

**TOWN OF HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026
6:00 P.M.
OFFICIAL MINUTES**

The regular monthly meeting of the Haverhill Town Council was held on Thursday, May 14, 2026, 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 (via Zoom), Council Member Teresa Johnson, Council Member Mark Uptegraph and Council Member Dennis Withington. Town Staff present included Town Attorney John Foster (via Zoom) and Town Administrator Tracey Stevens. With a quorum present in the Council Chambers, the meeting proceeded.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

A representative for Lourdes Moncayo of 5079 Gooseberry St spoke to the Council regarding an issue they are having trying to obtain approval for a fence. Town Administrator Stevens responded that she had contacted the owner earlier in the day to set up a meeting to discuss the fence permit application so she can try to resolve the issues, and if any further applications or appeals are needed, they will be included on a future agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Council Member Johnson moved to approve the agenda as submitted; seconded by Council Member Uptegraph. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 9, 2026
2. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report for March 2026
3. Approval of Lien Satisfaction for 5119 Palo Verde Place
4. Adopt Proclamation Regarding Gun Violence Awareness

Council Member Withington moved to approve the consent agenda as amended; seconded by Council Member Johnson. 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, noting that crashes on Belvedere & Military have increased, along with vehicle burglaries.

6. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

Chief Martinez presented the annual Fire Department report and distributed copies for the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ORDINANCE READINGS

7. **Resolution No. 2026-02 – A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Haverhill, Florida, Adopting a Preliminary Non-Ad Valorem Special Assessment for the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year for Residential Properties Lying Within the Municipal Boundaries of the Town of Haverhill as More Particularly Described in Exhibit “A” Attached Hereto, to Fund Solid Waste Collection and Disposal and Related Charges Within the Town, Collecting Such Pursuant to the Uniform Method for the Levy, Collection and Enforcement of Non-Ad Valorem Assessments, Providing that such Assessments Shall Constitute Legal, Valid, and Binding First Liens Upon Property Against Which Assessments are Made Until Paid; and Providing for an Effective Date.**

Town Administrator Stevens read Resolution No. 2026-02 into the record by title only. She explained that the increase in solid waste assessment from \$335 to \$345 reflects the increase in the solid waste contract.

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

Council Member Johnson moved to adopt Resolution No. 2026-02; seconded by Council Member Withington. Motion carried 5-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

8. Discuss Lien Reduction Request for 560 Bethany Lane

Town Administrator Stevens explained that a code enforcement lien was placed on the property at 560 Bethany Lane, and the owners of the property are requesting a fine reduction from \$107,000 to \$14,000. The property came into compliance on March 31, 2026, and as of today's date has remained in compliance with the violations outlined in the code enforcement case #24-00089. The fine of \$107,000 is outstanding, which represents a fine of \$200 per day for 535 days. Due to the complexity of the case and staff time involved, the extreme nuisance to the surrounding properties, legal fees and potential increase to the Town's insurance premiums due to the Town being named in a foreclosure case for this property, staff recommends not reducing the fines.

Garfield Stephenson of 560 Bethany Lane explained that the violations have been addressed and the reason it took so long to clear the violations was because a squatter was residing at the property for an extended period of time and it took a long time for the eviction process.

Holly Iannucci, Realtor for Mr. Stephenson, alleged that the court made errors in the eviction process and they have been working diligently to remove the squatter. She also noted that the property is in the foreclosure process and they are trying to sell the property prior to the foreclosure sale takes place next week. She noted that they have a buyer and the closing is scheduled for Monday so they are trying to reduce the lien prior to closing.

Town Attorney Foster gave a legal update noting that the Town does not have a formal lien reduction process in its code like other towns. He noted that other towns, when considering a lien reduction, look at the gravity of the violation, the time it took to come into compliance, any prior code violations for the owner on the property, whether the owner owned the property when the lien was placed, whether or not the owner took proactive measures to correct the violation in a timely manner, and any other factor that may provide a reasonable basis for the requested relief. He noted that in this case, the owner has not been cooperative with the town. He stated that there is approximately \$900,000 owed to the bank in the foreclosure.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 14, 2026

Mayor Foy asked if there was an estimate on the amount the town has spent on this code enforcement case, and Town Administrator Stevens responded that with a case that lasts only 30-60 days, an estimate is easy to give. However, in this case, the town has been working to resolve the issues for over a year and a half. She explained that the town was also named in the foreclosure case due to the lien on the property, so legal fees are also being expended. She noted that the Town's insurance premiums are likely to increase due to the foreclosure action as well, and those costs are currently unknown. She explained that there were nuisances on the property, as residents called to complain numerous times regarding fires on the property, litter and other uncleanliness, and cars being worked on outside which may cause some environmental impacts. She explained that the fine is \$107,000, which represents the Special Magistrate's order of \$200 per day for 535 days.

Mr. Stephenson stated that they took care of the violations on the property in what he felt was a timely manner. He stated he didn't know that he had to clear the vegetation from the area near the fence and once he found out, it was handled.

Town Attorney Foster inquired as to the purchase price of the property, and the owner was reluctant to give that information. Vice Mayor Gordon stated that the owner should be open and honest with the Council when requesting a fine reduction. He asked again about the purchase price of the property and who it is being sold to. Mr. Stephenson responded that he was not aware that he needed to disclose that information, and when Vice Mayor Gordon stated that it would become public record once it was sold anyway, Ms. Iannucci stated that Mr. Stephenson does not want that information to be held against him or for it to be a factor in the Council's decision. Vice Mayor Gordon pressed the issue, and Ms. Iannucci stated that the purchase price is \$1,258,000 and the buyer is Miramar, Inc. Vice Mayor Gordon asked if there is a relation between the current owner and the purchaser, and Ms. Iannucci stated there is no relation and it is an arms-length transaction. He also asked if the owner is trying to negotiate the \$900,000 payoff with the lender, and Ms. Iannucci stated the lender is not willing to negotiate. She stated that the owner has put forth money to fix the violations on the property and is asking for grace in the matter. Vice Mayor Gordon stated the town has been lenient in many cases over the years; however, he has never seen a case go on for this long. Town Attorney Foster stated that the Attorney in the foreclosure case shared with him that his client is intent on receiving the full \$900,000 owed or foreclosing on the property. He stated that the town's lien was filed after the foreclosure action began, so the town will likely not receive any of the fines if the property is foreclosed as the town lien is inferior.

Council Member Johnson asked if \$200 per day fine is the standard, and Town Administrator Stevens stated that the Special Magistrate hears testimony in the case and assesses fines based on the evidence. She asked if the town has reduced fines in the past, and Town Attorney Foster stated that the town has granted lien reductions in the past.

Council Member Withington asked how much our insurance may go up, and Town Administrator Stevens responded that she does not know.

Mayor Foy asked how the Special Magistrate decided how much to assess per day, and Town Attorney Foster stated that fines are generally around \$50-100 per day for a single-family residential property, as opposed to vacant land or commercial property which may be higher. He stated there were extenuating factors in this case, which is why the Special Magistrate may have chosen a higher fine.

Vice Mayor Gordon asked again what the Town's loss may be, and Town Administrator Stevens stated that due to the factors involved with this case including items that are currently unknown,

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 14, 2026

she is reluctant to give a number. Vice Mayor Gordon suggested that if the Council would like to entertain a reduction, it should not be lower than 30-40% so the costs may be covered.

The Council discussed reduction possibilities.

Vice Mayor Gordon moved to reduce the fines to \$64,200; seconded by Council Member Withington.

Town Attorney Foster add date it must be paid by, paid in readily available funds (not a check) or lien reduction is automatically rescinded and withdrawn without notice, Mayor and Town Administrator authorized to take any and all action necessary regarding the lien reduction including the preparation, execution and filing of any pleadings, instruments, affidavits and documents including a satisfaction and release of lien.

Vice Mayor Gordon amended his motion to reduce the lien to \$60,000 to be paid by Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 5:00 PM, and to incorporate the Town Attorney's comments that the town be provided a copy of the amended closing statement showing the settlement proceeds of \$60,000 being paid to the Town of Haverhill, that the fines be paid to the town in readily available funds or the lien reduction is automatically rescinded and withdrawn without notice, and the Mayor and Town Administrator be authorized to take any and all action necessary regarding the lien reduction including the preparation, execution and filing of any pleadings, instruments, affidavits and documents including a satisfaction and release of lien; seconded by Council Member Withington.

Motion as amended carried 5-0.

9. Discuss Potential Holiday Decorations Ordinance

Town Administrator Stevens explained that at Council Member Withington's request, she provided some research regarding a proposed ordinance on timeframes for displaying holiday decorations.

Council Member Withington thanked Town Administrator Stevens for all the effort she put into the research. He stated that the proposed ordinance language would address the issue, is not overly restrictive, and has an enforcement mechanism.

Council Member Johnson stated that the research shows some municipalities enforce holiday decoration timeframes utilizing the nuisance ordinances, and Town Administrator Stevens stated doing it that way is harder to enforce.

The Council discussed the timeframes for leaving holiday decorations outside, and it was decided to incorporate the language to allow holiday decorations to be displayed outside 45 days prior to the holiday and leave them displayed until 40 days after the holiday.

REPORTS

11. Mayor

Mayor Foy reported that he had attempted to take his wife to the PBCLOC District II/III luncheon, and learned that only Elected Officials and Municipal Staff were allowed to attend.

12. Town Attorney

Town Attorney Foster presented Part II of his Legislative Update which was included in the meeting packages.

13. 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 that the Town's Civic Ready mass notification system has increased from \$2,500 to \$4,200 per year, with only 53 subscribers including the Town Council and Town Staff and asked the Council for direction on continuing with the system. Vice Mayor Gordon asked about a reverse 911 system and Town Administrator Stevens stated the town does not have access to that in the absence of operating a Police or Fire Department. After discussion, the Council suggested researching alternatives and possibly having students or volunteers go door to door to distribute information on subscribing to the system.

14. Committee Delegates

Council Member Johnson shared that the Black Elected Officials Scholarship luncheon was successful. She believes they will surpass the \$100,000 revenue goal. She thanked the Council for once again supporting the program. She also shared that she attended her last class for Leadership Palm Beach County which was focused on transportation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

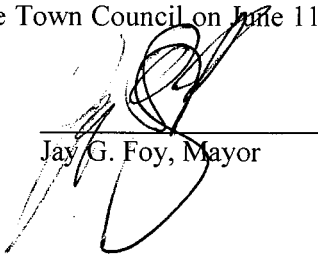
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Town Administrator Stevens and adopted by the Town Council on June 11, 2026.

Approved: _____

Tracey L. Stevens, Town Administrator


Jay G. Foy, Mayor

