

**MINUTES OF MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF THE  
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL  
January 20, 2010**

Present: Vice Mayor Mulleneaux, Councilman Don Innes, Eric Merriman, Ken Larson, Charles Morris, and Wayne Griffin

Staff Present: Terry Hinton Manager, Heath Brown Engineer, Chief Mark Stevens Police, Chief Mike Payne Fire Department, Dudley Welker Town Attorney, Lona Duncan Town Clerk

Absent: Mayor Bob Rivera

Visitors: Mike Cochran, Debbie Turley, Crystal Griffin, Aimee Staten, Joel Wright

**AGENDA**

Vice Mayor Mulleneaux called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and stated there was a quorum. He said he would like to excuse Mayor Rivera who is out of town with his wife who had surgery yesterday.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

A. Pool/Library Complex

Terry said this is for anyone who wants to make comments about the complex plan. This is a top of the line plan and we tried to utilize all the space we have. We also had an offer by EAC to sell us land over by the High School for the complex but they haven't given me an exact price yet. Heath and I and the engineers who worked on the plan looked at everything we could think of and this is what we came up with. Mike Cochran asked where the money is coming from. Vice Mayor Mulleneaux said it would be phrased in and then just part of our operating budget. Mike said it is defiantly a every good looking complex but as a tax payer I have to oppose this kind of endeavor and the reason why is I have some concerns about the state of economic we are in right now and are we using tax payer dollars responsibly. How can you recoup some of the money it is nice to swim and other activities but for the town as a whole what we are investing? I believe it is to extreme I don' think the benefits are justifiable. The yearly maintenance cost and insurance will be huge and each year this will go up. Do we have enough people to off set the cost? If we have that kind of money already I think it should be used on other things like more street lights as just one suggestion. The last thing is with this cost maybe it should be put before the vote of the people to see if everyone wants it. Vice Mayor Mulleneaux said you are right when you say we don't have the money to build it right now and we are in a bad economic status. This complex is a result of a large number of people coming to Council and requesting this. If we build it there will be phrases as to when the money is available we do not plan on going into debt for it. We will give everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion. We are trying to be responsible and we are trying to listen to the people and what they are wanting. Vice Mayor Mulleneaux said we will have a lot of public meeting and it will be the voice of the people who decides if this complex goes or not and if the funds are available. We thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Crystal Griffin stood and said I appreciated your consideration and ideas of even doing the complex. As a Mom I think it will be a good place for my kids to go and have activities to do and be safe. I am impressed with the pool complex because it has a enclosed area and an open area there is an aerobic area and pool for the little kids you have put a lot of thought into the pool complex. I like the jogging path on the outside it will get used a lot. I would like to see the complex some to pass especially the pool and library it would be great for the kids.

Vice Mayor Mulleneaux said again this is just a stating point and will have to be phrased in for a long period of time. Councilman Innes said I have pushed for this because we are a community that pride ourselves on families. As a town we have a responsible to provide those types of services to the community. In the past we have been guilty of and accused of using everyone else's and it is time for us to look at our responsibly we need to provide those services. It will have to be phrased in and that was the original intent. I think as a community we are not going to stop growing we have new homes being built and we have to be responsibility and meet their needs. Councilman Morris said we don't have property tax the only money we get is from sales tax. We can't raise money though property tax. Councilman Griffin stated I have a concern because if you look at the operating budget for the year and then the O&M on this complex where does the money come out of that budget so then if we want it bad enough there may have to be a secondary property tax for the operating maintenance. Terry said that might be the way to satisfy everyone because you can pay off bonds with a secondary tax levy but you have to go to election so the people would have the right to vote. Do I think that will happen anytime soon no? Councilman Griffin said so with our budget can you afford it right now and the answer was no. Councilman Innes said but the down turn will not stay so when it gets back up we can look at it. Mike Cochran said but the figures you are using right now 2010 and if you are phrasing in the cost that will only get more as time goes by. Councilman Morris said the cost of things is not always totally paid for look at the County the fairgrounds it cost them money and the City of Safford the pool and library cost them money. Any town that has a facility for public use is not going to make money on it the use is for the citizens and create a good living environment. Joel Wright asked if anyone had considered a basket ball court with lights. Terry said no because it draws undesirable people after awhile. Mr. Wright asked if that was fact and Terry said yes there are studies out there besides there are a lot of courts already in town the schools and the college. Mr. Wright asked if they are lighted and the answer was the college is. Mr. Wright said do you want high school kids and possible younger playing with college kids. Terry said after while it's not the younger kids but the older one's and they get to drinking and fights brake out and more problems. Vice Mayor Mulleneaux said he worked at the college for 15 years and that is true it is off campus people that cause the trouble. Mr. Wright asks does this complex have open access. Terry said other than the pool and library it will be open. Mr. Wright said I don't know the answer but I believe basketball is something people do more than say racket ball I am just giving you my thoughts. Chief Stevens said when he worked in Mesa one of the headache were those outside basketball courts we were always going out to fights and drinking at the parks the night seems to bring them out. Dr Wright asked have you investigated the idea of the use to the public as maybe a fee base cost by maybe a single day fee or an annual membership that may keep the undesirables out. Mayor Mulleneaux said we would have to hire someone to monitor the place. Councilman Merriman the indoor pool in Sierra Vista is getting back 80% because it is a year round indoor pool. Councilman Merriman said he had check on getting a YMCA here in the valley and it takes about 50 thousand people is order for them to look at you. Councilman Innes said we also need to let people know that we have the grant for the bike path that will go passed the complex from Golf Course down to Reay Lane into Thatcher. Terry said that is about 18 month to 2 years away.

**OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Anyone wishing to address the Council on an issue not on the agenda is allowed to speak at this time. Comments are limited to 5 minutes and the Council may only direct staff to study the matter, respond to criticism or schedule the matter for a future meeting.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCES:**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Action Item

- A. Approve minutes of the December 22, 2009 Regular Council Meeting.

- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C. Police Monthly Report.
- D. Approval of Invoices.
- E. Financial Reports.

Councilman Morris made motion to approve reports and minutes. Councilman Merriman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous Motion passed

**OLD BUSINESS:** Discussion, consideration and possible action

- A. Health Insurance Plan Approval.

Terry said we meet the next day with the people from the health insurance and some employees and checked with Blue Cross Blue and they can offer both plans which would be the PPO having the HRA and the HSA plan. We started a process to see where everyone wanted to go. We had more than half employees want to stay with the HSA plan. This will go until July 1<sup>st</sup> because they won't give us an 18 month contract so we will make this same offer in July because that is when our budget year starts. The employees seem to be happy with the different options.

Councilman Innes made motion to approve the Health Insurance for a PPO having the HRA and the HSA Plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield. Councilman Larson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed

Terry said we want to maintain the same for next year where we pay for the employee and family but we may have to have the vision and dental become an option where if the employee wants it they pay for it. I have been working on budget and it is getting pretty tight. Terry said we know Arizona Retirement is going up have not heard about police or elected official. Dispatching, dog catcher, landfill I don't have the cost yet. Councilman Innes ask the cost of dog catcher. Terry said it is sixty dollars a call out and it is well worth it to us. Chief Stevens said there was only 144 call outs this last year. Councilman Innes said so it would cost us more to hire someone to do that. Terry said yes it would. Councilman Innes said so all our citizens need to do is call dispatch and they will send someone the answer was yes. The state is already starting to shift cost to other people because they don't have the money. I am surprise we haven't gotten notice of the items we send to DPS lab I sure that is coming. Terry said there are some kits the officers use that they used to give us and now we have to buy our own so there are going to be cost we haven't had before.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Discussion, consideration and possible action

- A. Layton ditch & culvert right of way swap.

Terry said this is on Reay Lane from the edge of storage room to the canal there is a vacant field that is commercial property. We have talked to them for years to get the right of way. If you drive up Reay Lane Heath has placed markers where we could put a sidewalk. In return for the right a way we would agree too move their ditch over that is about 18000.00. Then down on First and Reay there is a culvert that need to be fixed and they want to put a water line across that crossing at the same time so they can expand their drip irrigation. They have asked that our crews install and they will supply the pipe in exchange for giving us all that right a way. Heath said we can not widen the road without out moving their ditch anyway so it is not like we are putting the money up to buy the property. Terry said this is how we obtain right a way by exchanging for labor. I think this is fair. The place there on Reay Lane that has the sidewalk cost us 10,000 a number of

years ago. If the council approves this we will put an agreement and legal description together and bring it back. Councilman Innes ask what are they going to do with the land and Heath said right now they plan on farming.

Councilman Morris made motion to approve ditch and culvert right a way exchange. Councilman Innes seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed

- B. **RESOLUTION NO. 559-2010:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, AUTHORIZING THE TOWN TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVENMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF ARIZONA FOR A ARRA/RECOVERY ACT FUND PROJECT.

Terry said this is the overlay stimulus money from the Feds on Reay Lane from Golf Course Road to the top of the hill. We have already approved this once but they changed some numbers and so we have to reapprove.

Council Griffin made motion to approve Resolution No. 559-2010 and Councilman Morris seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed

- C. **RESOLUTION NO. 560-2010:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, DECLARING AS A PUBLIC RECORD THAT CERTAIN DOCUMENT FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK AND ENTITLED "THATCHER TOWN CODE, CHAPTER 14 ELECTRIC UTILITY".

Terry said these are extensive regulations. With electric utility it is very possible that people will want to put solar panels and connect to our electric system and in order to do that in a safe manor this has to be done. This tells us how to allow a connection of renewable energy product to our system that is safe and not affect our overall operating system. It tells how to handle theirs if there is a net credit we would give them a check back but the rate they receive back will not be the same that was charged to them because of all the things we have to do like the line cost and metering etc. These regulations are patterned after Salt River Project and Graham County Co-Op they have been drawn up by our consultant in Phoenix. Councilman Morris I understand the rebate for putting this in doesn't apply in City. Terry said it does but the difference between us and Graham County is they were offering a credit or rebate. We don't offer the rebate but you can still have State or Fed tax credits. Councilman Griffin said I understand the home owner has to bear the cost of meter reading and not a town burden. Terry said that is true it is not fair for everyone else on our system to pay for another individuals program we just want to recoup the cost to us not to make money.

Councilman Innes made motion to approve Resolution No.560- 2010. Councilman Merriman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed

**ORDINANCE NO. 159-2010:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, RELATING TO THE TOWN CODE; AMENDING ARTICLE 14-2 AND ARTICLE 14-4; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS:

Terry said this Article 14-2 and 14-4 is part of our Town Code. In the document there will be an application they have to fill out and we have to inspect the unit it to make sure it is set up right. Terry said safety if a big issue.

Councilman Merriman made motion to approve Ordinance No 159-2010 and Councilman Morris seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous Motion passed

- D. **RESOLUTION NO. 561-2010:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, AUTHORIZING THE TOWN TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVENMENTAL

**AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF ARIZONA FOR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL, LIGHTING AND MAINTENEANCE, AT REAY LANE AND HIGHWAY 70.**

Terry said because of the State budget they don't have funds so they have given it to the Federal and this sets a dollar amount of 200 thousand dollar that is their best estimate and this is our share. With this agreement if the cost is more or less we are to pay half the cost. Terry said we are looking at about two years out.

Councilman Larson made motion to approve Resolution NO. 561-2010 and Councilman Innes seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.03 (A)(7) the Council may go into Executive Session to consult with the Town Attorney for legal advise.

Terry asked for himself, Dudley Welker, Heath Brown and Lona Duncan to stay for executive session which would be about 30 minutes.

Councilman Morris made motion to go into executive session seconded by Councilman Merriman. The vote was unanimous.

A. Decision on Executive Session.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

A. Town Manager's Report:

Terry said the corner of the Val's building is not being rented so with the ladder truck coming we were looking for a place to put at least one of the fire trucks we are thinking # 5 is a good engine and needs to be out of the weather. Our street crew is working in there to fix the ramps so we should be able to put 2 fire trucks and also a place for our street signs. Chief Payne said it will be good to get a truck out of the station.

Terry said we will continue on with the sidewalks probably next Monday after the storms have gone through we should finish by November. Heath said the bridge will be about April before completed. Terry said then we will look at Allred Lane if we don't have the right a way for all of it we will go at least from about the Allred house back to highway and make a 90 degree angle. Councilman Innes asked about side walks from 1<sup>st</sup> to Church. Terry said we can not get the right a way that's why we haven't done that.

Terry said the electrical department is doing maintain like trimming trees. We were trying to get more of the electronic meters put in but we did not get any of the stimulus money for the smart metering. We are putting them in as we go. We have several of the collector meters and a lot of the others and they work quit well. We will be able to read and turn off meters from the office we can have prepay for those that are continually on our shut off list. To finish the program we would have to have 250 thousand right now. Our hope is in the next 6 months we will try to get in those hard to read houses and then the next goal will be the rentals.

The crack sealing machine is running and shouldn't take as long this year. Just to remind you of the Water Committee meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 here. We think by this month or next month we will go out to bid for Reay Lane and by March or April to get the job done. Terry said on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> I have a mediation meeting for the bond on the town house on the hill. The judge wants it so I will be in Phoenix. They have been in the area and asked for pre bids meeting to complete it. It would be better for us if they fix it and let us inspect it. This bond is for the infrastructure improvements and includes improvements on Stadium Ave.

B. Fire Department Report.

Chief Payne said we will have elections next week for officers. We are going to be doing the burn on Feb 20<sup>th</sup> in Central at Webster Rd and Hwy 70 that is a Saturday. Vice Mayor

Mulleneaux ask about the house by the Daley feed lot that you burn down whose responsibility is it to clean it up. Terry said it is in the County and it is the home owners. Chief Payne said we received a notice from the State Fire Marshal's Office that they have fired a bunch of people so basically our training program is shut down they will not do it anymore but we still have the College training. The State is trying to find an out side force to do the National Fire Fighter Two Certification. This may affect the grant we put in for because we have to report to the National Fire Instant Reporting system and that was ran by the State which is being cut out. It also effect the State Mutual Aid System shut it down. We used them like if. Globe needed a ladder truck Globe would call them and then they would call us and we could send one that way. Chief said they have also let 5 of 6 inspectors go so the school inspections will be left hanging. Terry said we will probably end up doing the school inspection which is only done once a year but it does include all the schools from college on down to primary school. Terry said in 2009 we had 17 residential and 3 commercial building permits so we still did pretty well.

C. Police Department Report.

Chief Steven said the two in car cameras and radar's are install the camera is in the review mirrors that money came from a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Sergeant Woods should be back on the 31st of this month. We have met with all the Chief's about the preliminary planning of the Open House for the Mormon Temple they are expecting about 145 thousand people in a 3 week period. The agencies are all going to help but the County and DPS are going to have most of the responsibilities because it is their area. Chief Stevens also said we were down about 400 calls from last year.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Safe House- Councilman Griffin had nothing to report
- B. Chamber of Commerce- Councilman Merriman said there will be a Chamber Breakfast at 7:00am on Friday in the County General Service building where Bill Konopnicki will be the speaker. In the last meeting we voted on the new Board Officers and Steve Junion will be the President, Kevin Peck is Vice President and Janet Osterling Treasurer. We are trying to introduce a new billing program because money has been real slow coming in. There is a ribbon cutting for the Hancock trailers this week and also a lot of the hotels and restaurant are remodeling. We are trying to get together another breakfast in February for the people that are running for Mayor of Safford so we can hear from them. Springbok is coming in on the 25<sup>th</sup> and will talk to the Chamber about the Golf Course. I believe they are trying to lease that for 50 years so Jeff Holt will come and talk to Chamber. The College as far as students goes are up 30% in enrollment.
- C. SEAGO- None
- D. Arizona Foundation. Councilman Larson said we had a meeting last evening in preparation to give got the grants at the Chamber breakfast on Friday. We are in the process of becoming an affiliate of the Arizona Foundation which would help us work on producing more money. All the people on the Board are willing to work on getting that in place.
- E. Library Committee. Councilman Morris said we went to the Board of Supervisor on Tuesday and made the same presentation to them that this Council received last month. The Board would like to see it go but are concern about it going to vote this year because of the economy so it will probably be two years down the road. They are very positive about it because it will supplement the libraries provides them with a focus going the same way having a region library card and libraries will be able to have the internet they can buy in quality and it will be less. It is a supplemental thing it probably won't be enough to fund any buildings it will just provide matching funds to help. They are hoping

that every library can participate receiving funds to help purchase books or and keep track of books. The committee has had good feedback from all Council's.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Innes made motion to adjourn meeting with a seconded form Councilman Larson. The meeting adjourned at 9:01pm

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

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Lona Duncan, Town Clerk

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Robert Rivera, Mayor

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular/special meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Thatcher held on the 20th day of January 2010. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lona Duncan, Town Clerk