



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 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 Marc E. Kappel, Faith Lutheran Church

Pastor Marc E. Kappel, Faith Lutheran Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Grenier thanked Mr. Drury, the Department Directors, and the Staff for their preparedness, response, and recovery during Hurricane Milton. He said each department worked together, and the Council and Citizens were grateful for their dedication and response. He thanked Mr. Drury and Mr. O'Keefe for constant updates throughout the storm.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Grenier asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said staff had no changes. Mr. Drury thanked Mayor Grenier for his kind words on behalf of the entire Tavares Team.

MOTION

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Proclamation – World Polio Day

Mayor Grenier asked the Council if they wished to move forward with the World Polio Day Proclamation.

There was a consensus from the Council to approve the Proclamation.

Mayor Grenier read a Proclamation in its entirety recognizing October 24, 2024, as "World Polio Day."

Mr. Jim Dickerson, President of Rotary Club Golden Triangle, thanked the Council for declaring October 24, 2024, "World Polio Day." He provided historical background information on the Rotary Club organization and the eradication of polio worldwide. He said Rotary was a 'Service Before Self' organization with 1.4 million members in 122 countries. He encouraged those present to participate in an upcoming Tri-City Food Drive.

Mayor Grenier presented the Proclamation to Mr. Dickerson.

Tab 3. Community Grant Award Update

Debi Weinert, Executive Director of Triangle Community Alliance, said the City's response to Hurricane Milton was amazing. She made a presentation on the

expenditure of \$500 in Community Grant Funds awarded by the City Council in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Ms. Weinert noted that 71 Tavares children received a book monthly from the Dollywood Foundation, and the grant was funding 19 children.

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Gamble thanked Ms. Weinert for the report and said it reflected the grant funding was well used.

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 ordinances by title only:

RESOLUTION 2024-24

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

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 4. Approval of the September 18, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes; and Tab 5. Release of Mineral Rights for Fred Stover Field], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 4. Approval of the September 18, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 5. Release of Mineral Rights for Fred Stover Field

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 6. Resolution 2024-24 – Authorization to Apply for Public Assistance for Hurricane Milton

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

On October 5, 2024, Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, issued Executive Order Number 24-214 declaring a State of Emergency for Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, and Volusia counties., due to the expected impact of Tropical Storm Milton, now known as Hurricane Milton to the State of Florida, and,

On October 6, 2024, in response to an increased threat of risk to the Florida Peninsula from Tropical Storm/Hurricane Milton, Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, issued Executive Order 24-215 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. Amended Executive Order states that the Governor declares that a state of emergency exists in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Flagler, Gilchrist, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Levy, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwanee, Taylor, Union and Volusia 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 24-214, and the amended Executive Order Number 24-215.

On October 7, 2024, President Biden issued a Presidential Disaster Declaration, “declaring that an emergency exists in the State of Florida and ordered Federal Assistance to supplement State, tribal, and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Milton beginning on October 5, 2024, and continuing.” The Declaration states “Public Assistance (Category B) emergency protective measures, including direct Federal assistance, will be provided at 75 percent Federal funding for the counties of Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, Desoto, Dixie, Flager, Glades, Hardee, Hendry,

Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, and Volusia.”

The City of Tavares will be eligible to recover costs related to the disaster through Federal Public Assistance, FEMA, Category B expenditures at 75% beginning on October 5, 2024.

Resolution 2024-24 provides authorization for the City Administrator to make application for Federal Public Assistance for eligible Hurricane Milton Disaster related expenditures. Resolution 2024-24 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 the Council to approve Resolution 2024-24 authorizing the City Administrator to apply for Federal Public Assistance related to Hurricane Milton, and execute all documents related to and required by the application for Federal Public Assistance for Hurricane Milton.

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

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Resolution 2024-24, seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 7. Mayor's Youth Council Update and Council Pairing

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Tavares High School has completed its competitive selection process. Seven students applied to the program, and five students have been chosen to participate in the 2024-2025 Mayor's Youth Council. Each Council member has been provided with student letters for pairing consideration. Copies of the letters will also be placed in the Council's dais folders at the meeting. The Mayor's Youth Council is an introductory program for local government.

Tavares High School has selected the following five (5) students:

- *Kane Rogers Buigas*
- *Mitchell Garcia*
- *Anderson Fish*
- *Alyssa Liddy*
- *Kelly Lopez*

In addition, Tavares High School requested an amendment to the syllabus reducing the number of required Council functions outside normal meetings, like ribbon cuttings, Chamber luncheons, or groundbreaking ceremonies, from four (4) to two (2). Staff is in support of this request and is asking the Council to approve the amended syllabus (see attached syllabus) and complete the pairing process.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to receive an update on the Mayor's Youth Council, discuss and pair the students, and approve the amended syllabus.

Mr. Drury invited each member of the Mayor's Youth Council to the dais and asked them to answer the following two questions:

1. What do you like most about the City of Tavares?
2. What do you hope to get from the Mayor's Youth Council program?

Kane Rogers Buigas said what he likes most about Tavares is the City is filled with caring people. He hoped to gain more knowledge of local government and its processes through the program.

Mitchell Garcia enjoys the tight-knit community the City provides, where people help each other. He would like to learn how local government works and contributes to creating a better place for people to live.

Anderson Fish said Tavares is filled with thinkers who grow and prepare for the future. He said he was proud to be a part of the City and would like to understand how it works better.

Allyssa Liddy said she was most interested in getting to know everyone. She said Tavares was a small community where you can learn its inner workings.

Mr. Drury noted Kelly Lopez was not in attendance.

A discussion was held, and the following pairings were made by Council seat numbers from 1 to 5 and the order in which the Mayor's Youth Council members were listed in the agenda.

- Kane Rogers Buigas – Mayor Grenier
- Mitchell Garcia – Vice Mayor Gamble
- Anderson Fish – Council Member Price
- Alyssa Liddy – Council Member Singer
- Kelly Lopez – Council Member Pfister

Mr. Drury said the Mayor's Youth Council members would be provided information and instruction through their Principal, including the syllabus. He said the City Clerk would provide a copy of the City Charter, which lays out how the City works, including how the Council is elected and the responsibilities of the City. Mr. Drury said the members' goal was to get a copy of the City Charter, read it, comprehend it, and write a high-level report on the City Charter. He said the members should take their report to their next meeting and provide it to their paired Council member. Mr. Drury asked the Mayor's Youth Council members if they had any questions. There were none.

Mr. Drury said he was proud of the students who signed up for the program and noted they would learn much about municipal government.

Council Member Singer said the Mayor's Youth Council was a great program and was glad it was resurrected. He congratulated the students, thanked them for their interest, and commended them for speaking fluently before the audience.

Mayor Grenier said the students had great answers and spoke fluently. He appreciated that the students loved their community.

Tab 8. Hurricane Milton Update

Mr. O'Keefe provided an update and PowerPoint presentation on Hurricane Milton, including each storm phase from first actions and response to debris clean-up. He noted that 8,200 sandbags were provided to the citizens, and the County and City Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) were staffed throughout the storm.

Mr. O'Keefe thanked the Council, Mr. Drury, the Department Directors, and the Emergency Management Team for their assistance and support.

Mr. Drury thanked the Council for their close communication throughout the storm event as they provided issues reported by their constituents that were pushed out to the first responders. He said Mayor Grenier assisted him in conducting a windshield assessment and assisted at the City EOC. He noted that each Council member had previously served in that capacity and appreciated the task. Mr. Drury said each Department assisted in preparation and recovery efforts, and every employee came to the table to get the City up, open, and operational. He thanked Mr. O'Keefe for being the point person throughout the storm and the Citizens for their patience, support, and rowing with the City Staff. When it was time to clean up, he witnessed neighbors helping neighbors. Mr. Drury noted it would take weeks to pick up all the debris on the side of the road.

Mayor Grenier commended Mr. O'Keefe for his efforts. He said the Citizens were outstanding and worked together to clean up the debris.

Council Member Singer thanked Mr. Drury and said he had amassed a fantastic team. He thanked Mr. O'Keefe and the Department Directors for their efforts. He said the Citizens do not realize what happens behind the scenes and that Tavares was fortunate for its staff.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Gary Santoro, Royal Harbor, said Tavares had the best staff, and under the leadership of Mr. Drury, the city continues to amaze its citizens. He and his wife enjoyed participating in the Police Citizens Academy. He thanked Chief Coursey and said the Tavares Police Department, Staff, and the department exceeded his expectations.

TJ Fish, Juniper Court, Tavares, thanked the Council and Mr. Drury for reestablishing the Mayor's Youth Council program.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 9. City Administrator Report

Chief Coursey thanked Mr. Santoro for his kind words.

Mr. Tweedie said the 6th Annual Roctoberfest event would be held Saturday, October 19, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in Wooton Park. He said food and vendors would be highlighted.

Mr. Dillon said it was an honor to dedicate the new Public Works Operations Center on October 4, 2024. He said the project was completed due to the support of the Council, community, and Leadership team.

Mayor Grenier commended Mr. Dillon on his efforts. He said Mr. Dillon worked on the project diligently daily, traveled to Tallahassee to seek funding sources, and fostered a partnership with Lake Technical College. Mayor Grenier said the facility accommodates the Public Works Department and the Community by keeping the City's infrastructure running smoothly.

Mr. Dillon thanked Council Members Pfister and Price for attending a recent America in Bloom Symposium. He said the City won an award for the 'Coolest Place for Kids.' Mr. O'Keefe thanked the Council for their hurricane Milton update comments, and the Department Directors for their storm assistance.

Mr. Aldrich said the Annual Boo! Festival would be held on Friday, October 25, 2024, in downtown Tavares. The family-friendly event would feature a Trunk or Treat, live music, food vendors, and a costume contest.

Mr. Drury asked Mr. Aldrich how many hours he had worked at the Lake County Emergency Operations Center during Hurricane Milton. Mr. Aldrich said 33 hours.

Mr. Fabre noted no fees would be assessed for hurricane-damaged trees, fences, or roof permits.

Tab 10. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister

Council Member Pfister said the America in Bloom program had gotten more competitive, and she would like to agendize a discussion to invest in and grow the program in Tavares. She said the discussion would include where the City wants to take the program and additional financial commitment to be a contender.

Council Member Pfister said she and her grandchildren enjoyed fall baseball and the STEAM programs.

Council Member Pfister said she enjoyed the Public Works Facility ribbon-cutting event. She commended the partnership with Lake Technical College in the state and the facility would provide employment opportunities. Council Member Pfister said Mr. Drury was a great motivator with an amazing team. She thanked Mr. Drury for keeping her updated throughout Hurricane Milton.

Council Member Pfister commended Chief Coursey and said she received great comments about the Citizens Police Academy.

Council Member Price

Council Member Price thanked Mr. Drury, the Department Directors, employees, and citizens for their efforts during Hurricane Milton. He said some citizens had difficulty maneuvering heavy sandbags, and seeing neighbors assisting others was incredible. Council Member Price suggested a rack and cone system to expedite filling sandbags.

Council Member Price said he attended the America in Bloom Symposium, where they visited blighted areas that were renewed. He suggested that the City designate an official flower for Tavares that would match the logo colors to help build a sense of community and unity. He said the City received two awards: Coolest Place for Kids and Overall Best Impression.

Council Member Price said he attended the Public Works Facility ribbon-cutting event. He said it was a unique facility with dual programs, including the City's Public Works

and a diesel mechanics and mechanics school. He said a time capsule was installed that would be open in 50 years and suggested a picture be placed in the capsule as the area would look different over time.

Council Member Singer

Council Member Singer thanked the residents and community for their support. He thanked Mr. Dillon for his efforts at the Public Works ribbon-cutting event. He congratulated the City on the America in Bloom awards.

Vice Mayor Gamble

Vice Mayor Gamble commended the city employees for their efforts during Hurricane Milton.

Vice Mayor Gamble asked if new subdivisions were required to install underground electric services. Mr. Fabre confirmed.

Vice Mayor Gamble commended Mr. Dillon on his efforts in the partnership with Lake Technical College and project funding.

Mayor Grenier

Mayor Grenier said Tavares was a wonderful and great community where he was grateful to live.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Grenier adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk