



MINUTES OF THE HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD MAY 10, 2021

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.  
Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.  
Mr. John Ernest led an invocation.

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator  
John Brock, Town Clerk  
John Ernest, Public Services Director  
Thomas Wilkes, Town Attorney (virtually)  
Tara Hall, Library Director  
Azure Botts, Code Enforcement Officer

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

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to approve the agenda without changes; Councilor Gallelli seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the April 26, 2021 Town Council Meeting.**

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to approve the minutes; Councilor Klein seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 2. Presentation: Sara Whitaker of SMW GEO Sciences on the status of the CUP and Well #5.**

Sara Whitaker was not in attendance and this topic of business was postponed.

- 3. Consideration and Approval: Review Gwendolyn McIlvaine's application for membership to the Library Board.**

Mayor MacFarlane asked Tara Hall the Library Director to speak about the Library Board candidate. Mrs. Hall explained Mrs. McIlvaine was part of the library's home school group and has been a great asset to the library.

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy for the Town Council of Howey-in-the-Hills to approve of Gwendolyn McIlvaine's application to the Library Board; Councilor Gallelli seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**4. Consideration and Approval: LCSB SRO Contract for Summer term 2021 for Lake Hills School.**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that this was a normal/standard process in previous years when the school runs a summer session. Councilor Gallelli asked that since this was a routine item, had the Town ever asked for an increase. Mayor MacFarlane explained that this amount had gone up and down in the past.

Public Comment:

Doug and Berniece Hower, 444 Bellissimo Place – Mrs. Hower explained that she found two errors in the contract that the Town might wish to change. Mayor MacFarlane thanked Mrs. Hower and explained that the Town did need to make those changes.

**Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills to approve of the LCSB SRO contract for the Summer term 2021 for Lake Hills School as amended; Councilor Lehning seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.**

<b>Councilor Lehning</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Councilor Klein</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Councilor Gallelli</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Mayor MacFarlane</b>	<b>YES</b>		

**5. Discussion and Approval: Backflow quote for irrigation for Griffin Park.**

Mayor MacFarlane gave a background about the backflows and that the town had not run the irrigation at Griffin Park since 2017 or 2018. The Mayor wanted the Town Council to decide whether the Town should go ahead and replace the backflows and go back to irrigating the Park and surrounding area on Lakeshore, or should the Town remove the backflow and quit irrigating that area for good. Mr. Ernest explained that the backflows have to be tested every year and they frequently fail. He also said that the cost to replace the backflows is \$5,000. Mr. Ernest explained that if the Town Council decides not to irrigate that area anymore, he will take the backflows out of the ground and cap those lines.

Councilor Klein asked why we had the irrigation in the first place, were they needed at one time? He also asked that if the Town changed its mind in the future and wanted to irrigate that area, would that be a possibility? Mr. Ernest stated that we could do that in the future.

Public Comment:

None

**Motion made by Councilor Gallelli for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills to no longer irrigate along Lakeshore and Griffin Park and remove the backflows; mayor Pro-Tem Conroy seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**Old Business:**

None

**Town Reports:**

**Town Hall**

Town Clerk Brock explained that the Town Attorney briefed Town Hall on how a recent court case has ruled that websites are not “public accommodations” for the purposes of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Due to this development Mr. Wilkes stated, “If Howey is not aware of persons with visual impairments wanting to access Howey’s website with some frequency, then the Town should feel free to post pdf documents and other formats regardless of whether compatible with screen-reader software”. Going forward we will be posting the supplemental documents for each Town Council meeting on the website, and we will be slowly going back and posting older materials.

Mr. Brock stated that the Cemetery Module from Black Mountain Software is up and running. Town Hall is utilizing volunteers to load in old data about our cemetery into the Cemetery Module.

Mr. Brock gave an update on permits that were issued through Town Hall in April. During the month of April, we have had 15 Single Family Residents (SFR) permit requests from Dream Finders for Talichet bringing us year-to-date to 46 SFR permits issued for Talichet. We have had one new independent SFR permit for a house on E Myrtle. There were 3 SFR permit revisions in April. We also issued 7 building permits, 3 electrical permits, 3 mechanical/HVAC permits, 6 re-roofing permits, 1 pool/deck permit, 4 fencing permits, and 1 plumbing permits.

Mr. Brock stated that in April we continued to add late payment fees and disconnects for non-payments of utility bills. We did impose two property liens for non-payment of utilities. Those addresses were 503 Camino Real and 107 E Myrtle St.

**Police Department**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that the Police Chief was in training and gave some highlights from the Police Department's monthly report. Last month the Police Department participated in a successful National Take Back Day, it lasted for 4 hours and took in over 45 pounds of prescription drugs. The Police Department is in the process of bringing in 2 new full-time officers, which are taking the place of 2 full-time officers that had recently left. One of the new Officers is a former Howey-in-the-Hills Police Officer.

### **Code Enforcement**

Mayor MacFarlane explained that we had a brand-new Code Officer Azure Botts, who has a great deal of experience. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy asked Code Officer Botts what her strategy for the first few months on the job was. Code Officer Botts stated that she is looking at some Ordinances with the Chief and will be making suggestions to make them more enforceable so they can help keep property values up.

### **Public Services**

Mr. Ernest, Public Services Director stated that there were no water breaks last month. Mr. Ernest gave an update on the Central Ave Wastewater project. He stated that pipes had already begun to come in and were unloaded. Mr. Ernest thought that work would begin on the project within the next week or two.

### **Library**

Tara Hall, Library Director, stated that the Town had received a draft of the recommended appropriations of County funds and that there was an increase in this year's recommended amount that the Town library should receive.

### **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board / Special Events Committee**

Fran Wagler from the Special Events Committee announced the following events: Memorial Day event at the Taylor Memorial Cemetery on 5/31/2021 at 10am, Repaint the Traffic Signs on the Police Department Fence followed by an Ice Cream Social on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Wagler announced the winners of the Poetry Contest, the winners are: Blythe Darby McIlvaine (6 years old) her poem was *Flying with Dan*, Thomas O'Keefe (12 years old) his poem was *Reading*, and Grayson Terry (15 years old) his poem was *Tether*. Winner for the Name the Alley Contest was Vicky Steele, and she won a one-night stay at the Howey Mansion.

### **Town Attorney**

Town Attorney, Thomas Wilkes announced that the court case against the Town from Mr. Alimenti has been dismissed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, although he has the option of bringing it up again.

### **Town Administrator**

Sean O’Keefe, the Town Administrator, stated that the draft of the audit has been completed and he was hopeful that the final audit would be in by the end of the week. Mr. O’Keefe also explained some information on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) as it relates to the Town.

Mr. O’Keefe gave a summary of the draft the audit. He stated that the audit ratios are good almost to the point of being too good. That is, they do not maximize the Town’s available asset and liability limits. The Town has a high percentage of liquidity and has not assumed a lot of debt.

### **Council Member Reports:**

#### **Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy**

Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy wanted to know when mid-year employee reviews were going to be completed. Mayor MacFarlane explained that they would be completed soon, and the Town was changing its workflow to provide a 360-view process. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy also suggested that the property that the Town owned that was adjacent to Venezia should be used for a cycling trail head and that the Town may want to do an audit of cyclers activities in Town.

#### **Councilor Lehning**

Councilor Lehning suggested that a discussion for a future meeting should be updating the Town’s 5-year plan and how the Town Council could get citizen input. Councilor Lehning suggested that this could answer the question of “What does Howey want to be”. Councilor Lehning also discussed his review of GatorSkitch’s work of Temple Terrace and Fruitland Park’s projects, he thought they looked great.

#### **Councilor Gallelli**

Councilor Gallelli said that she thought the event committee did a great job with the Citrus Festival. Councilor Gallelli also wondered if cyclists purchase as much as motorcyclists do for other municipalities. Council Gallelli recommended that the public come to the Town Council meetings in person; that up to 10 visitors can attend the meeting in person. Councilor Gallelli explained the Town solicitor policy. Councilor Gallelli also reminded everyone that Maryann Krisovitch from Lake County Water Authority would come and speak about water sensors and water conservation at the next Town Council Meeting.

#### **Councilor Klein**

Councilor Klein asked if the Town was planning on going forward with repairs of the Sara Maude Park or going after grants to repair Sara Maude. Mr. O’Keefe said that the Town was waiting to see its funding and see where the Town priorities would lie. Mayor MacFarlane suggested that the priority was high for this project.

#### **Mayor MacFarlane**

Mayor MacFarlane stated that the prior week was Municipal Clerk's week and thanked Town Clerk John Brock for his work. Mayor MacFarlane also thanked the Events Committee for all their hard work.

Mayor MacFarlane explained that metal signs were coming for the Town buildings. She also stated that an RFP for replacing the Town Markers would be released before the end of the month. Mayor MacFarlane also stated that Town Hall has checked with our Town Attorney and the town has the authority to go ahead and do an electric sign without changing any Ordinances. She also said that the Town was committed to having the electronic sign built on the corner of the Town Hall land.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she received an email from Harris Chain of Lakes Group, and they were going to create a focus group on the Harris Chain of Lakes in June or July, and they were inviting the Town to participate.

Mayor MacFarlane also stated that she received an email about feral cats in a resident's yard. She wanted to make sure that everyone is aware that the Town has an interlocal agreement with the Lake County Animal Control to help deal with issues like this.

Mayor MacFarlane announced that the name that won the "Name the Alley" competition was "Tom Dick and Howey Alley". The issue is that now that the town has gone through this contest, we can not put up signs for this alley because Garbage trucks going down the alley would hit them.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she has asked Flo Dash, the group that organized the run for Founders Day, if they would do the 5k and 10k races for the Christmas Festival.

The Mayor stated that now that Councilor Lehning and Klein have identified the current Ordinances that laid out fee and fines, we need to redo our Ordinances so that our Fee Schedule is created through Resolutions. This task should be completed by the end of June.

The Mayor also stated that Town Hall is looking at purchasing the Black Mountain Software module on Timesheets. This should make payroll more efficient and easier to run. The Town would look to spend some CARES act money on this. The Town will also have some public workshops to see what other areas of need it should spend this money on.

### **Public Comments**

Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way – Mr. Tuite wanted to make a correction of the information that Mayor MacFarlane had given about the focus group on the Harris Chain of Lakes. The sponsor of the focus group was FWC.

Myron Lewellen, 508 Bellissimo – Mr. Lewellen thought that since more revenue was coming into to the Town, that the Town's property tax rate needs to be lowered.

Fran Wagler, 408 W Central Ave. - Mrs. Wagler wanted to thank all those that helped and

volunteered on the Citrus / Founder's Day Festival.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Gallelli seconded the motion.**

The Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m. | **Attendees: 32**

ATTEST:

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Mayor Martha MacFarlane

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John Brock, Town Clerk