

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



**REGULAR SESSION  
TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2023  
TOWN HALL**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mack called the Regular Session meeting to order at 6:30pm. 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, confirmation of the meeting notification was acknowledged, and it was determined that a quorum was present. The Mayor welcomed Planner Tim Green and members Smith, Pflugh and Labree from the planning and zoning board plus guests.

**CITIZENS QUESTIONS AND COMMENT**

**Mr. Banks Helphric** talked about the completion of the trail from Titusville to Clearwater. He said that his farm, orchard, vineyard and vegetable garden at Sams Lake Road in Clermont was open the second Saturday of each month where they grow their own food and teach sustainability, take, takeaway and taste. Next open house is May 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. He encouraged everyone to be a beacon, to get people to meet in the middle.

The owners of the food truck by the Sunoco Gas Station brought up the no parking signs that were to go up on Georgia Ave and felt that it may hurt their business if customers could not park.

**Mr. John Minger 25012 Begonia Court** brought up the replacement of garbage cans from GFL and their lack of response to his calls and that of town hall staff. The Mayor responded that he was aware of the issue and that staff were constantly chasing the cans to replace the broken ones. He added that he would be happy to pay a little more for better service but that moving to another company would mean a huge increase in the annual assessment. The Clerk reiterated that Suzi spends a lot of her time trying to resolve the issues on behalf of the residents.

**AGENDA REVIEW**

The Mayor requested that a proclamation for Clerks week be added to the agenda and that a discussion item for medical Marijuana dispensaries be added after item 1 so that the planner could participate. He wanted to get the council's direction as he had received a call from a party interested in setting up a dispensary in the town. A motion to accept the change was made by Vice-Mayor Cross; seconded by Councilman Teeters and unanimously approved.

## MEETING MINUTES

Approval of Minutes for March 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.  
Approval of Minutes for March 14, 2023 Workshop Meeting.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the minutes shown above; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel**  
**For: Sikkema, Issartel, Teeters, Cross, Mack**  
**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

## STAFF REPORTS

***Town Attorney – Heather Ramos – Absent***

***Police Department – Chief Hoagland*** – brought up the code enforcement case on the damaged and unsafe home on Florida Avenue. This was due to go to a foreclosure hearing, but the owner walked into the attorney's office and handed in a check for \$33,921.00 to pay the fines and liens and halt the process. The chief said that the case would continue until the violation was cured. Councilman Teeters said that the building should be tagged as an unsafe structure.

He updated the case on the fence on Adams Street where the owner has been given until June 30<sup>th</sup> to move the existing fence and bring it into compliance. The sidewalk on CR561 was discussed and Vice-Mayor Cross said that the Town should have it repaired as a safety issue and charge the homeowner. Responding to a question from the previous meeting, the Code Enforcement Officer is armed when he is in the field working code enforcement cases.

The town cleanup day is April 29<sup>th</sup>, and three dumpsters would be provided down at the park. Publix was sending a crew to help and volunteers would be fed at noon with burgers and hot dogs. He thanked Suzi for all her efforts in organizing the event. The Chief invited everyone to a memorial service to honor the fallen officers of Lake County to be held in front of the historical courthouse on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 am.

***Public Works – Wally Hoagland – NONE***

***Town Clerk – Graham Wells – NONE***

## NEW BUSINESS

### **DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF PRELIMINARY PLAT AND SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR STILLWATER COVE.**

The Mayor deferred to the town planner. Green Consulting Group, Inc. (GCG) has conducted the Final Development Plan review for the proposed Stillwater Cove project. The property is approximately 24.62 acres located west of Washington Street north of Florida Avenue. The plan proposes 32 residential lots. The review is for plans prepared by HALFF Signed and Sealed December 21, 2022 consisting of 12 pages.

Mr. Green stated that there were two actions to be taken and gave an overview of the project in his review report. He said that it had been reviewed by the planning and zoning board who had unanimously recommended its approval. He added that the subdivision was in Residential R-1 zoning and that a traffic study had been completed and school concurrency had been reviewed and approved by the school board.

The site development plans had been reviewed and approved by CPWG, the town's engineers. He said that there would be driveways on Florida Avenue and that the lots would have individual stormwater swales on each lot, with excess water draining to a large stormwater pond. The roads when completed would be dedicated to the town and there would be a homeowner's association that would be responsible for the stormwater.

The Mayor added that the subdivision would be connected to the town's fire control with hydrants throughout and potable water with individual septic tanks. Following discussion, the Mayor asked for a motion to approve the two individual parts to the subdivision.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the Preliminary Plat; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross YES**

**Sikkema YES**

**Issartel YES**

**Teeters YES**

**Mack YES**

**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the Site Development Plan; SECONDED by Councilman Teeters**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross YES**

**Sikkema YES**

**Issartel YES**

**Teeters YES**

**Mack YES**

**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

### **DISCUSSION ON HAVING A MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY IN THE TOWN**

Bloom Medicinals from Boca Raton had made an approach to the town to set up a dispensary. The planner went over the various types of businesses that were allowed in the zoning districts and dispensaries, which are not drug stores, are not listed in any zoning district. The code is written in such a way where if the type of business is not specifically allowed, then it is prohibited. The code would have to be revised if the council decided that they wanted them to be allowed.

The Chief opined that he was not opposed to the principle of having a dispensary but did have a concern about it being robbed as it was ostensibly a cash business and that it should not be close to schools or churches. No action was taken.

The Mayor wanted to bring item 10 – Update on the Georgia Avenue Improvements forward as there were some residents present at the meeting.

The Chief went over the history and previous discussions on this issue and said that at the last meeting it was decided that the road would be stabilized, and no parking signs would be put up on either side of the road. Councilman Teeters said that he had spoken to the owner of the gas station, and he was willing to put some money towards fixing the road.

Mr. Teeters said while the sand trucks had to be prevented from parking and breaking up the road. He added that the town needed to support the businesses and not hurt them and find a better solution than what was agreed at the last meeting. Chief Hoagland said that if the council did change its mind, he still wanted to put up the signs on the north side of the road.

Following extensive discussion, it was decided to give the chief the discretion to limit parking until the road can be stabilized and enter into conversation with the business owners. The Motion was made by Vice-Mayor Cross; seconded by Councilwoman Issartel and unanimously approved.

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO MOVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER FROM PART TIME TO FULL TIME.**

With the increase in Calls for Service (over 500 a month) and with the possibility of one of the officers being out for a long undisclosed period (medical), the Chief proposed to change the status of our part-time officer's position to full-time.

The Police department has seen a major increase in criminal activity in the recent few months. The area has seen a large increase in traffic, with the introduction of the new turnpike entrance. The population of the town and the surrounding area has grown and continues to grow. The additional subdivisions inside the Town of Astatula will increase the demand for services from the police department.

The Chiefs proposal is to allocate \$8,000.00 dollars towards changing the part-time officers to full-time. This gives an opportunity to respond and investigate crime quicker and more efficiently. It also provides the manpower to cover shifts when we have an officer out on medical leave, covering vacations, or out to serve our country on a military assignment. Following discussion, the Mayor requested a motion to approve.

**MOTION by Councilman Teeters to approve moving the law enforcement officer from part-time to full-time from May; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema.**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross YES**

**Sikkema YES**

**Issartel YES**

**Teeters YES**

**Mack YES**

**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO PURCHASE NEW TASER'S FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.**

The Axon X-2 Taser that officers are currently carrying have started to malfunction and breakdown. The Axon company no longer makes this brand of tasers or provides updates for the programs they use. This has become a recent issue and replacement was not needed or planned for in this budget year.

The Chiefs proposal is to use Public Safety Impact Fees to purchase ten new X-7 Tasers. The clerk advised that there is \$40,500.00 dollars in impact fee fund that can only be used for public safety. The cost to purchase ten Axon X-7 tasers is \$41,670.00. Axon is the only manufacturer of tasers and therefore three quotes cannot be obtained.

Taser use is important not just for officer safety, but for the safety of the public as well. This new taser system also works with the existing evidence software that matches our new camera system. Following discussion, the Mayor requested a motion to approve.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the purchase of the Tasers at a cost of \$41,670.00; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

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

**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO PURCHASE RAPID-ID.**

The proposal put forward by the Chief is to use the allocated budgeted amount of \$6,000.00 dollars set aside for car radio chargers. The car radio chargers have not been available to purchase and may not become available again. The reallocation of this budgeted money would go to the purchase of a RapidID: fingerprint scanner. RapidID scanners have become a necessity in this area.

The RapidID is a fingerprint scanner that gives the ability to find the true identity of a person who is attempting to conceal it. The town has had to use other agencies scanners in the past and almost allowed a person with felony warrants to go free when they gave us a false name and I.D. Officers have encountered more Sovereign Citizens in this area than has had in the past and this system would help with that issue. The system cost of the system is \$5,164.00.

**MOTION by Councilman Teeters to approve the reallocation of the funds budgeted for the radio chargers to purchase a RapidID fingerprint scanner; SECONDED by Vice-Mayor**

**Cross**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross            YES**  
**Sikkema        YES**

**Issartel        YES**  
**Teeters        YES**  
**Mack            YES**  
**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER CONTRACT FOR 2023-2024.**

The Lake County School Board has issued the School Resource Officer contract for the 2023-2024 school year. The contract payments made by the school board is for the presence of a school resource officer at the Astatula Elementary School. The contract is for ten months of service for one officer. After the school year is complete, that officer joins road patrol for the remaining two months and helps bolster staffing to cover vacation time.

