



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2020 – 4:00 PM  
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Amanda Boggus, Mayor  
Lori Pfister, Vice Mayor  
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  
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**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Boggus called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**III. BUDGET HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 TENTATIVE MILLAGE & BUDGET –  
READING OF TENTATIVE MILLAGE & BUDGET RESOLUTIONS 5:05**

**Tab 1. Approve Resolution 2020-19 for Tentative Millage Rate for FY 2021 – First Reading**

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2020-19 in its entirety as follows:

**RESOLUTION 2020 - 19**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 6.900 FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021; SETTING FORTH THE PERCENT BY WHICH THE MILLAGE RATE IS GREATER THAN THE "ROLLED-BACK" RATE.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:**

**WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida on September 3, 2020, adopted the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Tentative Millage Rate following a public hearing as required by Florida Statute 200.065.**

**WHEREAS, the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida, following due public notice as required by law, held a second public hearing on September 16, 2020, as required by Florida Statute 200.065 on the 2020-2021 Millage Rate; and**

**WHEREAS, the gross taxable value for operating purposes not exempt from taxation within Lake County has been certified by the County Property Appraiser to the City of Tavares as \$1,051,409,124.**

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Tavares of Lake County, Florida, that:**

- 1. The City of Tavares Fiscal Year 2020-2021 operating millage rate to be levied is hereby set at 6.900 mills, which millage rate is greater than the rolled back rate of 6.5143 by 5.92%.**
- 2. The voted debt service millage rate is set at .2623 mills for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.**
- 3. This Resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.**

Mr. Drury provided a video on Tavares business Sunday Cool. Mr. Drury said the video highlights economic recovery occurring in the city, and provided the following initiatives moving forward despite COVID-19:

- Sunday Cool included COVID products in their product line
- Avalon Park project moving forward and the charter school is sold out
- Seaplane manufacturing facilities and flight training facilities are doing well
- Industrial park is sold out
- Hospital and surgical centers are back to full staff and conducting elective surgeries
- The Big House programs are full or sold out

Mr. Drury said the businesses appear to be recovering and Council has remained steadfast and fiscally conservative with a lowered the budget and tax rates. Council set the budget goals at the beginning of 2020 and held multiple workshops throughout the year. All of the changes requested have been incorporated into the budget and the result is a fiscally conservative budget and tax rates. Tavares proposed property tax rate is the lowest in five years. Tavares proposed debt service rate is the lowest in nine years by 10%. The proposed budget is 24.7% less than the current year with increased Reserves appropriations. Mr. Drury said stable governments like Tavares provide better service to their citizens that result in a good economic climate, good economic recovery, and good quality of life for the residents. Tavares has a stable steady-as-she-goes approach to the tax rate reduction program that is working well and keeping governmental operations stable for its citizens and businesses. This is because Tavares has a measured and conservative way by reducing tax rates and budgets steadily and incrementally.

Ms. Houghton provided the following presentation:

*The City Administrator and his staff have developed a budget for Fiscal Year 2021 for Council's consideration totaling \$55,552,953 that is fully balanced. The proposed budget for FY2021 includes, among many other items, the following:*

1. *Similar Level of Service*
2. *General Fund millage rate decrease (from 6.9500 to 6.900) which is 5.92% above the rollbacked rate.*
3. *Debt Service millage rate decrease (from .2932 to .2623).*
4. *Increased reserve appropriations.*
5. *Fire Assessment level funded (no rate increase)*
6. *Employee raises of 2%*
7. *Healthcare cost increases are shared by employer and employee.*
8. *Two new Police Officers that were added in the current year are reflected in the FY2021 budget.*
9. *One new Firefighter position has been added.*
10. *Some positions added in FY2020 have been deferred.*
11. *Street paving is included at a reduced amount.*
12. *The History Museum is budgeted as part of the Community Services Department; the museum will be staffed by volunteers.*
13. *The Christmas lighting program is level funded.*
14. *The July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration is level funded.*

*15. Expanded programs are deferred or cut.*

*Previously the City Council discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget at the following public meetings:*

- July 1<sup>st</sup> – City Council Budget Workshop – (General Fund Presentation)*
- July 15<sup>th</sup> – City Council Budget Workshop – (Enterprise and Special Revenue Funds Presentation)*
- July 29<sup>th</sup> – City Council Budget Workshop – (Set Maximum Tentative Millage Rate)*
- August 5<sup>th</sup> – City Council Budget Workshop – (Capital Improvement Plan Presentation)*
- August 19<sup>th</sup> – City Council Budget Workshop*

*A Tentative Budget (all funds) has been prepared for the City Council based on discussions at the previous City Council Budget Workshops.*

*The Final Public Hearing to Adopt the FY2021 Millage Rate and the FY2021 Budget will be held at 5:05 p.m. on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at which time the final millage rates will be adopted.*

*Staff recommends Option 1: Take Public input and approve the Tentative Millage for Fiscal Year 2021 as reflected in Resolution 2020-19.*

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

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Stevenson thanked Mr. Drury. He said he would like it placed on the record that the audience was invited to speak.

Vice Mayor Pfister said would like it placed on the record that she wanted to go to the rollback rate. She said she found \$204,500 toward the \$400,000 needed for a rollback rate. She said the businesses were hurt most through COVID-19, and noted a concern for the residents and businesses that will pay higher taxes.

Council Member Buigas said while a rollback rate would be wonderful, a decision would then need to be made to defund a department or program such as Police, Fire, library or road paving. She said going to the rollback rate is a good thought, but the city is lean regarding personnel and projects.

Council Member Singer said the Council would like to get the rate as low as possible and it would be great to go back to the rollback rate. He said the Council has done everything it can and staff has done an amazing job reducing the budget as much as possible. He said he is proud that the City of Tavares has been able to reduce the

millage rate over the past few years. Council Member Singer said the city has a good budget.

Mayor Boggus said it is everyone's goal to reduce taxes.

## **MOTION**

**Roy Stevenson moved to approve Resolution 2020-19, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried 4-1 at 5:23 p.m. as follows:**

**Amanda Boggus: Yes  
Lori Pfister: No  
Lou Buigas: Yes  
Troy Singer: Yes  
Roy Stevenson Yes**

### **Tab 2. Approve Resolution 2020-20 to Approve the Tentative Budget for FY2021 – First Reading**

Ms. Novack read Resolution 2020-20 in its entirety as follows:

#### **RESOLUTION 2020-20**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAVARES, FLORIDA:**

**WHEREAS, a public hearing on the tentative 2020-2021 budget was held at the Tavares City Hall Council Chambers in the City of Tavares, Florida, Lake County, Florida on Thursday, September 3rd, 2020 at 5:05 p.m., as required by Florida Statutes 200.065; and**

**WHEREAS, the general public was given an opportunity to express its views pertaining to the tentative budget, and**

**WHEREAS, the City Council approved the tentative budget for 2020-2021, and**

**WHEREAS, a second public hearing on the proposed 2020-2021 budget was held in the Council Chambers at the Tavares City Hall, 201 East Main Street in the City of Tavares, Florida, on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at 5:05 p.m.,**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Budget for 2020-2021 fiscal year for the City of Tavares, Florida is hereby adopted**

**by the Tavares City Council in the amount of \$55,552,953 at public hearing this 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2020.**

**This resolution will take effect immediately upon its adoption.**

Ms. Houghton said the highlights for Resolution 2020-20 are the same as previously read into the record for setting the millage rate. She asked if the Mayor would like her to restate the highlights for the record. Mayor Boggus said no.

Karen Ortega, 4345 Abaco Drive, Tavares, noted her support for the Police and Fire Departments to receive extra funding and said she was glad for the recent additional staffing of two police officers.

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Buigas said the Council should recognize that the City Administrator was not included in the 2% employee raise.

Council Member Singer said he is happy with the budget and would like to see additional funding for road repaving.

Mayor Boggus advised Ms. Ortega that body cameras are included in the budget as an additional funding aside from added positions.

#### **MOTION**

**Lou Buigas moved to approve Option 1 [Take Public input and approve the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 as reflected in Resolution 2020-20.], seconded by Roy Stevenson. The motion carried 4-1 at 5:29 as follows:**

**Amanda Boggus: Yes**  
**Lori Pfister: No**  
**Lou Buigas: Yes**  
**Troy Singer: Yes**  
**Roy Stevenson Yes**

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully,

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Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM  
City Clerk