



Town Council Meeting

July 28, 2025 at 6:00 PM

**Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83238160613?pwd=IHuWPw68yICSGKpTatTLUsDj2Bb9wV.1>
Meeting ID: 832 3816 0613 | **Passcode:** 008469

AGENDA

Call the Town Council Meeting to order
Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
Invocation by Councilor Reneé Lannamañ

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum Present and Proper Notice Given

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

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.

CONSENT AGENDA

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.

- 1.** The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the July 10, 2028, Town Council Meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

OLD BUSINESS

- 2.** The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 23, 2025, Town Council Meeting.
- 3.** Consideration of Approval: **E Holly St. Budgeting**

NEW BUSINESS

4. Consideration and Approval: Resolution 2025-009 - Proposed Maximum Millage Rate

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; SETTING THE PROPOSED MAXIMUM MILLAGE RATE OF AD VALOREM TAXATION AND SETTING THE DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- Mayor will read the Resolution title.
- Town Manager will explain Resolution 2025-009.
- Mayor will open Public Comment and Questions for this item only.
- Mayor will close Public Comment.
- Motion to approve Resolution 2025-009.
- Council Discussion.
- Roll Call Vote.

5. Consideration and Approval: Water Rate Increase

6. Consideration and Approval: (First Reading) Ordinance 2025-006 - Compensation for Mayor and Town Council Members

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO THE COMPENSATION OF THE MAYOR, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS; REVISING THE COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO THE MAYOR, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE AND COUNCILORS IN SECTION 42-10 OF THE TOWN'S CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- Mayor will read the Ordinance title.
- Town Manager will explain Ordinance 2025-006.
- Mayor will open Public Comment and Questions for this item only.
- Mayor will close Public Comment.
- Motion to approve Ordinance 2025-006 to a second reading.
- Council Discussion.
- Roll Call Vote.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

7. Town Manager

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT

8. Mayor Pro Tem Everline

9. Councilor Arnold

10. Councilor Miles

11. Councilor Lannamañ

12. Mayor Wells

ADJOURNMENT

To Comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Qualified individuals may get assistance through the Florida Relay Service by dialing 7-1-1. Florida Relay is a service provided to residents in the State of Florida who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Disabled that connects them to standard (voice) telephone users. They utilize a wide array of technologies, such as Text Telephone (TTYs) and ASCII, Voice Carry-Over (VCO), Speech to Speech (STS), Relay Conference Captioning (RCC), CapTel, Voice, Hearing Carry-Over (HCO), Video Assisted Speech to Speech (VA-STs) and Enhanced Speech to Speech.

Howey Town Hall is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: **Town Council Meeting**

Time: **Jul 28, 2025 06:00 PM Eastern Time** (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83238160613?pwd=IHuWPw68yICSGKpTatTLUsDj2Bb9wV.1>

Meeting ID: 832 3816 0613

Passcode: 008469

Dial by your location

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 832 3816 0613

Passcode: 008469

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kc78JZ01BW>

Please Note: In accordance with F.S. 286.0105: Any person who desires to appeal any decision or recommendation at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purposes may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. The Town of Howey-in-the-Hills does not prepare or provide this verbatim record. Note: In accordance with the F.S. 286.26: Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact Town Hall, 101 N. Palm Avenue, Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737, (352) 324-2290 at least 48 business hours in advance of the meeting.



Town Council Meeting

July 10, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

AGENDA

Mayor Wells called the Town Council Special Meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.
Mayor Wells led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Councilor Reneé 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 (via Zoom) | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Mike Giddens, Police Lieutenant | Public Utilities Supervisor, James Southall (via Zoom) | April Fisher, Town Planner | Don Griffey, Town Engineer (via Zoom) | John Brock, Deputy Town Manager / Town Clerk

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

None

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Motion made by Councilor Arnold to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. 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.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Town resident, Marie Gallelli, raised concerns about poor audio quality during meetings when participants join remotely. She also asked for an update on the fire truck renovation.

Gavin Scheel, 123 E Oak St. – Town resident, Gavin Scheel, asked if his band could still be considered to perform at a future event and requested that a female artist be allowed to perform as part of the act. He also relayed a concern from a nearby food truck operator who claimed he was not allowed to display signs promoting his business. Mayor Wells noted that the organizer of the music series would be in contact regarding the band's participation.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Town resident, Andi Everline, raised concerns about ongoing street work on Citrus and Gardenia, noting that both areas were dug up but had seen no activity for over a week.

Mrs. Everline also reported that yard waste was not collected along Lakeshore Boulevard that week.

Fran Wagler, 409 W. Central Ave. – Town resident, Fran Wagler, presented a donation on behalf of an anonymous benefactor, that she had solicited. The donation was a ground outdoor light intended to illuminate the Town's historic water tower.

CONSENT AGENDA

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Councilor Miles asked to pull Agenda Items # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 for discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline request to pull Agenda Item #7 for discussion.

Consent Agenda Item #4 was the only item that was not pulled for discussion.

4. Consideration and Approval: Library Interlocal Agreement – Fourth Amendment

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Consent Agenda (which now only included Agenda Item #4); seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 23, 2025, Town Council Meeting.

Councilor Miles raised a concern regarding the accuracy of a sentence in the June 23, 2025, Town Council Meeting Minutes referencing a required second access point for a townhouse subdivision. He noted that the current wording implied the access "could be required," whereas the Town had already approved a plan mandating two full access points to a townhomes section of the Hillside Groves Development. Councilor Lannamañ responded that her original motion referenced the potential for a second access if the Town gains jurisdiction over the adjoining road. She emphasized that the County currently owns the road and has not yet transferred it to the Town, which limits immediate action.

Councilor Miles insisted that the requirement for two full access points, not just one and an emergency exit, had been a condition of approval when the plat was adopted a year and a half ago. He further explained that this requirement still stands unless formally amended, regardless of the County's position. Mayor Wells and Councilor Lannamañ acknowledged the County's role in limiting access, and Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, advised that the staff should review the meeting audio to confirm what

was actually stated during the prior meeting. If the recorded motion differs from what is written, the minutes should be corrected; otherwise, a formal motion would be needed to amend the approval.

Councilor Miles then made a motion to continue the item to the July 28 meeting for further review. Councilor Lannamañ seconded the motion, which passed 4–1.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to continue this item to the July 28, 2025, Town Council Meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion passed by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: Councilor Arnold

2. Consideration and Approval: **RFB 2025-003 - Lift Station #1 Bypass Pump Project Bid Acceptance**

Councilor Miles raised concerns regarding agenda items two and three, both involving lift station projects that were bid separately but attracted the same four bidders. He noted that staff recommended awarding the contracts to the second-lowest bidder instead of the lowest. Councilor Miles explained that, while the memo did not specify why the low bidder was deemed non-responsive, the Town Manager had informed him that the low bidder proposed using a different, inferior pump model than what was specified in the bid documents. Given this valid reason, Councilor Miles supported staff's recommendation and moved to award both contracts to the second-lowest bidder.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline inquired whether the grant funding would cover the full cost of the projects. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, explained that, due to multiple grants that the Town had acquired for both projects, the cost burden to the Town would be minimal. Mr. O'Keefe stated that the Town's cost for Lift Station #1 Project would be \$5,071 and the Town's cost for Lift Station #2 would be \$9,121.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve both Agenda Item #2 and Agenda Item #3 awarding both Projects to RCM Utilities; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

3. Consideration and Approval: **RFB 2025-004 - Lift Station #2 Bypass Pump Project Bid Acceptance**

Discussion for this Agenda Item was combined with Agenda Item #2.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve both Agenda Item #2 and Agenda Item #3 awarding both Projects to RCM Utilities; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

5. Consideration and Approval: **Library Services – Impact Fee Funding**

Councilor Miles requested to pull item five from the consent agenda, concerning the acceptance of \$200,000 in library impact fee funding. He explained that he plans to propose a long-term vision to build a new municipal complex, including a new Town Hall, police station, and expanded library, on a new site, allowing the current municipal buildings to be demolished and converted into park land. He asked whether the grant funds could be used to design a new library at a different location rather than expanding the current facility. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, confirmed that, as long as the funds are

used strictly for library design and not shared with other municipal functions, that would be permissible. However, Mr. O’Keefe also clarified that the Town would be required to repay a prorated amount of a previous grant if the current library building were repurposed before the 10-year use period has passed.

Councilor Lannamañ questioned how the Town would fund a new library, noting that recent construction costs in other towns were between \$10 million and \$12 million.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline expressed concern that, similar to the previous library expansion, the Town might have to contribute funds beyond what the County provides. He asked whether accepting the design funding would obligate the Town to proceed with construction. Mr. O’Keefe clarified that it would not; the grant would cover design only, and no commitment to build would be required.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Fran Wagler, 409 W. Central Ave. – Town resident, Fran Wagler, asked council members to speak louder, noting that audience members in the back were having trouble hearing. She then provided context on library construction costs, citing the Fruitland Park Library, which cost approximately \$3 million, and the Astor Library, which has not yet opened but is expected to remain under \$4 million. She shared this information to offer a more local and realistic cost comparison, in contrast to the higher figures previously mentioned.

Councilor Miles noted that Fruitland Park had repurposed its old library into a community center, which he praised. Councilor Lannamañ responded that her \$10–12 million estimate was based on figures from larger communities. Mrs. Wagler emphasized that her intent was to provide a clearer picture of library costs within Lake County.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Town resident, Marie Gallelli, asked why a library expansion is being considered and what the intended purpose of the \$200,000 design funding would be, noting it ultimately involves taxpayer money. Mayor Wells and Mr. O’Keefe explained that the expansion would provide additional bookshelf space and small study rooms for meetings. Mr. O’Keefe clarified that the plan involves enlarging the library building itself, not just renovating the interior. Mayor Wells added that the expansion would likely extend the building outward, possibly toward the front.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Town resident, Andi Everline, expressed skepticism about the need for a library expansion at this time. Citing American Library Association guidelines, she noted that the current 4,000-square-foot facility can accommodate up to 5,700 people, which exceeds the Town’s current population. She questioned the urgency of pursuing expansion, especially given her observation that local growth appears stagnant.

Mayor Wells acknowledged her point but emphasized that municipal projects take years to develop, and projected growth may justify planning now. Mrs. Everline mentioned that a local real estate office had closed due to a lack of growth, while Mayor Wells responded that, although the resale market may be slow, new construction, such as the Venezia Townhomes, has seen strong sales. Councilor Miles reiterated that his intent was to keep future options open, recognizing that, even if a new library is not currently needed, it would take several years to plan, fund, and construct one.

Gavin Scheel, 123 E Oak St. – Town resident, Gavin Scheel, expressed support for a future library expansion.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Everline to approve Agenda Item #5; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting**Yea:** Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells**Nay:** Councilor Lannamañ6. Consideration and Approval: **Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit**

During consideration of item six, approval of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 audit, Councilor Miles expressed concern about the short review period, noting that the audit had only been received a couple of days prior. Councilor Miles stated that he would like to make a motion to table Agenda Item #6 until the July 28 meeting to allow all council members sufficient time to read the report. There was no second for that motion.

Mayor Wells and Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, clarified that the audit had already been filed with the state to meet the June 30 deadline, making the council’s action a retroactive acceptance. Mr. O’Keefe explained that, because the audit is an independent product of the auditors, Council approval does not alter its content but formally acknowledges receipt.

Councilor Miles emphasized the importance of timely audits and noted that, in his prior experience as a finance director, audits were typically completed by March. He also pointed out a recurring inaccuracy in the audit’s Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) section, which incorrectly describes the Town’s government structure as having an elected mayor, rather than a mayor selected by and from among the five elected council members. He requested that this error be corrected in future audits. Mayor Wells agreed and noted that a new auditor will be engaged next year.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve Agenda Item #6; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting**Yea:** Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells**Nay:** None7. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-011 – Plat Approval Process**

Mayor Pro Tem Everline inquired about whether Resolution 2025-011 was related to the re-platting of N. Citrus. Mayor Wells clarified that the action was unrelated and instead prompted by recent changes in state legislation, effective July 1, which now prohibit elected officials from approving plats. Town Clerk, John Brock, explained that the measure ensures the Town remains in compliance with the updated Florida Statutes. An ordinance to formally revise the Town’s Land Development Code will be brought to the Planning & Zoning Board later in the month and to the Town Council for two readings in August. This interim step delegates plat approval authority to the Town Manager.

Mr. Brock further clarified that the new law removes elected officials from the platting process entirely at both municipal and county levels. Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, elaborated that, while Councils still retain authority over subdivision and final engineering plan approvals, the plat itself merely reflects those prior approvals and has become a procedural step. The legislative change is intended to streamline the process by removing the need for council or commission agendas for perfunctory plat approvals. Town Planner, April Fisher, confirmed that plats are based on previously approved plans. Councilor Miles summarized the intent: to eliminate delays by assigning plat approval to the Town Manager.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Resolution 2025-011; 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**PUBLIC HEARING****8. Consideration and Approval: Mission Rise Preliminary Subdivision Plan Submittal**

Town Planner, April Fisher, presented the Preliminary Subdivision Plan (PSP) for the Mission Rise development, stating that the applicant had addressed all Development Review Committee comments and met the requirements for preliminary plan approval. She noted that full landscaping, hardscaping, and irrigation plans would be required at the final subdivision stage. The Planning and Zoning Board had recommended approval with two conditions: first, that the development remain outside of an adjacent property owner's (Stephen Kane) 20-foot easement; and second, that a proposed road stub-out abutting Silverwood Lane be removed.

Councilor Miles inquired about the timeline for submitting detailed recreational facility plans, including playgrounds, pools, benches, and restrooms. Mrs. Fisher confirmed those elements are required at the final subdivision stage. Councilor Miles emphasized the importance of adequate recreational amenities for the approximately 408 units and encouraged the developer to consider adding a second or third pool with cabanas and restrooms in other sections of the development.

Applicant representative, Katlyn Crowell, confirmed that the developer had contacted the concerned property owner and adjusted future plans to respect the easement. She also stated the Silverwood Lane stub-out would likely be removed. Regarding recreational facilities, Ms. Crowell indicated that a pool and cabana were planned for Parcel E, and that restrooms were typically included, although no final designs had yet been completed. Councilor Miles encouraged inclusion of restrooms and reiterated the benefit of multiple communal pools to reduce future variance requests for private backyard pools.

Mayor Wells noted that the Land Development Code may not require restrooms in cabanas, but Councilor Miles expressed his strong preference for their inclusion. Mrs. Fisher agreed to review the development agreement to verify any recreational requirements and ensure consistency in the final subdivision plan review.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only. As there was no public comment, Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Mrs. Fisher recommended approval with the two stated conditions. Councilor Reneé Lannamañ made a motion to approve the preliminary subdivision plan with the conditions that (1) property boundaries be shifted outside (Mr. Stephen Kane's) adjacent 20-foot easement and (2) the stub-out on Silverwood Lane be closed. Councilor Miles seconded the motion, adding that the unit count should not exceed 415 and requesting clarity on the exact number, which Ms. Crowell confirmed was currently 405–408 units.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the Mission Rise PSP with the conditions that (1) boundary lines be shifted outside (Mr. Stephen Kane's) 20-foot easement and (2) the stub-out on Silverwood Lane be closed; Seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting**Yea:** Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells**Nay:** None**OLD BUSINESS**

None

NEW BUSINESS

9. Consideration and Approval: Approval for Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Restriping of Palm Ave. to Remove On-Street Parking

During discussion of Agenda Item #9, the Town Council considered a proposal from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to re-stripe Palm Avenue during its scheduled resurfacing in 2026. The proposed re-striping would eliminate on-street parking by moving the white edge lines closer to the curbs, creating more usable width for vehicle traffic. This would allow cars to bypass left-turning vehicles without the need for a third lane, which FDOT had previously determined was not feasible due to safety concerns.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline, who introduced the proposal, emphasized the expected future traffic increases from nearby developments and expressed concern that delaying action would result in inaction. He noted that FDOT had implemented similar re-striping on other state roads with success, such as SR 44 in Deland. He also clarified that this option would be implemented at no cost to the Town and could be reversed if future studies recommend other changes.

Council members weighed the potential benefits of improved traffic flow against concerns about losing on-street parking for residences and businesses along Palm Avenue. Councilor Lannamañ and Mayor Wells raised concerns about access to businesses, parties, deliveries, and utilities, while Public Utilities Supervisor James Southall noted that eliminating the parking areas would require additional safety measures for Town staff conducting work along the corridor. Police Lt. Mike Giddens added that on-street parking currently serves as a speed deterrent.

Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, provided a broader urban planning perspective, cautioning against design changes that increase road capacity at the expense of neighborhood character and livability. He noted that on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees, and narrow lanes are core components of traditional, sustainable neighborhood design and warned that allowing wider travel lanes now could lead to pressure for full four-lane expansion in the future, changes that would be difficult to reverse.

Mayor and council members expressed mixed views, with some favoring traffic efficiency and others emphasizing long-term community character and safety.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Fran Wagler, 409 W. Central Ave. - Town resident, Fran Wagler, provided historical context on the use of South Florida Avenue and school bus routing, noting that South Florida was originally designed to accommodate truck traffic from the citrus plant to reduce pressure on Palm Avenue. She recalled that school bus routes were also intended to avoid Central and Lakeshore, though that is no longer the case. Mrs. Wagler emphasized that past promises, and planning decisions should be considered when making changes now, especially given the increased residential traffic from newer developments like Talichet.

Mrs. Wagler supported the idea of a consistent speed limit along State Road 19 to reduce confusion and discourage speeding, particularly as drivers accelerate out of Town. Mrs. Wagler also addressed the practical timing of the Palm Avenue re-striping decision, pointing out that residents had already received notice that the road would be resurfaced. She urged the council to make a decision before that work occurs, so the striping is done correctly the first time, as part of the scheduled project.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Town resident, Marie Gallelli, voiced strong opposition to the proposed re-striping of Palm Avenue. She emphasized the uniqueness and character of the Town, arguing that eliminating on-street parking and widening lanes would negatively impact the community's

livability. Referencing a comparison to State Road 44, she noted that homes along Palm Avenue are situated much closer to the roadway, making the situation distinct and more sensitive to changes.

Mrs. Gallelli argued that open roadway space naturally allows for vehicles to maneuver around left-turning traffic without needing to remove parking, and she expressed concern about past and ongoing disruptions, such as aggressive tree trimming and excessive speed enforcement measures. She concluded by urging the council to reject the proposal and preserve the street's current design and neighborhood character. Mrs. Gallelli reaffirmed her recommendation to vote no.

Gavin Scheel, 123 E Oak St. – Town resident, Gavin Scheel, expressed support for removing on-street parking entirely, citing safety concerns. He stated that parked cars along the road obstruct visibility and make it difficult to see fast-moving traffic, including vehicles traveling at 55 to 60 miles per hour and semi-trucks. When asked to clarify, he confirmed that he supports the proposal to eliminate roadside parking as advocated by Mayor Pro Tem Everline.

Mayor Wells acknowledged that, while delivery vehicles such as those from Kroger, Amazon, and UPS would still stop curbside out of necessity, Mr. Scheel's preference aligned with the idea of clear travel lanes with no parking.

Following public comments, Mayor Wells remarked that he remained undecided on the matter and suggested that the Council consider tabling the decision to allow more time for reflection. Mayor Pro Tem Everline proposed a potential compromise: asking FDOT whether a limited parking zone could be retained in a one-block area around Central Avenue to support local businesses, while removing parking elsewhere along Palm. Councilor Arnold added that the Town is not under immediate pressure to decide and could postpone the matter without consequence.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to table Agenda Item # 9 to the July 28, 2025, Town Council Meeting; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: Councilor Miles

Councilor Arnold noted the next MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) meeting likely would not occur until October, giving the Town time to consider its position. Councilor Lannamañ requested that representatives begin a conversation about making speed limits consistent along the corridor. Mayor Wells and Mayor Pro Tem Everline agreed that standardizing the limits, potentially to 35 mph, would enhance safety and could be addressed in the MPO's future traffic studies, which heavily weigh public input.

Mayor Wells proposed notifying residents and businesses along SR 19 about the upcoming discussion to encourage public participation. Council agreed to table the issue until the second meeting in August and send notices specifically to SR 19 property owners.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ reconsider the last motion to table Agenda Item #9 to the July 28, 2025 Town Council Meeting, but rather table Agenda Item #9 to the August 25, 2025 Town Council Meeting (to allow time for Town Hall to mail out notices to all SR 19 residents and businesses, notifying them of the discussion); seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: Councilor Miles

10. Consideration and Approval: **Selection of TRIM Meeting Dates**

Motion made by Councilor Arnold to approve the dates of September 10, 2025, and September 24, 2025, for this year's TRIM Hearing Dates; 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

11. Consideration of Approval: **E Holly St. Budgeting**

Councilor Arnold moved to table Agenda Item # 11 until the next meeting Town Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Councilor Miles objected, stating that he had originally asked for the item to be placed on the agenda two meetings prior and felt it had already been delayed. He emphasized that the Council had acted based on inaccurate information on May 1st, and as a member of the prevailing side of that original vote, he wished to formally revisit and potentially reverse the decision.

Mayor Wells acknowledged the motion and opened the floor for Council discussion and public comment.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Town resident, Andi Everline, offered comments regarding Holly Street, stating that, after visiting the area, she found it to be in relatively good condition aside from one minor section that could be patched. She expressed concern that full resurfacing seemed unnecessary given the current condition of the road, especially considering the potential for future sewer work that might require digging up the pavement again.

Brad Smith, 120 E. Holly St. – Town resident, Brad Smith, inquired about the rationale behind the Holly Street resurfacing project, noting that he had been unable to find documentation explaining its necessity. Councilor Miles responded that Holly Street, along with Gardenia, had been prioritized by the Public Services Director for resurfacing due to poor condition, though he acknowledged Gardenia was in worse shape. He explained that many roads in the original part of Town were not properly constructed with a lime rock base and have deteriorated under heavy use, particularly by garbage trucks. The Town has been following a phased plan to improve streets, budgeting approximately \$300,000 annually for resurfacing and widening roads from 16 to 20 feet. Councilor Miles added that recent budget changes redirected funds away from this effort, leaving future road projects underfunded.

Mr. Smith concluded by stating that, in his experience driving the street daily, East Holly Street appears to be in good enough condition to delay resurfacing if necessary.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. - Town resident, Marie Gallelli, expressed her opinion that the resurfacing of Holly Street should remain scheduled for 2026 and that funds should instead be prioritized for the repair of the Town's boat dock, as originally planned. She noted that Mr. Smith, who lives on Holly Street, had made a compelling case that the road was not in urgent need of repair.

Councilor David Miles responded with concern, stating that the decision to delay Holly Street disrupted a long-term resurfacing schedule designed to improve one or two streets per year. He emphasized his objection to how the funding reallocation was handled, noting that, although Mrs. Gallelli was comfortable with the change, he was not.

Councilor Arnold then withdrew his motion and introduced a new motion to consider approval of funding for East Holly Street in the current fiscal year. Mayor Graham Wells clarified that the issue was not whether Holly Street would be completed, but rather when, emphasizing that the project had already

been deferred to Fiscal Year 2026, while the boat dock repairs had been prioritized for the current fiscal year (FY 2025) due to safety concerns and prior Council action.

Councilor Miles expressed concerns about the long-term road repair schedule, noting that, without borrowing, it would take seven years to complete the same number of roads currently proposed for funding in one year. He shared that he had submitted a proposal for the upcoming budget cycle to finance road and dock improvements through a five-year loan, arguing that limited transportation funds, currently funded only by gas tax revenue, could not support road reconstruction without such borrowing. He reiterated that the boat dock replacement was only identified as a safety priority in May and expressed frustration that it had displaced a previously budgeted road project.

Councilor Lannamañ acknowledged the funding constraints and stated she was not in favor of borrowing at this time, noting that Holly was not among the Town's worst roads. She and Councilor Miles agreed that other streets, such as Myrtle and Gardenia, may merit higher priority.

Mayor Wells recommended deferring a decision on Holly Street until Public Services Director, Morgan Cates, returned from vacation, and stated that funds were available to complete the boat dock this year, with enough surtax revenue expected next year to cover Holly Street, if Council chose to move forward. He also reminded the Council of other financial burdens associated with recent road projects, including legal, surveying, and water utility costs.

Ultimately, Councilor Arnold withdrew his second motion and introduced a third motion, to table the item until the July 28, 2025, Town Council meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Arnold to table Agenda Item #11 to the July 28, 2025, Town Council Meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved by voice vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline

Mayor Wells asked for a motion to extend the meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to extend the Town Council Meeting to 9:15 p.m. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

12. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-010 - Mid-Year FY2025 Budget Amendment**

Mayor Wells asked for any Council discussion or Public Comment on this agenda item. There was none.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Resolution 2025-010; 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

13. Consideration and Approval: **Letter for Coalition Against Bigger Trucks**

Council considered a request to approve a letter of support for the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, which opposes federal legislation that would increase the weight and/or length limits for tractor trailers on interstate highways. Councilor Miles, who requested the item be added to the agenda, explained that larger trucks pose safety risks and cause significant wear and tear on municipal roads, which are maintained at local expense. He noted that, although the proposal primarily concerns weight increases, there is also a provision to allow certain trucks to increase from 80 to 88 feet in length. Councilor Miles pointed out that such trucks already impact Town infrastructure, particularly on routes used heavily by traffic bound for the nearby juice plant.

Councilor Arnold and Councilor Lannamañ expressed caution regarding the potential implications of the letter on relations with the juice plant, which has a facility within the Town and is a significant taxpayer. Mayor Wells acknowledged these concerns but emphasized that the letter does not target existing operations but rather aims to prevent further increases in truck size. He cited the operational difficulty and congestion already caused by existing large trucks on Town roads.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Brad Smith, 120 E Holly St. – Town resident, Brad Smith, offered a suggestion aimed at improving efficiency and reducing roadway wear caused by garbage trucks on secondary streets. He proposed that residents coordinate to place their garbage bins on the same side of the street on collection days. This would allow the garbage trucks to make a single pass rather than navigating complex patterns through the neighborhood. Mr. Smith noted that alternating bin placement by street, one side one week, the other side the next, could create a looped route that reduces time, fuel, and wear on Town roads. While he acknowledged that this approach would require cooperation among neighbors, he believed it could significantly streamline operations and lessen the impact on residential streets. His suggestion was met with interest and appreciation from members of the Council.

Councilor Miles made a motion to approve three letters of opposition, with a correction to include Senator Rick Scott's address, as his name had been mistakenly omitted. However, the motion did not receive a second and therefore failed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

14. Town Hall

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

15. Police Department

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

16. Code Enforcement

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

17. Lake County Fire Rescue

Lake Count Fire Rescue report was included in the meeting's packet.

18. Public Services Department

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

19. Parks & Recreation

None

20. Library / Community Events

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

21. Town Attorney

None

22. Finance Supervisor

Department report was included in the meeting's packet.

23. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, provided several updates during his report. He announced that the Town has been awarded an additional \$1.485 million in state appropriations for Water Treatment Plant No. 3, supplementing the previously awarded \$4.25 million. Although the Town had requested twice that amount, receiving half was still considered a significant funding achievement.

Mr. O'Keefe also reminded the Council of two upcoming meetings: a joint municipal meeting hosted by the County on Monday, September 29th at 1:00 p.m. at the Venetian Center in Leesburg, and the first budget workshop scheduled for Tuesday, July 22nd at 1:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT

24. Mayor Pro Tem Everline

Mayor Pro Tem Everline raised two concerns. First, he relayed a complaint from resident Chandra McCollum, who lives on Magnolia Street adjacent to one of the Mission Inn golf courses. Mrs. McCollum and her husband have reportedly been disturbed for years by early-morning maintenance activities on the course, beginning as early as 4:30 a.m., involving noisy equipment and bright LED lights. Mayor Pro Tem Everline noted that similar issues do not occur on the Las Colinas course, allegedly because of Lake County's noise ordinance, and questioned why the Town could not enforce similar restrictions. He expressed concern that Mrs. McCollum's outreach to the Town Manager and Code Enforcement Officer had gone unanswered and suggested the Town adopt its own noise ordinance to address this and future development-related disturbances. Other council members, including Councilors Miles and Arnold, confirmed they had also been contacted by Mrs. McCollum and acknowledged the legitimacy of her concerns. Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, agreed to review the applicability of the Lake County noise ordinance to determine whether the Town could enforce it or adopt its own.

Second, Mayor Pro Tem Everline voiced objections to an email he received from the Town Manager on May 21 regarding procedural expectations for Council-staff interactions. Mayor Pro Tem Everline cited the Town Charter, specifically Article 2, Section 3(E), which grants Councilors the right to obtain information from staff. He took issue with the Town Manager's reference to ICMA Tenet 2, stating that the guideline had been inaccurately paraphrased to suggest that staff must inform the Town Manager of any communications with Councilors. Mayor Pro Tem Everline asserted that Tenet 2 applies only to communication between officials of different municipalities and not within the same organization. He described the Town Manager's approach as controlling and counterproductive to trust and organizational effectiveness.

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, responded by acknowledging that the ICMA guideline had been paraphrased to reflect internal organizational communication and reiterated that the intent was not to restrict Councilor access to staff, but to encourage transparency and communication. He noted that most staff and Councilors had operated with mutual openness in this regard. Mayor Pro Tem Everline concluded by emphasizing that trust and communication are built through mutual respect, not control.

25. Councilor Arnold

None

26. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles noted that he had requested a different version of the Finance Report from staff. He recommended that Council members review it, suggesting that it could be printed double-sided in portrait orientation to reduce it to four pages.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline requested that Town staff salaries for the current and previous fiscal years be provided ahead of the upcoming budget session. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, confirmed that this information is routinely provided alongside with the budget materials and is presented in a clear format showing current and proposed hourly and annual wages, along with the percentage change for each position.

Councilor Miles inquired about when the full budget packet would be made available in advance of the July 22nd workshop. Mr. O’Keefe responded that the packet would be finalized and distributed by the following Friday at the latest. Mayor Wells added that staff were currently in the process of reviewing departmental requests and salary recommendations, after which the complete information would be compiled and shared with Council.

27. Councilor Lannaman

None

28. Mayor Wells

Mayor Wells closed the meeting by alerting the Council to a significant funding shortfall for Water Treatment Plant No. 3. The projected cost to complete the plant is approximately \$10 million, while total appropriations currently amount to only \$5.7 million, leaving a gap of roughly \$4.3 million. With a construction timeline of approximately 355 days, the Town has limited time to identify a viable funding strategy.

The Mayor and Town Attorney Tom Wilkes have been exploring potential options, including the voluntary prepayment of impact fees by developers or builders. While such an approach has been used in other jurisdictions and is potentially legal, it would be strictly voluntary and may include incentives. However, if this option proves unfeasible, the Town would likely need to consider borrowing the remaining funds. The State Revolving Fund (SRF), which typically offers favorable rates, is not a viable option due to time constraints and complex compliance requirements, including the use of Davis-Bacon wages and domestic materials.

One interim solution discussed was the use of a line of credit to bridge cash flow for the \$5.7 million already appropriated, allowing the Town to spend and then request reimbursement. Mayor Wells noted that the cost of such a line of credit would likely be around 4.25% to 4.5% interest, with repayment only on funds actually drawn.

Councilors also discussed the evolution of the project cost—from an earlier estimate of \$7 million to the current \$10–12 million range. The higher figure includes the expansion to a 12” main but does not account for \$2 million in upgrades needed for an existing water treatment plant. Councilor David Miles suggested exploring a revenue bond that would include both water and wastewater improvements to reduce administrative costs and interest rates compared to issuing multiple smaller bonds.

ADJOURNMENT

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 9:23 p.m. | **Attendees: 36**

Graham Wells, CMC, Mayor

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk



Town Council Meeting

June 23, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor Wells called the Town Council Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Mayor Wells led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum Present and Proper Notice Given

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Everline (Attending Remotely via Zoom) | Councilor Jon Arnold | Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Mayor Graham Wells

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Public Services Director, Morgan Cates | April Fisher, Town Planner (via Zoom) | John Brock, Deputy Town Manager / Town Clerk

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to allow Mayor Pro Tem Everline to participate in the meeting and vote remotely via Zoom; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

None

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to pull Consent Agenda item #2 (Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval) from Consent Agenda to discuss.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Miles. 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.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Marie Gallelli requested that the digital sign's slide duration be extended to improve readability for passing drivers. Town Manager Sean O'Keefe noted the current default is five seconds per slide. Councilor David Miles supported the suggestion, stating he also has difficulty reading multiple items and agreed the timing could be adjusted.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Resident Andi Everline expressed disappointment over the conduct at the previous meeting, stating it was embarrassing for those in attendance and noting that while officials apologized to each other, no apology was made to the public.

Mayor Wells responded by apologizing for his role in the incident to both residents present and those watching online.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E. Central Ave. – Resident Tina St. Clair raised concerns about pedestrian safety at the crossing at Central Ave. and SR 19, noting the danger to residents, including children and individuals in wheelchairs. She requested that the Town pursue a flashing-light pedestrian crossing similar to those in other Florida cities and volunteered to help organize community support if needed.

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, stated that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a study that may include improvements through that corridor, with further details provided by staff. Councilor Arnold confirmed the crossing is a high-priority safety project ranked second or third on the list, with hopes to coordinate it with Palm Avenue resurfacing in 2026. Councilor Miles and Mayor Pro Tem Everline added that FDOT is aware of the Town's request but has not committed to the project due to funding constraints. Mayor Pro Tem Everline encouraged residents to submit letters or petitions to FDOT to help elevate the project's priority. Mrs. St. Clair also asked if interim safety measures like painted lines could be considered while awaiting larger improvements.

Banks Helfrich, 9100 Sams Lake Rd., Clermont, FL – County resident Banks Helfrich, identifying himself as "Farmer Banks", began his remarks with a light-hearted "Farm Tip of the Day" about growing watermelons in Florida. He offered three practical tips for improving watermelon quality and reducing pests. He then transitioned to a more serious topic, citing a 2023 Johns Hopkins University study identifying firearms as the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 17 in the United States. Drawing a historical parallel to Ralph Nader's life-saving advocacy for vehicle safety, Mr. Helfrich urged greater community engagement on gun safety. He noted that the City of Groveland Police Department and local gun shops offer safety courses and emphasized the importance of secure storage practices. Concluding with a call for action, he asked who will step forward as this generation's Ralph Nader to prevent further tragedies. Mayor Graham Wells thanked him for his comments.

Public Services Director, Morgan Cates, reported that the Town's engineered crosswalk improvement plan for the intersection of State Road 19 and West Central Avenue has been selected by FDOT for inclusion in the Target Zero pedestrian safety program. The program, in partnership with Bike Walk Central Florida, includes a 2025 study, at no cost to the Town, that will evaluate driver behavior, pedestrian activity, and enforcement needs. The study results will be shared with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to support the Town's request for enhanced safety features, including pedestrian lighting and crosswalks on both sides of the intersection. Mr. Cates and Lieutenant Giddens also attended a regional conference to advocate for the project. While optimistic, Mr. Cates noted the intersection remains hazardous and long-term improvements may require a traffic signal.

CONSENT AGENDA

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to pull Consent Agenda item #2 (Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval) from Consent Agenda to discuss.

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 09, 2025, Town Council Meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Consent Agenda (now only Agenda Item #1); seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

2. Consideration and Approval: **Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval**

Council discussed the proposed purchase of two utility vehicles for the Police Department, focusing on costs, vendor selection, usage, and timing. Police Chief Thomas presented quotes, recommending Love Motorsports in Ocoee as the lowest bidder. Councilor Miles questioned whether the quoted \$16,399 per unit was negotiable and suggested a \$35,000 all-in target. Chief Thomas noted negotiations would need to happen with the dealership's general manager once the Town was ready to commit.

The vehicles would be funded from Police Impact Fees, with over \$250,000 currently available. Council discussed the intended use, primarily for events like Founders Day, Christmas, and emergency response, as well as concerns about warranties, outfitting, and timing of purchase. Mayor Wells suggested delaying the purchase and incorporating it into the FY 2025–26 budget process to allow for broader capital planning and potential cost savings. Councilor Everline voiced his support in waiting to purchase the utility vehicles, as they were not needed until the Christmas Festival.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E Central Ave. - Resident Tina St. Clair inquired whether older vehicles, such as those formerly stationed at the Water Treatment Plant, on Central Ave., could be sold to help offset the cost of new utility vehicles. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, clarified that those older vehicles had already been removed and sold. Mrs. St. Clair acknowledged the response and expressed support for the Police Department's needs.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Police Department Utility Vehicles purchase; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Mayor Wells

PUBLIC HEARING

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

3. Consideration and Approval: **Selection of Dates for FY25-26 Budget Workshops**

After some deliberation the Town Council decided to hold the first Budget Workshop on July 22, 2025, at 1:00pm and the second Budget Workshop on August 7, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to have the Budget Workshops on July 22, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., and August 7, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.; 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

4. Consideration and Approval: **Hillside Groves Minor Amendment Request**

Town Planner, April Fisher, introduced a request from Meritage Homes to amend the approved Hillside Groves PUD (formerly The Reserve) by reducing the width of townhome lots from 27 feet to 24 feet. Staff and the planning consultant had determined the request constituted a major amendment requiring a full public hearing process; however, the applicant disagreed and sought Council's determination that it could instead be processed as a minor amendment, which would not require re-noticing or a full amendment process.

Applicant representative, Alex Flores, confirmed that, while the unit widths would be reduced, the overall number of townhomes, 153, would remain unchanged. Councilor Miles questioned the use of the additional space, to which the applicant responded it would become landscaped green space. Councilor Miles emphasized that no additional units should be added and raised concerns about reduced setbacks, limited access, and potential street parking issues. He advocated maintaining the originally approved road access layout, noting a previous Council requirement for two access points into the townhouse pod.

Discussion ensued about the feasibility of access onto Number Two Road, which Lake County currently controls but may transfer to the Town within 90 days. The current configuration includes only an emergency access route with a cul-de-sac, which several Councilors found inadequate.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline moved to treat the amendment as major and send it through the full Planning & Zoning and Development Review Committee process, but the motion failed for lack of a second. Councilor Miles then made a motion to treat the change as a minor amendment, with conditions: no increase in the number of units, any space gained from reduced widths to be used as green space, and the road configuration to remain as originally approved. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lannamañ, with the understanding that if the Town gains jurisdiction over the road, a second access point could be required in the future. The applicant agreed and clarified that the setback, lot size, and minimum living area standards would remain unchanged.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tom Ballou, 1005 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Tom Ballou expressed concern about treating the lot width reduction as a minor amendment, noting that the developer agreement suggests it requires a major amendment. Citing unresolved issues like access to Number Two Road, he recommended referring the matter to the Planning & Zoning Board for further review before Council made a decision.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E. Central Ave. – Resident Tina St. Clair stated that, based on the staff report and her review, the proposed lot width reduction should be treated as a major amendment. She emphasized the significant percentage change from 27 to 24 feet and supported following the formal review process. Mrs. St. Clair also clarified that costs for public notices are borne by the developer, not the Town, and stressed the importance of relying on the Town Planner's professional recommendation.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Marie Gallelli stated she does not consider the proposed change from 27 to 24 feet a minor amendment and believes it should go back to the Planning & Zoning Board. She noted difficulty reading the highlighted portion of the online materials that defined a minor amendment and emphasized that, since the Town Planner determined it to be a major amendment, that guidance should be followed.

Mayor Wells asked for clarification on the project timeline, confirming that the proposed townhouse changes fall within Phase Two. Applicant Representative, Alex Flores, explained that while home construction in Phase One can proceed, no engineering or infrastructure work for later phases, including Phase Two, can move forward until the amendment is resolved. Councilor Miles confirmed that both townhouse pods are located within Phase Two. Ms. Flores noted that, while the developer agreement doesn't explicitly categorize this change as major or minor, the language allows for Council discretion, which Councilor Miles reiterated had been accounted for in his motion.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to treat the change as a minor amendment, with conditions: no increase in the number of units, any space gained from reduced widths to be used as green space, and the road configuration to remain as originally approved; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion failed by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Mayor Wells

Motion made by Councilor Miles to treat the requested change as a major amendment; 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

5. Discussion: Oak Groves / ISBA Approach

Town Planner, April Fisher, presented a recommendation regarding the proposed Oaks Grove development, which seeks R4 zoning in unincorporated Lake County (which is within the Town's Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) utility area.) The Applicant, Margaret Brock, stated that the development would comply with Lake County's Land Development Regulations (LDRs), including 25% open space, and clarified that the maximum buildout would likely be around 32–37 homes, not 49 or 64, as speculated, due to site constraints.

Council members expressed concern over potential density, infrastructure compatibility, and the need for water and sewer service, which would likely need to come from the Town. Councilor Miles questioned why the development was proceeding through the County instead of the Town, particularly given the applicant's request for Town utilities. Mrs. Brock responded that she initiated the process with the County over a year ago and was unaware of the ISBA at that time but had reached out to Town staff

prior to formal notice of the rezoning, to discuss getting utilities from the Town. She did not commit to annexation but expressed willingness to meet with the Town to discuss utilities.

Council discussion emphasized limitations in wastewater capacity, Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) constraints on potable water, and the importance of preserving development standards at the Town's gateway.

Councilor Miles made a motion to extend the Town Council meeting to 9:30 p.m. This was done at 8:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

William Sullivan, 26336 SR 19, Howey-In-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County) - County Resident William Sullivan expressed strong opposition to the proposed Oaks Grove development, citing concerns about density, setbacks, and visual impact along State Road 19. He referenced the Lake County Land Development Code, stating that multifamily and townhome units are permitted on the property and noted that a county official confirmed up to 64 units could be built. Mr. Sullivan criticized the inclusion of dry retention areas within the required 25% open space, arguing this overstates the usable green space. He warned that stacked flats could be built along the lakefront, creating high-density development directly at the Town's visual gateway. Drawing from past development experience, he emphasized the potential for such configurations under Florida's condominium laws and urged Council to remain vigilant in protecting the Town's entry corridor.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Everline to follow the staff recommendation and send a formal letter to Lake County requesting a continuance of the rezoning hearing and a joint meeting between the Town, County, and applicant to discuss development compatibility; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells
Nay: None

6. Consideration and Approval: **Oak Groves – Court Reporter Fee Request**

Motion made by Councilor Miles to remove this agenda item from the 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

7. Discussion: **Town Auditor RFP Update**

Mayor Graham Wells introduced the Town Auditor RFP update. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, reported that only one submission had been received, likely due to the busy audit season, and recommended reissuing the RFP for an additional 30 days to attract more responses. Councilor Miles moved to re-post the RFP for 30 more days, and Councilor Lannamañ seconded. After clarification from the Town Clerk that the original RFP had already closed and must be re-advertised rather than extended, the motion was revised and approved. The Council also agreed to confirm that the sole current applicant, would be considered under the newly re-issued RFP.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to re-issue the Town Auditor RFP for another 30 days in an effort to get additional applicants; 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

8. Consideration and Approval: **Final Plat - Brock Replat of Poco Sierra and Griffin Village**

The Council considered approval of the final plat for the Brock replat of Poco Sierra and Griffin Village. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, noted two conditions: an additional mortgagee block must be added to the plat, and signatures from all six property owners must be obtained before the Town signs. Councilor Miles amended the motion to include these conditions, and Councilor Lannamañ, as the original motion maker, agreed.

In response to a question from Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Mr. O’Keefe and Councilor Miles explained that the replat corrects irregular right-of-way alignments and consolidates parcels, including transferring necessary land to the Town for a properly aligned road. The replat enables the lots to conform to Town code and supports the Town’s road improvement plans.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline also asked whether the Town was incurring costs for idle construction equipment on-site. Mr. O’Keefe and Mr. Wilkes clarified that the construction costs are fixed and the equipment is being staged in preparation for work resuming, with construction expected to restart shortly.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N Tangerine Ave. - Resident Marie Gallelli inquired about the north end of Citrus Avenue as it relates to the replat, expressing concern about the potential for a future road connection or emergency access through to new development. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, clarified that the Town’s project will create an “L”-shaped connection between Citrus and Camellia, stopping at the right-of-way and not extending through the property. He emphasized that any additional road extension beyond that point, whether by Mrs. Brock or the Thompson Grove developer, would not be funded by the Town. Councilor Miles added that, if the remaining 300 feet of roadway in front of the reconfigured lots is to be completed, it would be the responsibility of a developer to construct and fund it.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the replat with two conditions: an additional mortgagee block must be added to the plat, and signatures from all six property owners must be obtained before the Town signs; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

9. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-010 - Mid-Year FY2025 Budget Amendment**

The Council reviewed Resolution 2025-010, which involved a budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2024–2025. Mayor Wells noted that the resolution’s title and fund references contained inaccuracies: it incorrectly labeled the amendment as "final" and included "sanitation" and "general fund" references that no longer applied. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, explained the amendment included two adjustments: one for reimbursed police vehicle outfitting expenses funded by a state residual grant, and another for water impact fee reimbursements related to well drilling. Councilor Miles questioned whether “state grant public safety” was the correct title for one of the revenue sources. Due to the errors and uncertainty, Councilor Miles moved to table the resolution until the next meeting to allow for corrections.

**Motion made by Councilor Miles to table to next meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ.
Motion approved unanimously by voice vote**

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells
Nay: None

Due to the late hour Mayor Wells asked for a motion to recess for 5 minutes at 8:57 p.m.

**Motion made by Councilor Miles for a five-minute recess; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ.
Motion approved unanimously by voice vote**

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells
Nay: None

The Town Council Meeting reconvened at 9:02 p.m.

10. Consideration and Approval: **Remote Work and Leave Usage**

The Town Council engaged in an extensive discussion regarding Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe’s, planned remote work during an upcoming trip abroad. Councilor Arnold opened by emphasizing the need to avoid disclosing travel dates for security reasons and to focus the conversation on policy and compensation. Councilor Lannamañ clarified her understanding that Mr. O’Keefe would take four to five vacation days for travel, with the intent to work remotely, albeit in a different time zone, during the remainder of the trip using a VPN connection. Mr. O’Keefe confirmed that arrangement had been previously communicated to all council members.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline raised objections, asserting that the Town Manager had not explicitly sought Council approval for remote work and expressing concerns about costs to the Town, the precedent it might set, and Mr. O’Keefe’s accrued vacation practices. Mr. Everline cited the Town Charter’s language about Council oversight and challenged the contractual basis for remote work. The Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, responded that the contract and personnel policies were silent on remote work and did not authorize avoiding leave usage for out-of-town work. However, he acknowledged that it was ultimately a policy decision for the Council. Mr. Wilkes recommended formalizing any approval in the manager’s contract or personnel policies if the Council wished to proceed.

Mr. O’Keefe countered that Town policies implied supervisory discretion for remote work and cited prior instances of staff working remotely. Town Clerk and Deputy Town Manager, John Brock, confirmed that remote work had precedent and cautioned against undervaluing the Town Manager’s contributions, especially during budget season. Mr. Brock emphasized that any remote work should be compensated, while days with no expected work should be treated as vacation.

The discussion shifted to determining how many days Mr. O’Keefe would actively work. He stated his intent to be available for all 17 days, though Council members acknowledged he would likely be required for at least three major meetings and several budget-related tasks. Mayor Wells and Councilor Lannamañ supported allowing remote work on a case-by-case basis without reopening the contract, viewing the situation as a one-time accommodation. Mr. Brock suggested that perhaps the Town Council would trust Mayor Wells to personally supervise and assess Mr. O’Keefe’s remote work activities during the trip and report back to Council.

Ultimately, while Councilors expressed differing views on precedent and policy implications, there was general agreement that Mr. O’Keefe should receive credit for remote work performed, with remaining days designated as vacation.

Councilor Lannamañ made a motion to extend the Town Council meeting by 30 minutes. This was done at 9:32 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Dianna, Ballou, 1005 N Tangerine Ave. - Resident Dianna Ballou initially expressed skepticism but ultimately advocated for a balanced approach regarding the Town Manager's remote work arrangement. She acknowledged that, if Mr. O'Keefe would be attending meetings and performing preparation work while abroad, some compensation was warranted. Drawing from her own experience as a teacher working off the clock, she recognized the evolving nature of remote work expectations. However, she emphasized the importance of careful oversight and accountability, especially given the potential implications for future employment practices in the Town.

A brief discussion followed regarding the financial implications of vacation time and the Town Manager's contractually-allowed vacation cash-out. Mayor Wells floated the idea of suspending the cash-out for the year as a potential compromise but noted it would require further review. Mrs. Ballou concluded by requesting that Council clarify acronyms during future meetings to aid public understanding.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. - Resident Marie Gallelli expressed empathy toward Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe's, planned travel, acknowledging the importance of seizing a rare opportunity to spend meaningful time with family abroad. While recognizing the legitimacy of his commitment to remain available for Council meetings and budget preparation, she questioned whether he could realistically work as extensively as proposed while also making the most of the trip. Drawing from her own international business experience, she encouraged Mr. O'Keefe not to shortchange himself and to consider taking more time as vacation.

Mr. O'Keefe responded by noting his familiarity with the region and emphasized that, while he could theoretically take the entire period as vacation, doing so would place an excessive burden on remaining staff, particularly the Town Clerk, Mr. Brock. He cited recent staffing shortages and the heavy workload during budget season as reasons for maintaining partial work availability. Mrs. Gallelli and other participants also briefly discussed concerns about roaming charges and potential fiscal impacts, though Mr. O'Keefe clarified there would be no direct costs to the Town.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E Central Ave. - Resident Tina St. Clair, drawing on her executive experience in the newspaper industry, offered a firm perspective on the Town Manager's planned remote work during the budget season. She noted that, in her prior roles, vacations were prohibited during critical budget periods and salaried employees were expected to remain responsive without additional compensation. Mrs. St. Clair expressed concern over the appearance of Mr. O'Keefe receiving both paid vacation and compensation for partial workdays, particularly given his contractual ability to cash out unused leave. While acknowledging his contributions and expressing personal regard for him, she argued that most of the trip should be classified as vacation time.

Mrs. St. Clair also pointed to the Town's recent expansion of support staff and asserted that, if Mr. O'Keefe were to be absent during a critical period, the current team should be equipped to handle the workload. She suggested that, if key staff are unable to perform in his absence, the Town should reassess staff roles and capabilities. While leaving the final decision to the Council, she urged them to be cautious in setting precedent and in determining what is fair and responsible to the taxpayers.

Joshua Husemann, 671 Avila Pl. - Resident Joshua Husemann of Avila Place expressed concern over the extended discussion surrounding the Town Manager's proposed remote work and vacation arrangement. He pointed out that, despite the various opinions shared, no one speaking had direct experience serving as a town manager. Mr. Husemann referenced the Town Attorney's earlier remarks

about the longstanding pattern of town managers rarely taking time off, and he questioned why so much time was being spent debating the issue during budget season. He characterized the discussion as an example of micromanagement and suggested that such scrutiny could contribute to staff turnover, a recurring concern at past meetings. Mr. Husemann cautioned that this level of oversight might discourage staff retention and undermine effective governance.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Following extended public and council discussion, Councilor Lannamañ made a motion to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period. Her motion included authorizing the Mayor to monitor the situation to ensure that critical responsibilities were met during Mr. O’Keefe’s absence. Councilor Lannamañ emphasized the need for compromise, stressing that Mr. O’Keefe should not be expected to work without compensation and voicing opposition to micromanagement, advocating instead for trust in staff professionalism.

Town Clerk, John Brock, asked for clarification regarding how the Mayor's oversight would function in practice, specifically, whether it meant the Mayor would determine how many days Mr. O’Keefe would be considered on leave versus working. Councilor Lannamañ clarified that while she was not in favor of micromanagement, the intent was to strike a balance and establish accountability.

Councilor Miles voiced agreement with resident Joshua Husemann's comments and supported trusting Mr. O’Keefe to self-report his time. He emphasized that the Town Manager is the organization’s chief executive and should be treated as such. Councilor Miles rejected the idea of the Mayor acting as a “babysitter,” stating instead that Mr. O’Keefe should log his work and leave time honestly and independently.

After Councilor Miles’ remarks, Councilor Lannamañ amended her motion to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period and trust that he accurately and honestly records his work time.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period and trust that he accurately and honestly records his work time; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

11. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe stated that the E. Holly St. project approval agenda item would come before Town Council during the next meeting. Mr. O’Keefe also spoke about the Joint Planning Agreement that Lake County was hosting in Leesburg on June 30, 2025.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT

12. Mayor Pro Tem Everline

None

13. Councilor Arnold

None

14. Councilor Miles

None

15. Councilor Lannamañ

None

16. Mayor Wells

None

ADJOURNMENT

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 10:06 p.m. | **Attendees: 48**

Graham Wells, CMC, Mayor

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk



Town Council Meeting

June 23, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor Wells called the Town Council Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Mayor Wells led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum Present and Proper Notice Given

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Everline (Attending Remotely via Zoom) | Councilor Jon Arnold | Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Mayor Graham Wells

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Public Services Director, Morgan Cates | April Fisher, Town Planner (via Zoom) | John Brock, Deputy Town Manager / Town Clerk

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to allow Mayor Pro Tem Everline to participate in the meeting and vote remotely via Zoom; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

None

AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to pull Consent Agenda item #2 (Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval) from Consent Agenda to discuss.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Councilor Miles. 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.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Marie Gallelli requested that the digital sign's slide duration be extended to improve readability for passing drivers. Town Manager Sean O'Keefe noted the current default is five seconds per slide. Councilor David Miles supported the suggestion, stating he also has difficulty reading multiple items and agreed the timing could be adjusted.

Andi Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd. – Resident Andi Everline expressed disappointment over the conduct at the previous meeting, stating it was embarrassing for those in attendance and noting that while officials apologized to each other, no apology was made to the public.

Mayor Wells responded by apologizing for his role in the incident to both residents present and those watching online.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E. Central Ave. – Resident Tina St. Clair raised concerns about pedestrian safety at the crossing at Central Ave. and SR 19, noting the danger to residents, including children and individuals in wheelchairs. She requested that the Town pursue a flashing-light pedestrian crossing similar to those in other Florida cities and volunteered to help organize community support if needed.

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, stated that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a study that may include improvements through that corridor, with further details provided by staff. Councilor Arnold confirmed the crossing is a high-priority safety project ranked second or third on the list, with hopes to coordinate it with Palm Avenue resurfacing in 2026. Councilor Miles and Mayor Pro Tem Everline added that FDOT is aware of the Town's request but has not committed to the project due to funding constraints. Mayor Pro Tem Everline encouraged residents to submit letters or petitions to FDOT to help elevate the project's priority. Mrs. St. Clair also asked if interim safety measures like painted lines could be considered while awaiting larger improvements.

Banks Helfrich, 9100 Sams Lake Rd., Clermont, FL – County resident Banks Helfrich, identifying himself as "Farmer Banks", began his remarks with a light-hearted "Farm Tip of the Day" about growing watermelons in Florida. He offered three practical tips for improving watermelon quality and reducing pests. He then transitioned to a more serious topic, citing a 2023 Johns Hopkins University study identifying firearms as the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 17 in the United States. Drawing a historical parallel to Ralph Nader's life-saving advocacy for vehicle safety, Mr. Helfrich urged greater community engagement on gun safety. He noted that the City of Groveland Police Department and local gun shops offer safety courses and emphasized the importance of secure storage practices. Concluding with a call for action, he asked who will step forward as this generation's Ralph Nader to prevent further tragedies. Mayor Graham Wells thanked him for his comments.

Public Services Director, Morgan Cates, reported that the Town's engineered crosswalk improvement plan for the intersection of State Road 19 and West Central Avenue has been selected by FDOT for inclusion in the Target Zero pedestrian safety program. The program, in partnership with Bike Walk Central Florida, includes a 2025 study, at no cost to the Town, that will evaluate driver behavior, pedestrian activity, and enforcement needs. The study results will be shared with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to support the Town's request for enhanced safety features, including pedestrian lighting and crosswalks on both sides of the intersection. Mr. Cates and Lieutenant Giddens also attended a regional conference to advocate for the project. While optimistic, Mr. Cates noted the intersection remains hazardous and long-term improvements may require a traffic signal.

CONSENT AGENDA

Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.

Councilor Miles stated that he wanted to pull Consent Agenda item #2 (Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval) from Consent Agenda to discuss.

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 09, 2025, Town Council Meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Consent Agenda (now only Agenda Item #1); seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

2. Consideration and Approval: **Police Department Utility Vehicle Approval**

Council discussed the proposed purchase of two utility vehicles for the Police Department, focusing on costs, vendor selection, usage, and timing. Police Chief Thomas presented quotes, recommending Love Motorsports in Ocoee as the lowest bidder. Councilor Miles questioned whether the quoted \$16,399 per unit was negotiable and suggested a \$35,000 all-in target. Chief Thomas noted negotiations would need to happen with the dealership's general manager once the Town was ready to commit.

