

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

TO: TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
FROM: FRANCINE L. RAMAGLIA, CPA, AICP, ICMA-CM, TOWN MANAGER
DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 03, 2025
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENT INFORMATION FOR ITEM 18 – TRANSCRIPT

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT FROM THE MAY 13TH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember El-Ramey: So my ask was to put on—it's on the agenda from the May 6th discussion item. There is no page but we're still on that same number because that's where my request got stuck. Council discussed on March 18th: No late agendas and other things and having consequences to those things not being met for our discussion. And then it came up again on April 1st because these things continue to be late so I reviewed what our policy is in our HR manual for disciplinary action and if we're gonna proceed with the Town Manager's contract, I think these are important things. And I created a list to receive and file on issues that I have seen just since I got here on March 16th and my big concern of setting performance standards, goals, and targets to meet and disciplinary actions that go along with that. So I'd like to hand out what I brought with me and I also made additional copies so we can receive and file.

Councilmember Maniglia: I have a question for councilmember El-Ramey.

Mayor Kane: go ahead Phillis.

Councilmember Maniglia: So who did you do your research with? Was it Glen Torcivia or are you doing research with another attorney?

Councilmember El-Ramey: No, this is my research and my basic observations.

Councilmember Maniglia: Well you're talking about staff so I would imagine you would get with the Town Attorney.

Councilmember El-Ramey: I never said anything about staff. I said the Town Manager's performance. This is based on agenda items begin late. Some of these in concerns of the public that people have brought forward to meetings. This is basically everything that has happened in public meetings that's on my list.

Councilmember Maniglia: Okay well, there's a lot of things that happen in public meetings and people say a lot of things but you don't have any backup. Do you have backup?

Councilmember El-Ramey: Yeah, I do.

Councilmember Maniglia: I'd like to know where you did your research and got your information.

Councilmember El-Ramey: Can we receive and file my list?

Mayor Kane: Sure.

Councilmember Maniglia: Can you guys please email that to me?

Councilmember El-Ramey: So when we get to disciplinary action, we discussed that these agendas would not be later. Meetings would not be advertised without a certain amount of time. I had asked at the previous meeting that we also do a resolution for those meeting deadlines to be advertised but in our HR manual, we have type of discipline, beginning with verbal warnings, a written reprimand, a suspension without pay and then it talks about terminations. I think that this should be if this is the standard for employees, it should be for the Town Manager as well. So I think as this is not anything necessarily to discuss tonight but I wanted my concerns to be shared and I wanted to discuss what is in our own HR manual as part of your negotiations if that's what's going to be happening. So that was that. And then based on my discussion item, I also had concerns about the spending that I know I was on Council when we increased the spending limits to \$25,000. That was during COVID. Lots of things were going up very rapidly. Every single agenda, we saw tons of spending thresholds that had to be approved so I would like to see any spending because one of my concerns here on this list was that we hired a lobbyist. I can find no evidence of Council publicly discussing hiring additional lobbyists for the Town. And I can find no discussion publicly of the Southern Boulevard Corridor being the focus. So I would like to see any of this type of spending at least coming forward by resolution. That's my item so thank you.

Councilmember Maniglia: I'm a no... I mean are we taking consensus on this?

Mayor Kane: What I think Lisa is asking is to put a punishment section of discussion onto the next agenda and for us to all consider this and how we're going to punish everybody for being human.

Councilmember Maniglia: Yeah, I'm a no. I'm a no.

Mayor Kane: Well when it comes up for discussion, you'll have an opportunity to state your opinion as will Paul and Marge. And that this is just a list that's just being handed out and spread far and wide so that we can continue on the course

Councilmember Maniglia: Well I think you need to add legal to that list because many times the agenda is late—

Mayor Kane: Would you like to put on the next agenda "Discussion of legal"?

Councilmember Maniglia: Hell yeah!

Mayor Kane: Okay great we'll put that on there too. Can you add that please Francine. Are you done with your discussion item, Lisa?

Councilmember El-Ramey: Yes, thank you.

Councilmember Maniglia: I want footnotes. If somebody's gonna give us stuff, I want to know exactly where they're getting their information from if its not coming from our Town Hall, legal or other reliable sources.

Mayor Kane: We're on to Town Staff Comments.

Town Manager Ramaglia: I'm very happy to have this list and I will go over it with all the staff tomorrow, and we'll try to put together some responses. But because it's so vague and generic, it will be difficult to be able to give really the proper attention and discussion of each of those items. The other thing is I have requested to meet with Council Member El-Ramey since she just started running for election, and to date she has not wanted to meet with me or with any of my staff, nor has she talked to me in any meaningful way. I have received emails—some of them reprimanding, some of them, um, accusatory. Email is not the best way to communicate, and broad statements are never easy to answer definitively. But we will do our best to do that, and I absolutely welcome any visit to discuss any item. I will meet with absolutely any member of the public to talk about any of these items. And I think the whole staff would be willing to do that.

Additionally, my contract was written with an organizational review in there, and that organizational review is a process—it is not a one-person standing-alone pass or fail. It is, how did the organization do as a whole? And one of the big things that we've done every year is we've used the whiteboards, and we've gone up there, and we've had Council do tallies, and we've done all kinds of different things with capital projects—because we didn't want anybody to feel, um, pressure, but we still wanted to be able to have priorities.

So we have done the best that we could over all these years. Um, I would definitely like to see things be more on time, but it is not always possible to be more on time. One of the agendas that we're talking about went out at 7:42 on the Wednesday night—we did get it out at 4:30 or a little bit before that last week, so that was a good thing.

With regard to some of the comments made here tonight about our financials—we have done exceedingly well financially for the last several years, and we have used fund balance to keep the rates from going up. We have not had any rate increases for seven years. Everyone around us has had rate increases. I'm not saying I want rate increases—I'm thankful to God that we have had the

man from heaven from the county, from the state, from the federal government, and through the recent appropriations. But all of that looks like it's going away.

The statements that were made with regard to our spending—I do think it's important for you all to know that some of the information that you got tonight was not accurate. And so for the record, I do wish to go ahead and give you accurate information on the financials. Last week, I sent you the same presentation that was simplified into two pages to go over with facts that they did not listen to or did not want to hear.

But, um, as of March, the General Fund is performing quite well. Revenues are ahead of budget by \$570,000—we're 26% ahead of the budget at the 50% mark of the year. That's because we get taxes early on. Expenditures are under budget by \$371,000, or 17%. A lot of times you spend slower in the beginning of the year and you spend faster towards the end of the year. But nonetheless, right at this point—midyear—we are \$941,000 ahead of budget.

We do anticipate narrowing this margin and being closer to the budget as the year progresses and expenditures are incurred.

Regarding capital improvements that we heard about earlier tonight—we absolutely have a slower pace than we wish to have. The number one biggest problem for last year and straddling into this year was getting easements for the paving projects and the drainage projects. This year in the fall, we had a significant disruption to our Public Works schedule due to storm response and recovery efforts that have continued to be ongoing—and we're just finishing up some of them right now.

We're in the process of working with FEMA, and we are very lucky because we're not just getting the A and B category—we're getting the D category, which means the mitigation that we're actually fixing things after the storm to make them preventative of future damage in years to come.

For Public Works, spending is relatively in line with expectations, even though they've been delayed with some of the storm cleanup. Um, their revenues are 5% ahead and expenditures are about 11% over. Again, we do anticipate some FEMA reimbursements.

And lest I forget, we just awarded a bid that will likely be several million dollars and spend our state appropriations for drainage projects. Most of it will be culverts and replacements that have been in the capital plan for the last several years.

Solid Waste revenues, as of right now, are ahead by 55%. Expenditures are 26% over budget at midyear. I think maybe some of the hurricane cleanup is in there—but I don't know. We haven't finished a midyear audit at this point. But typically these balance out as we get closer to year-end.

Transportation and surtax fund are both lagging in revenue and spending. These are the primary sources for our capital programs, and we're closely monitoring them. As you know, the surtax is sunseting before the end of this year. Hopefully we will have it through December—but we may not. It depends how much is collected and distributed.

Those were the funds that we used to fund our capital and maintenance. So our future capital investment capacity is down.

You know what—it's really important to look to save pennies, because pennies turn into dimes, and dimes turn into dollars.

But what we have done here is we have shifted an organization from chaos to culture. And the culture that we have here is a very committed culture. There is not a person here who is not a professional.

You have three city managers, including me, on your staff. We don't pay them at city manager values—and you don't pay me at a city manager value. We are here because we can help.

You have two attorneys on staff—they are not paid as attorneys. They are here because they can help. We have two certified planners on the staff—they are not paid as certified planners.

You might be noticing that we took in the building, and we took it away from contractors who weren't getting the job done, who didn't collect the right amount of money. We also took the code enforcement back.

We do have a very hard time hiring people—you know, you might know that. It's not really easy to do work out here. I believe one of our Council people did it before. It's not the easiest—not the easiest at all. And certainly not for code enforcement, because you can't see anything from the road. The stuff that people give you, you have to be able to confirm. It's not suburban code enforcement. Most people aren't really, you know, up to what we have to do here.

I do agree with the processing of FDs—it's way too high. We're putting out a bid—a new bid—for development services, because we can no longer use the engineers that we changed to when the last set that were doing them were complained about. This is an age-old problem.

We had an offer from an engineer to do the work for \$100,000. It's all cost recovery—we can't take that offer. We're putting it out for bid, and we're going to get back and bring it to you so you can see how we can maybe do the FDs faster, better, cheaper.

But all in all, we have pivoted this place from where it was to where it is.

And you know, I've noticed a trend here for the 20 years—it's always the manager's fault. It's always a problem with code enforcement. It's always a problem with something somebody said. But if we start listening to stories instead of looking at facts, we're always going to be right where we are.

And I'm really, really proud of the work that this team has done. And I really, really, really appreciate the family environment that has been built here. And we don't all agree—and that's why you get a better result.

So I'm happy to answer any accusations, but, you know, they have to be a little bit better than this vagary. And additionally, I think punishment is for bad children—and there aren't bad children here at all.

So I look forward to, um, a little bit more conversation about this with Council Member El Ramy, if she wishes to speak with me. And again, I've invited everybody in to talk to me about my contract.

I'm very, very happy to talk to you about my contract. I wrote it a number of years ago with this day in mind—because this is what happens. That's why there is no public performance evaluation in my contract—because all somebody has to do is say something and all of a sudden it's true.

So I learned something a long time ago—people can say anything they want. That doesn't make it true. The work we do here—it speaks for itself.

And I'm sorry I took so much time—long time in coming that I'm saying it. I do believe in the high road. Hopefully you understand what I said tonight is me on the high road. I have a whole lot of other things I can say—but I won't, because that's not who I am.

Thank you very much.

The budget is not approved for June 2nd or June 6th. The, um, legislative session is extended now until June 30th. For June 3rd, we have asked the lobbyists to be able to be available in the meeting on Zoom so we could discuss it.

And, um, if we do need to have a conversation in public about this, then I will have all of our staff seated at the table to answer for this—because nobody here is a success or a failure on their own. It's a team.

Thank you.

Councilmember Lisa El-Ramey's Comments

Councilmember El-Ramey: So to clarify, I don't care who the manager is. The Town Council has failed to bring forward a performance standard and targets for the Town Manager historically. Um, I think that if disciplinary actions need to be spelled out, then they need to be spelled out. They're right there in our HR manual for our employees that they have to live by.

Uh, it has been my goal since running for this Council to—to serve in—in a way that did bring accountability to Council, to hold any manager accountable.

I have chosen not to meet with the Town Manager to date because I prefer to have things in writing, and I prefer to have things spoken out here in the public.

And, um, I don't think anybody thinks I'm uninformed. So if anybody thinks I'm uninformed, please share. But, um, I will continue to take the tact I've taken, and, uh, I—I think that, uh, I bring plenty of, uh, positivity to this day. So thank you.