



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 7, 2025 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Walter Price, Mayor
Lori Pfister, Vice Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Council Member
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
Mark O'Keefe, Support Services 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. 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.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said staff would like to table Tab 2, Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Agenda with Tab 2 Tabled [Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Tabled.

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 resolutions and ordinance by title only:

RESOLUTION 2025-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, GRANTING VARIANCES TO THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR THE MINIMUM SIDE AND REAR YARD SETBACKS IN A COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN DISTRICT (CD) ZONING FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 122 EAST MAIN STREET; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RESOLUTION 2025-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GRANT FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO COMPLETE A MASTER PLAN UPDATE AT THE TAVARES SEAPLANE BASE.

ORDINANCE 2025-04

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING ORDINANCE 95-43, AND ORDINANCE 2007-02 CHAPTER 6 OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES; UPDATING IMPACT FEES, RELATED TO FIRE, POLICE, PARKS IMPACT FEES; AND PROVIDING FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPACT FEES; PROVIDING FOR SHORT TITLE, FINDINGS, AUTHORITY, DEFINITIONS, APPLICABILITY, PAYMENT, DEDICATIONS, A FEE SCHEDULE, IMPACT FEE TRUST FUNDS, LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF IMPACT FEE FUNDS, REFUNDS, EXEMPTIONS, CREDITS, PENALTIES, SEVERABILITY, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 3. Approval of the April 16, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 3. Approval of the April 16, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 4. Resolution 2025-05 – Variance – Reduced Side and Rear Yard Setbacks for Tavares Heritage Square – 122 East Main Street, Tavares, FL

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

This is a variance application from Tavares Heritage Square LLC for a reduction of the required minimum side yard setback of 7.5 feet and a rear yard setback of 10 feet for property located at 122 East Main Street. Specifically, the property owner desires to build to the historic zero (0') setbacks along Ruby Street and S. Rockingham Avenue. The owner of the property wishes to construct two (2) mixed-used (commercial on the first floor and residential on the top floors) multi-story building structures.

Furthermore, the property at 122 East Main Street is in the Commercial Downtown District (CD) and the Downtown Waterfront Entertainment District, both of which promote zero setbacks under certain conditions. Moreover, several

existing buildings along Ruby Street (Puddle Jumpers Restaurant, Citrus Sky Bar/Key West Resort, Lakeview Inn West, Citrus on the Lake) and on Rockingham Avenue (O'Keefe's Irish Pub and City Hall) exhibit zero (0') setbacks as existing conditions. Since the proposed zero (0') setbacks are consistent with the historical character of the area, city staff is recommending approval of all presented variances.

On April 17, 2025, the Planning & Zoning Board met and voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend approval of Resolution 2025-05 as presented. Additionally, since there are several existing vacant parcels in the Downtown Entertainment District, the P&Z Board suggested that the City Council should direct Staff to amend the Land Development Regulations to allow zero (0') foot building yard setbacks on all fronts, including the sides and rear yards.

Staff recommend Option 1, that the City Council moves to approve Resolution 2020-05.

Vice Mayor Pfister asked if the item before the Council was for approval of a setback variance for one property or for allowing a zero setback for all properties. Mr. Fabre clarified that the item was for a variance at 122 Main Street.

Council Member Gamble asked if the New Hampshire side of the development was included in the proposal. Mr. Fabre confirmed that only Rockingham and Ruby Streets were being considered.

Council Member Singer questioned why some buildings in downtown had zero setbacks and why a variance was needed for the subject property. Mr. Fabre explained that properties with zero setbacks were constructed before the current codes were established.

Mr. Drury stated that the Board could bring back setback options for the area if the Council desired.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Resolution 2025-05, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Mayor Price asked for confirmation that most cities had downtown buildings with zero-foot setbacks. Mr. Fabre affirmed this, noting that such setbacks helped to promote walkability.

Mayor Price referred to the Downtown Master Plan, which emphasized wide sidewalks and space for restaurant seating. He inquired whether the current site plan allowed for such accommodations. Mr. Fabre confirmed that the site plan included wider sidewalks and recommended that the Council consider adopting the Planning and Zoning Board's

recommendation to allow zero lot lines in the downtown area, specifying which zoning districts it would apply to, to prevent the need for repeated variances.

Mr. Drury indicated that staff could move forward with an amendment if directed by the Council.

The Council reached a consensus to have staff bring back a proposal to implement zero setbacks for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) district at a future meeting.

Council Member Singer thanked the developers for their investment in downtown, specifically acknowledging Mr. Cagan and Mr. Wicks.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Vice Mayor Pfister also expressed her appreciation to Mr. Cagan and Mr. Wicks, noting her excitement for the project.

Council Member Grenier expressed his gratitude and said it was an honor to name the development Tavares Heritage Square.

Tab 5. Resolution 2025-06 – Acceptance of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Aviation Grant for the Tavares Seaplane Base (FA1) Master Plan Update

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

Previously, in 2017, the City of Tavares completed its initial airport master planning process for the city-owned and operated public use, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) licensed airport, the Tavares Seaplane Base, which is designated FA1. The Master Plan was approved by FDOT and the Tavares Seaplane Base was adopted into the Florida Aviation System Plan on January 31, 2017, setting up eligibility for future FDOT Aviation grant funding.

The City became grant-eligible this year and staff worked with its professional aviation consulting firm, Avcon and FDOT District 5 staff to determine, identify and establish the FDOT-required, 5-year airport capital improvement funding priority program, known as JACIP (Joint Automated Capital Improvement Plan). The first priority project identified was a required update to the master plan including an updated inventory and property map and required re-platting of the airport property. It was anticipated that this would occur in the next fiscal year and city match funding would be budgeted accordingly. However, FDOT advised that extra funding became available in their current year program and has awarded the City of Tavares 80% grant funding in the amount of \$174,656 for the master plan update project, with the City being responsible for its 20% required match of \$43,664 which is available in current FY 25 general fund reserves.

Funding and completing this project this year will provide accelerated eligibility for additional future FDOT funding, providing between 50% up to 95% of needed future capital improvement project costs for physical improvements to the facility, including safety and security enhancements, terminal improvements, fueling system improvements and other potential economic development related enhancements. Therefore, staff recommends acceptance of this grant award and the use of current fiscal year reserve funds to provide the required 20% city match for the \$174,656 FDOT grant. (Option 1)

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Gamble inquired about the funding. Mr. Tweedie said that while the City initially planned to include the project in next year's budget, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) could fund a grant in the current grant cycle due to other projects coming in under budget or being postponed.

Council Member Singer asked about the application deadline. Mr. Tweedie responded that the deadline was June 1, 2025.

Council Member Singer added that the Airport Master Plan would help identify future development opportunities for the property. Mr. Tweedie confirmed and noted that an updated airport property map, including new surveys, would be developed. He stated that these were technical requirements from FDOT to remain eligible for future funding under the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Council Member Singer expressed concern about using reserve funds for the City's matching grant portion. He acknowledged, however, that using reserves may be necessary to qualify. He noted that the estimated General Fund reserve balance was \$658,437 and requested the reserve balance at the beginning of the budget cycle.

Ms. Houghton replied that the reserve balance exceeded the required three months of operating expenses, although she did not have the exact figure available. She offered to provide that number later. She also noted that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommended maintaining a minimum of two months' worth of operating expenditures, and in Florida, many finance directors preferred a three-month reserve due to the timing of tax receipts in December.

Council Member Singer stated that approximately 90% of reserve funds should be preserved for emergencies, with the remaining 10% available for strategic or beneficial purposes. Ms. Houghton confirmed that GFOA recommended using excess reserves for one-time expenditures that were aligned with public and Council priorities.

Council Member Singer concluded that while the proposed use of reserve funds would not be for an emergency, it would serve a valuable purpose—leveraging an additional

\$140,656 in grant funding—and expressed his support for using reserves in this instance.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to accept the Staff's recommendation [Option 1], seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 6. Ordinance 2025-04 – City of Tavares 2025 Municipal Impact Fees for Police, Fire, Parks, and General Government

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

By way of background, the following information is provided to assist the City Council as they review the City of Tavares 2025 Municipal Impact Fee Study Final Draft Report for Police, Fire, Parks and General Government Impact Fees. The Final Draft Report is dated April 10, 2025.

- The prior study for City of Tavares Police, Fire and Park Impact Fees was dated September 12, 2006.*
- The City Council adopted Ordinance 2007-02 on February 21, 2007, which implemented the 2006 study recommendations.*
- On June 4, 2021, CS/CS/CS/HB337, known as the Florida Impact Fee Act, was signed into law which brought several changes to Impact Fee requirements.*

Changes to Impact Fees provided in the Florida Impact Fee Act (F.S § 163.31801) include the following:

- The law provides an introduction of definitions for the terms infrastructure and public facilities.*
- The law also creates a cap on the amount local governments can increase impact fees. This cap limits the increase to no more than 12.5% in a given year and no more than 50% over a four-year period.*
- An increase greater than 50% requires a two-thirds vote of the City Council and provides at least two publicly noticed workshops.*
- Local governments will be required to credit developers or builders on a dollar-for-dollar basis when they contribute towards public facilities or infrastructure.*
- The law requires that impact fees be split out into their own accounting fund.*

- *Local governments must limit administrative charges for the collection of impact fees to actual costs.*
- *Changes to the Financial Statement Audit Affidavit requirements by the CFO.*

The Final Draft Report has been prepared by the City's Rate Consultants, Joe Williams and Michelle Galvin of Raftelis, and discusses the following for each impact fee: Police, Fire, Parks, and General Government Facilities. The Draft Report has been prepared within the constraints of the Florida Impact Fee Act.

- *An Introduction*
- *Existing Impact Fees*
- *Incremental Costs*
- *Impact Fee Development*
- *Impact Fee Comparisons*

The City Council held two publicly noticed workshops on March 19, 2025, and April 2, 2025, as required by the Florida Impact Fee Act, FS 163.381801. At each of the two workshops, the City Council held dedicated discussions related to the extraordinary circumstances necessitating the need to exceed the phase-in limitations set forth in FS 163.31801. Extraordinary circumstances included the following:

- *Recent large inflationary cost increases*
- *Additional capital improvements, based on a significant increase in population growth.*

Upon consensus by the City Council on April 2, 2025, the second publicly noticed workshop, a Final Draft Report and proposed Ordinance was provided to the City Council on April 16, 2025.

The First Reading of Ordinance 2025-04 was held on April 16, 2025.

This represents the Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-04 for the City Council.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to accept the City of Tavares 2024 Municipal Impact Fee Study Final Report dated April 10, 2024, for Fire, Police, Parks, and General Government Impact Fees, and Adopt Ordinance 2025-04 implementing the recommended Impact Fees, having held two publicly noticed workshops with dedicated discussions demonstrating extraordinary circumstances, necessitating the need to exceed the phase-in limitations of F.S. 163.31801

Michelle Galvin of Raftelis presented a PowerPoint slide show on the Impact Fee Study, which included the study's objectives, impact fee basis, and impact fee methodology.

Council Member Singer expressed concern over a projected \$10.5 million deficit if the City did not raise impact fees, asking how the City would cover that shortfall. Ms. Galvin confirmed that the funds would have to come from the General Fund, potentially leading to tax increases.

Public Comment

Bill Josh, 4610 Treasure Cay Road, Tavares, said he was a realtor with extensive experience in Central Florida. He shared his background serving on planning and zoning boards in other municipalities. He noted that Tavares had seen significant development, with multiple developers active in the area, and pointed out that the cost of infrastructure was ultimately passed on to individual buyers. Given the current buyer's market in Central Florida, he argued that developers were already offering incentives to attract purchasers. He supported raising impact fees, pointing out that they had not increased since 2006 and that public services require appropriate funding. He emphasized that most buyers were relocating from outside the area and that Tavares should align its fees with those of neighboring communities.

