



**AGENDA
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
October 1, 2025
4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 E MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

(Members of the public wishing to speak on an item that is on the agenda must fill out a Request to Speak form available from the City Clerk or at the Council Meeting prior to the meeting being called to order. In addition, the Mayor will ask for comment under the agenda item titled "Audience to be Heard" for matters not on the Agenda. For further information contact the City Clerk at (352) 742-6209 or susie.novack@tavaresfl.gov)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1 Interim Pastor Josh Lane, Astatula Baptist Church

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2 Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO RECORD

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Tab 3 Approval of the September 17, 2025, City Council Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes (City Clerk)

Tab 4 Cresswind at Lake Harris Phases 2 & 3 — Preliminary Subdivision Plat (Community Development)

Tab 5 Request Council's Approval of Equipment for Auction (Finance)

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 6 Resolution 2025-17 - Opt -Out of Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption (Finance)

Tab 7 Resolution 2025-18 - Acceptance of Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) Grant for Fire Safety Trailer (Fire)

IX. ORDINANCES - PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 8 Award and Authorize Contract to Continental Strategy for State and Federal Governmental Relations (City Administrator)

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 9 City Administrator Report

Tab 10 City Council Member Reports

XV. ADJOURNMENT

F.S. 286.0105 If a person decides to appeal any decision or recommendation made by Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he will need record of the proceedings, and that for such purposes he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Individuals with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk at least two (2) working days in advance of the meeting date and time at (352) 742-6209.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 1

SUBJECT TITLE: Interim Pastor Josh Lane, Astatula Baptist Church

OBJECTIVE:

Interim Pastor Josh Lane, Astatula Baptist Church, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUMMARY:

Interim Pastor Josh Lane, Astatula Baptist Church, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 2

SUBJECT TITLE: Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

OBJECTIVE:

Receive an update on the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

SUMMARY:

The Tavares Chamber of Commerce will provide an update on Chamber activities.

OPTIONS:

1. Receive an update from the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.
2. Do not receive an update.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, receive an update from the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. September 2025 Report to the City Council

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 3

SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of the September 17, 2025, City Council Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes (City Clerk)

OBJECTIVE:

For the Council to consider approval of the September 17, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing minutes.

SUMMARY:

Attached are the September 17, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing minutes as submitted by the City Clerk.

OPTIONS:

1. Move to approve the City Council Regular Meeting and Budget Hearing minutes as submitted by the City Clerk.
2. Move to approve the meeting minutes with corrections.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

For the Council's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. 09-17-2025 CC Minutes

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 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

Tab 1. Pastor Greg Watts, Liberty Church Tavares

Pastor Greg Watts, Liberty Church Tavares, 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 had no changes.

MOTION

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EXPARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Holt stated that there was one quasi-judicial matter before the Council for consideration: the second reading of Ordinance 2025-09 [Tab 4], rezoning of the Palm Gardens property. Attorney Holt administered the oath to those intending to provide testimony.

Attorney Holt asked the Council if they had any ex parte communications. The following disclosures were made:

- Mayor Price said he spoke with Chuck Hiott, PE, Director of Land Development with Halff.
- Vice Mayor Pfister said she received phone calls, which she did not return.
- Council Member Grenier said he received a text from Mr. Hiott.
- Council Member Singer said he spoke with Mr. Hiott.
- Council Member Gamble said he may have received a phone call, which he did not return.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following ordinances at second reading by title only:

ORDINANCE 2025-08

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS CHAPTER 4 APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND PERMITTING, TABLE 4-B AND SECTION 4-22 PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF A FINAL PLAT, AND CHAPTER 16 SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS, SECTION 16-31 FORMS AND REPLACING FORM 16-13 IN ITS

ENTIRETY; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ORDINANCE 2025-09

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, REZONING APPROXIMATELY 20.83 ± ACRES OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF US HWY 441, APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILES WEST OF THE INTERSECTION OF US HWY 441 AND LAKE SHORE BLVD. AND 1.5 MILES EAST OF THE INTERSECTION OF US HWY 441 AND RADIO RD.; REZONING FROM PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) TO MIXED USE (MU) DISTRICT; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Novack noted Resolutions 2025-15 [Final Millage Resolution] and 2025-16 [Final Budget Resolution] would be read in their entirety during the Budget Hearing at 5:05 p.m.

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 September 3, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

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

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 3. Ordinance 2025-08 – Amendments to the City’s Land Development Regulations, Chapter 4 – “Application Procedures and Permitting,” Table 4-B and Sections 4-22 – Procedure for Consideration of a Final Plat, and Chapter 16 –

“Subdivision Regulations,” Section 16-31 – Forms; and replacement of Form 16-13

Mr. Drury introduced the item and provided a high-level overview. He said that under the existing practice City staff, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the City Council all approved both preliminary and final plats. He noted that a new state law prohibited Planning and Zoning Boards and City Councils from approving final plats and limited that authority to City staff.

Mr. Drury stated that the purpose of the agenda item was to update the City ordinance so that it complied with the new state law and required final plat approvals to be handled administratively by staff rather than through the City Council. He discussed his understanding of the reasoning for the legislative change and explained that the final plat process served only to confirm that infrastructure such as water lines, sewer lines, stormwater systems, streets, and the number of lots were consistent with what the City Council had already approved in the preliminary plat. He emphasized that there was no need for the City Council to approve the same matter twice once the construction had been completed.

Mr. Drury further explained that the final plat review was a ministerial and administrative task performed by the City Engineer, whose role was to calculate and verify technical compliance. He stressed that this process was not a policy decision but rather an administrative confirmation that the constructed improvements matched the approved preliminary plat.

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

On July 1, 2025, the State of Florida has amended s. 177.071, F.S. (see attached 2025-164 Laws of Florida); requiring that certain plat or replat submittals be administratively approved with no further action by City Council authority. The subject Ordinance proposes amendments to the City’s Land Development Regulations to revise and streamline the approval process for plat and replat submittals. Specifically, the ordinance:

- Amends Table 4-B and Section 4-22 within Chapter 4 to reflect changes to the final plat approval process;*
- Amends Chapter 16, Section 16-31 regarding forms associated with subdivision regulations;*
- Repeals and replaces Form 16-13 in its entirety;*

These amendments will allow for administrative approval of plats and replats, where appropriate, in a manner consistent with applicable Florida law.

On August 14, 2025, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend approval, subject to a minor clarification. The

City Council packet contains the revised edit as recommended by the P&Z Advisory Board and reviewed by staff and legal counsel.

Therefore, City Staff recommends that the City Council moves to approve Ordinance 2025-08.

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

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Ordinance 2025-08, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Vice Mayor Pfister noted the ordinance was a housekeeping measure.

Council Member Gamble asked for clarification regarding the wording in the ordinance and the state law that referred to “certain plat submittals.” He questioned whether that language applied to anything after the original plat.

Mr. Drury and Attorney Holt clarified that the reference to “certain plat” in the state law meant the final plat.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 4. Ordinance 2025-09 – Palm Gardens Property – Rezoning of Approximately 20.83 Acres Located on the Northwest Intersection of US Hwy 441 and Dead River from City of Tavares Planned Development (PD) Zoning to Mixed Use (MU) Zoning District

Mr. Drury provided a high-level introduction of the request. He said that the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Council had previously approved the City-wide Comprehensive Plan, which called for mixed-use zoning on the Palm Gardens property. He noted that both the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Council had also approved the annexation of the property into the City with a Planned Development designation, again with mixed-use zoning.

Mr. Drury stated that the City Council had approved mixed-use zoning for this site on two previous occasions. The current request represented a third attempt at approval because the owner’s prior project had stalled, and the Planned Development and zoning had been extinguished. He reported that the Planning and Zoning Board had denied the owner’s recent request. Based on his observation at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, it appeared that some members wanted to see a rendering of what the project could look like before recommending approval.

Mr. Drury concluded by stating that the request before the City Council was to designate the Palm Gardens property with mixed-use zoning, allowing the owner to place the property on the market and move forward with redevelopment.

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

The applicant is requesting a rezoning of the subject property from the expired Planned Development (PD Ordinance 2007-24) to the Mixed Use (MU) zoning district. The proposed MU zoning is intended to bring the site into consistency with the City's adopted Future Land Use Map designation of Mixed Use (MU) as outlined in the 2040 "Taking Flight" Comprehensive Plan.

The subject property is located at the northwest intersection of U.S. Highway 441 and Dead River, commonly known as Palm Gardens (AKA: Florida Lakefront RV Park). The parcel is approximately 20.83 acres in size. The property is bounded by the Dead River and associated wetlands to the east, U.S. Hwy 441 to the south, jurisdictional wetlands to the north, and a commercial land use (shed sales and storage facility) to the west. Demolition of the former manufactured home park on the site was completed in early 2024. The property is currently vacant, though some structures remain on-site, including a former restaurant, associated structures and boat dock.

A traffic study analysis was conducted by the applicant and accepted by the City's traffic consultant. Environmental and wetlands assessments were conducted for the site and provided to the city. Accordingly, any future development on the site will be required to comply with all applicable provisions of the City's Land Development Regulations.

At this time, the applicant does not have a specific proposed use or any development plans for the subject property. Therefore, the applicant elects to defer concurrency determination until such time as a final development order. Staff finds the rezoning request to be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

On August 14, 2025, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and a motion for approval failed (4-2). The majority of board members indicated that approval of the rezoning request should have a development plan for the subject property (see attached draft P&Z minutes).

After the subsequent P&Z meeting, below are relevant adopted codes for City Council to consider:

- "It is the intention of the Council that these regulations implement the planning policies adopted by the Council for the City and its planning area, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents. In accordance with Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes, all permits issued under this Chapter shall be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan" (Land Development Regulations, Chapter 1, Section 1-6). - The proposed "Mixed Use" (MU) rezoning request is consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.*

- *"After [PD expiration] revocation, City Council may take action to rezone the subject property to the lowest intensity and density zoning designation consistent with the Comprehensive Plan" (Land Development Regulations, Chapter 8, Section 8-11, 10, 2, f, 4). - The proposed "Mixed Use" (MU) rezoning request is the lowest intensity and density zoning designation consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *"Intensity and Density of Development. No gross residential density or gross non-residential floor area ratio shall exceed the maximum density or intensity designated in the future land use element of the Comprehensive Plan, regardless of the density/intensity permitted by the applicable zoning district" (Land Development Regulations, Chapter 8, Section 8-5, B). - The proposed "Mixed Use" (MU) rezoning shall be consistent with the adopted Land Development Standards for the MU zoning district.*
- *"Future Land Use/Zoning Matrix. The zoning districts in this chapter are consistent with the Future Land Use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan and shall be applied as shown in Table 8-1, Future Land Use/Zoning Matrix (Land Development Regulations, Chapter 8, Section 8-5, C). - The proposed "Mixed Use" (MU) rezoning is consistent with this Code provision.*
- *Any Preliminary Subdivision Plan/Plat (PSP) of the subject property will require City Council Approval.*
- *Any Variance request from the adopted Code will require a Planning & Zoning and City Council Public Hearings.*
- *The proposed rezoning submittal is complete per Table 4-A "Submittal Requirements" of the Land Development Regulations.*

Therefore, City Staff recommends that the City Council moves to approve Ordinance 2025-09.

Mayor Price asked how environmental impacts, traffic, and school concurrency requirements were being addressed without a concept plan. Mr. Fabre responded that these items had been evaluated at the preliminary stage based on the property's highest and best use. He stated that the traffic consultant had analyzed both residential and commercial scenarios and confirmed the findings. Mayor Price asked whether mixed-use required both residential and commercial components. Mr. Fabre stated that a commercial and a residential component should be included.

Mayor Price inquired whether there was any intention to develop the property under the Live Local Act. Mr. Drury said the applicant could address those questions.

Council Member Gamble asked whether the matter would return to the Planning and Zoning Board. Mr. Fabre stated that it would not.

Vice Mayor Pfister asked whether the project could be developed as entirely residential or entirely commercial. Mr. Drury and Attorney Holt explained that it could not be exclusively one or the other and that some commercial component would be required.

Vice Mayor Pfister expressed concern that the project could result in mostly residential uses with very little commercial development. Mr. Fabre clarified that the Council would have discretion at the preliminary plat stage if the balance of uses did not meet expectations. Mr. Drury added that a Planned Development (PD) would require Council approval, but if the property developed under straight zoning and complied with code, it would not return to the Council. Vice Mayor Pfister stated that the City needed more commercial uses and not additional housing.

Attorney Holt stated the Live Local Act could be applied in industrial, commercial, and mixed use districts, but not in residential districts. Mr. Drury noted that this meant rezoning the property to commercial or mixed use would open the possibility of Live Local Act applications. He stated the City's authority was limited and the decision was largely dictated by higher levels of government.

Council Member Gamble asked about traffic impacts near the bridge on U.S. 441, noting the history of accidents in that area. Mr. Fabre stated that staff shared those concerns and that such issues would be reviewed in greater detail when a development plan was submitted.

Chuck Hoitt of Halff Engineering, 902 North Sinclair Avenue, addressed the Council to clarify that the property would only return to the Council if variances or land divisions were requested. If developed under a straight site plan with no subdivisions, the matter would not return to the Council.

The applicant, Trey Vick, 3349 Holiday Avenue, was sworn in by Attorney Holt. Mr. Vick stated that he had no intention of utilizing the Live Local Act. He explained that his purpose in seeking mixed-use zoning was to establish a rulebook so the property could move forward with a comprehensive development plan. He noted that the property currently lacked entitlements, which prevented investment in engineering and architectural plans. He expressed the intention to comply with City codes and to return for variances if needed.

Mr. Vick stated that the owner's general vision included a combination of multi-family residential and commercial uses, with restaurants or service businesses along U.S. 441 and residential development behind. He said it was premature to present architectural renderings, as doing so without a defined plan might appear misleading.

Council Member Grenier stated that visuals or concept renderings could have been helpful to the Planning and Zoning Board and the Council. He emphasized the importance of protecting conservation areas along the Dead River. Mr. Vick responded that he preferred to be candid about the uncertainty at this stage rather than provide speculative renderings.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Ordinance 2025-09, seconded by Troy Singer.

Council Member Gamble asked about property lines shown on the map and whether portions across the Dead River were included. Mr. Vick stated that the Dead River was a navigable waterway and was not part of the developable property. Attorney Holt confirmed that setbacks from waterways and wetlands, as well as regulatory requirements of the St. Johns River Water Management District, would apply.

Council Member Singer expressed confidence in the Planning and Zoning Board, noting that its concerns stemmed from the absence of a concept plan. He asked Attorney Holt whether the applicant's statements about intent would be binding. Attorney Holt stated they would not be binding.

Vice Mayor Pfister expressed concern about the possibility of uncontrolled development and asked whether the applicant intended to move forward promptly. Mr. Vick confirmed that he and his partners intended to develop the property. He stated that their goal was to move forward with a quality project that would become an asset to the City.

Mayor Price asked about the property's marketability without zoning. Mr. Vick stated that without zoning, the property was unmarketable, which could result in further delays and uncertainty.

Vice Mayor Pfister and Council Member Grenier both expressed confidence in the applicant's intentions and encouraged him to deliver a quality project for such a visible and scenic location.

Council Member Singer noted that whatever decision was made could be subject to legal challenge. Attorney Holt stated that if the rezoning were denied, the property would remain without zoning, since there was no reverter language in place to return it to a prior classification.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Tavares Professional Firefighters Local 3245 and the City of Tavares

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City's Collective Bargaining Management Team (Mayor, City Administrator, Fire Chief, Finance Director & Human Resource Director) have bargained in good faith with the Firefighters Collective Bargaining Representatives on several occasions over the previous several months and have reached an agreement for Council's consideration which calls for the following salient items:

1) In order to raise the Firefighter's pay to market conditions, there exists a need to raise pay by 12%. In order to afford this, it was agreed that it would need to be

spread over a period of time as follows: There would be a retroactive increase of 3.5% on July 1, 2025, a 5% increase on October 1, 2025, and a 3.5% increase on July 1, 2026.

2) In order to raise Medic Pay to market conditions, Medic pay would be increased from \$3.75 per hour to \$4.13 per hour effective October 1st, 2025.

3) In order to improve the safety and the resting period of firefighters, Tavares would implement "True Kelley Days" in January 2026, from one every 28 days to one every 21 days, which means going from 13 to 17 Kelly days per year (4 additional rest days) per firefighter.

4) In order to improve safety, a new "Ladder Truck" assignment incentive pay of \$750 per year upon a firefighter's completion of the 4 classes needed to obtain Ladder Truck Operational certification:

- a. Vehicle Mechanical Rescue (VMR)*
- b. Rope Rescue Operations*
- c. Truck Company Operations*
- d. Aerial Operations*

The City's Collective Bargaining Management Team recommends approval of the attached agreement, which reflects the above items, and the Firefighters have voted on and approved the agreement.

Mr. Drury said staff recommended Option 1, to approve the agreement. He reviewed the fiscal impact, noting the current year's retroactive increase of \$18,821 had been absorbed through delayed hiring. He stated the remaining costs included \$79,048 in FY26 for the 5% increase, \$20,454 in July FY27 for the final 3.5% increase, \$11,820 for medic pay, and \$3,000 for the ladder truck incentive, totaling \$133,143. He emphasized that these amounts were not included in the FY26 draft budget because negotiations had only recently concluded.

Mr. Drury provided four funding options for Council consideration:

- Approve the agreement with funding from the General Fund surplus;*
- Approve the agreement with funding from the General Fund reserves;*
- Approve the agreement with funding from the General Fund and designate the source during the upcoming budget discussion; or*
- Not approve the agreement.*

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer expressed support for the firefighters and all City staff, stating the City would not be what it was without them. He stated the firefighters deserved the increase and expressed concern that the timing of the negotiations left the Council unaware of the fiscal impact during budget deliberations. He noted that had the agreement been available earlier, the Council would not have had \$108,970 in additional funds, and would have faced a \$24,000 deficit instead. He recommended

applying the contingency funds toward the agreement, with the remaining \$24,000 funded from reserves.

Vice Mayor Pfister thanked the management team for their efforts in negotiating the contract. She stated that the city's reserves were strong and supported using them to fund the agreement.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Tavares Firefighters Local 3245 and the City of Tavares, with funding from Reserves. Bob Grenier seconded the motion for discussion.

Council Member Grenier inquired about the level of reserves.

Ms. Houghton responded that reserves were projected at \$7.283 million, and with the agreement funded from reserves, the balance would be approximately \$7.169 million. She explained this equated to 2.88 months of reserves, which remained above the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) recommended level of two to three months.

Mr. Drury added that reserves were approximately \$2 million above GFOA recommendations.

Council Member Gamble noted that constituents often questioned the level of reserves and stated that using them for firefighter salaries would still keep the City within GFOA standards. He suggested approving the agreement with reserves and then separately bringing back any other contingency projects for Council approval.

Vice Mayor Pfister emphasized that reserves were taxpayer funds and that using them for the firefighters was a responsible investment in public safety and community quality of life. She stated the City had always been fiscally responsible with reserves.

Mayor Price stated that as a member of the management team, he had reviewed pay levels in surrounding jurisdictions. He said the agreement would make Tavares competitive with other agencies and prevent the loss of personnel. He believed the agreement was both reasonable and necessary.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. BUDGET HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 MILLAGE & BUDGET – READING OF FINAL MILLAGE & BUDGET RESOLUTIONS – 5:05 P.M.

Tab 6. Approve Resolution 2025-15 for Final Millage Rate for FY 2026 – Second Reading

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2025-15 in its entirety as follows:

RESOLUTION 2025 - 15

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 6.6850 FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; SETTING FORTH THE PERCENT BY WHICH THE MILLAGE RATE IS GREATER THAN THE "ROLLED-BACK" RATE.

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

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida on September 3, 2025, adopted the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Tentative Millage Rate following a public hearing as required by Florida Statute 200.065.

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida, following due public notice as required by law, held a second public hearing on September 17, 2025, as required by Florida Statute 200.065 on the 2024-2025 Millage Rate; and

WHEREAS, the gross taxable value for operating purposes not exempt from taxation within Lake County has been certified by the County Property Appraiser to the City of Tavares as \$1,896,245,451.

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

- 1. The City of Tavares Fiscal Year 2025-2026 operating millage rate to be levied is hereby set at 6.6850 mills, which millage rate is greater than the rolled back rate of 6.3538 mills by 5.21%.**
- 2. The voted debt service millage rate is set at .1467 mills for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.**
- 3. This Resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.**

Mr. Drury noted the advertisement for the Millage and Budget Hearings were advertised on September 14, 2025, and provided the following presentation:

The City Administrator and staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2026 for Council's consideration totaling \$69,201,385 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY 2026 includes, among many other items, the following:

- 1. A Similar Level of Service is achieved.*

2. *General Fund millage rate decreases from 6.7756 mills to 6.6850 mills, which is 5.21% above the rollbacked rate.*
3. *Debt Service millage rate decreases from .1601 to .1467.*
4. *Estimated reserve balances that meet GFOA recommendations.*
5. *Fire Assessment level funded with no rate increase.*
6. *Employee raises of 5.0%.*
7. *Six new Public Safety positions are proposed: three for Police, and three for Fire.*
8. *Six new General Fund positions are proposed with a hire date of 7/1/2026: two for Finance (one part-time, and one full-time), one for Fleet Management, one for Facilities Management, and three for Community Services (two part-time, and one full-time).*
9. *Street paving - \$400,000.*
10. *Expanded programs are cut.*

Previously, the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget at the following public meetings:

- *7/16/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General Fund Budget)*
- *7/16/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Set Maximum Tentative Millage rate)*
- *8/06/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General, Utility, and Special Revenue Fund Budgets)*
- *8/20/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Capital Improvement Plan Presentation)*
- *8/20/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Discussion on FY 2026 Proposed Budget)*
- *9/03/2025 – City Council Budget Public Hearing – (Discussion on FY 2026 Proposed Budget)*

A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council. Exhibit A lists all the changes made to the Proposed Budget since it was presented at the July 16th City Council meeting. The changes made have resulted in \$108,970 in unappropriated revenue in the General Fund that remains available for appropriation. Options include: 1) Appropriate it as a "contingency" for unforeseen initiatives or projects that the Council may want to initiate during the next fiscal year 2) Fund a cut item 3) Place it into reserves or 4) lower the millage rate.

Mr. Drury said the staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to take public input and approve the Final Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2026 as reflected in Resolution 2025-15, and address the \$108,970 appropriations during the next agenda item – adoption of the budget.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the audience. There was none.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer asked Ms. Houghton if it was possible to lower the millage rate. Ms. Houghton stated the rate could be lowered at the meeting, and not increased.

Council Member Singer asked if reserves could be used to accomplish a reduction. Ms. Houghton confirmed that reserves could be applied, noting that the City held approximately \$2,198,425 above the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommended reserve levels. Vice Mayor Pfister inquired if that figure was after the appropriation, and Mr. Drury confirmed it was.

Mr. Drury clarified that the question was whether appropriating the \$2.1 million in excess reserves to reduce the millage rate would result in a measurable change. Ms. Houghton, cautioning that the calculation was being done without full analysis, estimated that the millage rate would decrease to 5.5256 mills and noted that it did not account for recurring expenditures that could be impacted.

Vice Mayor Pfister asked for the estimated difference to a homeowner with a \$300,000 property. Ms. Houghton calculated an estimated annual savings of \$289.85.

Council Member Singer asked whether the Council wished to lower the rate or maintain it as is. Vice Mayor Pfister remarked that while the idea was good, the savings were modest and equivalent to a family choosing to forgo a single outing each month. She expressed concern about the long-term consequences.

Mr. Drury cautioned against using one-time dollars to offset recurring expenses. He explained that while one-time revenues could be applied toward one-time projects such as a parking garage, using reserves to offset recurring costs would require replacing the \$2.1 million the following year.

Council Member Gamble noted uncertainty regarding the future of property taxes, stating that reductions in homestead property tax revenue could be forthcoming, and the City should be cautious.

Council Member Singer emphasized that he only wished to show that money existed that could be applied, though he was satisfied with the recommended rate. Vice Mayor Pfister said she appreciated the idea but did not support lowering the rate for that year.

Mayor Price asked if unused funds could be carried forward into the following budget year. Mr. Drury confirmed. Council Member Gamble added that rollover amounts were already assigned, and Mayor Price clarified he was referring to the general reserve level. He agreed that with uncertainty in property tax revenues, the City should maintain its reserves to protect essential services.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to adopt Resolution 2025-15 and recommended an operating millage rate of 6.6850 mills and a debt service millage rate of 0.1467 for Fiscal

Year 2025-2026. The motion was seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0 at 5:28 p.m.

Tab 7. Approve Resolution 2025-16 for Final Budget for FY 2026 – Second Reading

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2025-16 in its entirety as follows:

RESOLUTION 2025-16

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 - 2026.

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

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the tentative 2025-2026 budget was held at the Tavares City Hall Council Chambers in the City of Tavares, Florida, Lake County, Florida on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 5:05 p.m., as required by Florida Statutes 200.065; and

WHEREAS, the general public was given an opportunity to express its views pertaining to the tentative budget, and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved the tentative budget for 2025-2026, and

WHEREAS, a second public hearing on the proposed 2025-2026 budget was held in the Council Chambers at the Tavares City Hall, 201 East Main Street in the City of Tavares, Florida, on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 5:05 p.m.,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Budget for 2025-2026 fiscal year for the City of Tavares, Florida is hereby adopted by the Tavares City Council in the amount of \$69,201,385 at public hearing this 17th day of September 2025.

This resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Mr. Drury noted the advertisement for the Millage and Budget Hearings were advertised on September 14, 2025, and provided the following presentation:

The City Administrator and staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2026 for Council's consideration totaling \$69,201,385 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY 2026 includes, among many other items, the following:

- 1. Similar Level of Service is achieved.*
- 2. General Fund millage rate decreases from 6.7756 mills to 6.6850 mills, which is 5.21% above the rollbacked rate.*
- 3. Debt Service millage rate decreases from .1601 to .1467.*
- 4. Estimated reserve balances that meet GFOA recommendations.*
- 5. Fire Assessment level funded with no rate increase.*

6. *Employee raises of 5.0%.*
7. *Six new Public Safety positions are proposed: three for Police, and three for Fire.*
8. *Six new General Fund positions are proposed with a hire date of 7/1/2026: two for Finance (one part-time, and one full-time), one for Fleet Management, one for Facilities Management, and three for Community Services (two part-time, and one full-time).*
9. *Street paving - \$400,000.*
10. *Expanded programs are cut.*

Previously, the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget at the following public meetings:

- *7/16/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General Fund Budget)*
- *7/16/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Set Maximum Tentative Millage rate)*
- *8/06/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (General, Utility, and Special Revenue Fund Budgets)*
- *8/20/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Capital Improvement Plan Presentation)*
- *8/20/2025 – City Council Budget Workshop – (Discussion on FY 2026 Proposed Budget)*
- *9/03/2025 – City Council Budget Public Hearing – (Discussion on FY 2026 Proposed Budget)*

A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council. Exhibit A lists all the changes made to the Proposed Budget since it was presented at the July 16th City Council meeting. The changes made have resulted in \$108,970 in unappropriated revenue in the General Fund that remains available for appropriation. In addition, the firefighters' union contract resulted in \$114,322, which needs to be added to the budget. Options include: 1) Appropriate the surplus to cover the firefighters' union contract, or 2) Fund a cut item(s) and fund the firefighters' union contract with reserves.

At the previous Public Hearing, prior to the firefighters' union contract being finalized, Council member Singer proposed that the surplus be allocated for items on the cut list, such as road paving or lighting at the U.S. 441 gateway sign. Council member Gamble suggested splitting the funds between roads and sidewalks. The Council agreed that the allocation of the surplus should be decided at the next Public Hearing. An opportunity is available to continue those discussions now.

Mr. Drury said staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to take public input, approve the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 as reflected in Resolution 2025-16 and appropriate the \$108,970 as the Council deemed appropriate, and fund the firefighters' union contract from reserves.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the audience. There was none.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to return the \$108,970 surplus back into reserves. The motion was seconded by Lori Pfister.

Vice Mayor Pfister stated that instead of placing the funds into reserves, she would prefer to allocate the surplus toward specific projects, including Ruby Street West End lighting, gateway year-round lighting , and funding an economic development retail recruitment consultant. She explained that investing in a consultant would strengthen the City's commercial tax base and offset the reliance on residential growth.

Mr. Tweedie said the consultant would provide data analysis, market studies, and recruitment strategies aligned with the City's approved economic development strategy along U.S. 441 and State Road 19. He emphasized that such firms had established relationships with commercial developers and operators, giving the City access to higher-quality development opportunities.

Vice Mayor Pfister noted that approximately \$49,126 would remain, which could be used for sidewalk repairs or to establish a gateway residential grant program to improve the City's entry corridors. She also suggested replacing the dead palm tree at the downtown roundabout before the installation of Christmas lights.

Council Member Gamble said he supported sidewalk investments in areas where children walk to school, while Vice Mayor Pfister suggested sidewalk repairs and a grant program to help residents improve properties along gateways. Mr. Drury stated that a new sidewalk would cost approximately \$16,000 for one block on one side of the street, and the City could address additional needs through a broader program.

Council Member Singer asked how long the retail consultant had been on the budget cut list. Mr. Drury responded that it had been removed for eight consecutive years.

The motion failed 4-1 as follows:

Walter Price:	No
Lori Pfister:	No
Sandy Gamble:	No
Bob Grenier:	No
Troy Singer:	Yes

Mr. Drury noted the City already had a commercial façade grant program in place. Vice Mayor Pfister suggested setting aside funds to create a similar residential gateway grant program, beginning with the St. Clair Abrams Avenue and Gateway Boulevard corridors.

She added that additional funding could later support Main Street and other entryways, noting that such investments would help the community and enhance the City's competitiveness in the America in Bloom program. Mr. Drury stated that staff would return with a complete program for Council consideration, potentially structured as a 50/50 matching grant with a maximum award of \$500.

Mayor Price expressed support for funding a retail consultant. He shared that he had spoken with a consultant at the Florida League of Cities conference, who provided a retail report identifying unmet opportunities in the Tavares market area. Mayor Price emphasized the importance of spurring commercial development along U.S. 19 before it became dominated by residential apartments, and he noted that strengthening the commercial tax base would help offset anticipated losses from homestead exemptions. He expressed preference for prioritizing three to five projects, with any remaining balance returned to reserves.

Council Member Grenier stated that the entire \$108,970 surplus should be spent on tangible projects, including the retail consultant, to help the City's Economic Development Department attract new businesses. He emphasized that investments in visible improvements such as year-round lighting at the gateway fountain would reinforce Tavares' unique identity as "America's Seaplane City." Council Member Grenier concluded that fiscal investment in the community was the right direction and that the surplus should be spent entirely on projects residents could see and benefit from, rather than held in reserves.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Final Budget as reflected in Resoluton 2025-16, with the \$108,970 appropriate funds to be applied to the following projects:

- **West End Lighting at \$3,474**
- **Gateway Lighting at \$1,370**
- **Retail Consultant for Economic Development at \$55,000**
- **Sidwalk – 1 Block/1 Side at \$16,000**
- **Citizen Gateway Grants at \$20,000**
- **Additional Sidewalks at \$13,126**

The motion was seconded by Bob Grenier.

Mr. Drury advised that staff would return with a full Fiscal Year 2026 sidewalk repair, replacement, and new construction program for Council approval, with opportunities for Council to amend the program as needed.

The motion passed 4-1 as follows at 5:54 p.m.:

Walter Price: Yes
Lori Pfister: Yes

Sandy Gamble: Yes
Bob Grenier: Yes
Troy Singer: No

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Steven Lestner, 516 North Rockingham Avenue, Tavares, expressed concern about a proposed gas tax, growth, and infrastructure costs. He opposed new apartment construction, favored the redevelopment of existing buildings, and suggested requiring developers to contribute to infrastructure development. He voiced support for firefighter raises and appreciation for first responders.

Mayor Price clarified that the proposed gas tax was a County issue, not a City matter. Council Member Sandy Gamble noted the State's Live Local Act limited municipal control.

Phil Hartman, 1560 Apache Circle, Tavares, requested approval for six additional flagpoles at the Lake Francis Estates Veterans Memorial to honor all branches of the armed services.

Mayor Price responded that the request would require an ordinance change, as current regulations only allow one flagpole per parcel. Mr. Drury said staff could bring back an amendment to the Land Development Regulations allowing up to seven flagpoles for homeowners' associations with a common area, provided the HOA approved the project. He confirmed that a permit would still be required under existing rules, and that the City could not waive permit fees for selected projects, even for patriotic displays, as fees must be applied consistently to all residents.

Carsten Keifer, President of the Tavares Professional Firefighters Local 3245, thanked the Council and staff for their support and approval of the new collective bargaining agreement.

XV. REPORTS

Tab 8. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury reported that he had been invited by Council Member Grenier to speak at the Central Florida History Museum Symposium, hosted at the Pavilion on the Lake. He explained that the symposium was held quarterly in different parts of Central Florida and that Council Member Grenier had secured Tavares as the host site with Council support and funding. Mr. Drury noted the event drew more than 100 attendees, and he stated that he was honored to give a brief presentation welcoming the group. He thanked Council Member Grenier for the invitation.

Mr. Tweedie stated that he had attended the symposium and congratulated Council Member Grenier. He added that most attendees had never visited the Pavilion on the Lake before, and he remarked that the event was excellent promotion for the facility and the community.

Chief Keith expressed appreciation to the union executive leadership team and to the Council for approval of the new collective bargaining agreement. He gave special thanks to Mayor Price for representing the Council during negotiations. Chief Keith also thanked the Council for attending the Patriots Day September 11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Historic Courthouse and said he was proud of the Council's participation and support.

Mr. Aldrich thanked Council Member Grenier, noting that the History Museum experienced a surge of visitors following the symposium. He announced the first community engagement meeting for the Golden Triangle Regional Park was scheduled for September 25 at the Golden Triangle YMCA. He added that a second meeting would follow on October 16 at the Civic Center and that residents could also provide input via the public survey at gtparks.com.

Ms. Houghton thanked the Council and stated that she looked forward to implementing the newly adopted budget.

Tab 9. City Council Member Reports

Vice Mayor Pfister noted she missed the September 11 Patriots Day Remembrance Ceremony and the symposium event due to scheduling conflicts. She also noted:

- Several representatives would be attending the upcoming America in Bloom Conference, and she expressed excitement about the opportunity.

Council Member Grenier reported on the Central Florida History Museum Sharing Symposium, which Tavares hosted at the Pavilion on the Lake. He also noted:

- Nine, possibly ten, counties were represented, with more than 100 people in attendance.
- Mayor Price led the Pledge of Allegiance and offered remarks, and Council Members Singer and Gamble, as well as Mr. Drury, participated.
- Staff led by Carrie Petroski, delivered a flawless presentation in colonial attire, and Tavares "shined" in front of historical societies across Central Florida.
- Several attendees expressed interest in moving to Tavares.
- Residents were encouraged to visit the StoryWalk at the library.
- Noted Chief Keith would be his guest on an upcoming radio program to discuss fire prevention.

Council Member Singer thanked Ms. Houghton, Budget Analyst Brett Jones, and the Finance Department staff for their dedication in preparing the budget. He also noted:

- Pride in Tavares and appreciation for all City staff.
- Said it was an honor to attend the September 11 ceremony, and he asked Chief Keith to commend Division Chief Mark Kidd for his work on the event.
- Said the symposium was educational, showcased Tavares well, and impressed other cities.

Council Member Gamble thanked Council Member Grenier for the opportunity to attend the symposium. He also noted:

- He learned historical details, including Elvis Presley filming locally and the origin of Lake Aster's name.
- Said Mr. Drury gave a strong presentation, and symposium materials were shared with other municipalities.
- Stated the importance of retaining police officers and firefighters, and that the Council's actions would help keep qualified personnel.
- Said he opposed using artificial intelligence to displace jobs, citing concerns about negative impacts on the economy.
- Commended the Finance Department for their responsiveness and detailed knowledge of the budget.

Mayor Price reported that he attended the Historical Society meeting and was proud to hear residents and visitors remark that "Tavares has it going on." He also noted:

- The September 11 memorial event was meaningful and well attended.
- Thanked the Finance Department for their extensive work on the 650-page budget document.
- Said Tavares is "the place to be."

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 4

**SUBJECT TITLE: Cresswind at Lake Harris Phases 2 & 3 — Preliminary Subdivision Plat
(Community Development)**

OBJECTIVE:

To approve the Preliminary Subdivision Plat for the Cresswind at Lake Harris Subdivision Phases 2 and 3 generally located at the western terminus of Woodlea Rd.

SUMMARY:

The proposed Phases 2 and 3 are planned as age-restricted residential subdivisions generally located at the western terminus of Woodlea Road and interior of the Cresswind at Lake Harris Subdivision. These phases encompass approximately 86.11 acres in size and include a total of 274 single-family lots—116 in Phase 2 and 158 in Phase 3—permitted under the existing Planned Development (PD) zoning district (Ordinance 2022-05), which was approved by City Council on July 20, 2022 (see attached minutes).

Background: On April 5, 2023, Phase 1 of the Cresswind at Lake Harris Subdivision, which consists of 148 single-family lots and associated amenity tracts, received Preliminary Plat approval from City Council. Accordingly, the traffic study and environmental assessment were conducted for Phase 1 and subsequent subject phases (2 & 3). The Final Plat and bonding for the subdivision infrastructure was subsequently approved on January 17, 2024, and officially recorded at the Lake County Property Appraisers on April 26, 2024. Construction of age-restricted residential homes within Phase 1 is currently progressing steadily. At this time, the developer has submitted the Preliminary Subdivision Plat for Phases 2 and 3, along with all required documentation, including two development agreements for your review and consideration:

Development Agreements:

1. Transportation Agreement: This agreement, involving Lake County, the Lake County School Board, and the City of Tavares, fulfills the traffic mitigation requirements outlined in the PD Ordinance 2022-05, Section 5 – Public Facilities, Item G. It obligates the developer to construct the final segment of Captain Haynes Boulevard (Segment 2), which includes a roundabout at the Woodlea Road intersection and a connection to the recently completed extension at Seaport Village (see Exhibit “A”). In return, the developer will receive Lake County transportation impact fee credits as outlined in the agreement. Staff recommends that the Mayor sign the document, with authorization for the City Administrator to approve any minor revisions or addendums. Accordingly, any substantial modification to the agreement will require City Council approval.

2. Utility Agreement: This agreement between the City and the developer addresses the as-built conditions of the existing force main (sewer) infrastructure. Its purpose is to ensure continued operational integrity and compliance with the adopted Levels of Service (LOS) standards. Likewise, staff recommends that the Mayor sign the document, with authorization for the City Administrator to approve any minor revisions or addendums. Accordingly, any substantial modification to the agreement will require City Council approval.

City staff has reviewed the submitted documents and confirmed compliance with the City's Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan. Upon approval, the developer may proceed with engineering design for all required infrastructure systems, subject to staff review and approval. A Final Plat and bonding for the proposed infrastructure improvements must then be submitted for staff review and final approval by the City Administrator or designee.

OPTIONS:

1. City Council moves to approve the Cresswind at Lake Harris Phases 2 & 3 Preliminary Subdivision Plat with execution of the associated development agreements.
2. City Council moves to deny the Preliminary Subdivision Plat for Phases 2 & 3.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council moves to approve the Cresswind at Lake Harris Phases 2 & 3 Preliminary Subdivision Plat with execution of the associated development agreements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

This Preliminary Subdivision Plat and associated development agreements has been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved for legal sufficiency.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Preliminary Plat - Cresswind at Lake Harris Phases 2 & 3
2. Transportation DA (Between KH CW Lake Harris LLC, Lake County & the City)
3. Utility Agreement (Between KH CW Lake Harris LLC & the City)
4. LCSB Concurrency Exemption Letter
5. Ordinance 2022-05 - PD Rezoning - Cresswind
6. PD Approval Minutes - July 20, 2022

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 5

SUBJECT TITLE: Request Council's Approval of Equipment for Auction (Finance)

OBJECTIVE:

To request City Council Authorization to dispose of vehicles and equipment that have become obsolete and that have reached their useful life by online auction.

SUMMARY:

The City has five vehicles, two garbage trucks, a fire department ladder truck, two mowers and various other miscellaneous equipment items that have been identified as surplus property. The City would also like to donate a vehicle to Lake Tech for use in their training facility. These items have also been identified for disposal due to age, wear and tear, non-performance, cost of repair or are obsolete for use. The vehicles and equipment are currently stored at the Caroline Water Plant Property.

Florida statutes section 274.07 states that authority of disposal of property shall be recorded in the minutes of the governmental unit. A list of items for auction approval is attached. The list identifies eighteen (18) items for auction and one (1) vehicle for donation.

Upon approval by the City Council, an online auction utilizing Royal Auction Group, Inc. will be conducted and the proceeds will be deposited into the appropriate fund for the related item. The City will piggyback on the Lake County Royal Auction Group Contract, Contract Number 21-0543A for auction services.

This process generally realizes 110% of the blue book value for used vehicles.

As indicated above, please see the attached listing of items scheduled for disposal.

OPTIONS:

1. **Move to Approve** the attached listing of surplus items and authorize staff to offer these for sale through an online auction with Royal Auction Group, Inc.

2. **Do Not Approve** the attached listing of surplus items and Do Not authorize staff to offer these items for sale through an online auction with Royal Auction Group, Inc.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Move to Approve** the attached listing of surplus items and authorize staff to offer these for sale

through an online auction with Royal Auction Group, Inc

FISCAL IMPACT:

Proceeds from the sale of the auctioned items will be deposited into the General Fund or the Appropriate Related Fund for each item.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Legally Sufficient

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Auction Equipment 2025

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 6

**SUBJECT TITLE: Resolution 2025-17 - Opt -Out of Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption
(Finance)**

OBJECTIVE:

To consider approval of Resolution 2025-17 for the City of Tavares to “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program.

SUMMARY:

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

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

Lake County and Lake County Municipalities are located within the Orlando-Kissimmee, FL MSA and the most recent Shimberg Annual Report, 2024 (see page 32) confirms the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of rental households in the identified category which provides eligibility for the City of Tavares to Opt-Out of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program. *(A copy of the 2024 Shimberg report is attached.)*

On September 18, 2024, the City of Tavares City Council adopted Resolution 2024-18 to Opt-Out of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program for Tax Year 2025. The Opt-Out provision requires the City Council to renew adoption annually for the Opt-Out of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program.

On February 11, 2025, the Lake County Board of County Commission adopted a Resolution to renew the “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program.

In order to renew the “Opt-Out” of the exemption for 2026, the City of Tavares must adopt Resolution 2025-17 by a two-thirds majority vote. The “Opt-Out” provision will be valid for the 2026 tax year and

must be renewed by resolution each year thereafter, when the Shimberg Annual Report confirms that the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of rental households in the identified category.

Resolution 2025-17 mirrors the prior year Resolution that was prepared by the City Attorney.

Staff have confirmed that the 2024 Shimberg Annual Report (the most recent report) confirms the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of renter households in the identified category which provides eligibility for the exemption.

OPTIONS:

1. **Move to Adopt Resolution 2025-17 for the City of Tavares to “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program for Tax Year 2026.**
2. **Move to Not Adopt Resolution 2025-17.**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Move to Adopt Resolution 2025-17 for the City of Tavares to “Opt-Out” of the Live Local Property Tax Exemption Program for Tax Year 2026.**

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Resolution 2025-17 (Live Local Property Tax Exemption) 2nd year_2026_10012025
2. Shimberg Center for Housing Studies_2024 Annual Report
3. FL Senate 2023 Summary for CS-SB 102 Live Local
4. FL Senate 2024 Summary for Live Local Amendments_SB328+HB7073
5. FL Statutes Chapter 196.1978

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-17

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

WHEREAS, Section 196.1978(3), Florida Statutes (the “Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption”) requires the Lake County Property Appraiser to exempt certain rental properties from ad valorem taxes if such properties meet the criteria of the Live Act Local Property Tax Exemption; and

WHEREAS, beginning with the 2025 tax roll, Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes, (Chapter 2024-158, *Laws of Florida*) allows taxing authorities to "opt-out" of providing the Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption to units in multifamily projects that are used to house natural persons or families whose annual household income is between 80 and 120 percent of the median annual adjusted gross income for households within the metropolitan statistical area (“MSA”) or, if not within a MSA, within the county in which the person or family resides (the “80 to 120 Tax Exemption”), if the taxing authority finds that the latest Shimberg Center for Housing Studies Annual Report, prepared pursuant to Section 420.6075, Florida Statutes (“Shimberg Annual Report”), identifies that the number of affordable and available units in the MSA or region is greater than the number of rental households in the MSA or region for natural persons or families who meet the income criteria for the 80 to 120 Tax Exemption; and

WHEREAS, the Tavares City Council hereby finds that the latest Shimberg Annual Report (2024 Annual Report) identifies a surplus of affordable and available units in the Orlando- Kissimmee, FL MSA, in which the City of Tavares is located, for those households that meet the income criteria for the 80 to 120 Tax Exemption; and

WHEREAS, the Tavares City Council hereby finds that the City of Tavares is a taxing authority that is eligible for the election in Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes, which allows the City of Tavares to not exempt properties that would otherwise qualify for the 80 to 120 Tax Exemption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tavares City Council of Tavares, Florida:

Section 1. Legal Findings of Fact. The foregoing recitals are hereby adopted as legislative findings of the Tavares City Council and are ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made a specific part of this Resolution upon adoption hereof.

Section 2. Opt-Out Election; Required Findings. The Tavares City Council hereby finds that the latest Shimberg Annual Report identifies a surplus of affordable and available units in the Orlando-Kissimmee, FL MSA, in which the City of Tavares is located, for those households that meet the income criteria for the 80 to 120 Tax Exemption. Therefore, the City of Tavares hereby elects not to exempt properties eligible for the 80 to 120 Tax Exemption in Section 196.1978(3)(d)1.a., Florida Statutes, pursuant to the authority in Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes, and hereby requests that the Lake County Property Appraiser not grant any such exemptions.

Section 3. Applicability. This Resolution applies to all *ad valorem* property tax levies imposed by the City of Tavares.

Section 4. Advertising; Notice to Property Appraiser. This Resolution has been duly advertised in accordance with Section 50.011(1), Florida Statutes. The City Clerk is directed to provide a copy of this Resolution to the Lake County Property Appraiser prior to January 1, 2026.

Section 5. No Waiver of Rights. Other governmental entities have alleged that the Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption is unconstitutional, and inconsistent with Section 196.012(7), Florida Statutes. Further, other governmental entities have raised concerns with relying entirely on the Shimberg Annual Report to meet the “affordable and available” test in Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes. The adoption of this Resolution shall not constitute an admission that the Live Local Property Tax Exemption is constitutional or consistent with Section 196.012(7), Florida Statutes, and shall not constitute an admission that the Shimberg Annual Report is the best method of determining the current inventory of “affordable and available” housing in the City of Tavares. If the City of Tavares ceases to qualify for the election in Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes, in future years, or if this Resolution is determined to be invalid or unenforceable by the Lake County Property Appraiser or a court of competent jurisdiction, nothing in this Resolution shall be deemed a waiver of the City of Tavares’ right to challenge the Live Local Act Property Tax Exemption.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect on January 1, 2026, and shall expire on January 1, 2027. This Resolution may be renewed prior to January 1, 2027, pursuant to Section 196.1978(3)(o), Florida Statutes, or other applicable law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025, by a two-thirds vote of the governing body.

ATTEST:

TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
TAVARES, FLORIDA

City Clerk

Walter Price, Mayor

This ____ day of _____, 2024.

Approved as to form and legality:

Lindsay C. T. Holt, City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 7

SUBJECT TITLE: Resolution 2025-18 - Acceptance of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant for Fire Safety Trailer (Fire)

OBJECTIVE:

Consider approval of Resolution 2025-18 authorizing acceptance of FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant for Fire Safety Trailer.

SUMMARY:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded the City a \$270,000 Fire Prevention and Safety grant to purchase a fire safety trailer. FEMA will cover 95% of the trailer's cost (\$257,142.85), and the City must pay the remaining 5% (\$12,857.15). The fire safety trailer will be used to offer interactive, scenario-based learning in a controlled environment.

Details of the grant from FEMA include the following:

- Agreement Number: EMW-2024-FP-00441
- Pass-through Entity: N/A.
- Awarding Entity: Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Recipient: City of Tavares.
- Grant Award: \$257,142.85.
- City Match: \$12,857.15.
- Award Period: 9/27/2025 – 9/26/2026.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Move to approve resolution 2025-18 authorizing the City Administrator to accept and execute all necessary grant agreements with FEMA for the fire safety trailer grant, and to authorize staff to utilize Infrastructure Sales Tax reserves for the city match portion of the grant in the amount of \$12,857.15.

Option 2: Do not approve resolution 2025-18.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1: Move to approve resolution 2025-18 authorizing the City Administrator to accept and execute all necessary grant agreements with FEMA for the fire safety trailer grant, and to authorize staff to utilize Infrastructure Sales Tax reserves for the city match portion of the grant in the amount of \$12,857.15.

FISCAL IMPACT:

\$257,143 will be added to the FY 2026 Grant Fund budget.
\$12,858 will be added to the FY 2026 Infrastructure Sales Tax budget.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Resolution 2025-18
2. Fire Safety Trailer (Whitepaper)
3. EMW-2024-FP-00441 - Award Package

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

RESOLUTION 2025-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANT FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO PURCHASE A FIRE SAFETY TRAILER.

WHEREAS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded the City of Tavares a \$270,000 grant.

WHEREAS, the grant provides funding to purchase a fire safety trailer.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. The City Administrator or his designee is hereby authorized to execute all necessary grant agreements with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Elements of the award include:

- Agreement Number: EMW-2024-FP-00441
- Pass-through Entity: N/A.
- Awarding Entity: Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Recipient: City of Tavares.
- Grant Award: \$257,142.85.
- City Match: \$12,857.15.
- Award Period: 9/27/2025 – 9/26/2026.

SECTION II. If any section or portion of a section of this Resolution proves to be invalid, unlawful, or unconstitutional, it shall not be held to invalidate or impair the validity, force, or effect of any other section or part of this Resolution.

SECTION III. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 1st day of October 2025, by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida.

Walter Price Sr., Mayor
Tavares City Council

ATTEST:

Susie Novack
City Clerk

Approved as to form:
Lindsey Holt
City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 8

SUBJECT TITLE: Award and Authorize Contract to Continental Strategy for State and Federal Governmental Relations (City Administrator)

OBJECTIVE:

To request Council approval to award a contract to Continental Strategy for RFQ2025-0009 State and Federal Governmental Relations Firm.

SUMMARY:

On September 3, 2025, the City Council awarded RFQ 2025-0009 for State and Federal Governmental Relations services to Continental Strategy and authorized staff to negotiate a contract for Council consideration.

Staff has successfully negotiated a contract with Continental Strategy in the amount of \$9,000 per month (\$108,000 annually) for both State and Federal Governmental Relations services, plus travel expenses as incurred. The proposed agreement is for an initial term of one (1) year, with the option for up to three (3) additional one-year renewals upon mutual agreement of both parties.

The contract also includes a 30-day cancellation clause, allowing either party to terminate the agreement with written notice.

The negotiated amount reflects the current market rate for similar services provided to municipalities of comparable size within the State of Florida that engage firms to provide both State and Federal governmental relations services.

OPTIONS:

1) Move to Approve the attached Contract with Continental Strategy in the amount of \$9,000.00 per month for FY 2025-2026.

2) Do Not Approve the contract with Continental Strategy.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, for the Council to approve the attached contract with Continental Strategy in the amount of \$9,000 per month for FY 2025-2026.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City Council appropriated \$75,000 from reserves in FY 2025 for Governmental Relations Services. These funds have not been used and will roll forward into FY 2026. In addition, the City Council

appropriated \$60,000 during the budget process for FY 2026. This provides a total of \$135,000 in available funding, which is sufficient to cover the annual contract plus travel expenses.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Legally sufficient.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. RFQ2025-0009 Agreement for Continental Strategy

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 9

SUBJECT TITLE: City Administrator Report

OBJECTIVE:

The City Administrator will inform the City Council on city-related matters.

SUMMARY:

The City Administrator will provide a summary at the meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

City Council Meeting	October 15, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Planning and Zoning Board Meeting	October 16, 2025, 3:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Library Board Meeting	October 8, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Tavares Library Expansion Room
Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing	October 28, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers

OUTSIDE AGENCY MEETINGS:

Lake County League of Cities Meeting	October 10, 2025, 12:00 noon, Tavares Civic Center
Lake Sumter MPO Governing Board Meeting	October 22, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Suite 175, 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Leesburg
Tavares Chamber of Commerce Business Meeting	October 22, 2025, 11:30 a.m., Tavares Civic Center

CITY EVENTS:

The current 2025 and 2026 City Event calendars are attached.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Tavares_EventCalendar_2025_9.2.2025
2. 2026_Tavares_EventCalendar_8.12.2025

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
10/1/2025**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 10

SUBJECT TITLE: City Council Member Reports

OBJECTIVE:

To inform the Council on city-related items.

SUMMARY:

The Council will be offered an opportunity to provide a report at the meeting.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

Attachments not provided are available to the public upon request to the City Clerk.