

**MINUTES OF THE HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD FEBRUARY 13, 2017**

**Mayor Sears** called the Town Council Meeting of February 13, 2017 to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troop No. 254** led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Public Services Supervisor Ernest** led the Invocation.

Present: Mayor Sears, Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel, Councilor Conroy, Councilor Mabry and Councilor Scott.

Also Present: Police Chief Thomas, Public Services Supervisor Ernest, and Town Clerk Brasher.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Minutes of the January 23, 2017 Town Council Meeting**

*Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel, seconded by Councilor Scott, moved to approve the Consent Agenda as corrected. Motion carried 5-0 with a roll call vote.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Update: Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Lake Legislative Meetings Regarding the Water Plant**

**Mayor Sears** gave detailed background on the meeting with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) regarding the sulfides in the water. He reassured the public there are no safety issues with the water quality. The Town received a letter from Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) noting the treatment of the sulfides and action being taken to resolve the problem. He further gave detailed background on his meeting with State Representative Metz and State Senator Baxley regarding the Town's request for water appropriation funding from the State of Florida.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding what the Town is doing to resolve the sulfides without putting in a new well and the associated costs. **Public Services Supervisor Ernest** discussed the continued problems with the Data Flow System and recommended purchasing a new monitoring system due to the continued problems and continued costs.

**Consideration and Approval of Budget Amendment 2016-2017-001 for the Sound System in the Council Chambers**

*Councilor Mabry, seconded by Councilor Scott, moved to approve Budget Amendment 2016-2017-001 for the new Sound System in the Council Chambers. Motion carried 5-0 with a roll call vote.*

**Update: Wastewater Line**

**Councilor Scott** asked for an update on the wastewater line. **Mayor Sears** gave detailed background and said the project is at the final planning stage with Booth, Ern, Straughan and

Hiott (BESH) and should be put out of bid next month. He said the line will run from the gas station on E. Central Ave down to Lakeshore Blvd. where a lift station will be located. He gave background on the approximate cost of \$150,000 to run the line to the doctor's office and the Library on W. Central Ave. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding extending the wastewater line, septic tank failures and hook-up fees.

**Councilor Conroy** suggested a strategic plan for water, wastewater and funding sources.

#### **Update: Alleyway Status**

**Mayor Sears** said there is no funding for this project and the plan was delayed pending the installation of the wastewater line and the proposed parking plan on W. Central Avenue.

#### **Discussion: Paving all roads on the West side of SR 19**

**Councilor Scott** said the streets on the West side of SR 19 look rough. **Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel** said the streets need to be curbed to prevent the street edges from being damaged. **Mayor Sears** gave detailed background on a street conditions survey that was done by Lake County several years ago and said the Town may need an updated assessment. He noted the Town has been paving every year and there are always budget constraints.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding truck and bus traffic in Town. **Police Chief Thomas** advised the Town cannot regulate the route the school buses use as they are exempt.

#### **Discussion: Bicycle Path from the SR 19 Bridge to CR 48**

**Councilor Conroy** gave detailed background on this item and said the Town should engage with Cities of Mt. Dora, Tavares, Mascotte, Groveland and Montverde to help assist with getting a plan for a bicycle path. He suggested sending a Resolution to the MPO for consideration.

### **OLD BUSINESS – None**

#### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Mayor Sears** gave background on a potential grant from the Florida Boating Improvement Fund. He suggested resurfacing the fishing pier. He also discussed improvements such as rest rooms, parking improvements with using Parks & Recreation Impact Fees as the match. Public Services Supervisor Ernest said the base of the pier is in good shape. A lengthy discussion ensued.

*It was the consensus of the Town Council to look into applying for this grant.*

**Councilor Scott** thanked Public Services Supervisor Ernest for his hard work and dedication on the water quality. **Councilor Conroy** said he would like to see a location map of all the wells.

**Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel** asked Staff not to use acronyms on the agendas or in the minutes. **Town Clerk Brasher** said she would make sure acronyms are not used.

**Councilor Conroy** said he supports Chief Thomas in the purchase of a vehicle but he is

upset with the process of the vehicle purchased. He said this should have been discussed with Mayor Sears and/or the Police Department Liaison (Councilor Mabry) before being purchased and gave detailed background.

**Councilor Mabry** said this purchase did not require a justification for the purchase. He said he takes offense to what Councilor Conroy said about the vehicle purchase and the public reprimand of Police Chief Thomas as well as what he said "I'll be watching you" to Chief Thomas. He said Councilor Conroy assumed Chief Thomas was buying a car and he is at fault for assuming. **Councilor Mabry** asked if the purchase price of the pick-up truck was outside the cost authorized. **Police Chief Thomas** said the vehicle will cost approximately \$43,000 and the budget was \$47,000. **Councilor Mabry** thanked Police Chief Thomas for a job well done on the purchase.

**Mayor Pro-Tem David Nebel** said he did not feel the purchase of the authorized vehicle needed to be approved or discussed with Mayor Sears or the Police Department Liaison (Councilor Mabry).

**Mayor Sears** said the Town Council is in error for not obtaining the vehicle information prior to authorizing the purchase. He said he has discussed this with Chief Thomas and the Town has learned a lesson from this. **Mayor Sears** said the item should not have been on the agenda without having the background on the purchase due to the fiduciary responsibility. A lengthy discussion ensued.

**Councilor Scott** said the Department Directors are hired to run their departments and they should be trusted to run their departments.

**Councilor Mabry** – No comments

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Sal Gallelli**, 1104 N. Tangerine said he would like to see a map of the Town wells and asked for background on the wells. He suggested the investment of a security camera to monitor the boat ramp area as vehicles are damaging the sidewalks with their trucks and trailers. He also asked for background information on the Police Department vehicles, what, why and price.

**Martha MacFarlane**, 210 E. Cypress said she is in favor of the boating grant for restrooms and using Parks & Recreation Impact Fees as the match.

**Elwis Benson**, 406 S. Florida discussed the chart of Impact Fee Balances and asked how Staff is monitoring what is being collected. **Town Clerk Brasher** gave detailed background.

**Mayor Sears** gave detailed background on impact fee eligible projects. A lengthy discussion ensued.

**Ed Smith**, 308 N. Palm Ave, asked if Utility Repair Experts (URE) keep the Town informed on how much chlorine is being used at the water plant. **Public Services Supervisor Ernest** said Utility Repair Experts (URE) are keeping him informed. **Mr. Smith** voiced his opinion with the vehicle purchase and said he feels this is micro managing. He also voiced his

concern with the Police Chief being reprimanded at a Public Meeting.

**Police Chief Thomas** said Lake County Sheriff Department brought their traffic device for the speed/traffic study on S. Florida Ave. and that will capture data for seven (7) days. He thanked everyone for their support and said a new SUV is outside to look at.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.**

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Chris Sears, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Brenda Brasher, MMC  
Town Clerk