



Town Council Members Present

Zane Teeters, Jr. – Mayor
Cheryl Marinelli – Vice-Mayor
Kay MacQueen – Council Member
Susan Richert - Council Member
Kim Hanawalt – Council Member

Town Staff

Charles Jacien, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief
David Langley, Attorney

1. Call to Order

The Special Council Meeting of the Town of Astatula was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Zane Teeters. The Mayor reminded everyone to silence their phones.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Karen provided the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by the Clerk.

Present:

- Mayor Zane Teeters
- Vice Mayor Cheryl Marinelli
- Council Member Kay MacQueen
- Council Member Richert
- Council Member Hanawalt

A quorum was present.

The Clerk confirmed that proper notice had been given.

4. Agenda Review

Mayor Teeters stated that because the special meeting was originally scheduled for only one or two actions but expanded to nine items, citizen questions and comments would be moved to the end of the meeting.

A request was made to move Agenda Item No. 7 up to Item No. 5.

Motion/Consensus: Move Agenda Item No. 7 up to Item No. 5.

Vote: Approved by voice vote, **5-0**.

5. Approval of Minutes

The Council reviewed the following minutes:

- Regular Council Meeting Minutes of **December 9, 2025**
- Charter Revision Workshop Minutes of **March 18, 2026**

A motion was made to approve the minutes.

Motion: Approve the minutes as presented, made by Z. Teeters

Second: Seconded, by K. Hanawalt

Vote: Approved **4-1**. Opposed by K. MacQueen

New Business

6. Discussion/Action: Reimbursement Payment of Expenses

Mayor Teeters introduced the item regarding reimbursement of legal expenses incurred in connection with an ethics complaint filed against him. He stated that outside counsel was required because the Town Attorney had been named or involved as a witness in the matter and therefore could not represent him.

Council discussion included questions regarding:

- The nature of the ethics complaint;
- Whether the matter arose from actions taken in the Mayor's official capacity;
- Whether the Town was legally obligated to provide a defense or reimbursement;
- Whether attorney's fees could be reimbursed by insurance;
- Whether the Mayor could legally vote on the matter;
- Whether the Town could seek reimbursement from the Mayor depending on the outcome of the ethics matter.

The Town Attorney explained that the matter was within the Council's discretion and that the Council should consider whether the actions were taken in the Mayor's official capacity and for a public purpose. The Attorney also stated that insurance may reimburse attorney's fees up to \$100,000 if the Mayor is cleared of wrongdoing, but reimbursement may not be available if there is a finding of violation or settlement. The Attorney further advised that, in his opinion, the Mayor could vote on the issue because Florida law does not prohibit elected officials from voting on expenses related to their position.

Council members discussed the difference between a tort action and an ethics matter, the applicable legal standard, and whether the Town could be liable for additional legal fees if it refused reimbursement and a court later determined reimbursement was required.

Mayor Teeters stated that the complaint related to a cease-and-desist letter sent to Mr. Wilbur and his wife regarding alleged defamatory statements concerning the Mayor's office.

Motion: Approve reimbursement of legal fees and expenses, made by C. Marinelli

Second: Seconded, by K. Hanawalt

Vote: Approved 4-1 by roll call.

Roll Call Vote

- Vice Mayor Marinelli — Yes
- Council Member Richert — Yes
- Council Member Hanawalt — Yes
- Mayor Teeters — Yes
- Council Member MacQueen — No

Result: Motion passed 4-1.

7. Second Reading: Ordinance 2026-01 — Burn Ban Procedures and Enforcement

Mayor Teeters introduced **Ordinance 2026-01**, stating that the ordinance gives the Mayor authority to declare a burn ban when conditions make open burning unsafe.

Council discussion was brief. A Council Member stated support for the ordinance and said the Council had done a good job putting the burn ban procedures into words.

Motion to Read by Title Only

Motion: Read Ordinance 2026-01 by title only, by S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by K. MacQueen

Vote: Approved 5-0 by voice vote.

The ordinance title was read into the record.

Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment on the burn ban ordinance.

There was **no public comment**.

Motion to Approve Ordinance 2026-01

Motion: Approve Ordinance 2026-01 on second reading, by S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by K. MacQueen

Vote: Approved 5-0 by roll call.

Roll Call Vote:

- Council Member Hanawalt — Yes
- Council Member Richert — Yes
- Council Member MacQueen — Yes
- Vice Mayor Marinelli — Yes
- Mayor Teeters — Yes

Result: Ordinance 2026-01 was adopted.

8. Second Reading: Ordinance 2026-02 — Alcohol, Marijuana, and CBD Location Restrictions

Mayor Teeters introduced **Ordinance 2026-02** regarding public possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages and restrictions on businesses that sell liquor, marijuana, or CBD products within 1,000 feet of schools, churches, public buildings, and public parks.

Council discussion included whether the 1,000-foot distance requirement was excessive compared to other jurisdictions, where distances may be 300 or 500 feet. Other comments supported maintaining a larger distance from schools, churches, parks, public buildings, and children.

Motion to Read by Title Only

Motion: Read Ordinance 2026-02 by title only, by S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by K. MacQueen

Vote: Approved 5-0 by voice vote.

The ordinance title was read into the record.

Motion to Approve Ordinance 2026-02

Motion: Approve Ordinance 2026-02.

Second: Seconded.

Vote: Approved 5-0 by roll call.

Roll Call Vote:

- Vice Mayor Marinelli — Yes
- Council Member Hanawalt — Yes
- Council Member Richert — Yes
- Council Member MacQueen — Yes
- Mayor Teeters — Yes

Result: Ordinance 2026-02 was adopted.

9. Discussion/Action: Operational Services Agreement with Purified Water Services for Water and

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Mayor Teeters discussed issues with the former water and wastewater treatment plant operator. He stated there had been operational problems at the wastewater plant, including a generator that had not been properly run, equipment problems, and repairs needed at the wastewater treatment plant. He also discussed a chlorine leak at the potable water plant and stated that chlorine had leaked onto the floor and out of the building. The Mayor stated that the prior operator's repair failed and that non-compliant parts were allegedly used. He also stated that the previous company was allegedly under investigation by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for falsifying records, including records related to the Town.

Mayor Teeters explained that due to the urgency of the water system issues, he terminated the prior contract for cause and authorized Purified Water Services to begin providing services. He stated the new company's cost was close to what the Town had already been paying, with only about an \$85 difference, and that the company came highly recommended.

Council discussion included:

- Who hired the former company;
- Whether Tula Park homeowners would absorb any costs;
- Whether sewer and water fees were being charged to homeowners;
- Whether three bids should have been obtained;
- Whether the situation qualified as an emergency;
- Whether the Council could shorten the agreement or direct staff to obtain additional bids;
- The length of the agreement, stated as 12 months.

The Town Attorney stated that the item was being brought to Council for ratification and that Council had options, including shortening the contract or requesting additional bids.

Motion: Ratify the Mayor's decision to hire Purified Water Services, LLC, by S. Richert

Second: Seconded. Z. Teeters

Vote: Approved 5-0 by roll call.

Roll Call Vote,

- Vice Mayor Marinelli — Yes
- Council Member MacQueen — Yes
- Council Member Richert — Yes
- Council Member Hanawalt — Yes
- Mayor Teeters — Yes

Result: Contract with Purified Water Services, LLC was ratified.

10. Discussion/Action: Correction and Reposting of March 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Council Member Richert raised concerns regarding the March 10, 2026 meeting minutes. She stated that at the April 14, 2026 meeting she had requested corrections to reflect that Miriam Gomez spoke against Council Member Cheryl Marinelli and in support of Council Member Kay MacQueen, and that Karen Smith's public comments had been omitted.

Council Member Richert stated that the corrected minutes had not been posted accurately. Discussion followed regarding whether "CM" meant "Council Member" and whether the minutes should specifically state that Ms. Gomez spoke against Council Member Marinelli.

The Town Attorney explained that minutes are prepared by the Clerk, presented to Council, and corrected by Council if necessary. If Council disagrees over what was said, the audio may be reviewed and the Council may

vote on the correction.

First Motion

Motion: Correct the March 10, 2026 meeting minutes to state that Miriam Gomez , 13131 New York Avenue, spoke against Council Member Cheryl Marinelli and in support of Council Member Kay MacQueen, made by S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by K. MacQueen

Vote: Motion failed 3-2, opposed by Z. Teeters, C. Marinelli, K. Hanawalt

Second Motion

Vice Mayor Marinelli then made a motion directing the Clerk to review the March 10, 2026 recording and determine whether Ms. Gomez spoke negatively about Council Member Marinelli.

During discussion, the Council briefly recessed while staff attempted to locate the recording. The meeting was brought back to order at 7:48 p.m. The Town Clerk stated the recording was not available on the shared drive and appeared to be in the possession of the Deputy Clerk. Mayor Teeters directed the Clerk to obtain the recording from the Deputy Clerk as soon as possible.

Motion: Direct the Town Clerk to review the March 10, 2026 recording and, if Miriam Gomez spoke negatively about Council Member Marinelli, add that statement to the March 10, 2026 minutes, by C. Marinelli

Second: Seconded

Vote: Approved by voice vote.

5-0

11. Discussion: Rules of Order, Staff and Council Responsibilities, and Decorum

Vice Mayor Marinelli discussed the need for Council Members to treat Town staff with respect. She stated that the front office staff, police department, public works, and all Town employees should not be yelled at, treated negatively, or treated as if they work directly for individual Council Members.

She emphasized that Council Members should maintain decorum with one another, the public, and staff, and that the Town should work together as a team in the best interest of the community.

Council discussion followed regarding whether concerns about staff treatment should be addressed directly with the person involved. Vice Mayor Marinelli stated that some staff may need an advocate and that the Council should move forward respectfully.

No formal action was taken.

12. Discussion/Action: Charter Revisions

The Council discussed proposed charter revisions. The Town Attorney stated that after the prior workshop, he researched options and advised that the Town could either pursue a new charter or make individual changes by referendum. He noted that there were approximately 16 proposed changes, and that placing too many items on the ballot could create cost concerns and potential legal issues.

The Attorney recommended narrowing the proposed changes, potentially to eight or fewer, so they could fit on one ballot.

Council discussed the need for additional review before moving forward.

Motion: Table the charter revision item and schedule a workshop to review the proposed charter changes one by one, by S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by K. MacQueen

Vote: Approved 5-0 by voice vote.

The Clerk was directed to work on scheduling a charter workshop within approximately 14 days. The Attorney noted that the first reading of any ordinance would need to occur by May and the second reading by June to meet election-related deadlines.

13. Discussion: Meetings Going Past 8:30 p.m.

Council Member MacQueen discussed concerns regarding meetings extending past 8:30 p.m. She stated that when meetings run late, residents become tired and leave, which reduces community involvement. She suggested that if a meeting is expected to go very late, another meeting should be scheduled instead.

Mayor Teeters stated that the Town already has a mechanism in place to extend meetings by motion. He noted

that if Council does not wish to extend a meeting, members may vote against an extension. Discussion followed regarding balancing meeting length with the need to complete agenda items, especially when residents attend to speak on specific agenda matters. No formal action was taken.

14. First Reading: Ordinance 2026-03 — Extension of Temporary Moratorium on Annexations and Residential Development

Mayor Teeters introduced **Ordinance 2026-03**, extending the temporary moratorium on annexations and residential developments involving more than eight new dwelling units for up to 12 months. He stated the prior moratorium had been adopted by Ordinance 2025-08.

Motion to Read by Title Only

Motion: Read Ordinance 2026-03 by title only, by K. Hanawalt

Second: Seconded, by S. Richert

Vote: Approved 5-0 by voice vote.

The ordinance title was read into the record.

Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment on Ordinance 2026-03.

There was no public comment.

Motion to Approve First Reading

Motion: Approve Ordinance 2026-03 on first reading, S. Richert

Second: Seconded, by Z. Teeters

Vote: Approved 5-0 by voice vote.

The Mayor stated that the second reading would be held at the next Council meeting after proper advertisement.

Public Comment

Mayor Teeters opened general public comment and stated that no action would be taken on matters not on the agenda. He further stated that zoning, code enforcement, and procurement matters not scheduled for hearing could not be discussed during public comment.

Miriam Gomez

Miriam Gomez stated that information she discussed at a prior meeting had been obtained from the online agenda. She said she printed the information from the Town's website before the meeting and disagreed with statements suggesting the information had not been available online.

Ms. Gomez also stated that agenda items are sometimes not specific enough and requested more information be included so citizens can better understand what will be discussed at upcoming meetings.

Karen Smith

Karen Smith questioned why public comment had been moved to the end of the meeting rather than being heard before Council action. She also asked how much money the Town owed related to the legal reimbursement item.

Mayor Teeters stated the amount was approximately \$9,500 at that time.

Ms. Smith expressed concern that Council should have been informed before outside counsel was hired and stated that she believed more matters should be brought before the Council before decisions are made. She also commented that the Council appeared disorganized and that communication among Council Members could be improved.

Brian Wilbur

Brian Wilbur commented on public comment being held after Council votes and stated that citizens should be heard before decisions are made.

Mr. Wilbur also addressed the legal reimbursement issue. He disagreed with the Town paying the Mayor's legal defense costs and stated that invoices were increasing. He read a statement indicating that probable cause had

been found on an allegation involving abuse of office for disproportionate benefit and misuse of position, specifically related to use of the Town seal, letterhead, and title in a cease-and-desist matter involving a former Council Member.

Mr. Hopper

Mr. Hopper spoke regarding the water and sewer system. He stated that water and sewer operations are important and that the Town needs qualified people handling those systems. He questioned whether the Town should remain in the sewer business and suggested the Town consider selling the sewer system to reduce responsibility and potential costs.

Mr. Hopper also urged Council Members to research items carefully, look out for taxpayer money, and act in the best interest of the Town.

Additional Public Comment Discussion

Karen Smith requested that all comments from the meeting be included in the minutes. Mayor Teeters explained that meeting minutes are a summary and not a word-for-word transcript. He stated that a transcript could be requested as a public record.

Additional discussion occurred regarding Council Members' obligation to vote. Mayor Teeters and Council members stated that elected officials generally must vote unless they have a legally recognized conflict of interest.

Council Member Hanawalt responded to comments regarding her prior statements and stated that she had not said the words attributed to her. She clarified that she may have referred to being new but did not consider herself uninformed.

Mayor Teeters then closed public comment.

Announcements

Mayor Teeters announced that **May 4th** is Astatula's 99th birthday. He stated that pizza and cake would be provided at 12:00 p.m. for Town employees, Council Members, and Planning and Zoning members, and that all Town employees were invited.

The Clerk will coordinate a date for the charter revision workshop.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Teeters adjourned the meeting at **8:23 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Zane Teeters Jr

ATTEST:



Charles Jacien Town Clerk