



Town Council Public Hearing on Tentative Budget and Proposed Millage Rate

**September 07, 2023 at 5:05 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737**

MINUTES

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Public Hearing on Tentative Budget and Proposed Millage Rate to order at 5:05 p.m.

Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Councilor George Lehning | Mayor Pro Tem Marie V. Gallelli | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator | John Brock, Town Clerk | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Morgan Cates | Public Works Director | Tara Hall, Library Director | Matt McDonald, Code Enforcement Officer

Confirmation of Meeting Notification and acknowledgement of Quorum was completed.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2023-008 - Tentative Millage Rate**

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor, read Resolution 2023-008 by title only and the following statements.

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-008, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 7.50 FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The Taxing Authority is the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills.
- The Rolled-Back Rate is 6.5274 mills.
- The percentage over the Rolled-Back Rate is 14.90%, which is the percentage increase in

property taxes.

- The proposed Millage Rate to be levied is 7.500.

Mayor MacFarlane gave a short presentation showing a comparison of the proposed millage rate and budget rate to historic millage rates and budgets within the Town.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment and Questions for this issue only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline had questions about where funding for the Town’s budget came from that did not originate from property taxes. Mr. Everline also asked about what happens if the Town does not receive the level of impact fees that it was expecting.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch had questions about how his property tax was set and how his property was assessed.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment and Questions.

Mayor MacFarlane introduced the Town’s new Code Enforcement Officer, Matt McDonald, to the Town Council.

Mayor MacFarlane congratulated Police Officer, Rafi’-el Corbitt, as the staff member of the month at Lake Success Academy.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Councilor Comment and Questions for this issue only.

Councilor Miles asked what 1/10 of a mill was. Councilor Miles stated that he would be proposing to lower the millage rate from 7.5 to 7.4. Councilor Miles noted that the Town’s non-appropriated fund balance was currently budgeted at \$28,865.

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe noted that lowering the Town’s millage rate by 1/10 of a mill would cost the Town about \$18,000.

Mayor MacFarlane suggested that the Town Council approve the maximum millage rate at the tentative public hearing and wait to make any motions lowering the rate until the final hearing when the Town Council could have exact numbers as to the cost of lowering the millage.

Mr. O’Keefe summarized his Executive Summary that had been included in the packet for the Public Hearing.

Councilor Lehning stated that, in a future Executive Summary, he would like to see a comparative breakdown of the difference in fund amounts between the current fiscal year and the upcoming fiscal year and why there was a change.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she thought that the \$31,500 budgeted for the Christmas Festival seemed high. It was decided to leave the Christmas Festival budget at its currently budgeted level.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Councilor Comment and Questions.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve Resolution 2023-008, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 7.50 FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion was approved by a roll-call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: Councilor Miles

2. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2023-009 - Tentative Budget**

Martha MacFarlane, Mayor, read Resolution 2023-009 by title only and with the following statements.

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-009, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Tentative Budget for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills for Fiscal Year 2024 to be adopted by Fund Department is as follows:

- General Fund in the amount of \$2,550,080.
- Infrastructure fund in the amount of \$273,355.
- Enterprise fund in the amount of \$6,943,736.
- Police Pension Fund in the amount of \$176,604.
- Police Advanced Training Fund in the amount of \$3,000.
- Water Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1,162,653.
- Parks & Rec Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$738,000.
- Police Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$738,000.
- Road Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
- Wastewater Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
- Stormwater Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
- Building Services in the amount of \$679,565.
- Tree Fund in the amount of \$1,000.
- Total all Funds \$13,265,996.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment and Questions for this issue only.

Tim Everline, 1012 N Lakeshore Blvd. – Mr. Everline gave out some handouts to the Town Councilors. Mr. Everline compared the Town’s proposed millage rate with other local municipalities. Mr. Everline suggested that the Town should get sponsors to pay for the Town Christmas festival rather than directly funding it. Mr. Everline then made comparisons of Town employees’ pay, such as the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Public Works Director, and Code Enforcement Officer to a website’s quote of what it thought the average person in those position within the State of Florida made.

Eric Gunesch, 448 Avila Pl. – Mr. Gunesch had questions about who pays for impact fees.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Councilor Comment and Questions for this issue only.

Councilor Lannamañ suggested that she was in favor of the budget, but she was concerned about the two administrative assistants that were being added to the staff. Councilor Lannamañ suggested that the budget be approved but that the Town Manager should be told to put one of the positions on hold and not hire it for 6 months or so.

Councilor Miles disagreed, saying that, if the budget was approved, the Town Manager should ensure that the budget be executed. Councilor Miles said that if the Town Council was not in favor of hiring one of the new positions, that it should have the position removed from the budget.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that she thought the Town needed both new positions that had been proposed and that the Town Hall position was vital. Councilor Miles agreed with Mayor MacFarlane and defended the need for the proposed Public Works Administrative Assistant position.

Motion made by Councilor Lehning to approve Resolution 2023-009, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

Nay: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any person wishing to address the Mayor and Town Council and who is not on the agenda is asked to speak their name and address. Three (3) minutes is allocated per speaker.

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Councilor Lannamañ to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Miles seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m. | **Attendees: 36**



Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:



John Brock, Town Clerk

