



Town Council Public Hearing on Tentative Budget and Proposed Millage Rate

**September 04, 2024 at 5:05 PM
Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall
101 N. Palm Ave.,
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737**

MINUTES

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

Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Tara Hall, Library Director | John Brock, Town Clerk

Confirmation of Meeting Notification and acknowledgement of Quorum was completed.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2024-007 - Tentative Millage Rate**

Mayor MacFarlane read Ordinance 2024-007 out loud by title only and the following statements:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-007, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 7.50 FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The Taxing Authority is the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills.
- The Rolled-Back Rate is 6.9645 mills.

- The percentage over the Rolled-Back Rate is 7.69%, which is the percentage increase in property taxes.
- The proposed Millage Rate to be levied is 7.500.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

There were no public comments or questions.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

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

Councilor Miles asked the Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, what it would cost the Town if it would lower the millage rate by 0.05 or by 0.10. Mr. O’Keefe stated that it would cost the Town \$10,677 to lower the millage rate by 0.05 and it would cost the Town \$21,354 if it wanted to lower the millage rate by 0.10.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that, with all ongoing projects and costs that the Town was incurring, she thought the millage rate should stay at 7.50 and that the Town should look at lowering it next year if possible. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she agreed with the mayor.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve Resolution 2024-007, but to change the millage rate from 7.50 to 7.45. There was no second for this motion.

Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve Resolution 2024-007, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 7.50 FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR AD VALOREM TAXES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles stated that this was the second year in a row that he has tried to lower the Town’s millage rate by a small amount.

Mayor MacFarlane stated that there were projects, such as the \$50,000 spent on Peak Park, that have raised the cost to the Town and that, because of this, it was not the time to lower the Town’s millage rate. Councilor Lannamañ stated that she would support a lowering of the millage rate to the roll-back rate if the Town Council was able to watch its spending through the year.

Councilor Miles stated that he was not suggesting the Town go to the roll-back rate, but he did think that the Town priorities on spending were not focused correctly. The Town should not have spent \$500,000 on the Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve Boardwalk project but should have spent that money on roads and water lines.

2. Consideration and Approval: **Resolution 2024-008 - Tentative Budget**

Mayor MacFarlane read Ordinance 2024-007 out loud by title only and the following statements:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-008, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The Tentative Budget for the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills for Fiscal Year 2025 to be adopted by Fund Department is as follows:
 - General Fund in the amount of \$3,326,777.
 - Infrastructure fund in the amount of \$266,578.
 - Enterprise fund in the amount of \$6,812,737.
 - Police Pension Fund in the amount of \$198,423.
 - Police Advanced Training Fund in the amount of \$1,500.
 - Water Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$15,750.
 - Parks & Rec Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$257,100.
 - Police Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$5,000.
 - Road Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
 - Wastewater Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
 - Stormwater Impact Fee Fund in the amount of \$1.
 - Building Services in the amount of \$106,500.
 - Tree Fund in the amount of \$1,000.
 - Total all Funds \$10,991,368.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

There were no public comments or questions.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment for this item.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she thought the following sentence in the resolution, “The Town Manager may advise the Town Council of possible excess revenues, or deductions in revenues, which may allow for additional appropriations, or require the reduction of appropriations, during the fiscal year,” the word “may” should be changed to “shall”.

Councilor Lannamañ was concerned about budget transfers and stated that she would like more communication. Mr. O’Keefe stated that all budget transfers are communicated through emails to the Town Councilors, and they have 10 days to respond and say that they would like the budget transfer to come before the Council and, if so, it becomes an item of business at the Council’s next meeting.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli to approve Resolution 2024-008, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA; ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE, while changing the word “may” for “shall” in the sentence “The Town Manager may advise the Town Council of possible excess revenues, or deductions in revenues, which may allow for additional appropriations, or require the reduction of appropriations, during the fiscal year”; seconded by Councilor Lannamañ. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

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

Nay: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m. | **Attendees: 16**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk

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