

**NOTICE OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
April 15, 2019**

Councilmembers present: Mayor Rivera, Vice Mayor Allen, Councilman Rapier, Councilman Bryce, Councilwoman Smith, Councilwoman Howard

Councilmembers absent: Councilman Welker

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Fire Chief Mike Payne, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen, Tommy Nicholas, Gary Allred, McKay Ferrin

Visitors: Barbara Stailey, David Sowders, Ward Weaver Ken Tluczek, Amelia Tluczek, Melanie Tluczek, Vance Bryce, Dove

AGENDA

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order by Mayor Rivera. He stated that we do have a quorum. On behalf of this council, God bless our men and women in the armed forces, our first responders, police and fire, ICE, border patrol, and everyone that is protecting our country.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Clifford.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Ken Tluczek stated that he is a new resident of Thatcher and he is here to propose establishing a dog park so that dogs can exercise in a clean, safe environment without annoying people. Mayor Rivera explained that we are developing a park over by the ball fields and we have talked about putting a dog park in there.

Vance Bryce stated that he is the assistant director at the Chamber. We have a new executive team over there and are there to help. If you know anyone in Thatcher who is starting a business, or has a business, wants to network, or needs help, send them our way.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve minutes of the March 18, 2019 Regular Council Meeting.
- B. Approve minutes of the March 25, 2019 Budget Workshop.
- C. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- D. Police Monthly Report.
- E. Approval of Invoices.
- F. Financial Reports.

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Allen to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Preliminary 2019-2020 Budget

Mr. Brown stated that this is very similar to the previous budget. Just to hit the highlights, I did change the amount for the website to the correct amount and adjusted the raises to a 3% bonus. Our internet service increased. We just changed our plan from a shared residential line to a dedicated line. When the final budget is approved I would ask that the council approve to pay for the electric bill from the golf course to come out of the electric department. I also increased the budget to get a big chunk of the needs for the fire department met. I'm hoping that we can get some grants to help with the other things that they need. I did add some more money to the police department for the TRACS system to get it up and running.

Mayor Rivera stated that we discussed raising the rates in sanitation. Mr. Brown explained that Safford is raising our landfill rates so that they can build up a fund to close their landfill. I did place in the budget a \$3 rate increase. Mayor Rivera also asked where we are at with the sewer. I agree with what Councilwoman Howard brought up at our last meeting, that we need to come up with a capital improvement plan to address future issues. Councilman Rapier suggested a \$2 increase so that we could meet our needs without being excessive. Councilwoman Howard asked if there was money in the budget for the inspections that we are going to start. Mr. Brown said yes, there is enough money to get about a third of the town inspected. She said maybe after we see where the inspections get us then we can see what we are going to need the next few years and can incorporate that into our CIP plan. Vice Mayor Allen said that with our rate increase is there something that we can do for those that can prove hardship. Mr. Brown stated that I am not opposed to that. Councilman Bryce stated that we have discussed this before and we talked about using the papers that the state uses for property taxes to prove hardship. It has a few factors to see if residents qualify.

Mr. Brown said that we did talk about raising the tax rate for purchases over \$5,000. I sent an email late this afternoon, and there are several towns in Arizona that state that they charge their regular tax rate on the amount up to \$5,000 and it goes to the lower percentage over \$5,000. I like that because if someone buys something for \$4900, they are paying a higher tax rate than someone who is spending \$5,000. Some of our options are raise the tax rate on \$5,000 or more, we can change the number \$5,000, or we can change whether it's the portion or all or nothing. I would suggest taxing the full rate up to \$5,000 and the decreased rate over that. Mayor Rivera stated that I think there was a sunset clause on that. Councilman Rapier stated that he would like to see us raise the tax for items over \$5,000 to 1.5%. Vice Mayor Allen stated that about three years ago I went to several car dealerships and asked what would happen if we decreased our rate. They said that our rate was so minuscule that I don't think it would change anything. Mr. Brown said that I talked to someone at the Department of Revenue and we have to give them 60 days notice if we are going to change our rate. I do know that if we go to a half percent increase then it would bring in an additional approximately \$90,000. Councilmember Rapier stated that if we increased the rate to 1.5%, it would benefit us and meet our needs.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Fair Housing Proclamation
- B. **RESOLUTION NO. 680-2019.** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, URGING THE ARIZONA LEGISLATURE TO HEAR AND RATIFY AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATIVE TO EQUAL RIGHTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

Mr. Brown explained that this is being passed by several cities in the State of Arizona and this is to get Arizona to become the 38th state which is the number required to get an amendment put into the constitution for equal rights for men and women. It encourages the state to get on board. Councilman Rapier asked if this was the same one that was passed in 1972. Mr. Brown stated that this resolution is only to encourage the state. Councilman Rapier made the motion that we do not pass Resolution 680-2019. Motion was not seconded. Motion dies.

- C. ADOT IGA for Church Street HURF Swap

Mr. Brown said that unfortunately ADOT didn't get the IGA to us today. I would like to call a special meeting as soon as they get that to us. It is essential for us to move forward.

Transfer of Electric Enterprise Funds to General Fund for Payment of Electric Utility Bills

Mr. Brown stated that I am trying to adhere to the auditor's request. We are purchasing electricity from the provider through the electric department and we have not been paying this back through the different departments. During our audit they are manually moving funds from the different departments and so if we pass this then that will not be required. Motion was made by Councilman Rapier that we approve the transfer of electric enterprise fund to the general fund to pay for the electricity costs and was seconded by Vice Mayor Allen. Motion carries unanimously.

D. GPS Bid

Mr. Brown explained that we have had our GPS equipment for fourteen years now and Mr. Palmer has actually been bringing in his own equipment. I recommend buying this in this year's budget. We only have one bid. We like to use the Trimble equipment because City of Safford runs a Trimble base station and we can piggy back off of that. Mr. Palmer also mentioned that it would cost money to get everyone trained to a new system as well. Motion was made by Councilman Rapier to approve the bid from Allen Instruments as recommended by staff and was seconded by Vice Mayor Allen for \$27,025.36. Motion carries unanimously.

E. Fire Department Equipment Bid

Mr. Brown stated that we are going to have problems cutting through any vehicles 2008 or newer, and this equipment is pretty old. Mr. Payne stated that we have bids from the top four providers for this type of equipment. L.N. Curtis was the low bid. We are looking at electric power tools, which give us a lot more mobility. This is the same equipment that Pima just bought and that Safford is looking at. Motion was made by Councilmember Rapier to accept the bid from L.N. Curtis for \$28,378 and was seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Brown stated that I still think the Church Street Project will be on track to bid in May and award in June. The culvert at Quail Ridge is going very well. I recommend that when the culvert is done we will move to Red Lamp and knock down the house and pool and do some clean up there. I did have one developer

come in wanting to know what the Town wants to develop. He was going to go to his architect and come up with some things and will get back to me.

The paving project is all done and turned out well. We really need to get some community outreach for the 2020 census so I am going to keep bringing that up. This Wednesday I will be heading to the training for the Capital Improvement Plan.

B. Fire Department Report

Chief Payne said that there is an asbestos meeting on Thursday and I will be attending that to see what we need to do in burning older houses. Kathy Grimes contacted us and asked us to be present at Dump the Drugs. Mayor Rivera asked what we are doing with the old jaws-of-life equipment and Chief Payne stated that we will keep it on another vehicle. Mayor Rivera stated please thank our firefighters.

C. Police Department Report

Chief Woods stated that we participated in the active shooter drill at Safford High School two weeks ago. It was very complicated but we learned a ton. We also have been working with the school district doing ALICE training for school staff. Next Saturday Safford has invited us to their CORE event. Next Monday the substance coalition has the Hide in Plain Sight presentation. The 27th is Dump the Drugs at Home Depot, so we will have someone there. It is a busy month for community stuff. Mayor Rivera said thank you and please pass our thanks along to our officers.

D. Council Reports

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Councilwoman Howard asked if we could discuss adding councilmembers to the Town's insurance at no additional cost to the Town.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilwoman Smith and seconded by Vice Mayor Allen at 7:42 to adjourn council meeting. Motion carries unanimously.