



**AGENDA  
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
March 18, 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](mailto:snovack@tavares.org))

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Tab 1           Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**V. SWEARING IN BY CITY ATTORNEY AND DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

**VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO RECORD**

**VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

Tab 2           Approval of the March 4, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)

**VIII. RESOLUTIONS**

**IX. ORDINANCES - PUBLIC HEARING**

**First Reading**

**Second Reading**

Tab 3           Ordinance 2026-01 — Amending Land Development Regulations to allow for Reasonable Accommodation of Certified Recovery Residences per F.S. Sec. 397.487 (Community Development)

**X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Tab 4            **Award Invitation to Bid Number (ITB) 2025-006 for N. St. Clair  
Abrams Treatment Pond (Eagle Park) to Second Lowest  
Responsive Bidder (Finance)**

Tab 5            **Charter Referendum Ballot Language on City Council Terms (City  
Administrator)**

**XI.    NEW BUSINESS**

**XII.   OLD BUSINESS**

**XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD**

**XIV.  REPORTS**

Tab 6            **City Administrator Report**

Tab 7            **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  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 1**

**SUBJECT TITLE: Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community**

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**OBJECTIVE:**

Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community, will provide the invocation and lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SUMMARY:**

Melanie Chen, Central Florida Freethought Community, 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  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 2**

**SUBJECT TITLE: Approval of the March 4, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes (City Clerk)**

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**OBJECTIVE:**

For the Council to consider approval of the March 4, 2026, City Council meeting minutes.

**SUMMARY:**

Attached are the March 4, 2026, City Council meeting minutes as submitted by the City Clerk.

**OPTIONS:**

Move to approve the meeting minutes under the Consent Agenda.  
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. 03-04-2026CC Minutes

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



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 4, 2026 – 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  
Sarah Coursey, Police Chief  
James Dillon, Public Works Director  
Mark O'Keefe, Support Services Director  
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. Pastor Kevin Honeycutt, First Baptist Church of Tavares**

Pastor Kevin Honeycutt, First Baptist Church of Tavares, 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**

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

**IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

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

Attorney Holt stated there were no quasi-judicial matters before the Council for consideration.

**VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD**

Ms. Novack read the following ordinances and resolutions by title only:

**RESOLUTION 2026-03**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, TO VACATE A PORTION OF A 50.00-FOOT WIDE RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATED AT 510 RIDGE PLACE TAVARES, FL 32778, THE PART TERRACE STREET LYING NORTH OF LOT 36, SOUTH OF LOT 37 AND EAST OF RIDGE PLACE IN KOCH TERRACE, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 8, PAGE 26 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, SUBJECT TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TAVARES COUNCIL; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**RESOLUTION 2026-04**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GRANT FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO PURCHASE THREE CLAW TRUCKS.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF TAVARES LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 8 ZONING REGULATIONS, SECTION 8-12 SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH A UNIFORM, LIMITED, AND EXCLUSIVE PROCEDURE FOR THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCES AND CERTIFIED RECOVERY RESIDENCE REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION; PROVIDING FOR CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAW; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

## **VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Pfister asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Council Member Gamble asked to pull Tab 3, Funding for the Marine Unit, for discussion.

### **MOTION**

**Bob Grenier moved to approve Consent Agenda Tab 2 [Approval of the February 18, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes] with Tab 3 pulled for discussion, seconded by Doug Keown. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.**

#### **Tab 2. Approval of the March 5, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes**

*Approved on the Consent Agenda.*

#### **Tab 3. Funding for the Marine Unit**

Council Member Gamble said the item reflected the City's leadership and the initiative of City employees in pursuing opportunities that did not require any additional funds from Tavares citizens. He stated that efforts of this nature were sometimes overlooked and commended and thanked Chief Coursey and the Police Department for their efforts.

### **MOTION**

**Sandy Gamble moved to approve Funding for the Marine Unit, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.**

## **VIII. RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Tab 4. Resolution 2026-03 – Request to Vacate a Section fo a 50-foot Wide Platted Right-of-Way Located Adjacent to 510 Ridge Place**

Mr. Fabre provided the following presentation:

*This is a request to vacate a platted undeveloped right-of-way lying adjacent to the property located at 510 Ridge Place, Tavares, Florida 32778. The current adjacent property owner is petitioning to vacate an existing right-of-way since it is undeveloped and not practical as a future right-of-way. City staff reviewed the vacate request and determined no conflicts in the vacation regarding drainage, utilities, health, safety, or welfare of the Public. As a result, this official vacation will remove the city's public interest in this land.*

*On February 19, 2026, the Planning & Zoning Board met and voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend approval of Resolution 2026-03 as presented.*

*Staff recommends Option 1, for the City Council moves to approve Resolution 2026-03 vacation of a right-of-way located adjacent to 510 Ridge Place more particularly described as, part of Terrace Street lying North of Lot 36, South of Lot 37 and East of Ridge Place in Koch Terrace, as recorded in Plat Book 8, Page 26, Public Records of Lake County.*

Mayor Pfister asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Gamble asked who would be deeded the property. Mr. Fabre stated that the Lake County Property Appraiser typically divided the parcel in half, with each portion conveyed to the abutting property owners. He confirmed that the property would be deeded to the adjacent property owners on the parcel's side rather than those behind it.

Council Member Price asked if the City was the current owner of the underlying property. Mr. Fabre confirmed. Council Member Price noted that returning the property to private ownership would place it back on the tax rolls.

## **MOTION**

**Sandy Gamble moved to approve Resolution 2026-04, seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.**

### **Tab 5. Resolution 2026-04 – Authorization to Accept Grant to Purchase Solid Waste Vehicles**

Ms. Houghton provided the following presentation:

*The Department of Environmental Protection has awarded the city \$930,000 to purchase three 2026 Freightliner M2 crew & Brush Hawg (claw) trucks. The terms of the grant agreement stipulate that, in exchange for the funding for the three new trucks, the City must scrap at least one eligible diesel truck consistent with the scrappage requirements of the Department's diesel Emissions Mitigation*

*Program. The Public Works Director and the Fleet Management Department have identified three eligible trucks to scrap.*

*Details of the grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection include the following:*

- *Agreement Number: VW415.*
- *DEP Grant Manager: Marnie Brynes*
- *Pass-through Entity: N/A.*
- *Awarding Entity: Florida Department of Environmental Protection.*
- *Recipient: City of Tavares.*
- *Grant Award: \$939,000.*
- *No grant match required.*
- *Award Period: Date of Execution – March 31, 2027.*

*Staff recommends Option 1, for the Council to approve resolution 2026-04 authorizing the City Administrator to accept and execute all FDEP grant agreements for the purchase of the three claw trucks.*

Ms. Houghton commended and thanked Fleet Operations Supervisor Kyle Allman for working with the Finance Department to secure the grant. She stated that the City had been given approximately three days' notice to complete the application, which occurred during the holiday period, making the accomplishment especially notable. Ms. Houghton recognized Mr. Allman, who was present in the audience, along with his direct supervisor, Jerry Hall. She remarked that the Fleet Department had done an excellent job providing the necessary information within a very short timeframe. Ms. Houghton stated that she looked forward to working with the Fleet Department again should another grant opportunity arise.

Council Member Gamble asked for clarification regarding the disposal of vehicles referenced in the grant requirements. Ms. Houghton stated that the City would be required to dispose of three older vehicles as part of the grant requirements, and noted that the program operated on a one-for-one replacement basis.

## **MOTION**

**Doug Keown moved to approve Resolution 2026-04, seconded by Bob Grenier.**

Vice Mayor Grenier stated that the grant demonstrated that employees throughout the organization had the ability to assist in identifying and pursuing grant opportunities, not only department directors. He remarked that department directors should be proud of their staff and stated that the City continued to perform exceptionally well in securing grant funding. He also noted that additional fleet replacements would likely need to be considered in the coming year.

Council Member Gamble commended the Fleet staff for maintaining the City's vehicles and for their service to the citizens of Tavares.

Council Member Price and Council Member Keown also expressed appreciation to staff and commended the team for their efforts in securing the grant on short notice.

**The motion carried unanimously 5-0.**

## **IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING**

### **First Reading**

#### **Tab 6. Ordinance 2026-01 – Amending Chapter 8 Zoning Regulations, Section 8-12 Supplemental Regulations of the Land Development Regulations to Allow for Reasonable Accommodation of Certified Recovery Residences per Florida SB 954 (2025) and F.S. Sec. 397.487**

*No discussion at First Reading.*

### **Second Reading**

## **X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Tab 7. Charter Referendum Discussion**

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

*At the previous meeting, Council member Doug Keown requested and Council approved to place a discussion item regarding a City Charter Amendment by Referendum to put in place term limits for Council members.*

*An opportunity has been provided for Council to discuss this item. By way of information attached is Council member Keown's list of items regarding this and below is information on the process:*

- 1) Council holds discussions on the item at this March 4th City Council meeting and votes to either move forward with a referendum or not. (The motion should include the parameters for the ballot language for the City Attorney to work with).*
- 2) The City Attorney would then provide Council with official ballot language for Council to vote on at their March 18th Council meeting.*
- 3) First Reading of the Ordinance to amend the Charter would then be at the April 1st meeting — No Discussion*
- 4) Second reading of the Ordinance to amend the Charter would then be presented at the April 15th meeting - Full Discussion and vote*
- 5) The City Clerk would then transmit the referendum language by the deadline date of August 16, 2026, to the Supervisor of Elections.*
- 6) The vote would occur on Tuesday, November 3, 2026*

- 7) Cost to place on the ballot is under \$10,000. Possibility no cost depending upon what else is on the ballot and how many pages it generates.*
- 8) Cost to advertise in both languages and both papers is under \$4,000*

Council Member Gamble said he had spoken with several individuals in the community regarding a referendum. He stated that while he remained undecided regarding term limits, he supported moving from two-year to four-year Council terms in order to reduce the cost of off-year municipal elections and allow those funds to be used elsewhere in the City's budget. He remarked that if term limits were ever considered alongside four-year terms, a structure of three consecutive terms, or twelve years, could be appropriate.

Council Member Keown presented his proposal outlining potential changes, including extending Council terms from two to four years, allowing Council Members to serve two consecutive terms before sitting out a term, and adjusting the mayoral term from one to two years. He stated that the proposal would begin with the next election cycle and would not apply retroactively. Council Member Keown noted that aligning elections with even-numbered years could reduce election costs.

Council Member Price stated that there were advantages and disadvantages to term limits, although his primary concern involved the length of time Council Members were able to serve in order to effectively complete projects and maintain continuity. He noted that most municipalities in Lake County utilized four-year Council terms and expressed support for transitioning to four-year terms in order to align with neighboring cities and eliminate costly off-year elections. Council Member Price stated that he did not have a strong preference regarding the length of the mayoral term and emphasized the importance of balancing experience with periodic leadership change.

Vice Mayor Grenier said the issue had been presented to voters previously and had not been approved. He reflected on his tenure on the Council and noted that two-year terms often made it difficult to complete long-term initiatives before the next election cycle began. Vice Mayor Grenier discussed several past initiatives, including horizon teams related to the State Road 19, 561, and 448 corridors, and stated that continuity on the Council helped maintain the City's long-term vision. He expressed support for four-year terms and stated that, if changes were proposed, the public should be clearly educated on the reasons for the change.

Mayor Pfister stated that she did not support term limits, explaining that voters already possessed the ability to remove elected officials through the election process. She said that while two-year terms sometimes created challenges due to frequent election cycles, they also provided an opportunity for voters to address concerns quickly if a Council Member was not serving effectively. Mayor Pfister discussed the challenges associated with campaign cycles occurring shortly after elections and noted that many City projects required several years to complete. Mayor Pfister said many City projects extended well beyond eight years and noted that experience and familiarity with those efforts helped move them forward efficiently. She also commented on the role of the mayor within the

City's council-manager form of government, stating that the mayor primarily presides over meetings and signs official documents while the City Administrator oversees day-to-day operations.

Gary Santoro, a resident of Royal Harbor, addressed the Council and stated that education would be essential if the City pursued any charter changes. He said that previous proposals to extend Council terms may have failed because residents believed the changes were intended to benefit elected officials rather than the community. Mr. Santoro suggested that emphasizing the financial savings associated with eliminating off-year elections could help residents better understand the proposal. He added that while he did not support term limits for the Council, he supported extending Council terms to four years.

Vice Mayor Grenier stated that he shared Mayor Pfister's concerns regarding continuity and said he worried about the effect that future leadership changes could have on important City initiatives. He remarked that the horizon teams had been valuable in building enthusiasm and focus among Council Members and staff and said he did not want momentum lost on projects already underway, including the gateway and boulevard efforts. Vice Mayor Grenier stated that he agreed with focusing solely on extending Council terms to four years and suggested that any future referendum should concentrate on that issue and include stronger public education.

### **MOTION**

**Bob Grenier moved to move forward with a referendum extending Council terms from two-year terms to four-year terms. The motion was seconded by Sandy Gamble.**

Council Member Gamble stated that while Council meetings occurred on the first and third Wednesdays, Council Members also spent considerable time outside of meetings working on City initiatives and reviewing projects behind the scenes. He noted that he had recently spent several hours with staff reviewing plans related to the West Main Street gateway sign. Council Member Gamble said that as Council members served longer, they developed knowledge and experience that could be difficult for new members to acquire quickly, particularly if there were significant turnover on the Council. He added that while the City Attorney and City Administrator provided guidance, Council members also spent time preparing and researching issues outside of meetings. Council Member Gamble expressed appreciation to Mayor Pfister for her many years of service.

Council Member Keown stated that he appreciated the opportunity to present the proposal and thanked the Council for considering and discussing his ideas. He remarked that when he ran for office he had indicated he would raise the topic, and he appreciated the thoughtful discussion that had taken place.

Council Member Price stated that most cities in Lake County utilized four-year terms. He reiterated his support for focusing solely on extending Council terms to four years in order to eliminate off-year elections and bring the City more in line with neighboring municipalities.

Mr. Drury stated that staff would bring back the proposed language at a future meeting to amend the City Charter to change Council terms from two years to four years. He said staff would conduct an educational campaign over the next seven months to inform the public about the proposed change.

**The motion carried unanimously 5-0.**

**XI. NEW BUSINESS**

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

**XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD**

Gary Santoro, Royal Harbor, commended the Council and stated that he would be willing to assist in sharing information with the community regarding the proposed Charter Amendment. He suggested that individuals outside the Council could help convey the information so the message did not come solely from elected officials.

Mr. Drury stated that under Florida law the City must remain neutral regarding referendums and provide only factual public information about what voters would be considering. He explained that the City could provide information about the proposal, including the cost of off-year elections and how other municipalities structure their Council terms, although the City could not advocate for or against the measure. Mr. Drury added that staff would work with community groups, including homeowner associations, to ensure residents received accurate information regarding the referendum.

Mayor Pfister suggested that informational materials be prepared so that Council Members could provide consistent, factual information to residents when questions arose. Mr. Drury stated that the information would be shared through multiple channels, including the City's website, social media, and outreach to homeowner associations, and reiterated that the information would remain factual and neutral in accordance with the law.

**XIV. REPORTS**

**Tab 8. City Administrator Report**

Mr. Drury reported that the City recently installed its first State historical marker at a church located on Alfred Street. He stated that the marker recognized the building's historic significance and noted that the effort reflected the vision established by

residents approximately seventeen (17) years earlier to build Tavares on a historic foundation. Mr. Drury commended Council Member Grenier for his work in coordinating with the State of Florida and with Mr. Gene Smith, a local resident who had purchased and restored the church, returning it to its historic condition, including restoring the stained-glass windows.

Chief Coursey reported that the Police Department had recently begun its first Citizens Police Academy session for 2026 and noted that Council Member Keown was participating in the program.

Mr. Tweedie announced that the Planes, Tunes, and BBQ event would be held on Saturday, March 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Seaplane Base. He stated that the event would include a seaplane contest, live music, vendors, a drone show, and other activities for the community. Mr. Tweedie noted that the drone show was expected to begin at approximately 8:05 p.m.

### **Tab 9. City Council Member Reports**

Council Member Gamble reported that he and Mr. Dillon had recently traveled to Port Orange to observe the progress of the West Main Street gateway sign currently under fabrication. He stated that the visit allowed them to review the workmanship and view other projects completed by the sign company, noting that the company was well established and operated by a third-generation owner. Council Member Gamble remarked that the sign was progressing well and would be delivered once completed, adding that the structure appeared stable and that the company took pride in its work. He stated that the gateway would be an important addition for the City and could serve as a model for future gateway features along St. Clair Abrams Avenue and other areas of the community.

Council Member Gamble also remarked on the number of grants secured by City departments in recent years and commended staff for their efforts in pursuing outside funding opportunities. He referenced a recent fire truck acquisition that saved the City a significant amount of money through grant funding and stated that staff consistently worked to identify opportunities to reduce costs for the citizens of Tavares.

Council Member Keown congratulated Council Member Grenier on the installation of the City's first State historical marker and stated that he appreciated the City's continued emphasis on preserving local history. He also commended the Police Department for the recent Citizens Police Academy session and thanked Mr. O'Keefe for providing a presentation that included statistics and information about the number of visitors who come through Tavares each day. Council Member Keown stated that he had recently held office hours and had the opportunity to meet with several residents to discuss their questions and concerns. He added that he remained impressed by the professionalism and expertise of City staff across all departments.

Vice Mayor Grenier thanked Ms. Novack for providing a list of all women who had served on the Tavares City Council in recognition of National Women's History Month, noting that the information was being used by the Tavares History Museum for an upcoming presentation. He announced that he would be presenting a program at the Tavares History Museum on March 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., highlighting the City's founders and notable women in Tavares history as part of Women's History Month and the America 250 initiative. Vice Mayor Grenier also noted that the recently installed State historical marker was the first for the City and hoped that additional markers would be pursued in the future.

Vice Mayor Grenier noted the recent passing of a City Utilities laboratory technician, Mario Washington, and expressed sympathy to his family and colleagues.

#### **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business, and Mayor Pfister adjourned the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully,

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Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM  
City Clerk

**AGENDA SUMMARY  
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 3**

**SUBJECT TITLE: Ordinance 2026-01 — Amending Land Development Regulations to allow for Reasonable Accommodation of Certified Recovery Residences per F.S. Sec. 397.487 (Community Development)**

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**OBJECTIVE:**

To amend Chapter 8 Zoning Regulations of the Land Development Regulations to allow for the requests for Reasonable Accommodation of Certified Recovery Residences consistent with both Florida SB 954 (2025) and Section 397.487 of the Florida Statutes.

**SUMMARY:**

The Florida Legislature requires local governments to adopt objectives and procedures for processing requests related to Certified Recovery Residences per SB 954 (See Attached). Florida law establishes a statewide framework for the certification and oversight of recovery residences that provide housing to individuals recovering from substance-use disorders (Section 397.487, Florida Statutes). The proposed ordinance amends Chapter 8 of the Land Development Regulations to implement a narrowly tailored review process applicable only to Certified Recovery Residences according to section 397.487, Florida Statutes.

Furthermore, the proposed ordinance establishes a written application process, defined review timelines, and objective standards for approval or denial, while ensuring consistency with the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Adoption of the proposed ordinance will bring the City into compliance with state law while preserving the City's authority to enforce generally applicable land development, health, and safety regulations.

**OPTIONS:**

1. That the City Council move to approve Ordinance 2026-01.
2. That the City Council moves to deny Ordinance 2026-01.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

On February 19, 2026, the Planning & Zoning Advisory Board met and voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend approval of Ordinance 2026-01 as presented (see attached draft minutes).

City Staff recommends that the City Council moves to approve Ordinance 2026-01 in order to be in compliance with state law.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:**

Ordinance has been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved for legal sufficiency.

**ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:**

1. Ordinance 2026 -01
2. SB 954 Certified Recovery Residences
3. 02-19-2026 PZ Minutes Draft
4. Newspaper Ad

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY  
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 4**

**SUBJECT TITLE: Award Invitation to Bid Number (ITB) 2025-006 for N. St. Clair Abrams Treatment Pond (Eagle Park) to Second Lowest Responsive Bidder (Finance)**

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**OBJECTIVE:**

To award a bid for the stormwater Treatment Pond Project known as Eagle Park, authorize staff to negotiate a contract, and authorize a budget amendment for project costs exceeding grant funding.

**SUMMARY:**

At the July 19th, 2023, City Council meeting, the City Council approved the acceptance of a Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) Stormwater grant of \$376,955 to design and build a new wet detention stormwater treatment pond on North St. Clair Abrams. At the December 6th, 2023, City Council meeting, the Council approved the acceptance of a State of Florida Direct Appropriation/Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) LPA grant for the same project for \$200,000. A second Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant for the same project, amounting to \$176,955, was accepted at the March 20, 2024, City Council meeting. This brought the total grant funding for the project to \$753,910.

On March 16, 2025, the City of Tavares advertised an Invitation to Bid (ITB) 2025-0006 for the St. Clair Abrams Treatment Pond Project. Eight (8) companies responded to ITB 2025-0006, with Valencia Construction Group being the lowest responsive bidder at \$784,790.66. Don Griffey of Griffey Engineering, the engineer for the project, had reviewed all bid respondent proposals for ITB 2025-0006, and recommended awarding a contract to Valencia Construction Group for the project. At the April 16, 2025, City Council meeting, the City Council approved awarding the contract for the project to Valencia Construction Group, and authorized staff to amend the budget to use \$30,880.66 from Stormwater reserves to cover the difference between the total grand funding (\$753,910) and Valencia Construction Group's bid (\$784,790.66).

At the 8/20/2025 City Council meeting, the City Council authorized staff to amend the grant agreements to extend the length of the agreements due to an active eagle nest nearby, which caused permitting and construction delays. Due to the delays, Valencia Construction Group has withdrawn from the project. Staff (and Don Griffey) recommend that the City Council award the second-lowest bidder, Close Construction Services, with the contract for this project.

Staff has contacted Close Construction Services, and they have agreed to honor their original bid of \$984,116.56. To award the bid to Close Construction Services, staff recommends authorizing the use of Water/Wastewater Fund reserves to cover the difference between the original bid and the new award, which is \$230,206.56.

**OPTIONS:**

**Option 1:** Move to award Invitation to Bid (ITB) 2025-0006 to Close Construction Services and authorize a budget amendment from Water/Wastewater fund reserves in the amount of \$230,206.56.

**Option 2:** Do not award.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Option 1:** Move to award Invitation to Bid (ITB) 2025-0006 to Close Construction Services and execute the construction contract and authorize a budget amendment from Water/Wastewater fund reserves in the amount of \$230,206.56 and authorize .

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

If approved, \$230,206.56 will be budgeted in the Water/Wastewater fund using Water/Wastewater reserves.

Funding details:

- Original Bid: \$784,790.66.
- Original Funding: \$784,790.66.

1. Lake County Water Authority Grant: \$376,955.
2. Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grants: \$376,955.
3. Stormwater Reserves: \$30,880.66.

- Second Lowest Bid: \$984,116.56.
- Additional amount needed from Water/Wastewater reserves: \$230,206.56.

**LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:**

Legally Sufficient

**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  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 5**

**SUBJECT TITLE: Charter Referendum Ballot Language on City Council Terms (City Administrator)**

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**OBJECTIVE:**

To Discuss a City Charter Referendum instituting four (4) year terms on City Council members

**SUMMARY:**

At the previous meeting, Council voted to have the City Attorney draft language for a City Charter Amendment by Referendum to put in place four (4) year terms for Council members.

The City Attorney has drafted the language and associated Ordinance (see attached).

**OPTIONS:**

- 1) Approve referendum language for the referendum this November.
- 2) Alter referendum language.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve referendum language .

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Actual cost will be provided at a later date once the Supervisor of Elections determines this. It is expected to be less than \$14,000.

**LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:**

Yes.

**ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST:**

1. Ordinance 2026-03 Ballot Referendum - Four Year Terms

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

**ORDINANCE 2026-03**

AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA; AMENDING SECTION 3.03 OF THE CHARTER PERTAINING TO TERMS OF OFFICE OF CITY COUNCILMEMBERS; AMENDING SECTION 10.04 OF THE CHARTER PERTAINING TO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS; PROVIDING FOR FOUR (4) YEAR TERMS OF OFFICE FOR CITY COUNCILMEMBERS; PROVIDING THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS SHALL BE HELD EVERY TWO (2) YEARS IN EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS CONSISTENT WITH STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION CYCLES; PROVIDING TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS ESTABLISHING STAGGERED TERMS; PROVIDING FOR A REFERENDUM; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Tavares operates pursuant to its municipal charter adopted under the laws of the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, the Charter currently provides that members of the City Council are elected at large by the electors of the City and serve terms of two (2) years; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that extending the term of office for councilmembers to four (4) years will promote continuity in governance, enhance stability in municipal policymaking, and permit the effective implementation of long-term municipal initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that aligning municipal elections with statewide general election cycles occurring every two (2) years in even-numbered years will improve voter participation and administrative efficiency; and

WHEREAS, Section 166.031, Florida Statutes, authorizes the governing body of a municipality to propose amendments to its charter for approval by the electors of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to submit to the electors of the City of Tavares a proposed amendment to the Charter to extend councilmember terms to four (4) years and establish staggered terms so that municipal elections will continue to occur every two (2) years.

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

## **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 3.03 OF THE CITY CHARTER.**

Section 3.03 of the Charter of the City of Tavares, Florida, is hereby amended to read as follows:

### Section 3.03. Election and terms.

Terms for newly elected councilmembers shall commence at the first regular meeting following the general municipal election. The members of the city council shall hold their office for the term of ~~two (2)~~ four (4) years or until their successors are elected and qualified, except as otherwise provided in the transitional provisions of this Charter amendment.

## **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 10.04 OF THE CITY CHARTER.**

Section 10.04(a) of the Charter of the City of Tavares, Florida, is hereby amended to read as follows:

### Section 10.04. Elections.

(a) *General election.* A general election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year to choose successors to each councilmember whose term will expire before the next general election and, except as otherwise provided in the city Charter, to fill each vacancy in elective office for the unexpired portion of the term.

(b) *Council positions.* For each council seat that is up for election, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes cast for the office shall be declared elected.

## **SECTION 3. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

In order to establish staggered four-year terms while maintaining municipal elections every two (2) years:

1. Council Seats One (1), Three (3), and Five (5) elected at the November 2026 municipal election shall serve four (4) year terms expiring in November 2030.
2. Council Seats Two (2) and Four (4) elected at the November 2025 municipal election shall serve three (3) year transitional terms expiring in November 2028.
3. Beginning with the elections held in November 2028, and thereafter, councilmembers elected to all seats shall serve four (4) year terms.
4. Following completion of the transitional terms, municipal elections shall continue to occur every two (2) years in even-numbered years, alternating between presidential and gubernatorial election cycles.

**SECTION 4. REFERENDUM**

Pursuant to Section 166.031, Florida Statutes, the Charter amendments proposed by this ordinance shall be submitted to the electors of the City of Tavares for approval at the next available municipal election.

The ballot title and question shall read substantially as follows:

**CHARTER AMENDMENT REFERENDUM**

**FOUR-YEAR TERMS FOR TAVARES CITY COUNCIL**

Shall the City of Tavares Charter be amended to extend City Councilmember terms from two (2) years to four (4) years and align municipal elections with statewide election cycles occurring every two (2) years, with transitional terms to establish staggered four-year council terms?

- YES FOR APPROVAL
- NO FOR DISAPPROVAL

**SECTION 5. SEVERABILITY**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this ordinance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

**SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE OF ORDINANCE**

If approved by a majority of the electors voting on the measure, the Charter amendments set forth herein shall become effective immediately upon certification of the election results.

PASSED AND ORDAINED this \_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, by the City Council of the City of Tavares, Florida.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lori Pfister, Mayor  
Tavares City Council

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susie Novack, City Clerk

Passed First Reading \_\_\_\_\_, 2026

Passed Second Reading \_\_\_\_\_, 2026

Approved as to form and legality

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Lindsay Holt, City Attorney

**AGENDA SUMMARY  
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 6**

**SUBJECT TITLE: City Administrator Report**

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**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	April 1, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers  April 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Planning and Zoning Board Meeting	March 19, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers
Library Board Meeting	April 8, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Tavares Library Expansion Room
Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing	March 24, 4:00 p.m., Tavares City Council Chambers

**OUTSIDE AGENCY MEETINGS:**

Heartland League of Cities Meeting	April 10, 2026, 12:00 noon, Location to be Determined
Lake Sumter MPO Governing Board Meeting	April 22, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Suite 175, 1300 Citizens Boulevard, Leesburg
Tavares Chamber of Commerce Business Meeting	March 25, 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. Tavares\_EventCalendar\_2026\_Rvsd 2.23.2026

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

**AGENDA SUMMARY  
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
3/18/2026**

**AGENDA TAB NO.: 7**

**SUBJECT TITLE: City Council Member Reports**

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**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.*