



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 1, 2020 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY COUNCIL VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING
<https://www.youtube.com/user/tavarespubcom1>**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Amanda Boggus, Mayor
Lori Pfister, Vice Mayor - *Absent*
Lou Buigas, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member
Roy Stevenson, 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
Tamera Rogers, Community Services 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**

TAVARES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

J. Scott Berry, Executive Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Boggus called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. She noted this is the first time the City of Tavares has used video conferencing for a City Council meeting. Mayor Boggus said the meeting was authorized by Governor Ron DeSantis Executive Order 2020-69, regarding emergency management for COVID-19, specifically local government public meetings. She provided information to prepare the public on the virtual meeting venue, including how to access the Agenda and instructions for audience participation.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Tab 1. Richard Keith, Fire Chief

Richard Keith, Tavares Fire Chief, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Drury said staff had no changes to the agenda.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Lou Buigas. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Tab 2. Tavares Chamber of Commerce Update

Mr. Berry said the Chamber had three (3) new members, in March 2020. He said the Chamber offices closed March 17, 2020, due to COVID-19, and staff continues to work remotely. The Chamber continues to provide visitor information through phone calls and emails.

Mr. Berry provided the following event date changes:

- The April Legislative Wrap Up Breakfast was rescheduled to June 16, 2020
- The Community Services Awards was rescheduled to June 10, 2020

Mr. Berry noted Council Member Buigas, Tavares Fire Chief Keith, and several Tavares businesses would be honored during the Community Services Awards.

Mr. Berry noted the following COVID-19 initiatives the Chamber has implemented:

- Sandwich boards offered to restaurants to promote curb-side services
- 'Let's Eat' campaign for Chamber members

- New web page with COVID-19 updates
- Suspending 60 day rule that suspends membership for non-payment
- 'Hugs to Healthcare Workers' campaign
- 'Tuesday 10 at 10' campaign
- 'Virtual Scavenger Quest'

Mr. Berry noted the 'Tuesday 10 at 10' is a campaign where ten business owners are invited to a virtual meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday's with himself, Mr. Tweedie, and Tracy Garcia from Elevate Lake, to share experiences, resources, and recreate business in the COVID-19 environment.

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

Mr. Drury commended Mr. Berry on his leadership and thanked both Mr. Berry and Mr. Tweedie for working together and pointing the business community in the right direction to assist with their needs.

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

Attorney Williams stated 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 NO. 2020-06

A RESOLUTION OF CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA; AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY THROUGH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR ASSISTANCE RELATED TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY; AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS RELATED TO FEDERAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

Tab 3. Approval of Resolution 2020-06, Application for Federal Public Assistance (FEMA) for COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Houghton provided the following presentation:

On March 13, 2020, Donald Trump, President of the United States declared the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic of sufficient severity and

magnitude to warrant a nationwide emergency declaration covering all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia. The Presidential Declaration provides for the availability of Federal Assistance for costs incurred by local governments due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The incident period for Public Assistance under the Declaration is effective beginning January 20, 2020.

The State of Florida has opened the State of Florida PA Website for local agencies to make application to the Florida Division of Emergency Management to receive Federal Public Assistance for costs incurred related to the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency.

The State has begun applicant briefings for cities, counties, school boards, and non-profits to provide guidance on the application process and the eligibility of cost reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for costs incurred by local jurisdictions as a result of the pandemic. Eligible costs include (not limited to) over-time, supplies, equipment, emergency management operations, public safety, and telework related costs.

The City of Tavares has incurred eligible costs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency, and therefore Resolution 2020-06 provides authorization for the City Administrator to make application for Federal Public Assistance for the COVID-19 Pandemic (Disaster PA 4486). Resolution 2020-06 also provides authorization for the City Administrator to execute agreements and contracts related to and required by application for Federal Public Assistance.

Staff recommends Council move to approve Resolution 2020-06 authorizing the City Administrator to apply for Federal Public Assistance related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and to execute all documents related to and required by the application for Federal Public Assistance for the COVID-19 Pandemic, PA#4486 / EM3432.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the public. Mr. Drury reiterated public comments or questions could be made by emailing councilmeeting@tavares.org. He said comments will be read into the record and should be no more than three minutes in duration.

Ms. Novack said the city received no public comments. She said any comments received late or separated by the city's spam filtering software would be reviewed after the meeting, and forwarded to each Council member. She said public comments would become part of the public record.

Mayor Boggus asked for questions from Council. There were none.

MOTION

Lou Buigas moved to approve Option 1 [Council move to approve Resolution 2020-06 authorizing the City Administrator to apply for Federal Public Assistance related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and to execute all documents related to and required by the application for Federal Public Assistance for the COVID-19 Pandemic, PA#4486 / EM3432.], seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Attorney Williams asked the Council to include raising hands when voting.

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 4. State of the City COVID-19 Report

Mr. Drury provided a report on the State of the City, including four levels of service provided by the City. He said information on COVID-19 was received from several organizations including the following: Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Florida Department of Health, Lake County Board of County Commissioners Office of Emergency Management, and City of Tavares Emergency Management/Public Communications Director. He said items that will be reported will change.

Mr. Drury noted the current amount of COVID-19 cases is 163,000 in the United States as of April 1, 2020, and provided the following information and updates:

- Citizen Frequently Asked Questions
- Update on Federal Initiatives and Guidelines
- Update on State Initiatives and Guidelines
- Update on Lake County Initiatives and Guidelines
- Update on City of Tavares Employee Initiative and Guidelines
- Update on City Services

Mr. Drury said all city employees are essential for the continued operation of the city, and fall into one of the following three categories:

1. On Duty at Designated Work Stations
2. On Duty at a Remote Work Station
3. Cycling in on Staggered Shifts to Perform Duties

The work strategy maintains essential and some non-essential services to the public while significantly reducing the entire city crews contracting COVID-19.

The City operates under the following four (4) Service Levels:

- A) Normal Operations: Service to Public is at a full level “all systems go”. Employees are reporting for duty as normally scheduled.
- B) Curbed Operations: Service to Public is at a curbed level. Some Non-Emergency Services and Non Essential Service to the public are suspended. Some employees who can work remotely may be directed to do so.
- C) Emergency and Essential Service: Service to public is reduced to a minimal level. While many Non-Emergency and Non Essential services are suspended, Emergency and Essential services continue (Public Safety of Police and Fire, Public Utilities of water and sewer, Solid Waste of garbage collection, etc.)” Many Employees are working remotely, Skeleton Crews are deployed providing essential services, and some employees are placed on stand-by ready to serve status and are cycled in when front-line skeleton crews get sick or are in need of relief.
- D) Emergency Services Only: Service to public is Emergency only. All non-emergency services are temporarily on hold. Police and Fire and some front-line employees are deployed to provide Emergency Only Service.

Mr. Drury said Tavares was at a Service Level C - Emergency and Essential Services fully maintained, and some non-essential services have been suspended. Mr. Drury provided the following examples:

Essential Services Maintained - Police, Fire, Ambulance, Hospital, Water, Sewer, Garbage, Roads and Full Capacity, Traffic Lights Operational and Maintained, Website on Covid-19 Updated, Tavares EOC at Level C with Mayor, City Administrator, and Department Directors meet Regularly, and Police Chief, Fire Police, and EOC Director meet Regularly with the County EOC.

Non-Essential Services Maintained – Parks, Boat Ramps, Virtual Library Book Check-Out, Building Permits, Right-of-Way Maintenance, Public Records Requests, Fire Department Car Seat Installation and Inspection.

Suspended Services – Library is Closed, Airport Terminal Building is Closed, Tavares Pavilion on the Lake is Closed, All Special Events are Cancelled, Public Restrooms are Closed, and the Tavares Splash Park is Closed.

Mr. Drury said there is a tremendous amount of work that continues behind the scenes by City employees. He said the following programs continue to move forward:

- The budget is being developed
- Audits continue
- Summer recreation program is being crafted
- Federal stimulus package is being monitored for businesses and the community
- Seaplane Base and Marina reconstruction is moving forward
- Lake Francis Estates Infrastructure Upgrades are moving forward
- CDBG Grant applications are being processed
- All employees are fully engaged at their three levels of employment
- Economic Development Department is working with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce to assist affected businesses and provide updates
- Financial account services including payables and receivables are fully maintained
- Preparations for upcoming elections are underway
- Public records requests are being processed
- Public information updates continue on the website and with local media
- City Council meetings are held virtually and live-streamed
- Vacant positions are being filled through virtual communication with two new Police Officers recently hired
- City Hall phone is answered Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- All buildings are being maintained
- The Council is updated regularly

Mr. Drury thanked the Council for being fully engaged throughout the emergency as well as the citizens who are watching and participating in the meeting. He thanked the First Responders, Tavares Leadership Team, and all employees for staying engaged without reservation. Mr. Drury commended Mr. O'Keefe for his assistance in making the virtual Council meeting come to fruition.

Mayor Boggus asked for public comment. There was none.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Council Member Singer asked what more in the future can the City do to assist the residents and business community. Mr. Drury said the first item would be to find out what the problem and needs are. He said the City is working with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, Lake County, and the State of Florida to identify needs and match with assistance programs. He said the President of the United States issued a stimulus package that is the greatest the Nation has ever received. To distribute the stimulus dollars, the Federal Government will utilize entities that are in place and ready to assist with distribution. Tavares will act as a conduit to assist businesses in getting back on their feet.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

XIV. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

No public comment received.

XV. REPORTS

Tab 5. City Administrator Report

Mr. Drury said the next City Council meeting is scheduled April 15, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. The meeting can be viewed at www.youtube.com/user/tavarespubcom1. He noted the following meetings were canceled until further notice: Library Board, Planning and Zoning Board, and Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing. The 4th of July Celebration continues to be planned for July 4, 2020. He provided outside agency meeting cancellations and noted the Mayor's Youth Council would hold their Mock Meeting on April 15, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. He said the meeting would also be available for viewing on Youtube.

Chief Lubins said the investigation at Ingraham Park is active and progressing well. He said the Police Department is performing full law enforcement service in keeping with CDC guidelines. Phone calls may be utilized for less urgent requests for safety. He said this would not impede the service level provided by the Police Department. Chief Lubins noted two new Police Officer's are onboarding and will begin serving soon.

Mr. O'Keefe thanked the Council for the opportunity to bring the meeting to Livestream on YouTube. He noted 33 audience members were viewing the meeting and thanked them for their participation.

Mr. Tweedie said the Economic Development team is working closely with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce, Lake County Office of Economic Prosperity. When resources become available through the State and Federal Government, the information will be provided to all affected local businesses. He thanked Mr. Berry with the Tavares Chamber of Commerce and the Executive Director partners at Lake County and Elevate Lake. He said the City of Tavares might have issued the first stimulus in the Nation in the form of a Notice to Proceed to Haskell for the Marina and Seaplane Base reconstruction. He said the city expects to receive a revised construction schedule and project renderings over the next few weeks.

Mr. Clark said the Utility Department is rotating 100% of the staff and continue to meet all EPA and FDEP requirements for testing in water analysis.

Ms. Bublitz said the city is continuing to recruit and accept applications through the city website. All interviews will be conducted virtually.

Ms. Rogers said the library remains vibrant with twenty calls received during the week, and online library material continues to be checked out by citizens. She noted the Pavilion remains closed and staff continues to respond to clients including rescheduling events. The Community Services Department will be recruiting nine summer camp counselors.

Ms. Houghton said the city continues to suspend utility account disconnects and penalties for all delinquent accounts. Payments for utility accounts may be made by the dropbox, online, or phone utilizing the city's innovative voice response system. She said staff is available daily by emailing utilitybilling@tavares.org or by telephone. Customers may leave messages after 12:00 p.m. for the next day's call back. New accounts may be requested by email or phone. Ms. Houghton said the Finance Department is coordinating with the Community Development Department to ensure that permitting payment processes continue. She thanked the Finance Department staff and said all reporting continues to be timely and transaction posted for budget review.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the Community Development Department is committed to maintaining services remotely for development review and the issuance of permits. A new Building Official started on Monday, and the department continues to move forward.

Attorney Williams said the Governors Stay at Home order was signed prior to the Council meeting, and is available by contacting the City Clerk. The Order includes a 12-15 page attachment of what constitutes essential services. Attorney Williams said he has been the City Attorney since April 1, 1984, and this has been a historic meeting where it is occurring over distant places over the internet, which had not been invented when he began his tenure. He commended Mr. Drury, Mr. O'Keefe, and the staff for putting the meeting together.

Tab. 6. Council Member Reports

Council Member Singer

Council Member Singer said that working together; we will all come out stronger. He thanked Mr. Drury, Mr. O'Keefe, and the staff for facilitating the meeting. Council Member Singer thanked those in the medical field, first responders, and educators. He said to be kind, be well, be safe, and God Bless.

Council Member Buigas

Council Member Buigas thanked Mr. Drury, Mr. O'Keefe, and staff for facilitating the meeting. She noted Ms. Laratta was safe and enjoying her cruise. She thanked Mayor Boggus for her leadership.

Quote of the Day: "You can't calm the storm, so stop trying. What you can do is calm yourself. The storm will pass." ~Timber Hawkeye

Council Member Stevenson

Council Member Stevenson thanked Mr. Drury, Mr. O'Keefe, and staff for facilitating the meeting. He said this is a time for us to care and treat each other well.

Mayor Boggus

Mayor Boggus thanked everyone for their efforts in setting up the meeting.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC/FCRM
City Clerk