



AGENDA
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
January 21, 2026
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 snovack@tavares.org)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1 Deacon Jim Shelley, St. Mary of the Lakes Catholic Church

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2 Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Tab 3 Proclamation — Tavares' 9th Annual Arbor Day Celebration (Mayor)

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

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO RECORD

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Tab 4 Approval of the December 17, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)

Tab 5 Approval of the 2026 City Council Meeting Dates (City Administrator)

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 6 Resolution 2026-01 - FY 2026 First Budget Amendment (Finance)

Tab 7 Resolution 2026-02 - Authorize SRF Loan for SAHM Drinking Water Project DW3509A with Loan Forgiveness (Finance)

IX. ORDINANCES - PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

- Tab 8 Ordinance 2026-02 - Extend Deferred Retirement Option from 60 months to 96 months for Tavares Firefighters' Pension Plan (Finance)

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

- Tab 9 Community Grant Awards (City Clerk)
- Tab 10 Broad Budget Goals (City Administrator)
- Tab 11 Property Acquisition for Future Parking Garage Construction (Economic Development)

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XIV. REPORTS

- Tab 12 City Administrator Report
- Tab 13 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
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 1

SUBJECT TITLE: Deacon Jim Shelley, St. Mary of the Lakes Catholic Church

OBJECTIVE:

Deacon Jim Shelley, St. Mary of the Lakes Catholic Church, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUMMARY:

Deacon Jim Shelley, St. Mary of the Lakes Catholic 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
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 2

SUBJECT TITLE: Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

OBJECTIVE:

Receive an update from the Tavares Chamber of Commerce.

SUMMARY:

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

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. January 7th, 2026 Council Report

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 3

SUBJECT TITLE: Proclamation — Tavares' 9th Annual Arbor Day Celebration (Mayor)

OBJECTIVE:

For the Mayor to read the proclamation declaring January 17, 2026, as City of Tavares Arbor Day.

SUMMARY:

Trees are among the most valuable assets in any community when thoughtfully planted and properly maintained. They enhance our neighborhoods by providing beauty, shade, and environmental benefits, while also boosting property values and improving residents' health and wellness.

In 2018, the City of Tavares proudly earned the Tree City USA designation by meeting the rigorous standards set by the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to responsible urban forestry and sustainability.

To celebrate this dedication and promote continued stewardship of our natural resources, the City of Tavares hereby proclaims January 17, 2026, as Arbor Day in the City of Tavares.

OPTIONS:

1. The Mayor will read the City of Tavares Arbor Day Proclamation.
2. The Mayor will not read the City of Tavares Arbor Day Proclamation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1 - The Mayor will read the City of Tavares Arbor Day Proclamation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Legally Sufficient

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Arbor Day 2025 Proclamation

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



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, In 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees; and

WHEREAS, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world; and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate temperatures, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide a habitat for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products; and

WHEREAS, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, beautify our community; and are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Tavares City Council does hereby proclaim January 17, 2026, as

CITY OF TAVARES ARBOR DAY

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED by the Tavares City Council on this 21st day of January 2026.

Lori A. Pfister, Mayor

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 4

SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of the December 17, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)

OBJECTIVE:

For the Council to consider approval of the December 17, 2025, City Council meeting minutes.

SUMMARY:

Attached are the December 17, 2025, City Council meeting minutes as submitted by the City Clerk.

OPTIONS:

1. Move to approve the meeting minutes under the Consent Agenda.
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. 12-17-2025 CC Minutes

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



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 17, 2025 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Lori Pfister, Mayor
Bob Grenier, Vice Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Council Member
Doug Keown, Council Member
Walter Price, 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
Brian Dykes, Utilities Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pfister called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. She 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. Father Hank Sargado, Saint Patrick's Catholic Church, Mt. Dora

Father Hank Sargado, Saint Patrick's Catholic Church, Mt. Dora, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

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

Attorney Holt stated the two Ordinances at second reading were legislative in nature, and no quasi-judicial matters were before the Council for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following ordinances by title only:

ORDINANCE 2025-10

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY AMENDING CHAPTER 10.5, LICENSES AND BUSINESS REGULATIONS, ARTICLE IV ENTITLED GARAGE SALE REGULATIONS, BY AMENDING SECTION 10-15-152, NO PERMIT REQUIRED; AND SECTION 10.5-156, PENALTY; 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 2025-11

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 21 SIGN REGULATIONS, SECTION 21-17 MISCELLANEOUS SIGNS; SUBJECT TO THE RULES, REGULATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY AND CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the December 3, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

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

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

Tab 3. Ordinance 2025-10 – Amending Code of Ordinances, Article IV – Garage Sale Regulations, Section 10-15-152 and Section 10.5-156

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

On July 2, 2025, the Police Department formally requested that City Council consider amending the existing Garage Sale regulations within the City's Code of Ordinances. The primary objective of the proposed amendment is to establish a permit requirement for garage sales and to define penalties for violations. This initiative addresses the ongoing challenge of monitoring the current limit of four (4) garage sales per property per calendar year.

Under the proposed ordinance, residents would be required to obtain a no-fee permit prior to holding a garage sale, with a maximum of four permits allowed annually per property. Enforcement provisions include an initial warning for first-time violations, followed by a \$150 fine for a second offense and \$250 for any subsequent offenses.

Following review, City Council directed staff to proceed with drafting the ordinance to incorporate these changes. Ordinance 2025-10, which amends Chapter 10.5, Article IV — Garage Sales Regulations, specifically Sections 10.5-152 and 10.5-156, is attached for your review and formal action. Please note, the attached Ordinance establishes an effective date of thirty (30) days following adoption. This implementation period is intended to ensure adequate preparation

of the permitting process for residents and to provide sufficient time for public service announcements regarding the new requirements.

On November 20, 2025, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and formally recommended approval (5-0) of Ordinance 2025-10. Discussion ensued on topics of displaying of permits, HOA authorized yard sales, yard-sales versus state-sales definitions, and notifying the public and HOAs on the new ordinance if adopted. All the concerns were addressed at the public hearing.

Staff recommended Option 1, that the City Council move to approve Ordinance 2025-10.

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Gamble stated that he wanted to ensure the ordinance did not negatively affect churches and confirmed with Mr. McCormick that churches operating under established business activities would not be impacted. Council Member Gamble asked whether the ordinance provided sufficient enforcement, and Mr. McCormick confirmed that it authorized tracking permits and the issuance of monetary penalties for violations. Council Member Gamble also sought clarification regarding the provision that three consecutive days constituted a single yard sale, which Mr. McCormick confirmed.

Council Member Keown commented that the ability to apply for permits online would make the process easier for residents and eliminate the need for them to come into City offices.

Council Member Price asked whether permits would be required to be displayed during yard sales. Mr. McCormick stated that if a permit were not displayed, he would speak with the property owner and verify permit issuance through City records. He further stated that if a permit were displayed, he would not stop. Council Member Price also asked how the ordinance would apply to community-wide yard sales, and Mr. McCormick said that each participating residence would be required to obtain its own permit.

Vice Mayor Grenier raised concerns about situations in which residents held yard sales over multiple days and then left items or junk in their yards after the sale concluded. He asked whether this would constitute a violation if no yard sale signage remained. Mr. McCormick stated that such conditions could constitute either a storage of junk violation under Section 12-23 or a nuisance violation under Section 12-13 of the Code. He said that if items remained beyond three days, staff would document the condition, issue a notice to the property owner, and allow 21 days for compliance before proceeding to a hearing. Vice Mayor Grenier stated that he did not support junk remaining in yards and commented that the ordinance would help address those situations. He also expressed concern about enforcement capacity, noting that Mr. McCormick was the City's sole Code Enforcement Officer, and asked how violations would be monitored, particularly if individuals attempted to conduct additional yard sales without permits.

Mr. Drury stated that police officers on duty had access to permit information and could issue warnings if they observed potential violations. He explained that officers could verify whether a permit had been issued and address the matter accordingly. Mr. McCormick added that most issues were expected to occur on weekends and stated that approximately 90 percent of City residents never held yard sales, and enforcement could be managed effectively.

Vice Mayor Grenier stated that the primary concern involved individuals who repeatedly abused yard sales, effectively turning them into ongoing businesses that negatively affected neighboring properties. He stated that he did not object to occasional yard sales and supported reasonable enforcement to protect neighborhood conditions.

Council Member Gamble asked how the ordinance would apply to mobile home parks that often conducted yard sales at a clubhouse or common area. Mr. McCormick said that if a yard sale occurred at a single centralized location, only one permit would be required. If yard sales were conducted at multiple individual homes, each home would be required to obtain a permit. He further clarified that in centralized situations, the park owner would be responsible for obtaining the permit.

MOTION

Doug Keown moved to approve [Ordinance 2025-10], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 4. Ordinance 2025-11 – Amending the Land Development Regulations, Chapter 21 Sign Regulations, Sections 21-17 Miscellaneous Signs

Mr. Fabre made the following presentation:

On September 17, 2025, during the Audience to be Heard portion of the City Council meeting (see attached), a resident from Lake Francis Estates submitted a request to allow six (6) flagpoles for a proposed Veterans Memorial.

Following discussion, City Council directed staff to prepare a text amendment to the Land Development Regulations to allow up to seven (7) flagpoles on parcels of land that are designated, owned, and maintained by a HOA. The proposed amendment ordinance would allow for this request.

Attached for your review and formal recommendation is the revised language in Chapter 21 – Sign Regulations, specifically Section 21-17: Miscellaneous Signs.

On November 20, 2025, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and formally recommended approval (5-0) of Ordinance 2025-11. Discussion ensued on topics of pole construction, size of flag, pole placement. All the concerns were addressed at the public hearing.

Staff recommended Option 1, that the City Council move to approve Ordinance 2025-11.

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

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve [Ordinance 2025-11], seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. Police Pension Board Appointment

Mayor Pfister made the following presentation:

The Police Officers' Pension Trust Fund is administered by a five-member Board of Trustees. One trustee serves as the Mutual Appointment, Fifth Trustee, a position that is jointly selected by the existing Board members and presented to the City Council for ministerial approval. The Police Pension Board has recommended the reappointment of Dana Scola to continue serving in this role for a two-year term ending November 2027.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the Council to approve the reappointment of Dana Scola as the Mutual Appointment, Fifth Trustee to the Police Pension Board, for a two-year term ending November 2027.

Mayor Pfister said she would like to reappoint Dana Scola as the Mutual Appointment, Fifth Trustee to the Police Pension Plan Board, for a two-year term ending November 2027.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve the Mayor's appointment, seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Citizen Outreach

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

At the previous meeting, Council Member Doug Keown introduced the idea of holding informal meetings with citizens outside the regularly scheduled City Council meetings. He described these gatherings as opportunities for residents to meet with Council Members, with no formal agenda, to ask questions or discuss any City-related topic.

During the discussion, it was noted that the City already conducts similar outreach when specific workshops are held. For example, the recent workshop on the Master Plan for the Regional Park.

Council discussion focused on the potential costs of hosting additional meetings and the need to comply with Florida's open public meeting requirements, including proper advertising, minute-taking, recording by the City Clerk, and appropriate security from the Police Department. IT staff would also be utilized to record the meeting. Following the discussion, the Council directed the City Administrator to agendize the concept and present options at the next meeting.

- 1. Formally Scheduled Public Meeting at the Civic Center - Establish a regularly scheduled meeting at the Civic Center. The City Clerk would advertise the meeting and prepare minutes; the I.T. Department would record the meeting; the Police Chief would assign an officer for security; and Public Works would provide setup. A two-hour meeting would incur costs associated with staff time for setup, advertising, minute preparation, recording, and police presence.*
- 2. Council Member Office Hours at City Hall - Designate a regularly scheduled day and time (e.g., first Monday of the month at 9:00 a.m.) when a Council Member may meet with citizens in the first-floor conference room at City Hall. As this setting does not constitute a formal public meeting, no staff support would be required for advertising, minutes, recording, or police presence, resulting in no additional cost.*
- 3. Coffee With a Council Member - A Council Member may host informal "Coffee With a City Council Member" gatherings at a local coffee shop on a regularly scheduled day and time (e.g., first Monday of the month at 8:00 a.m.). As these are informal, off-site interactions, no staff support or costs would be required.*
- 4. Phone calls, email and text with a Council member: This option is always available and if necessary has and continues to lead to a one on one meeting usually at city hall.*

Staff recommended Options 2, 3, and 4.

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

The Council discussed proposed options related to Council–constituent communication and outreach. Council Member Gamble stated that he supported Options 2, 3, and 4 and commented that Council members were already utilizing these practices. He indicated that formalizing the existing approach was acceptable, although he did not see a need for substantive changes.

Council Member Price stated that Council members' phone numbers and email addresses were posted on the City's website and that he regularly received emails, text messages, and phone calls from constituents. He noted that he frequently met with constituents in informal settings such as breakfast or coffee meetings and did not believe a change was necessary. Council Member Price expressed support for continuing current practices and preferred Option 4.

Vice Mayor Grenier stated that Options 2, 3, and 4 reflected how Council members already interacted with constituents. He noted that many residents met with him at the Research Center, where he regularly engaged with the public. He said that formalizing the existing approach would not significantly change how Council members currently operated.

Council Member Keown stated that he supported Option 2 and expressed interest in establishing a set time to meet with constituents in a City conference room. He stated that this approach would allow residents to know when and where he would be available for face-to-face discussions, would not cost the City, and would supplement existing communication methods such as phone calls and emails.

Mayor Pfister stated that she did not wish to change current practices and commented that meetings were already scheduled through City Hall when residents requested appointments. She noted that some residents lacked internet access and suggested that Council contact information could be included in City newsletters or bulletins on occasion. Mayor Pfister stated that the existing process had worked well and expressed a preference for continuing current practices.

Mr. Drury stated that staff would work with any Council member who wished to establish a scheduled meeting time by coordinating room availability and logistics. He clarified that Option 2 would apply only to individual Council members who chose to participate and would not require all Council members to establish designated meeting times. Council Member Gamble reiterated that historically, meeting space had been made available upon request and that he did not believe a fixed monthly schedule was necessary.

MOTION

Doug Keown moved to approve Options 2, 3, and 4, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 7. Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days 2026

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The Florida League of Cities will host its annual Legislative Action Days in Tallahassee on January 26–28, 2026. This event provides municipal officials with opportunities to meet directly with state legislators, discuss upcoming legislation,

and advocate for issues affecting the City and local government. The City of Tavares works diligently to maintain engagement with its legislative delegation to ensure representation in its advocacy efforts.

Council direction is requested regarding which Council Member(s) wish to attend the 2026 Legislative Action Days.

Staff recommended Option 1, for the City Council to select one or more Council Member(s) to attend the Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days 2026.

Mr. Drury said the City works diligently to maintain engagement with its legislative delegation to represent the City in its advocacy efforts.

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

Council Members Keown, Gamble, and Price said they were available and would like to attend. Council Member Price noted his ongoing working relationship with members of the legislative delegation.

Mayor Pfister stated that she was interested in attending an alternate date to conduct focused discussions and preferred to schedule a separate meeting to address the golf cart crossing near the hospital.

Mr. Drury confirmed that Council Member Price, Council Member Keown, and Council Member Gamble would be scheduled to attend the upcoming legislative session on behalf of the City.

Council Member Price noted that participating cities were typically grouped together based on shared legislative interests and noted that during the prior year, the Cities of Eustis, Tavares, and Groveland were grouped together due to overlapping legislative delegation representation, which had proven effective.

Mr. Drury further stated that a separate meeting would be scheduled with Mayor Pfister and the Secretary of Transportation to address the golf cart crossing issue specifically.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to send three (3) Council Members to represent the City at the Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days, seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. Update on the Washington DC Infrastructure Utilities Corridor & Rails to Trails Grant Meetings

Mr. Dillon provided an update on the Washington, DC Infrastructure Utilities Corridor and Rails-to-Trails grant meetings held on December 3, 2025. He stated that

representatives from Lake County, the City of Tavares, and the City of Mount Dora traveled to Washington, DC, to seek federal support for a \$25 million dollar BUILD grant application. Mr. Dillon described the trip as a significant milestone that demonstrated regional unity, project readiness, and strong collaboration among partner agencies. He explained that the delegation met with members of Florida's congressional delegation and senior officials at the United States Department of Transportation to secure guidance and letters of support. Mr. Dillon noted that the project emphasized safety, regional mobility, expanded public utilities, and economic growth, and that the USDOT had already recognized the prior application as a project of merit. He stated that strategic coordination with Continental Strategy enabled the delegation to hold multiple high-level meetings, resulting in strong support and optimism for the project's competitiveness for federal funding.

Council Member Price stated that he believed the Washington, DC trip was very successful and that the delegation provided strong representation through the participation of elected officials, engineers, staff, and professional consultants. He commented that all members of Congress and Senators were supportive of the project and that such unified backing was meaningful. Council Member Price said satisfaction was expressed as the project would serve as a major utilities corridor and include significant matching funds exceeding the amount requested. He stated that the delegation was well prepared, referencing the extensive application materials already developed, and remarked that the trip was worthwhile. Council Member Price concluded by stating that the City likely had the strongest opportunity in approximately twenty years to secure this funding.

Mr. Drury stated that a Notice of Funding Opportunity had been issued and that the City would have approximately 60 to 90 days to complete the updated application. He noted that the application requirements had been substantially revised and stated that Mr. Dillon and the project partners would have approximately 1.5 months to incorporate the new criteria. Mr. Drury said that the project had been in development for approximately six years in coordination with Lake County, Mount Dora, the Trust for Public Land, and railroad partners, and that the application was now more competitive than at any previous point. He stated that the City anticipated an announcement regarding grant awards in November and expressed optimism that Tavares could be among a limited number of cities in Florida to receive this significant funding.

Council Member Keown commended Mr. Dillon and Council Member Price for their efforts and leadership in advancing the project.

Council Member Gamble recognized the professional team retained by the City, stating that their assistance was instrumental in securing access to key meetings and advancing the application process.

At the request of Council Member Gamble, Mr. Dillon provided an additional update regarding recent correspondence related to State Road 19 and County Road 561. Mr. Dillon stated that the City had received authorization from the Florida Department of

Transportation for signal improvements at the intersection of State Road 19 and County Road 561. He explained that the project would include a new traffic signal and pedestrian crossing, particularly addressing the southbound left-turn movement onto County Road 561, which had been challenging for motorists. Mr. Dillon stated that construction was expected to take approximately 160 days and that work would begin in late December.

Mr. Drury added that the left-turn signal installation represented the culmination of approximately five years of coordination efforts and expressed appreciation that the project was moving forward.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Gary Santoro, Royal Harbor, Tavares, stated that the information and updates regularly received from the Council were consistently positive and beneficial to residents. He commented that Mr. Dillon played an integral role in City projects alongside Mr. Drury and stated that residents should be pleased with the progress being made throughout the City. Mr. Santoro acknowledged that some projects took several years to come to fruition and expressed appreciation for the continued efforts of the Mayor, Council, and staff. He concluded by thanking the Council and extended wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

Maribel Blanco, Ruby Street, and Director of the Research Center, Tavares, presented Christmas ornaments to Mayor Pfister, Council Member Keown, and Mr. Drury to place on the holiday tree. She invited the Mayor, Council, staff, and community to attend an open house at the Research Center scheduled from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. She concluded by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas.

Debi Weinert, Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Lake County, provided an update on the program. She stated that she began the program a little over two (2) years prior with two (2) participating children and reported that as of September 2025, the program had grown to serve approximately 1,270 children. She noted that the program had expanded to five (five) additional cities and was now serving approximately 1,350 children. Ms. Weinert stated that families and community members continued to support and fund the free book program and commented that the program would have a profound impact on Lake County by helping children enter kindergarten with reading skills that allowed teachers to focus more effectively on instruction. She thanked the Council for their time and extended holiday greetings.

Mayor Pfister expressed appreciation to Ms. Weinert and thanked her for her dedication and hard work in supporting the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 9. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury opened his report by wishing the Mayor, Council, staff, and attendees a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He congratulated Mr. Brian Dykes on his appointment as the City's new Utilities Director and thanked him for taking on the role.

Chief Coursey provided a brief departmental recognition report at the request of Vice Mayor Grenier. She said Captain John Hall received a 25-year service award and Police Records Coordinator Michelle Taylor a 10-year service award.

Mr. Aldrich thanked the Mayor and City Council for participating in the Christmas parade as judges or participants. He expressed appreciation to Council Member Keown for serving as Santa at the library during a recent event.

Mr. Aldrich announced the Winter Solstice Concert scheduled to be held at the library, and invited the Council and public to attend Cookies with Santa at the Public Works Operations Center.

Tab 10. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Keown opened his remarks by commending the Parks and Recreation Department and all staff who assisted with the Christmas parade. He provided the following additional comments:

- He stated that he enjoyed attending the library's Christmas event and appreciated the opportunity to serve as Santa.
- He referenced the City employee luncheon held the previous day and thanked those who helped organize the event.
- He extended birthday wishes to Mayor Pfister.
- He commented on meetings with department directors and staff, noting their professionalism, knowledge, and the enjoyable nature of the discussions.

Council Member Price began by congratulating Mr. Brian Dykes on his accomplishments and promotion. He provided the following additional comments:

- He praised the Parks and Recreation Department for hosting a successful Christmas parade with a large turnout despite inclement weather.
- He noted his attendance at a blue-ribbon cutting ceremony for AdventHealth.
- He spoke positively about the City's employee Christmas party and the recognition of employees receiving 30-year service awards.
- He extended holiday greetings, including Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year.

Council Member Gamble opened by congratulating Mr. Brian Dykes and Mr. Dillon on their continued success. He provided the following additional comments:

- He stated that pursuing grant funding benefited taxpayers, noting that funds would otherwise be awarded to other jurisdictions.
- He recognized Ms. Bublitz and Mr. Sherrard for their efforts during the employee holiday luncheon.
- He thanked City employees for their dedication, acknowledging their availability during evenings, weekends, and holidays and the sacrifices made to serve the community.
- He commented on the increased attendance at the Christmas parade compared to the prior year, despite rain.
- He extended Merry Christmas and Happy New Year wishes.

Vice Mayor Grenier began by stating that Fire Division Chief Willis did an excellent job supporting the Christmas parade. He provided the following additional comments:

- He announced an upcoming event at the Research Center featuring karaoke, snacks, food, and entertainment.
- He expressed appreciation to Mr. Drury for keeping the Council informed and stated that the strength of Team Tavares reflected effective leadership and communication.
- He congratulated Mr. Dykes.
- He discussed departmental realignments, including Event Services Manager Carrie Petroski assuming additional responsibilities, including overseeing a newly established Events Services division and the Pavilion staff.
- He noted that Event Services Assistant Manager Amy England remained assigned to the Pavilion and that a new service staff position had been created.
- He thanked Council Member Keown for filling in as Santa at the library.
- He referenced Mayor Pfister's comments regarding the expansion of the City's golf cart community along State Road 19 toward Publix.
- He concluded with holiday greetings.

Mayor Pfister opened by apologizing for missing an event the previous day due to work obligations. She provided the following additional comments.

- She complimented Ms. Bublitz for consistently doing an excellent job.
- She congratulated Mr. Dykes for his recent promotion.
- She stated that illness prevented her attendance at the Rails-to-Trails event and expressed full confidence in Mr. Dillon's leadership.
- She praised the Christmas parade and thanked those who assisted with transportation and logistics.
- She expressed appreciation to City staff and Council members for another successful year.
- She described Mr. Drury as a strong motivator whose leadership contributed to the City's success and positive workplace culture.

- She stated her appreciation for the Council, advisory boards, and community organizations, including the History Center.
- She expressed optimism for 2026 and confidence in breaking ground on the railroad trail project.

All those present wished each other a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and Mayor Pfister adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 5

SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of the 2026 City Council Meeting Dates (City Administrator)

OBJECTIVE:

To provide the scheduled 2026 City Council regular meeting dates.

SUMMARY:

The following is a list of the remaining scheduled 2026 City Council regular meeting dates:

February 4, 2026
February 18, 2026
March 4, 2026
March 18, 2026
April 1, 2026
April 15, 2026
May 6, 2026
May 20, 2026
June 3, 2026
June 17, 2026
July 1, 2026
July 15, 2026
August 5, 2026
August 19, 2026
September 2, 2026
September 16, 2026
October 7, 2026
October 21, 2026
November 18, 2026
December 2, 2026
December 16, 2026
January 20, 2027

Please note that there is one (1) meeting in November due to the timing of the elections certification.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the scheduled meeting dates as presented.
2. Approve the Scheduled meeting dates with changes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1, approve the scheduled meeting dates as presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

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
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 6

SUBJECT TITLE: Resolution 2026-01 - FY 2026 First Budget Amendment (Finance)

OBJECTIVE:

To approve Resolution 2026-01, amending the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

SUMMARY:

The attached resolution represents increases and/or decreases to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. Appropriation increases represent capital projects, 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 FIRST AMENDMENT to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Approve Resolution 2026-01 amending the FY 2025-2026 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

Option 2: Do not approve Resolution 2026-01.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to approve Resolution 2026-01, amending the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 City of Tavares Annual Operating Budget.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated final budget amounts are included with the budget detail for this amendment.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

The resolution has met legal sufficiency.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Resolution No. 2026-01
2. Exhibit A

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

RESOLUTION 2026-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE 2026 FISCAL YEAR ADOPTED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, REPRESENTING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE ADOPTED BUDGET, AND PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR, AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:

Fund Name	Fund Number	Estimated Revenues ¹	Reserve Appropriations ³	Unappropriated Revenues ²	Estimated Appropriations/ Expenditures
General Fund	001	29,374,587	\$ 2,733,066	\$ -	\$ 32,107,653
Water/Wastewater Utility	401	14,365,987	1,521,820	-	\$ 15,887,807
Water/Wastewater Impacts	441	1,415,419	-	(474,689)	\$ 940,730
W/WW RR&I Fund	443	400,000	189,470	-	\$ 589,470
SRF Construction Fund	444	-	8,322,315	-	\$ 8,322,315
W/WW SRF Loan	445	2,575,052	-	-	\$ 2,575,052
Sunset View Fund	447	-	-	-	\$ -
Solid Waste	402	4,848,980	14,125	-	\$ 4,863,105
Stormwater	403	2,446,542	9,358	-	\$ 2,455,900
Seaplane Base Fund	405	1,046,608	21,257	-	\$ 1,067,865
Pavilion Fund ⁵	406	851,720	13,255	-	\$ 864,975
Community Redevelopment	105	292,326	24,085	-	\$ 316,411
Police Impacts	110	132,178	18,986	-	\$ 151,164
Fire Impacts	111	145,962	-	(66,984)	\$ 78,978
Forfeiture Fund	112	-	-	-	\$ -
Park Impacts	114	322,769	-	(152,769)	\$ 170,000
Building Permits	115	185,481	-	(185,481)	\$ -
Citizen Donation Fund	119	50	-	-	\$ 50
Fire Assessment Fund	122	2,064,182	-	-	\$ 2,064,182
Infrastructure Sales Tax ⁵	150	-	124,000	-	\$ 124,000
Grant Fund	151	961,049	982,875	-	\$ 1,943,924
Infrastructure Sales Tax	152	2,487,958	1,537,366	-	\$ 4,025,324
ARPA	155	-	21,139	-	\$ 21,139
GTRP East Lake County Assistance	157	293,000	118,090	-	\$ 411,090
Debt Service Fund	201	1,114,477	-	(41)	\$ 1,114,436
Capital Project Fund	303	-	805	-	\$ 805
Capital Project Fund (Public Works Facility)	304	-	65,213	-	\$ 65,213
Municipal Police Pension ⁴	601	3,260,106	-	(1,397,900)	\$ 1,862,206
Firefighter's Pension ⁴	602	4,052,667	-	(1,847,977)	\$ 2,204,690
General Employee Pension ⁴	603	94,584	-	(51,419)	\$ 43,165
Mildred Hunter Trust ⁴	605	425	-	(75)	\$ 350
Wooton Park Playground ⁴	606	450	-	-	\$ 450
		\$72,732,559	\$ 15,717,225	\$ (4,177,335)	\$ 84,272,449

¹ Estimated Revenues = anticipated revenue collections.

² Negative Reserve Appropriations assumes unappropriated revenues.

³ Positive Reserve Appropriations assumes appropriating (spending) an amount of reserves.

⁴ Special Revenue Fund.

Section 1. Whereas the adopted budget for the City of Tavares for Fiscal Year 2026 should be increased from \$69,424,677 to \$84,272,449 in both revenues and expenditures where the increase represents increases or decreases in estimated revenues and expenditures due to prior year project/encumbrance rollovers previously approved by the City Council.

Section 2. Whereas this resolution represents the First amendment to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. (Exhibit A)

Section 3. Whereas any resolution or portion of a resolution in conflict with this resolution or any portion of this resolution is hereby repealed.

Section 4. Whereas if any section, sentence, clause, phrase or word of this resolution is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the resolution shall not be affected and remain in full force and effect.

Section 5. Be it be resolved that this resolution shall be effective upon its adoption.

PASSED and ADOPTED this 21st day of January 2026, by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida.

Lori Pfister, Mayor
Tavares City Council

ATTEST:

Susie Novack
City Clerk

Approved as to form:
Lindsey Holt
City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 7

SUBJECT TITLE: Resolution 2026-02 - Authorize SRF Loan for SAHM Drinking Water Project DW3509A with Loan Forgiveness (Finance)

OBJECTIVE:

Request Council approval and Adoption for Resolution 2026-02 for State Revolving Loan Fund SAHM Funding (Supplemental Appropriations for Hurricanes Helene and Milton) Loan Application to fund the cost to plan, design, and construct for enhancement of the resilience, reliability, and redundancy of the City's drinking water system (Project SAHM 3509A).

SUMMARY:

The City of Tavares operates a public water system (PWS ID # 3351333) with over 134 miles of distribution lines, serving residents within the city limits and surrounding areas. Potable water is sourced from the Upper Floridan Aquifer through six groundwater wells, treated at four facilities, and stored in three tanks with a combined capacity of 2.5 million gallons.

The Project will include the following system improvements:

- Waterproofing and elevating electrical panels and control systems to prevent flood damage.
- Installing remote monitoring and control systems (SCADA) upgrades for real-time control and monitoring.
- Improving distribution system redundancy by looping key waterlines and adding pressure-boosting stations.
- Enhancing booster pump capacity for consistent water delivery.
- Increasing storage capacity or optimizing existing storage for better operational flexibility.
- Installing Drinking Water Wells to replace the 2 downtown wells.

The project aims to increase system redundancy, reliability, and resiliency, addressing issues identified during hurricane Milton and other disasters. By proactively strengthening the system's configuration, it will protect public health and safety, preserve environmental resources, and ensure regulatory compliance.

The Project cost for planning, design, and construction is estimated at \$21,450,000. The DEP SAHM funded listed amount is \$21,450,000 with a principal forgiveness amount of \$21,450,000.

Florida FDEP has included the project (SAHM 3590A) on the Florida DEP Funding List. The City will enter into a loan with loan forgiveness as indicated on the State DEP Division of Water Restoration Assistance Funding List provided in Notice ID# FA-SRF-202511.

OPTIONS:

1. **Move to Approve** Resolution 2026-02 authorizing the Mayor to execute documents for

application and acceptance for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection State Revolving Loan Program for SAHM Funding for the 3509A Drinking Water Project.

2. Do not Approve Resolution 2026-02

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Move to Approve** Resolution 2026-02 authorizing the Mayor to execute documents for application and acceptance for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection State Revolving Loan Program for SAHM Funding for the 3509A Drinking Water Project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

As the loan will provide forgiveness there will be no fiscal impact.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

This Resolution has been reviewed by the City Attorney.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. DW3509A Draft Resolution_01212026_f2
2. November 12 Combined Final Agency Action
3. SAHM Drinking Water Project DW3509A_Project Description_B Dykes_01162026

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

RESOLUTION 2026-02

A RESOLUTION OF CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM; MAKING FINDINGS; AUTHORIZING THE LOAN APPLICATION; AUTHORIZING THE LOAN AGREEMENT; ESTABLISHING PLEDGED REVENUES; DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES; PROVIDING ASSURANCES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes provide for loans to local government agencies to finance the construction of drinking water infrastructure and improvements; and

WHEREAS, Florida Administrative Code rules require authorization to apply for loans, to establish pledged revenues, to designate an authorized representative; to provide assurances of compliance with loan program requirements; and to enter into a loan agreement; and

WHEREAS, the State Revolving Fund loan priority list designates Project No. DW3509A as eligible for available funding; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Water Restoration Assistance, Notice FA-SRF-202511 provides Exhibit A: For the 11-12-2025 State Year 2026 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Priority List Adoption Meeting eligible new projects, and

WHEREAS, The City of Tavares is listed (item MM) for SAHM Funding Source for Project 3509A for Planning, Design, and Construction, and

WHEREAS, the approved listing amount is a loan listing amount of \$21,450,000 for the project, and a Principal Forgiveness amount of \$21,450,00 and,

WHEREAS; the City of Tavares, Florida, intends to enter into a loan agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection under the State Revolving Fund for project financing.

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

SECTION I. The foregoing findings are incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.

SECTION II. The City of Tavares, Florida, is authorized to apply for a loan for SAHM Funding for Project 3509A to finance the Project.

SECTION III. The revenues pledged for the repayment of the loan are net revenues of the City's Water and Sewer Fund. The City also has the following prior non-State Revolving Loan liens; 2012A Series Revenue Bond \$4,720,000; 2012B Series Revenue Bond \$2,370,000; 2021 Series Revenue Note \$3,600,000.

SECTION IV. The City Administrator is hereby designated as the authorized representative to provide the assurances and commitments required by the loan application.

SECTION V. The Mayor is hereby designated as the authorized representative to execute the loan agreement which will become a binding obligation in accordance with its terms when signed by both parties. The Mayor is authorized to represent the City in carrying out the City's responsibilities under the loan agreement. The Mayor is authorized to delegate responsibility to appropriate City staff to carry out technical, financial, and administrative activities associated with the loan agreement.

SECTION VI. The legal authority for borrowing moneys to construct this Project is 166.111, Florida Statutes.

SECTION VII. All resolutions or part of Resolutions in conflict with any of the provisions of this Resolution are hereby repealed.

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

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum present of the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida, at a regular meeting, this 21st day of January, 2026.

BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF
TAVARES, FLORIDA

Lori Pfister, Mayor

ATTEST, BY THE CLERK OF THE CITY
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES,
FLORIDA:

City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY:

City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 8

SUBJECT TITLE: Ordinance 2026-02 - Extend Deferred Retirement Option from 60 months to 96 months for Tavares Firefighters' Pension Plan (Finance)

OBJECTIVE:

Approve Ordinance 2026-02 which amends Section 15-128 of the City of Tavares Code of Ordinances, City of Tavares Firefighters' Pension Plan to allow eligible members to extend the period for Deferred Retirement Option from 60 months to 96 months.

SUMMARY:

Ordinance 2026-02 provides changes to the Firefighters' Pension Plan to allow eligible plan members to extend the Deferred Retirement Option from 60 months to 96 months,

The Pension Plan Board Attorney Pedro Herrera of Sugarman, Susskind, Braswell & Herrera, has prepared Ordinance 2026-02 to provide changes to Section 15-128 of the Firefighters' Pension Plan that sets for the Deferred Retirement Option Plan for eligible Firefighters' Pension Plan participants.

- Amends: Section 15-128 (b) (3) and provides that any member shall be eligible to participate in DROP for a period not to exceed 96 months.
- Amends: Section 15-128 (b) (3) to add section (a) which provides that a member who entered DROP prior 2-4-2026 and has not reached their maximum DROP participation period of 60 months may elect to extend their maximum DROP participation to 96 months and sets forth conditions.
- Amends: Section 15-128(c)(2) to add language setting forth conditions should a DROP participant fail to terminate employment at the expiration of 96 months.

The Plan Actuaries, Foster and Foster, have provided a letter of "no-impact" to the Firefighters' Pension Plan stating that no formal Actuarial Impact Statement is required to support adoption. A copy of their letter detailing the Plan changes, and the actuary opinion is attached.

OPTIONS:

1. **Move to Adopt** Ordinance 2026-02 amending Chapter 15-128 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Tavares Firefighters' Pension Plan to extend Maximum DROP Participation from 60 months to 96 months.

2. Do not Adopt Ordinance 2026-02.

-

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Move to Adopt** Ordinance 2026-02 amending Chapter 15-128 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Tavares Firefighters' Pension Plan to extend Maximum DROP Participation from 60 months to 96 months.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

This Ordinance has been reviewed by the City Attorney.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Ordinance 2026-02 Amendment Extending DROP to 8 years - Tavares FF_2
2. Actuary Letter of no Impact_Tavares Fire Pen Drop Extension from 60 months to 96 months

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

ORDINANCE 2026-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, AMENDING CHAPTER 15, PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT, ARTICLE V, FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION TRUST FUND, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF TAVARES; AMENDING SECTION 15-128, DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN; PROVIDING FOR AN EXTENSION OF DROP PARTICIPATION PERIOD; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HERewith AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares Firefighters' Pension Trust Fund (the "Plan") desires to extend the maximum allowable period and allow eligible Members to participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) for up to eight (8) years; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Plan desires to expand the DROP period from five (5) years to eight (8) years for all currently active Members including those already participating in the DROP; and

WHEREAS, an amendment to the Plan is necessary to permit such new conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees have requested and approved such an amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees have considered such an amendment to be in the best interest of the participants and beneficiaries of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has received, reviewed, and considered an actuarial impact statement describing the actuarial impact of the amendment provided for herein; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds the amendment provided in this Ordinance to be in the public's interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. Chapter 15, Pensions and Retirement, Article V, Firefighters' Pension Trust Fund, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Tavares is hereby amended by amending Sec. 15-128, Deferred retirement option plan, subparagraph (b), *Participation*, and (c), *Funding*, to read as follows:

15-128. - Deferred retirement option plan.

[...]

(b) *Participation.*

- (1) *Eligibility to participate.* In lieu of terminating his employment as a firefighter, any member who is eligible for normal retirement under the system may elect to defer receipt of such service retirement pension and to participate in the DROP.
- (2) *Election to participate.* A Member's election to participate in the DROP must be made in writing in a time and manner determined by the board and shall be effective on the first day of the first calendar month which is at least fifteen (15) business days after it is received by the board.
- (3) *Period of participation.* A member who elects to participate in the DROP under subsection (b)(2), shall participate in the DROP for a period not to exceed sixty (60) months beginning at the time his election to participate in the DROP first becomes effective. An election to participate in the DROP shall constitute an irrevocable election to resign from the service of the city not later than the date provided for in the previous sentence. A member may participate only once.

Notwithstanding, effective February 4, 2026, an eligible Member as described herein shall be eligible to participate in the DROP for a period not to exceed ninety-six (96) months beginning on the date which the Member first becomes eligible for normal retirement.

- a. An eligible Member who entered the DROP prior to the effective date herein and has not reached their maximum DROP participation period of 60 months as of February 4,

2026, may, in accordance with the conditions specified below, elect to extend their maximum DROP participation period from sixty (60) months to ninety-six (96) months. Upon approval by the Board, a Member's election to extend participation in the DROP shall extend the Member's DROP participation period as if the maximum participation period upon entry into the DROP was 96 months (e.g. adding 36 months to the initial 60 month maximum DROP participation period). For Members who elect to extend their maximum DROP participation, the following conditions shall apply to any such extension of DROP participation:

- i. The election shall be irrevocable; and
- ii. The Member must, in writing, (1) agree to terminate employment at the end of the extended DROP participation period; and (2) submit an irrevocable, unconditional letter of resignation prior to extending the DROP, which resignation shall be effective on the date the DROP participation period ends (which shall be the earlier of the termination of the member's employment, for any reason, or the last day of the extended maximum DROP participation period); and
- iii. The Member must elect to extend the DROP participation period and submit the written requirements noted above prior to the end of the member's initial 60-month DROP participation period. In the event a Member who is eligible to extend his/her maximum DROP participation period does not elect timely to do so, the Member's DROP participation period shall not be extended, and the maximum DROP participation period shall remain at sixty (60) months.

For a DROP participant who fails to terminate City employment at the expiration of the 96-month maximum DROP participation period, such Member shall be deemed not to be retired, the Member's DROP election shall be null and void, and the Member shall effectively have no accumulated DROP benefits. Plan membership shall be reestablished retroactively to the original date of the commencement of the DROP, and the Member shall be required to pay to the Plan the Member contributions as if they had continued service to the city, and the city contributions during the period such Member participated in the DROP, plus an interest rate equal to the annual assumed investment return during each year the Member participated in the DROP.

(c) Funding. [...]

[...]

(2) Transfers from retirement system

[...]

c. A member's DROP account shall only be credited with interest or a return and monthly benefits while the member is a participant in the DROP. A member's final DROP account value for distribution to the member upon termination of participation in the DROP shall be the value of the account at the end of the quarter immediately preceding termination of participation for participants electing the net plan return and at the end of the month immediately preceding termination of participation for participants electing the flat interest rate return, plus any monthly periodic additions made to the DROP account subsequent to the end of the previous quarter or month, as applicable, and prior to distribution. If a member fails to terminate employment after participating in the DROP for the permissible period of DROP participation, then beginning with the member's 1st month of employment following the last month of the permissible period of DROP participation, the member's DROP account will no longer be credited or debited with interest or returns, nor will monthly benefits be transferred to the DROP account. All such non-transferred amounts shall be forfeited and continue to be forfeited while the member is employed by the fire department. A member employed by the fire department after the permissible period of DROP participation will still not be eligible for pre-retirement death or disability benefits, nor will he accrue additional credited service except as provided for in section 15-129. Notwithstanding, effective February 4, 2026, for all members who elect to participate in the DROP for eight (8) years, then beginning with the next payment following cessation of participation or beginning with the member's 97th month of DROP participation, whichever occurs first, the member's DROP account will no longer be credited or debited

with earnings or interest, nor will monthly benefits be transferred to their DROP account. All such non-transferred amounts shall be forfeited and continue to be forfeited while the member remains employed by the City as a firefighter.

[...]

SECTION 2: Specific authority is hereby granted to codify and incorporate this Ordinance in the existing Code of Ordinances of the City of Tavares.

SECTION 3: If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase of this ordinance, or the particular application thereof shall be held invalid by any court, administrative agency, or other body with appropriate jurisdiction, the remaining section, subsection, sentences, clauses, or phrases under application shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 4: All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith be and the same are hereby repealed.

SECTION 5: That this Ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ORDAINED ON this 4th day of February, 2026, by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida.

Lori Pfister, Mayor
Tavares City Council

Passed First Reading: _____

Passed Second Reading: _____

ATTEST:

Susie Novack
CITY CLERK

Approved as to form:

Lindsay C. T. Holt
CITY ATTORNEY

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 9

SUBJECT TITLE: Community Grant Awards (City Clerk)

OBJECTIVE:

To award community grants or area not-for-profit organizations with a 502C3 designation for up to \$500 in funding for community and social service projects.

SUMMARY:

The Council budgeted \$2,000 in the current Fiscal Year 2025 for community grants. The City advertised at the beginning of the fiscal year an invitation to submit community grant applications for area not-for-profit organizations with a 502C3 designation for up to \$500 in funding for community and social service projects.

The City received five (5) grant applications (attached) as follows:

- Angel Flight Southeast
- Educational Foundation of Lake County
- Lake Cares, Inc.
- Tavares Theater, Inc.
- Triangle Community Alliance, Inc.

A ranking committee consisting of the City Clerk, Finance Director, and Community Services Director met on January 14, 2026, and reviewed the applications to determine if they met the criteria for the Community Grant Program. It was determined that each request met the award criteria. The grant opportunity was advertised in the Daily Commercial and on the City website.

OPTIONS:

1. Award four (4) \$500 Community Grants.
2. Award five (5) \$400 Community Grants.
3. Do not award Community Grants at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 2, for the Council to award five grant requests in the amount of \$400 each to Angel Flight Southeast, Educational Foundation of Lake County, Lake Cares, Inc., Tavares Theater, Inc., and Triangle Community Alliance, Inc.

FISCAL IMPACT:

\$2,000, leaving a -0- balance for any further grant requests in FY 2026 if all funds awarded.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Angel Flight Southeast
2. Educational Foundation of Lake County, Inc.
3. Lake Cares, Inc.
4. Tavares Theater, Inc.
5. Triangle Community Alliance, Inc.
6. Display Ad - Community Grants

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 10

SUBJECT TITLE: Broad Budget Goals (City Administrator)

OBJECTIVE:

For the Council to develop its FY 2027 Broad Budget Priorities and provide them at the February 4th City Council meeting.

SUMMARY:

It is recommended Council members develop their three (3) to five (5) broad budget priorities over the ensuing weeks for the upcoming FY 2027 (October 1, 2026 -September 30, 2027) Annual Budget development and deliver those budget priorities individually to the City Administrator by the end of the month - January 31, 2026, so he can assemble them for the Council's collaborative consideration at the next City Council meeting on February 4th, 2026.

Attached are the adopted prior year budgetary goals for Council's reference.

OPTIONS:

No action required at this meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Each Council member develops its FY 27 broad budget priorities and delivers them to the City Administrator by January 31, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Yes.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. Council Member FY 26 Budget Goals Approved 02-05-2025

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

FY 2026 Broad Budget Goals

Council Member Gamble FY 26 Budget Goals

1. Maintain Pay As We Go and not go further in debt.
2. Maintain present or better level of service.
3. Budget for Employee Raises.
4. Set new Impact Fees.
5. West End of Main Street Improvement.
6. Woodlea Sports Park Improvements.

Council Member Grenier FY 26 Budget Goals

1. Plan the new Tavares frontier along SR19/561/448 corridor well with no sprawl and be mindful of infrastructure, type of businesses, type of residential development, and land conservation for recreational pathways, natural resources, and wildlife.
2. Continue to make sure the Parks and Recreation Department, Tavares Public Library and the Tavares History Museum and have the resources needed to maintain and exceed, a high level of service to patrons and guests. Do not forget the citizens' vision of "Building on a Historic Foundation."
3. Provide the Public Works, Water, Communications, and IT departments with the proper, updated, and safe tools and equipment to exceed their already high level of service.
4. Keep streets, alleyways, stormwater, solid waste, infrastructure improvements moving forward with the proper resources to provide a high level of service.
5. Provide the resources and modern equipment to the Police and Fire Departments to ensure they continue to exceed a high level of service.

Vice Mayor Pfister FY 26 Budget Goals

1. Funding for GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGIONAL PARK design and construction
2. Continued funding for GOVERNMENTAL ADVOCACY REPRESENTATION for RAILS TO TRAILS
3. Funding if needed to secure golf cart crossing at hospital
4. 365 blue/ silver lighting at memorial fountain / 441 gateway
5. Funding for design of parking garage at East Main / Pavilion

Mayor Price FY 26 Budget Goals

1. Continue to lower millage rate, while keeping up at least the same level of service to residents that are currently provided.
2. Review and adopt new impact fees where and if needed.

3. Continue to attract new commercial development to Tavares, especially national chain retailers.
4. Continue to pursue grants, especially for rails to trails project.
5. Start West Main Street gateway project and rejuvenate area.
6. Convert old public works complex into surface parking.
7. Implement official Tavares flower project and start planting in public spaces.
8. Have traffic signal installed at 19/561, especially left turn signal.

Council Member Singer FY 26 Budget Goals

1. Continue to invest in infrastructure improvements.
2. Reduce the millage rate.
3. Sustain recommended reserve levels.
4. Pursue additional grant opportunities
5. Ensure adequate staffing and fair compensation across all departments.
6. Enhance the aesthetics of key corridors into our city.

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 11

SUBJECT TITLE: Property Acquisition for Future Parking Garage Construction (Economic Development)

OBJECTIVE:

For the City Council to approve the purchase of an approximately 1/2 acre parcel of available privately owned property for the amount of, not to exceed \$255,500 subject to a satisfactory appraisal and authorize the City Administrator to execute purchase documents. The parcel is adjacent to city property behind city hall, which has been identified as and designated for future construction of a multi-story parking garage structure.

SUMMARY:

The City has developed a long-term plan to construct two additional future parking garage structures to adequately address the parking needs of the community for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors. These two parking garages, in addition to the existing Lake County garage, will be located strategically in the downtown corridor, one block North of Main Street, behind City Hall and at the site of the former public works complex, providing easy vehicular access to the downtown core without crossing the Main Street corridor to access events, businesses and the waterfront area.

All the necessary property has been assembled and is under city ownership except for one parcel, located at the corner of Maud and New Hampshire, at the northwest corner of the existing City Hall property (attached photo). This parcel has recently been put on the market for sale and the owner has asked their real estate broker to provide the city with the first opportunity to purchase the property for its future garage needs. The lot is listed at a market price of \$255,500.

As this parcel did not become available until after the development and adoption of the current fiscal year budget, there were no funds allocated in this budget for the acquisition cost. Staff working together with the finance team have identified 3 options for funding in the current fiscal year:

1. Building permit fee revenues.
2. Current fiscal year reserves. The current reserves are sufficient to cover the cost of this expenditure while still exceeding GFOA recommended reserve funding levels.
3. Reserves to be reimbursed with facilities impact fees to be collected in the future.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the purchase authorizing the expenditure of up to the full asking price of \$255,500 subject to satisfactory appraisal of the property value, utilizing current fiscal year reserves.
2. Approve the purchase authorizing the expenditure of up to the full asking price of \$255,500 subject to satisfactory appraisal of the property value, utilizing building permit fee revenues.

3. Do not authorize the purchase of the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends council moves to approve option 2.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sufficient funds are available for options 1 or 2.

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Legally sufficient.

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. EMaudStreetProperty

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 12

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	February 4, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers February 18, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Planning and Zoning Board Meeting	February 20, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Library Board Meeting	February 11, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares Library Expansion Room
Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing	January 27, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers

OUTSIDE AGENCY MEETINGS:

Heartland League of Cities Meeting	February 13, 2026, 12:00 noon, Location to be Determined
Lake Sumter MPO Governing Board Meeting	February 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Suite 175, 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Leesburg
Tavares Chamber of Commerce Business Meeting	January 28, 2026, 11:30 a.m., Tavares Civic Center

Attached is the current 2026 Event Calendar.

OPTIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:

1. 2026_Tavares_EventCalendar_Rvsd 1.16.2026

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
1/21/2026**

AGENDA TAB NO.: 13

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.