

require Council approval. The discussion highlighted inconsistencies in the current policy, leading to procedural confusion.

Councilor Lannamañ agreed with the proposed revisions and emphasized the importance of clarity and transparency. Mr. O’Keefe noted that any changes must be internally consistent and legally reviewed before adoption.

The Council reached a consensus to have staff draft revisions, conduct legal review, and present a redlined version at an upcoming meeting. Councilor Miles proposed a deadline for the first meeting in April, with potential earlier consideration in March.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Marie Gallelli, 1104 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Gallelli expressed concerns about past procurement decisions, including the purchase of the Town Christmas tree and expenses related to Peak Park. Mr. O’Keefe clarified that both expenditures were conducted in accordance with the current policy and budgeted funds.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Further discussion among Council members revisited past procurement challenges, emphasizing the need for a clearer, more defined policy to prevent procedural ambiguities. Councilor Lannamañ reiterated that the discussion was not meant to critique past decisions but to ensure future transparency and accountability.

Mayor Wells concluded the discussion by confirming the next steps, aiming to finalize the revised procurement policy at the first meeting in April.

3. Consideration and Approval: **Talichet Lift Station**

Mayor Wells introduced the agenda item concerning the Talichet Lift Station, which has been an ongoing matter of discussion. Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, outlined the options for bringing the lift station under Town management and upgrading it to municipal standards. The original plan involved a special assessment, which would have required a 16- to 24-month process through the County. Instead, a more cost-effective and expedient solution was proposed: the Town would finance the project, and the Talichet Homeowners Association (HOA) would repay the cost through quarterly reimbursements over a period not exceeding five years.

Councilor Miles supported the streamlined approach, noting that the special assessment process is typically used for large-scale projects involving hundreds or thousands of properties. However, he raised concerns about financing, as the Town’s current line of credit carries a 5.3% interest rate, which may be higher than necessary given declining market rates. Mayor Wells and Mr. O’Keefe suggested exploring alternative financing options, including using Town reserves or securing a separate loan.

Councilor Miles also questioned the necessity of a \$3,600 generator pigtail purchase when the proposed lift station upgrades would replace the entire control panel. Mr. O’Keefe confirmed that the pigtail would no longer be needed, as the upgrade project would include a proper generator hookup.

Councilor Lannamañ raised concerns about HOA stability and the risk of delinquent payments impacting the Town. She emphasized the need for a clear repayment agreement and safeguards in case of non-payment. Mayor Wells and other council members agreed that reducing the repayment period from five years to three years would minimize financial risk to the Town.

Resident Joshua Husemann, representing the Talichet HOA, confirmed that the HOA may have some reserve funds available and that a one-time special assessment would be the most cost-effective solution. However, the HOA will need to secure approval from homeowners for the transfer of the lift station, requiring a two-thirds vote. The HOA planned to discuss the proposal at its March 5th meeting and then proceed with legal agreements.

Mayor Pro Tem Everline and Councilor Miles stressed the urgency of completing the project before the upcoming hurricane season to prevent overflows and potential environmental fines. Public Services Director, Morgan Cates, noted that, if the Town could use an existing utility contract, the work could be expedited and possibly completed by June.

The Council approved moving forward with a formal agreement between the Town and the Talichet HOA. The agreement will:

- Require the HOA to transfer ownership of the lift station to the Town.
- Establish a three-year repayment period with quarterly payments.
- Include all project costs, financing costs, and legal fees.
- Set an interest rate at 5% or the prevailing market rate at the time of financing.

The Council directed staff to have the agreement drafted by the HOA legal team, with the goal of finalizing it by the first meeting in April. Town Attorney, Heather Ramos, confirmed that the agreement review could be completed in a timely manner.

Mayor Wells opened Public Comment for this item only.

Michael Huculak (Talichet HOA President), 667 Avila PL – Mr. Huculak stated that the HOA was going to have a meeting on March 5th and he expected to have quorum at that meeting.

Tom Ballou, 1005 N. Tangerine Ave. – Resident Tom Ballou expressed urgency regarding the Talichet Lift Station upgrades, emphasizing the potential financial and environmental consequences if the project is not completed before hurricane season. He raised concerns about the possibility of an overflow during a storm, which could result in substantial fines from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Mr. Ballou urged the Council to act swiftly, suggesting that the Town should consider covering the cost of interim fixes—such as a \$1,900 or \$3,500 repair—since the lift station will ultimately be taken over by the Town. He cautioned against bureaucratic delays and emphasized the importance of setting a firm deadline to prevent unnecessary legal and administrative complications. His primary concern was ensuring the system is operational as soon as possible to avoid a costly environmental hazard.

Mayor Wells closed Public Comment for this item.

Motion made by Councilor Miles to approve the proposal as outlined above; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Everline. Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Voting

Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Everline, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Mayor Wells

Nay: None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

4. Town Manager