

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



**REGULAR SESSION
TUESDAY DECEMBER 12, 2023
TOWN HALL**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mack called the Regular Session meeting to order at 6:40pm. He gave the invocation and led the led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Stephen Cross, Vice-Mayor
Zane Teeters
Orita Issartel
Jeanne Quiros

Staff Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief
Tom Harowski, Interim Planner

Roll Call was performed, confirmation of the meeting notification was acknowledged, and it was determined that a quorum was present. The Mayor welcomed guests and recognized Karen Smith from the Planning & Zoning Board.

CITIZENS QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

Kay MacQueen 25207 Buttonwood, Astatula thanked the council and Chief for all their efforts putting on the many events and added that she had heard only positive comments from the residents in the Meadows. She went on to talk about her experience with a bear at her property.

David Quiros 25928 Dogwood Lane, Astatula, said that the food drive was a great event, as was light up Astatula where free food and Christmas gifts relieved a lot of stress for parents of young families trying to make ends meet. He said that Pastor Lovely had been in touch with the food banks to take any excess to the pantry at his church in Astatula. He stated from statistics that families are only \$400.00 away from being on the street. He pointed out that the tennis court net was in need of replacement and that one piece of workout equipment at Swaffar Park was damaged and dangerous and should be removed. He drew attention to the ground repair after the pipe was laid on Georgia Avenue.

AGENDA REVIEW

Vice-Mayor Cross made a motion to table Item 3 of new business, as there was no back-up data for review; seconded by Councilman Teeters and unanimously approved.

MEETING MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes for August 2, 2023 Budget Workshop Meeting.
2. Approval of Minutes for August 21, 2023 Budget Workshop Meeting.
3. Approval of Minutes for September 12, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.
4. Approval of Minutes for October 10, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.
5. Approval of Minutes for October 19, 2023 Council Workshop
6. Approval of Minutes for November 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.

Councilwoman Quiros had stated that she was shown as seconding a motion which should have been Councilwoman Issartel. There was also an incorrect date shown on one set of minutes.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the minutes shown above with the stated amendments; SECONDED by Councilwoman Quiros

For: Cross, Quiros, Issartel, Mack

Against: Teeters

MOTION CARRIED 4-1

STAFF REPORTS

Town Attorney – Heather Ramos – Absent

Chief Hoagland – thanked those who turned up to help at the thanksgiving event where ninety people were served. He said that 358 gifts were given away at Light up Astatula and thanked Councilman Teeters for organizing the golf cart parade. He thanked the Clerk and Councilwoman and David Quiros for helping give food out at the food distribution drive and Councilman Teeters for working traffic control. The event served 335 families, 1,225 Individuals and 450 children.

The next event is the Ball drop which will go from 6:00pm to 1:00am on New Years Eve. There will be two drops, one at 9:00 pm and the second at midnight. Alcohol will be allowed but not sold at the event and there will be several food trucks. He announced that there will be an active shooter drill at the Elementary school this Thursday between 2:00pm and 2:30pm.

He spoke of the sadness of a family who had lost their grandmother who was the home bread winner and was being buried on Thursday. They had a lot of cost for the funeral and left behind three children who would not have a good Christmas. He asked for donations of gifts that could be given to them along with food for the Christmas period.

Town Clerk & Finance Officer – Graham Wells – spoke of an enquiry that he had from Kay MacQueen about the community center being rented for a gun show. Following some discussion it was decided that there was nothing in the rules that precluded such an event.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT REVIEW

The Clerk did not have a finance report available at that time. The full finance report will be available on the town's website as soon as it is completed.

The Bank balances on October 31, 2023 are shown below.

General Fund:	739,156.38
Impact Fees:	171,400.22
Transportation Fund:	62,577.14
Infrastructure Fund:	124,332.35
Enterprise Fund:	13,905.35
Cash Drawer:	150.00

NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT OF KAY MCOQUEEN TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Ms. MacQueen addressed the council on her background and education. Karen Smith asked why prayer before the P & Z meeting had been taken out. Mayor Mack had no explanation and said that it was at the discretion of the Chairman. The council had not taken it out.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to appoint Kay MacQueen to the Planning and Zoning Committee; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel.

For: Cross, Quiros, Issartel, Teeters, Mack

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACT WITH FRED FOX ENTERPRISES, INC FOR ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE CDBG GRANT #23DB-N31. FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE WATER PLANT.

A Request for Proposals was advertised, and three companies submitted proposals. One was disqualified and the other two were graded by the Mayor and the Clerk and the Administration for the Grant was awarded to Fred Fox Enterprises, Inc. The contract has been sent to the attorney and the red lined copy with her suggested amendments has been sent back to Fred Fox Enterprises for their comments. The amendments were approved. Vice-Mayor Cross said that the ranking sheets were not included in the agenda packet.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve the contract with Fred Fox Enterprises, Inc for administration services for the CDBG grant #23DB-N31, for the expansion of the water plant.; SECONDED by Councilman Teeters.

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Issartel YES

Teeters YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO ADOPT A POLICY AND COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM PROVIDED BY POWER DMS FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2023-26 PERMITTING FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES TO ELECT MEDICARE COVERAGE INSTEAD OF INSURANCE COVERAGE PROVIDED BY THE TOWN.

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ASTATULA, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, PERMITTING FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES TO ELECT MEDICARE COVERAGE INSTEAD OF ELECTING INSURANCE COVERAGE PROVIDED BY THE TOWN; PROVIDING FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This item has been discussed at several meetings and at the October 19 workshop it was agreed that Vice-Mayor Cross would liaise with the attorney and bring back to Council a formal resolution to adopt this new policy.

Councilman Teeters said that he had issue with the section in the resolution where *"The Town may at any time request documentation evidencing that the Eligible Employee has enrolled in and is paying for Medicare coverage"* and feels that it should be mandatory. Each month the employee has to prove that they had either paid the premium or that it was taken from their social security check.

Vice-Mayor Cross said that if at all, it could be requested at the beginning and that was it. Clerk Wells said that as it was claimed on an expense report by the employee, they would be falsifying the report if they did not have the insurance. Mr. Cross added that it was written so that proof of insurance could be requested by a council member or department head at any time but would not be required on a monthly basis. Following further discussion, it was suggested that it be moved ahead as written.

Vice-Mayor Cross made a motion to read the resolution title only, seconded by Councilman Teeters and unanimously approved. The Mayor read the title and requested a motion to approve.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to approve Resolution 2023-26; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel.

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Issartel YES

Teeters YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF QUOTATION FOR DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE MONROE CONCEPTION DESIGN FROM THE EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL.

The design proposal is for the Monroe area in the commercial district in front of the businesses to design and fix the town's road while not affecting their access. The Right-of-way reduces from 75 feet to 50 feet. There are different options, and this would give the town professional design standards and a scope of work for the council to review and make a decision on. This project and the way forward was discussed extensively and a motion was requested.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross to move ahead with scope of services for a request for proposal; SECONDED by Councilman Teeters.

For: Quiros, Teeters, Issartel, Cross, Mack

Against: None

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

APPROVAL TO RATIFY THE HIRING OF JENNIFER LONG TO THE POSITION OF CLERICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANT.

The Mayor said that this was an approval to formally hire Jennifer to the position of Clerical and Financial assistant. Currently she is working two days a week but the position is for thirty-two hours so more hours can be given when she is able to work them.

MOTION by Vice-Mayor Cross approve the hiring of Jennifer Long to the position of Clerical and Financial Assistant; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel.

A roll call vote was taken.

**Cross YES
Quiros YES
Issartel YES
Teeters YES
Mack YES**

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

APPROVAL OF A HOLIDAY BONUS EQUAL TO THE HOURS NORMALLY WORKED FOR CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEARS DAY FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES.

The Mayor stated that this was a one-time bonus as he was not happy with the language in the resolution that was brought forward after council approved holiday pay for part-time employees at a workshop. The Clerk said that although this was being called a bonus, it would go through payroll in the normal way with the addition of FICA and FRS contributions. It only affected Tracy, Jennifer, and Heather.

MOTION by Councilman Teeters to a approve a holiday bonus equal to the hours normally worked for Christmas Day and New Years Day for part-time employees with a sunset of January 2nd, 2024; SECONDED by Councilwoman Quiros.

A roll call vote was taken.

**Cross NO
Quiros YES
Issartel YES
Teeters YES
Mack YES**

MOTION CARRIED 4-1

COUNCIL DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT

Councilman Cross (Finance) – asked the Clerk to confirm the levels of purchasing authority for department heads and Council members as per the policy and procedure manual. There was a difference of opinion as to whether purchases over \$2,500.00 had to be approved by the council, even if the cost was in the budget. Vice-Mayor Cross said that all contracts and agreements including health insurance, general insurance, grants, and any purchase over \$2,500.00 should be approved at the time whether in the budget or not.

Mayor Mack (Public Works) – said that there was an upcoming workshop to discuss the fiber grant. There was also a grant meeting with Florida Commerce that has not yet taken place.

He also talked about the legislative money he wanted to apply for to build a new public works building at Swaffar Park. He also wanted to extend the paving in the parking lot at the community center. A design and proposal should be ready for the January meeting. He gave an update on the annexation process for County Materials and Mack Concrete. He also gave an update on the waterline for Tula Parc on Adams Street and the Hydrants in East Lake Harris Estates. FRWA were going to conduct flow testing on the hydrants which would be free of charge.

Councilman Teeters (LDR's, Ordinances, Legal, Grants) – Suggested that the town uses the Boy Scouts to paint the fire hydrants. The town can donate an amount per hydrant towards their troop funds.

A motion to extend the meeting until 9:15 pm was requested. Councilman Teeters made the motion; seconded by Councilwoman Quiros and voted 3-2 to extend. Vice-Mayor Cross and Councilwoman Issartel voted against.

Councilman Teeter said that new Councilwoman Quiros was not on the website. The Mayor said that he would add her. He also said that the HR liaison position had not been added to the agenda. The Clerk said that it was only discussed at a workshop and would need to be ratified. The Mayor concurred as the same had happened to the hiring of Jennifer Long. Councilman Teeters requested that it be added to the January agenda.

He then brought up the \$15,000.00 that the town spent on Swaffar Park and wanted an explanation as to why nothing has happened since. He said that he can only see where \$7,500.00 was approved and wanted to ensure that in future, all purchases including the advanced spending of grant money, even if it was to be reimbursed, be approved by the council.

Councilwoman Issartel (Economic Development) – NONE

REVIEW

Items for Workshops and possible dates NONE

Items for Next Regular Council meeting – NONE

Items for Special Meetings and possible dates – NONE

COUNCIL MEMBER MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS


ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9.19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:


Graham Wells, CMC, Town Clerk