater Fisheries Resources Division
- Pastor Mike Watkins, Friendship Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
- Ileanne Buigas, Executive Director of Lake County Museum of Art
- Lou Ronca, Sunnyland Chapter Antique and Classic Boat Society Scampy program (Sunnyland chapter apprentice mentoring program for youth)
- Debby Blais, Community Services Coordinator
- Amy Pattee, Assistant Manager of Pavilion on the Lake
- Carrie Petroski, Manager of Pavilion on the Lake
- Lela Braunsch, Florida Forest Service
- Josh Hampton, Florida Forest Service
- Jamielyn Daugherty, Residential Horticulture Agent UF/IFAS
- Chris Evans, Volunteer
- Regina Doherty, Volunteer
- Dawn Pierson, Volunteer
- Matt Pictrowski, Volunteer
- Kellie Singer, Volunteer
- Sandie Singer, Volunteer
- Tavares Leadership Team
- Public Works Director James Dillon

- Parks Management Division Team, including Ryan Krull, Taylor Degregorio, Larry Cooper, Amanda Fiorelli, and Clay Moffis

Ms. Anderson thanked the City Council for their support.

Council Member Singer said it was an honor to be present when the City won the America in Bloom awards. He said it was great to see the community come together to help make the program come to fruition. Council Member Singer thanked Ms. Anderson for her efforts.

Mayor Price and the Council presented the America in Bloom awards to the Public Works Team.

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

Attorney Boggus stated 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 Ordinance at Second Reading by title only:

ORDINANCE 2023-11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 17-54, 17-55, 17-56, AND SECTION 17-75 PROVIDING FOR UPDATES TO WATER, WASTEWATER, RECLAIMED WATER, AND STORMWATER RATE SCHEDULES BASED ON A COMPREHENSIVE RATE STUDY RECOMMENDATION BY RAFTELIS, RATE CONSULTANTS; PROVIDING FOR RATE ADJUSTMENTS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2028, AND PROVIDING FOR AUTOMATIC RATE INCREASES OF CPI PLUS 1% TO RESUME AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2028; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

MOTION

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

Tab 5. Approval of the October 4, 2023, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 6. Ordinance 2023-11 – Rate Study Ordinance – Second Reading

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

In order to meet revenue sufficiency requirements for Water, Wastewater, Reclaim, and Stormwater debt (bank loans, bonds, and State Revolving Fund Loans), a comprehensive utility sufficiency rate study for the Utility Funds was completed. A comprehensive rate study is accomplished every five (5) years in order to meet debt covenant requirements.

A Rate Study was completed in May 2009 and presented to the City Council on June 18, 2009. This study recommended automatic annual rate increases for water, wastewater and reclaim water of 1% + CPI. The City Council approved this recommendation.

A subsequent Rate Study was completed in September 2014, and presented to the City Council on November 9, 2014. This Rate Study recommended no change to Ordinance 2009-22, therefore automatic rate increases of 1% + CPI remained in effect. The City Council approved this recommendation.

On August 21, 2019, a five-year Rate Study was presented to the City Council by the City's Rate Consultants, Mike Rocca, Principal Consultant, and Joe Williams, Senior Consultant of Raftelis. The Study recommended a small decrease in water rates, but a small increase in wastewater rates. The Study recommended suspending the automatic 1%+CPI increases until October 2023, and implementing the proposed rates that provided for an average combined rate increase over a four-year period of approximately 1.95% for a residential customer with monthly consumption of 4,000 gallons. The City Council approved the study, and adopted Ordinance 2019-18.

A full-scale rate study which is accomplished every five years to ensure revenue sufficiency compliance for operations and debt service covenant requirements was scheduled to be completed in the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2023. Due to economic conditions nationally, in Florida, and the local experience of inflation rates at historical levels, the City completed an interim revenue sufficiency rate review in Fiscal Year 2022 to ensure rate sufficiency compliance would be maintained for the Water/Wastewater Utility. The Interim Rate Study

recommended a rate increase of 5% for Wastewater. The study did not recommend rate increases for Water, Reclaim or Stormwater. On December 21, 2022, the City Council Adopted Ordinance 2022-17 approving interim rates effective January 1, 2023.