Danielle Stroud, CEO of the Eustis Habitat for Humanity, 1806 S. Bay Street, Eustis, spoke about the organization's work building and repairing homes to help individuals access homeownership. She emphasized that their homeowners pay taxes and insurance and were priced out of the traditional housing market. Ms. Stroud raised concerns that any increase in impact fees would ultimately be passed on to the end user, making homeownership less attainable for many residents. She encouraged the Council to consider how increased fees could hinder the transition from renting to owning for people already living in the area.

Kristie Folker, representative for the Lake Sumter Builders Association, 1100 N. Joanna Avenue, Tavares, commented on the fee increase proposal. She raised concerns about the city's justification under the "extraordinary circumstances" provision and suggested that a phased-in approach would be more appropriate. She acknowledged recent city investments in police and fire stations and felt the fee increase resulted from delayed action rather than extraordinary need. She encouraged the Council to allow for gradual fee increases over a multi-year period, giving builders time to prepare and help avoid economic disruption. She stressed that development approvals come from the city and that builders need predictability to make long-term decisions.

Council Discussion

Council Member Singer said the impact fee increase would be a potential additional cost for new homebuyers and reiterated the principle that future growth should cover its costs. He broke down the proposed increase in relation to typical home prices in the area, stating that the proportional cost was minimal. He referenced previous expert input suggesting continued growth in the region, underscoring the importance of planning ahead. He also addressed the idea of phasing in the fees at a cost to the City in the amount of \$1.7 million dollars, and noted that it would result in a financial burden

on current residents. He supported full implementation of the impact fees to ensure the city's infrastructure keeps pace with demand.

Council Member Singer asked the City Attorney to confirm whether the city's proposal complied with legal requirements. Attorney Holt affirmed that the proposed increase was compliant with Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes through workshops and hearings, and qualified under the "extraordinary circumstances" provision. She explained that a two-thirds vote by the Council was required to proceed. Minor clerical corrections to the draft proposal had been made and noted in the record.

Council Member Singer inquired about the number of housing units already approved and exempt from the new fees. Mr. Drury responded that while an exact number was not available, it represented a large inventory. He clarified that the new fee schedule, if adopted, could not be implemented until 90 days after approval, placing the effective date around August 5.

Council Member Gamble inquired about vehicle replacement estimates for police and fire services, suggesting that the listed costs were underestimated. He noted that police vehicles typically exceed \$53,000 each. After confirming that the city's police-to-population ratio remains below optimal staffing levels, he emphasized the importance of using impact fees to address service needs without increasing taxes for existing residents. Council Member Gamble stated that the proposal was overdue and noted that he and Vice Mayor Pfister had been advocating for a review of impact fees.

Vice Mayor Pfister supported adjusting impact fees to reflect current market conditions. She recounted that the city had previously suspended or reduced impact fees to encourage economic investment, noting that these strategies had successfully attracted hotels, restaurants, and jobs. Vice Mayor Pfister asserted that the city had done its part to support the development community, and now it was time to support residents. She estimated that the fee increase would add a manageable monthly cost to a new home and did not believe it would deter future construction. Vice Mayor Pfister emphasized the need to maintain the city's quality of life and described the proposal as a fair and reasonable step forward.

Council Member Grenier echoed support for the proposal. He noted that two public workshops on the issue had been productive and emphasized that the increase was necessary to sustain service levels for existing residents and that Tavares remains a desirable community where people will continue to move.

Mayor Price concurred with the Council's statements, reinforcing the concept that growth should fund the infrastructure it requires. He pointed out that in an economic downturn, the city would retain the ability to pause or revise the fees. Drawing from his experience as an appraiser, he observed that developers routinely increase home prices without a clear explanation, and the proposed fee would be a relatively small addition. He expressed his support for the increase.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve [Ordinance 2025-04], seconded by Lori Pfister.

