



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 1, 2023 – 4:00 PM
TAVARES CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 EAST MAIN STREET, TAVARES 32778**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

**Walter Price, Mayor
Sandy Gamble, Vice Mayor
Bob Grenier, Council Member
Lori Pfister, Council Member
Troy Singer, Council Member**

STAFF PRESENT

**John Drury, City Administrator
Lindsay Holt, City Attorney
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Mike Fitzgerald, 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, Public Communications Director
Phil Clark, Utilities Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Price called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He 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 Jamison Elder, Umatilla Baptist Church

Pastor Jamison Elder, Umatilla Baptist Church, provided the invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Price asked for any changes to the Agenda. Mr. Drury said staff had no changes.

MOTION

Lori Pfister 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

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Price asked if anyone wished to pull an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. There were none.

MOTION

Troy Singer moved to approve the Consent Agenda [Tab 2. Approval of the January 18, 2023, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes; and, Tab 3. Board Appointments – Police and Fire Pension Boards], seconded by Bob Grenier. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 2. Approval of the January 18, 2023, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

Tab 3. Board Appointments – Police and Fire Pension Boards

Approved on the Consent Agenda.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

IX. ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING

First Reading

Second Reading

X. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 4. Broad Budget Priorities

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

As provided for in the prior City Council meeting, an opportunity is provided at this Council meeting for the City Council to develop its FY 2024 (October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024) Broad Budget Goals which City staff will use as guiding principles and a starting point to build the annual City Budget over the next several months. The budget will then be presented back to the City Council this summer. Thereafter, the Council will continue to refine it through July and August and finalize it and adopt it in September with public commentary and input along the way. Attached are the prior year's Broad Budget Goals that the former City Council set forth, many of which were incorporated into the budget. Also, re-included from the prior Council meeting are the current projects and initiatives underway.

The Council members provided their Broad Budget Priorities as follows:

Vice Mayor Gamble

- Maintain level of service
- Continue and finish Capitol Projects
- Sidewalk replacement and new where needed
- Installation of exhaust system in station 29 if not completed before
- Adopt new Impact Fees for residential housing
- Finalize the deal of Stover Complex to Lake County School Board if not completed at the time of Budget
- Continue to lower debt and not go further into debt
- Add a person to shifts at Station 29

Council Member Singer

- Continue to lower the millage
- Offer the same level of services
- Road repaving
- Take care of infrastructure
- Continue to pursue grant programs
- Ensure staff is well compensated
- Continue to work on current capital projects and finish

Council Member Singer asked Ms. Houghton if the City met the criteria for Reserves. Ms. Houghton confirmed. Council Member Singer said he would like Reserves to remain at their current level.

Council Member Pfister

- Make sure the YMCA is a priority that is funded to get the project off the ground
- Impact fees for residential housing and possible incentives for commercial building
- Be mindful when developing the Highway 19 frontage
- Safety lighting for downtown

Mr. Drury said lighting was completed along the trail and waterfront, and a plan is being put together for lighting at the traffic circle.

- Continue to look for grants
- Make Pontoon Promenade a tourist destination

Council Member Grenier

- Complete Public Works building
- Continue with the West Main Street Gateway
- Do something for the Old 441 gateway
- Plan the new Tavares frontier along SR19/561/448 corridor well with no sprawl and be mindful of economics, residential development, land conservation, and a possible convention center.
- Continue to make sure the Tavares History Museum and Tavares Library have the resources needed to keep a high level of service to patrons and guests
- Replace the small directional sign at the Tavares Cemetery to the Lane Park Cemetery
- Do something to recognize Major St. Clair Abrams in an appropriate and honorable way for future generations
- Keep streets/alleyways/stormwater going, improving, and at a good level of service
- Keep the needs of the Police and Fire Departments to ensure they keep their high level of service

Mayor Price

- Try to get to the rollback rate, if not continue the trend of lowering the millage rate
- Accelerate and continue to pay down City debt
- Would like to see West Main Street Gateway Project come to fruition
- Continue to pursue grants
- Continue the same level of service
- Increase reserves where we can

- Increase lighting on sidewalks in Wooton Park. Mr. Drury confirmed lighting had been installed
- Finish ARPA projects in progress
- Continue the current hold on the HVAC at the historical fire station until the buildings future has been determined

Mr. Drury thanked the Council and said he and the staff would work to create a budget to bring back for consideration.

Tab 5. Board Appointment – Code Enforcement Special Magistrate

Mayor Price made the following presentation:

Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Rick Joyce recently retired, leaving the Special Magistrate position vacant. Tavares Attorney Benjamin M. Boylston has indicated he is interested in the position. The City Administrator, City Attorney, Police Chief, and Code Enforcement Officer are in support of the appointment. The annual contract has the same terms/rates/conditions as the previous Special Magistrate.

Mayor Price said he would like to appoint Benjamin M. Boylston as the City of Tavares Code Enforcement Special Magistrate.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve the nomination of Benjamin M. Boylston as the City of Tavares Code Enforcement Special Magistrate, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Council Member Singer, Vice Mayor Gamble, and Mayor Price thanked Mr. Boylston.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Boylston thanked the Council and said he was honored to be appointed as Special Magistrate and looked forward to getting to work.

Tab 6. Tavares Square Request for Proposals Continuation of Discussion

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

The city-owned downtown property now known as Tavares Square was originally purchased from Lake County in 2015 for the purpose of fulfilling the vision of the City Council's adopted Downtown Master Plan. The Master Plan conceptualized transforming this property, which was previously occupied by a County Government Records Center, into a multi-level, mixed-use commercial development, with elements of open plaza space, multi-family residential and retail/office space, "...through negotiations with potential developers" - Page 102

Downtown Tavares Redevelopment Master Plan.

After the City acquired and converted the property to open public space, the City began marketing efforts to solicit private sector interest in purchasing and redeveloping this property consistent with the vision of the Master Plan. An initial RFP was conducted in late 2015/early 2016, resulting in no market interest or proposals. Subsequently, a contractual engagement with a Commercial Real Estate Broker was entered into for a 2-year period. Due to soft market conditions at the time, the City received no interest from the private sector and the Council directed staff to suspend active marketing efforts on the property until more favorable market conditions emerged.

As market conditions became more favorable in 2022, in May of that year, Council approved staff for the third time to seek interest in Tavares Square from private developers by conducting another RFP solicitation process to solicit a potential developer for the sale and redevelopment of the Tavares Square property consistent with the Downtown Master Plan. RFP solicitation # 2022-0014 resulted in four (4) proposals being received at the proposal deadline of 08/31/2022. A selection committee consisting of the City Administrator, Economic Development Director, and Community Development Director was convened to review, score, and rank these firms. The result was a tie score between Cagan Management and G3 Development being the top two ranked firms.

These two mixed-use proposals from these two top-ranked firms were presented to Council at the previous Council meeting for the purpose of selecting one of the two firms to negotiate a contract with and then bringing that negotiated contract back to the Council for consideration and final approval. Both firms presented the Council with an overview of their proposed projects at the meeting. After receiving, reviewing, and discussing the proposals, the Council determined that additional information should be provided to the two (2) proposers on what the Board is looking for, in addition to the Board needing more information before the board could make a decision to award the project to one of the firms for contract negotiations.

This item has therefore been brought back to City Council for further consideration and it is recommended that:

1: Council hold a discussion on what they are looking for from the proposers for the site and upon the conclusion of these discussions, that

2: The top two ranked Proposers fine-tune their proposals or not over the next two weeks based on this Council input for a final submittal by the two top-ranked firms to the City Council at the next meeting for consideration and selection of the number one ranked firm to negotiate a contract with.

After the Board selects the number one ranked firm at the next meeting, staff will negotiate a contract with that firm and bring a negotiated contract back to the Council for consideration and approval at a subsequent meeting.

Staff recommends Option 1, for Council to discuss and provide input as to what they are looking for from the two top-ranked firms and then request that Cagan Management and G3 Development re-submit their proposals with any revisions they may or may not want to make based on the City Council's input.

Mr. Drury said an opportunity was provided for the Council to discuss their wishes for the property.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 for discussion, seconded by Bob Grenier.

Council Member Pfister said after further thought, she felt the development would need a parking garage, and people would only want to live at the location with access to nearby parking. She suggested locating a garage along Main Street and would be amenable to an increase in height if needed to make the project financially feasible. Council Member Pfister stated she would like to ensure the Ruby Street end of the property was open with views of the lake and would like water features and a European flavor.

Council Member Grenier said a parking garage would need to be backstage and accessible to the residents and businesses. He said the buildings should maintain the historical downtown theme and not be modern with glass or exposed staircases.

Council Member Singer said both developers would be a great choice as they were highly involved in the community and had outstanding projects in Tavares. Council Member Singer said he would like proposals with and without the parking garage and noted a concern for parking used by area business customers. He said there were plans for a future parking garage when Public Works moves locations, and he wanted to avoid the concept of a parking garage on Main Street. Council Member Singer said he would like additional information regarding a lease option for a parking garage.

Vice Mayor Gamble said he would like the project to follow the existing Land Development Regulations, as any changes would set a precedent for future development. Vice Mayor Gamble said a parking garage should be at no expense to the City for purchase or lease, and he would not want a parking garage street side. Vice Mayor Gamble noted his preference for a facade similar to City Hall.

Mayor Price asked G3 if they would still include 60 units with surface-only parking. Mr. Gunther said no, as replacement parking could be obtained with surface-only parking. He said G3 proposed 60 units because the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan discusses higher densities downtown.

Mayor Price inquired about the enforcement of surface parking. Mr. Gunther said it would not be their intention for parking to be limited to the tenants and noted there were currently 57 parking spots. The building residents would use parking in the morning and evening, and the public would use parking during the day.

Mayor Price noted he did not support committing the City to a future lease obligation. He said a garage might not cover the City's long-term parking needs over a future parking garage at the existing Public Works site.

Mayor Price asked if the construction cost would go up if over three stories. Mr. Gunther said no.

Mayor Price said he preferred the look of a hybrid coastal building with brick at the bottom and more modern at a higher level. He said it is an exciting project for the City and is needed on the site.

Kristie Furman, 204 N. Rockingham Avenue, Tavares, said her favorite thing about downtown Tavares was the architecture. She noted Tampa has a parking garage with a public garden top on the top floor.

Council Member Grenier said he would like to see two options from each firm; a parking garage and on-street parking.

Mr. Drury said parking would have to be addressed to meet the City's Land Development Regulation requirements, whether surface parking or a parking garage. He said the Council indicated a parking garage should be at no cost to the City, aesthetically pleasing, and street side. He said both proposals included adequate onsite parking to meet the City codes and noted the Council shared good comments on their preferences.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 7. Select Contractor for the new Public Works Operations Center

Mr. Dillon made the following presentation:

On October 29th, 2021, Governor Ron Desantis awarded the City of Tavares six (6) million dollars through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund to complete the funding program for the new Public Works Operations Center that will accommodate the entire operation of the City of Tavares Department of Public Works and serve as a regional transportation training and innovation center for the City of Tavares and Lake Technical College's Diesel and Automotive program. On May 4th, 2022, representatives from GatorSkitch, Lake Technical College, and City Staff presented to City Council the interlocal agreement and Architectural Site Plan for the new Public Works Operations Center. At that

meeting, the City Council approved the interlocal agreement, schematic design, and authorized staff to finalize the design, develop the construction documents and bid the job out. An Invitation to Bid for the construction of the new Public Works Operations Center (ITB No. 2023-0005) was opened publicly on November 19th, 2022, and closed on January 18th, 2023, at 2:00 pm, resulting in the receipt of three (3) bids as follows:

<i>DE Scorpio Corporation</i>	<i>\$21,327,007.00</i>
<i>Mark Cook Builders, Inc.</i>	<i>\$22,121,068.00</i>
<i>Charles Perry Partners, Inc.</i>	<i>\$23,786,686.00</i>

The budget for the construction portion of this project is \$19,489,517 placing the low bid of \$21,327,007 at 8% above budget (\$1,837,489).

Pursuant to the attached engineer's recommendation, it is recommended the Council approve Option 1 A, B, and C as follows:

- A. Select DE Scorpio Corporation as the lowest most responsive bidder for the project*
- B. Instruct staff and the Engineer to negotiate a contract within budget.*
- C. Bring back to the Council at its next meeting a construction contract within budget.*

Mr. Dillon said the architect and staff believed a contract could be negotiated within the budget.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the Council.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve Option 1 [A. Select DE Scorpio Corporation as the lowest most responsive bidder for the project; and, B. Instruct staff and the Engineer to negotiate a contract within budget; and, C. Bring back to the Council at its next meeting a construction contract within budget], seconded by Bob Grenier

Council Member Singer and Council Member Grenier noted their support for the project.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 8. Fairgrounds Horizon Team

Mr. Drury made the following presentation:

Lake County Fairgrounds is exploring relocation to Tavares across the street from Miracle Field off CR 448 next to the Animal Shelter. As this County project takes shape, a concerted coordination effort will take place between Lake

County, the Fairgrounds Board, and Tavares to address utilities, traffic, support hotels, and other related economic support and infrastructure. Having a Council member join the Horizon Team (City Administrator, Economic Development Director, Utilities Director, and Public Works Director) to report back to Council on progress and needs will benefit the project and Council.

Council Member Pfister said she had worked on the project for many years and wished to be appointed Council representative on the Fairgrounds Horizon Team.

MOTION

Bob Grenier moved to appoint Lori Pfister as the Fairgrounds Horizon Team Council Representative, seconded by Troy Singer. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Tab 9. Award of Quote for Fred Stover Sports Complex Appraisal

Mr. Aldrich made the following presentation:

Attached is a letter from the School Board of Lake County, Florida expressing their interest in purchasing the Fred Stover Sports Complex. Previously, at the November 2, 2022 meeting, the council directed staff to begin negotiating a purchase & sale agreement with the school board for the property. Staff has met with school board representatives and is currently developing that agreement and a negotiated sale price. An appraisal of the property is needed, and staff has solicited three price quotes as follows:

- 1. Pomeroy Appraisal Associates of Florida, Inc - \$4,800*
- 2. Clayton, Roper & Marshall Inc. - \$6,500*
- 3. The Spivey Group, Inc. - \$7,450*

Staff is seeking council authorization to move forward with the lowest price quote from Pomeroy Appraisal Associates of Florida in order to proceed with the purchase & sale agreement negotiations. Funds for the appraisal are available in the City Administrator's FY23 Contingency line item for miscellaneous purchases. Once the appraisal is complete, staff will bring the purchase & sale agreement back to the Council with the negotiated sale price for approval.

Mayor Price noted Pomeroy was a residential firm in Volusia County and recommended the approval of Clayton, Roper & Marshall, Inc. as they had commercial property experience and a Member Appraisal Institute (MAI) designation. He said while he wanted to save money, he felt it would be best to consider Clayton, Roper & Marshall, Inc. for the project.

Mr. Drury noted there were sufficient funds to accommodate the increased cost.

Council Member Pfister inquired about ballfield appraisals. Mayor Price said appraising a ballfield would be unique and specialized.

Vice Mayor Gamble and Council Member Singer supported Mayor Price's recommendation.

MOTION

Sandy Gamble moved to approve Clayton, Roper & Marshal, Inc. at a cost of \$6,500, seconded by Lori Pfister. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. AUDIENCE TO BE HEARD

Kristie Furman, 204 N. Rockingham Avenue, said she enjoyed the Rhythm on Ruby event and commended Cheri Moan on her efforts. Ms. Furman said she appreciates Mayor Price's fiscal conservatism and recommended Mr. Drury review the complications associated with millage and rollback rates.

Mr. Drury thanked Ms. Furman for her comments and said each Council member meets with him and the Finance Director to review the budget.

Ms. Furman said she is excited about the development of the fairgrounds and thanked Council Member Pfister for her efforts. She noted concern regarding the Tavares Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Drury said Council Member Singer and Mr. Tweedie attend each Chamber board meeting, and the Chamber makes a presentation to the Council every other meeting. He said the relationship between the Tavares Chamber of Commerce and the City of Tavares is strong.

Gary Santoro, Royal Harbor, welcomed Council Member Grenier back to the Council. He said he hoped the Council did not forget the staff, including Mr. Drury, during the budget process.

XIV. REPORTS

Tab 10. City Administrator Report

City Administrator

Mr. Drury said a list of upcoming events was provided to the Council. He highlighted upcoming African American Heritage events at the Tavares Library and Wooton Park.

Department Directors

Mr. Tweedie said the 2nd Annual Rhythm on Ruby Event was a great success and commended Cheri Moan, Operations Coordinator, for her efforts. He thanked the City departments who assisted, including Public Works, Fire, and Police. He thanked the Council for their support of the event.

Mr. Aldrich said Babe Ruth signup would be held through the following week and was reflecting a 30% increase from the previous year, with 160 participants registered.

Ms. Houghton said she looks forward to working with the Council during the budget season.

Tab 11. City Council Member Reports

Council Member Pfister

- Said she enjoyed the weekend festivities downtown and looked forward to the event season.

Council Member Grenier

- Noted Chief Coursey would present Lifesaving Awards and swear in two new officers on February 9, 2023.
- Said Tavares Square was an important project, and the history of the site should be cherished.
- Said he looked forward to the opening of the new Public Works Facility.

Council Member Singer

- Said the Rhythm on Ruby was a fantastic event, and he enjoyed the bands. He asked Mr. Tweedie to pass on his thanks and commendation to Ms. Moan. He thanked all the Departments for their assistance with the event.

Vice Mayor Gamble

- Inquired about golf carts on sidewalks along the lakeshore. Chief Coursey said the golf carts were not allowed and asked Vice Mayor Gamble to contact the Police Department if he witnessed violations. Mr. Tweedie said he would look into additional signage.
- Said it was Nancy Elkins's last day as the City Receptionist and wished her well in her retirement.
- Said Captain Buddy Luckock would be retiring later in the month and said he had been a faithful employee of the City for many years.
- Asked for the schedule of the water park. Mr. Dillon said Wooton Wonderland was on schedule, with a grand opening in June 2023.

Mayor Price

- Said the Rhythm on Ruby was a nice event.
- Said he was happy to see the Public Works Facility come to fruition.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Price adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk