



Town Council Budget Workshop

July 13, 2022 at 9:00 AM

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

Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737

MINUTES

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Budget Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.
Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Acknowledgement of Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilor George Lehning (Initially Absent, arrived at 9:04 a.m.) | Councilor Marie V. Gallelli | Councilor Rick Klein (via Zoom) | Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Conroy (via Zoom) | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

STAFF PRESENT:

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator | John Brock, Town Clerk | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director | Tara Hall, Library Director | James Southall, Public Utilities Supervisor

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion: Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Administrator, Sean O'Keefe, to introduce this topic. Mr. O'Keefe gave an overview of the proposed budget. Mr. O'Keefe explained that there was a shortfall between the proposed expenditure and revenue for the General Fund, with the millage rate staying the same as the previous year at 7.5. Mr. O'Keefe said that the currently proposed General Fund budget was short by \$395,943.

Tara Hall, Library Director, presented the proposed budget for the library. Mrs. Hall explained that the library was looking to extend hours on Saturday; that was due to requests from patrons. This increase in hours would increase staffing costs.

James Southall, Public Utilities Supervisor, presented the proposed budget for the Water / Sanitation Fund. Mr. Southall stated that the biggest changes were additional equipment that would be needed due to the Town getting larger. An example of this was additional lift stations, retrofitting the Town's primary water tanks, and a larger supply of chemicals. Mr. Southall also said the Utilities department was looking to hire an additional full-time employee and part of the cost for this employee would be covered from lowering the usage of the Town's current contractor, URE. Mayor MacFarlane explained that there would be a larger

amount of work falling on the Utility department in the coming year due to the Hillside Groves development and the new Venezia Town Homes development. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy asked what the expectation was for exactly how many new homes were coming “on-line” during the next year. Mayor MacFarlane stated that there were 30 to 40 new homes to be built next year in Talichet, 121 new town homes in Venezia Town Homes, and Hillside Groves would start their infrastructure buildout next year.

Morgan Cates, Public Works Director, presented the Public Works Department budget, the Parks & Recreation budget, and the Cemetery budget. Mr. Cates explained that the Public Works department was looking to hire an additional staff member who could not only assist with grounds maintenance, but also with building maintenance. Mr. Cates stated that the Public Works Department would like to add an additional larger mower to maintain the rights-of-way in Town. Mr. Cates stated that, with the additional funding to the Cemetery budget, this would allow for removal of fill dirt, fix the fence, and add ADA-compliant sidewalks. Mr. Cates said the largest addition to the Parks & Recreation budget was to make improvements to the Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve.

Police Chief, Rick Thomas, presented the proposed budget for the Police Department. Chief Thomas stated he wanted to add an additional full-time Officer that would work as a second officer during night shift duty. The decision to ask for an additional night shift officer comes from feedback from the current officers saying they do not feel safe at night. Other increases in the Police Department’s budget were due to migrating to Office 365, refilling the propane tank used to run the Police Department generator, the annual fee for the new roadside message board, an increase in the repair and maintenance of vehicles, a \$5,000 increase in marketing materials, gas and oil prices increasing, and ammunition prices increasing. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy suggested that, instead of adding an additional night shift officer, Chief Thomas and Mr. O’Keefe should ask the County Sheriff to do more night drive-throughs in the Town.

Town Clerk, John Brock, presented the proposed Legislative, Finance and Administration, and Other General Government budgets. Mr. Brock stated that the Legislative budget had a \$6,000 increase and was primarily due to a \$5,000 Town Hall audio upgrade, and an additional \$1,000 training budget to train new Town Councilors. Mr. Brock also said the increase to the Financial and Administrative budget was in the amount of \$15,000. Mr. Brock stated the increase was primarily due to insurance increases, Account and Auditing contractors’ increases, and Telephone and Communication increases. Mr. Brock also stated that the Other General Government account funding was decreasing due to the Building Inspector contractor pay moving under the Building Fund.

Mr. O’Keefe presented the Code Enforcement and Special Events proposed budgets. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy wanted to know why there was 10% salary increase projections for all of the Town’s employees and wanted a salary study/rationale. Mr. O’Keefe committed to presenting the Town Councilors with a countywide comparison of salaries.

Mr. O’Keefe also presented the Building Fund, Infrastructure, and Impact Fees budgets. Mayor MacFarlane said she would like the Town to apply for grants from the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grants. Police Chief Thomas stated that he would like to use a portion of the Police Impact Fees to purchase a Drug Incinerator. Mr. Southall explained that he had submitted a request of \$384,000 for the purchase of a Thompson pump, an upgrade to the main water plant, and a covered enclosure for all the water equipment at Public Works.

Mr. Cates explained that the Parks & Recreation Impact Fees expenditure budget would come out to \$208,000. The projects that this would cover included adding the following to the Central Park: a Sunshade over the swings, a misting fan, a “kiddy” basketball area (replacing the foursquare area), expanding the existing basketball court to regulation size, and running power to the Central Park pavilion. Other projects that would fall under the Parks & Recreation impact fees would include expanding the entry way in the Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve and adding improvements to the Venezia Park. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy wanted Mr. Cates to submit a more detailed plan for what the Parks & Recreation board expansion plan was at a future Town Council meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Conroy also suggested that, at the next budget meeting, Mr. Southall should review all the financial plans for the new water plant. Mayor MacFarlane stated that the

Town Councilors could be presented with a high-level conceptual plan for the water plant and what the next steps were for the project.

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, Mayor MacFarlane adjourned the meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. | **Attendees: 11**

Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

John Brock, Town Clerk