

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



**REGULAR SESSION
TUESDAY APRIL 9, 2024
TOWN HALL**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Vice-Mayor Cross called this scheduled Regular Session meeting to order at 6:41pm. Council Member Quiros gave the invocation and Vice-Mayor Cross led the led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Stephen Cross, Vice-Mayor
Zane Teeters
Jeanne Quiros

Absent:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Orita Issartel

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 Vice-Mayor, who was deputizing for Mayor Mack welcomed guests and recognized Karen Smith from P & Z.

CITIZENS QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

There was none.

AGENDA REVIEW

Vice-Mayor Cross requested to add the question of why holiday pay has not been paid to full-time employees to item 3 of new business. Council member Teeters wanted to table items 1 and 2 of new business to a future date. He felt that there were more important matters concerning the policy and procedure manual and they should wait until the budget discussions for 2024-25 when there would be a full board.

Vice- Mayor Cross stated that as there was a quorum present and they were agenda items, they would be discussed and a decision to vote on them, or not, would be made at that time. He added that item 2 was a promotion for an employee, and it was appropriate for the item to be discussed.

MEETING MINUTES

Approval of Minutes for March 12, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.

Motion by Council Member Quiros to approve the minutes shown above; SECONDED by Vice-Mayor Cross

For: Cross, Quiros

Against: Teeters

MOTION CARRIED 2-1

STAFF REPORTS

Town Attorney – Heather Ramos – Absent

Chief Hoagland – said that he had been involved in some community events. He had done a 5K run for Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Clermont and also attended an Easter Egg Hunt in Mascotte for children with Autism where the town’s wrapped police vehicle was featured. He said that there was to be a fallen officers memorial for officers in Lake County, in front of the courthouse in Tavares on May 7th at 9:00am.

He said that the community awareness group had been set up with the blessing from the attorney. Founder members would be Dawn Teeter and David Quiros as new volunteers were recruited. The Chief wanted the program to start at the beginning of May. Vice-Mayor Cross brought up a speed sign on CR48 coming west that was hidden by a tree. Member Teeters added a tree issue on CR561. The Chief responded that they were both on County Right-of Ways, but he would do his best to get them looked at.

Vice-Mayor Cross requested that the Chief bring his new finger printing scanner to the next meeting to show to the council. The Chief said that he had a tentative date for the next food distribution drive which will be on June 22 at the community center.

Town Clerk & Finance Officer – Graham Wells

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT REVIEW

The Clerk went over the finance report. The full finance report is available on the town’s website.

The Bank balances on February 29, 2024 are shown below.

General Fund:	1,289,444.63
Impact Fees:	167,562.72
Transportation Fund:	65,346.07
Infrastructure Fund:	212,900.92
Enterprise Fund:	84,230.43
ARPA Fund	1,044,280.00
Cash Drawer:	150.00

PUBLIC HEARING

FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE 2024-05 REPEALING CHAPTER 13 OF THE TOWN’S CODE OF ORDINANCES REQUIRING A PERSON CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE TOWN TO OBTAIN A BUSINESS TAX RECEIPT.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ASTATULA, FLORIDA REPEALING CHAPTER 13 OF THE TOWN’S CODE OF ORDINANCES REQUIRING A PERSON CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE TOWN TO PAY A BUSINESS TAX TO THE TOWN AND TO OBTAIN A BUSINESS TAX RECEIPT FROM THE TOWN; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

At a prior council meeting, the issue of business tax receipts was discussed, and it was agreed that the cost to the town in issuing them plus the usefulness of the information did not have any tangible benefit. The county has also stopped issuing business licenses. This ordinance repeals the section in the code requiring them and will take effect on October 1, 2024.

The Vice-Mayor opened public comment, and there being none, closed public comment and requested a motion to read by title only. The motion was made by Council Member Teeters; Seconded by Member Quiros. The Vice-Mayor read the title and requested a motion to approve.

MOTION by Council Member Teeters to approve Ordinance 2024-05 repealing chapter 13 of the town's code of ordinances requiring a person conducting business in the town to obtain a business tax receipt; SECONDED by Council Member Quiros.

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Teeters YES

MOTION CARRIED 3-0

FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE 2024-06 AMENDING ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 18 OF THE TOWN'S CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ASTATULA, FLORIDA PERTAINING TO FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT; AMENDING ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 18 OF THE TOWN'S CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION TO ADD REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING ELEVATION CERTIFICATES FOR HOMES BUILT IN SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Town must amend the Town's Floodplain Management Regulations to add language required by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. This ordinance amends Article II of Chapter 18 of the Town's Code of Ordinances entitled "Flood Damage Prevention and Protection" to add a new Subsection 105.5 to Section 105 entitled "Site Plans and Construction Documents".

The Vice-Mayor opened public comment, and there being none, closed public comment and requested a motion to read by title only. The motion was made by Council Member Teeters; Seconded by Member Quiros. The Vice-Mayor read the title and requested a motion to approve.

MOTION by Council Member Teeters to approve Ordinance 2024-06 amending article II of chapter 18 of the town's code of ordinances entitled flood damage prevention and protection; SECONDED by Council Member Quiros.

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Teeters YES

MOTION CARRIED 3-0

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2024-07 AMENDING SECTION 7.1 OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL.

The Clerk said that one of the things that inhibit the recruitment and retention of part-time staff is the provision of Health Insurance and also full vacation and holiday pay. Tracy left the town because of it, and it is proving difficult to recruit to replace her.

In August of 2020, Resolution 2020-12 increased the number of hours from 36 to 40 to qualify as a full-time employee and receive full benefits. Resolution 2024-07 proposes to repeal Resolution 2020-12 and return to full-time employees working 36 hours or more. The proposal is to make the two positions in Town Hall; Clerical & Financial Assistant and Building Services Clerk full-time employees with full benefits.

There is a mandatory waiting period for health insurance so any change would not take effect until July 1, 2024. The Premium for Jennifer will be \$902.74 per month totaling \$2,708.22 up to the end of the financial year. A new permitting clerk would be similar depending on age. Both premiums would be easily offset by the Clerk moving from the town's insurance to Medicare.

The Clerk went over the fiscal impact shown on the agenda cover sheet. Council Member Teeters said that money and benefits is not the issue when retaining staff and believed that the hours required for full-time should remain at forty hours. Vice-Mayor Cross said that he had always thought that both positions should be full time and that the job market had change significantly since the town raised it from 36 to 40 hours.

Council Member Quiros felt that moving it back to 36 hours made sense as the town would save four hours per person per week while still offering full healthcare and holiday benefits. Vice-Mayor Cross said that he would like to have the resolution define what full time is rather than what part time is. With that he asked for a motion to read Resolution 2024-07 by title only. Council Member Quiros made the motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Cross and approved 2-1 with Council Member Teeters opposing. Vice-Mayor Cross read the title and requested a motion to approve.

MOTION by Council Member Quiros to approve Resolution 2024-07 with the amendment to define what full-time is: SECONDED by Member Teeters.

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Teeters NO

MOTION CARRIED 2-1

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL FOR A PROMOTION TO DEPUTY TOWN CLERK AND WAGE INCREASE FOR JENNIFER LONG.

The Clerk stated that Jennifer returned to the town following her maternity leave in October 2023 to take up the role of Clerical and Financial Assistant; a new position approved by council.

She has now completed six months in the role and has shown herself to be an invaluable asset to the town hall staff. She has taken on the additional duties with enthusiasm, diligence and skill. In addition, she has taken on the role of permitting clerk temporarily following Tracy's departure to keep the town running. In recognition of her efforts and value to the town both present and future, the Clerk recommended promoting her to Deputy Town Clerk and increasing her wage to \$23.00 per hour (currently \$18.00).

The wage level in the budget is \$20.00 per hour for 32 hours. If approved, she will become a member of the Florida Association of City Clerks and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, which will enable her to attend the twice annual training academies to further her knowledge and experience. As Resolution 2024-07 passed, she will become a full-time employee (36 hours per week) with full benefits.

The additional wage, holiday and vacation pay plus FICA and FRS equates to approximately \$7,420.00 for this fiscal year. The additional fiscal impact for 2024-25 will be approximately \$15,100.00 which would include the training classes. Health insurance for the year for her will be \$10,833.00.

Vice-Mayor Cross asked the board members for their comments. Member Quiros said that she was in favor of it. Member Teeters did not agree with the \$5.00 per hour raise as her current position had a range of up to \$20.00 per hour giving a \$2.00 increase which he was good with. Vice-Mayor Cross said that this was a different position and a promotion. He added that he had always said that the position should be \$25.00 per hour.

Following further discussion and comments from residents present, Vice-Mayor Cross asked for a motion.

**MOTION by Council Member Quiros to approve Jennifers promotion and pay raise:
SECONDED by Vice-Mayor Cross.**

A roll call vote was taken.

Cross YES

Quiros YES

Teeters NO

MOTION CARRIED 2-1

DISCUSSION ON ADMINISTERING VACATION AND HOLIDAY PAY GOING FORWARD AND WHY IT WAS NOT BEING FOLLOWED.

Chief Hoagland stated that the eight hours for not working the holidays had never been paid since he became the chief. He said that he talked to the clerk at that time who told him that only time and a half was paid if the holiday was worked. He claimed that he was ignorant of seeing where it states otherwise in the policy and procedure manual.

It was discussed why the payments had not been made and responses given to the accusations made to place blame. Member Teeters acknowledged that the shift sheets did not have any punch in or out times and that the shifts worked were only marked with an X. If it was a holiday, it was marked with an X/H for those who worked and left blank for those who did not work.

The Clerk stated that this was only an issue with the police officers as all others were currently either part-time and not entitled to paid holidays, or the day was taken off with pay if the employee was entitled. Whatever was put on the shift sheet and signed by the employee and authorized by the Chief was what the clerk put through payroll. No decisions were reached as to how this would change in the future.

COUNCIL DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT

Councilman Cross (Finance) – NONE

Mayor Mack (Public Works) – ABSENT

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

Councilwoman Issartel (Economic Development) – ABSENT

Councilwoman Quiros (Law Enforcement) – Stated that the town was moving forward with the community awareness group.

REVIEW

Items for Workshops and possible dates - ***A date was made w/c April 29th for discussion on the policy & procedure manual.***

Items for Next Regular Council meeting - NONE

Items for Special Meetings and possible dates - NONE

COUNCIL MEMBER MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS - NONE

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:


Graham Wells, CMC, Town Clerk