

HILLIARD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Hilliard Town Hall / Council Chambers
15859 West County Road 108
Post Office Box 249
Hilliard, FL 32046

TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

John P. Beasley, Mayor
Kenny Sims, Council President
Lee Pickett, Council Pro Tem
Joe Michaels, Councilman
Jared Wollitz, Councilman
Dallis Hunter, Councilman

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Lisa Purvis, Town Clerk
Cory Hobbs, Interim Public Works Director
Gabe Whittenburg, Parks & Rec Director

TOWN ATTORNEY

Christian Waugh

MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 04, 2025, 7:00 PM

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

Anyone wishing to address the Town Council regarding any item on this agenda is requested to complete an agenda item sheet in advance and give it to the Town Clerk. The sheets are located next to the printed agendas in the back of the Council Chambers. Speakers are respectfully requested to limit their comments to three (3) minutes. A speaker's time may not be allocated to others.

PLEDGE OF CIVILITY

WE WILL BE RESPECTFUL OF ONE ANOTHER
EVEN WHEN WE DISAGREE.
WE WILL DIRECT ALL COMMENTS TO THE ISSUES.
WE WILL AVOID PERSONAL ATTACKS.
"Politeness costs so little." – ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CALL TO ORDER

PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mayor John Beasley
Council President Kenny Sims
Council Pro Tem Lee Pickett
Councilman Jared Wollitz
Councilman Dallis Hunter
Councilman Joe Michaels

PUBLIC HEARING

ITEM-1 Ordinance No 2025-09 – Setting the Town of Hilliard, Tentative Millage Rate for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Mayor Beasley

Open Public Hearing
Call for Public Comments

Harry Godwin, 37125 Southern Glenn Way, Hilliard, states he is confused about the proposed 0.25 mill increase. He questions why Hilliard is considering

raising taxes when other jurisdictions are lowering theirs, noting this would equal about \$250 per \$100,000 in property value and potentially \$800,000 more in revenue. He argues Hilliard already has one of the highest tax rates in the county and questions whether the increase is truly needed.

Deborah Mayo, 36152 Pine Street, Hilliard, states that Governor Ron DeSantis has called for rolling back taxes, not raising them. She states that the Town Council will be held responsible and criticizes bonds and spending, suggesting fraud concerns.

Phyllis Godwin, 37125 Southern Glenn Way, Hilliard, notes there are currently 151 properties for sale, with hundreds more homes planned for new developments. She fears raising taxes will drive people away, including her daughter, a single mother, who may not be able to afford a higher mortgage.

Sally Singleton, 2940 Jane Lane, Hilliard, asks questions about the millage rate and who sets it since she lives outside Town limits.

Close Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2025-09

Motion to close Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

TOWN COUNCIL ACTION

Town Council to consider adopting Ordinance No. 2025-09, on First Reading and to set a Second Public Hearing & Final Reading on Friday, September 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Councilman Wollitz, clarifies that there are 47 homes for sale in Hilliard. He explains that raises are tied to budget challenges, noting that the Nassau County Local Option Gas Tax was miscalculated for Callahan, causing Hilliard to lose \$100,000 in next year's budget. Comparing millage rates, he calculates his own property taxes will rise by about \$37.13 and stresses that the Town is now compensating for years of lowering the millage rate while surrounding counties raised theirs.

Council President Sims, adds that the Town believed it was serving residents well by keeping the millage rate among the lowest in Florida and by keeping water and sewer rates low. However, with the Town no longer qualifying as a REDI Community, grants have diminished, largely because Hilliard hasn't adjusted its own rates.

Council Pro Tem Pickett, reiterates that Council members pay the same taxes as citizens. He says while they took pride in rolling back rates, the decision has created challenges now.

Town Clerk Lisa Purvis, emphasizes that the tax difference this year funds quality-of-life services such as sidewalks, streetlights, mosquito spraying, and public facilities.

Public Works Director Cory Hobbs, adds that the Town tracks and reports mosquito spraying dates and locations.

Town Attorney Waugh, advises he has reviews the process for budget hearings and that the Town Council are following the rules.

Motion made by Councilman Wollitz, Seconded by Council President Sims.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

ITEM-2 Ordinance No. 2025-10 – Setting the Town of Hilliard, Tentative Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Mayor Beasley

Open Public Hearing
Call for Public Comments
Close Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2025-10

Following no public comments, motion to close Public Hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Council President Sims.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

TOWN COUNCIL ACTION

Town Council to consider adopting Ordinance No. 2025-10, on First Reading and set a Second Public Hearing & Final Reading on Friday, September 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m..

Motion made by Council President Sims, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

REGULAR MEETING

ITEM-3 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

No additions to or deletions from the agenda.

ITEM-4 Town Council approval of the monthly retainer increase to Mr. James A. "Butch" Williams' agreement with the Town of Hilliard for Fire Safety Inspection Services.
Lisa Purvis, MMC – Town Clerk

Motion made by Council President Sims, Seconded by Council Pro Tem Pickett.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

ITEM-5 Town Council approval of the Public Works Director's recommendation to fill the vacant Public Works Technician/Heavy Equipment Operator position.
Cory Hobbs – Public Works Director

Public Works Director Cory Hobbs explains that this individual has already started under emergency circumstances.

Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Wollitz.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

- ITEM-6 Town Council approval of the Public Works Director's recommendation to fill the vacant Public Works Technician/Heavy Equipment Operator position.
Cory Hobbs – Public Works Director
- Public Works Director Cory Hobbs explains that this individual has already started under emergency circumstances.
- Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels
- ITEM-7 Town Council approval of the Public Works Director's recommendation to fill the vacant Public Works Technician position.
Cory Hobbs – Public Works Director
- Public Works Director Cory Hobbs, states that this individual is to begin work Monday, September 8, 2025.
- Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Wollitz.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels
- ITEM-8 Town Council approval of the Public Works Director's recommendation to fill the vacant Public Works Technician position.
Cory Hobbs – Public Works Director
- Public Works Director Cory Hobbs, states that this individual is to begin work in two weeks.
- Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels
- ITEM-9 Town Council to accept the resignation of Jody Wildes, Lead Wastewater Specialist, effective September 5, 2025.
Cory Hobbs – Public Works Director
- Motion made by Council Pro Tem Pickett, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels
- ITEM-10 Town Council to accept the resignation of Calen Burnette, Administrative Financial Assistant, effective September 19, 2025.
Lisa Purvis, MMC – Town Clerk
- Motion made by Council President Sims, Seconded by Council Pro Tem Pickett.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

- ITEM-11 Town Council to Reschedule the September 8, 2025, Budget Workshop for the review and discussion of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget.

Lisa Purvis, MMC – Town Clerk

Councilman Wollitz motions to keep Workshop as originally scheduled on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Motion made by Councilman Wollitz, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

- ITEM-12 Town Council approval of the Minutes for the August 14, 2025, Workshop, August 18, 2025, Workshop, and August 21, 2025, Workshop & Regular Meeting.

Lisa Purvis, MMC – Town Clerk

Mayor Beasley, asks why former Mayor Vanzant's picture is not on the agenda and requests during discussion at the August 21, 2025, Regular Meeting. Town Clerk Lisa Purvis replies stating that she was not sure how to word the item for the agenda as discussion items are taken up at either workshops or at the end of the meeting under Additional Comments. Further states that she is not sure how you can force someone to provide a picture but assures as soon as one is received, she will immediately have it ready framed and ready for Mayor Beasley to have placed up on the wall.

Motion made by Councilman Wollitz, Seconded by Council Pro Tem Pickett.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

- ITEM-13 Town Council approval of Municipal Equipment Company, LLC, Payable through August 22, 2025, Project Name: 2 Sets of Bunker Gear in the amount of \$1,748.05.

CAPITAL FUNDED PROJECT LUMP SUM CONTRACT \$9,794.10

Motion made by Councilman Wollitz, Seconded by Councilman Michaels.
Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

PUBLIC

No public comments.

MAYOR & TOWN COUNCIL

Councilman Wollitz, reports that he has emailed Nassau County regarding low-hanging tree branches and roadside overgrowth, along Pine Street noting that Public Works and several citizens have also raised the issue.

He thanks staff for starting work in the Northwest Quadrant.

Councilman Michaels, shares that he spoke with Parks & Recreation Director Gabe Whittenburg earlier, who is currently off. He highlights strong participation in recreation programs, with over 100 kids in soccer and more than 25 in gymnastics.

Council Pro Tem Pickett, emphasizes that the Town Council is working hard to make the best decisions for the residents of both the Town and Nassau County.

Mayor Beasley, reminds everyone that the Car Show will be held this Saturday, September 6, 2025, starting at 8:00 a.m., and encourages attendance. Further states that Alicia Head Town PIO & Events Coordinator has sent out emails regarding the upcoming events that she has planned for City Government Week, October 20th through 24th, asking that all council members & staff participate.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

PRESENT:

Town Clerk Lisa Purvis
Public Works Director Cory Hobbs

ABSENT:

Parks & Recreation Director Gabe Whittenburg

Town Clerk Lisa Purvis, provides several updates to the Town Council.

She reports that she spent several hours today with the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) and consulted with auditors regarding the unrestricted fund balance. She notes that reducing the Bond Reserve Account by \$93,000 could help offset water and sewer revenue needs. She emphasizes that she is working to minimize the impact of the water and sewer rate increase and announces that FRWA will present be presenting the rate study at the Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. monthly workshop.

The Hilliard Airpark Box Hangar Project went out to bid this week, with a pre-bid meeting September 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., a bid opening October 8, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., and award scheduled for November 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Thanks to the help of Councilman Michaels, the marketing for the Mikkleson Estate (land only) will begin soon.

On September 10, 2025, the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator will be advertised in the Nassau County Record and on the Town's website. RFQs are due October 2, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. and will be reviewed at the October 9, 2025, Monthly Workshop.

The Greenbrier Groundbreaking Ceremony is scheduled for September 16, 2025, at 11:30 a.m., and the Town Council has been invited.

Mayor Beasley will be recognized for his 25 years of service to the Town by both the Town and the Florida League of Cities at the September 18, 2025, regular meeting.

She reminds all that on September 23, 2025, the Nassau Delegation Speaker's requests are due.

On October 1, 2025, the Nassau Delegation meeting will be held at the Nassau County BOCC chambers from 1:00–3:00 p.m. in Yulee.

Rural Counties Day in Tallahassee is scheduled for January 22, 2026, and she states that she will coordinate with Sherri Mitchell of the Nassau County Economic Development Board regarding participation.

She also revisits Council President Sims' earlier point about the Town no longer qualifying as a REDI Community, explaining that because the east side of Nassau County is more affluent than the west, eligibility is determined based on the county as a whole. However,

efforts are being made to have the Town evaluated independently. Councilman Sims agrees stating that only one to two counties in the state are looked at separately due to one half being considered rural.

TOWN ATTORNEY

No comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:48 p.m.

Motion made by Council President Sims, Seconded by Councilman Wollitz.

Voting Yea: Council President Sims, Council Pro Tem Pickett, Councilman Wollitz, Councilman Hunter, Councilman Michaels

Approved this 18th day of September, 2025 by the Hilliard Town Council, Hilliard, Florida.



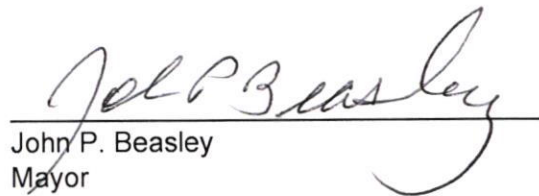
Kenneth A. Sims, Sr.
Council President

ATTEST:



Lisa Purvis
Town Clerk

APPROVED:



John P. Beasley
Mayor