

**TOWN OF HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025
6:00 P.M.
OFFICIAL MINUTES**

The regular monthly meeting of the Haverhill Town Council was held on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at the Town Hall, 4585 Charlotte Street, Haverhill, FL.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Foy offered the Invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Town Administrator Stevens called the roll, and Council Members present were Mayor Jay Foy, Vice Mayor Lawrence Gordon, Council Member Ray Caranci, Council Member Teresa Johnson, and Council Member Dennis Withington. 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

Brian Smith of 1133 Palmetto Rd spoke to the Council regarding a code enforcement matter on his property and Town Administrator Stevens responded that she would follow up with Mr. Smith the following week to address his concerns regarding interactions with staff.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Foy 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 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 28, 2025
2. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 8, 2025
3. Authorize Town Administrator to Sign Documents to Renew Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust General Liability and Workers' Comp Insurance for 10/1/25 – 9/30/26
4. Ratify the Closing of the ARPA Bank Account at TD Bank and Deposit of the Remaining Balance Which Consists of Interest Earnings into the General Operating Bank Account at Seacoast Bank

Vice Mayor Gordon moved to approve the consent agenda as submitted; seconded by Council Member Caranci. Motion carried 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS & INTERAGENCY REPORTS

5. Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Ekstrom reported on the statistics for the past 30 days which included a burglary at the shopping plaza on Military Trail, vagrants at 7-Eleven, and multiple traffic stops. He noted that the installation of license plate recognition cameras in town would be helpful in solving crimes and stated he would follow up on that at a later date.

Council Members thanked Deputy Ekstrom and his team for helping to slow down traffic and address aggressive driving throughout the Town.

6. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

District Fire Chief Martinez reported on the statistics for August which included 3 motor vehicle accidents and 18 medical calls, for a total of 21 calls, with an average turnout time of 47 seconds and 6.45 response time. He also gave an update on Fire Department training, programs and services.

Council Member Withington commended Chief Martinez on the quick response he received when he called 911.

Town Administrator Stevens requested that Chief Martinez provide an engine for the Town's Annual Trunk or Treat event on Halloween.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY26 FINAL BUDGET

7. Final Budget Hearing for FY26

- a. Town Administrator's Presentation of the Final Budget & Final Millage Rate for the FY2025/2026 Budget
Town Administrator Stevens presented the Final Budget & Final Millage Rate for FY2025/2026, noting that there were no changes to the total budget figure since the Council adopted the Tentative Budget on September 8, 2025. She stated she is proposing to lower the mil rate to 3.90.
- b. Town Administrator Stevens announced the Town of Haverhill Computed Millage Rate is Higher Than the Rolled Back Rate of 3.7671 by 3.53%. The millage to be levied is 3.9000.
- c. Public Comment & Comments from Town Council Members
Mayor Foy called for public comments, and there were none. Vice Mayor Gordon asked Town Administrator Stevens to confirm the change in mil rate and Town Administrator Stevens responded that she is proposing to lower the mil rate from the current FY24/25 mil rate of 4.05 down to 3.90 for the FY25/26 budget.
- d. Resolution No. 2025-15: Adoption of Final Millage Rate for FY2025/2026
Town Attorney Foster read Resolution No. 2025-15 into the record by title only.
Council Member Johnson moved to adopt Resolution No. 2025-15 at 6:17 PM; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 5-0.
- e. Resolution No. 2025-16: Adoption of Final Budget for FY2025/2026
Town Attorney Foster read Resolution No. 2025-16 into the record by title only.
Council Member Caranci moved to adopt Resolution No. 2025-16 at 6:18 PM; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ORDINANCE READINGS

8. Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance No. 537:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HAVERHILL, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTIONS 54-1, 54-2, 54-3 AND 54-4, OF CHAPTER 54, SUBDIVISIONS, PLATTING AND REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF HAVERHILL, BY AUTHORIZING THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO RECEIVE, REVIEW, PROCESS AND APPROVE, APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS, OR DENY ANY PROPOSED PLAT RATHER THAN THE TOWN COUNCIL; REQUIRING THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO NOTIFY ANY PLAT APPLICANT OF ANY MISSING DOCUMENTS OR INFORMATION NECESSARY TO PROCESS THE PLAT, AND THE APPLICABLE TIMFRAMES FOR REVIEWING THE PLAT, WITHIN SEVEN (7) BUSINESS DAYS AFTER SUBMISSION; REQUIRING THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO NOTIFY THE PLAT APPLICANT OF THE REASONS FOR DENYING ANY PLAT APPLICATION; 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. 537 into the record by title only.

Mayor Foy called for public comments, and there were none.

Council Member Withington moved to adopt Ordinance No. 537 on second reading; seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried 5-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

9. Discussion Regarding the Process of Septic to Sewer Conversion

Town Administrator Stevens reported that she provided information regarding the septic to sewer conversion process at the last meeting and asked Council Members to review it prior to this meeting. She stated she is looking for direction from the Council as to whether or not they would like to move forward with the septic to sewer conversion process now or wait until it is mandated by the State. She noted that a mandate from the State would likely be at least partially funded by the State.

Mayor Foy noted that he estimates a conversion would cost around \$30,000 per housing unit for the main system only, with additional costs for each property owner to hook into the new system. He stated he was involved with the planning for septic to sewer conversion with Harbor Branch in Tequesta near the Jupiter Inlet and he described the environmental factors and concerns. He stated Haverhill doesn't have environmental areas to be concerned about phosphorous and nitrogen, although there are always concerns regarding viruses travelling to a well. He stated that septic tanks don't cause a problem for those who are on domestic water service.

Council Members discussed grants and appropriations and Town Administrator Stevens stated that there needs to be a level of planning done prior to requesting grants and appropriations. Council Member Johnson stated she appreciates the information that was provided by Town Administrator Stevens and asked if a consultant would need to do the planning work, to which Town Administrator Stevens confirmed. Mayor Foy noted that DERM provided a map of the septic tanks in the area; however, identifying how many the town has is only a small step in the planning process.

Discussion ensued regarding the planning phase along with costs to residents including the cost for each resident to hook up to the system once it is installed, which can be quite costly. Mayor Foy stated that it is state law for property owners to connect to the system once it is installed in front of the house, and discussion ensued regarding which neighborhoods are already connected to sewer. Grant funding was also discussed.

After discussion regarding costs, the Council consensus was to not move forward with a septic to sewer conversion project at this time.

REPORTS

10. Town Attorney

Town Attorney Foster did not have a report.

11. Mayor

Mayor Foy reported that he attended the NPDES Steering Committee meeting last week.

12. 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. State House Select Committee Regarding Property Tax Relief or Elimination

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- b. Costs for Special Election to Fill Town Council Seat
- c. Virtual Meeting to be Held to Discuss the Vulnerability Assessment Exposure Analysis Results
- d. Several Municipalities and Counties in the State Participating in a Lawsuit Declaring Senate Bill 180 Unconstitutional
- e. Town Administrator Stevens Attending FLC Legislative Policy Committee Meeting in Orlando on September 26th

Vice Mayor Gordon asked if the Council is required to fill a vacant Council seat and Town Administrator Stevens stated it depends on the timing of the resignation and how long is left in that Council Member's term. He also asked about educating the public regarding the potential elimination of property taxes and Town Administrator Stevens stated she is currently working on the data packet that is specific to Haverhill and it will be provided to the public once its complete.

13. Treasurer

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

Council Member Caranci moved to receive and file the Treasurer's report for August 2025; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 5-0.

14. Committee Delegates

Council Member Johnson reported that she attended the Leadership Palm Beach County meeting and heard presentations by Mayor Marino, Commissioner Flores, and Representative Tendrich. She stated they spoke about the proposal to eliminate property taxes and what that may entail. Town Administrator Stevens stated that the State's proposal to eliminate property taxes and replace it with sales tax funds takes away local control of the tax dollars, as the state would have broad control over what those funds can be utilized for. Vice Mayor Gordon stated that the Governor is supporting the elimination of property taxes without any plausible way to replace those funds.

Vice Mayor Gordon reported that he attended the monthly Palm Beach County League of Cities meeting yesterday and the Board hired a new Executive Director, Amelia Jadoo, Esq. to replace retiring Executive Director Richard Radcliffe.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business to come before the Council at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Letter of Support for Bristol Hospice Services Certificate of Need Application

Council Member Johnson explained that hospice service expansion is needed in our area and asked the Council to send a letter to the State Agency for Health Care Administration in support of Bristol Hospice Services certificate of need application. Discussion ensued regarding the certificate of need process, the legalities of supporting a private enterprise, and whether or not Bristol Hospice Services is a for-profit or non-profit enterprise. Town Attorney Foster stated that each Council Member would need to disclose whether or not they had a financial interest in Bristol Hospice Services prior to voting on a letter of support and noted that the Council would not be able to voice support for any private enterprise that would be located within the Town. There were no Council Members with a financial interest in Bristol Hospice Services.

Council Member Johnson moved to send a letter of support for Bristol Hospice Services certificate of need application; seconded by Vice Mayor Gordon.

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Council Member Caranci asked if he could abstain from the vote since he won't be serving on the Council much longer, and Town Administrator Stevens stated that he could not abstain from voting unless a financial interest exists. Council Member Caranci stated that there wasn't enough information provided for him to support a particular business when he doesn't know which other businesses are applying for the certificate of need.

Vice Mayor Gordon moved to postpone the vote on providing a letter of support for Bristol Hospice Services certificate of need application until the next meeting; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 4-1 (Council Member Johnson dissented).

Council Member Johnson asked why she was not able to sign a letter of support for Bristol Hospice Services without approval of the Council. Town Attorney Foster explained that a personal letter of support can be issued by Teresa Johnson, but not Council Member Johnson on town letterhead, as utilizing the title of Council Member and utilizing town letterhead is purporting that the Town is in support when it may not be. Town Attorney Foster explained that the Council speaks as one voice, not individual voices, and each Council Member has no authority individually under state law and the charter of the town. He read an excerpt from the Council Member orientation memo that he developed which described the law in that respect.

Policy on Flags at Half Mast

Vice Mayor Gordon stated that he would like to develop a town policy on who the flag is lowered for at Town Hall, as opposed to following Governor's orders to lower the flag. Discussion ensued and **there was consensus of the Council that the flag at Town Hall will only be lowered to half-mast at the direction of the Council.**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Town Administrator Stevens and adopted by the Town Council on October 23, 2025.

Approved: _____

Tracey L. Stevens, Town Administrator

Jay G. Foy, Mayor

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Thursday, September 25, 2025
6:00pm

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