

Town Of Havana

2nd Budget Workshop

August 13, 2024 – 6:00pm

Meeting minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Loughmiller at 6:00pm. Invocation was led by Councilman Reed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call confirmed the presence of the following council members including Penny Key (via phone), Lawrence Reed, Tabatha Nelson, Mayor Loughmiller and Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Bass, ensuring a quorum for the meeting. Council members absent were Landon Seymour and Matt Wesolowski.

Budget Discussion

Ms. Wilkerson stated the budget provided to council is not fully balanced but Council should anticipate no additional substantial changes other than requests discussed in this meeting. Based on 3.00 mills the following rates will be imposed: Water 10%, Sewer 15%, Electric 7%, and Gas base meter \$8.00. Staff will continue to work on Quality control to decrease meter issues, improve replacement schedule & costs. The Current Budget presented is balanced and includes the vacant HPD position funded at 9 months and interview process to begin October 2024.

The Town Manager reported that since the tap fee increase approval at last meeting, a tap fee for gas was declined by customer due to cost. She will be working aggressively at more annexation to increase the tax base. She reported that the flat bed truck is in very poor shape and either need to budget for truck or increase in repair costs. Iron Horse has a used flat bed that they purchased from City of Tallahassee and is in good shape and low miles. Cost is \$22K.

ARPA funds in the amount of \$98K were set for tree trimming the northern ½ of the town but the company cannot give a start date. The Town needs to spend the money and she is moving the funds to a water project for the liner in ground storage tank due to DEP citation. Tree-trimming will be handled in-house beginning 8/14/2024. The last few outages were due to limbs on the lines. Every time a limb touches the lines costs the Town money. Councilwoman Key inquired if the \$98K was enough and Ms. Wilkerson confirmed the \$98K would be close to covering the used flat bed truck purchase and the water project cost.

Mayor Loughmiller inquired as to repairing or replacing the sign on Short ST @ Water Works building. Ms. Wilkerson stated that an inquiry can be made as to what it would take to repurpose due to the old signs and fonts fit with the history of Havana.

Ms. Wilkerson reviewed the sample utility bill comparison in the packet showing the impact of the proposed increases. The budget is as lean as it can be and the tap fees have already been increased. Zoning fees are being reviewed now. Other suggestions are to increase the tax base and require developers to put in natural gas in all new neighborhoods. The Territorial Agreement with Talquin is going to be expiring soon and will probably renew it.

Other opportunities are to look into grants for southern part of town to grow, increasing gas customers in Country Club area and sewer and digital meters. The Country Club currently does not have sewer or gas. DEP is pushing for sewer instead of septic systems and this area will probably need a Lift Station. Electric meters can be replaced with smart meters now but the costs will be for the software. Grants for these systems are not as plentiful. Chattahoochee has recently converted to digital. The Town can go over and check it out as soon as they are up and running. The new Public Safety building money will be coming and if more id needed, the Town will request more. The urgent need now are the failing lift stations.

Ms. Wilkerson requested the Council's input on the Budget and the needs. Councilman Reed and Councilman Bass inquired as to number of cutoffs, reasons and if same people. Ms. Wilkerson and Town Clerk both

confirmed that it seems to be the same people and poor choices is more of the reason. Mayor Loughmiller requested increasing the electric base meter rate to \$15.00 to increase revenue some. Councilwoman Nelson shared that Liberty County could not afford to keep utilities and recently Talquin took over the area. Talquin is installing digital meters due to distance and rates are Talquin rates. Councilman Reed asked as to the thoughts on the base meter increase. Ms. Wilkerson said it is an extremely tight budget and the increase make a little more revenue to help the overall budget. The Town will also be looking into surrounding areas for possibly replacement of bucket truck and other equipment needs.

The Town Manager announced that there is a Meet & Greet with the Sheriff candidates from 7:30-10:00am on Thursday at Hazel Baker and this is an opportunity for all citizens to ask questions and to inquire as to the gaming issues.

Ms. Wilkerson confirmed that the only changes needed to be made to the budget is electric base meter rate to \$15.00. Council agreed.

Chief Lewis is creating case logs in regards to nuisance issues for tracking purposes.

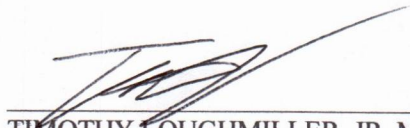
Recognition of Each Council Member

Councilman Bass shared that it is everyone's responsibility to explain to citizens when approached the reason for the increases. Councilwoman Nelson stated that hopefully an ISO reevaluation is coming and hopefully homeowners' insurance rates will decrease which will help to ease the impact. Each council member had the opportunity to contribute remarks or raise issues.

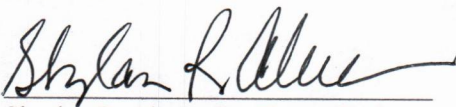
Motion to Adjourn

Councilman Bass made motion to adjourn the August 13, 2024, Budget Workshop meeting. Councilwoman Nelson seconded, and motion carried.

Mayor Loughmiller adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.


TIMOTHY LOUGHMILLER, JR, MAYOR

ATTEST:


Shrylan R. Alexander, Town Clerk