In February 2023, the City's rate consultants of Raftelis, Mike Rocca, Principal Consultant, and Joe Williams, Senior Consultant, began a comprehensive rate study for the Water, Wastewater, Reuse, and Stormwater Utility services. Raftelis has provided a final Rate Study Report to the City (attached). The Study recommends the following for the Council's considerations:

- Water – no rate increases for FY2023/2024 and FY2024/2025; 2% increases on October 1st each year for FY2025/26, FY2026/27, and FY2027/28*
- Wastewater - no rate increases for FY2023/2024 and FY2024/2025; 2% increases on October 1st each year for FY2025/26, FY2026/27, and FY2027/28*
- Reclaimed Water - no rate increases for FY2023/2024 and FY2024/2025; 2% increases on October 1st each year for FY2025/26, FY2026/27, and FY2027/28*
- Stormwater/Mo/ESFU – no rate increases for FY2023/2024; \$0.15 per ESFU monthly for FY2024/2025, FY2025/2026, FY2026/2027, and FY2027/2028*

Proposed Ordinance 2023-11 is attached containing Exhibit "A", "B", "C", and "D" which provides detailed schedules for the proposed recommendations per the Comprehensive 2023 Rate Study. Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to move to approve Ordinance 2023-11 which implements the recommended Utility Rates for Water, Wastewater, Reclaimed Water, and Stormwater Services.

Mike Rocca and Michelle Galvin, Raftelis, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the rate study.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister said the rate study included positive news and noted her support.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 [for the Council to move to approve Ordinance 2023-11 which implements the recommended Utility Rates for Water, Wastewater, Reclaimed Water, and Stormwater Services], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 7. Board Appointment – Police Pension Board

Mayor Price made the following presentation:

One Council-appointed seat on the Police Pension Board is expiring on November 30, 2023. The City advertised the seat appointment in the Daily Commercial and on the City website. This appointment is for a two-year term expiring in November 2025. The City received a letter of request for the re-appointment of John Clark. (attached) No new applications were received. The Pension Board appointments are recommended by the Mayor and ratified by the City Council.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Mayor to recommend and the Council to ratify the appointment of John Clark to the Police Pension Board for a two-year term expiring November 2025.

Mayor Price recommended John Clark for reappointment to the Council Appointed Police Pension Board seat for a two-year term expiring November 2025.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve the reappointment of John Clark, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. Memorandum of Understanding & Agreement between the City of Tavares and Cagan Urban Development for the Purchase and Sale of Tavares Square Property

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

Previously, City Council directed staff to solicit and seek proposals for a multi-level, mixed-use commercial development as conceptualized by the Master Plan and described in RFP#2022-0014 (attached) seeking interest for purchase and conversion of the property to be operable as a viable mixed-use commercial use to complement and enhance the existing surrounding uses of the downtown entertainment district. Through this process, the Council selected the Cagan Management Group as the top-ranked firm and directed staff to obtain a fair market appraisal from a qualified property appraisal firm and negotiate an agreement with Cagan for the sale and future development of the property for Council consideration.

The attached market appraisal report was provided by the Spivey Group Inc. of Orlando, FL (dated May 22, 2023) providing for a value at the time of \$1,600,600 for the property which is located at 122 East Main Street, Tavares.

Based on the appraisal, current market conditions, and the substantial economic impact of this proposed project on our City, staff has negotiated the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cagan for Council consideration. Salient points of the MOU include:

A period of up to six (6) months due diligence, during which Cagan is authorized to engage in due diligence to confirm that the Property is suitable for the anticipated redevelopment and commercial use. This may include feasibility studies/reports; surveys of the property; utility studies/reports etc.

- 1. Purchase price of ONE-MILLION ONE-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,100,000.00) for the property;*
- 2. CAGAN is to pay FIVE-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$500,000.00) at closing with a letter of credit to the CITY for the balance owed of \$600,000.*
- 3. CAGAN is to pay the balance of SIX-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$600,000.00), over 10 years from the date of closing (\$60,000 per year)*

By way of background, the City paid \$1,080,000.000 for the property in 2015 with the intention of recouping this investment upon the sale of it to an investor who would develop the property consistent with the downtown Master Plan. This MOU accomplishes both the recouping of the investment goal as well as the redevelopment goal.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cagan Urban Development LLC and authorize the City Administrator to execute sale documents for the property.

Mr. Tweedie noted the MOU in the agenda packet had a scrivener error, and a revised agreement was placed in each Council member's dais folder.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer asked if the project included commercial components. Mr. Tweedie confirmed the development would consist of mixed-use with approximately 11,500 square feet of commercial space on the first floor and multi-story residential rental units above. Council Member Singer noted the property was vacant for eight years. He said the project would add vibrancy and residents to the downtown to support businesses. Council Member Singer said Mr. Cagan had a great history with the City and noted his support.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the project melded with the City's vision, including multi-story development in the downtown for a vibrant area for people to live, work, and play. He noted his support.

Council Member Grenier said Mr. Cagan was a historic preservationist who visited the Tavares Historical Research Center to study the history of the City's architecture. He noted his support.

Council Member Pfister said she was excited about the project. She said she initially hesitated to sell the property and enjoyed the grassy area. Council Member Pfister said the Council worked hard to correct the tax structure balance as the residents carried most of the tax burden. She said getting the property back on the tax roll would alleviate some of that burden and supported selling the property. Council Member Pfister felt the project would be best for the City and residents. She commended Mr. Tweedie.

Mayor Price said he understood the difficulty in marketing the property, feasibility, and cost analysis. He was happy to have the property back on the tax roll and said the location was great, with infrastructure in place to support the development. He said the project was best for the City and noted his support.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 [for the Council to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cagan Urban Development LLC and authorize the City Administrator to execute sale documents for the property], seconded by Bob Grenier.

Council Member Singer said he hoped to see shovels in the ground soon and thanked Mr. Cagan and Mr. Tweedie.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Drury recognized and thanked Commissioner Smith for attending the meeting.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

Tab 10. Fourth of July Celebration Parade Discussion

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

At a previous meeting, Councilmember Lori Pfister asked to have the Fourth of July parade discussion brought back to City Council for additional conversation. At the September 21, 2022 City Council meeting, Council voted to hold the Fourth of July parade only on Main Street.

As requested, staff is bringing this topic back to the Council for additional conversation and offers the following for your deliberation:

1. *Holding the Fourth of July parade on Main Street worked well this year from a staffing perspective.*
2. *Due to the narrow roadway and minimal sidewalks along Ruby Street, holding the Fourth of July parade only on Main Street provides a better experience than Ruby Street for both the participants and spectators. It has worked well to have the Fourth of July parade only along Main Street and utilize both streets for the much larger Christmas parade.*
3. *Holding the parade at 5:00pm, while hot and threatened by afternoon storms every year, has been a better fit from a staffing perspective and for the business community than when it was previously held at 10:00am. As a point of background, about 20 years ago the Fourth of July parade was held in the morning, followed in the evening with entertainment and fireworks. In 2004, the downtown business community got together and requested that the parade be moved to the late afternoon, allowing visitors to enjoy the parade and stay in the area for the fireworks. (Attached is a highlighted exert from the minutes at the May 5, 2004 Tavares City Council meeting where the request was made).*
4. *There have been prior discussions about a boat parade. At this time, the Community Services Department is not equipped nor funded to manage a boat parade on the water, so this option may be better suited for a private boat club or an organization such as the Tavares Chamber or Rotarian Club to take on.*

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister noted her support for a boat parade. Mr. Drury said the staff could include the cost of holding a boat parade in the next year's budget for the Council's consideration.

Vice Mayor Gamble suggested staff check with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, or Triangle Boat Club to see if they may be interested in hosting a Boat Parade. Mr. Drury said staff could send a letter to each organization and ask if there was interest in having a boat component to the July 4th Celebration and if they would be interested in taking it on. Council Member Pfister said the City could offer some assistance.

Council Member Singer said one issue was the unpredictable weather and heat at 5:00 p.m. He asked if it would be possible to hold the parade later in the evening to flow into the fireworks rather than having a large gap between the two event components. Mr. Aldrich said the Christmas parade worked well at 5:00 p.m. with entertainment in the park followed by fireworks. He stated a parade at 7:00 p.m. may strain staff as fireworks were being prepared, and the team would be working on the parade route and coordinating barricades. Mr. Drury asked Mr. Aldrich if he would like to explore moving the parade hours. Mr. Aldrich said yes. Mr. Aldrich asked the Council if they preferred to have kid's activities and bands in the 4-hour gap between the parade and fireworks or a parade and fireworks with less focus on the entertainment aspect. Mr. Drury asked Mr.

Aldrich to explore options and update the Board on what would work and any compromises to entertainment.

Council Member Grenier said staff should talk to parade participants to see if they would be agreeable to a later parade timeframe.

Council Member Pfister said that since the City holds Rocktoberfest, the City may wish to focus on something other than entertainment during the 4th of July event. She said the money saved on entertainment could be utilized to enhance another event.

Council Member Singer said the fireworks display may be enhanced with any savings.

Mayor Price said he was amenable to moving the parade to a later time when the temperature would be cooler with less time gap between the parade and the fireworks. He suggested moving the parade to 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. He said he was a proponent of having the parade go down Ruby Street and Main Street. Mayor Price said he received complaints with entries having 25 to 30 vehicles, and suggested there may need to be a limit to how many could be included in one entry.

Council Member Pfister said the 4th of July Parade was heavy with politicians and few floats. She noted the high school bands did not participate during the summer. Council Member Pfister said she would prefer a boat parade and family barbeque picnic.

Council Member Singer said he enjoyed seeing children and families attending the parade.

Vice Mayor Gamble suggested a sub-themed parade where the participants would need to decorate to be included in the parade with a float.

Council Member Pfister said Tavares is a City of firsts and challenged those present to create a patriotic, family-oriented event that includes as much tradition as possible and sets the City apart. She asked Mr. Aldrich to contact the Chamber of other clubs and bring back his findings in a few months.

Documentary Discussion

Council Member Grenier asked Mr. Drury to discuss the status of a recent documentary. Mr. Drury said a short pilot documentary was made, including interviews with each Council member. He said a price was received to complete a full-length documentary on where Tavares has been, where Tavares is, and where Tavares is headed. Mr. Drury said staff could bring the documentary discussion back to the Council with recommendations and ideas on completing a full-length documentary. He said the short pilot documentary could be shown and a discussion held regarding the Board's interest in a full-length documentary that would be aired on public broadcasts, NPR TV, and radio stations regarding the Tavares history, Tavares renaissance, and the creation of America's Seaplane City.

Council Member Grenier said he would like to see that research and information and noted his support to agendize.

December Council Meeting Attire Discussion

Council Member Pfister asked everyone to dress in their festive holiday clothes at the December 6, 2023, City Council meeting.

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 11. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said the Mayors Youth Council would resume after a hiatus due to COVID-19. He said Tavares High School selected five students, and the Mayor and staff would meet with the students in the ensuing weeks. He provided a high-level summary of the program and said the program was a good learning experience in civics and government.

Mr. Dillon congratulated Ms. Moan.

Mr. Aldrich noted Boo Fest would be held Friday, October 27, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. He thanked those Council members who were participating as costume contest judges.

Tab 12. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister said she could not attend the BooFest event due to a scheduling conflict. She commended Ms. Moan and said she received a phone call from one of the Roctoiberfest bands to let her know the fantastic job and professionalism she displayed at the event.

Council Member Grenier said it was wonderful to see the City achieve awards and continue to move forward.

Council Member Singer said he was excited to see the Mayor's Youth Council program return to the City. He said he enjoyed Rocktoberfest and commended Ms. Moan on her efforts.

Vice Mayor Gamble commended Ms. Moan and said her dedication was appreciated. He said seeing the City win the America in Bloom Awards was wonderful.

Mayor Price congratulated the City on receiving awards for Events and America in Bloom. He looked forward to the BooFest event and enjoyed Rocktoberfest. Mayor Price noted people who attended Roctoiberfest came from throughout Central Florida and even Norway. He congratulated the Economic Development Department Team.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk