



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 2, 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
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
James Dillon, Public Works Director
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

Council Member Gamble 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 requested the addition of a July 4th Update under new Business.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Agenda with said change, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 1. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Stephanie Hayes, President and CEO of the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on recent Chamber activities.

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 2025-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE 2025 FISCAL YEAR ADOPTED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, REPRESENTING THE SECOND 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. There were no requests.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the June 18, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the June 18, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 3. Resolution 2025-12 – Second Budget Amendment for FY2025

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The attached resolution 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.

This resolution represents the SECOND AMENDMENT to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Mr. Drury said the staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve Resolution 2025-12, amending the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve [Resolution 2025-12], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 4. Request from Tavares Babe Ruth Booster Club to Take Over the Tavares Babe Ruth League

Mr. Aldrich said the agenda item had been continued from the previous City Council meeting. He reported that the Booster Club submitted an email rescinding their

proposal, effective July 1, 2025, as they were dissolving the organization. He and Deputy Recreation Director Pete Sherrard were available for questions.

Council Member Singer asked if a representative from the Booster Club was present. Mr. Drury confirmed no one had attended, despite being invited. Council Member Singer expressed disappointment, stating he would have liked to hear how their offer compared to the work done by City staff who had grown the program.

Council Member Grenier noted the Parks and Recreation Department would remain a core function of the City. Council Member Singer cautioned the Council regarding future requests, as the Booster Club had dissolved within a month of their request.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to accept the Booster Club's dissolution and removal of their request, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Council Member Gamble reflected on the Booster Club's origins and its goal to enhance the program through fundraising, including the establishment of concession stands. He stated that dissolving the group was unfortunate and would have a negative impact on the children.

Council Member Singer agreed and noted that the Club had previously contributed resources that the City could not fund. He also praised the Parks and Recreation staff for their work.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 5. Florida League of Cities Annual Conference

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The Florida League of Cities Annual Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida, from August 14-16, 2025. This conference will provide valuable educational opportunities to help Florida's municipal officials serve their citizenry more effectively.

The Florida League of Cities requests that each member municipality sending delegates to the Annual Conference designate one of their officials to cast their votes at the Annual Business Session, which will be held on Saturday, August 16. Election of League leadership and adoption of resolutions are undertaken during the business meeting. Traditionally, the Mayor attends (depending upon schedules) the Florida League of Cities annual conference on behalf of the City of Tavares.

Mr. Drury asked the Council to select the City's delegate and appoint the voting member to cast their vote at the Annual Business Session. [Option 1]

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to have the Mayor represent the City of Tavares at the Florida League of Cities Annual Conference and act as the City's voting delegate, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Mayor Price noted he was available to attend. Vice Mayor Pfister asked him to check out the exhibits.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Extension to the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for Provision of Library Services

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

On September 10, 2019, the City of Tavares entered into an Interlocal Agreement with Lake County, FL for the provision of library services to join other communities in providing equal access to public library services, without charge, for all residents of Lake County. Tavares is one of sixteen libraries in the Lake County Library System that provides coordinated library services throughout the county, and offers consistent plans, programs, policies, and procedures in the operation, maintenance, and development of library services throughout the area.

The previous agreement signed in 2019 with the county was a three-year term, expiring on September 30, 2022. Subsequently, the City and County then entered into three separate 12-month extensions, with the third one expiring on September 13, 2025. County officials are requesting to extend the agreement for an additional 12-month period while they continue to review the funding metrics of their annual appropriations. Staff is seeking approval to extend this agreement for another year. A copy of the agreement is included in your agenda packet.

Mr. Aldrich said staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve and extend the Interlocal Agreement with Lake County, Florida for the provision of library services.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

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

Tab 7. Interlocal Agreement with Lake County for Distribution of Funds from the Lake County Library Impact Fee Trust Fund to Expand the Book Collection of the Tavares Library

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

On January 28, 2025, the City applied for grant funding through the Lake County Library Impact Fee Trust Fund in the amount of \$10,000.00 to purchase collection items that would expand on the Tavares Library Florida special collection. At its May 15, 2025 regular meeting, the Lake County Library Advisory Board voted to recommend approval in the amount of \$10,000.00 to fund the project.

It should be noted that acceptance of Lake County Library impact fees obligates the City to remain a member of the Lake County Library System for a period of four (4) years following the final completion of the collection purchase. In the event the City withdraws from the partnership, the City shall repay portions of the impact fee funds as indicated in the agreement.

Mr. Aldrich said staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approval and enter into an interlocal agreement between the City of Tavares and Lake County, Florida to accept the impact fee funds in the amount of \$10,000 to be used for the purchase of collection items at the Tavares Library. Mr. Aldrich noted the agreement was a 100% grant with no matching funds required.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, expressed his appreciation for the library and suggested a campaign to promote DVD borrowing as an alternative to online services.

Council Member Singer welcomed Mr. Jochim and expressed appreciation for his positive comments.

Council Member Grenier expressed his support and noted his appreciation for the \$10,000 allocation toward special collection books.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to approve, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. Receipt of Tavares Library Donation and Allocation of Funds

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

In a remarkable gesture of generosity, the Tavares Library recently received a \$10,000 donation, accompanied by the heartfelt request that it be used "in good

health.” The American Library Association and United for Libraries emphasize the importance of effectively managing library donations. Donors contribute with the expectation that their gifts will be utilized promptly and efficiently to support the organization's mission. They suggest that donors enjoy seeing their contributions directed toward meaningful projects rather than sitting idle in reserve accounts. Furthermore, they state that donors seek to see tangible results and impacts from their support and trust that their donations will improve access, education, and community engagement through their library.

Staff are committed to honoring this extraordinary gift by developing a lasting, meaningful project that aligns with the Tavares Library mission and enriches our community. Several options to allocate the donated funds are as follows:

1. **RIDGE PARK STORYWALK:** The StoryWalk concept was first created by Anne Ferguson of Vermont in connection with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. It is a way to provide an innovative and delightful way for children and adults to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. Laminated pages from a children's picture book are installed in powder-coated, aluminum frames along an outdoor path. As you walk the path, you are directed to the next page of the story. The proposed Ridge Park StoryWalk would be installed along the sidewalk near the new flower garden in Ridge Park, just outside the Tavares Library. The StoryWalk will be ADA-compliant and thoughtfully placed in the shade, allowing easy reading. This option builds on the library's current StoryWalk program, which began in 2020 using temporary DIY wooden stakes that are no longer usable. This new initiative would be a permanent installation, providing a lasting reading experience and building on the library's successful programs in Ridge Park.
2. **BOOK BUDGET INCREASE:** Annually, City Council allocates the library's fiscal year's budget and provides funds for purchasing books and other materials to add to the library's collection. The amount of funds budgeted each year often determines how many, or what collection variety, the library may purchase. The goal in purchasing new and fresh materials to add to the library's collection is to increase the circulation of the items and offer the visiting patrons a better assortment of selections. Allocating the donated funds to increase the book budget for the library would offer a one-time, temporary boost to the budget, allowing the library to purchase an additional \$10,000 worth of books and materials. It should be noted that, separately from this donation, the library has applied for a \$10,000 Collection Development Grant from the Lake County Library Impact Fees. The Lake County Library Advisory Board has unanimously approved this grant and awaits approval from the Lake County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).
3. **PROGRAM BUDGET INCREASE:** Similarly, City Council allocates annual budget dollars for library staff to administer programs throughout the year for patrons of all ages. Funds specifically earmarked for youth

and adult programs are geared towards creating reading activities, concerts, and other innovative programs with the intention of bringing more people into the library. Allocating the donated funds to increase the program budget for the library would allow the staff to expand its current one-time program offerings with contracted vendors and high-quality entertainment with the hopes that it would boost our library's visitation.

Mr. Aldrich said staff recommended Option 1, the Ridge Park StoryWalk, which would be ADA-compliant, shaded, and located near the flower garden at the library.

Council Member Grenier said he supported the project, noting that most libraries he had visited recently during speaking engagements included similar features. He said the library was receiving \$10,000 to boost their book collection, and a story walk would be an excellent addition for the children.

Council Member Singer asked if a story walk would be considered at other City locations. Mr. Aldrich explained the preference for Ridge Park due to security and proximity to the library.

Council Member Singer commended Library Director Rebecca Campbell and said the City would not receive the funds without her outstanding work.

Ms. Campbell said the story walk was a passion project that the library team had been working on for years.

Council Member Gamble asked what material would be used for the story book pages. Ms. Campbell said the staff selected aluminum. She said the library had a collection of sixteen (16) books that would be dedicated to the story walk. She said the story walk could be designed around seasons, holidays, and customized for children and adults.

Mayor Price noted his support, and reiterated that the library also received \$10,000 in funds for books.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Sandy Gamble. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 9. Garage Sale Ordinance

Chief Coursey made the following presentation:

Previously, the City had a garage sale ordinance that required a no-cost permit for up to four garage sales per year. This ordinance worked well and was easy to enforce, as it provided Code enforcement with documentation. Subsequently, by Ordinance 2017-02 (attached), the Council amended the previous ordinance on

Garage Sale Permits by removing the no-cost permit but limiting the number of garage sales to four per year. This amendment made it harder to enforce and keep track of the number of garage sales within the calendar year.

Additionally, the current ordinance does not define a fine per violation-staff recommends setting this fine. Example: First offense receives a warning, second offense a \$150 fine, and all subsequent fines \$250 within the calendar year.

Chief Coursey said staff recommended Option 1, to amend the ordinance to require a no-cost permit and set fine amounts.

Mayor Price asked Code Enforcement Officer McCormick to summarize the complaints he had received related to garage sales. Officer McCormick reported that he had recently received numerous complaints about a garage sale on St. Clair Abrams. He noted that salvagers held yard sales nearly every weekend, making enforcement challenging. Because Code Enforcement allowed a reasonable time to cure violations and yard sales typically ended within a couple of days, tracking violations was difficult. He added that once a yard sale was removed, the violation was considered cured, and the cycle repeated. Officer McCormick estimated that approximately four properties were responsible for most of the violations.