The amount being proposed for 2023-2024 is \$67,317.00 for the school year. This amount covers the Officer's salary for ten months plus, healthcare costs, FICA, FRS, equipment, and expenses to attend the FASRO conference. It is an increase of five percent over 2022-2023.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the School Resource Officer Contract for 2023-2024; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel**  
**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross            YES**  
**Sikkema        YES**  
**Issartel        YES**  
**Teeters        YES**  
**Mack            YES**  
**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL FOR THE PURCHASE OF BUILDING DEPARTMENT SOFTWARE.**

The Mayor gave an overview of the software that is part of a suite of modules offered by Municode. It would enable the department to streamline the building permit process. The Clerk went over the financial impact of building permits and how the fees are allocated and spent. Following discussion, a motion was requested.

**MOTION by Councilman Teeters to approve the purchase of the building department software; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel**  
**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross            YES**  
**Sikkema        YES**  
**Issartel        YES**  
**Teeters        YES**  
**Mack            YES**  
**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**At this point the Mayor read the proclamation for the Municipal Clerks Week.**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE BIDS FOR FENCING AROUND THE PD/PW COMPOUND.**

There is an amount in the infrastructure budget of \$9,600.00 to replace the 4-foot fence around the Police and Public Works compound with a 6-foot fence. The actual cost of the new fence is \$14,000.00 which includes the cost of a 16-foot roller gate. There is an additional cost for the electric operator for the gate of \$7,950.00. Hercules Fencing, who are the low bidder, installed the fencing around the water treatment plant and well 2. Their quality of work is outstanding.

A similar quotation was received from Superior Fence and Rail which was \$15,556.00 for the fence and gate and an additional \$7,717.85 for the motor to operate the roller gate. Following discussion, a motion was requested.

**MOTION by Councilman Teeters to approve the bid from Hercules Fencing for \$21,950.00; SECONDED by Vice-Mayor Cross**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

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

**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO PURCHASE A UTV FOR PUBLIC WORKS.**

An amount of \$15,000.00 was put into the infrastructure budget to purchase a new Kawasaki Mule. This vehicle is not available, and quotations were sought for an alternative utility vehicle; Kubota RTV-X900G-A Off Road Utility Vehicle 4x4 3 Cyl. Diesel 21.6 Hp/ROPS/2-Range HST/Standard Cargo Box/ATV Tires.

Quotations were received from Crystal Tractor and Equipment (\$20,591.43), Florida Coast Equipment (22,337.14), and Ridge Equipment (\$17,077.00) which is piggybacked on the Florida Sheriff's Association Bid #FSA20-EQU18.0 October 1st, 2020, through September 30th, 2023.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the purchase of the Kubota Utility Vehicle from Ridge Equipment at a cost of \$17,077; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross YES  
Sikkema YES  
Issartel YES  
Teeters NO  
Mack YES**

**MOTION CARRIED 4-1**

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO REPLACE THE PANELS ON THE MARQUEE SIGN.**

The Mayor gave an overview of an opportunity to upgrade the sign in the town hall parking lot with two full color refurbished light panels manufactured in 2020. Krier Signs and Lighting Service would retrofit the top of the sign to fit them with LED lighting at a cost of \$23,500.00. Following discussion, a motion was made not to approve the purchase.

**MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to not approve the purchase of the sign panels; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Cross            YES  
Sikkema        YES  
Issartel        YES  
Teeters        YES  
Mack            NO**

**MOTION CARRIED 4-1**

**DISCUSSION OF LOBBYIST – GRAY ROBINSON.**

The Mayor outlined the benefit of engaging a lobbyist to assist with getting funds and grants for the town and associated retainer costs of \$5,000.00 per month. No action was taken.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT REVIEW**

The Clerk requested that the finance report be brought forward to an earlier time in the meeting within the staff reports section. The council approved this, and it would take effect from the next meeting.

The Clerk then proceeded to give his report on the financial health of the town for all funds. The full report is available on the town’s website.

The Bank balances on February 28, 2023 are shown below.

General Fund:                    830,145.86  
Impact Fees:                    96,006.43  
Transportation Fund:            63,615.87  
Infrastructure Fund:            86,915.53  
Enterprise Fund:                14,687.59  
Cash Drawer:                    150.00

**COUNCIL DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT**

***Councilman Cross (Finance)*** Gave an update of meetings regarding the fiber grant.

***Mayor Mack (Public Works)*** NONE

***Councilwoman Sikkema (Public Safety/Code Enforcement)*** – NONE

***Councilman Teeters (LDR’s, Ordinances, Legal, Grants)*** – NONE

***Councilwoman Issartel (Economic Development)*** – NONE



**REVIEW**

Items for Workshops and possible dates –

*Amendment to the PUD for Sterling Meadows. Scheduled to be a joint session with the planning and Zoning Board for Friday April 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 at the community center.*

Items for Next Regular Council meeting –

*Councilman Teeters wanted to discuss an emergency call box for the town Hall parking lot. Councilwoman Issartel wanted to discuss benefits for part time employees.*

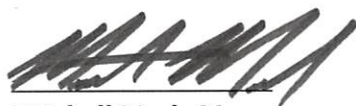
Items for Special Meetings and possible dates - NONE

**COUNCIL MEMBER MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS - NONE**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9.48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk

