

Town Of Havana

Budget Workshop

August 12, 2025 – 6:00pm

Meeting minutes

Call to Order

The August 12, 2025 Budget Workshop meeting was called to order by Mayor Eddie Bass at 6:00pm. Invocation was led by Mayor Pro Tem Lawrence Reed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call confirmed the presence of the following council members including Councilwoman Nelson, Mayor Eddie Bass, Mayor Pro Tem Lawrence Reed, Councilman McKinnon and Councilman Wesolowski. Councilman Seymour and Councilwoman Key was not in attendance.

Recognition of Visitors

David Wesolowski – 310 N Main ST, Havana, FL 32333 – Mr. Wesolowski questioned the zoning fees and money in vs money out. He shared it is important to determine how much is needed. The zoning fees does not total to FY24 and only \$8K to \$9K in revenue from information from his public records request. He would like to know why zoning needs to be increased.

Councilman Wesolowski inquired as to the same question. Ms. Wilkerson stated the revenue went up but did not go up in expense. Councilman McKinnon stated that this is a forecast only. He shared there is really no way to know what the future growth will be.

2025/2026 Proposed Budget

Town Manager, Kendrah Wilkerson, presented the proposed draft budget. It is not balanced and will change before the final budget is produced. She requests feedback from tonight's workshop on the priorities the council would like to see.

Councilman inquired as to the salaries and Ms. Wilkerson stated this is the first year to budget and across the board increase. Mayor Pro Tem inquired as to the # of employees. Ms. Wilkerson shared it is around 34 but only full-time will be eligible for this increase. Ms. Wilkerson shared that TJ Crawford went to a sworn position but the Town remains with the same # of full-time.

Ms. Wilkerson reviewed general changes and notes in the budget and shared that the draft budget is based upon ½% EL, 5% WA and 10% SW increases. Councilman Wesolowski shared that he had spoken to a local banker at Midsouth Bank and he can offer a higher increase on interest for the Town's money. Councilman Wesolowski does not wish to raise rates. Ms. Wilkerson requested that Mr. Wesolowski forward any contact and information to her. She shared that the Town has been meeting with Capital City Bank about restructuring and looking at opportunities to make more interest on the money. Also moving the Regions and The First monies to a CD at another institution in order to stop pay monthly fees and increase the interest on these monies as well. Councilman Wesolowski had several questions in regards to different lines items on the budget. There was much discussion among the council in regards to power purchase, CRA, spray field leases, strategies as well as past years audit comments. Ms. Wilkerson shared that several of the reoccurring comments will go away. Due to minimal staff, the comment on segregation of duties will probably continue to show as it is impossible to have complete segregation. The idea for the rate increases is to help stabilize each utility and decrease the money transfers to sewer.

Ms. Wilkerson shared two other options of no rate increase and balance the budget with cuts where it is required and increase EL transfer and back to same amount as last year. She requests guidance from the council on what they desire for FY26 budget. Councilman McKinnon and Councilman Wesolowski both voiced their desire to stay with the option for less sewer increase and stay at 3.0000 mills. Councilwoman Nelson shared that hopefully the ISO rating will return a savings for citizens. She pointed out that the past few years strategy is working and removing negative comments from the audits. She asked if our rates impact our grants. Ms. Wilkerson shared that USDA grants will make a recommendation before funding of what the Town should do. The Town has been applying for as many grants as possible to make all repairs needed to the sewer system. There is a meeting tomorrow, 08/13/2025, to find out if the monies the Town applied for will be granted to repair the digester. If so, then that will make a difference in the budget. The Town is looking to put sewer management services out to bid due to decreased satisfaction from OMI. Option is to have an operator, 2nd operator and apprentice and that would be significantly less expensive than what the Town currently pays OMI. Councilman McKinnon shared that there has been a shortage in certified operators in the market and when we bring in-house, the Town will assume all liability. The Town needs to test the market and see what is available. Possibility to take it back in-house but there is a learning curve that will be a hurdle. There can be cost savings if the Town can staff.

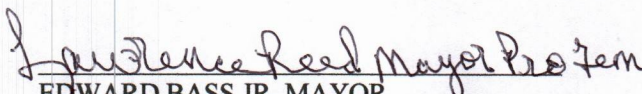
Councilman Wesolowski desires to stay more conservative for the citizens. Mayor Pro Tem Reed agreed and wants the Town to look at bringing sewer management services in-house. Ms. Wilkerson shared breaches that OMI have committed and also of possible options that have been suggested. This will definitely be an item brought back to council after appropriate research has been completed. Councilman McKinnon shared historical knowledge of how OMI and their services came to be.

After much discussion in regards to the options, Ms. Wilkerson stated she will present a balanced budget at the 1st Budget Hearing on September 16, 2025 based on the option of staying at 3.0000 and the conservative approach. Also, that town staff will continue to look at opportunities to make the Town's money make more money.

Motion to Adjourn

Councilman McKinnon made motion to adjourn the August 12, 2025, budget workshop meeting. Councilwoman Nelson seconded, and motion carried.

Mayor Bass adjourned the meeting at 7:19pm.


EDWARD BASS JR, MAYOR

ATTEST:


Shrylan R. Alexander, Town Clerk

