



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 155 F. Road, Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Thursday, May 21, 2026**

TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor El-Ramey called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor El-Ramey led the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Lisa El-Ramey, Vice Mayor Manish Sood (arrived at 6:09 P.M.), Councilmember Paul Coleman, Councilmember Anita Kane, Councilmember William “Joe” Stephens, Acting Town Manager Valerie Oakes, Outside Special Counsel Johnneeka Simpson from Gray Robinson, and Acting Town Clerk Kenthia White.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, AND MODIFICATIONS

MOTION: COUNCILMEMBER KANE/ COUNCILMEMBER COLEMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA MOTION PASSED (4-0).

Vice Mayor Sood entered at 6:09 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor El-Ramey opened public comments.

Robert Austin reported his findings from attending a nearby meeting regarding the airport noise from the airport, as well as a noise monitor that will be implemented.

Mayor El-Ramey closed public comments.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

MOTION: COUNCILMEMBER KANE/ COUNCILMEMBER COLEMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA MOVING MOTION PASSED (5-0).

REGULAR AGENDA**1. Follow up to Negotiations for Town Manager Contract**

Special Counsel Johnneeka Simpson from Gray Robinson presented an update on current negotiations. She stated that she had received news that opposing Counsel had denied the Town's latest counteroffer of 10 weeks paid severance and the contractually obligated paid time off.

Opposing Counsels final counteroffer consists of: 16 additional weeks of severance pay; payment of her accrued and unused PTO; and payment of her unused Flexible Spending Account (FSA) balance.

Vice Mayor Sood raised questions regarding the possibility of with-cause termination. He mentioned that with-cause termination, with an investigation, could possibly cost over \$100,000.

Ms. Simpson stated that she believed that the Council could terminate with cause, but that she would advise consideration of opposing counsels' counteroffer and weigh out the pros and cons of each option.

Mayor El-Ramey recessed the meeting for 15 minutes, so that Council could meet one-on-one with Ms. Simpson, at 7:03 P.M.

Mayor El-Ramey reconvened the meeting at 7:40 P.M. She opened public comments.

Virginia Standish discussed prior issues that Town has faced due to the mismanagement from previous Town Managers. She advises that the Council use these prior situations to help them make decisions for the future.

Todd McLendon advised Council to accept opposing Counsels counteroffer as he believes it to be the most fiscally responsible path.

Mayor El-Ramey closed public comments.

MOTION: COUNCILMEMBER KANE/ COUNCILMEMBER COLEMAN MOVED TO TERMINATE THE CONTRACT WITHOUT CAUSE AND PAY 16 WEEKS SEVERANCE, ACCRUED PTO, AND FORFEIT THE FSA BALANCE. MOTION FAILED (2-3), WITH MAYOR EL-RAMEY, VICE MAYOR SOOD, AND COUNCILMEMBER STEPHENS DISSENTING.

MOTION: VICE MAYOR SOOD/ COUNCILMEMBER STEPHENS MOVED TO TERMINATE THE TOWN MANAGER WITH-CAUSE EFFECTIVE

IMMEDIATELY. MOTION FAILED (2-3), WITH MAYOR EL-RAMEY, COUNCILMEMBER KANE, AND COUNCILMEMBER COLEMAN DISSENTING.

MOTION: VICE MAYOR SOOD MOVED TO AUTHORIZE SPECIAL COUNSEL TO CONDUCT A DEEPER INVESTIGATION INTO SPECIFIC ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING CONSULTATIONS, WITH A REPORT TO BE RETURNED IN ONE WEEK. MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

The Council seemed to have reached an impasse and continued discussions regarding their possible options moving forward.

MOTION: COUNCILMEMBER KANE/ COUNCILMEMBER COLEMAN MOVED TO APPROVE AN OFFER OF 10 WEEKS OF SEVERANCE PAY OUT, FORFEITURE OF FSA, ACCRUED PTO, EFFECTIVE AS OF CLOSE OF BUSINESS YESTERDAY, AND OPPOSING COUNSEL HAS UNTIL CLOSE OF BUSINESS MAY 27 TO RETURN WITH A RESPONSE. MOTION PASSED (4-1), WITH VICE MAYOR SOOD DISSENTING.

TOWN STAFF COMMENTS

Acting Town Manager Valerie Oakes echoed an announcement from Councilmember Kane about a Countywide Master Transportation Plan meeting in Belle Glade on June 30, 2026, from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Paul Coleman II requested Council consensus to authorize staff to send a notification letter to residents along Loxahatchee Avenue advising them of a proposed plan to restrict through-traffic on that road, in response to a nearby commercial business not adhering to its approved site plan. The letter would inform residents that the item would be placed on the July agenda and invite them to attend or submit feedback by email.

Acting Town Manager Oakes indicated that staff was already planning to bring forward options, including a guardrail or dirt berm, on the June 2nd agenda, and suggested that the resident notification letter go out early the following week to allow affected property owners to weigh in at both the June and July meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at Councilmember Kane and seconded by Councilmember Coleman. Motion passed (5-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,
FLORIDA**

ATTEST:

Signed by:

Kentlia White

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Town Clerk

Signed by:

[Signature]

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Mayor Lisa El-Ramey, Seat 2

Signed by:

Manish Sood

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Vice Mayor Manish Sood, Seat 5

Signed by:

Joe Stephens

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Councilmember William "Joe" Stephens, Seat 1

Signed by:

Anita Kane

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Councilmember Anita Kane, Seat 3

Signed by:

[Signature]

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Councilmember Paul Coleman II, Seat 4