



MINUTES OF THE HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Mayor MacFarlane led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Public Services Director led an invocation.

Members Present:

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor
Ed Conroy, Mayor Pro-Tem
Marie V Gallelli, Councilor
Rick Klein, Councilor
George Lehning, Councilor

Staff Present:

John Ernest, Public Services Director
John Brock, Town Clerk
Rick Thomas, Police Chief (virtually)
Thomas Wilkes, Town Attorney (virtually)

Roll Call was performed, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the January 25, 2021 Town Council Meeting.**

Motion made by Pro-Tem Conroy to approve the minutes; Councilor Gallelli seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Councilor Lehning	YES	Councilor Gallelli	YES
Council Klein	YES	Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy	YES
Mayor MacFarlane	YES		

NEW BUSINESS

2. **Consideration and Approval of RESOLUTION 2021-001. A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, pertaining to cleaner and greener lake frontage along Lakeshore Blvd; establishing an “Adopt a Bump-Out on Lakeshore” program; providing an effective date.**

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor, read Resolution 2021-001 aloud. The Town Council briefly discussed the Resolution.

Motion made by Councilor Gallelli to approve RESOLUTION 2021-001. A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, pertaining to cleaner and greener lake frontage along Lakeshore Blvd; establishing an “Adopt a Bump-Out on

Lakeshore” program; providing an effective date; Councilor Klein seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Councilor Lehning	YES	Councilor Klein	YES
Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy	YES	Councilor Gallelli	YES
Mayor MacFarlane	YES		

3. Discussion: Moving Fines/Fees specific values out of Ordinance and into Resolutions that are referenced by Ordinances.

Mayor MacFarlane explained the importance of moving fees and fines out of Ordinances and into Resolutions. The Mayor asked for volunteers from the Councilors to assist with identifying where all the fees and fines are currently in the Ordinances so that the Town can move forward with this project. Counselors Lehning, Klein, Gallelli and Pro-Tem Conroy volunteered to assist. Town Clerk Brock will coordinate this project. Town Clerk Brock will hold a meeting with the volunteers, or just speak to them one-on-one about the project.

4. Discussion: Policy on who can turn water on/off from the meter (Residents, Licensed Plumber, Town Staff).

Mayor MacFarlane, Mayor asked Mr. John Ernest, Public Services Director to explain some of the issues that Public Services is having with residents turning their water on/off at the meter. Mr. Ernest explained that residents have broken the water meter in attempts to turn the water on and off themselves, which is not only expensive, it can also cause it to take hours to be able to turn off the water. Mr. Ernest explained that some of the meters, especially the older ones, can be easily broken. Public Services is asking that only Town Staff or Certified Plumbers be the ones to turn the water on or off at the meter.

Councilor Klein expressed that we need to encourage the older houses in the Town, that do not have a shut-off valve, to get one. For houses that do not have a shut off valve, if the meter is broken while trying to shut off the water, there is no way to do this quickly, the meter would need to be fixed first and sometimes this requires digging up the street. It was suggested that we put notices in the water bill to educate residents on the importance of adding a shut off valve to their water lines.

It was decided that this would be put on the agenda for the next meeting to get this policy written and considered.

5. Discussion: Town Hall closing to the public on Fridays.

Mayor MacFarlane explained the importance of the Town Hall closing to the public one day a week so that certain task could get completed without distractions. This is important particularly due to how small of a staff we have a Town Hall. Mayor MacFarlane explained many of the

daily tasks that the Utility Billing Clerk (such as creation of new accounts) has and how they back up with interruptions.

Mayor MacFarlane also explained that this issue shows the need that the Town has to add a new part-time or full-time employee to work the front desk and assist the Utility Billing Clerk.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy explained that he would in favor of this policy if there is clear signage on the front and back door of Town Hall explaining that if someone did have an emergency on the day, that Town Hall is closed to the public to call a special number for assistance.

Councilor Klein suggested that the day that Town Hall closes be on Wednesday rather than Friday. Mayor MacFarlane said that she thought that the precedent was set by other local municipalities closing certain departments on Fridays to the public.

Mayor MacFarlane put forward that she wanted to start this not on the upcoming Friday, but rather the following Friday, 2/20/2021.

Public Comments:

JoJo Lowe, 139 E. Central Ave. – Mrs. Lowe said that as a retired teacher she did not have days off to do work and she did not think the person at the front desk had too much work to do.

Beth Flack, 607 S. Florida Ave. – She liked the idea of the Town Hall being closed on Wednesdays to the public.

Karen Johnson, 911 S Lakeshore Blvd. – Mrs. Johnson is retired Osceola County employee, and she thinks that this is a great idea for the Town.

Jamie Troyer, 224 Messina Pl. – Mrs. Troyer suggests that we need to make sure that we budget for a full-time, not a part-time employee, since it seems like we need the full-time employee.

Old Business:

6. Discussion: Update on the process to move sanitation fee (WCA) on to the tax roll.

Mayor MacFarlane explained Town Attorney Thomas Wilkes had contacted the town after this topic was brought up during the last Town Council Meeting and had explained the necessary steps that needed to happen. These steps included how this process must be advertised and getting permission from the Lake County Tax Collector and Property Appraiser to move forward. The town is following the appropriate steps to move forward.

Public Comment

Myron Lewellen, 508 Bellissimo Pl. – Explained how he did not want this process to occur because he felt that it would greatly increase the cost of his escrow in his mortgage.

Reports:

Town Hall

John Brock, Town Clerk, gave the Town Hall report. Mr. Brock stated that he had received his Notary Public last month and was now able to notarize documents for Town residents at Town Hall for free. He also explained how his certification for CMC was going.

Mr. Brock stated that the project of migrating over to the Black Mountain Software (BMS) Permitting Module would be completed by the first of March. He also stated that BMS would begin the process of creating our specific Cemetery Module in March.

Finance

Mayor MacFarlane explained that we are working on the audit, that we are still waiting on the Police Pension actuary work (which should be done Monday after next).

Police Department

Police Chief Rick Thomas discussed the status of the new Public Safety Complex Project. The Police Department is looking for the council to approve the conceptual plan soon so that we can piggyback off the city of Fruitland Park who is doing a similar project.

Chief Thomas introduced architect Mike Latham with GatorSketch Architects and Planners. He explained the project that he is doing in the City of Fruitland Park and how there would be a cost savings piggybacking off that work. Pro-Tem Conroy expressed that he wanted us to have something in writing from Lake county discussing their intentions before moving forward.

Public Comment

Sal Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Suggested that the Town speak to other municipalities and ask for tips or suggestions before moving forward.

The Police Chief also asked if the Town would be willing to donate the Town's oldest (11-year-old Police vehicle) to the Sumter County municipality Center Hill. The City of Center Hill is in great need a working police vehicle and we were going to decommission this vehicle.

Public Comment

Beth Flack, 607 S. Florida Ave. – Said she had spoken to the Center Hill Police Department in the past and they were very complimentary of the Howey-in-the-Hills Police Department and that she thought this would be the neighborly thing to do.

Motion made by Pro-Tem Conroy for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills to donate their oldest Police vehicle to the Sumter County City of Center Hill's Police Department; Councilor Gallelli and Lehning seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Councilor Lehning **YES**
Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy **YES**
Mayor MacFarlane **YES**

Councilor Klein **YES**
Councilor Gallelli **YES**

Public Services

Mr. John Ernest, Public Services Director, discussed the status of some of the Public Services projects. Mr. Ernest discussed the meeting he had with residents on Saturday 2/6/2021 to discuss the 2021 Downtown Sewer Project. He also spoke about the Well #5 project, which is looking at a site on Lake Hills development property.

Code Enforcement

Chief Thomas discussed two new code cases, one on Myrtle and one on Magnolia.

Library

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Library has been closed and will reopen on Wednesday 2/10/2021. Mayor MacFarlane introduced Fran O'keefe Wagler to talk about what things are happening in Special Events.

Fran O'Keefe Wagler, 408 W Central Ave – Mrs. Wagler discussed the Library reopening on Wednesday, Valentine's Day (Parent's Night Out) event, Founder's Day/Citrus Festival (on May 5/1/2021), the Easter Egg Hunt, and Town Special Election on 2/9/2021 from 7a-7p.

Town Attorney

Nothing to report.

Council Members

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy

Nothing to report.

Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning wants an update on the hiring of the Town Administrator/Finance Manager.

Councilor Gallelli

Councilor Gallelli reminded the Council the LEC Grand Opening is on 3/26/2021. Councilor Gallelli also announced a date for her next Social Distance Meet; it would be February 27th, at

10am. The Meet up would be at the gazebo at Griffin Park and the topics will include residents with businesses and ways to conserve water.

Councilor Klein

Nothing to report.

Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane stated the agreement with the CDD is outdated and needs to be updated; Blevins Park has new flags installed; we are working on getting the specifics on the Town Retirement Plan; and the Reserves development is reinterested in moving forward again.

Mayor MacFarlane also discussed that the Howey-in-the-Hills Boy Scout troop has disbanded with some of the members moving to the Tavares troop. The town had allocated \$5,000 for the Town troop and Mayor MacFarlane wanted to donate \$1,000 of that money to the Tavares troop.

Motion made by Pro-Tem Conroy for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills to donate \$1,000 to the Tavares Boy Scout troop that Howey-in-the-Hills Scouts have moved to; Councilor Gallelli seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Councilor Lehning	YES	Councilor Klein	YES
Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy	YES	Councilor Gallelli	YES
Mayor MacFarlane	YES		

Public Comments

Sal Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Wants the town to move the date of the Town garage sale to a new date so that it does not conflict with other municipalities official garage sales.

JoJo Lowe, 139 E. Central Ave. – Mrs. Lowe had a question to Counselor Gallelli about where her Social Distance Meet would be.


ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Councilor Gallelli to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Lehning seconded the motion.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. | **Attendees: 32**


Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:


John Brock, Town Clerk