

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL  
December 16, 2019**

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

Councilmembers absent: Councilman Bryce, Councilman Welker

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Fire Chief Mike Payne, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen, Public Works Supervisor Tommy Nicholas, Officer Brian Ellsworth, Officer J.R. Maner

Staff absent: Town Attorney Matt Clifford

Visitors: Lance Henrie, Mark Vining, Landon Sanders, Jonathan Sanders, Mackenzie Millar, Wendy Millar, David Ramirez, Krista Ramirez

**AGENDA**

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order by Mayor Rivera at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Rivera stated that we do have a quorum. He stated God bless our men and women in the armed forces, our first responders, police, fire, and EMT's, ICE, Border Patrol, and all who protect our country.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Landon Sanders.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

None

**OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

David Ramirez stated that I brought up this subject last year about needing a light at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Highway 70. It is a dangerous intersection. Mayor Rivera stated that we would have to ask the state about that. Mr. Brown stated that we have petitioned the state twice in the last five years. I agree that we need a signal there, but unfortunately, we need more traffic or more accidents to warrant a traffic signal.

McKenzie Millar stated that she was representing the lego robotics 7<sup>th</sup> grade team at Thatcher Middle School. Last time we were here, Vice Mayor Allen asked if we had seen any AED's outside. She explained that her team had researched the subject of AED's in parks and found that in England they refurbished phone booths and put in AED's.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCES:**

- A. Christmas Lighting Contest Awards.

Mayor Rivera thanked those who have put up beautiful lights for everyone to admire.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

Motion: Action: Approve, Moved by Vice Mayor Allen, Seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

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

- A. Town of Thatcher Employee Handbook Update

Mr. Brown mentioned that this is the same handbook that we brought to the last meeting. We tabled it for the Council to review further. Councilman Rapier stated that the Councilmembers who are not here had concerns, but I have spoken with them both and they no longer have concerns and they would be fine with approving it as is. Councilwoman Howard asked if this includes the hours banked for vacation. Mr. Brown stated that it is the same as it was, but the Employers Council told us that we had to allow employees to accrue 40 hours per year. So at the end of the year an employee has to be swept back down. Now it says if you are above 760 hours per year, then the Town will buy those hour back to get you to 760 hours. Vice Mayor Allen stated that he would like to discuss time off and how it is reported by exempt and non-exempt employees further in a work session.

Motion: Action: Approve, Moved by Councilman Rapier, Seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

- A. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Brown stated that with all the wet weather we have had I have noticed that our roads have been neglected. Since they have been so wet they are more susceptible to potholes. I love our projects, but I think one of our main duties as a Town is to keep things in good working order. I think we need to keep the streets, signs, and striping in good working order and then work on the complex as much as possible. Tommy's crew was pulled off our project today to fix potholes and a driveway on Church Street. We are continuing to put in conduit for lighting, power, sound, and security, and are putting in water lines at the new complex for sprinklers. The next thing will be to put in the mechanical room there. The goal is to be able to plant grass by the time it gets warm.

On Church Street they are hoping to put pavement down between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue this week. The concrete contractor has moved over to the College to get the sidewalks done while they are on break. They are also hoping to get pavement down while the College is on break. Last month I mentioned that Brent Morris will be retiring the first part of the year. Reo Evans our assistant street supervisor expressed interest in that so we filled that position within and that left a vacancy on the street crew. We had Colton Cook who has been working part time on Tommy's crew, and so he is now full time.

We were approached by the College and they are going to be paving some of their parking lots and wanted to know if we would be willing to partner with them on our paving project. They offered to compensate us for any more time that it might take us in preparing the bid. It's a good deal for us, because we aren't going to be doing a lot of asphalt and so by teaming up with them, we will get a lower price. Councilwoman Howard asked if it will be two separate sets of bid docs and Mr. Palmer answered it would be two bid schedules on the same set of docs. Mr. Brown explained that Mr. Palmer and I are really trying to get a handle on our asphalt management.

Mayor Rivera asked if there had been any contact with Mr. Harmon from ADOT about Highway 70 and 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. Mr. Brown explained that he talked to Bill Harmon and he is frustrated but that there is no money to do anything. Highway 70m through Thatcher and Safford needs to be milled and repaved but there is no money in the budget for the next three to four years. I want to reiterate with the census coming up, that for every person that is counted we get approximately \$10,000 in the next ten year period. We are looking at partnering with the County, Safford, and Pima to hire a part time person to focus on the census. That person would be working with the schools and different clubs. This way we can be proactive in helping people get the census done.

Ted Prina is the representative for the Graham-Greenlee Tax Coalition. This group is trying to promote the fact that you can donate \$800 to a non-profit and get that back in your Arizona state taxes. They are talking to the Town in order to give more legitimacy to their cause. I think it is a great idea, and I am going to do the

bronze sponsorship. It keeps the state tax dollars local.

Councilwoman Howard asked if there was any progress on the drainage issues on Porter Lane. Mr. Palmer mentioned that everything is done to acquire the property, but it sat as soon as Church Street started. We are at the point where we can call everyone back in and say these are the easements we need and what are you asking for the land. The only person that I haven't met with is Arden Palmer. It would require buying a few rows of cotton but most of it would be relatively inexpensive. I also started on doing the same process over on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue so we can tackle it all at once.

Mr. Brown mentioned that Council meeting in January and February both fell on holidays. Council agreed to change January's meeting to the 27<sup>th</sup> and February's to the 24<sup>th</sup>.

B. Fire Department Report

Chief Payne explained that the fire department had a successful burn down in Central a few Saturday's ago. We had a few people from Pima there helping as well. We do get a lot of training out of those. We will be back to our normal training until we find another house to burn. Mayor Rivera stated please thank our firemen.

C. Police Department Report

Chief Woods stated that the schools grant for a resource officer got denied. The grant was for school counselors and resource officer's, but Thatcher didn't receive either. The County and Freeport are hosting a Risk Management seminar at the College on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Gordon Graham is the guy who is presenting and writes a lot of policies for police departments, but this training will be on supervisory issues. We received our new detective truck, so we are getting that ready. We have had a few burglaries with unlocked vehicles lately, so make sure you lock your vehicles. Mayor Rivera asked if we have an MOU with other agencies to help each other out. Chief Woods stated that yes, we do.

D. Council Reports

None

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: Action: Adjourn, Moved by Councilman Rapier, Seconded by Vice Mayor Allen at 7:35. Motion carries unanimously.