Mayor Price asked how having a permit requirement would help. Mr. Drury responded that the main challenge had been tracking the limit of four garage sales per property per year. He explained that the proposed ordinance would require residents to apply online for a no-cost permit, limited to four per calendar year. Violators would receive an initial warning, followed by fines of \$150 for the second offense and \$250 for subsequent offenses. Mr. Drury noted that if the Council approved of this approach, staff would draft the ordinance for Council consideration.

Mayor Price asked how staff would notify residents about the permit requirement. Mr. Drury stated that the City's public relations team would promote the new requirements in a positive light to raise awareness.

Further discussion ensued regarding the difficulties staff had faced enforcing yard sale rules without a permit system and the need for fines to encourage compliance.

Vice Mayor Pfister asked whether violations would be tracked by property address. Mr. Drury confirmed.

Council Member Gamble asked about the allowable duration for yard sales. Officer McCormick replied that yard sales would be permitted for up to three consecutive days.

Council Member Gamble inquired whether non-profit organizations would be treated differently. Officer McCormick clarified that non-profits would be subject to the same rules as all other residents.

Mr. Drury said staff would prepare and bring back a draft ordinance reflecting the permit requirements and fines for the Council's consideration.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

4th of July Update

Mr. O'Keefe addressed the Council in his role as the City's Emergency Management Director. He emphasized that safety was the top priority for attendees of the July 4th Celebration event. Mr. O'Keefe reported that inclement weather was forecast over the holiday weekend, and there was consensus among Emergency Management, the Police Department, and the Fire Department to cancel the 4th of July parade due to the anticipated severe weather. However, he confirmed that all other scheduled activities—including bands, vendors, entertainment, and the fireworks display at 9:00 p.m.—would proceed as planned.

Vice Mayor Pfister, Council Member Gamble, and Council Member Singer all expressed their support for the decision, underscoring that the safety of the community was their highest priority.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

Council Member Gamble inquired about the status of the skate park removal. Mr. Clark said the removal was completed.

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Vance Jochim, of 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, addressed the Council regarding Tavares Nature Park. He noted that the City had created fire breaks within a 20-foot area that was ungrated, which made walking difficult. Mr. Jochim requested that the City grate this area to improve accessibility. He also recommended the installation of trail signs and suggested the City increase publicity efforts to promote the park. Additionally, he encouraged the City to consider including artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives in future budgets and planning.

Stephanie Hayes, representing the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on a map company the Chamber was currently using to produce its map services.

Gary Santoro, from Royal Harbor, recognized retired Utility Director Brad Hays, who was present in the audience. Mr. Santoro credited Mr. Hays and City Administrator Mr.

Drury for resolving water pressure issues in Royal Harbor. He further remarked that Mr. Drury had left the City well-positioned by hiring Mr. Clark as the new Utility Director.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 10. City Administrator Report

Mr. Aldrich said the pie tasting and poem contests would still be held at the 4th of July Celebration event. He said forms were available on the City website.

Tab 11. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Grenier shared that members of the Mechanized Calvary Club expressed their appreciation for the hospitality they experienced during their recent visit to the City of Tavares. The event, held from June 19–22, 2025, drew attendees from fourteen states, including Hawaii. He noted that local hotels and restaurants were fully booked throughout the event, highlighting the positive economic impact on the community.

Council Member Price provided a detailed update on four (4) growth management workshops hosted by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners. He summarized the content and discussion points from each workshop as follows:

- Charter County Workshop: This session focused on the concept of Lake County becoming a Charter County. If implemented, this change could give the County Commission additional authority, including the potential to override municipal land use decisions—raising concern for home rule and local control.
- Planning Workshop: This workshop focused on the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Discussions centered on strategies for long-term growth management and planning throughout the county.
- Agricultural Farmlands Workshop: Council Member Price explained that Lake County voters recently approved a \$50 million referendum aimed at preserving agricultural lands. Workshop discussions included options such as purchasing agricultural land, selling development rights, and then returning the remaining conservation area back to the original landowner. This method could free up additional funding compared to full land acquisition. He added that both state and private grant funding would be available to support these efforts.
- JPA Roundtable: This roundtable included participation from Mayors and City Managers representing all Lake County municipalities. A primary focus of the meeting was a proposal between the County and municipalities to avoid annexation and development in rural transition areas along city boundaries. The discussion also included the possibility of eliminating the existing Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements (ISBAs). Council Member Price emphasized that the City of Tavares had not yet met with Lake County officials on this issue, and no decisions had been made. Any future decision would rest with the Tavares City Council. A major theme of the roundtable was the lack of available funding

for transportation infrastructure needed to support ongoing and future growth throughout the County.

Mayor Price concluded the reports by noting that Governor Ron DeSantis had signed a revised version of the Live Local Act. He also reported that the Governor was pursuing a statewide ballot initiative that would propose eliminating all homestead property taxes.

The meeting concluded with Council Members and staff extending well wishes for a safe and joyful Independence Day.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk