

**TOWN OF HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025
6:00 P.M.
OFFICIAL MINUTES**

The regular monthly meeting of the Haverhill Town Council was held on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Town Hall, 4585 Charlotte Street, Haverhill, FL.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Gordon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Mayor Gordon offered the Invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Town Administrator Stevens called the roll, and Council Members present were Vice Mayor Lawrence Gordon, Council Member Ray Caranci, Council Member Teresa Johnson, and Council Member Dennis Withington. Mayor Foy was absent with notice. Town Staff present included Town Attorney John Foster and Town Administrator Tracey Stevens. With a quorum present in the Council Chambers, the meeting proceeded.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments offered from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Mayor Gordon inquired if there were any additions, deletions, or modifications to the agenda and there were none.

Council Member Withington moved to approve the agenda as submitted; seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 22, 2025
2. Approval of Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program (JAG-Countywide) funds allocation in the total amount of \$293,033, of which \$240,228 will be allocated to the Countywide Re-Entry Program, and \$52,805 will be allocated to Equipment for Law Enforcement Agencies Countywide
3. Approval of Grau & Associates Three-Year Contract Extension to Audit the Town's Financial Statements for FY25, FY26 and FY27

Council Member Caranci moved to approve the consent agenda as submitted; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 4-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (PBSO)

There was no one in attendance from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to offer a report.

COMMENTS FROM PALM BEACH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE (PBCFR)

District Fire Chief Martinez reported on the statistics for May which included 17 calls including 4 vehicle accident, 10 medical calls, and 1 alarm, 1 investigation, and 1 minor fire. The average response time was 6:48 with a turnout time of 50 seconds. He also reported on the following:

- a. The new preemptive zoning system is on track to begin in September. The system will alleviate the traffic issues which cause higher response times.
- b. The department installed another 181 free smoke detectors within 5 municipalities in the month of June. Anyone can call to have one installed.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2025

- c. There were 35 firefighters that graduated in recruit class 94, and the next class will begin in August.
- d. Electric vehicle (EV) fires are on the rise and are extremely difficult to extinguish due to the location of the batteries and the fact that lithium-ion batteries self-oxidize. He noted that even after the fire is extinguished, it can re-ignite a month after the initial fire. He would like to present information regarding EV fires to the public here at Town Hall and will coordinate with Town Administrator Stevens.

PRESENTATIONS

4. Independent Auditor's Report on the FY24 Financial Statements by Grau & Associates

David Caplivski, Audit Partner with Grau & Associates, presented the FY24 Independent Auditor's Report on the FY24 financial statements, noting that it was a clean audit with no findings. He noted that the Town is in a strong financial position and thanked Town Administrator Stevens for working well with his team on the audit.

Council Member Johnson moved to receive and file the FY24 Financial Statement Audit Report; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ORDINANCE READINGS

5. First Reading and Adoption of Ordinance No. 535:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HAVERHILL, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 38-9, PARKING OF MOTOR VEHICLES, RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, WATERCRAFT AND TRAILERS IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, OF CHAPTER 38, TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF HAVERHILL, BY CLARIFYING IN SUBSECTION (d)(2)(ii)(4) THAT ALL RECREATIONAL VEHICLES SHALL BE STORED WITH ALL SLIDE-OUTS AND AWNINGS IN THE CLOSED POSITION; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF LAWS IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CORRECTION OF SCRIVENERS' ERRORS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND OTHER PURPOSES.

Town Attorney Foster read Ordinance No. 535 into the record by title only.

Town Administrator Stevens noted that this ordinance stated that this ordinance is being presented in an attempt to address comments by the Council that there are people living in RV's within the town. The language added is as follows: "Recreational vehicles shall be stored with all slide-outs and awnings in the closed position."

Vice Mayor Gordon called for public comments, and there were none.

Council Member Withington moved to adopt Ordinance No. 535 on first reading and transmit the ordinance to second reading; seconded by Council Member Caranci. Motion carried 4-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

6. Approval of Expenditure not to Exceed \$45,430 for Generator Replacement at Town Hall to be Performed by Generator Supercenter and Alpha Fence & Rail

Town Administrator Stevens reported that this is a budgeted expenditure for the generator at Town Hall that is currently failing. She noted that although this expenditure is budgeted, the cost goes slightly over budget, so there will need to be a budget amendment at the end of the year to take money from another unexpended line within the infrastructure surtax budget. Out of the

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2025

three quotes received for the generator and fuel tank replacement, staff recommended hiring Generator Supercenter which was the lowest quote, and out of the three quotes received for the fence removal and replacement, staff recommended hiring Alpha Fence and Rail which was the lowest quote.

Vice Mayor Gordon called for public comments, and there were none.

Council Member Caranci moved to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$45,430 for generator replacement at Town Hall to be performed by Generator Supercenter and Alpha Fence and Rail; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Discussion Regarding Preliminary FY26 Budget

Town Administrator Stevens presented the preliminary FY26 budget, noting that Haverhill was in the top three for valuation percentage increase this year due to the 20 new townhomes that were added to the tax roll. She stated that another 20 townhomes will be added to the tax roll next year when the rest of the Haverhill Courts units receive a certificate of occupancy. She stated that the proposed mil rate of 3.90 is lower than the current mil rate of 4.05, and that rate will likely be able to be lowered again next year with more units added to the tax roll.

Council Member Withington asked what the percentage of homesteaded properties in town is, and Town Administrator Stevens stated she would bring that information to the next meeting.

Council Member Caranci stated that since the solid waste assessments are going up to cover the Waste Pro contract increase, it would be good if we could offset that cost within the overall budget. Vice Mayor Gordon stated he agrees to give tax relief but also recognizes that we need to cover the cost of inflation. He asked how the Town's mil rate compares to other cities, and Town Administrator Stevens stated she would bring that information back to the next meeting. She stated that she is looking at lowering the mil rate as much as possible to give the taxpayers some relief in their property tax bill. Council Member Johnson stated she thinks it's great that we will be able to give the residents some relief in the property tax bill this year.

Council Member Caranci stated that we are lucky in Florida that we have a 3% valuation cap for homesteaded properties, unlike other states that have increased by 35% or more.

8. Discussion Regarding Impact Fees

Town Attorney Foster explained that there has been a change in Florida statutes section 163.3180 regarding the collection of transportation impact fees. County Administrator Baker sent a letter informing the town that the new law needs to be addressed, and she sent two separate interlocal agreements for the town to consider adopting. The first interlocal agreement presents an option for each entity to collect its respective portion of the impact fees, and the second interlocal agreement presents an option for the town to collect the entire impact fee and remit the County's portion back to the County. The letter also states that if the requirements of FS 163.3180 do not apply to the Town's current circumstances or if the Town would like to keep the status quo with the County regarding our respective mitigation of transportation impacts, to let County staff know. Town Attorney Foster stated that currently, the County collects the impact fee, and none is remitted back to the Town, and his first impression was to notify the County that the Town would like to keep business as usual. Town Attorney Foster also noted that Max Lohman, the City Attorney for the City of Palm Beach Gardens, was involved in HB479 and shared a letter that he wrote to his City Commission, noting that HB479 specifically requires that the County and Town must develop an interlocal agreement to coordinate the mitigation of those respective transportation impacts. He is encouraging the cities not to sign the interlocal agreements that were

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2025

drafted by the County, as they likely do not meet state law requirements. Town Attorney Foster stated there is a penalty provision in statute that would kick in if an interlocal agreement is not signed by October 1, 2025.

Council Member Caranci stated that he believes the City of Palm Beach Gardens recently won a lawsuit against the County, and the City could now collect its own impact/mobility fees. It was noted that this is a different situation than the situation Haverhill is in due to this new law.

Council Member Johnson stated that this is a complex issue, and further conversations will need to be had with the County. Town Administrator Stevens and Town Attorney Foster agreed.

Council Member Caranci noted that impact fees could pay for street lighting on the County roads that run through Haverhill.

REPORTS

9. Town Attorney

Town Attorney Foster submitted a written report in the meeting packages and gave a verbal report to the Council on the bills that passed and failed during the 2025 state legislative session. It was noted that there was another attack on home rule this year with many unfunded mandates handed down to municipalities.

10. Mayor

Mayor Foy was not present to give a report.

11. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Stevens noted that her written monthly report was submitted in the Council packages and encouraged the Council to review the report with important information. She reported on the following:

- a. Jo Plyer, a long-time public servant in Haverhill, has been admitted to a memory care facility, and her family is preparing her home for sale. We wish Jo and her family all the best during this transition.
- b. The deadline to file FORM 1 Financial Disclosures with the Florida Commission on Ethics is July 1st. Town Council Members should have received an email from the FCE with a link to the electronic filing system. All filings need to be made electronically this year.
- c. The County has partnered with the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc. for implementation of the Heir's Project. This initiative is funded by a grant to preserve generational wealth and promote community stability by providing legal services to eligible homeowners for the creation of estate plans, wills, deeds, and the clearing of tangled property titles. All services will be provided free of charge. More information may be found on the Town's website.
- d. Staff is currently working on a New Resident Welcome Packet with important information for new residents including important phone numbers and websites, Civic Ready signup information, the importance of keeping our stormwater drainage systems clear, information on garbage & recycling collection services, etc. This should be ready to distribute in the next few months.
- e. The Town's NPDES MS4 Permit (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit) - Year 8 audit is scheduled to be held in August and September of this year. The records review will occur in August and the site visit will occur in September.

- f. The Florida Legislature adopted new language that further expands the oversight authority of the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget (OPB). Under this provision, OPB is authorized to conduct comprehensive reviews of any local government's functions, procedures, policies, and expenditures for fiscal years ending September 30, 2024, and September 30, 2025. These reviews are intended to identify: (1) the use of resources for DEI initiatives that may be inconsistent with state law; (2) evidence of gross overspending, waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement; and (3) duplicative or redundant government functions. To carry out these reviews, OPB may request access to a wide range of records, including personnel costs, overhead, contracts, grants, outsourcing expenditures, financial audits, budgets, millage reports, compliance reviews, employee training materials, and job descriptions. If a local government has received state funding in the current or previous fiscal year, within seven business days of a request, it must provide OPB access to relevant personnel and subject-matter experts, physical premises (subject to reasonable security protocols), and applicable data systems and records. Local government failure to comply with these provisions may result in a \$1,000 per day fine, subject to recommendation by OPB and approval by a three-fourths vote of the Administration Commission. These fines are assessed against the local government and deposited into the state's General Revenue Fund. Any records requested by OPB under this law are considered public records inspection requests and are subject to enforcement under chapters 119.11 and 119.12, Florida Statutes. The law also requires OPB to submit an initial report by January 13, 2026, to the Governor, Chief Financial Officer, Senate President, and House Speaker. This report must identify the local governments reviewed, summarize the findings, and include any documented evidence of DEI-related spending, mismanagement, or duplicative functions. It must also include recommendations for improving governance and fiscal responsibility. The law **does not limit** OPB's authority to engage in other activities or encourage voluntary cooperation from local governments. This new oversight authority expires on July 1, 2026.
- g. The Town Administrator is scheduling vacation the week of July 28 – August 1 to travel to Maine. However, a second trip may be necessary due to some health issues in her family.
- h. The Town Administrator will be attending the Florida League of Cities Annual Conference in Orlando from Thursday, August 14th through Saturday, August 16th, and the ICMA Annual Conference in Tampa from Saturday, October 25th through Wednesday, October 29th.

12. Treasurer

Town Administrator Stevens reported on the Treasurer's report for May 2025, noting that everything is on track.

Council Member Caranci moved to receive and file the Treasurer's report for May 2025; seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried 4-0.

13. Committee Delegates

Council Member Johnson reported that she presented information regarding the Re-Entry program at the Palm Beach County League of Cities Executive Board meeting. There is a wish-list for folks who are transitioning and if anyone would like to donate, please let Council Member Johnson know.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2025

Council Member Johnson stated she heard information during the meeting regarding the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative and inquired about the septic-to-sewer element. Town Administrator Stevens responded that she has reached out to a grants administrator to inquire about costs, as the Town may be able to apply for a planning grant. The first step for a septic-to-sewer conversion is the planning phase, and the town may be able to apply for a planning grant with the help of a grant writer/grants administrator, whose fees may be paid from the grant proceeds if the Town is awarded the grant.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Vice Mayor Gordon stated he received a letter requesting a proclamation for Verdenia Baker who recently retired as the Palm Beach County Administrator, and he would like to sponsor that proclamation for a scholarship event that will be held in her honor on November 30, 2025. Council Member Caranci noted that Joe Abruzzo has been hired to replace Ms. Baker.

Vice Mayor Gordon asked where we are in the process of looking at the parking code to address parking in the roadways. Town Administrator Stevens stated that staff will be meeting on July 15th to discuss the parking code.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Attorney Foster notified the Council he will be attending the Florida Municipal Attorney's Association conference the week of July 21-25, 2025, and Dominic DeCesare will be filling in for him at the July 24, 2025 Town Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Town Administrator Stevens and adopted by the Town Council on July 24, 2025.

Approved: _____

Tracey L. Stevens, Town Administrator

Jay G. Foy, Mayor

SIGN IN SHEET

TOWN OF HAVERHILL
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, June 26, 2025
6:00pm

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