

**TOWN OF ASTATULA
MAYOR AND TOWN
COUNCIL MINUTES**



**REGULAR SESSION
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2022
TOWN HALL**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mack called the Regular Session meeting to order at 6:35pm. He gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Stephen Cross, Vice-Mayor
Gayle Sikkema
Orita Issartel
Zane Teeters

Staff Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief

Roll Call was performed, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

CITIZENS QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

Karen Smith of 13332 Orange Blossom Street asked Councilwoman Issartel what the real reason was that the council meetings were moved from Monday to Tuesday. Ms. Issartel replied that Monday was a very busy time for her. Ms. Smith asked if Clerk Wells had asked for it to be changed, which she denied. Ms. Smith then stated that she had asked her at a previous meeting if she was paid for being a council member to which she replied, and Vice-Mayor Cross replied absolutely not, but Ms. Smith said that they are paid.

Neither Councilwoman Issartel nor Vice-Mayor cross could remember being asked the question whether or not that they were paid at any prior meeting. Ms. Issartel added that knowing she was paid, why would she say that she wasn't? Clerk Wells asked which meeting this had taken place at as he listens to the entire recording when doing the minutes and cannot recall the question ever being raised. There were two sets of minutes still to be completed and he said that he would listen to them to see if the question was asked at either of them.

Ms. Smith's point was that if a question was asked that council members answer them truthfully. She said that she had heard that the reason the meeting was changed to Tuesday's was that Mr. Wells could take up a position on the Council at Howey in the Hills. The Mayor stated that he had spoken to Clerk Wells about the change and felt that it should have been brought up at the meeting.

Judy Tice of 13240 Kansas Ave said that she supported Ms. Smith's statement and although she was not present, stated that the question was asked at the meeting that the Mayor and Clerk were absent, which was August 8, 2022. Jane Whaley deputized for the Clerk that night. Clerk Wells said that he would listen to the recording of the August 8 and let Karen know if the question was asked or if it wasn't.

Mr. Vic Stone of 24737 Madison Street said that he had some questions that he would like answers to. His question was directed to the Clerk and asked whether it was true that the day was changed so that he could take up a position on the council in Howey in the Hills. The Clerk responded that it was partially true. He had spoken to the Mayor about it as previously the question had been raised, and at that time, four council members were in favor of the change, but the Mayor was not because of History and Tradition and therefore no action was taken.

There was currently an opportunity or possibility that Mr. Wells would run for council in Howey but that was quashed as the attorney had informed him that he could not take that position if elected as he would be a dual office holder because of being the Clerk in Astatula. He added that he had not made any decision to run for council, but if the day was not changed then he couldn't even if he chose to.

Mr. Stone asked if the Clerk served on any of the boards or committees in Howey as it would be double dipping on pay. Clerk wells assured him that although he did not currently serve, he had served on three committees in a volunteer (unpaid) capacity and that any interest in serving on the council had nothing to do with money. At this point the Mayor closed the public comment and question period.

AGENDA REVIEW

The Mayor requested to table item 5 of new business. Vice-Mayor Cross made the motion, seconded by Councilwoman Sikkema and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARING

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2022-14 TO INCREASE THE ANNUAL COST OF COLLECTION OF SOLID WASTE FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL DWELLING TO \$241.86 PER UNIT FOR FY 2022-23.

The Mayor opened public comment. Mr. Stone talked about the increases that he was experiencing on electricity and so many other items. He did not agree with increasing the garbage rate and that the council should look out for the residents of the town and tell GFL, no. If they don't like it, then the town can go to any of the other carriers and negotiate a better rate.

The Mayor closed public comment and gave an overview of the current situation with the carrier and their issues with their recycling partner. He said that he had talked to the county about an alternative carrier should GFL decide to withdraw from the current contract with the town. He added that the town had not raised the rate to the residents for the last three years and confirmed that the increase was \$11.45 per household for the year.

The town has already committed to the increase requested by GFL and this vote is whether to pass the increase on to the residents. The new rate will be \$20.51 and the rate at the county has gone up to \$24.00 per month for a once-a-week collection. Councilwoman Sikkema said that the council does not take these decisions lightly, but the alternative would be more costly. Vice-Mayor Cross made a motion to read the title, seconded by Councilwoman Sikkema and unanimously approved. The Mayor read the title and Section 1 A, B & C and requested a motion to approve.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve Resolution 2022-14; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema

A Roll Call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Sikkema YES

Teeters NO

Issartel YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

At this point, the Mayor called a recess to the meeting at 7:30 pm and the meeting reconvened at 7:35 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL TO HIRE EMPLOYEES TO FILL OPEN OFFICE POSITIONS.

The Mayor explained that one position was to replace Jennifer as administrative assistant who left several months ago to have a baby. The other position is to replace Jane Whaley who is set to retire at the end of the month. The clerk interviewed all the candidates who applied and the position for the administrative assistant has been offered to Jennifer's sister Suzi Waters who will work the same number of hours and days and at the same rate as Jennifer did. Jennifer would come in for two days next week to train her.

One of the other applicants wanted more hours and it was felt had the necessary abilities to be able to take over the permitting from Jane. She does not have any experience but after two weeks with Jane should be able to learn sufficient to keep the department running. Both applicants had a second interview with the Police Chief, and he believed that they are both a good fit for the positions. The Clerk in Howey had seventeen responses to his advert on Indeed to fill the same permitting clerk position and not one had any experience.

There was a discussion on whether the compensation for staff should be set each time a new individual was hired as Councilman Teeters believe that the Charter states, "The Council shall set the compensation for all town employees." Compensation includes salary and all benefits. The Clerk and other members of the board interpret it that compensation levels which are itemized, are set at the time the budget is approved. Hence the Clerk or Chief have the authority to negotiate the hire of new employees, but which is still subject to the approval of council.

Councilman Teeters did not agree and at 8:05 pm walked out of the meeting.

The Mayor went over the hours and compensation for the Building Services Clerk. This was \$17.00 per hour for 32 hours per week plus the FRS retirement which is mandatory for all employees.

The applicant was offered health insurance as per the town's policy which she declined as she had coverage on her husband's policy, albeit, health insurance is part of the compensation if requested. The mayor requested a motion to create this new position and the compensation.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Cross to create the position as stated, seconded by Councilwoman Issartel, and unanimously approved by roll call vote, 4-0.

The second position is for an Administrative Assistant for 24 hours per week at a rate of \$15.00 per hour. FRS retirement is included but there was no requirement to offer health insurance as it is under the 25-hours per week minimum set by the federal government.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Cross to create the position as stated, seconded by Councilwoman Issartel, and unanimously approved by roll call vote, 4-0.

The next order of business was to authorize the Clerk to confirm the offer employment to the applicants that have been selected.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Cross to authorize the Clerk to confirm the position of Building Services Clerk to Tracy Stephenson, seconded by Councilwoman Sikkema and unanimously approved, 4-0.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Sikkema to authorize the Clerk to confirm the position of Administrative Assistant to Suzi Waters, seconded by Vice-Mayor Cross and unanimously approved, 4-0.

Vice-Mayor Cross stated that it is the responsibility of the three department heads, the Clerk, Police Chief and Public Works Director for the day to day running of the town which includes the hiring of new employees to fill vacant positions. The final approval for the new hire rests with the council.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2022-22 ADOPTING A NEW COMPENSATION SCHEDULE.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ASTATULA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE MONTHLY PAY FOR THE TOWN MAYOR TO BE EFFECTIVE ON OCTOBER 1, 2022; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Mayor thanked the council for their respect and consideration in putting forward the increase in his stipend. The Clerk emphasized that this increase is recompense only for the execution of the duties and responsibilities of being the Mayor of Astatula and does not in any way constitute payment for any of the work that he does for the town. Vice-Mayor Cross made a motion to read by title only, seconded by Councilwoman Sikkema and unanimously approved. The mayor read the title and requested a motion.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to send Ordinance 2022-20 to second reading; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema
A Roll Call vote was taken.**

**Cross YES
Sikkema YES
Issartel YES
Mack YES**

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL TO PAVE THE INTERSECTION OF WOODLAND DRIVE AND ORANGE BLOSSOM STREET AND INTERSECTION OF NIXON ST AND DELAWARE AVE.

The Mayor spoke of the need to repair and resurface the intersection at Woodland Drive and Orange Blossom Street which was beyond patching and while the contractor was mobilized, he was quoted to resurface an area on Nixon St and Delaware Ave. He said that this contractor was the low bidder on a previous paving project which is why there were not three bids, The quote from Mid Florida Paving & Sealcoating Inc was in the ballpark of the amount presented to council at the last meeting. The payment would be from the Transportation Fund and would come out of next year's budget.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor to approve the appropriation of \$35,000 for road maintenance as stated; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema.

A Roll Call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Sikkema YES

Issartel YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

RETROACTIVE APPROVAL TO PURCHASE 30 LOADS OF DIRT TO FINISH THE BALL FIELD AT A COST OF \$7,500.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor to approve the purchase of 30 loads of dirt to finish the ball field at a cost of \$7,500; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema.

Cross YES

Sikkema YES

Issartel YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT REVIEW

The Clerk had not had opportunity to review the finance report for July in detail but went over the highlights and stated that as er were coming to the end of the financial year, a budget amendment to correct any spending over budget, would be brought to council in November.

The Bank balances on July 31, 2022 are shown below.

General Fund:	511,737.64
Impact Fees:	50,407.59
Transportation Fund:	70,435.96
Infrastructure Fund:	20,211.13
Enterprise Fund:	6,938.36
Cash Drawer:	150.00

STAFF REPORTS

Town Attorney - Heather Ramos – ABSENT

Police Department - Chief Hoagland – NONE

Town Clerk - Graham Wells – NONE

Public Works - Wally Hoagland

The Chief was actively trying to recruit a new public works technician to replace Brad Whaley and wanted councils' approval to negotiate the hire the new employee at a wage of up to \$20.00 per hour plus health insurance depending on their skills and abilities for 32 hours per week. Mr. Cross made that motion but as this was not an agenda item it was just taken as a straw poll. All members were in favor.

COUNCIL DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT

Finance - Councilman Cross – NONE

Public Works - Mayor Mack – NONE

Public Safety/Code Enforcement - Councilwoman Sikkema - NONE

Office - LDR's, Ordinances, Legal, Grants - Councilman Teeters – NONE

Economic Development - Councilwoman Issartel – NONE

REVIEW

- a. Items for Workshops and possible dates – NONE
- b. Items put forward for the next Council meeting - NONE
- c. Review of items needing Special Meetings and possible dates – NONE

COUNCIL MEMBER MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS – NONE

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk