



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 20, 2021 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Amanda Boggus, Mayor
Lou Buigas, Vice Mayor
Lori Pfister, Council Member
Walter Price, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member**

STAFF PRESENT

**John Drury, City Administrator
Bob Williams, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Mike Fitzgerald, Community Development Director
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Lori Houghton, Finance Director
Richard Keith, Fire Chief
Stoney Lubins, Police Chief
James Dillon, Public Works Director
Phil Clark, Utilities Director
Crissy Bublitz, Human Resources Director
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director
Scott Aldrich, Community Services Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Boggus called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Pastor Mike Ellis, Umatilla Baptist Church

Pastor Mike Ellis, Umatilla Baptist Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Drury said staff had no changes. He noted the new audio and visual equipment would be tested by a sound technician throughout the meeting.

MOTION

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

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

Attorney Williams said there were no quasi-judicial matters before Council.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Singer said he would like to pull Tab 4 for discussion.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the Consent Agenda minus Tab 4 [Tab 2 – Approval of the December 2, 2020 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes; Tab 3 – New Resident Welcome Letter], seconded by Lou Buigas. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the December 2, 2020 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. New Resident Welcome Letter

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 4. Tavares Fourth of July Celebration Date

Mr. Aldrich provided the following presentation:

The City of Tavares typically holds our community Fourth of July Celebration on the actual holiday, July 4th of any given year. In the past, we have only adjusted

our event when the July 4th date falls on a Sunday. On those occasions, the city has held the event on the day prior, July 3rd.

This year, July 4th falls on a Sunday. Staff is seeking permission from the council to adjust the date of our Fourth of July Celebration to Saturday, July 3, 2021.

Council Member Singer noted his preference to hold the celebration on July 4th.

Mayor Boggus asked when the cities of Eustis and Mount Dora scheduled their 4th of July celebrations. Mr. Aldrich said Eustis was scheduled to hold their event on the Friday prior to July 4th, and Mount Dora scheduled their event on July 3rd. Mayor Boggus asked if celebrations had previously been moved due to the 4th of July falling on a Sunday. Mr. Aldrich confirmed and said the event date was moved twice in the past fifteen years.

Council Member Pfister asked if the Monday, July 5th is a city holiday. Mayor Boggus said the courthouse would be closed on Monday, July 5th. Mr. Drury said City Hall is closed Monday, July 5th. Council Member Pfister noted her preference to hold the celebration on the 4th of July.

Vice Mayor Buigas said her preference is to celebrate on July 4th.

Council Member Price said the event should be moved to Saturday as patrons have to get up early for work the following day if held on the 4th of July. Mayor Boggus concurred and said some people do not have a government holiday the following day.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to leave the July 4th Celebration on Sunday, July 4, 2021, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion passed 3-2 as follows:

Amanda Boggus:	No
Lou Buigas:	Yes
Lori Pfister:	Yes
Walter Price:	No
Troy Singer:	Yes

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 5. Asset Management Program for Utilities

Mr. Clark made the following presentation:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF), requires utilities receiving SRF financial support to maintain an active fiscal sustainability and asset management (FSAM) program.

This program is incentivized by providing eligibility for interest rate reductions of 0.1 percent and loan forgiveness (future loans). After the successful implementation of a standard FSAM program for various small water utilities, the FDEP SRF Program is exploring best practices for asset management practices and related tools for midsize water utilities by providing funding to support a collaborative study with the City of Tavares Utilities Department. Woodard & Curran has been engaged by FDEP as their consultant for the study

Tavares, located in Central Florida with a population of approximately 18,000, was pleased to be provided the opportunity to participate in the study. Tavares engaged Woodard & Curran to identify and analyze Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) and Enterprise Asset Management System (EAMS) software options suitable for midsize water utilities serving populations between 10,000 and 50,000. The Tavares Utilities Department is an ideal example of a midsize utility that is currently managing utility assets for utility operations that include Water Treatment, Water Distribution, Wastewater Treatment, Wastewater Collection, Waste Water Distribution, Reuse, and Stormwater.

