

Town Council Public Hearing on Final Budget and Millage Rate

**September 24, 2025 at 5:05 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737**

MINUTES

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

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

Councilor Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum Present and Proper Notice Given

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Everline | Councilor Jon Arnold | Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Mayor Graham Wells

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | Mike Giddens, Police Lieutenant | Morgan Cates, Public Services Director | Oscar Ojeda, Finance Supervisor | John Brock, Deputy Town Manager / Town Cler

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

None

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

**Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Arnold.
Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: None

PUBLIC QUESTION & COMMENT

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. The general Public Question & Comment period will be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes unless extended by the Presiding Officer.

None

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-016 - Final Millage Rate FY26**

Mayor Wells read Resolution 2025-016 out loud by title only and the following statements:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-016, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 6.9900 FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The Taxing Authority is the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills of Lake County, Florida.
- The Rolled-Back Rate is 7.0227 mills.
- The percentage increase over the over the Rolled-Back Rate is -0.47%.
- The proposed Millage Rate to be levied is 6.9900.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

There were no public comments or questions.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Mayor Wells opened Councilor Comment and Questions for this issue only

Following a brief discussion regarding the wording of the resolution, Councilor Lannamañ moved to approve Resolution 2025-016.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve Resolution 2025-016; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Everline. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: None

2. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-017 - Final Budget FY26**

Mayor Wells read Resolution 2025-017 out loud by title only and the following statements:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-017, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A FINAL BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The Final Budget for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills for Fiscal Year 2026 to be adopted by Fund Department is as follows:
 - General Fund in the amount of \$3,897,390.
 - Infrastructure fund in the amount of \$259,200.
 - Enterprise fund in the amount of \$6,806,197.
 - Police Pension Fund in the amount of \$165,515.
 - Police Advanced Training Fund in the amount of \$1,500.
 - Water Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.

- Parks & Rec Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
- Police Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$4,368.
- Building Services in the amount of \$156,013.
- Tree Fund in the amount of \$1,000.
- Transportation Fund in the amount of \$76,465.
- Wastewater Fund in the amount of \$574,124.
- Total all Funds \$11,941,774.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

There were no public comments or questions.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

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

Councilor Miles inquired about last-minute budget changes, specifically regarding the additional utility vehicle approved for the Public Services Department during the September 8, 2025, Town Council Meeting. He asked which fund covered the split cost and whether it had been implemented, noting that the water impact fee fund showed only \$1. Mayor Wells clarified that the impact fee fund is separate from the operating enterprise funds, one for water and one for wastewater, and confirmed that the changes were implemented prior to the Tentative Public Hearing. Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager, added that the updates, including the vehicle purchase, had already been incorporated into the budget by the Finance Supervisor. Councilor Miles confirmed his understanding and asked if any other adjustments had been made to the budget after the third workshop. Mr. O'Keefe and Mayor Wells affirmed that no further changes occurred beyond those actions previously approved, noting that the adjustments also included the \$2,000 reallocation for training, education, and dues.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Resolution 2025-017, the final budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 in the amount for all funds of \$11,941,774, as broken down in the discussion by the Mayor; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: None

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wells asked if anyone had anything else to speak about.

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, provided an update on the Police Chief recruitment process, noting that interviews would be held on Friday, September 26, 2025. He explained that four local Police Chiefs had been invited to participate on the interview panel to assist in evaluating candidates. Mr. O'Keefe stated that Lieutenant Mike Giddens would continue serving as Interim Police Chief until a permanent appointment was made and confirmed that Lt. Giddens was among the five members of the applicant pool to be interviewed. He further clarified that, as a charter officer position, the Police Chief position requires Town Council confirmation. While the Town Manager makes the selection, the Council confirms the final appointment. This confirmation was scheduled for the next regular Town Council meeting on October 13, 2025.

Councilor Arnold asked whether the selected candidate would attend the meeting so Council could ask questions, and the Town Manager confirmed that he would notify the candidate and expect them to be present. Councilor Lannamañ requested to review the resumes of all candidates, and Mr. O'Keefe agreed, noting that he could provide the information in advance along with details of the interview panel composition. In response to a question from Councilor Miles, Mr. O'Keefe identified the participating agencies as Leesburg, Fruitland Park,

Mascotte, and Tavares, explaining that the representatives were either police chiefs or individuals with prior law enforcement leadership experience.

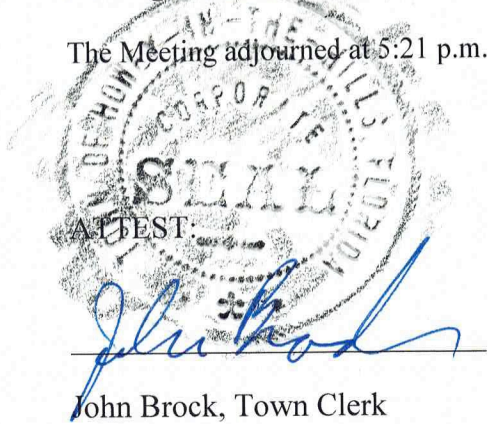
There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Councilor Lannamañ to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Arnold seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m. | **Attendees: 14**



Graham Wells, CMC, Mayor

ATTEST:


John Brock, Town Clerk