Council Member Gamble said the increase in impact fees was not meant to stop growth, and instead an attempt to maintain the same level of services.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 7. Report Writer Contract with the LCSO

Chief Coursey made the following presentation:

This agenda item is to seek approval for a contract with the LCSO to contract their report writing service. This will allow officers to call in to LCSO and dictate calls for service that require a report. This service will allow officers to complete calls more effectively and efficiently. The service provides proper documentation of the reports and will comply with the new reporting system required by the state. Officers will call in to the dispatch service center and dictate reports. This saves valuable time and will allow officers to be back in service and available to respond to the next call for service or active patrols, thus more officers on the street.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve the agreement with the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Vice Mayor Pfister asked whether funds were available in the current budget to cover the contract for the remainder of the year. Chief Coursey confirmed that the funding would come from salary savings and that the contract would also be included in the upcoming budget.

Council Member Singer inquired whether all officers would be using the new program. Chief Coursey responded that all officers, except detectives, would utilize the program.

Mayor Price inquired about the amount of time the program would save. Chief Coursey provided an example, noting that sheriff's deputies could call in reports en route to the next call, eliminating the need to be taken out of service to complete reports.

MOTION

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

Council Member Gamble asked if the service would include automobile accidents. Chief Coursey said no.

Council Member Singer asked if any other cities in Lake County were using the service. Chief Coursey said no, noting Tavares was once again a 'City of Firsts.'

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. FY 2026 Proposed Budget Calendar

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

The FY 2026 Proposed Budget Calendar is attached. The first City Council budget workshop is on Wednesday, July 16, 2025. The Maximum Tentative Millage Rate will be set at the same meeting.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget Calendar as provided.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve [Option 1], seconded by Lori Pfister.

Council Member Singer noted that one meeting had been removed from the schedule. Ms. Houghton confirmed and explained that the change was made to ensure the discussion and presentation would not be too close to the Fourth of July holiday, and to make it more convenient for everyone to attend.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 9. Recreation Department Program Update

Mr. Aldrich provided a presentation on the following programs:

- Tavares Babe Ruth League – where we were, where we are, and where we would like to go. Participation increasing each year after COVID.
- Full STEAM Ahead Educational Program
- Homeschool Programs
- Senior Series
- Take-A-Hike Program
- Father - Daughter Dance
- Egg-Venture

Mr. Aldrich stated there were 2,821 participants in the current programs the City offered. He recognized Deputy Director of Recreation Pete Sherard and Recreation Coordinator Kayla Gains for their dedication and hard work.

Council Member Gamble expressed appreciation for the Recreation Department and its programs. He inquired about participation trends in the Babe Ruth baseball program,

specifically whether participants had increased or decreased compared to the previous year. Mr. Aldrich explained that staff had reported a reduction of nine participants, from 159 in the spring of 2024 to 150 in the spring of 2025. Council Member Gamble provided a historical overview of the program, noting that attendance had been higher when there were no competing local programs and Tavares was the only city in the area offering a Babe Ruth League.

Council Member Gamble praised the Recreation Department for its efforts in offering programs to both residents and non-residents.

Council Member Singer echoed the praise for the Recreation Department, commending the entire staff for their excellent work and continued dedication. He particularly appreciated the variety of programs, highlighting the recent Egg Venture event as a creative and engaging way to get residents exploring the City of Tavares. He also acknowledged the challenge of maintaining a small-town feel in a growing city of over 20,000 people. He emphasized that programs like these were vital in fostering a strong sense of community.

Vice Mayor Pfister commended the Recreation Department and expressed interest in seeing more STEAM programs. She asked the staff to include additional STEAM programs in the upcoming budget.

Tab 10. CDBG Application Approval for Park Restroom Construction at the Golden Triangle Regional Park – East Campus

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a competitive funding program through Lake County that provides grants for Urban County Partners that represent low to moderate income constituents in a particular geographic area. Over the past several years, CDBG funds have been used to construct public restrooms and improve other amenities at City parks such as Wooton Wonderland, Summerall Park, Aesop's Park, Ingraham Park, and Tavares Nature Park.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council approve the recommendation to apply for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to use towards the new construction of a park restroom to be located next to the soccer fields at the Golden Triangle Regional Park – East Campus.

Council Member Gamble inquired about the location of the proposed restrooms. Mr. Aldrich said that the plan was to place them directly next to the soccer fields. Council Member Gamble then asked where that location appears on the master plan. Mr. Drury explained that the restrooms would be coordinated within the master plan, and staff would bring back a revised site and master plan for review.

Mayor Price expressed his understanding that the county would be funding all improvements. Mr. Drury clarified that the restrooms would be funded through a Lake County awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Mayor Price then asked what restroom facilities were currently available. Mr. Drury replied that only portable toilets (portalets) were currently in use.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve [Option 1], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 11. Request to Participate in Lake 100 Study

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Attached is a request from Lake 100 for Tavares to participate in a Lake County Cities and Lake County Government study. The study aims to answer the following four (4) questions:

- a. Are Lake's cities disproportionately subsidizing county services to areas outside municipal limits, and to what extent?*
- b. Are specific services like law enforcement and fire duplicated or overlapping, potentially allowing for cost efficiencies?*
- c. Will the resulting data assist elected leaders with neutral, independent data to better educate the public on operating budgets?*
- d. Will the results of the study reinforce the business community's need for predictability, fairness, and transparency in how growth is managed across jurisdictions?*

Staff recommended the Council participate up to a cost of \$2,500.00

Council Member Singer inquired about the benefits of County and municipal participation in the proposed study. Mr. Drury explained that the study, conducted by a third party, would explore potential services duplicated between the City and the County.

Council Member Singer acknowledged the City's longstanding collaborative relationship with the County and other municipalities. He expressed support for participating in the study but did not support contributing \$2,500 in funding.

Vice Mayor Pfister stated that she did not support allocating funds for the study, noting that the City of Tavares operated effectively under Mr. Drury's leadership.

Council Member Gamble asked Chief Keith if any duplicative or overlapping services existed. Chief Keith responded that the department maintained mutual agreements with

neighboring cities such as Mount Dora and Eustis, emphasizing strong cooperation across jurisdictions.

Council Member Gamble further noted that assistance from other law enforcement agencies was common and effective during large events, such as Leesburg's Bike Fest. He praised the City's functional partnerships and Mr. Drury's leadership. He stated that Tavares was operating well, with existing fire and police agreements in place with both the County and surrounding cities.

Council Member Singer said there was always something to learn from such studies and acknowledged Mr. Drury's ability to collaborate with other municipalities. However, he remained opposed to funding the initiative.

A discussion was held during which Mr. Drury emphasized the strong working relationship between the City of Tavares and Lake County, citing joint efforts on regional park and trail development.

Mayor Price said he did not favor transferring the City's home rule authority to the County.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Mr. Drury attending the meetings at his discretion on his own time, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Mr. Drury said he would be happy to attend a couple of meetings and share his thoughts and ideas without contributing any dollars.

Lori Pfister withdrew her motion.

AMENDED MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Mr. Drury attending the meetings at his discretion with no City funding, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Mayor Pfister said she would like to agendize a discussion on zero lot lines in the downtown.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

Council Member Grenier inquired about the completion date for the upgrades at Aesop's Park, including the installation of new sod. Mr. Dillon responded that the project was expected to be completed within the next couple of weeks.

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Bill Josh, 4610 Treasure Cay Road, Tavares, shared that he invested significant time and energy before moving to the City of Tavares. He highlighted the City's recreational offerings and sense of community as key factors in his decision. Mr. Josh commended Mr. Dillon for his prompt and effective response to a traffic safety issue on Dead River Road. Mr. Dillon contacted the county immediately, and within 48 hours, a "No Left Turn" sign was installed, which likely prevented further accidents. Mr. Josh praised Mr. Dillon for listening, advocating, and getting results.

Bruce Peterman, Royal Harbor, praised the City's employees, noting a recent presentation by Mr. O'Keefe to the Royal Harbor community regarding storm preparedness. He commended Mr. O'Keefe's thorough explanation of expectations, procedures, and roles of various City departments, including police, fire, water, and City Council. He expressed appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of City staff.

Mr. Peterman also thanked the City Council for passing an impact fee ordinance, stating that he appreciated the measure as a City taxpayer.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 8. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury echoed Mr. Peterman's comments and acknowledged the dedication of City employees who attend HOA meetings on their own time, emphasizing that it reflects their strong commitment to the community. He also commended the City Council for being responsive to constituents, often addressing concerns via email or text as early as 6:00 AM or as late as 9:00 PM. He stressed the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with Lake County, which ultimately benefits the citizens. Mr. Drury thanked all five Council Members for their dedication, including work done on weekends and evenings.

Mr. Tweedie wished O'Keefe's Irish Pub a happy 41st birthday.

Mr. O'Keefe reflected on the opening of O'Keefe's Irish Pub 41 years ago, saying it felt like yesterday. He expressed pride in Tavares as a vibrant city and thanked everyone who contributed to its ongoing success.

Mr. Aldrich encouraged residents to visit the library and see the refreshed interior, commenting on how wonderful it looks.

Ms. Houghton reported that the Finance Department worked diligently to close out the previous fiscal year. She expressed her appreciation for the city as both an employee and resident.

Mr. Fabre mentioned that the next meeting will include a Horizon Team update.

Tab 13. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Grenier

Council Member Grenier highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works, and Library staff, who began working at 8:00 AM to rearrange furniture, fix wiring, move signage, and clean the floors in preparation for the library opening at 9:30 AM. He was impressed by the teamwork and noted how different the library now looks.

Council Member Grenier invited Library Director Rebecca Campbell to the podium to speak about Ridge Park. Ms. Campbell shared that the park received a grant from the Florida Wildflower Foundation. Master Gardeners had since planted 50 species of wildflowers, which were in bloom. Wildflower seed packets were available, and the garden was intended for the entire community to enjoy. She thanked Mr. Aldrich and Deputy Director of Recreation Pete Sherrard for their support and commented on the positive feedback from the library staff and patrons.

Council Member Grenier also reported on the following:

- Commended Mr. O'Keefe on a thoughtful letter he received from Royal Harbor regarding a recent speech.
- Asked Chief Coursey to pass along his appreciation to Lieutenant Dana Scola for her nomination as Officer of the Year.
- Praised Mr. Tweedie for the restoration work at the Prop Shop, especially noting the excellent brickwork and plaques completed by former Council Member and Mayor Robert Wolfe.

Council Member Singer

Council Member Singer shared that he attended the Lake County Sheriff's Office Memorial Service for fallen heroes, commending the Sheriff's Office for a well-organized and respectful ceremony. He thanked the law enforcement officers for their service and dedication.

Council Member Singer also reported on the following:

- Apologized for missing the recent mock council meeting and congratulated all five participants, expressing hope that the program continues.
- Extended Mother's Day wishes to all mothers, including his wife and mother, noting their importance in his life.

Council Member Gamble:

Council Member Gamble also wished everyone a happy Mother's Day. Reflecting on the loss of both his parents, he encouraged others to cherish their mothers and celebrate the day meaningfully.

Council Member Gamble also reported on the following:

- Asked Chief Coursey about a recent bicycle accident on CR-473 involving a 61-year-old and a 69-year-old cyclist. He noted the importance of educating residents—especially children—about proper bicycle safety, including riding with the flow of traffic.
- Reported that although James Dillon was absent, he was receiving updates on the progress at Aesop's Park. New sod and cypress mulch were being installed in the playground area, and Parks Operations Manager Traci Anderson was working to clean up trees at Tavares Nature Park.
- Commended all department directors and field employees for going above and beyond in their work.

Mayor Price:

Mayor Price expressed his appreciation for the professionalism of the Tavares City staff.

Mayor Price also reported on the following:

- Attended the Back the Blue Walk, thanking the Tavares Police and Fire Departments for their participation.
- Participated in the Law Enforcement Memorial Service, describing it as a moving ceremony.
- Extended Mother's Day wishes to all mothers.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk