

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



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

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mack called the Regular Session meeting to order at 6:32pm. He gave the invocation and led the led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Gayle Sikkema
Orita Issartel
Zane Teeters

Absent:

Stephen Cross, Vice-Mayor

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 Theresa LaBree from the Planning & Zoning Committee.

CITIZENS QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

Mr. Banks Helphric 9100 Sams Lake Road Clermont, who is running for State House District 25 gave a short talk on character and integrity and promoted his farm, orchard, vineyard and vegetable garden at Sams Lake Road in Clermont which is open the second Saturday of each month.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes to the agenda.

MEETING MINUTES

Approval of Minutes for August 8, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.
Approval of Minutes for August 8, 2023 Local Planning Agency Meeting.
Approval of Minutes for August 29, 2023 Emergency Council Meeting.

MOTION by Councilwoman Sikkema to approve the minutes shown above; SECONDED by Councilman Teeters

**For: Sikkema, Issartel, Teeters, Mack
MOTION CARRIED 4-0**

STAFF REPORTS

Town Attorney – Heather Ramos – Absent

Police Department - Chief Hoagland - the four new patrol cars were in and waiting on reimbursement from the grant. He talked about the Food Drive on December 9th and the three events coming up; Halloween, Thanksgiving and Light up Astatula Event on December 1st. He recognized officers Jackie Lajeunesse and Michael Tisdell for completing the Field Training Officers Course. He gave an update on code enforcement, public works, the tree trimming and the project on Georgia Avenue which was now finished. He advertised the Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD) walk which is on Saturday at 8:00 am. The road condition in front commercial units on Monroe Street was also discussed.

Town Clerk & Finance Officer - Graham Wells - NONE

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT REVIEW

The Clerk gave 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 July 31, 2023 are shown below.

General Fund:	792,266.28
Impact Fees:	142,440.43
Transportation Fund:	74,766.39
Infrastructure Fund:	95,576.95
Enterprise Fund:	10,555.03
Cash Drawer:	150.00

PUBLIC HEARING

FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE 2023-15 ADOPTING THE TOWN'S WATER RATES, FEES AND CHARGES.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ASTATULA, FLORIDA RELATING TO WATER RATES, FEES AND CHARGES; PROVIDING FINDINGS; CREATING CHAPTER 40 IN THE TOWN'S CODE OF ORDINANCES TO BE TITLED "WATER;" ADOPTING THE TOWN'S WATER RATES, FEES AND CHARGES AND PRESET INCREASES THROUGH 2028 FOR RESIDENTIAL, NONRESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, RATIFICATION, CODIFICATION, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

An independent water rate study has been conducted by the Florida Rural Water Association. The Water Rate Study has determined that the rates must be modified each year to ensure that the Town can reach its goals of collecting sufficient revenue to prudently operate its water system and more fairly allocate and distribute the costs of the water system among all customers and classes of customers.

The Mayor asked for a motion to read by title only. Councilwoman Sikkema made the motion, seconded by Councilwoman Issartel. The motion passed 3-1 with Councilman Teeters voting against. The Mayor opened the floor for public comment. Resident Michael Hopper asked what the new rate will be. The Clerk responded that the increase was 15% to existing and new users following the recommendations of a rate study that had been completed by the Florida Rural Water Association.

He added that as an enterprise fund it had to be sustainable and stand on its own feet. The study recommended a 15% increase each year for the next five years to ensure that all expenditures and future expansion can be met.

The increase to provide safe water and testing had gone up substantially. Mr. Hopper said that it was particularly important to him as he was on the water system that the water quality was kept high. He thought that the increase would be more towards 25 to 30 percent. David Quiros asked what the life expectancy was on the pipes in the ground. The Mayor responded that it was typically forty years. Mr. Quiros said he felt that it was necessary to increase the cost to ensure that there was sufficient money in the future to replace the pipe.

Being no further questions from the public he closed public comment as asked for comments from the board. Councilman Teeters said that he had not received the original study done that he had requested two months ago. The Clerk apologized and said that he would send it. He added that when the original study was done, there was no data and between comparisons with other towns and the FRWA, a rate had to be established.

Motion by Councilwoman Sikkema to adopt Ordinance 2023-15 adopting the water rates, fees and charges; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel

A roll call vote was taken.

Sikkema YES

Issartel YES

Teeters NO

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 3-1

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW 6-FOOT FENCE AND GATE FOR PUBLIC WORKS COMPOUND.

This project was talked about at a previous council meeting. The fence will replace the four-foot fence on the north side of the public works compound. The cost of \$5,990 will be funded in the current year from the infrastructure fund. The Mayor stated that the bid was from Hercules Fencing who had done good work for us in the past and were generally the cheapest. He asked for any comments and a motion to approve.

MOTION by Councilman Teeters to approve the purchase and installation of new 6-foot fence and gate for public works compound; SECONDED by Councilwoman Issartel.

A roll call vote was taken.

Sikkema YES She said that she would have liked three bids

Issartel YES

Teeters YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL FOR THE PURCHASE OF MOWHAWK LMF-12-3SA 12,000LB VEHICLE LIFT.

An amount of \$9,600.00 was put into the 2023-24 Infrastructure fund budget for the purchase of a vehicle lift. The lift that was planned is no longer available and did not include the installation. An alternative has been selected which does include the installation and the new amount has been added to the budget.

Following discussion this item was put on hold.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES TO PREPARE A DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND (DWSRF) WATER FACILITY PLAN.

To facilitate responding to imminent and future infrastructure requirements, the Town is considering funding for water needs through the State Revolving Fund (SRF) low interest loan program. Planning documentation required for SRF funded projects includes a Drinking Water Facility Plan.

This plan will have a 20-year planning period, based on a 20-year SRF loan period. Preparation of this plan will assist the Town in quantifying the scope and cost of infrastructure to serve existing needs as well as future growth. The Mayor gave more details of what the plan was designed to do and the cost of \$25,000 for Saltus Engineering to complete the plan.

MOTION by Councilman Teeter to approve the proposal for professional engineering services to prepare a drinking water state revolving fund (DWSRF) water facility plan at a cost of \$25,000 plus or minus; SECONDED by Councilwoman Sikkema.

A roll call vote was taken.

Sikkema YES

Issartel YES

Teeters YES

Mack YES

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL FOR SCHOOL ZONE SPEED ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.

Chief Hoagland gave a presentation on the speed camera system in the school zone. Councilwoman said that it was a no brainer that we get the system and that it was the best product. There was extensive discussion and some issues raised with terms of the contract.

MOTION by Councilwoman Sikkema that we table this to the next council meeting pending the comments on the contract from the attorney; SECONDED by Councilman Teeters.

For: Sikkema, Issartel, Teeters, Mack

MOTION CARRIED 4-0

FINAL DISCUSSION ON THE 2023-24 BUDGET.

The Mayor said that as we are moving into the final stages of the budget which would have to be advertised, council should give their final okay to go forward. The clerk went over the changes that would be made from tonight's meeting. It was decided to leave the \$26,000 for the lift in the budget even though it was not approved.

Councilman Teeters asked if the new police sign and call box was included in the budget. The clerk responded that they were not as they had been discussed but not formally approved. There was \$26,000 available for the lift and a surplus in the infrastructure fund to do both these items if council approves them once exact costs have been established.

The Clerk reminded council of the dates for the preliminary and final budget hearings which were extremely important. A full board was traditionally required to approve the budget. Councilman Teeters brought up the position of Public Works Director and that the Chief should be paid for doing the job. He said that it had been discussed previously and that a date of the first of the year should be put in place to resolve the issue.

Councilwoman Sikkema asked how many extra hours was the chief working in order to do the public works job. She felt that if he is doing it within the normal working week then he should not be paid extra, anymore than anyone taking on extra duties. This made sense to the other board members. She added that this year, the council preferred to give the higher level of raises to the Police along with additional hours for both Scott and Heather. The Mayor suggested that the Chief was looking for an additional \$500.00 per month.

A decision could not be taken as the issue was not on the agenda. It was decided that the budget would move forward to the Preliminary Public Hearing as presented, and any further action would be taken in the new financial year.

COUNCIL DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT

Councilman Cross (Finance) - ABSENT

Mayor Mack (Public Works) – Apprised the Council on a meeting that he and the Clerk had had with Senator Baxley. He gave an update on the progress with the Tula Parc development and contacts that he was pursuing with FGUA.

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 – NONE

Items for Next Regular Council meeting – NONE

Items for Special Meetings and possible dates – **Solid Waste Hearing and Preliminary Budget Hearing – September 14, 2023 and Final Budget Hearing – September 28, 2023.**

COUNCIL MEMBER MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

NONE

ADJOURNMENT


There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9.01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:


Graham Wells, Town Clerk