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CITY COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY

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Amelia Jadoo  
Daniel Harrell, Of Counsel

May 20, 2025

***VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY***

Mayor and Town Council  
Town of Loxahatchee Groves  
155 F Road  
Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

RE: Analysis of Legal Fees

Dear Mayor and Town Council:

In accordance with your request, the following is an analysis of legal fees expended by the Town of Loxahatchee Groves along with a comparison of legal fees for other municipalities which our firm represents as City Attorney, and suggestions on how to reduce fees.

**Part I - Analysis of General Fees, by Category, Expended from October 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>10/1/24 – 3/31/25</b>
Trees (Article 87 & Removal)	\$5,591.37
Civil Citations	\$3,630.76
Culverts	\$3,558.14
1300 D Road	\$1,282.87
Livestock Waste	\$12,925.48
Water Control Plan	\$6,704.80
School Zone/Redspeed	\$3,705.80
WAGFLO	\$4,284.29
Sign Code	\$9,343.14

<b>Projects</b>	<b>10/1/24 – 3/31/25</b>
ULDC	\$1,645.94
Solid Waste	\$1,452.31
Fireworks	\$1,379.69
Charter	\$919.79
Priorities (added March 2025)	\$3,340.29

**Part II – Analysis of Legal Fees expended by the Town by fiscal year since October 1, 2020:**

October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 – \$196,267.00  
 October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 – \$296,061.00<sup>1</sup>  
 October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 – \$410,236.00  
 October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 – \$388,267.00  
 October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 - \$292,170.26

This is how much time our Firm provided to the Town of Loxahatchee Groves from October 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025 without charging for those services:

	Hours	Not Billed
October 2024	23.7	\$5,747.25
November 2024	20.5	\$4,971.25
December 2024	17.4	\$4,219.50
January 2025	32.9	\$7,978.25
February 2025	27.2	\$6,596.00
March 2025	61.3	\$14,865.25
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>\$44,377.50</b>

**Part III. Comparison of Legal Fees for October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 for several of the clients that our Firm serves as City/Town/Village Attorney**

The category of general government includes attending Commission meetings, Advisory Board meetings (i.e., Planning and Zoning), communications with City Manager and Staff, land use, drafting ordinances, resolutions and contracts, purchasing, procurement, and agenda items. This category is included for all municipalities listed.

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<sup>1</sup> Francine Ramaglia became the Interim Town Manager in May, 2022 and Town Manager on October 4, 2022.

City/Town/Village	Population <sup>2</sup>	Additional Services Provided by Each Municipality	Fees
Belle Glade	20,000	CRA; Parks & Recreation; Campground and Marina; Municipal Solid Waste & Recycling; Facilities Maintenance & Garage; Municipal Golf Course; Museum; Passports; Municipal Airport	Less than \$200,000
Greenacres	43,990	Fire Rescue; Parks & Recreation; K-12 After School Programs including transportation; Youth Camps; Passports; Stormwater Management	Less than \$200,000
Highland Beach	4,200	Police Dept. (including Marine Patrol Unit); Fire Rescue (including construction of new Fire Rescue building); Municipal Library; Water Utility	Less than \$200,000
Loxahatchee Groves	3,400	Water Management including drainage and canals	\$403,228.67
Palm Springs	26,890	Police Dept.; Municipal Library; CRA; Parks & Recreation, Water Utility; Youth Camps; Senior Programs; Stormwater Management	Less than \$200,000

**Part IV. Increase in Attorney’s Fees compared to Increase in Staff Salaries**

As you can see, our legal fees have significantly increased from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2024. In 2022, our legal fees had increased from \$196,267 in the prior year to \$296,061 in the FY 22 year. In both of the next two (2) fiscal years, 2023 and 2024, our fees increased to approximately \$400,000 each year. The increase from the FY 22 fees to the FY 24 fees was approximately 30%. During the same time frame, staff salaries went from \$1.318 million to \$2.067 million which was a 62% increase in salaries (see attached). As you can see, the rate of increase

<sup>2</sup> As reflected in the Palm Beach County League of Cities Membership Directory.

in legal fees has been about one half of the increase in staff salaries.

Many of you have heard the Town Manager state that she has been trying to clean up twenty (20) years of backed up work. Those efforts are reflected in the increase in both staff and attorneys costs. As the Town Manager wrote, in a January 9, 2025 email to Councilwoman Maniglia, "I will say that we do use our attorney more than many other cities as we do not have the level of staff—in numbers or level of expertise— or even just the physical time to write and/or address the numerous issues that the Town faces as well as the bottleneck of "righting the past" and of course the volleyball that generally has us looking at the same issues multiple times to no avail."

As I believe you are all aware, attorneys' fees are driven primarily by assignments from the Town Manager. Occasionally, there are assignments from the Council such as drafting a certain ordinance but the vast majority of your expenses on attorneys' fees are through assignments from the Manager.

#### **Part V. Suggestions for Reduction of Fees**

As the Town Manager noted, many issues seem to go unresolved for many years. The delay in resolution may be for a variety of reasons, such as for the matter to return to Council numerous times with changes, for seeking review and comments from outside consultants and/or staff on each revised draft, for scheduling before an advisory board, for providing a draft that is ready for Council consideration, or for changes in direction or prioritization. When items are not completed in a timely manner, there is always an increase in cost, both in staff time and attorneys' fees, in re-engaging on a topic that may have had no activity for many months. One suggestion would be to establish deadlines by which projects should be completed and scheduling additional deadlines if the project needs more work after its initial deadline.

Another suggestion would be to prioritize projects. You have often heard discussions about there are too many priorities, too many issues that the Town is trying to tackle all at once. This often leads to many items not being completed; as soon as one priority gains momentum, another priority seems to overtake it and puts the first priority on the back shelf. For this reason, establishing deadlines and prioritizing projects have to work together.

A third suggestion would be to not have contracts prepared by staff and then sent to us for review. It would be much more efficient to simply provide us with the necessary information and have us draft the contract.

A fourth suggestion would be to instruct that agenda items are provided to our office in a timely manner. Attached is the Town's "Deadlines for Agenda Items/Agenda Publication" document. Rarely do we receive items to review in accordance with the Town's policy. We are often provided items to review a day or two prior to agenda publication.

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I trust that the above is of assistance to you and look forward to working with you to provide excellent legal services in the most cost effective manner.

Sincerely,

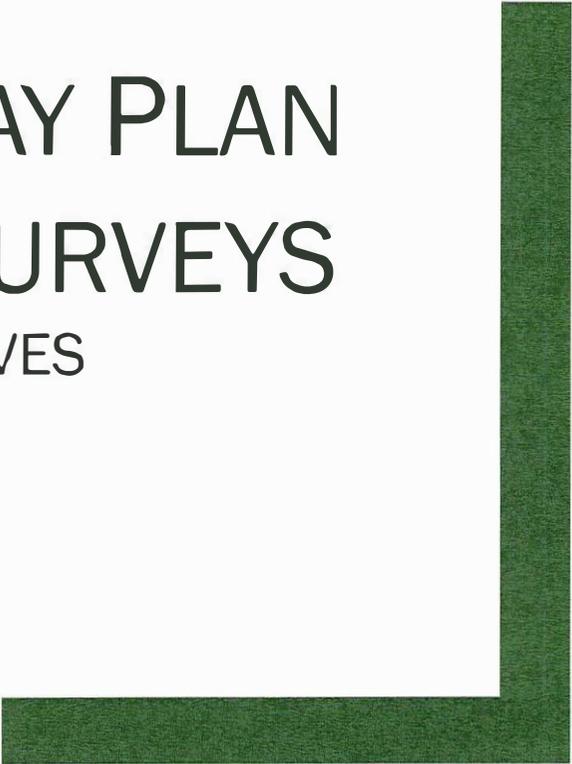
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glen J. Torcivia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "T".

Glen J. Torcivia

cc: Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager  
Valerie Oakes, Town Clerk

# FY 2024-2025 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Town of Loxahatchee Groves  
September 18, 2024



# STAFFING MODEL & PAY PLAN BASED ON MARKET SURVEYS

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

# COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
	PROPOSED	AMENDED	AUDITED	AUDITED	AUDITED	AUDITED
<b>COUNCIL</b>						
REGULAR SALARIES	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,750	
FICA & MEDICAL TAXES	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,037	
	<u>\$ 48,000</u>	<u>\$ 48,000</u>	<u>\$ 50,000</u>	<u>\$ 50,000</u>	<u>\$ 49,787</u>	
<b>STAFF</b>						
REGULAR SALARIES	\$ 917,360	\$ 691,793	\$ 472,930	\$ 495,081	\$ 478,237	\$ 483,672
OVERTIME	\$ 5,000	\$ 19,000	\$ 6,234	\$ 5,382	\$ 22,597	\$ 11,338
FICA & MEDICARE TAXES	\$ 70,528	\$ 53,037	\$ 40,261	\$ 36,773	\$ 36,081	\$ 35,723
RETIREMENT FRS	\$ 151,680	\$ 133,231	\$ 88,154	\$ 73,036	\$ 118,126	\$ 53,772
INVESTMENT TOWN MANAGER						
HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE	\$ 88,119	\$ 77,745	\$ 24,249	\$ 28,045	\$ 60,845	\$ 17,970
WORKER'S COMPENSATION	\$ 12,200	\$ 6,010	\$ 23,043	\$ 14,463	\$ -	\$ -
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE - PAYCHEX	\$ 9,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,239	\$ 5,181	\$ 746
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<u>\$ 1,253,887</u>	<u>\$ 988,816</u>	<u>\$ 662,871</u>	<u>\$ 660,019</u>	<u>\$ 721,067</u>	<u>\$ 603,221</u>
REGULAR SALARIES	\$ 717,500	\$ 689,468	\$ 446,646	\$ 402,816	\$ 337,077	\$ 312,956
OVERTIME	\$ 25,000	\$ 18,500	\$ 20,696	\$ 31,223	\$ 9,743	\$ 14,039
ON-CALL PAY	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,656	\$ 6,515	\$ 5,312	\$ 4,299
FRINGE BENEFITS						
FICA & MEDICARE TAXES	\$ 58,000	\$ 52,744	\$ 35,449	\$ 31,358	\$ 25,833	\$ 24,334
RETIREMENT FRS	\$ 118,000	\$ 153,385	\$ 75,908	\$ 73,531	\$ 107,089	\$ 50,566
HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE	\$ 130,000	\$ 71,529	\$ 43,313	\$ 46,886	\$ 44,388	\$ 9,406
WORKER'S COMPENSATION	\$ 40,000	\$ 36,787	\$ 22,671	\$ 14,463		
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE - DRUG TEST	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 639	\$ 2,165	\$ 967	\$ 65
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE - PAYCHEX						\$ (56)
<b>ROADS &amp; DRAINAGE FUND</b>	<u>\$ 1,096,500</u>	<u>\$ 1,030,413</u>	<u>\$ 648,978</u>	<u>\$ 608,957</u>	<u>\$ 530,409</u>	<u>\$ 415,609</u>
<b>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</b>	<u>\$ 2,398,387</u>	<u>\$ 2,067,229</u>	<u>\$ 1,361,849</u>	<u>\$ 1,318,976</u>	<u>\$ 1,301,263</u>	<u>\$ 1,018,830</u>



## Deadlines for Agenda Items/ Agenda Publication

### MEETING SCHEDULE

Town Council Regular Meeting

1st Tuesday of the Month

### DEADLINE SCHEDULE

Town Attorney's 1st Review Cycle

Town Attorney's 2nd Review Cycle

Town Clerk's Review

Agenda Publication Date

*The deadlines to request the drafting of an ordinance will be managed on a case by case basis.*

*Four (4) Weeks prior to Publication:  
Requests to draft contracts/policy.*

*Two (2) Weeks prior to Publication:  
Final Review of Agenda Items,  
Preparation/Review of Resolutions, &  
Review of Executed Contracts.*

*One (1) Week prior to Publication:  
Review & Approval for Agenda  
Finalization of Items*

*Wednesday Prior to the Town Council  
Meeting at 5:00 P.M.*

<b>Tuesday, December 3, 2024</b>	Thursday, October 31, 2024	Wednesday, November 13, 2024	Wednesday, November 20, 2024	Wednesday, November 27, 2024
<b>Tuesday, January 7, 2025</b>	Wednesday, December 3, 2025	Tuesday, December 17, 2024	Tuesday, December 24, 2024	Wednesday, December 31, 2025
<b>Tuesday, February 4, 2025</b>	Tuesday, December 31, 2024	Wednesday, January 15, 2025	Wednesday, January 22, 2025	Wednesday, January 29, 2025
<b>Tuesday, March 4, 2025</b>	Wednesday, January 29, 2025	Wednesday, February 12, 2025	Wednesday, February 19, 2025	Wednesday, February 26, 2025
<b>Tuesday, April 1, 2025</b>	Wednesday, February 26, 2025	Wednesday, March 12, 2025	Wednesday, March 19, 2025	Wednesday, March 26, 2025
<b>Tuesday, May 6, 2025</b>	Wednesday, April 2, 2025	Wednesday, April 16, 2025	Wednesday, April 23, 2025	Wednesday, April 30, 2025
<b>Tuesday, June 3, 2025</b>	Wednesday, April 30, 2025	Wednesday, May 14, 2025	Wednesday, May 21, 2025	Wednesday, May 28, 2025
<b>Tuesday, July 1, 2025</b>	Wednesday, May 28, 2025	Wednesday, June 11, 2025	Wednesday, June 18, 2025	Wednesday, June 25, 2025
<b>Tuesday, August 5, 2025</b>	Wednesday, July 2, 2025	Wednesday, July 16, 2025	Wednesday, July 23, 2025	Wednesday, July 30, 2025
<b>Tuesday, September 2, 2025</b>	Wednesday, July 30, 2025	Wednesday, August 13, 2025	Wednesday, August 20, 2025	Wednesday, August 27, 2025
<b>Tuesday, October 7, 2025</b>	Wednesday, September 3, 2025	Wednesday, September 17, 2025	Wednesday, September 24, 2025	Wednesday, October 1, 2025
<b>Tuesday, November 4, 2025</b>	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	Wednesday, October 15, 2025	Wednesday, October 22, 2025	Wednesday, October 29, 2025
<b>Tuesday, December 2, 2025</b>	Wednesday, October 29, 2025	Wednesday, November 12, 2025	Wednesday, November 19, 2025	Wednesday, November 26, 2025

*\*These dates are subject to change.*