

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
April 20, 2020**

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

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen

Visitors: Matt Bingham

AGENDA

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order by Mayor Rivera at 6:30. He stated that we do have a quorum and called the meeting to order. Let it be known that this is the first time that we have done a virtual meeting due to the circumstances.

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

None

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve minutes of the March 16, 2020 Regular Council Meeting.
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C. Police Monthly Report.
- D. Approval of Invoices.
- E. Financial Reports.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **RESOLUTION NO. 687-2020:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR

FY 2020/21 STATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS, CERTIFYING THAT SAID APPLICATION MEETS THE COMMUNITY'S PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE CDBG PROGRAM, AND AUTHORIZING ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT AND COMPLETE THE ACTIVITIES OUTLINED IN SAID APPLICATION.

Mr. Brown explained that staff recommends we do High School Avenue Street improvement from the railroad tracks to Church Street. It looks like the low mod numbers in that area would qualify this project. This is an area that has no drainage or curb and sidewalks. As a backup, we could go from Church Street to the Highway. Mayor Rivera asked what this entails. Mr. Palmer answered that it would include acquiring the right of way we need, the utility relocation that needs to be done, take care of the drainage, full curb gutter, and sidewalks, and the AB between the road and sidewalk. It would do everything but pave curb to curb. Mr. Brown stated that we would probably choose to do the project all at once and use some of our streets money to pave this. Councilwoman Howard asked if we have the cost estimate for what the paving would cost. Mr. Palmer stated that we anticipated that the project would be around \$250,000, which is what would we would get through CDBG and would cover everything but the paving. I want to say the paving was around \$200,000. Mr. Brown explained that we normally get around \$430,000 from HURF and it does quite a lot of paving.

Councilman Bryce asked if we thought this project would qualify. Mr. Brown explained that we have a decent chunk of town that is 51% of low moderate income. No body knows when the new numbers will come out. Keith Dennis from SEAGO thinks that we will be able to use the numbers we have now for this year. Motion was made by Councilwoman Smith to approve Resolution 687-2020 and was seconded by Vice Mayor Allen. Motion carries unanimously.

B. Fair Housing Proclamation

C. 2019/20 Audit Report

Matt Bingham explained that he is representing Colby and Powell PLC. When we do an audit, we give our opinion on are your financial statements as to whether they are fairly stated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. We are looking for any material errors or fraud. For fiscal year 2018-2019 all units received a clean opinion. The financial statements can be relied upon. The two findings that we found are that the revenue and expenditures for grants were not recorded in the same location, and the second was a catch all for the journal entries we made.

For fiscal year 2019, the biggest and most significant pension is the PSPRS. This is the one you can control because you can make payments to bring the liability down. A question that we get a lot is how we faired this year. The net position gives us a good indicator of the financial condition of the

Town. It is our assets minus all our liabilities. The net position has increased over the last three years. The big thing last year is that we paid off the Red Lamp note and then we also bought several capital assets. Councilwoman Howard asked Mr. Bingham if six months was a good reserve amount for operating capital for a utility or municipality. Mr. Bingham stated that I think you need to lay out a plan of what you are planning on future major repairs and replacements and plan for those that are coming and set aside enough savings to take care of those. Councilwoman Howard mentioned that the average for municipalities who have and run utilities, is always six months of your operating costs in a reserve account. I was curious what you have seen with other cities and towns. Mr. Bingham said that most cities and towns that we audit are in the red and are paying for these costs out of the general fund.

D. Budget Workshop Date

Mr. Brown stated that I thought we could have our meeting at 6:30 on May 4 and do an in-person meeting with council, myself, and Michelle, and then we would bring in the department heads individually to discuss their needs. Mayor Rivera asked about Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Brown stated that he could be there as well.

E. COVID-19 Utility Bill Non-Pay Discussion & Procedure

Mr. Brown explained that I put this on here at the request of Councilwoman Howard. We have 31 residents and four businesses that have their power on that haven't paid for the month of March. The discussion is about when we get through this crisis and it is time to start paying or get shut off, they are going to be facing large bills where they can't come up with the money all at once. I think it is basic. We can work with them individually and work out a payment plan. Mayor Rivera stated that I like the idea, but am curious what other cities and towns are doing. Mr. Brown stated that I talked to Horatio and they are going to start shutting people off unless they can show that they are directly impacted due to the pandemic. If they can show that, then they will leave the power on and work with them individually.

Councilwoman Howard stated that Graham County Utilities cannot shut anyone off because they are mandated by the Corporation Commission. SEACAP here in Graham County has received a lot of money to help with this, so have we been pushing people to this for assistance. Mr. Brown explained that we are going to mail out letters to these customers that emphasizes that just because we aren't shutting off their power that they aren't getting out of paying their bill. We could also mention this program and steer them in that direction. Vice Mayor Allen stated that I think we should give them a limit because if not then we are hurting them. If we give them thirty days and if they can show impact, then we can send them to SEACAP. Mr. Clifford stated that I think they must provide documentation. Mr. Brown stated that with the council consensus we will mail them a letter and give them thirty days unless they provide documentation.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Town Manager's Report
- Public Works Projects – Recreation Complex, Church Street
 - COVID-19 Status/Update
 - Census Grant & Status
 - Town Council Election Candidates

Mr. Brown stated that it has been slow with our office being closed. We are making good progress on our rec complex. We are close to being ready to put the roof on the mechanical room. We are also just about done bringing in the fill for the topsoil for the soccer fields. Next week YL Farms will be laser leveling the fields. We are on track to have our grass planted this season. Church Street is just about wrapped up. We have a landscaper there and they will be doing the striping Wednesday or Thursday.

I met with the Mayors and Managers today and the governor had a conference call and he said that he is looking at Memorial Day in opening things back up. I'm not sure exactly what that means. The County feels like the don't want to open things back up until they have enough tests to test anyone who would like to be tested, and they don't have nearly enough to do that.

I applied for a small grant from the League of Cities and Towns and we received \$5000. We are going to use that money to pay our census worker and anything census related. We received four applicants for our four Town Council seats. Those applicants are Ashley Smith, Randy Bryce, Mark Vining, and Eddy Carlton.

- B. Fire Department Report
- Postponed
- C. Police Department Report
- Postponed
- D. Council Reports

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Allen and was seconded by Councilwoman Smith to adjourn at 7:27 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

APPROVED:

Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk

Bob Rivera, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

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

Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk