



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 5, 2025 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Antonio Fabre, 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, Support Services Director
Jon Hall, Police Captain
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.

Mayor Price noted two Council members could not attend due to illness and stated a quorum of three members allowed the meeting to proceed.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Pastor Marc E. Krappel, Faith Lutheran Church

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

Mayor Price noted Mayor Youth Council members Anderson Fish and Alyssa Liddy were at the dais to shadow their paired Council member during the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

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 ordinances and resolutions by title only:

RESOLUTION 2025-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE 2025 FISCAL YEAR ADOPTED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, REPRESENTING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE ADOPTED BUDGET, AND PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

Council Member Grenier asked to pull Tab 3 [Leela Reserve Phase 2B – Final Plat] from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve Tab 2 on the Consent Agenda [Approval of the January 15, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the January 15, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. Leela Reserve Phase 2B – Final Plat

Council Member Grenier said he pulled the item from the Consent Agenda to record the vote, not for a discussion. He said he would 2nd the vote so that it could go to a final vote.

Council Member Singer said legislation required the City Council to approve final plats. If a developer has completed the items it was required to accomplish, the Community Development Department advises the Council. Council Member Singer noted that the city would have legal issues if the final plat were not approved. He said some developments can be approved several years before they come to a final plat. He asked if, in the future, the meeting minutes of prior approvals on a project could be included in the agenda packet. Mr. Drury said the minutes would be added to the backup material for future meetings.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve Tab 3 [Leela Reserve Phase 2B - Final Plat, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Mayor Price noted that the final plat was before the Council for approval, not the project.

The motion passed 2-1 as follows:

Walter Price:	Yes
Bob Grenier:	No
Troy Singer:	Yes

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 4. Resolution 2025-03 – First Budget Amendment for FY2025

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

Resolution 2025-03 represents increases and/or decreases to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Appropriation increases represent capital projects,

ARPA expenditures, and prior year/project encumbrance rollovers. In addition, the Resolution also reflects transfers between individual accounts within adopted budgets for all departments.

Resolution 2025-03 represents the FIRST AMENDMENT to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to approve Resolution 2025-03, amending the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

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

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve Resolution 2025-03, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. Domestic Sister City Program

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The Domestic Sister City Horizon Team (Council Member Bobby Grenier and City Administrator John Drury) was tasked with identifying Sister City candidates within the United States for the City Council to review and select from. There are approximately 19,500 cities in the United States. The Horizon team met on several occasions to develop some criteria/parameters on identifying a list of Sister Cities including the following:

*North of the Mason Dixon Line
East of the Mississippi River
Less than a 20-hour drive
A similar population to Tavares
Near a body of water
Not an identical twin*

Five cities were identified:

- *Keen, New Hampshire*
- *Rome, New York*

- *Traverse City, Michigan*
- *Plattsburg, New York*
- *Watertown, New York*

Once a potential Sister City is identified by the City Council, and the selected city accepts the designation of Sister City, a delegation of City officials would be assembled to visit the sister city annually to share and learn from each other's experiences.

Attached is the Horizon Team's report for Council's consideration and action.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to identify a Sister City to reach out to and invite to be a Tavares Sister City.

Council Member Grenier said building relationships with international sister cities due to their distance. He said the Sister City Horizon Team identified domestic cities with many similarities to Tavares, yet they would bring something new. Council Member Grenier noted four of the five cities were county seats. He felt a sister city was important and a domestic Sister City would be more manageable to visit and learn from each other.

Council Member Singer noted his support for a domestic sister city. He said the selected cities looked great and noted Traverse City was one letter away from Tavares.

Mr. Drury recommended that the Council rank the cities in order and authorize staff to reach out to the first-ranked City. If there were no interest, staff would then reach out to the second-ranked City.

Council Member Singer asked Mr. Grenier to rank the cities as he served on the Horizon Team and researched each City.

Council Member Grenier ranked the cities in the following order:

- Traverse City, Michigan
- Plattsburg, New York
- Keen, New Hampshire
- Watertown, New York
- Rome, New York

Mayor Price said Traverse City was compatible with railroad history and form of government and served as the county seat. He noted his support.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to notify each city in the order as described [1. Traverse City, Michigan, 2. Plattsburg, New York, 3. Keen, New Hampshire, 4. Watertown, New

York, and 5. Rome, New York], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Tab 6. Broad Budget Priorities

Mr. Drury said each year, the Council develops its top budget priorities for the ensuing year. He noted that the agenda packet included the Council's FY 2026 budget priorities. Mr. Drury asked if anyone would like to remove any goals, discuss any goals, or approve all goals as presented. He said once the Council's list was approved, he would work with the Department Directors to incorporate as many goals as possible to bring back a balanced budget for the Council to deliberate, hold public hearings, and adopt. He said incorporating the goals, keeping the millage rate tight, and accomplishing projects was a balancing act.

Council Member Singer wished to clarify one of his budget items: Enhance the aesthetics of key corridors in the City. He noted the west end of Main Street was being addressed and said he would like to start the conversation to move forward with the existing Horizon Teams, such as St. Clair Abrams and Alfred Street. Mr. Drury said there are horizon teams for Old US 441 and St. Clair Abrams. He previously asked the Directors to meet with their Horizon Team members and return with a report and recommendations to the Council. He said the Council would receive reports with action items within the next sixty days.

Council Member Singer said he would like to see the cost of maintaining the blue and silver lighting year-round at the Chris Daniels memorial fountain sign and possibly changing the lights out during Christmas. Mr. Drury said the lighting upgrade cost would be included in the budget for the Council's consideration and vote.

Mayor Price said he likes the blue and silver lights. He said it enhances the City sign and entryway.

Council Member Grenier said he would like to move forward with all goals presented by the Council as a showing of respect as they speak for their constituents, including service parking or a parking garage at the old Public Works location at the east end of Main Street.

Mayor Price said his thought on surface parking was to determine the demand and, if it builds, discuss moving forward with a parking garage.

Mayor Price noted that the Council's goals were consistent between the five members and that everyone was rowing in the same direction.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to proceed with the submitted Broad Budget Goals, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Tab 7. Tavares Chamber of Commerce, Taste of Tavares Pavilion Fee Waiver Request

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

The Tavares Chamber of Commerce has submitted the attached letter of request for a one time facility rental fee waiver for their use of the Pavilion on the Lake for the purpose of re-establishing their annual Taste of Tavares event which had been held at the Pavilion each year from 2015 through 2019 (see attached letter of request). The fee for their proposed evening time block for the weekday evening of March 27, 2025 would be \$1,800 plus an additional fee of \$700 (\$350 per hour X 2 hours) for set up/preparation time prior to the event, for a total of \$2,500. The Chamber would be required to hire and pay for one of the Pavilion approved & contracted catering companies for the sale and service of alcoholic beverages, for which the City would receive the Pavilion commission from the catering vendor.

Staff recommends Option 1, to approve the Tavares Chamber of Commerce request for a one time Pavilion rental fee waiver.

Mr. Tweedie introduced Stephanie Hayes, CEO and President of Tavares Chamber of Commerce, and David D'Agostino, Executive Board Member of Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. D' Agostino said the Chamber of Commerce was excited to host the Taste of Tavares event after a hiatus due to Covid. He discussed the increased Chamber membership and efforts to bring back their signature event. He said a fee waiver would be helpful, and he was grateful for the Council's consideration.

Ms. Hayes said many wished to participate in 2024. However, the event did not come to fruition.

Council Member Grenier said the Taste of Tavares was a great event, and he did not support waiving the fee as the Pavilion on the Lake was a business with associated costs. Others would be encouraged to approach the City requesting waivers.

Council Member Singer thanked the Tavares Chamber for bringing back the Taste of Tavares event and said he hoped that if the request were not approved, the Chamber could still move forward with the event. He concurred with Council Member Grenier and said waiving a fee would set a precedence. Council Member Singer said the City and Chamber had enjoyed a wonderful relationship and knew the City assists the Chamber in other ways.

Mayor Price concurred with the Council's comments and feared other organizations would want waivers. He noted the City subsidized the Tavares Chamber of Commerce annually.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to deny a waiver, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

John McCoy, Imperial Terrace East, 2730 Vindale Road, Tavares, said their community had a recent board meeting during which road conditions were discussed. He said the roads were beginning to erode on the sides, buckle, and crack. He asked if someone from the City could look at their streets to see what could be done for future planning.

Mr. Drury noted that the City conducted a road assessment approximately six years ago, during which all City roads were labeled according to their condition and placed on a list for repaving. Mr. Drury said he would find out where on the list the roads in Imperial Terrace East were scheduled for paving and report back to Mr. McCoy so that he could advise his board. Mr. Drury asked Mr. McCoy to send an email with his contact information.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 8. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury noted a list of upcoming meetings was available in the Council's agenda packets.

Captain Jon Hall said the 2nd Citizens Police Academy would begin on March 18 and run through May 13, 2025. He said a banquet for the class would be held on May 20, 2025. He said the Police Department had an overwhelming response, and the class filled up in six days.

Mr. Tweedie said the Ribbon on Ruby event was successful. He thanked the Council members and City departments for their support. He gave special thanks to Special Events Manager Cheri Moan and Waterfront Operations Manager Dan Charles and their team.

Mr. Tweedie reported that the ADA lift at the marina, donated by the Lake County Leadership Class of 2024, had been installed.

Mr. Clark discussed a successful job shadowing/tour of the Utilities Department with Mayor's Youth Council member Anderson Fish.

Mr. Clark noted he was a member of a subcommittee of the Utility Association for Air Quality. He said the Utility Department would host an annual workshop for the subcommittee, and approximately seventy members would stay in Tavares, enjoying the hotels and restaurants and making a positive economic impact.

Mr. Aldrich said Mayor's Youth Council member Alyssa Liddy made a great addition to their team during the department shadow/tour day.

Mr. Fabre said he enjoyed the Mayor's Youth Council department shadow/tour day and noted three of the Mayor's Youth Council members shadowed his department.

Tab 9. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Grenier noted that he worked at Disney and the theater and was a museum exhibit designer for over 30 years. He said the small details are essential and pointed out that the bollards at the Tavares library were architecturally stylish and looked like they were made explicitly for the library. Council Member Grenier said the bollards added to the façade of the library and exuded the City's vision and the good taste of City staff. He asked Mr. Drury who selected the bollard design. Council Member Grenier said the bollards were a safety feature that reflected the City's goals and beauty.

Mr. Drury said he believed Facilities Manager Randall Smith made the bollard selection and said he would confirm.

Council Member Grenier noted Mayor's Youth Council member Anderson Fish was shadowing him during the meeting and asked Mr. Fish for comments.

Mr. Fish said one word he came out of his department shadowing experience was 'competence.' He expressed his pride in the City's security, beautiful architecture, departments, and Staff.

Council Member Singer said he attended the recent Arbor Day event and thanked Mr. Dillon and his Staff for their efforts. He said the event was a nice partnership with other community organizations and agencies.

Council Member Singer thanked Pastor Michael Watkins for his efforts on the African American Heritage Festival. He said the event was nice, with great food and music. He thanked the city staff for helping make the event successful.

Council Member Singer said he could not attend Rhythm on Ruby and heard many positive comments about the event. He thanked Mr. Tweedie and his team for creating a successful event.

Council Member Singer said the Mayor's Youth Council was a fantastic program and hoped the members learned much. He recognized Alyssa Liddy, who was shadowing him at the dais during the meeting.

Mayor's Youth Council member Alyssa Liddy thanked the Council for the opportunity to participate in the program. She said the Mayor's Youth Council was a great opportunity to learn about local government and the departments within that people do not see daily.

Mayor Price said the Mayor's Youth Council was a great program working well.

Mayor Price said he attended Rhythm on Ruby, and everyone had a good time at the event.

Mayor Price said he attended the African American Heritage Festival. He thanked Pastor Watkins for letting him participate in the program by saying a few words.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk