

Town Of Havana

Regular Council Meeting

February 25, 2025 – 6:00pm

Meeting minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bass 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, Matt Wesolowski, Tabatha Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem Lawrence Reed, Mayor Bass and Howard McKinnon via telephone, ensuring a quorum for the meeting. Councilman Seymour was not in attendance.

Recognition of Visitors

Request to Approve Minutes

Motion Made by Councilman Wesolowski to approve council minutes for January 28, 2025 minutes. Seconded by Councilwoman Nelson and motion carried.

Old Business

Old Elementary School Resolution 2025-14R-2

Ms. Wilkerson, Town Manager, requests approval of Resolution 2025-14R-2 which updates the fines owed by the owners through February 25, 2025, to \$399,515.00

Councilwoman Nelson made motion to approve Resolution 2025-14R-2 with a second from Councilman Wesolowski. Motion carried.

New Business

FY2023 Audit Presentation -Moran & Smith (Chris Moran)

Ms. Wilkerson, Town Manager, requests Town Council to permit our auditor, Chris Moran, to present the FY2023 audit report. Upon conclusion, the Manager requests that Town Council accept the report via motion & vote. Town staff have already begun working on the FY2024 audit with the goal of submitting before 6/30/2025 deadline.

Chris Moran, CPA, shared that this was a difficult audit with a lot of adjustments due the delay. Mr. Moran reviewed the audit and detailed several areas with the Town Council and shared that over all the numbers were good. The Town broke even after the transfers. Previously compliance comments from the previous CPA report were not received timely in order for staff to correct and make necessary changes. In 2022 audit, the Town was in a deteriorating financial condition but numbers show things are going in the right direction. Mr. Moran requested the Council to approve the draft and give the Town Manager authorization to approve the final audit report in order that submission may be submitted to the State to keep the State money coming. 2024 Firemen Pension report was filed today and Mr. Moran requested that the Town engage the actuaries for input.

Councilman Wesolowski shared that he is glad the Town is going in the right direction now. All the Town Council thanked Mr. Moran for helping the Town reach compliance and on track.

Motion made by Councilman Wesolowski to approve the draft audit and give the Town Manager authorization to approve the final audit report. Seconded by Councilwoman Key and motion carried.

Bid Award - Lincoln Avenue Waterline Replacement

The Town Manager, Ms. Wilkerson, shared that the Town staff conducted a public bid opening on February 7, 2025 at 10:00 am for the construction portion of the Lincoln Ave Waterline Replacement. Four submissions were received by the town and the submissions are included in the council packet. The lowest bid was \$130,750.88 from WSN Construction, LLC. The bid was slightly over the remaining project budget of \$118,000, staff negotiated with WSN to complete some the work in-house, including direct purchase of materials, to reduce the project cost by approximately \$12,000. Ms. Wilkerson is requesting approval for the bid to be awarded to WSN Construction LLC and authorize the Mayor or Town Manager to execute a contract with WSN Construction to complete the work.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion to approve WSN Construction LLC to complete the Lincoln Avenue Waterline Replacement and authorize the Mayor or Town Manager to execute the contract. Mayor Pro Tem Reed seconded and motion carried.

Bid Selection – Water Tank Renovation Lining

The staff conducted a public bid opening for the renovation of a 50,000-gallon Concrete Water Tank located at the Depot off of 5th Street SW on December 27, 2024 at 12:00pm. One bid was received and the Bid Opening sheet is attached to council packet. The bid was \$75,245 from Southern Corrosion, who does other work for the Town including our tank inspection and repair. Ms. Wilkerson shared that the renovation was noted by FDEP as a requirement to be completed no later than 2026. The renovation was approved to be funded through ARPA funding up to \$76,000. The Town Manager is requesting approval of Southern Corrosion's bid and authorize the Mayor or Town Manager to execute a contract with Southern Corrosion to complete the work.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion to approve Southern Corrosion bid and to authorize the Mayor or Town Manager to execute the contract. Councilwoman Key seconded, and motion carried.

Florida Forestry Grant - Equipment

Ms. Wilkerson requested the Town Council to approve staff to apply for the FY25 Forestry Fire Grant in order to purchase two full sets of turnout gear and two sets of SCBA including cylinders, along with two extra spare cylinders for the trucks. The total project cost is \$28,700 and asking for the grant to fund 50% and the Havana Volunteer Fire Department to fund the remaining with funds raised by the department. The Town Manager shared that last year, this same grant paid 100% of the project cost due to having residual funding.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion to approve the application for the FY25 Forestry Fire Grant. Mayor Pro Tem Reed seconded and motion carried.

Juneteenth Holiday Closure Request (6/19/2025)

Ms. Wilkerson requests approval from the Town Council to close Town Hall on Thursday, 6/19/2025 and give all employees a paid holiday in observance of Juneteenth, to allow all employees to observe and participate in this day.

Mayor Pro Tem Reed made a motion to approve the closing of Town Hall and a paid holiday for Town Staff. Councilman Wesolowski seconded and motion carried.

Special Events Permit - Artfest

Havana Main Street is requesting the Town Council to approve the special events permit to host ArtFest on April 12, 2025 from 7am – 5pm. They are requesting closure of the down area and downtown parking lot, use of electrical outlets, cones & barricades, police presence, additional trash cans, same day trash service and bag change out, as well as removing the cans on Sunday to the Museum area. All services, other than closure of the downtown and parking lots, will create an expense for the town. Ms. Wilkerson shared at the prior festival, HMS volunteers used paint on the curbs and asphalt to mark vendor tent locations for a festival. All parties understand that this is strictly prohibited. If HMS wishes to use chalk as an alternative to paint, this must be discussed in advance and all markings must be removed by the applicant at the conclusion of the festival. Insurance is required and HMS will provide before the event.

Councilwoman Nelson shared again her concern about not enough Porto toilets and the downtown businesses' restroom facilities being used by festival attendees. Pat Gregory with HMS shared that there will be 4 or 6 Porto toilets and she suggests businesses provide signage of no public restrooms.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion to approve the special events permit for Artsfest with HMS covering any expenses to the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Reed seconded, and motion carried.

Special Events Permit – HCDC Mega Reunion Parade

Applicant Montrail Harris submitted a request for the Havana Community Development Center – Grand Reunion Parade to be held on April 26, 2025 from 11am – 2pm. The parade route is US 27 northbound (both lanes) from Town Hall to Carver Avenue. Ms. Wilkerson reminded the Town Council that the town limits stop just after Freedom Storage. She has requested event organizers to coordinate approval of closure of both north-bound lanes of US 27 and traffic safety with FDOT and Gadsden County Sheriff's Office for the remainder of the route along the highway from Freedom Storage to Carver Avenue.

Event organizers are not requesting support from the town, though law enforcement will be needed to ensure US27 traffic is held or rerouted by GCSO before it hits town limits on the southern border. Any expense for additional law enforcement needed will be at the expense of the event organizers. Mr. Harris understands the proof of event insurance is required.

Ms. Wilkerson is requesting conditional approval for the Grand Reunion Parade, noting that the applicant must provide proof of insurance, coordinate all traffic/safety issues with Gadsden County and FDOT for the section of US 27 N that is in the county and reimburse any expense incurred by the Town as a result of assisting with this event.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion to approve the special events application for the Grand Reunion Parade with the conditions stated by the Town Manager. Mayor Pro Tem Reed seconded, and motion carried.

Commercial Parking Lot Lighting – Safety Concern

Ms. Wilkerson shared that the parking lot lighting safety concern in the Harvey's parking lot has been brought to her attention. Harvey's is open until 8pm. During the fall, winter and early spring when it gets dark earlier in the day, the parking lot is very dark during hours they are still open and customers are shopping. She would like the Town Council to discuss sending the shopping center a letter requesting more lighting or potentially even pursue further discussion on an ordinance that requires additional lighting in commercial parking lots.

Mayor Bass shared that he has had several female citizens share feeling unsafe in the dark parking lot. Councilwoman Nelson shared that an employee at Harvey's has requested increased lighting in the parking lot with no response from the owners.

Councilman Wesolowski made the motion for the Town Manager to send a letter to the owners but not sure about forcing private businesses with an ordinance. He is making the motion to start with the letter. Mayor Pro Tem Reed seconded, and motion carried.

Certificate of Appropriateness – Public Safety Complex

The Town staff completed a Certificate of Appropriateness application (included in packet). The Planning/Historic Preservation Committee recommends approval of the application submitted with the comment that the building paint should match a neutral/historical color palette.

Councilwoman Nelson made the motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. Councilman Wesolowski seconded, and motion carried.

2025 Annual Gas Pipeline Safety Evaluation Report - PSC

Ms. Wilkerson presented the summary report of Annual Gas Pipeline Safety evaluation performed by the public Service Commission on January 16, 2025. She requested approval by the Town Council to accept the annual gas inspection report.

Mayor Pro Tem Reed made the motion to accept the report. Councilman Wesolowski seconded and motion carried.

Town Manager Report

Havana Cigar Days – April 5, 2025

Comcast Project – currently 68 poles attached at \$500 penalty/pole and to date have paid over \$11K to the Town in damages.

Mega Reunion – organizers have requested to have council members to be celebrity judges of the tents. Ms. Wilkerson will provide council members with the information.

Appropriations request – Lift Stations (Dogwood & 5th AVE)

HVFD - Chief Harrison and Assistance Chief Nelson will be attending an ISO Workshop in Lynn Haven. Ms. Wilkerson also recognized Donna Dunn in her role of record keeping which is vital to the ISO inspection.

March 6 will be the HVFD Chicken Pilau and it will be held drive thru style this year at the Community Park. 27 fire calls – 4 Town and 23 County. 7 structure files.

HPD – event stats are provided in the packet and also on the table for citizens information.

Recognition of Each Council Member

Mayor Bass shared that the appropriations list has been provided to Simon and Franklin and last update was that Havana was at the top of the list.

Councilman Reed shared he is ready to speed up the process on the Public Safety Complex project and break ground ASAP. He appreciates the Town Manager's work on this.

Motion to Pay the Bills

Councilman Wesolowski made motion to pay the Town bills. Councilwoman Nelson seconded and motion carried.

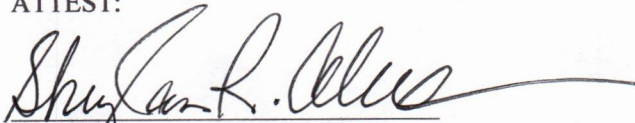
Motion to Adjourn

Councilwoman Nelson made motion to adjourn the February 25, 2025, council meeting. Councilman Wesolowski seconded, and motion carried.

Mayor Bass adjourned the meeting at 6:54pm.


EDWARD N BASS JR, MAYOR

ATTEST:


Shrylan R. Alexander, Town Clerk

