



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 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 Lillie Brown, St. Johns Free Methodist Church

Pastor Lillie Brown, St. Johns Free Methodist Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION

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

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Proclamation – March 2021 Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Mayor Boggus read a proclamation in its entirety declaring March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve the Proclamation, seconded by Lou Buigas. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 3. Recognize and Proclaim March 15-19, 2021 as Government Finance Professionals Week in the City of Tavares

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

Government Finance Professionals Week is an inaugural event sponsored by the Florida Government Financial Officers Association (FGFOA) to recognize the vital services of all government finance professionals that they provide to our state and our communities.

The FGFOA was established in 1937 and serves over 3300 members. The FGFOA provides professional resources to government finance professionals. Resources include:

- A code of ethics and standards*
- Continuing education*
- Networking*
- Leadership*
- Information resources*

Mayor Boggus read a proclamation in its entirety designating March 15 through March 19, 2021 as Government Finance Professionals Week in the City of Tavares.

MOTION

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

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

Ms. Novack read the following resolution by title only:

RESOLUTION 2021-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING STAFF TO SUBMIT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LAKE COUNTY AND THE CITY OF MOUNT DORA A 2021 BETTER UTILIZING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT (BUILD) GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE WEKIVA TRAIL EXTENSION PROJECT-SEGMENT 1 AND SEGMENT 5 TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Boggus asked if any Council members would like to pull an item from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION

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

Tab 4. Approval of the January 20, 2021 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 5. Resolution 2021-02 – Joint Agency 2021 BUILD Grant Application \$25 Million

Mr. Dillon made the following presentation:

Tavares City Council authorized the pursuit of a \$25 million BUILD grant for the planned Wekiva Trail Extension Project - Segment 1 and Segment 5 (Downtown Tavares to Downtown Mount Dora and out to Sorrento).

In order to apply for the BUILD grant, a resolution is required authorizing staff in partnership with Lake County Florida and City of Mount Dora to submit to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) a \$25 million 2021 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Application for the planned Wekiva Trail Extension Project - Segment 1 and Segment 5.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260, December 27, 2020) ("FY 2021 Appropriations Act") appropriated \$1 billion to be awarded by the Department of Transportation (DOT) for National Infrastructure Investments on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to read and approve Resolution No. 2021-02, to apply and accept, in partnership with Lake County and the City of Mount Dora a \$25 million 2021 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Application for the planned Wekiva Trail Extension Project - Segment 1 and Segment 5 and to share the cost of the operation and maintenance of the trail project once completed.

Mr. Drury said he is proud of Mr. Dillon and his Team who have worked diligently to assist with the grant application. The City put together a grant application the previous year which received an eligible status that went before the United States President and Secretary of Transportation for funding consideration. He said it is difficult to achieve that level and noted Tavares received the high ranking in its first application. The two Florida grants were awarded to Hillsborough and Pinellas County. Mr. Drury noted the competitive nature of the grants and said he is confident this year's application will build upon the success of last year. If passed, the resolution will be placed in the application. Mr. Drury said Vice Mayor Buigas is on the Horizon Team and will be working with the legislative Team in Washington, D.C. to help shepherd the grant. The Tavares Team would also be reaching out to Senator Rubio, Senator Scott, Congressman Webster, as well as other representatives for Mount Dora and the area.

Mr. Drury said he is excited about the project which will bring a trail from downtown Tavares to downtown Mount Dora in the railroad bed. It will be an economic driver for families, citizens, and visitors to come to downtown Tavares and rent or bring bicycles and go between the two downtown communities. The trail also goes to Sorrento and connects to the Wekiva coast-to-coast trail system. He said the trail will be a game changer for the area and is clean economic development that will be good for restaurants, the downtown, and hotels.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, commended Mr. Dillon. He asked if trail maintenance would be split between the cities and Lake County and asked

for the estimated cost. He said the resolution indicates the build grant may be used for up to 80% of the costs of the projects which implies there is a 20% match that could equate to each three partners coming up with a \$1.6 million dollar match. He asked for clarification for the downstream maintenance costs and the possible grant match.

Mr. Drury said 80% grant funding refers to applications for an urban designated grant. Tavares would designate its application, as in the previous year, as a rural designated grant which is 100% funded. He noted the rural designation grant is also included in the resolution. Mr. Drury said Lake County will be applying for the grant and allocation. If a match is required there would be three projects used as matches including the Mount Dora communications infrastructure upgrade project as a match from Mount Dora. The golden triangle area roundabout would be Lake County's match, and Tavares is looking at Utilities, water and sewer. He said Tavares has projects in the works that would also be a grant match if necessary. However, he anticipates the grant will be designated as rural with a 100% grant.

Mr. Drury noted the other question posed by Mr. Jochim was in regards to maintenance cost sharing. Before the project is complete, Tavares and Mount Dora look forward to negotiating with Lake County for proportionate fair shares of the maintenance. The trail has not been designed, engineered or built and it is impossible to tell identify maintenance costs at this time. The goal is to obtain a grant, acquire the right-of-way, design, engineer, construct, and then discuss proportionate fair shares of maintenance costs.

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

MOTION

Lou Buigas moved to approve Resolution 2021-02, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 6. Award Bid and Execute Contract for the Construction of the Tavares Library Expansion Project

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

On December 22, 2020, the City of Tavares advertised an Invitation to Bid for the Tavares Public Library Expansion Project - BID NO. 2021-0001. Eight (8) companies responded with Morton Construction Company of Sanford, Florida

being the lowest bidder at \$685,864.00. Our engineering firm for the project, the DLR Group, has reviewed the lowest bidder's proposal and recommends approval.

This project is fully funded through Lake County Library Impact Fees at an amount of \$1,000,000.00 and currently has a construction budget of \$755,000.00. By awarding the contract to Morton Construction Company as the lowest bidder, it would allow the project to remain on budget with a 10% construction contingency.

Final submission of the scope of service by this company has been reviewed by staff and by the engineer and has met compliance in all areas.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to make a motion to approve the recommended low bidder, Morton Construction Co., for the Library Expansion Project and authorize staff to negotiate a contract for construction.

Mr. Aldrich said staff hopes to enter into an agreement and begin construction within 30 to 45 days. The goal is to have the project completed by Fall 2021.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said he called up a contractor that was not selected to discuss the city's procurement process. The contractor he spoke with said it was a straight and fair process. Mr. Jochim commended the City's procurement process and said he supports the library. He asked what the remainder of the grant, less contingency and construction costs, would fund, or if the remaining balance would be sent back to Lake County.

Mayor Boggus said the remaining funds would be used for design and engineering. Mr. Aldrich confirmed, and said \$200,000 is allocated for design costs, furniture, permitting fees, and stormwater fees.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer asked if the funding comes from Lake County Impact Fees for the library and not from the City of Tavares General Fund. Mr. Aldrich confirmed.

Mr. Drury thanked Council Member Pfister, Council liaison on the projects Horizon Team. He said she has worked on the project for many years, and said a 100% grant for the Tavares library is a good fiscal job well done. He thanked Mr. Aldrich and Council Member Pfister for securing the grant and working with the design team to move the project into implementation.

Vice Mayor Buigas said the selected contractor, Morton Construction Company, is a Certified Building Contractor (CBC). She said the third best price, Evergreen, is a General Contractor (GC). Council Member Buigas said there is a difference in certification between a CBC and GC, and asked if the bid request accepts a CBC qualification. Mr. Drury said staff will verify in the bid specifications if a qualified

contractor, qualified general contractor, or qualified certified building contractor is accepted. Vice Mayor Buigas said she likes that the library building is one story, and noted a CBC can build up to a 3 story commercial. She said Morton Construction Company is more experienced, including in retail and fast food type buildings. The third candidate, Evergreen, has experience in institutional type building.

Vice Mayor Buigas said she is also concerned a 10% contingency would not be sufficient. She said metal, windows, and delays can pose issues, and noted her concern that the lowest bidder may not have identified possible issues. Mr. Aldrich said staff and City engineers vetted the bids. He noted the engineers asked several questions to clarify and ensure the respondent knew and understood the bid specs. Mr. Drury said the city received a letter from the engineer recommending the selected bidder. He said the engineer designed, reviewed, wrote bid specs, and reviewed the bid, and has advised the City that the contractor met all of the criteria they were looking for. Mr. Drury said he agrees a 10% contingency is tight and staff would be working closely with the contractor to stay within budget. He said this is a tough project as the building is old with air conditioning, electrical, and fire alarm issues. Each time the City negotiates with the contractor on patching it into the fire alarm or air conditioning, the contractor has worked well with the City and remained within budget of the existing project.

MOTION

Walter Price moved to approve Morton Construction for the Library Expansion Project, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 7. Update on Lake County Partnership Opportunities for the Central Lake Regional Park

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

The Lake County Parks Master Plan that was developed in 2005 and revised in 2018 calls for the county to build five (5) regional parks throughout the county to meet the needs of the residents.

- *A North Lake Regional Park*
- *A South Lake Regional Park*
- *An East Lake Regional Park*
- *A West Lake Regional Park*
- *A **Central Lake Regional Park** (To serve East Leesburg, Tavares, Howey, Eustis and Mount Dora)*

All the Lake County regional parks have received significant movement including funding and construction except for the Central Lake Regional Park. Several years ago, the City of Tavares advocated for the Woodlea Sports Complex to be the location of the county's Central Lake Regional Park. Agreements were drafted to create a partnership between the County and City in order to build more

baseball/softball fields, picnic pavilions, multipurpose fields, and walking trails. Those agreements were supported by the Lake County Parks and Trails Advisory Board, but due to changes in county leadership, the agreements were never executed by the County and the concept fell dormant. Tavares created a Woodlea Sport Park Horizon Team made up of Mayor Amanda Boggus, John Drury and Scott Aldrich to continue to move forward with the Woodlea Sports Park expansion program.

In a separate initiative, the City recently developed a City/YMCA partnership exploration Horizon team made up of Council member Lori Pfister, John Drury and Scott Aldrich to engage in discussions and conversations with the YMCA on exploring a joint partnership to expand City Community Center offerings including Senior Services and Youth programs. The YMCA sits on about 25 acres, much of which is not developed, including land along Lake Elsie and wooded areas for active and passive trails. Additionally, the YMCA location is slated as a site for a trailhead for the Tavares - Mount Dora - Sorrento Wekiva trail connection. These discussions and conversations with the YMCA have led to identifying other organizations that may want to partner including Lake County.

A concept is being explored where Lake County's goal of establishing a Central Lake Regional Park could be fulfilled at the Woodlea Sports Complex and YMCA under a partnership agreement along the following lines:

- Establish a West Central Lake Regional Park Campus (Woodlea Sports Complex)
- Establish a East Central Lake Regional Park Campus (YMCA)

The concept of fulfilling Lake County's need to establish a Central Lake Regional Park utilizing partnership and existing facilities to be most cost effective was discussed at the Lake County Parks and Trails Advisory Board at their February 8th meeting. That board voted unanimously to support further exploration of this concept of a multi-site (East/West Campus) Central Lake Regional Park in Tavares.

No specifics on how the partnership agreements would be structured has been developed. If the City wants to continue to explore these partnerships, a City Horizon Team would need to continue to meet with the potential partnerships, discuss structure and bring back to Council its findings for further consideration. Therefore, it is recommended that the two (2) existing Horizon Teams be merged into one called the "Central Lake Regional Park Partnership Horizon Team" made up of one City Council Member, The City Administrator and Community Services Director. This team would explore the partnerships and report back to Council on a regular basis to receive direction from the City Council on terms and conditions of any partnerships that may form. No formal partnerships would be developed without a vote of the City Council. The Horizon team, like all the other Tavares

Horizon teams, are exploratory in nature and responsible to report back to the full Council as mile stones are reached.

Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to Discuss the update and have one Council member join the new merged Central Lake Regional Park Partnership Horizon Team.

Mayor Boggus noted either she or Council Member Pfister would need to step down from one of their Horizon Teams in order to merge the two Teams. Mr. Drury confirmed. Discussion was held and Council Member Pfister said she would like to continue with the project and serve on the Central Lake Regional Horizon Team.

Mr. Drury advised Council Member Pfister that there was a Horizon Team meeting scheduled the following day.

Tab 8. Approve the Fire Union Collective Bargaining Management Negotiations Team

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Previously Council Member Roy Stevenson served on the Collective Bargaining Management Negotiation Team which negotiates the Fire Department Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Collective Bargaining Management Negotiation Team is preparing to begin the 2021 negotiations with the Fire Union [IAFF #3245], and Council representation is needed on the Management Team.

Staff recommends the Council discuss and approve a Board representative for the Collective Bargaining Management Negotiations Team.

Mayor Boggus asked the Council for their interest in being a part of the Management Bargaining Team. Council Member Singer asked if Council Member Price had an interest in serving on the Team. Council Member Price said he would be happy to serve on the Collective Bargaining Management Team.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

XV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

XVI. REPORTS

Tab 9. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said the City recently hosted Lake County's budget and vision workshop at the Pavilion on the Lake with new County Manager Alan Rosen and all five County Commissioners. He noted members of the audience also attended including Pastor

Mike Watkins and Vance Jochim. Most of the fourteen Lake County City Managers also attended. Mr. Drury said the workshop reminded him of the visioning Tavares conducted fifteen years prior where the City Council and community worked for a year through workshops to create a vision for Tavares. From the visioning workshop a plan was developed that the City has been implementing since. At the start of the visioning the downtown was vacant and boarded up with the exception of government operations. A government campus was created, and Tavares brought in hotels, restaurants, and private investment. He said it was interesting to watch Lake County begin a process and journey of visioning its future and creating its identity.

Mr. Aldrich noted each Council member received an invitation to the Babe Ruth opening ceremonies at Woodlea Sports Complex, scheduled March 6, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Tab 10. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister noted former Council Member Kirby Smith was elected to the Lake County Commission. She said it has been a pleasure to work with Commissioner Smith and Lake County. She said Commissioner Smith has a real interest in Tavares and she enjoys having a great working relationship. Mr. Drury noted Commissioner Smith was elected as Vice Chairman of the Board.

Council Member Price thanked Chief Lubins and Lori Houghton for tours of the Police and Finance Departments.

Vice Mayor Buigas said it is National Day of Kindness. She provided the following quote: "Kindness is the language which the Deaf can hear and the Blind can see."
~Mark Twain

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk