



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 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
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 Grenier 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 Shane Hargrave, Compass Life Church

Pastor Shane Hargrave, Compass Life Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Grenier 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 Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

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 for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following Resolution by title only:

RESOLUTION 2024-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, PURSUANT TO SECTION 196.1978(3)(o), FLORIDA STATUTES, ELECTING TO NOT EXEMPT PROPERTY UNDER SECTION 196.1978(3)(d)1.a., FLORIDA STATUTES, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE “LIVE LOCAL ACT PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION”; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Novack stated two Resolutions would be read in their entirety during the budget hearing: Resolutions 2024-19 and 2024-20, Second Reading.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Grenier 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 August 21 and September 4, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes; and, Tab 3.

Leela Reserve Phase 2A – Final Plat], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the August 21 and September 4, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. Leela Reserve Phase 2A – Final Plat

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 4. Resolution 2024-18 – Opt Out of Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

In 2023, the Florida Legislature passed CS/SB 102 which amended Section 196.1978 of the Florida Statutes for purposes of addressing the affordable housing needs of residents across the State of Florida. The legislation created a 75 percent property tax exemption for multi-family developments if rental units were reserved for persons or families whose annual household income AMI is greater than 80 percent but not more than 120 percent of the median annual adjusted gross income for households within the respective metropolitan statistical area (MSA. This exemption is known as the “Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption Program”. (A copy of the Florida Senate 2023 Summary for CS/SB 102 by the Committee on Community Affairs is attached to provide additional background for the 2023 Amendment.)

In 2024, the Florida Legislature passed SB 328/HB7073 to again amend Florida Statutes Section 196.1978, the “Live Local Act”. The amendment (HB7073) was created to allow taxing authorities to opt-out of the exemption beginning with the 2025 tax roll if the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies Annual Report (Shimberg Annual Report) identifies that the number of affordable and available units in the respective MSA is greater than the number of renter households who meet the income criteria for the 80 to 120 AMI category. (A copy of the FL Senate Committee Summary for SB328+HB7073 is attached for additional background – see page 3 for HB 7073-New “Opt-Out” from the 80-120% AMI)

Lake County and Lake County Municipalities are located within the Orlando-Kissimmee, FL MSA and the 2023 Shimberg Annual Report (see page 32) confirms the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of rental households in the identified category which provides eligibility for the City of Tavares to “Opt-Out of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program. (A copy of the Shimberg report is attached.)

On July 9, 2024, the Lake County Board of County Commission adopted a Resolution to “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program.

In order to “Opt-Out” of the exemption, the City of Tavares must adopt Resolution 2024-18 by a two-thirds majority vote. The “Opt-Out” provision will be valid for the 2025 tax year and must be renewed by resolution each year thereafter, when the Shimberg Annual Report confirms that the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of renter households in the identified category.

Resolution 2024-18 has been prepared by the City Attorney for the City Council’s consideration to adopt the “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program. Staff has confirmed that the 2023 Shimberg Annual Report confirms the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of renter households in the identified category which provides eligibility for the exemption.

Staff recommends the Council move to approve Option 1, to adopt Resolution 2024-18 for the City of Tavares to “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program for Tax Year 2025.

Don Kehr, 16833 Deer Island Road, Lake County, noted his support for Resolution 2024-18.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Resolution 2024-18, seconded by Sandy Gamble.

Council Member Singer asked if any current developments would be affected if Resolution 2024-18 was approved. Mr. Drury confirmed that one property at the corner of Lane Park Cutoff and State Road 19 could not claim tax-exempt status for units that fall under the affordable housing criteria.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the Live Local Act allows development in industrial and commercial areas, removing opportunities for commercial development.

Council Member Price noted his support for removing additional incentives to the Live Local Act.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. Annual Citizen Donation Program Report

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

On December 7, 2022, the City Council approved a Citizen Donation Program for donors who wish to make smaller donations in honor of loved ones. For \$250, a Donor can donate to a Department Program and receive a brick inlaid in the City with the honored person's name or a nameplate on a Wall of Appreciation. Certificates of appreciation are also provided to the donors. Please see the attached Citizen Donation Program form.

Part of the program is having each donor's name read into the record at a City Council meeting by the City Administrator once a year honoring and thanking them for their contributions. The following donations were made in the fiscal year 2023-2024.

- *Meta McCarthy - \$250.00 Donation to the Tavares Library Book Drive in memory of Margaret Peers.*
- *George W. Cooke - \$1000.00 Donation to the Tavares Library Book Drive*
- *My First Coffee House - \$250.00 Donation to the Tavares Library Book Drive*
- *Meta McCarthy - \$100.00 Donation to the Tavares Library Book Drive*
- *Marli Lopez - \$250.00 Donation to the Tavares Library Book Drive in memory of Robert Arnold Grenier*
- *Sally Hart-Wong - \$250.00 Donation to the Police Officers Fund in memory of Edwin Book.*

Mayor Grenier said he was unaware a donation had been made in memory of his father, Robert Arnold Grenier. He noted his support for the Citizen Donation Program.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the audience. There were none.

Tab 6. America in Bloom Discussion

Mr. Dillon 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, resources, 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, and*

Last year, 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.

The America In Bloom evaluation team visited Tavares this past spring and any awards or recognition from that visit will be announced at the annual National Symposium. The National Symposium offers educational sessions, informative tours, and an opportunity to meet other community leaders and share ideas for improvement and success through connection and collaboration. Logan, Ohio, will host the 2024 symposium with accommodations in Columbus, Ohio, from September 26th to September 28th. Registration for the full conference, airfare, and lodging is \$1605.19 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.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer, Vice Mayor Gamble, and Mayor Grenier noted they had scheduling conflicts and would not be available to attend the symposium.

Council Member Pfister and Council Member Price said they would be available to attend.

Council Member Singer said America in Bloom was a wonderful program and encouraged each Council member to attend a future conference.

Mayor Grenier said the America in Bloom advisors were constantly wowed by the City of Tavares team and efforts. He noted the Tavares Cemetery was being turned into an arboretum. Mr. Dillon said it would be the first in the state.

Mr. Drury thanked Council Member Pfister and Council Member Price for agreeing to attend the America in Bloom symposium. He said staff would make their arrangements.

Vice Mayor Gamble suggested increasing the budget the following year so that a third Council member could attend if they wished.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

Council Member Pfister

Council Member Pfister asked for an update on impact fees. Ms. Houghton said the rate consultant was finalizing a Police, Fire, Parks, and Facility impact fee study, reviewing the capital program for each department involved in the study, and then reviewing the finance related to the budget and operating results. She said the study should come to the Council for consideration within sixty days.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if reviewing the capital improvement plan and budget was to justify increasing impact fees. Ms. Houghton confirmed. Mr. Drury said Florida statutes require a nexus between new capital items to raise impact fees. The third-party study would identify new capital items and provide the nexus with a financial plan. He said that that portion was currently being conducted, and the study would be sent to the Council for adoption, and then the Council could adjust the impact fees. Mr. Drury said the study would provide the exact amounts needed for fee adjustments.

Council Member Pfister asked for an update on Splash Park and inquired if it would open in 2025. Mr. Drury discussed the chlorination equipment and said it was past its useful life. He said a new system would need to be installed, and Mr. Clark was working with his team, consultants, and engineers on plans, specifications, and cost estimates. Mr. Clark said he anticipated providing a proposal to the Council by the end of October 2024.

Council Member Pfister inquired about Splash Park repair funding and said she wanted the City to complete the repairs correctly and not cut corners. She asked if the project had been budgeted. Mr. Drury said the design was being planned, and the dollar figures had yet to be determined.

Mayor Grenier

Mayor Grenier asked for an update on Dead River Road improvements. He said the road was in poor condition, including potholes. Mr. Drury said Dead River Road was a Lake County road on their 20-year plan and was unfunded. Property owners were improving the road by developing their lands and adding right-hand change lanes and sidewalks. Vice Mayor Gamble said the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) had not prioritized Dead River or Woodlea Roads. He said Lake Sumter MPO indicated if Rails to Trails could be extended to Woodlea Road they would increase the width of the road.

Council Member Price

Council Member Price said the Tavares Masonic Lodge would like to put a logo on the City civic road sign. He said they had grant funding available to help offset the cost.

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XV. REPORTS

Tab 9. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said Lake County would have a referendum on the November ballot to protect open lands, wildlife, and increasing trails. He recommended that those present look at the information on the initiative and noted that the request was for \$50 million dollars. Mr. Drury said the project would protect open lands in Lake County and add and improve trails. He said the project would affect Tavares, the Golden Triangle, and Lake County.

Mr. Drury said the Council and City had been working with Mount Dora and Lake County for years to connect the two downtowns with a trail along the railroad bed. He noted Mr. Dillon led the project. There was a time when the railroad was not interested in converting the rail to a trail and wanted to use it to support empty railroad cars along the corridor. Recently, the railroad had a change in leadership and their thinking. He said everyone is re-engaged in the trail project, and the work and studies that have been completed will pay off. There is a new partner in the project: Trust for Public Lands. Trust for Public Lands would work with the railroad, the County, and the Cities to move the project forward. He said it would be a project the community would enjoy and embrace.

Mr. Dillon provided an update on Slim Haywood Road infrastructure improvements, including street lights, that should be completed by the end of November.

Chief Keith said he attended an event at the Institute of Public Safety. He thanked those Council members who were able to attend and said the event included the following:

- Dedicate the renaming of Lane Park Cutoff Road to Kenn Bragg Way.
- Dedicate a plaque to Ken Bragg for his contributions to Lake Technical College and the Institute of Public Safety.
- Groundbreaking ceremony of a new building at the Institute of Public Safety, which would be the home for the Lake Technical College Emergency Medical Services program.

Chief Keith discussed the multiple campuses of Lake Technical College throughout Tavares and the surrounding area, including a Vet Tech program at the Lake County Animal Shelter, Public Safety Telecommunications courses at Lake County Emergency Operations Center, and the Deisel and Automotive Mechanics at the new Public Works Facility. He said Mr. Dillon worked with Lake Technical College to bring auto repair to the Public Works Facility. Chief Keith noted the students were all adult students

purchasing gas, lunches, and groceries and looking for places to live. He said some law enforcement programs include hotel stays for special programs, noting the economic impact of the partnerships with Lake Technical College.

Mayor Grenier said the event was wonderful and historic.

Tab 10. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister commended Deputy Director of Recreation Pete Sherrard and Mr. Aldrich for their efforts. She said fall ball had begun and noted her grandson was enjoying playing in the league. Council Member Pfister said the first game would be held on Saturday, September 21, 2024.

Council Member Price said he was honored to attend the ceremony for Mr. Bragg at the Institute of Public Safety. He said the event was well attended and thanked Chief Keith for emceeding the event.

Council Member Singer said he could not attend the ceremony for Mr. Bragg and had heard there was a great turnout of attendees. He said Mr. Bragg deserved the honors and was happy for him and his family. Council Member Singer said partnerships in the community pay dividends and increase economic development. He thanked Mr. Dillon for bringing another economic engine to the City and thanked the Citizens of Tavares for their support.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted that the sale of the Stover Field complex was closing.

Vice Mayor Gamble said Mr. Bragg was responsible for obtaining the financing for Vo-Tech in the 1960s, and the Institute of Public Safety in the 1990s. He noted the population in Lake County was 39,000 in 1967. Today, the population was close to 500,000. He said Mr. Bragg brought trade opportunities to the students who were not college-bound and recently recommended Lake County Schools open the construction academy back at Leesburg High School. He said Mr. Bragg helped support the effort, and the Lake County School Board received a \$900,000 federal grant to start the construction academy at Leesburg High School. He said many opportunities were realized because of one person's vision and Mr. Bragg deserved the honors.

Mayor Grenier said the Institute for Public Safety event in honor of Mr. Bragg was a wonderful event.

Mayor Grenier said the Tavares History Research Center and Tavares Museum recently hosted a quarterly Museum Sharing Session. He said museums and historical societies meet quarterly throughout Lake County and West Orange, including Winter Garden, Apopka, and Zellwood. He said there were approximately fifty attendees representing different historical societies. He said it was a wonderful event and thanked Community Services Coordinator Debby Blais and Support Services Director Mark O'Keefe for their assistance.

Mayor Grenier said September 17, 2024, was National Constitution Day, and September 17 through September 23, 2024, was National Constitution Week. He said it was a good time to read the Constitution.

Mayor Grenier recessed the meeting at 4:52 p.m. for the Public Hearing.

Mayor Grenier called the Public Hearing to order at 5:05 p.m.

**XI. BUDGET HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 MILLAGE & BUDGET –
READING OF FINAL MILLAGE & BUDGET RESOLUTION – 5:05 P.M.**

**Tab 7. Approve Resolution 2024-19 for Final Millage Rate for FY 2025 – SECOND
READING**

Ms. Novack read the following Resolution in its entirety:

RESOLUTION 2024 - 19

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 6.7756 FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025; 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 4, 2024, adopted the 2024-2025 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 18, 2024, as required by Florida Statute 200.065 on the 2024-2025 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 \$1,731,865,984.

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

- 1. The City of Tavares Fiscal Year 2024-2025 operating millage rate to be levied is hereby set at 6.7756 mills, which millage rate is greater than the rolled back rate of 6.0359 mills by 12.55%.**

2. The voted debt service millage rate is set at .1601 mills for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

3. This Resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City Administrator and staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2025 for Council's consideration totaling \$66,530,603 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY 2025 includes, among many other items, the following:

- 1. Similar Level of Service.*
- 2. General Fund millage rate increase (from 6.5950 mills to 6.7756 mills), which is 12.55% above the rollback rate.*
- 3. Debt Service millage rate decrease (from .1817 to .1601).*
- 4. Estimated reserve balances that meet GFOA recommendations.*
- 5. Fire Assessment level funded (no rate increase).*
- 6. Employee raises of 8.0%.*
- 7. Two new Police Officers, a new Police Records Assistant, three new Firefighters, a new Fire Inspector, an Engineering Inspector, a Streets Maintenance Worker, a Staff Assistant (for Economic Development), a Library Assistant, a Parks Specialist, and a Facility Specialist.*
- 8. Street paving - \$400,000.*
- 9. West End Parking Phase 1, 2, and 3 - \$990,040.*
- 10. Expanded programs are cut.*

Previously, the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget at the following public meetings:

- 7/17/2024 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General Fund Budget)*
- 7/17/2024 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Set Maximum Tentative Millage rate)*
- 8/07/2024 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General, Utility, and Special Revenue Fund Budgets)*
- 8/21/2024 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Capital Improvement Plan Presentation)*
- 8/21/2024 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Discussion on FY 2025 Proposed Budget)*
- 9/04/2024 – City Council Public Hearing – (Discussion of FY 2025 Proposed Budget)*

A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council. During the 8/21/2024 Budget Workshop City Council added the following items to the proposed budget:

- 1. West End Parking Phase 1, 2, and 3 - \$990,040.*
- 2. Two Picnic Tables at Aesop's Park - \$7,933.*
- 3. Four benches at the Cemetery - \$8,700.*

4. *Police Officer - \$108,133.*

At the public hearing on 9/4/2024 the City Council reduced the proposed millage rate from 7.0500 mills to 6.7756 mills. Exhibit A lists all the changes made to the Proposed Budget since it was presented at the July 17th City Council meeting.

The Final Public Hearing to adopt the FY 2025 Millage Rate and the FY 2025 Budget will be held at 5:05 p.m. on September 18, 2024, at which time the final millage rates will be adopted.

Staff recommends approval of Option 1, for Council to take public input and approve the Final Millage for Fiscal Year 2025 as reflected in Resolution 2024-19.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the audience. There were none.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister asked for the rollback rate. Ms. Houghton said the current year rollback rate was 6.0359, as published and reported on the DR20 form in August 2024.

Mayor Grenier noted the Police Department included three new positions, including two new Officers and a Police Department Assistant.

Council Member Pfister inquired about the parking lot project in the downtown. Mr. Drury said the project was designed, engineered, and permitted, and the right of way had been negotiated. He said the project was ready to proceed. Mr. Drury noted the Council was not moving forward with a parking garage at the time, and the area business community was growing. Council Member Pfister inquired about brick pavers. Mr. Drury said a bid alternate would be provided and noted the City had some pavers stored, which may be included to lower costs for the bid alternate. Council Member Pfister asked what funding was initially planned for the project. Mr. Drury said ARPA funding was planned and used on other items as bids came in higher than expected due to a turn in the economy.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked how much funds had been expended on design and permitting to date. Mr. Tweedie said approximately \$150,000.

Council Member Singer said the prices would continue to go up if the City did not move forward with the project. He noted the City lowered the millage rate for the past five years. He said inflation was at a record high, and the budget took care of employees, added police and fire employees, and included street paving. He said the budget was a good budget that the Finance Department and Department Directors worked hard on and supported moving forward with the millage rate as proposed with parking needs addressed.

Council Member Price asked how many dollars would have to come out of the budget to get to the rollback rate. Ms. Houghton said \$1,281,061. Mr. Drury said a structural imbalance in the balance would be created by using a one-time capital item to achieve a rollback rate. Mr. Drury said a recurring expense and not a one-time expense like a parking project would need to be used. An example of recurring expenses would be the staff positions, including Firefighters, Police Officers. Capital items would not be a recurring expense. Council Member Price said the proposed budget takes care of staff and the additional items the Council wanted. He said the budget was cut from the initial trim notices and that costs for insurance, gas, and other items increased. Council Member Price said it was a well-balanced budget and noted his support for approving a millage rate of 6.7756 mills.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Option 1 [Take public input and approve the Final Millage for Fiscal Year 2025 as reflected in Resolution 2024-19], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0 at 5:26 p.m.

Tab 8. Approve Resolution 2024-20 for Final Budget for FY 2025 – SECOND READING

Ms. Novack read the following Resolution in its entirety:

RESOLUTION 2024-20

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 2025.

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

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the tentative 2024-2025 budget was held at the Tavares City Hall Council Chambers in the City of Tavares, Florida, Lake County, Florida on Wednesday, September 4, 2024 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 2024-2025, and

WHEREAS, a second public hearing on the proposed 2024-2025 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 18, 2024, at 5:05 p.m.,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Budget for 2024-2025 fiscal year for the City of Tavares, Florida is hereby adopted by the Tavares City Council in the amount of \$65,530,603 at public hearing this 18th day of September 2024.

This resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City Administrator and staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2025 for Council's consideration totaling \$66,530,603 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY 2025 includes, among many other items, the following:

- 1. Similar Level of Service.*
- 2. General Fund millage rate increase (from 6.5950 mills to 6.7756 mills), which is 12.55% above the rollback rate.*
- 3. Debt Service millage rate decrease (from .1817 to .1601).*
- 4. Estimated reserve balances that meet GFOA recommendations.*
- 5. Fire Assessment level funded (no rate increase).*
- 6. Employee raises of 8.0%.*
- 7. Two new Police Officers, a new Police Records Assistant, three new Firefighters, a new Fire Inspector, an Engineering Inspector, a Streets Maintenance Worker, a Staff Assistant (for Economic Development), a Library Assistant, a Parks Specialist, and a Facility Specialist.*
- 8. Street paving - \$400,000.*
- 9. West End Parking Phase 1, 2, and 3 - \$990,040.*
- 10. Expanded programs are cut.*

Previously, the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget at the following public meetings:

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A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council. During the 8/21/2024 Budget Workshop City Council added the following items to the proposed budget:

- 1. West End Parking Phase 1, 2, and 3 - \$990,040.*

2. *Two Picnic Tables at Aesop's Park - \$7,933.*
3. *Four benches at the Cemetery - \$8,700.*
4. *Police Officer - \$108,133.*

At the public hearing on 9/4/2024 the City Council reduced the proposed millage rate from 7.0500 mills to 6.7756 mills. Exhibit A lists all the changes made to the Proposed Budget since it was presented at the July 17th City Council meeting.

The Final Public Hearing to adopt the FY 2025 Millage Rate and the FY 2025 Budget will be held at 5:05 p.m. on September 18, 2024, at which time the final millage rates will be adopted.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the audience. There were none.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the FY 2024-2025 Budget as presented, seconded by Walter Price.

Vice Mayor Gamble noted a concern regarding liability at the Tavares Nature Park pier/dock. He requested that \$75,000 be added back to the budget to remove the pier/dock. Vice Mayor Gamble suggested freezing the West End Parking Project or not moving forward with pavers to lower costs. Mr. Drury said the project would take six to eight months to complete, and staff would bring back bids and alternatives for the Council's consideration.

Council Member Pfister said she would like to discuss the pier/docks to be added to a future agenda when staff can provide information and bring back options rather than be included in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget.

Vice Mayor Gamble said the pier/dock needed to be removed correctly. Mr. Drury said staff would bring back information for consideration and deliberation.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0 at 5:33 p.m.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk