Town Of Havana
Regular Council Meeting & Public Hearing
June 30, 2026 – 6:00pm

Meeting minutes

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Howard McKinnon at 6:00pm. Invocation was led by Councilman Mosby followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

A roll call confirmed the presence of the following Council members, Matt Wesolowski, Tabatha Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem Howard McKinnon, John Bryant, Robert Mosby, and Penny Key, ensuring a quorum for the meeting. Mayor Bass was not in attendance.

3. Set the Agenda

Motion was made by Councilwoman Nelson and seconded by Councilman Wesolowski to set the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Recognition of Visitors

Fert Richardson, 112 Greenway Drive, Havana, FL, addressed the Council regarding a youth recreation program he wishes to establish in Havana due to the lack of recreational opportunities for local youth.

Mr. Richardson presented information on the Jr. NBA/WNBA program, which is approved by the NBA, and advised that he is certified to operate the program. He explained that the program will operate as a no-cost program for participants and will accept donations to support its activities. The goal is to provide the youth of Havana with positive recreational opportunities.

The program will initially offer basketball, with plans to expand into baseball, soccer, and flag football. Mr. Richardson advised that the cost is **$30 per child**, which includes a basketball uniform, and each team will receive **two basketballs**. The first registration event will be held on the Town Hall lawn on **July 6**, and organizers plan to conduct additional registrations throughout the community to recruit participants.

Registration is also available online at **www.HCDCsportsdivision.com**.

Mr. Richardson stated that the program is about more than athletics. In addition to sports, the program emphasizes teamwork, cooperation, respect, determination, good character, strong values, and community involvement. He explained that basketball serves as a vehicle to engage youth while teaching life skills and positive values.

Mr. Richardson expressed that there is a significant need for youth programming in the community due to alleged gang activity. He stated that if the community does not reach young people early, it risks losing them to negative influences. He further stated that youth are looking for positive activities and that, if those opportunities are not provided, they may turn to negative ones.

Mr. Richardson advised that the Jr. NBA League operates under official NBA rulebooks and guidelines and that the organization is required to follow those standards. He concluded by requesting the Town's support to help ensure the program's continued success.

Sheila Shellman, 901 Circle Drive, Havana, FL, addressed the Council regarding street safety concerns that she believes have not been addressed by Town staff. She stated that she had contacted the Town twice within the past two months regarding the issue.

Ms. Shellman explained that at the intersection of **1st Avenue and 2nd Street**, heading east toward Circle Drive, there is no stop sign for one direction of travel, while traffic on 2nd Street does have a stop sign; however, it is obstructed by overgrown bushes. She stated that motorists are frequently failing to stop and that there have been multiple incidents in which members of her family were nearly involved in accidents due to drivers disregarding the stop sign. She further stated that one of the stop signs is missing its reflective material and believes it should be replaced. Additionally, she requested that the Town trim the overgrown trees and vegetation at the corner lot to improve visibility.
Chief Lewis advised that he would inspect the area and review the reported concerns. Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon thanked Ms. Shellman for bringing the matter to the attention of the Town Council.

5. Consent Agenda Items

A motion was made by Councilman Wesolowski to approve the Consent Agenda Items and it was seconded by Councilman Bryant. The motion carried.

6. Old Business

a. Havana Library Project

The Town Manager requested approval of the attached revisions to the grant-funded improvements for the Havana Public Library. Because the Town owns both the library building and the property, approval from the Town Council is required to authorize the proposed revisions and allow the project to proceed. Also included for Council's consideration were the Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) recommendation letter and the Staff Findings Report.

Mr. Kyle Manning, representing the project design team, presented the proposed revisions, which include a 2,500-square-foot addition to the Havana Public Library. He advised that the project includes 11 parking spaces, landscaping, and stormwater improvements. Additional parking will be located off 6th Avenue on the southern side of the library.

Councilwoman Nelson inquired about the project's timeline and funding. Mr. Manning and Town staff advised that substantial progress is anticipated by the end of the calendar year. Councilwoman Nelson noted that she believed there was a limited timeframe to complete the project. Mr. Manning clarified that the timeframe applied to the design phase rather than the overall completion of the project.

Councilman Bryant asked whether the current rendering differed from the original proposal due to budget constraints. Mr. Manning and Town staff explained that the original concept included a two-story addition; however, the design exceeded the available budget. As a result, the project was redesigned to a single-story addition to meet the funding requirements.

Councilwoman Nelson asked about the next steps should the Council approve the revisions. The project design team advised that the project is expected to be advertised for bids within the next month and stated that no additional timeline information was available at this stage of the project.

Councilwoman Nelson made a motion to approve the revised design for the Havana Public Library project. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Key. The motion carried.

7. New Business

a. Resolution 2026-09R-Manager Signing Authority

Resolution No. 2026-09R was presented to the Town Council, granting signing authority to the incoming Town Manager, Leigh Davis, to execute and administer agreements with the State of Florida and federal agencies, effective on her date of hire.

The resolution authorizes the Town Manager to execute and submit required reports, agreements, and related documents in a timely manner without the need to convene a special Town Council meeting for approval.

Councilwoman Nelson made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-09R. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wesolowski. The motion carried.

b. Schedule Budget Hearings

Chief Lewis turned this portion of the meeting over to Town Manager Leigh Davis.

Ms. Davis advised that the tentative dates for the first and final budget hearings were September 22 and September 29, respectively. However, she explained that the September 22 date may be too late to comply with the Truth in Millage (TRIM) notification timeline. She requested additional time to determine the budget hearing dates scheduled by Gadsden County and the Gadsden County School Board to ensure the Town's hearings are scheduled in compliance with TRIM requirements.

Rather than adopting the tentative budget hearing dates, Ms. Davis requested that the Town Council reconvene on **July 14**—the date previously designated as an as-needed mid-month meeting—to formally establish the budget hearing schedule. She also requested direction from the Council regarding whether the meeting should begin at **5:00 p.m.** or **6:00 p.m.** Ms. Davis explained that meeting on July 14 would allow the Town to establish the budget hearing dates in compliance with the TRIM notification schedule and all applicable advertising deadlines.

The Council directed that the meeting be held at **6:00 p.m.**

Councilman Bryant made a motion to reconvene on **July 14 at 6:00 p.m.** The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Nelson. The motion carried.

c. Special Events Permit-Trunk or Treat

A request was submitted for the annual Trunk or Treat event, hosted by Dawn McGriff, to be held on October 30, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Council requested clarification regarding the event date, as the event has traditionally been held on October 31. Chief Lewis advised that he would contact the event organizer to verify the correct date.

Councilwoman Key made a motion to approve the event regardless of whether it is held on October 30 or October 31, pending confirmation of the date. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wesolowski. The motion carried.

8. Public Hearings

b. Ordinance 416-Talquin Electric Cooperative-Franchise Fee (1st Reading)

The first public hearing was called to order at 6:19 p.m. by Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon for the first reading of Ordinance 416, Talquin Electric Franchise Fee.

Town Attorney Jody Finklea presented the ordinance and advised that the franchise agreement had been under negotiation for several years and that the Town and Talquin had finally reached mutually acceptable terms. Attorney Finklea explained that, in 1997, the Town adopted Ordinance 285, which requires all utility providers operating within the Town limits to have a franchise agreement with the Town. This agreement will bring Talquin Electric into compliance with the 1997 ordinance.

Attorney Finklea explained that the Town will grant Talquin Electric the right to operate its utility facilities within the Town's rights-of-way. In exchange, Talquin Electric will pay the Town a 5% franchise fee on its base revenues generated from customers served within the Town limits. The agreement will become effective after the Florida Public Service Commission approves a separate territory agreement. Although that agreement is not part of Ordinance 416, Attorney Finklea advised that he has negotiated a separate territory agreement with Talquin Electric, which will come before the Council next month for approval. Because it is not an ordinance, it will require only one reading and one approval.

Attorney Finklea stated that the territory agreement will have a 30-year term and will modify the service territory boundaries between the Town of Havana and Talquin Electric. Under the agreement, the Town will acquire two distribution lines from Talquin Electric at their depreciated book value, estimated to be less than $7,500 for both facilities. One distribution line is located on Cutoff Road near Mays Nursery, and the other is located along the eastern side of U.S. Highway 27, just south of town near the former community garden. Attorney Finklea advised that the agreement will return to the Council next month with the second reading of Ordinance 416. The ordinance and the territory agreement will become effective simultaneously and will each have a 30-year term. He further explained that the franchise area subject to the 5% franchise fee may expand or contract as the Town's boundaries change through future annexations.

Councilman Wesolowski asked whether the agreement would allow Town of Havana residents to choose Talquin Electric as their utility provider. Attorney Finklea responded that the Florida Public Service Commission establishes exclusive service territories, and customers do not have the option to choose between providers. He explained that the agreement simply grants Talquin Electric the legal authority to occupy the Town's rights-of-way, where it has historically operated without a formal franchise agreement. The agreement authorizes Talquin Electric to install and maintain utility poles, wires, transformers, and related facilities within the Town's rights-of-way in exchange for paying the Town a 5% franchise fee.

Councilman Wesolowski asked whether Talquin Electric was merely using the Town as a pass-through. Attorney Finklea explained that, as a home rule municipality, the Town has both governmental and proprietary authority. Under the agreement, the Town grants Talquin Electric the authority to provide electric service within the designated territory and to occupy the Town's rights-of-way. In return, the Town receives the franchise fee, which Talquin Electric ultimately passes on to its customers.

Councilman Wesolowski asked why it would benefit the Town to relinquish that service area. Attorney Finklea explained that Talquin Electric has historically served those areas, which are relatively small but located within the Town limits. As the Town annexes additional property or new development occurs within Talquin's designated service territory, the Town will continue to receive franchise fee revenue for Talquin's use of the Town's rights-of-way.

General discussion followed between Attorney Finklea and the Council regarding various provisions of the agreement. Attorney Finklea further advised that the Florida Public Service Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over territory agreements and that every territory agreement must be filed with and approved by the Commission. Following approval of the second reading of Ordinance 416 next month, the Town will submit the territory agreement to the Public Service Commission. He noted that additional details regarding the territory agreement would be discussed during the next meeting and that the focus of the current public hearing was the franchise agreement.

Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon opened the public hearing for public comment at 6:40 p.m.

David Wesolowski, 306 N. Main Street, asked whether the Town would lose or gain revenue from the electric service agreement. Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon responded that electric service is one of the Town's largest sources of revenue. Mr. Wesolowski then asked whether the Town was giving up anything in exchange for the 5% franchise fee. Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon replied that the Town would not be giving up anything and would instead benefit from the agreement.

Councilman Bryant made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 416. Councilwoman Key seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The second public hearing was scheduled for July 28. The first public hearing was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

9. Information Item

a. Town Manager Report

Chief Lewis thanked the Town Council for selecting him to serve as Interim Town Manager and welcomed Leigh Davis as the Town's incoming Town Manager.

Chief Lewis reminded the Council of the annual financial disclosure requirements.

He reported that construction of the Havana Public Safety Building had been completed and that a Certificate of Occupancy had been issued. The final payment request for the Public Safety Building project was included in the meeting packet.

Chief Lewis advised that the Havana Police Department purchased a Generac generator using funding received through a federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) grant. He noted that there was no cost to the Town of Havana or its residents for the purchase.

He announced that an open house for the Havana Public Safety Building would be held on **July 11**.

Chief Lewis further reported that the Town of Havana had entered into an agreement with Comcast to provide fiber internet service to Town Hall, the Havana Public Safety Building, Well No. 5, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He advised that switching internet service from Mediacom to Comcast resulted in no additional cost to the Town.

Law enforcement and fire department statistics were attached to the report for the Council's review.

b. Town Council Report

The Town Council thanked the Chief for serving in an Interim capacity and welcomed Town Manager Leigh Davis.

Motion to Adjourn

Councilman Wesolowski made motion to adjourn, Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon seconded, and the motion carried.

Mayor Pro Tem McKinnon adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.

Edward Bass, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Enosha Williams, Town Clerk