



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 7, 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 Fred Boone, First Baptist Church of Mount Dora

Pastor Fred Boone, First Baptist Church of Mount Dora, 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 the staff had no changes.

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 for consideration.

VI. READING OF ALL ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS INTO THE RECORD

Ms. Novack read the following resolution by title only:

RESOLUTION 2021-14

A RESOLUTION OF CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM; AUTHORIZING SRF LOAN AGREEMENT DW350980 FOR LAKE HERMOSA/AVALON PERMANENT BOOSTER STATION DESIGN ACTIVITIES; SETS THE LOAN AMOUNT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Boggus asked if anyone would like to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

MOTION

Lou Buigas moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented [Tab 2. Approval of the June 16, 2021 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes; Tab 3. Florida League of Cities Certificates of Completion – Institute for Elected Municipal Officials; Tab

4. Release of Easement - Palmer Homes, Inc.], seconded by Walter Price. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the June 16, 2021 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. Florida League of Cities Certificates of Completion – Institute for Elected Municipal Officials

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 4. Release of Easement – Palmer Homes, Inc.

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 5. Resolution 2021-14 – Request Authorization to Execute State Revolving Loan Fund Agreement DW350980 for the Lake Hermosa Booster Pump Station Design Activities

Ms. Houghton made the following presentation:

The Lake Hermosa/Avalon Booster Pump Project service area is located in the northern portion of the City of Tavares and includes current and future service connections for Advent Health (Waterman) Hospital, the existing Etowah development, the Atwater Multi-family developments, the Pinecrest Charter School, and the Avalon Park Village. The Avalon Park Village is a planned 155 acre development that will include approximately 1,100 residential units, and a mixed use community on the shores of Lake Hermosa.

Water pressure has been and continues to be a concern in this employment and residential area. As a stop gap measure the City Council agreed to put in place a temporary booster pump to "get by" as the Water Department completed a more longer term plan and funding program for a permanent solution.

The Long term plan was developed, completed and approved by the City Council on October 21, 2020 by Resolution 2020-23. The plan calls for a permanent booster pump station to serve the entire area, ground storage tanks, and a transmission line to boost pressures to the required and desired service levels within the Avalon/Lake Hermosa Region under all flow conditions.

On March 3, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution 2021-03 authorizing application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) State Revolving Loan Program (SRF) for design activities for a permanent booster

pump solution.

On June 4, 2021, the Florida Department of Environment Services (FDEP) contacted the Finance and Water Departments that the City's State Revolving Loan (SRF) application had been approved. The loan document provided by FDEP to the City of Tavares is attached. Salient Points of the Loan agreement include the following:

- *Design activities – disbursable amount is \$240,000*
- *Capitalized interest (non-disbursable) amount is \$500*
- *Estimated loan service fee is \$4,800*
- *Semi-annual loan payments are estimated at \$12,972*
- *The first semi-annual loan payment is due November 15, 2021*
- *Loan term is Ten (10) years*
- *Annual loan interest rate is 1.08%*

Staff recommends approval for this loan so that design activities for the Lake Hermosa/Avalon Booster Pump Project may begin to address water pressure for the Project Area.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said developers should provide their infrastructure rather than the city incurring the debt. He said the fiscal impact of the project is not included in the agenda report.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Mr. Drury noted all subdivision developers pay for and install their infrastructure, including water and sewer. All Cities invest in public infrastructure by creating trunk lines to developed areas for water, sewer, and roads. The developer then taps into the trunk lines once they have their development infrastructure installed. Mr. Drury advised that the project's fiscal impact is located on the first page of the agenda summary.

Council Member Singer commended current and previous Councils for investing in the City's future. He noted the project had been discussed and approved and said a loan rate of 1.08% could not be beaten.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve, seconded by Lou Buigas.

Vice Mayor Buigas noted Atwater is the largest tax-paying development in the City. She said making utilities available generates profit in tax value.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 6. Update on New Youth Basketball Camp at Tavares High School

Mr. Aldrich noted the City has an interlocal agreement with the Lake County School Board for joint use of facilities. He said this project is an excellent example of the partnership formed with the local high school.

Pete Sherrard, Recreation Manager, provided a video and made the following presentation:

The City of Tavares Recreation Department recently hosted the inaugural youth basketball camp at the Tavares High School from June 14 - 18. The camp had a total of 23 kids in grades 3rd-8th and was led by the head coaches of the Tavares High School Men's and Women's Basketball Teams. Along with their assistant coaches and some select players, the head coaches worked with the campers on skill development, teamwork, and sportsmanship to promote a fun and positive environment.

Mr. Sherrard said 11 of the participants were Tavares residents, with the remaining from surrounding cities. He worked with Women's Basketball Coach Stanton and Men's Basketball Coach Bryant who conducted all coaching on-site. Mr. Sherrard noted 13 student-athletes helped man stations, instructed, coached, and refereed. He said there are discussions for future programs and leagues, including during holidays.

Mr. Drury commended Mr. Sherrard.

David Serdar, 66 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, noted his support.

Vice Mayor Buigas said she enjoys receiving updates on recreation programs.

Tab 7. Renewal of Automatic Aid Agreement between the Cities of Leesburg and Tavares for Fire Protection and other Emergency Services.

Chief Keith made the following presentation:

The City of Tavares has had an automatic aid agreement with the City of Leesburg for fire protection, since August 22, 2016. This was a five (5) - year agreement, and requires direct action from both entities to enact a renewal. This request to renew the agreement is based on the end of the five (5) year timeline of the existing agreement.

This automatic aid agreement that exists between Tavares and Leesburg is virtually identical to the agreements we have with Eustis and Mount Dora. There is no exchange of funds in either direction, associated with this agreement.

The existing automatic aid agreement between the City of Tavares and the City of Leesburg has been working as designed, and continues to benefit both communities.

This version of the automatic aid agreement is amended to remove the 5-year renewal requirement. Effective with this version, now presented to City Council for consideration, the agreement will remain effective indefinitely, until purposefully cancelled by either party (as provided for in Section 12).

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said he does not support removing the renewal period for sunshine and visibility purposes. He said there is no cost information included in the agenda report.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Vice Mayor Buigas referred to a May 2021 activity report provided to the Council. She said it appears Leesburg is the highest user and asked if it reflected a typical month. Chief Keith said usage could change as the statistics would depend on calls received.

MOTION

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

Tab 8. Renewal of Automatic Aid Agreement between the Cities of Eustis and Tavares for Fire Protection and other Emergency Services

Chief Keith said the agreement between the City of Eustis and Tavares is the same agreement as provided in Tab 7.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said had no additions to his previous comments [Tab 7].

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

MOTION

Lou Buigas moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 9. Renewal of Automatic Aid Agreement between the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares for Fire Protection and other Emergency Services

Chief Keith said the agreement between the City of Mount Dora and Tavares is the same agreement as provided in Tab 7.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, said had no additions to his previous comments [Tab 7].

David Serdar, 66 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, noted his support.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Price asked if the three agreements save costs if other cities have equipment in their inventory that Tavares does not, which would save on those items' purchasing cost. Chief Keith confirmed and said the agreements also ensure a correct number of firefighters respond to a scene as required by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Council Member Price asked if Tavares provides or receives the most assistance. Chief Keith said that due to the central location of Tavares, the city generally receives more assistance which could change due to need-driven calls.

Council Member Singer noted the agreements provide a faster response to emergency calls.

MOTION

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

Tab 10. City Attorney Retirement

After personally speaking with each Council member and providing a letter of retirement, Attorney Williams said he would like to formalize his retirement after serving 37 years as the City Attorney. He said he would continue to serve as City Attorney until October 1, 2021, which is the beginning of a new fiscal year, and would allow Council time to go through a hiring process.

Attorney Williams said hiring a City Attorney is different than hiring a consultant. He said the City Attorney has a personal services contract with no severance, and a vote of three can terminate the agreement. He said that is how most City Attorneys are contracted and recommended the same type of contract. He said the Council is not constricted when hiring a City Attorney, like hiring an engineer or architect where they would have to go through a competitive process. Council can hire someone they want immediately or go through a review or hiring process. Attorney Williams said it is essential to hire a Tavares or Lake County local lawyer who can be immediately

available to staff and Council and has a finger on the pulse of the City and area. He noted additional fees would include travel expenses and higher billing rates if an attorney is located in the Orlando area. Attorney Williams said he works with the City Administrator and staff daily, and the position has become specialized and includes board certifications. He said Tavares needs someone who understands and has experience in municipal law.

Attorney Williams said he strongly recommends Attorney Lindsay Holt, who received her law degree from Stetson Law School, to fill the position of City Attorney. He had worked with Attorney Holt for five to six years before she opened her practice, and she has stepped in to serve the City for the past two years in his absence. He noted Attorney Holt purchased his office building in Tavares, where he is now a tenant, and he can continue to mentor her. Attorney Williams said it had been a great 37 years that went by fast.

Mr. Drury said he has worked with many city and airport attorneys over thirty years, and Attorney Williams is by far the best attorney he has ever worked with and will be greatly missed.

Council Member Pfister said she would miss Attorney Williams and enjoyed sitting next to him at the dais for the past fifteen years. Council Member Pfister said she is comfortable continuing with Lindsay Holt, who comes highly recommended by Attorney Williams, will maintain the small-town feel, is a part of Tavares, and has done a good job.

Vice Mayor Buigas said Attorney Williams would be missed and noted his wealth of knowledge and information of Tavares. She said Ms. Holt would be a wonderful candidate and has enjoyed working with her in Attorney Williams's absence. She said it would be fair to competitively open the position with stipulation for a Lake County attorney well versed in municipal law.

Council Member Singer said Attorney Williams would be missed, and the City needs an attorney with community ties. He said Attorney Holt has done a wonderful job and noted his support for a competitive review with Attorney Holt included in the process. He discussed the possibility of utilizing a point value rating for candidates.

Council Member Price thanked Attorney Williams for his years of dedicated service to the City of Tavares. He said Attorney Holt has been working with the City for many years and would be an obvious choice for the position. He said he would like Attorney Holt to be the next City Attorney.

Mayor Boggus noted she is in the legal field and does not know if anyone could beat Attorney Holt if the position were open to all. She said there are limited attorneys in the local area with municipal law experience who are not already working for a municipal government which would create a conflict to work for Tavares effectively. She noted a concern for candidates who may overstate their experience in municipal law. Mayor

Boggus said she is prepared to select Lindsay Holt, who has worked for the City, and Attorney Williams, for many years.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved for the City Administrator to bring back a contract selecting Lindsay Holt as the City Attorney at the next Board meeting, seconded by Walter Price.

Vice Mayor Buigas said Ms. Holt would be qualified for the position, and her only concern is regarding transparency. She noted her support to go through a competitive process and conduct research.

Mayor Boggus said making this motion does not solidify Attorney Holt's appointment as the City Attorney. A motion would give the City Administrator approval to bring back a contract. Mr. Drury confirmed. He said he would bring back a contract, and if approved, Attorney Holt will be the next City Attorney.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, noted his support to go through a public process for transparency.

David Serdar, 66 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, commended Attorney Williams for his 37 years of service. He noted his support to select a local attorney.

Attorney Williams said he has known Attorney Holt her entire career and has a unique ability to look at her values and understand what he believes the City needs. He noted Council, with a vote of three, can change attorneys at any time as the position is a personal service contract.

Belynda Rinck, 216 Fern Avenue, Tavares, noted her support for going through a public process.

The motion carried 3-2 as follows:

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

XI. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Tab 11. Budget Workshop – General Fund Presentation

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

The City Council developed broad budget priorities for the City Administrator to use as guiding principles in developing next year's FY 22 budget which included lowering the tax rate and maintaining a similar level of service.

The City Administrator and Finance Department have worked with Department Director's to develop budgets to achieve the Council's broad budget goals (see attached Council Budget Goals). To achieve these goals, a comprehensive cut list was developed (see attached City Administrator FY22 proposed cut list). As in previous years, the cut list is organized into two (2) categories:

- *"Reduced" and "Cut". "Reduced" means the item is still in the proposed FY 22 budget and the City Administrator has reduced the amount that was requested by the Department Director.*
- *"Cut" means the City Administrator has removed the entire item from the budget. It is recommended Council looks closely at the cut list.*

Highlights of the proposed FY 22 budget are:

1. *A Similar Level of Service is achieved.*
2. *The FY 22 budget is increased by only 1.69% over the current year's FY 21 Adjusted Budget to maintain a similar level of service while keeping up with increases in cost including, health insurance (estimated at 10% increase), property insurance (estimated at 10% increase), workers compensation estimated at 5% increase, and general liability insurance (estimated at 10% increase).*
3. *The General Fund millage property tax rate is decreased.*
4. *The Debt Service millage property tax rate is decreased.*
5. *The Reserve appropriations are increased over prior years appropriation.*
6. *The Fire Assessment is level funded (no rate increase).*
7. *Employee raises are established at 2.5% with no Cost of Living Adjustments included.*
8. *Increased healthcare costs are shared by employee and employer.*
9. *The cost of new positions, except for the "Streets Manager", is funded proportionately between the General Fund and Enterprise Fund.*
10. *City-wide street paving is increased from \$0 in prior year General Fund to \$250,000 and from \$130,000 in prior year Sales Tax to \$250,000 for a total of \$500,000 to repave city deteriorating roads in neighborhoods.*
11. *Although the proposed Budget includes funding for the History Museum, the City will utilize volunteers for staffing needs.*
12. *The seaplane base safety project of rerouting the Tav-Lee trail around the "hot" aircraft ramp is funded at \$300,000 to reduce an incursion between aircraft and pedestrians, children, and bicyclists minimizing injury potential from an active aircraft taxing to the aircraft departure and arrival ramp.*
13. *The Christmas lighting program is level funded.*

14. Expanded programs are cut.

Proposed decreased property tax millage rate with a balanced budget

This proposed budget is balanced and reflects a property tax millage rate decrease which is lowered from 6.90 mills down to 6.85 mills and a proposed debt service rate decrease that is lowered from .2623 to .2391. At the proposed lower millage rates, homeowners with a house valued at \$150,000 and standard homestead exemption would pay \$708.91 per year or \$59.08 per month in City Ad Valorem Property Taxes for the budget that is before Council for FY 2022.

This first budget workshop is on July 7, 2021 to deliver, present and discuss the General Fund budget. The second budget workshop on July 21, 2021 is to deliver, present, and discuss the enterprise funds (Water, Wastewater, Reclamation, Stormwater, Solid Waste, Seaplane Base/Marina, and the Pavilion on the Lake) and discuss the General Fund Budget that was presented at the last Council meeting.

The maximum tentative millage rate will be set at a third budget workshop on July 28, 2021. A fourth and fifth Council budget workshop is scheduled for August 4, and August 18, 2021 to discuss all budgets followed by two Public Hearings on the budget on September 8, 2021 and September 22, 2021. The Five (5) Year Capital Plan will be delivered, presented and discussed at the August 4, 2021 budget workshop.

Current estimates are expected to change over the next couple of weeks for State Shared revenues, health insurance, general liability insurance, and workers' compensation insurance. As new estimates become available staff will update the budget, and provide a listing of updated estimates and the effect to the proposed budget to the City Council.

It is recommended the Finance Director present details of the General Fund to the Council, department by department.

Mr. Drury asked Ms. Houghton to provide highlights of the General Fund Budget for each department. He said once her presentation is complete, the floor would open for questions and comments. He said answers to questions might be brought back to Council in the following meeting to provide an opportunity for staff to conduct research and ensure the Council receives accurate information.

Ms. Houghton provided a PowerPoint presentation of the FY 2022 General Fund Budget.

Ms. Houghton thanked the Departments, Finance Department staff and special mention to Brett Jones, Budget Analyst.

Mr. Drury provided a review of the budget book for navigation purposes down to the dollar for included items. He described the difference between percentage-based budgeting and zero-based budgeting. Mr. Drury said Tavares conducts a zero-based line item budget which lists every line item requested. Mr. Drury said the budget has over 300 pages and 22,000 numbers included.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the audience.

Vance Jochim, 12619 Milwaukee Avenue, Lake County, commended staff and said the detail provided by Tavares is transparent and makes it easier for anyone to find items. He said there are cities that do not offer much detail in their budgets. He inquired about a roll-back rate.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Singer thanked Ms. Houghton and staff. He said Council provided direction, and a budget was delivered that maintains the same level of service and provides the citizens with high quality of life, reduces millage, increases reserves, rewards employees, and increases road resurfacing. A discussion was held on the previous year's adopted and adjusted budgets depicted in the PowerPoint slide presentation. Ms. Houghton said the FY21 revised budget to the proposed budget reflected a 1.68% increase.

Vice Mayor Buigas said she spent time at the Property Appraisers Office several months ago to review the City tax base. She said she was surprised to find 25% of the properties in Tavares do not pay property taxes due to the city being the County seat. She said other cities do not have that high number, and it is commendable that Tavares works with fewer dollars to provide services. Vice Mayor Buigas inquired about an additional \$500,000 from the docks coming in under budget. Ms. Houghton said \$550,000 was included in the budget as proposed savings from the Seaplane Base project insurance proceeds. Vice Mayor Buigas asked if the final amount would be set before Council decides on the final millage and budget. Mr. Drury confirmed and said one-time insurance proceeds funded the Seaplane Base and Marina. He confirmed they are unrestricted funds currently allocated for streets (\$250,000) and the Seaplane Base trail reroute (\$300,000).

Council Member Singer said Council is scheduled to set the maximum tentative millage rate on July 28, 2021. He noted setting the rates usually takes five minutes and asked if the July 28, 2021 meeting could be moved to the scheduled July 21, 2021 City Council meeting. Mr. Drury said that would meet state criteria, and staff could move the meeting at Council's wish.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to set the Maximum Tentative Millage Rate during the July 21, 2021 regular scheduled meeting, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Mayor Boggus said she received a Request to Speak form from Caroline Peeples who is no longer in the audience.

David Serdar, 66 Wintergreen Drive, Fruitland Park, said he was honored to be in 4th of July parade. He said he enjoyed the fireworks and music.

Belynda Rinck, 216 Fern Avenue, Tavares, said her daughter suggested having the Wooton Park playground designers obtain ideas by watching how the summer camp children interact during playtime.

XV. REPORTS

Tab 12. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury thanked Mr. Aldrich and Debby Blais, Administrative Coordinator, for organizing the 4th of July Celebration and parade. He commended them on a great job and said Chief Keith did a wonderful job emceeing the event.

Mr. Aldrich said the 4th of July and Christmas events are City events where each department plays an important role in the event's success. He noted there are no entry fees to enter the parade, and instead, the community is asked to donate food for the homeless or Christmas toys for children.

Ms. Houghton thanked the Department Directors for their work on the budget.

Tab 13. City Council Member Report

Council Member Pfister

- Commended Mr. Aldrich and Ms. Blais for their efforts on the July 4th Celebration.
- Commended Ms. Houghton and the Department Directors for their work on the Budget.
- Said she looks forward to reviewing the budget.

Council Member Price

- Thanked the Recreation Department for their efforts on the July 4th Celebration. He said it was a great event and was pleased by the number of attendees.
- Thanked Mr. O'Keefe and Chief Lubins for manning the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during hurricane Elsa.
- Said he looks forward to reviewing the budget.

Council Member Singer

- Said he enjoyed the 4th of July Celebration and received great comments from citizens. He said thanked those who assisted in putting on the event.

Vice Mayor Buigas

- Commended those who worked on the July 4th Celebration event and said it is wonderful to serve with Team Tavares.
- Provided the following quote: "Last year you said next year. Last month you said next month. Yesterday you said tomorrow. Words are just words until you take action so let's start today." ~Roger Lee

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk