



**TAVARES CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2020 – 6:30 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
Susie Novack, City Clerk
Bob Tweedie, Economic Development Director
Mark O'Keefe, Public Communications Director**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Boggus called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Tab 1. Jones Brothers Assignment of Lease Agreement

Mr. Tweedie made the following presentation:

Jones Brothers Air & Seaplane Adventures first established commercial seaplane operations here in America's Seaplane City at the same time the new Tavares Seaplane Base was opened in 2010. At that time the company leased a small office space at the City owned Prop Shop facility providing part time seaplane aerial tours and flight instruction.

Since that time the company has grown along with the Seaplane Base and has become a thriving and robust commercial seaplane operation providing full time, full service aerial scenic tours, flight instruction as well as on demand air charter services under an FAA part 135 air taxi operations certificate.

Current owner Rob Galloway took over full ownership of the company in 2016 and has been instrumental in the growth of the company not only in terms of operations but through its physical expansion into the current leasehold at the former trail head building which Jones Brothers entered into a lease for in 2018 and invested in substantial improvements to occupy.

Recently Mr. Galloway recently informed staff of an offer he had received to sell his interest in the company to Mr. Peter J Closi Jr. and has formally requested a lease assignment for the purpose of closing the ownership sale (see attached letter). Under the terms and conditions of the lease (attached) a lease assignment may be allowed with the approval of Council.

The buyer, currently owns and operates a helicopter tour operation in Key West and Clearwater intends to maintain and expand upon the current operations and bring the company to its next level (Please see attached business plan and resume provided by Peter Closi). He will be retaining Mr. Galloway as Operations Director for the next 2 to 3 years as well as the majority of the current personnel.

Staff recommends Option 1, to approve the lease assignment as requested.

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

Mayor Boggus asked for comments from the Council.

Council Member Stevenson asked if the meeting was properly noticed. Mr. Drury confirmed.

Council Member Buigas thanked Mr. Galloway for all he has done in the city. She said he has worked well with other business and it is her hope that continues.

Council Member Buigas asked if the five locations Mr. Closi will be growing his operations will be located in Lake County. Mr. Closi said no. He said other locations include Key West, St. Petersburg, Daytona, Miami Beach, and in the panhandle. He said he is looking for high tourist areas and would like to grow the brand as there are many pilots who would like to start an operation. Council Member Buigas asked Mr. Closi if he will primarily maintain seaplanes or incorporate helicopters. Mr. Closi said his focus is on seaplanes.

MOTION

Lori Pfister moved to approve, seconded by Roy Stevenson.

Council Member Singer thanked Mr. Galloway for his work with Jones Brothers. He said Mr. Galloway has taken Jones Brothers to the next level and it has been a large part of the community. Council Member Singer said he appreciates the seaplane bingo events with proceeds going to a scholarship to Tavares High School and hopes Mr. Closs continues with community involvement to keep the small town feel of Tavares. Mr. Closs said he concurs with Council Member Singer and it is his plan to come to Tavares monthly and meet with the pilots. He said he also plans to continue with scholarships, seaplane bingo, raffles, with hopes to add more.

Council Member Stevenson said Mr. Closs will fall in love with Tavares.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and Mayor Boggus adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susie Novack, MMC, FCRM
City Clerk