The vehicles would be funded from Police Impact Fees, with over \$250,000 currently available. Council discussed the intended use, primarily for events like Founders Day, Christmas, and emergency response, as well as concerns about warranties, outfitting, and timing of purchase. Mayor Wells suggested delaying the purchase and incorporating it into the FY 2025–26 budget process to allow for broader capital planning and potential cost savings. Councilor Everline voiced his support in waiting to purchase the utility vehicles, as they were not needed until the Christmas Festival.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E Central Ave. - Resident Tina St. Clair inquired whether older vehicles, such as those formerly stationed at the Water Treatment Plant, on Central Ave., could be sold to help offset the cost of new utility vehicles. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, clarified that those older vehicles had already been removed and sold. Mrs. St. Clair acknowledged the response and expressed support for the Police Department's needs.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the Police Department Utility Vehicles purchase; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Mayor Wells

PUBLIC HEARING

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

3. Consideration and Approval: **Selection of Dates for FY25-26 Budget Workshops**

After some deliberation the Town Council decided to hold the first Budget Workshop on July 22, 2025, at 1:00pm and the second Budget Workshop on August 7, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to have the Budget Workshops on July 22, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., and August 7, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.; 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

4. Consideration and Approval: **Hillside Groves Minor Amendment Request**

Town Planner, April Fisher, introduced a request from Meritage Homes to amend the approved Hillside Groves PUD (formerly The Reserve) by reducing the width of townhome lots from 27 feet to 24 feet. Staff and the planning consultant had determined the request constituted a major amendment requiring a full public hearing process; however, the applicant disagreed and sought Council's determination that it could instead be processed as a minor amendment, which would not require re-noticing or a full amendment process.

Applicant representative, Alex Flores, confirmed that, while the unit widths would be reduced, the overall number of townhomes, 153, would remain unchanged. Councilor Miles questioned the use of the additional space, to which the applicant responded it would become landscaped green space. Councilor Miles emphasized that no additional units should be added and raised concerns about reduced setbacks, limited access, and potential street parking issues. He advocated maintaining the originally approved road access layout, noting a previous Council requirement for two access points into the townhouse pod.

Discussion ensued about the feasibility of access onto Number Two Road, which Lake County currently controls but may transfer to the Town within 90 days. The current configuration includes only an emergency access route with a cul-de-sac, which several Councilors found inadequate.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline moved to treat the amendment as major and send it through the full Planning & Zoning and Development Review Committee process, but the motion failed for lack of a second. Councilor Miles then made a motion to treat the change as a minor amendment, with conditions: no increase in the number of units, any space gained from reduced widths to be used as green space, and the road configuration to remain as originally approved. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lannamañ, with following statement "So, David, I like your motion and I want to second it, but the only thing that I would like to have considered is that if the county indeed turns that road over to us, then it can go back to what we originally wanted, which is a second access road." The applicant agreed and clarified that the setback, lot size, and minimum living area standards would remain unchanged.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Tom Ballou, 1005 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Tom Ballou expressed concern about treating the lot width reduction as a minor amendment, noting that the developer agreement suggests it requires a major amendment. Citing unresolved issues like access to Number Two Road, he recommended referring the matter to the Planning & Zoning Board for further review before Council made a decision.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E. Central Ave. – Resident Tina St. Clair stated that, based on the staff report and her review, the proposed lot width reduction should be treated as a major amendment. She emphasized the significant percentage change from 27 to 24 feet and supported following the formal review process. Mrs. St. Clair also clarified that costs for public notices are borne by the developer, not the Town, and stressed the importance of relying on the Town Planner's professional recommendation.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Marie Gallelli stated she does not consider the proposed change from 27 to 24 feet a minor amendment and believes it should go back to the Planning & Zoning Board. She noted difficulty reading the highlighted portion of the online materials that defined a minor amendment and emphasized that, since the Town Planner determined it to be a major amendment, that guidance should be followed.

Mayor Wells asked for clarification on the project timeline, confirming that the proposed townhouse changes fall within Phase Two. Applicant Representative, Alex Flores, explained that while home construction in Phase One can proceed, no engineering or infrastructure work for later phases, including Phase Two, can move forward until the amendment is resolved. Councilor Miles confirmed that both townhouse pods are located within Phase Two. Ms. Flores noted that, while the developer agreement doesn't explicitly categorize this change as major or minor, the language allows for Council discretion, which Councilor Miles reiterated had been accounted for in his motion.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to treat the change as a minor amendment, with conditions: no increase in the number of units, any space gained from reduced widths to be used as green space, and the road configuration to remain as originally approved; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion failed by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Mayor Wells

Motion made by Councilor Miles to treat the requested change as a major amendment; 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

5. Discussion: Oak Groves / ISBA Approach

Town Planner, April Fisher, presented a recommendation regarding the proposed Oaks Grove development, which seeks R4 zoning in unincorporated Lake County (which is within the Town's Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) utility area.) The Applicant, Margaret Brock, stated that the development would comply with Lake County's Land Development Regulations (LDRs), including 25% open space, and clarified that the maximum buildout would likely be around 32–37 homes, not 49 or 64, as speculated, due to site constraints.

Council members expressed concern over potential density, infrastructure compatibility, and the need for water and sewer service, which would likely need to come from the Town. Councilor Miles questioned why the development was proceeding through the County instead of the Town, particularly given the applicant's request for Town utilities. Mrs. Brock responded that she initiated the process with the County over a year ago and was unaware of the ISBA at that time but had reached out to Town staff

prior to formal notice of the rezoning, to discuss getting utilities from the Town. She did not commit to annexation but expressed willingness to meet with the Town to discuss utilities.

Council discussion emphasized limitations in wastewater capacity, Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) constraints on potable water, and the importance of preserving development standards at the Town's gateway.

Councilor Miles made a motion to extend the Town Council meeting to 9:30 p.m. This was done at 8:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

William Sullivan, 26336 SR 19, Howey-In-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County) - County Resident William Sullivan expressed strong opposition to the proposed Oaks Grove development, citing concerns about density, setbacks, and visual impact along State Road 19. He referenced the Lake County Land Development Code, stating that multifamily and townhome units are permitted on the property and noted that a county official confirmed up to 64 units could be built. Mr. Sullivan criticized the inclusion of dry retention areas within the required 25% open space, arguing this overstates the usable green space. He warned that stacked flats could be built along the lakefront, creating high-density development directly at the Town's visual gateway. Drawing from past development experience, he emphasized the potential for such configurations under Florida's condominium laws and urged Council to remain vigilant in protecting the Town's entry corridor.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Everline to follow the staff recommendation and send a formal letter to Lake County requesting a continuance of the rezoning hearing and a joint meeting between the Town, County, and applicant to discuss development compatibility; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells
Nay: None

6. Consideration and Approval: Oak Groves – Court Reporter Fee Request

Motion made by Councilor Miles to remove this agenda item from the 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

7. Discussion: Town Auditor RFP Update

Mayor Graham Wells introduced the Town Auditor RFP update. Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, reported that only one submission had been received, likely due to the busy audit season, and recommended reissuing the RFP for an additional 30 days to attract more responses. Councilor Miles moved to re-post the RFP for 30 more days, and Councilor Lannamañ seconded. After clarification from the Town Clerk that the original RFP had already closed and must be re-advertised rather than extended, the motion was revised and approved. The Council also agreed to confirm that the sole current applicant, would be considered under the newly re-issued RFP.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to re-issue the Town Auditor RFP for another 30 days in an effort to get additional applicants; 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

8. Consideration and Approval: **Final Plat - Brock Replat of Poco Sierra and Griffin Village**

The Council considered approval of the final plat for the Brock replat of Poco Sierra and Griffin Village. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, noted two conditions: an additional mortgagee block must be added to the plat, and signatures from all six property owners must be obtained before the Town signs. Councilor Miles amended the motion to include these conditions, and Councilor Lannamañ, as the original motion maker, agreed.

In response to a question from Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Mr. O’Keefe and Councilor Miles explained that the replat corrects irregular right-of-way alignments and consolidates parcels, including transferring necessary land to the Town for a properly aligned road. The replat enables the lots to conform to Town code and supports the Town’s road improvement plans.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline also asked whether the Town was incurring costs for idle construction equipment on-site. Mr. O’Keefe and Mr. Wilkes clarified that the construction costs are fixed and the equipment is being staged in preparation for work resuming, with construction expected to restart shortly.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N Tangerine Ave. - Resident Marie Gallelli inquired about the north end of Citrus Avenue as it relates to the replat, expressing concern about the potential for a future road connection or emergency access through to new development. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, clarified that the Town’s project will create an “L”-shaped connection between Citrus and Camellia, stopping at the right-of-way and not extending through the property. He emphasized that any additional road extension beyond that point, whether by Mrs. Brock or the Thompson Grove developer, would not be funded by the Town. Councilor Miles added that, if the remaining 300 feet of roadway in front of the reconfigured lots is to be completed, it would be the responsibility of a developer to construct and fund it.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the replat with two conditions: an additional mortgagee block must be added to the plat, and signatures from all six property owners must be obtained before the Town signs; seconded by Councilor Miles. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

9. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2025-010 - Mid-Year FY2025 Budget Amendment**

The Council reviewed Resolution 2025-010, which involved a budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2024–2025. Mayor Wells noted that the resolution’s title and fund references contained inaccuracies: it incorrectly labeled the amendment as "final" and included "sanitation" and "general fund" references that no longer applied. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, explained the amendment included two adjustments: one for reimbursed police vehicle outfitting expenses funded by a state residual grant, and another for water impact fee reimbursements related to well drilling. Councilor Miles questioned whether “state grant public safety” was the correct title for one of the revenue sources. Due to the errors and uncertainty, Councilor Miles moved to table the resolution until the next meeting to allow for corrections.

**Motion made by Councilor Miles to table to next meeting; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ.
Motion approved unanimously by voice vote**

Voting

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

Nay: None

Due to the late hour Mayor Wells asked for a motion to recess for 5 minutes at 8:57 p.m.

**Motion made by Councilor Miles for a five-minute recess; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ.
Motion approved unanimously by voice vote**

Voting

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

Nay: None

The Town Council Meeting reconvened at 9:02 p.m.

10. Consideration and Approval: **Remote Work and Leave Usage**

The Town Council engaged in an extensive discussion regarding Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe’s, planned remote work during an upcoming trip abroad. Councilor Arnold opened by emphasizing the need to avoid disclosing travel dates for security reasons and to focus the conversation on policy and compensation. Councilor Lannamañ clarified her understanding that Mr. O’Keefe would take four to five vacation days for travel, with the intent to work remotely, albeit in a different time zone, during the remainder of the trip using a VPN connection. Mr. O’Keefe confirmed that arrangement had been previously communicated to all council members.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline raised objections, asserting that the Town Manager had not explicitly sought Council approval for remote work and expressing concerns about costs to the Town, the precedent it might set, and Mr. O’Keefe’s accrued vacation practices. Mr. Everline cited the Town Charter’s language about Council oversight and challenged the contractual basis for remote work. The Town Attorney, Tom Wilkes, responded that the contract and personnel policies were silent on remote work and did not authorize avoiding leave usage for out-of-town work. However, he acknowledged that it was ultimately a policy decision for the Council. Mr. Wilkes recommended formalizing any approval in the manager’s contract or personnel policies if the Council wished to proceed.

Mr. O’Keefe countered that Town policies implied supervisory discretion for remote work and cited prior instances of staff working remotely. Town Clerk and Deputy Town Manager, John Brock, confirmed that remote work had precedent and cautioned against undervaluing the Town Manager’s contributions, especially during budget season. Mr. Brock emphasized that any remote work should be compensated, while days with no expected work should be treated as vacation.

The discussion shifted to determining how many days Mr. O’Keefe would actively work. He stated his intent to be available for all 17 days, though Council members acknowledged he would likely be required for at least three major meetings and several budget-related tasks. Mayor Wells and Councilor Lannamañ supported allowing remote work on a case-by-case basis without reopening the contract, viewing the situation as a one-time accommodation. Mr. Brock suggested that perhaps the Town Council would trust Mayor Wells to personally supervise and assess Mr. O’Keefe’s remote work activities during the trip and report back to Council.

Ultimately, while Councilors expressed differing views on precedent and policy implications, there was general agreement that Mr. O’Keefe should receive credit for remote work performed, with remaining days designated as vacation.

Councilor Lannamañ made a motion to extend the Town Council meeting by 30 minutes. This was done at 9:32 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Dianna, Ballou, 1005 N Tangerine Ave. - Resident Dianna Ballou initially expressed skepticism but ultimately advocated for a balanced approach regarding the Town Manager's remote work arrangement. She acknowledged that, if Mr. O'Keefe would be attending meetings and performing preparation work while abroad, some compensation was warranted. Drawing from her own experience as a teacher working off the clock, she recognized the evolving nature of remote work expectations. However, she emphasized the importance of careful oversight and accountability, especially given the potential implications for future employment practices in the Town.

A brief discussion followed regarding the financial implications of vacation time and the Town Manager's contractually-allowed vacation cash-out. Mayor Wells floated the idea of suspending the cash-out for the year as a potential compromise but noted it would require further review. Mrs. Ballou concluded by requesting that Council clarify acronyms during future meetings to aid public understanding.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. - Resident Marie Gallelli expressed empathy toward Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe's, planned travel, acknowledging the importance of seizing a rare opportunity to spend meaningful time with family abroad. While recognizing the legitimacy of his commitment to remain available for Council meetings and budget preparation, she questioned whether he could realistically work as extensively as proposed while also making the most of the trip. Drawing from her own international business experience, she encouraged Mr. O'Keefe not to shortchange himself and to consider taking more time as vacation.

Mr. O'Keefe responded by noting his familiarity with the region and emphasized that, while he could theoretically take the entire period as vacation, doing so would place an excessive burden on remaining staff, particularly the Town Clerk, Mr. Brock. He cited recent staffing shortages and the heavy workload during budget season as reasons for maintaining partial work availability. Mrs. Gallelli and other participants also briefly discussed concerns about roaming charges and potential fiscal impacts, though Mr. O'Keefe clarified there would be no direct costs to the Town.

Tina St. Clair, 135 E Central Ave. - Resident Tina St. Clair, drawing on her executive experience in the newspaper industry, offered a firm perspective on the Town Manager's planned remote work during the budget season. She noted that, in her prior roles, vacations were prohibited during critical budget periods and salaried employees were expected to remain responsive without additional compensation. Mrs. St. Clair expressed concern over the appearance of Mr. O'Keefe receiving both paid vacation and compensation for partial workdays, particularly given his contractual ability to cash out unused leave. While acknowledging his contributions and expressing personal regard for him, she argued that most of the trip should be classified as vacation time.

Mrs. St. Clair also pointed to the Town's recent expansion of support staff and asserted that, if Mr. O'Keefe were to be absent during a critical period, the current team should be equipped to handle the workload. She suggested that, if key staff are unable to perform in his absence, the Town should reassess staff roles and capabilities. While leaving the final decision to the Council, she urged them to be cautious in setting precedent and in determining what is fair and responsible to the taxpayers.

Joshua Husemann, 671 Avila Pl. - Resident Joshua Husemann of Avila Place expressed concern over the extended discussion surrounding the Town Manager's proposed remote work and vacation arrangement. He pointed out that, despite the various opinions shared, no one speaking had direct experience serving as a town manager. Mr. Husemann referenced the Town Attorney's earlier remarks

about the longstanding pattern of town managers rarely taking time off, and he questioned why so much time was being spent debating the issue during budget season. He characterized the discussion as an example of micromanagement and suggested that such scrutiny could contribute to staff turnover, a recurring concern at past meetings. Mr. Husemann cautioned that this level of oversight might discourage staff retention and undermine effective governance.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Following extended public and council discussion, Councilor Lannamañ made a motion to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period. Her motion included authorizing the Mayor to monitor the situation to ensure that critical responsibilities were met during Mr. O’Keefe’s absence. Councilor Lannamañ emphasized the need for compromise, stressing that Mr. O’Keefe should not be expected to work without compensation and voicing opposition to micromanagement, advocating instead for trust in staff professionalism.

Town Clerk, John Brock, asked for clarification regarding how the Mayor's oversight would function in practice, specifically, whether it meant the Mayor would determine how many days Mr. O’Keefe would be considered on leave versus working. Councilor Lannamañ clarified that while she was not in favor of micromanagement, the intent was to strike a balance and establish accountability.

Councilor Miles voiced agreement with resident Joshua Husemann's comments and supported trusting Mr. O’Keefe to self-report his time. He emphasized that the Town Manager is the organization’s chief executive and should be treated as such. Councilor Miles rejected the idea of the Mayor acting as a “babysitter,” stating instead that Mr. O’Keefe should log his work and leave time honestly and independently.

After Councilor Miles’ remarks, Councilor Lannamañ amended her motion to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period and trust that he accurately and honestly records his work time.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to allow the Town Manager, Mr. Sean O’Keefe, to work remotely while overseas during the upcoming budget period and trust that he accurately and honestly records his work time; seconded by Councilor Arnold. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: Mayor Pro Tem Everline

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

11. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe stated that the E. Holly St. project approval agenda item would come before Town Council during the next meeting. Mr. O’Keefe also spoke about the Joint Planning Agreement that Lake County was hosting in Leesburg on June 30, 2025.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT

12. Mayor Pro Tem Everline

None

13. Councilor Arnold

None

14. Councilor Miles

None

15. Councilor Lannamañ

None

16. Mayor Wells

None

ADJOURNMENT

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 10:06 p.m. | **Attendees: 48**

Graham Wells, CMC, Mayor

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk



Date: July 10, 2025

To: Mayor and Town Council

From: Oscar Ojeda, Finance Supervisor

Re: Consideration of Approval: **E Holly St. Budgeting**

Objective:

To consider funding possibilities to enable the completion of E Holly St. in FY25

Summary:

As of June 30, 2025, the fund balance of the Infrastructure Fund is \$484,876. There are currently two capital projects in process: North Citrus Avenue and Gardenia. The amount required to complete these capital projects is \$458,593. For the remaining FY25, the anticipated revenue to be received is \$88,000, bringing the balance of the Infrastructure Fund to \$572,876, this leaves the unencumbered funds in the Infrastructure Fund to be \$114,283. The next capital project to be completed as prioritized by Council was the Boat Ramp which has an estimated \$100,000 cost.

The cost of E. Holly St. is estimated to be \$185,400 (\$159,200 to be paid from the Infrastructure Fund for paving and \$26,200 from the Water Fund for waterlines). Even if Council chooses to prioritize E. Holly St. over the Boat Ramp there are not currently enough funds in the Infrastructure Fund to cover the expenditures and a transfer from the General Fund will be needed.

As of today, funds from the General Fund have already been used to cover over \$43,000 in legal, advertising, engineering, surveying, and land acquisition costs for North Citrus Avenue and Gardenia. As well as \$76,000 from the Water Fund.

Recommended Motions:

The Town Council has the following options:

1. The Town Council motions keep E. Holly St. in FY26.

OR

2. The Town Council motions to prioritize E. Holly St. in FY25 over the Boat Ramp in early FY26 and approve the use of \$45,000 from the General Fund to cover all the expenditures of E. Holly St.

Fiscal Impact:

Decreased of \$45,000 from the General Fund and \$26,200 from the Water Fund.

Staff Recommendation:

While staff acknowledges the importance of the E. Holly St. project, given current fund constraints and existing commitments, it is recommended that Council determine whether this project should be deferred to FY26 or prioritized over the Boat Ramp with additional General Fund support.



UTILITY REPAIR EXPERTS
12818 Cooper Road
Groveland, FL 34736
Phone – (352) 638-0416

Quote

Item 3.

Date: June 24, 2025
Quote# 1010
Expiration Date: July 24, 2025

To: **Howey-in-the-Hills**
(East Holly Street)

Qty.	Description	Unit Price		Line Total
	Labor- Locate existing utilities. Excavate 8-inch main line on Palm Ave. Trench and install approximately 100 feet of 8" C-900 pipe, fittings, and locate wire. Install bell restraints. The new water main will be installed 4' below the existing water main per city engineer. The new water main will be approximately 6' deep under East Holly Street. Restore excavation area and lay sod.			\$18,200
	Parts- 100 feet- 8-inch C-900 pipe 100 feet – locate wire (4) 8-inch 45's (2) 8-inch bell restraints (10) Mega lugs (10) Mega lug bolt kits (1) 8-inch MJ coupling (2) Pallets of Sod			
	Labor- Locate existing utilities. Excavate 8-inch DI water main on Palm Ave. Install (1) 8-inch valve insertion to isolate the main line. This is for the new water main installation under East Holly Street. Install new valve can. Restore excavation area.			\$8,000
Subtotal				
Sales Tax				
Total				\$26,200

Quotation prepared by: *Steve Guba*

To accept this quotation, sign here and return: _____

Thank you for your business!

Utility Repair Experts 115 Sourwood Lane, Ste D, Groveland, FL 34736

License # CUC1226232



Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 8:47:07 AM Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: Re: Final version of the packet for Thursday's Town Council meeting
Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at 5:16:40 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: David Miles
To: Sean O'Keefe
CC: John Brock, Thomas J. Wilkes
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png

As per usual, the Staff report mimics the inaccurate and biased information about the Infrastructure Fund, the Transportation Fund and General Fund when there is a preferred outcome by some not to fund the Holly Street reconstruction this fiscal year. This was not the action I requested of the Town Manager on four separate occasions to be placed on the Town Council Agenda, in fact it is an attempt to subvert my agenda request! My request was quite simple: "Place a proposal to award the reconstruction of E. Holly Street back on the agenda for reconsideration. Also prepare a budget adjustment to move the revenue funds from the General Fund to the Infrastructure/Transportation Fund to accompany the related expenditure lines moved in February." In February we were told that the budget adjustments had NO IMPACT on the budget approved by the Town Council. I asked for a straight up and down vote by the Town Council on these two items. That was not done as requested, Mr. Town Manager.

First, while it is true that there were some legal, ROW acquisition, and other costs related to N. Citrus that are normally funded for this and every other identical purpose by the General Fund. The money spent in the general fund for legal fees and ROW acquisition are not germane to this issue. They were separately required to resolve another issue, which was the fact that the Town's roads and water lines were neither on the Town's ROW nor on an easement across three private properties at the corner of N. Citrus and Camellia Way. They solved this separate issue, to wit, the Town was encroaching on private property for its roads and water lines.

The analysis presented by staff ignores the revenue amount budgeted by the Town Council in the FY 2024-2025 General Fund Budget for the explicit purpose of doing minor road work and street lighting. This General Fund revenue budget of \$72,998 was not moved to the newly established Transportation Fund Budget when the identical related expenditures were moved from the General Fund to the Transportation Fund. I strongly abhor this tactic of trying to obscure the road issue with irrelevant information. The Town Council only decided to fund the Boat Dock after being provided incorrect and misleading information related to the FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 budgeted road repairs in the Infrastructure Fund to artificially show a shortfall, when none existed. The surprise Boat Dock issue was later interjected at the May 1 meeting to further obfuscate and create a proposed shortfall in road construction funding, when none existed if staff had followed the original budget plan approved by the Town Council.

I request that a copy of this rebuttal be attached to the agenda item on E. Holly Street Road Reconstruction for discussion by the Town Council.

David R. Miles
Town Councilor

Town of Howey-in-the-Hills

101 N. Palm Avenue | P.O. Box 128 | Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

Cell 352-470-9106

dmiles@howey.org | www.howey.org



RESOLUTION NO. 2025-009

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; SETTING THE PROPOSED MAXIMUM MILLAGE RATE OF AD VALOREM TAXATION AND SETTING THE DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, it has been determined by the Town that the total taxes to be levied at the proposed millage rate of 7.5 mills is equal to the amount of \$1,820,681 necessary for the operation and expenses for the administration of the affairs of the Town.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The millage rate for the Fiscal year 2024-2025 was 7.5 mills. The proposed millage for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is set at a not to exceed rate of 7.5 mills.
2. The first budget hearing to accept public comment on the millage rate and budget will be held September 10, 2025, at 5:05 p.m. in the Howey-in-the-Hills Town Hall, 101 N. Palm Avenue, Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida 34737.
3. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its approval and adoption by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida.

PASSED AND RESOLVED this 28th day of July, 2025, by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida.

Graham Wells, CMC, Mayor

ATTEST:

John Brock
Town Clerk



Date: July 28, 2025

To: Mayor and Town Council

From: Sean O’Keefe, Town Manager

Re: Consideration and Approval: **Water Rate Increase**

Objective:

To establish rates for water services to Town residents in the upcoming fiscal year.

Summary:

As the Town approaches the beginning of its fiscal year, it is established by code (Sec. 171-3.5) that the Town may increase the water rate by a percentage not to exceed the Municipal Cost Index (MCI) of the preceding calendar year. The increase percentage of the MCI for calendar year 2024 was 1.77096%. Council needs to determine whether there will be an increase to water customers based on this inflationary change. As an example, if this rate were to be implemented, the base rate for monthly residential potable usage of 5,000 gallons or less would change from \$34.02 to \$34.62.

Total number of residential potable meters vs. residential irrigation meters are roughly a 75/25 split, with potable vs. irrigation usage by gallons roughly 45/55, with revenues generated at roughly 60/40. (The lower revenue-to-usage ratio of irrigation water is due to the lower cost of irrigation water at higher usage rates.)

Fiscal Impact:

There is an overall cost to the Town for water service, which needs to be covered by the rates set by Town Council. A rate increase by the allowable MCI rate percentage is estimated to generate approximately \$16,000 in additional annual revenue for the Water Utility Fund.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the allowable MCI water rate increase of 1.77096% across all categories and within all brackets.

Public Services

Water User Charges

Town of Howey-in-the-Hills Ordinances Chapter 171

Non-resident service charge is 1.25 times the established amount

Connection fee

New Residential, Builder or Commercial (not less than cost).....	450.00
Existing Residential, Builder or Commercial	30.00

Connection fee and deposit

Residential owner deposit.....	150.00
Residential tenant deposit	250.00
Builder deposit.....	150.00
Commercial deposit	250.00

Delinquent reconnection (Res. 2005-22)

During Public Services (business hours Mon-Fri 7a.m. – 3 p.m.)	50.00
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Penalty for late utility bill payment

.....	10% of bill
-------	-------------

Water turn-off or turn-on (Res. 2010-012)

Scheduled (business hours Mon-Fri 7a.m. – 3 p.m.)	30.00
---	-------

Water availability (meter at address)

.....	14.23
-------	-------

Water plant improvement (each household)

.....	10.00
-------	-------

Unpaid fee collection charges (Res. 2012-043)

.....	35.00
-------	-------

Town Water Rates

Water availability (meter in ground and locked)

Monthly Base Rate	14.23
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Potable

Monthly Base Rate 0-5,000 gallons	34.02
Rate per 1,000 gallons 5,001-9,000.....	2.72
Rate per 1,000 gallons 9,001-14,000.....	2.98
Rate per 1,000 gallons 14,001-20,000.....	3.24
Rate per 1,000 gallons 20,001-30,000.....	4.56
Rate per 1,000 gallons 30,001-60,000.....	13.15
Rate per 1,000 gallons 60,001 and over	17.20

TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS FEE SCHEDULE

Item 5.

Residential irrigation

Monthly Bases Rate 0-5,000 gallons	34.02
Rate per 1,000 gallons 5,001-30,000.....	2.72
Rate per 1,000 gallons, 30,001-60,000.....	2.98
Rate per 60,001 gallons and above	4.56

Residential irrigation 2-month new landscape with irrigation meters

Monthly Bases Rate 0-5,000 gallons	34.02
Rate per 1,000 gallons 5,001 and above	2.72

Commercial and homeowner associate irrigation rates

Monthly Base Charge per Connection.....	34.02
Rate per 1,000 gallons 0–30,000.....	2.72
Rate per 1,000 gallons 30,001 and over	2.98

Utility Meter Fees and Hydrant Meter Water Deposit

Meter tampering fee

Per meter (fee plus costs of all labor and materials for damages incurred).....	50.00
---	-------

Meter installation fee

(minimum fee for standard installations, fee plus time and material for nonstandard installation and materials)

5/8 x 3/4 inch meter standard installation	701.10
1 inch meter standard installation	860.93
1 1/2 inch meter standard installation	1,180.74
2 inch meter standard installation	1,405.85
3 inch meter standard installation	5,666.12
4 inch meter standard installation	8,193.57

2 inch hydrant meter and backflow preventer rental	1,600.00
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The 2 inch hydrant meter and back-flow preventer is used on a temporary basis, usually for construction site. The rental fee and deposit is a minimum of \$1,600.00 with 50 percent being refundable upon return of the nondamaged and fully functional meter and back-flow preventer. A 50 percent nonrefundable fee covers the cost of installation and maintenance of the meter and back-flow preventer.

2 inch hydrant meter deposit.....	500.00
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They 2 inch hydrant meter water deposit is required, refundable after full payment of all water bills and the account balance of \$0.00.

Sewer user charges

Residential wastewater processing per ERU to CDD	24.00
Residential wastewater town collection infrastructure	22.00

Sanitation charges (solid waste)

Residential-monthly	31.86
Commercial-monthly	35.67

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-006

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO THE COMPENSATION OF THE MAYOR, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS; REVISING THE COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO THE MAYOR, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE AND COUNCILORS IN SECTION 42-10 OF THE TOWN'S CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Whereas, Subsection 112.313(5) of the Florida Statutes provides that the Town Council members may vote on matters affecting their salary, expenses, or other compensation as a public officer.

Whereas, the Town Council now desires to amend the Town's Code of Ordinances regarding the amount of compensation paid to the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore and to Councilors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Recitals. The recitals set forth above are true and correct and constitute the legislative findings of the Town Council.

Section 2. Amendments to the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills' Code of Ordinances. Section 42-10 of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills' Code of Ordinances is amended as shown by the addition of the underlined language and the deletion of the strike-through language as follows:

Sec. 42-10. - Compensation of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore and Town Council Members.

- A. The Mayor shall receive compensation in the amount of ~~\$250.00~~\$375.00 per Town Council meeting, workshop, or specially called meeting attended by the Mayor. The Mayor's compensation shall not exceed ~~\$500.00~~\$750.00 per calendar month.
- B. The Mayor Pro Tempore shall receive compensation in the amount of ~~\$125.00~~\$187.50 per Town Council meeting, workshop, or specially called meeting attended by the Mayor Pro Tempore. The Mayor Pro Tempore's compensation shall not exceed ~~\$250.00~~\$375.00 per calendar month.
- C. A Town Councilor shall receive compensation in the amount of ~~\$100.00~~\$150.00 per town council meeting, workshop, or specially called meeting attended by a Town Councilor. A Town Councilor's compensation shall not exceed ~~\$200.00~~\$300.00 per calendar month.
- D. The Mayor may be excused from attending a town council meeting, workshop, or specially called meeting without a deduction in compensation. The Mayor must notify the Town Clerk 24 hours prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk shall announce the Mayor's absence at the meeting, and the Town Council shall determine whether the absence will be deemed excused for purposes of this paragraph.
- E. The Mayor Pro Tempore or a Town Councilor may be excused from attending a town council meeting, workshop or specially called meeting without a deduction in compensation. The Mayor Pro Tempore or Town Councilor wishing to be excused from a meeting must notify the Mayor 24 hours prior to the meeting, at which time the Mayor shall determine whether the absence will be deemed excused for purposes of this paragraph.

Section 3. Severability. The provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be separable and if any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance shall for any reason be held to be invalid or

unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections, sentences, clauses or phrases of this Ordinance, but they shall remain in effect, it being the legislative intent that this Ordinance shall stand notwithstanding the invalidity of any part.

Section 4. Codification. The provisions in Section 2 of this Ordinance shall become and be made a part of the Town's Code of Ordinances.

Section 5. Effective Date. This Ordinance takes on October 1, 2025, or upon its enactment, whichever comes later.

PASSED AND ORDAINED on _____, 2025, by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida.

Graham Wells, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY
for use and reliance by the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills,
Florida, only.

John Brock, Town Clerk

Thomas J. Wilkes, Town Attorney

First Reading held July 28, 2025

Second Reading, Public Hearing and Adoption held _____

Advertised _____



Date: July 24, 2025

To: Mayor and Town Council

From: Sean O’Keefe

Re: Consideration and Approval: **Ordinance 2025-006 - Compensation for Mayor and Town Council Members**

Objective:

To consider an amendment to Section 42-10 of the Town’s Code of Ordinances to revise the monthly compensation structure for the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Town Council Members.

Summary:

Ordinance 2026-006 proposes to revise the current compensation for elected officials to reflect updated rates by 50% per meeting and corresponding monthly maximums. The proposed compensation rates are as follows:

- **Mayor:**
 - \$375 per Council meeting, workshop, or special meeting attended
 - Not to exceed \$750 per calendar month
- **Mayor Pro Tempore:**
 - \$187.50 per Council meeting, workshop, or special meeting attended
 - Not to exceed \$375 per month
- **Council Members:**
 - \$150 per Council meeting, workshop, or special meeting attended
 - Not to exceed \$300 per month

The ordinance preserves provisions for excused absences and includes appropriate notification and approval mechanisms. It also reaffirms that such compensation is permissible under Section 112.313(5) of the Florida Statutes, which allows public officers to vote on matters affecting their own compensation.

The proposed changes reflect modest adjustments based on the time commitments and responsibilities of elected officials, while still maintaining monthly caps. The amount is less than the level of compensation when it was last reduced by half. Also, the proposed amount of compensation for councilors is still less than the other municipalities of Lake County.

Fiscal Impact:

The expenditures would increase by \$8,100, from \$16,200 to \$24,300.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on benchmarking, staff recommends this increase in councilor compensation.

LAKE COUNTY MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS COMPENSATION

City	Population	Commissioners	Population Per Commissioner	Annual Pay Commissioner	Annual Pay Mayor	Paid Health	Paid Dental	Paid Vision	Retirement Contribution
Clermont	44,600	5	8,920	\$6,600	\$7,800	No	No	No	No
Leesburg	28,376	5	5,675	\$11,364	\$15,888	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eustis	23,595	5	4,719	\$5,400	\$6,400	No	No	No	No
Groveland	23,000	5	4,600	\$9,180	\$9,180	No	No	No	No
Tavares	18,777	5	3,755	\$6,965	\$7,965	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mount Dora	17,200	7	2,457	\$6,293	\$10,926	No	No	No	No
Lady Lake	16,714	4	4,179	\$8,400	\$9,300	No	No	No	No
Minneola	16,446	5	3,289	\$7,200	\$7,200	No	No	No	No
Fruitland Park	9,175	5	1,835	\$12,000	\$12,000	No	No	No	No
Mascotte	6,600	5	1,320	\$5,378	\$7,395	No	No	No	No
Umatilla	4,196	5	839	\$4,000	\$6,000	No	No	No	No
Howey-in-the-Hills	1,837	5	367	\$2,400	\$6,000	No	No	No	No
Montverde	1,700	5	340	\$6,000	\$12,000	No	No	No	No
Municipal Average			3,253	\$7,014	\$9,081				