



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
June 5, 2024 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

**John Drury, City Administrator
Amanda Boggus, City Attorney
Jillian Roberts, Deputy 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

Vice Mayor Gamble 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. Pastor

Pastor Brooks Braswell, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION

Tory Singer moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

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. Roberts read the following ordinances by title only:

RESOLUTION 2024-10

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO PURCHASE BODY CAMERA EQUIPMENT.

ORDINANCE 2024-06

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS CHAPTER 8 ZONING REGULATIONS, TABLE 8-2 PERMITTED AND SPECIAL USES; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ORDINANCE 2024-08

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 11 MISCELLANEOUS OFFENSES SECTION 11-4 NOISES FROM BLOWER, OUTDOOR BLOWER VACUUM, ETC. AND AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS CHAPTER 12 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SECTION 12-2 PROHIBITION OF A PUBLIC NUISANCE NOISE AND SECTION 12-3 PRESUMPTIVE PUBLIC NUISANCE NOISE; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the May 15, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the May 15, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 3. Resolution 2024-10 - Acceptance of United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

The City of Tavares Police Department was awarded a United States Department of Justice (US DOJ) Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) to purchase six (6) new body cameras and related equipment.

Details of the grant include the following:

- *Agreement Number: R7089.*
- *Pass-through Entity: Florida Department of Law Enforcement.*
- *Subrecipient: City of Tavares.*
- *Grant Award: \$4,331.*
- *No grant match required.*
- *Award Period: 10/1/2023 – 9/30/2024.*
- *The grant is subject to all applicable rules, regulations, and conditions, as contained in the Department of Justice Grants Financial Guide, and the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Grant Requirements (2 C.F.R. Part 200).*

Instead of purchasing body cameras, the Police Department would instead like to purchase two lidars with batteries for a total cost of \$5,323. The city has submitted a request to change the scope of the project from body cameras to lidar equipment, and FDLE has tentatively approved the request; however, the original grant agreement must be signed first before the scope change request may be finalized. All other aspects of the grant agreement would remain the same (including the grant award amount of \$4,331). The lidars exceed the grant award by \$992. The additional cost will be paid from the Police Department operating budget.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve Resolution 2024-10 authorizing the Chief of Police and Mayor to execute the body camera JAG grant.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 [Approve Resolution 2024-10 authorizing the Chief of Police and Mayor to execute the body camera JAG grant], seconded by Troy Singer.

Vice Mayor Gamble stated he is in favor of the grant.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Tab 4. Ordinance 2024-06 – An ordinance amending the Land Development Regulations, Table 8-2 Permitted and Special Uses, to allow Backyard Chickens as an accessory use in single-family zoning and to allow for a single-family residence in an existing “lot-of-record” on “RMF-3” zoning district

No Discussion at First Reading.

Tab 5. Ordinance 2024-08 – Amending the City of Tavares Code of Ordinances Chapter 11 and the Land Development Regulations Chapter 12 to include criteria for noise levels in new residential dwelling units in a Commercial or Industrial zoned district (Live Local Projects) and to adjust the hours of nuisance noise equipment operations

No Discussion at First Reading.

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 6. Use of the Capital Improvement Notes 2020 A & B to Improve Soccer Field Turf at the Golden Triangle Regional Park - East Campus (Community Services)

Mr. Aldrich gave the following presentation:

At the July 15, 2020 regular City Council meeting, Council approved Resolution 2020-15 which authorized the Capital Improvement Revenue Notes 2020 A & B. The Notes provided funding for a number of projects to be completed in the City. One of those projects slated was the construction of a pickleball court at an estimated cost of \$30,000. Since that time, the City has partnered with Lake County to purchase the YMCA and build the Golden Triangle Regional Park - East Campus. Over the past year, the City has made a number of improvements to that park that have been fully funded by Lake County, including the construction of three pickleball courts, which frees up the City's \$30,000 allotment.

In addition to the City's \$30,000 funding that was previously allotted for a pickleball court, there remains another \$9,175 in project contingency money from the Capital Improvement Notes 2020 A & B that is also available. Staff is seeking approval from Council to redirect this \$30,000 budget allotment and \$9,175 in project contingencies to go towards professionally grading and new sod installation of the youth soccer field and three junior fields at the Golden Triangle Regional Park - East Campus. The current

fields in place are in need of significant repair. Improving these field conditions will give a tremendous boost to our newly formed Tavares Youth Soccer League, which has already seen over 150 youth participants in just its first season. This new program gained instant popularity and the community is anxiously awaiting our next season.

Staff Recommends (Option 1) that the City Council moves to approve the redirecting of funds in the amount of \$30,000 from the already constructed pickleball court project from the Capital Improvement Revenue Notes A & B to improve the youth soccer fields at the Golden Triangle Regional Park - East Campus.

Council Member Singer asked how the \$30,000 could be utilized. Ms. Houghton stated those funds may be used for any Capital Item for or insularly costs related the implementation of a capital item.

Council Member Price asked if any additional pickleball courts had been installed or planned in other parks, eliminating the need for YMCA membership to play. Mr. Aldrich stated there was one court at Asops Park from a converted existing tennis court.

Vice Mayor Gamble confirmed a membership was not required to play pickleball at the YMCA.

Council Member Pfister said the pickleball courts were enjoyable, and she would like to see improvements to the tennis courts. Council Member Pfister suggested relocating the tennis courts and repurposing the area for another recreational use. She expressed satisfaction that efforts were underway to enhance the facility.

Vice Mayor Gamble inquired about the type of grass planned for planting. Mr. Aldrich replied Bermuda grass is being considered for the fields, not the common areas. Vice-Mayor Gamble expressed a desire for a clear cost estimate for the project, noting that he understood Lake County would provide full funding.

Mr. Drury said ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the grass would be a significant responsibility for the City.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he would have like to see a formal bid and did not believe \$39,000 would cover the costs for grass. He emphasized the need for manpower to maintain the fields and the necessary chemicals, and noted that properly maintaining a Bermuda grass field requires mowing three times a week.

Mr. Aldrich said he obtained an estimate and stated if the \$39,000 is approved, along with an additional \$10,000 from the county, the total cost for the field renovations would be \$49,000. He assured that his team is committed to maintaining the fields to the best of their ability.

Mr. Drury stated the county oversees Capital program for new projects, while the city maintains existing infrastructure. He noted that the current project fell somewhat in between, as it could be argued as both a new capital item and essential for ongoing maintenance and operation of the ballfields used by children. Ensuring the fields are free of divots and other hazards is crucial for maintaining a quality program.

Mr. Aldrich said the county contributed \$300,000.00 under a beautification agreement which funded the construction of the pickleball courts, parking lot, new fencing, and related improvements. While substantial funds were spent on sand upgrades, including leveling and

irrigation replacements, no work was done on the actual sod at that time. Now, a year later, after running programs on the fields, the sod itself needed to be replaced.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked about the irrigation work done around the soccer fields. Mr. Aldrich confirmed it covered the entire area around the YMCA building and was contracted out. Vice-Mayor Gamble noted his concerns about previous issues with sprinkler heads not being correctly placed. Mr. Aldrich clarified that while they repaired parts of the old system, they did not fully replace it and used the same landscaping firm as for the Woodlea project.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1.

Council member Singer noted Option 1 did not list \$9,175.00.

Seconded by Troy Singer.

Vice-Mayor Gamble asked Attorney Boggus if the motion needs to be amended to include the \$9,000.00.

Attorney Boggus stated the motions are necessary to designate funds specifically for capital improvements, whereas leftover funds could be reallocated within the general fund with a motion.

Ms. Houghton explained that the Council's initial project list allocated \$30,000 for pickleball courts and set aside a contingency amount in case of budget fluctuations. The current allocation from the contingency fund corrects an oversight by staff, covering the full \$30,000 for pickleball and an additional \$9,000 from the contingency fund for this project.

Attorney Boggus clarified that the sod or field wasn't originally part of the allocation, so the amendment seeks to include these expenses using the designated funding.

Ms. Houghton added that the \$9,000 from the contingency fund was not initially designated for any specific project.

Mr. Drury said the county constructed the pickleball courts, and there was no need to build new ones. He recommends reallocating funds to enhance the soccer fields. The approach would ensure both improved pickleball courts and enhanced soccer fields.

Council Member Pfister provided an overview of past pickleball discussions and said since the county has already built the pickleball courts that Tavares intended to build, the \$30,000 allocated for pickleball could be redirected to improve a needed soccer field for the Tavares Youth Soccer League.

Council Member Singer noted the 150 youth participants and the condition of the fields and stated his support on improving the fields for the youth.

Council Member Price said 150 youth participants for the first year was great and asked if there is a need to amend the motion to include the \$9,175.

Council Member Pfister explained that there is still \$9,175 remaining in contingency funds. Therefore, in addition to the \$30,000 originally allocated for the constructed pickleball court project. She suggested amending the total to include the \$9,175 from contingency.

Council Member Singer asked Attorney Boggus' opinion.

Attorney Boggus noted the need adhere to the rules of procedure to ensure that the Council proceed correctly and advised to vote against the current motion and propose a revised motion.

Troy Singer rescinded his Second.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 to include \$9,175.00 funding for the project, seconded by Troy Singer.

Vice Mayor Gable noted his support.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Tab 7. Authorize Purchase Agreement with AXON Enterprises, Inc. for Body Worn Cameras, Tasers, and Electronic Media Storage for the Tavares Police Department. (Finance)

Ms. Houghton gave the following presentation:

The Police Department needs Body Worn Cameras and storage of generated media from the cameras, as well as electronic storage of various media.

The Police Chief, Information Technology Department Director, and the Finance Purchasing Department researched various options for the best option for product and price. The team contacted various law enforcement agencies in Florida as well as agencies nationwide to determine available options and products that could meet the specific needs of the Tavares Police Department.

After much research, it was determined that Axon provided the best option for the Tavares Police Department initiatives. Axon is the sole source provider for the equipment. Staff negotiated with Axon to reach the best price option. Although Axon is the sole source provider, the company is also a Sourcewell Co-op provider for piggy-back purchasing of their equipment. Through negotiation, staff was able to negotiate more favorable pricing (sole source) than pricing provided under the Soucewell Co-op agreement.

The proposed Agreement with Axon Enterprises, Inc. provides a total cost of \$574,700.18 over 5 years. The agreement provides for a base five-year cost summary with two additional cost summaries to provide for true-up changes through-out the five-year contract term.

As this is a new all-inclusive body camera capital program for the Police Department, the first year costs will be funded from Police Impact Fees, and subsequent annual costs will be funded from Impact Fees if available.

Staff recommended Option 1: Move to authorize the City Administrator to execute a Purchase Agreement with AXON Enterprises, Inc. for Police Body Cameras, Evidence & Media Storage, Officer Safety Plan, and related true-up option with a total cost of \$574,700.18 with payments scheduled over a five-year period and authorize appropriations from Police Impact Fees for the purchase for Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of \$128,009.35.

Chief Coursey said the officer-safety plan bundle was a state-of-the-art system that provided enhanced value through its advanced technology and seamless integration with tasers and Evidence.com. With this system, in-house storage was required. She said the state attorney's office and several neighboring agencies including Eustis, Lady Lake, Groveland, Howey-in-the Hills, Umatilla, Astatula, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office used this system. This not only enhances safety for officers and citizens alike but also streamlines the process for uploading video evidence in case of a crime, significantly improving the efficiency of our detectives. Furthermore, the system ensured cloud protection, allowing state attorneys to access and retrieve data as needed. She stated another significant safety feature was the automatic activation of the officers' body cameras when they were in proximity to a Lake County Deputy, Eustis, or Mount Dora officer where tasers were drawn or body cameras activated, providing a comprehensive 360-degree view of incidents.

Vice-Mayor Gamble asked for comments from Council.

Council Member Singer inquired about the current status of the existing body cameras. Chief Coursey responded that the current body cameras lacked the advanced technology present in the new models. They were basic video cameras that officers must manually activate. The battery life was inadequate, and the technology did not meet the standards required for a department of the City's caliber. Currently, all evidence captured by body cameras needed to be uploaded manually to the City servers, which were nearing capacity. This necessitated ongoing purchases of servers including maintenance. Additionally, the CSI technician spent considerable time sorting through this evidence and fulfilling requests from the state attorney's office, resulting in increased workload.

Council Member Singer noted was about \$30,000.00 worth of equipment, the remainder is for servers and training. Chief Coursey stated it was similar to a phone, you're paying initially for the product, the remainder is for service and storage, which was needed for records retention.

Mr. O'Keefe stated the video files from the Police Department were housed on on-site city-servers. With this product, it would take it off of the city servers into a larger cloud, which has been demonstrated by other law enforcement agencies as the best practice across the nation.

Council Member Singer noted his support.

Council Member Pfister asked what would happen at the end of the five years and noted her support. Chief Coursey stated a contract would need to be re-negotiated.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1, Seconded by Troy Singer.

Council Member Price confirmed the portion of the contract that was not covered by Impact Fees would be covered by the budget. Mr. Drury confirmed.

Ms. Houghton stated Impact fees would cover this year's cost and depending on the collection of sufficient Impact Fees for the following five years.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked for the average annual amount of collected Impact Fees and noted his support. Ms. Houghton stated the approximate total is between \$75,000.00 to \$125,000.00 annually and noted an Impact Fee Study was being conducted for Police, Fire and Parks.

The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Council Member Price asked the Council about bringing back civic signs such as a Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce road signs. He asked comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister noted her support to hold onto the sense of community and for each club to fund their own sign.

Vice Mayor Gamble recommended a sign ordinance.

Mr. Drury suggested bringing the request to the Council for authorization for clubs to be identified in the public right of way or Council could come up with a list of clubs the staff could approve.

Council Member Pfister noted a list of clubs would need to be identified such as benevolent or fraternal organizations.

Mr. Drury said staff would bring back options for the Council's consideration.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, noted a log had fallen down in Tavares Nature Park.

Pastor Watkins, 805 Summerall Avenue, Tavares, noted his church would be completing Vacation Bible School and requested a proclamation for Juneteenth to be read at their Juneteenth event.

Council Member Singer noted a proclamation would need to be assembled prior to the next meeting and noted his support.

Council Member Pfister noted it is a Federal Holiday and she was not in support.

Council Member Price suggested a proclamation be drafted for the following meeting to be voted on by the Council.

Doug Keown, 1955 Magnolia Circle, Tavares, applauded Council for their past discussion regarding Live Local. He suggested talking to other cities about issues with Live Local legislation.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 7. City Administrator Report

Chief Coursey thanked Council for their support and noted Captain Blessing and Lieutenant Schmidbauer received recent promotions.

Mr. Aldrich noted the Summer Reading Program at the Library and Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball were currently finishing their all-star seasons. He thanked and recognized Wendell Hunt from the Utilities Department for clearing the brush behind the old soccer fields behind the YMCA.

Attorney Boggus noted that on a First Reading Ordinance there was a scrivener's error omitting the word "lines" from "property lines" which would be corrected before the second reading.

Tab 8. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Price congratulated the recently promoted Police officers.

Council Member Singer congratulated the Eustis High School softball victory of winning State Championship and noted the Tavares Youth Football League won the 12U spring football championship. He said the America In Bloom judges visiting next week.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he supports Community Services pertaining to maintaining the sports fields.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Vice Mayor Gamble adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully,

Jillian Roberts
Deputy City Clerk