The City's study analyzed the CMMS (Computerized Maintenance Management System)/EAMS (Enterprise Asset Management System) needs and priorities of the Utilities Department based on questionnaires completed by City staff, existing software considerations, Woodard & Curran's software implementation experience, and the City's input during the demonstration process. An evaluation of ten (10) software packages based on these requirements, a summary of the selection process as well as software and implementation costs were developed. In addition, the summary report includes recommendations and a proposed plan to implement a new CMMS/EAMS for the Utility Department's Water Distribution, Water Treatment, Wastewater Collection, Wastewater Treatment, and Stormwater assets.

Staff recommends approval of Option 1 – authorize the City Administrator to execute a contract with Cityworks. Funding was budgeted out of five separate line items.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, recommended future management hires be capable of developing software as a criteria for employment.

Mayor Boggus asked for additional comments from the audience. There were none.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Price asked what current practices staff uses in lieu of the proposed software. Mr. Clark said the current software does not meet the City's needs. Council Member Price asked for the benefits of the new software. Mr. Clark said the software would provide asset management, work order systems, and integrates with approximately four to five other software systems including backflow, mapping, and SCADA. He said FDEP would like the software in place to protect their loan and ensure the City has a program that will keep the projects they help fund intact. He said the software is also a great tool for future capital planning.

Mr. Drury said the software helps forecast capital equipment useful life. A replacement warning is set so capital assets can be scheduled, and do not have to be replaced in an emergency situation at a premium cost. He said the world we live in includes many software applications through phones and computer driven databases and software. The city purchases good vetted software that meets IT interfacing and government security requirements.

Council Member Price asked if the software provides any financial benefit. Mr. Drury the following financial benefits:

- Reduced SRF loan for wastewater expansion at .1% for debt service over 20 years including a debt service forgiveness clause
- Ability to forecast when a capital asset needs to be replaced
- Efficiency and responsiveness to citizens when they have water and sewer issues

Mr. Clark said the software also integrates with SeeClickFix. He noted the city would secure a third party to train an in-house staff trainer.

Vic Mayor Buigas asked how long the City had the previous software. Mr. Clark said one year, and another the year before. He said neither software was sufficient.

Mayor Boggus asked how the grant monies were spent. Mr. Clark said the grant money was paid to the consultant obtained through an RFQ in order to determine the City's needs and provide the best options.

Council Member Pfister asked if the same consultant was used for the past two programs. Mr. Clark said no.

Council Member Singer asked if \$98,000 had already been budgeted. Mr. Clark confirmed.

MOTION

Lou Buigas moved to authorize the City Administrator execute a contract with Cityworks, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 6. Overview of New Council Meeting Streaming System Installed in Council Chambers

Mr. O'Keefe provided a high level overview of the newly installed audio visual equipment in City Council Chambers to facilitate streaming Council meetings. This project was fully funded by the CARES Act with the following features:

- Microphones
- Audience speakers
- Video streaming cameras for broadcast to the City Website with closed captioning service for the Deaf or the hard of hearing viewer which is fully compliant with the American Disabilities Act
- Additional monitors and speakers are now located in the lobby and outside City Hall to provide meeting overflow space or social distance opportunities for public viewing
- Future meeting videos will be archived on the city website so they can be watched at a later date for the convenience of those who Live, Work and Play in Tavares, America's Seaplane City

Mr. O'Keefe said the February 3, 2021 City Council meeting would be the first livestream meeting. He thanked each Department for their support in implementing the project. Mr. Drury noted the Council Chambers would be painted within the next 60 days. He said the system will allow City business to move forward in the Sunshine during a pandemic.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience.

David Serdar, 866 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, noted his support for the video upgrades.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said there can be a delay in the video stream and recommended the meeting video not be cut off right away at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister asked who would work the system. Mr. O'Keefe said he will work the video equipment and several staff members will be cross-trained for those

times he is absent. He said the system is intuitive and confirmed no new employees would be hired.

Council Member Singer thanked Mr. O'Keefe for shepherding the project. He said Council had wished to livestream meetings for many years and appreciates CARES Act Funding was used to fund the project. He said the Council Chamber back doors had a glare and recommended tinting the glass.

Mr. O'Keefe noted meeting videos would be available on the agenda page of the City website after each meeting.

Tab 7. Tavares History Museum Update

Mr. Aldrich said staff had been working with the Historical Society for several months transferring documents and artifacts to the City for display in the new history museum. He said CARES Act Funding enabled staff to secure a web-based software program for digital documentation and online viewing. The system is called Pass Perfect and is one of the leaders in the world for museum software. Staff met with Vice Mayor Buigas for a tour of the museum and received many ideas for volunteers. Staff also visited museums throughout Central Florida. He thanked the Tavares Historical Society for their assistance throughout the transition period.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience. There were none.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Mayor Boggus asked about the anticipated opening date of the museum. Mr. Aldrich said the opening would be held in the spring of 2021, and no date had been identified.

Tab 8. Florida's Safe Haven Law, and the Treatment of Surrendered Newborns

Chief Keith made the following presentation:

A member of City Council had inquired at a previous City Council meeting on the possibility of having a "Baby Box" installed and available in Tavares.

A "Baby Box" for this discussion, is a structural repository in which an unwanted baby is placed (surrendered), in lieu of a more tragic type of abandonment. The baby box must be protected structurally, air conditioned and heated for climate control, and attached to a constantly monitored alarm system.

Florida Law, Title XXIX, Chapter 383, Section 50, titled "Treatment of Surrendered Newborn Infant" is the controlling document. 383.50 creates a means for the surrender of a newborn infant to a specifically qualified and identified individual. This very detailed statute section allows for a firefighter in Florida, to receive the infant being voluntarily surrendered.

While Baby Boxes have been legalized in a few other states, they have not been legalized in Florida. There have been attempts to broaden the scope of Chapter 383.50 to allow Baby Boxes in the past. There is another attempt to once again broaden 383.50 to allow for Baby Boxes now.

The primary difference between the current language of the law is that the infant surrendered today, shall be surrendered from the arms of the parent directly into the arms of a firefighter, whereas the proposed changes to the law, should it be successfully enacted, would add the "Baby Box" as an alternative infant surrender method.

Staff will monitor this potential change to legislative language, keep City Council apprised, and respond accordingly.

In the meantime, Tavares Fire Department is prepared, and has been prepared, to receive any newborn infants surrendered to our staff in compliance with the current scope of 383.50. We keep a supply of infant care items available at our fire stations to assist with the care required when receiving a surrendered infant.

There is no evidence that an infant has ever been surrendered to Tavares Fire Department.

Discussion was held regarding the Ocala Fire Department's installation of a baby box. Mayor Boggus asked if the Tavares Fire Department ever received a surrendered child. Chief Keith said he found no records of a surrendered child. Mr. Drury said he was under the assumption legislation had not passed allowing baby boxes in Florida. He said staff will look into Ocala's baby box further. Attorney Williams noted the legal conclusion that there is no legislation in support of baby boxes at Fire Stations in Florida.

Kristy Furman, 204 N. Rockingham Avenue, said she does a lot of not-for-profit work including assisting the homeless. She asked if there is a phone number or resource shelters can reach out to advocate for a baby box program. Chief Keith said there are hotlines shelters can call including Children and Family Services. He said shelters are not allowed legislatively to receive a surrendered child, and shelters should direct anyone who surrenders a child to a Hospital, EMS Station or Fire Station.

Mayor Boggus asked if children can be surrendered at a Fire Station without questions. Chief Keith confirmed, and said the Fire Department would immediately take a surrendered child to the hospital where a child would then be placed in the Children and Family Services intake system.

Tab 9. Establish FY 2022 Broad Budget Priorities

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

It has been the practice of the Council to set the broad budget priorities for the City Administrator to use as guiding principles in developing a budget that is commensurate with the Council's overall budgetary goals.

By way of background, the City operates six (6) governmental operations as follows:

1. **General Government** (revenues derived by property taxes, other taxes, and fees)
2. **Utilities** - Water, Waste Water (Sewer), Reclaimed Water, Stormwater (Revenues derived by fees – no property taxes)
3. **Solid Waste (Garbage Collection)** (revenues derived from fees – no property taxes)
4. **Seaplane and Marina Enterprise** (revenues derived from fuel sales, prop shop sales, rental income from Seaplane operator and others, the General Fund (taxes) and CRA TIF Fund (Incremental property tax revenues within the CRA District).
5. **Pavilion on the Lake**. (revenues derived from rental income and General Fund taxes)
6. **Capital Projects**. (revenues are derived from grants, impact fees, special tax revenues like "Infrastructure Sales Tax" and property taxes).

(Note: in addition to the above are debt service costs associated with prior capital projects)

Historical Perspective

The ebbs and flows of the economic conditions of the United States and Florida are well beyond the control of Tavares as was/is the Pandemic. These economic conditions along with the Pandemic have affected all cities in Lake County creating some challenges to overcome. Each city has taken a different approach to working in these economic realities. Tavares took a calculated growth risk approach of investing in itself by creating America's Seaplane City, developing a Seaplane base and virtual runway in Lake Dora, creating a marina with docking and fuel service and now rebuilding that hurricane destroyed investment with insurance proceeds. Tavares also created a downtown entertainment district, recreational Seaplane Themed Splash Park for children scheduled to be renovated, professionalized its Public Safety operation of Police and Fire service by constructing a new "state of the art" Public Safety Complex as a gateway feature, added many unique events to the downtown, punctuating its 4th of July (cancelled this past year due to Covid-19) and Christmas parades as Lake County's "go to" parades and events, developed The Pavilion on the Lake (Lake County's premier events venue – A Central Florida Destination) to host conferences and weddings, expanded its sewer, water and reclaimed systems throughout the city, secured \$18 million in Rail Road grants to upgrade the Rail

Line spine that goes through Tavares and Lake County and established an Economic Development Department to recruit companies to Tavares and develop an “open for business” friendly environment for investors.

Economic Development cannot occur without strategically placed water and sewer infrastructure to service that economic investment. The city took an aggressive posture on the expansion of its wastewater and water plant to encourage private investment into the City of Tavares. That investment in itself along with its “Civic Entrepreneurial” approach to governance, resulted in attracting tens of millions of new private dollars invested into the City of Tavares as well as the creation of many new high-wage jobs. That private investment includes: Sea Rey Seaplane Manufacturing Company, Wipaire Seaplane Pontoon manufacturing company, Jones Brothers Seaplane Air Charter, Flight Training and Scenic Tour operations, Osprey Assisted Living and Alzheimer’s Care Lodge, Tavares first Publix Shopping Center, the Big House Indoor Regional Sporting Facility, Tavares first Professional Workforce luxury apartment complex next to the hospital, and now a second waterfront luxury apartment complex programed on Alfred Street, the Hospital’s new Heart Care Center, an expanded Hospital ER facility and modern assisted living facility, an influx of medical related companies to Tavares Medical Park (outpatient surgical centers, multiple medical clinics specializing in a range of medical specialties and a VA Clinic), An upscale day Spa, many new residential sub-divisions and retirement communities that not only drive and support short term construction trade work but long term maintenance, landscaping and home servicing jobs, many new restaurants and bars, three new down town hotels, the complete sell out of the professional park on SR 19 (just south of the Ace Hardware Store) and the 448 Lake Ridge Industrial/Commerce Park’s continued expansion of new buildings and business. Most recently a brewery is scheduled to open up in downtown Tavares too.

In summary, the economic conditions in Tavares are very good in terms of business expansion, Business retention, Business start-ups, jobs, prosperity and increased tax base to support the public services the community enjoys.

The fruits of the City Council’s, staff’s and citizen’s labor have not come without challenges. While the City was investing in itself, it did it amongst the back drop of some very challenging national and state economic realities including a national pandemic. This, however led to very favorable pricing structures when securing the contractors to build the public infrastructure. The city also upgraded its Fire Safety program from Basic Life Support with no paramedics to Advanced Life support with paramedics who have saved so many lives with their paramedic skills. The Police Department was upgraded from working out of hallways and closets in the corner of City Hall to its own Police Station in the new Public Safety complex paving the path to become fully accredited for the first time in the city’s history! All this new public infrastructure and improved professionalism attracted people and private investment. It also increased cost to the City to staff, manage and maintain. In addition to this increased cost to maintain this new public infrastructure and professionalism, the city also added many new services

(Enhanced 911 service provided by the Sheriff's Office, a seaplane base and virtual runway, marina, pavilion, train station, many special events, reclaimed water, street beautification/irrigation and landscaping, street re-paving program, alleyway brick overlay program, Wootton Park improvements, the new Ecological Park, new boat ramps and restrooms and additional recreational ball fields and the list goes on). This has expanded the level of service offered to the community as well as the cost to the community.

Future Budgetary Formation

- 1. Utilities: Water, Sewer, Reclaim and Storm Water: The City has conducted a rate study that calls for reasonable growth and increases on the expense and revenue side of the budget. Rate increases are capped at Consumer Price Index (CPI) for water, sewer and reclaimed water.*
- 2. Garbage Collection: Council previously addressed moderate growth on the expense side and revenue side of the budget. Rate increases are capped at Consumer Price Index (CPI).*
- 3. Seaplane base and Marina Enterprise: Hurricane Irma destroyed the seaplane base and marina. Insurance proceeds are paying 98% of the cost to rebuild this. The project has commenced with completion estimated this summer. Once completed, the seaplane base and marina will be back in full operation.*
- 4. Pavilion On The Lake: The facility is exceeding expectations with weddings and "events". It has become one of Lake County's signature venues. There are two primary goals: 1) Continue to have a positive effect on the local economy by filling up hotels, patronizing restaurants, and supporting wedding/conference support businesses (photography, florist, catering companies, hair/make up, wedding planners, limo service, new Paddleboat operations and seaplane business) And 2) Self-sufficiency operationally. The annual economic impact on the local community per year is in excess of \$2.5 million.*
- 5. Capital Improvement Projects: The City Council previously developed and maintains a five-year Capital Improvement program. This plan will be updated based on what has occurred and what this Council desires for future capital items.*
- 6. Debt Service Costs: A debt service schedule was provided in the current year's budget and it will be updated for the next budget cycle. The Debt Service Management Report shows that Tavares is in good standing on all of its debt.*
- 7. General Fund: At this early point in time, it is not possible to predict with precision the actual revenue or expenses that will occur for next Fiscal Year 2022 (Beginning October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022) because the city*

does not know:

1. *How many new properties have been added to the tax rolls nor how much property values will increase? (The Property Appraiser issues that report in May).*
2. *What the State shared revenues will be? (State sets that in June)*
3. *What the increased operational cost will be? (fuel, electricity, Healthcare, payroll etc. – Staff bases this on economic indicators)*

However, “possible” scenarios for the purpose of starting the discussion on the Council’s broad budget priorities based on staff following trends and conducting research could result in the following possible budget scenarios:

Revenues:

1. *Property Tax revenue collections increasing due to an increase in property values and new construction.*
2. *All other revenues increasing over current year due to positive economic conditions.*

Expenses:

1. *Personnel expenses increasing*
2. *Operational expense increasing*
3. *Employee Healthcare cost increasing*

Tax Rate: Tavares has maintained a steady and incremental reduction in the property tax rate over the past several years as it balances the increased cost of delivering services and providing new services with setting a reasonable property tax rate to support these increased costs and new services.

FY 19 - 7.100 millage rate

FY20 - 6.9500 millage rate

FY 21 – 6.9000 millage rate

Currently a Homesteaded house in Tavares valued at \$150,000 paying the current property tax rate of 6.9 mills is paying \$57 per month or \$690 per year for Tavares General Government property tax.

Mr. Drury noted there are over 20 current projects and 50 initiatives that will continue throughout the current year. He asked Council to discuss and provide their broad budget goals for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 including the following areas:

- Maintaining or not maintaining a similar level of service
- Adding or not adding new programs or services
- Employee compensation and benefits
- Capital projects
- Tax rate, fees, Reserves, Debt Service, and grants

He said that once the Council's broad budget goals are identified he would meet with the Leadership Team to develop the budget over the ensuing months. A budget would then come back to Council in July, August, and September for deliberation and adoption for FY2022. He noted the fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said costs should be controlled and wages should be placed on hold due to the effect of COVID-19 throughout the community. He said Tavares wants to be a Cadillac city with the associated costs and a referendum should be placed before the citizens to see if they would prefer to be a Cadillac or Volkswagen city. He said benchmarked metrics should be published comparing Tavares to other cities, and the City should create an economic forecast methodology utilizing specialists in economic forecasting.

David Serdar, 866 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, said Tavares is a Cadillac city located on the lakefront, is America's Seaplane City, and the County seat. He said Tavares is a beautiful city that people love to visit. Mr. Serdar said you cannot make everyone happy.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Pfister

Council Member Pfister said her only priority is getting to below the rollback rate. Mayor Boggus asked if she wanted to move forward with the Senior Center and Library Expansion projects. Council Member Pfister said no, and it is not the time for those projects.

Council Member Price

Council Member Price said he would like to maintain a similar level of service if possible, and he would like to aim to start the budget at the rollback rate and possibly go down from there. He said Tavares has a 10% unemployment rate. Council Member Price said he believes income taxes and gas prices may increase, and while the millage rate has reduced in the past taxes have increased. He said if the city can start at the rollback rate and work the budget down from there it would be a good way to go.

Council Member Singer

Council Member Singer said the citizens love Tavares and think the City is a great place to live. He said he would like to see the tax rate as low as possible, and if Council

wishes to go to the rollback rate or below they must provide ideas on how to achieve that goal. He said he would like to continue the trend of reducing the tax rate, continue to provide the same level of service for the citizens and businesses, and ensure first responders are well funded. Council Member Singer said he would like to look into the possibility of adding street lights as he had received several comments from citizens regarding a need for street lighting.

Council Member Singer said the City has been fortunate to lower the millage rate for the past three years. He would like to make sure Tavares is able to do that again this year including keeping Reserves at a healthy level. Council Member Singer said it is important to take care of the city's infrastructure for the future. He said Council cannot think of just this year, and must also look five to ten years in the future. He noted the road resurfacing budget had to be cut the past year and said residents appreciate their roads being resurfaced. Council Member Singer said he would like to increase the road resurfacing budget.

Council Member Singer said he would like that to continue with economic development. If the City is able to attract more businesses in the community it would lower the tax burden for everyone. He said he would like to make sure the City employees are taken care of as they are what makes the City of Tavares so special, and the city staff has done a tremendous job and should continue to be rewarded. He said he would like to make sure the city continues to seek grants.

Vice Mayor Buigas

Vice Mayor Buigas said it will be a tough year for the community, and the City needs to focus on needs and not wants. She said she would like to continue lowering the millage rate. She said while the rollback rate would be wonderful, the City would have to eliminate the library or another service along that line. Vice Mayor Buigas said she is willing to listen to anyone who would like to explain how the City can get to the rollback rate and does not believe the Council wishes to eliminate the library. Council Member Buigas said a lot of citizens find solace at the library.

Council Member Buigas said she would like the employees taken care of, and noted Tavares runs a very lean city. She said other cities include departments that have many employees such as building departments with less population than Tavares and three times the number of employees. Council Member Buigas said she does not have a problem being the Cadillac of Lake County.

Mayor Boggus

Mayor Boggus said she would like to reduce debt and keep taxes the same. She said she always like to lower taxes and understands that may not be possible. Mayor Boggus said she would like to give staff a raise to acknowledge appreciation and employee dedication. She said a raise may not be as large as normal.

Mayor Boggus said she would like to keep the same level of service as well as increase Reserves and pave as many roads as possible. For this coming year she would like to make sure the ballfields are cleaned up so they look their best and not like they have been neglected during the pandemic. She said Utility Billing receives more phone calls than normal and may want to look to additional staffing. She said the Public Works project is overdue and the City is working with community partners and grants for a better facility.

Mr. Drury thanked the Council for being straightforward and clear on their expectations, broad budget goals, and direction. He said a budget would be developed and brought back to Council in a couple of months.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

David Serdar, 866 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, discussed the recent city meetings he has attended as well as government officials he has had an opportunity to talk with throughout Lake County and Central Florida.

Richard, Annese, 3152 Bayou Lane, Tavares, Treasurerer Board of Director, Etowah Homeowners Association, said he would like to the city to implement paperless billing. He said Etowah is making progress with Avalon on their perimeter boundary and drainage issues. He noted a tilted stop sign at the intersection of Andrews and Lake Eustis Drive, and 100 feet of missing sidewalk on Lake Eustis Drive. Mr. Drury encouraged Mr. Annese to use the new SeeClickFix app to report issues such as the stop sign. He said he can also email the City Administrator and describe where the missing sidewalk is located.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 10. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said he is excited Tavares is embracing new technology from livestreaming meetings to SeeClickFix. He said technology helps keep staff lean and mean. He thanked Council for approving the Asset Management software which will help the Utility Department.

Mayor Boggus asked if the Asset Management software integrates with paperless Utility Billing. Mr. Clark said no.

Ms. Houghton said there are Finance technology initiatives that are currently in process. She said paperless billing is not listed but is in que, and the city does have an online auto bill pay by credit card option.

Attorney Williams commended Mr. O'Keefe on the Council Chamber upgrades including livestreaming.

Tab 11. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister

Council Member Pfister thanked Mr. O'Keefe for overseeing the Council Chamber upgrades and livestreaming project.

Council Member Price

- Said he likes the fact that the Council Chamber upgrades was paid by CARES Act funding.
- Said the city was 7/10 of 1% away from hitting the rollback rate the previous year.

Council Member Singer

- Said the Christmas parade was fantastic and thanked staff for their efforts.
- Said the Arbor Day event in Wooton Park had a nice turnout and it was good to see Tavares partner with outside organizations.
- Wished those present a happy 2021.

Vice Mayor Buigas

- Said it was nice to be back in the Council Chambers again with upgrades.
- Thanked Mr. O'Keefe for his work on the city website.
- Said Arbor Day was a great event and thanked Traci Anderson, Parks Supervisor, for her efforts.
- Provided a quote of the day: "There is more to life than being a passenger."
~Amelia Earhart
- Wished those present a happy 2021.

Mayor Boggus

- Said she enjoyed the Arbor Day event and noted trees were given out to attendees.
- Said she enjoyed the Christmas parade.
- Noted the Lake County Museum of Art exhibition highlighting local artist will open the following week.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk