



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
TOWN COUNCIL AND FAAC JOINT BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 155 F. Road, Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Tuesday, August 20, 2024**

TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kane called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM

ROLL CALL

Mayor Anita Kane, Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Councilmember Robert Shorr, Councilmember Laura Danowski, Councilmember Phillis Maniglia, Town Manager Francine Ramaglia, Town Attorney Glen Torcivia (zoom), Project Coordinator Jeff Kurtz, Public Works Director Richard Gallant, Public Works Superintendent Craig Lower, Public Works Coordinator Lexi Collegio, Keshavarz and Associates, Inc. Randy Werterpny, and Assistant to the Town Clerk Sammie Brown were present.

Finance Advisory and Audit Committee (FAAC) Members

Chair Manish Sood, Vice Chair Tracy Raflowitz, Frederick Hoo, and Cassie Suchy were present

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Public Comment received from Virginia Standish. Town Council discussion ensued.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

1. Presentation of FY 2025 Budget

Manish Sood Chair of FAAC presented the FAAC recommendations of the FY 2025 Budget.

2. Upcoming Budget Meeting Dates

August 22 - FY 2025 Budget Workshop at 6 PM (if needed)

September 3 - FY 2025 1st Budget Hearing at 6 PM

September 18 - FY 2025 2nd Budget Hearing at 6 PM

By consensus, the Town Council agreed to reconvene on August 22, 2024, at 5:00 PM to continue the discussion.

TOWN COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Laura Danowski expressed her appreciation for the FAAC committee, describing the work as phenomenal and the effort as fabulous. She noted how impressed she was with the diligence in digging into the details, asking questions, and pushing back where necessary. She stated that while Mr. Sood had previously said the Council had the hard decision, she believed it was truly the committee who faced the hard work. Ms. Danowski said she was disappointed that Mr. Sood had left the meeting but wanted to specifically commend him for handling a public integrity challenge with professionalism. She stated that while disagreements over numbers are expected, she felt such matters should have been handled privately rather than through public criticism. Ms. Danowski again thanked FAAC members and remarked that Mr. Sood demonstrated himself to be a true gentleman.

Councilmember Phillis Maniglia expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the FAAC, noting that such meetings should occur more frequently, ideally mid-year, rather than only at the end of the budget process. She addressed the 50/50 program, explaining that while it was initially supported by residents, it was ultimately not implemented. She stated it would now be unfair to reintroduce it, as some residents would end up paying twice. Although some residents have requested to pay 50% toward having the roads being paved, Councilmember Maniglia stated that this approach would create inequity. She acknowledged that certain residents are eager to see the roads paved and that promises had been made, reiterating her opposition to reinstating the 50/50 program at this time. She closed by thanking the FAAC for the time and effort.

Councilmember Robert Shorr addressed the personnel pay structure, noting that earlier discussion did not fully cover all related issues. He referenced figures stating the potential savings of over \$300,000 compared to the current structure and stated that proposed adjustments could bring personnel costs to approximately \$2.25 million. Mr. Shorr stated that if approved, the increases would limit available funds primarily to payroll and Sheriff's contract costs. He felt that some of the proposed raises were for employees who had only recently completed probation; noted that employees are hired with employment letters outlining the position and pay. He stated that awarding additional increases within six to seven months of hiring may not be consistent with those agreements. Mr. Shorr stated that he does not support the increases across-the-board but recommended the Town establish fair minimum and maximum salary ranges based on averages from other municipalities. He added that if minimums are adjusted upward, some employees may require raises to meet that standard, but that increases beyond that should be carefully reviewed.

Vice Mayor Marge Herzog stated that she was pleased with the Council's response to the joint meeting and suggested that such meetings could be held quarterly in order to provide updates and maintain awareness of the Council's direction as the year progresses.

Mayor Anita Kane invited the FAAC members to attend the upcoming meeting on Thursday at 5 PM to provide additional support in addressing questions. She emphasized that, while it would not necessarily be a joint meeting, the committee's participation would be a valuable resource. Ms. Kane expressed appreciation for the committee's efforts and the work they have contributed. She appreciated FAAC and staff for the work, noting that from her perspective as a resident, she had not seen the Town functioning as well as it is now. She acknowledged that while the former Water Control District operated with fewer staff, many needs were not being met, which contributed to long-standing

infrastructure neglect. She emphasized that the current staffing levels are necessary to address those needs and ensure services are delivered equitably throughout the Town.

Mayor Kane highlighted the importance of continued improvements, referencing concerns with Upper North Road, and encouraged prompt attention to roadway conditions; remarked that although the Town was founded with the intent of maintaining a small, rural character, growth has created new demands for services, such as permitting, road maintenance, and responsiveness at Town Hall. Mayor Kane noted that she has received large positive feedback from residents regarding the quality of service provided by staff, with some areas still requiring improvement

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Councilmember Maniglia moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 PM, which was seconded by Vice Mayor Herzog and passed unanimously (5-0)

**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES,
FLORIDA**

ATTEST:

Signed by:
Valerie Dakas
06E744C2F37F4A4...
Town Clerk

Signed by:
Anita Kane
F5AB3D68FF41435...
Mayor Anita Kane, Seat 3

Signed by:
Margaret Herzog
69ECD57738A5448...
Vice Mayor Margaret Herzog, Seat 5

Councilmember Phillis Maniglia, Seat 1

Councilmember Laura Danowski, Seat 2

Councilmember Robert Shorr, Seat 4