

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
September 21, 2020**

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

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Fire Chief Mike Payne, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen, Engineer Tech Gary Allred

Staff absent: Town Engineer Tom Palmer

Visitors: Phil Cook, Vance Bryce, Torey Cranford, Tricia Garrett, Eddy Carlton, Mark Vining, John Howard, Wayne Layton, Lance Henie, Jeff Larson, Aaron Asher, David Bell, Margaret Radford

AGENDA

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:30 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, fire, EMT's, ICE, border patrol, and the Gila Valley.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Phil Cook.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Vance Bryce from the Chamber stood to introduce the Gila Valley Made team, Tricia Garrett, Torey Cranford from Cakes with TLC. Tricia Garrett stated that we are a part of the core four that developed Gila Valley Made. We are a place that local artisans can sell and develop their businesses here in the Gila Valley. We are trying to give local people somewhere to shop.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve minutes of the August 17, 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 Councilwoman Howard and seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. New Liquor License for SpringHill Suites

Mr. Brown explained that this is a new license for Springhill Suites. Motion was made by Councilman Rapier and was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

B. Paving Project Bid Award

Mr. Brown mentioned that we went ahead and bid this out early. We are going to widen Church Street out to the curb from Stadium to Reay Lane. We are going to pave High School from the highway to Church St. and College from Church Street to Railroad, and repaving Railroad Street all the way out to the curbs. We are also going to widen Porter Lane from 1st Street to the north, so it is a standard size street. The bid includes fogging as well. We only received two bids. The low bid was from CKC and I recommend accepting their bid. Councilman Bryce stated that it looks like we are fogging the newer roads and that is good for them. Mr. Brown stated that it is our goal to do this when the asphalt is still in good shape. Councilwoman Howard made the motion to approve the bid to CKC Construction for \$407,395 and was seconded by Vice Mayor Allen. Motion carries unanimously.

C. Approval of Purchase of John Deere Z997R Mower – State Contract Pricing

Mr. Brown stated that we are mowing several areas now so. This is our local John Deere dealer, who is providing state contract pricing. It should be a good high-quality mower. Motion was made by Vice Mayor Allen to approve the purchase of the mower for \$24,656.37 from Stotz. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

D. Preliminary Plat for the Sunset Circle Subdivision

Mr. Brown mentioned that this is a little different and it is the first time we have done a subdivision since we have our new code. This is a nine-lot subdivision on the east side of Reay Lane. It will take advantage of our small street standards, so curb on both sides but sidewalks on only one. Mayor Rivera asked if this had gone to Planning and Zoning and Mr. Brown answered yes, and they unanimously approved the pre-plat. Vice Mayor Allen asked if we decided against imposing the sewer install fee on the developer. Mr. Brown explained that we will pass that fee along. Vice Mayor Allen stated so that will be a set fee for every lot. Mr. Brown stated

yes, we will charge that amount to anyone who connects to that line. Councilman Bryce asked if there were any issues with retention basin draining into the Frye Channel. Mr. Brown said no, we love if there is a way to let the storm water collect and then slowly drain off. Wayne Layton stood and stated that there was a question about lighting during the P&Z meeting. There are requirements for street lighting so I will make sure that I work with the Town on that. Another question that came up was about the Highline Canal and easements. There was nothing recorded in regard to an easement. The Highline Canal on the south side of my property is a concrete ditch, but I will work with the irrigation district to make sure that everything is good. Councilwoman Howard asked about the retention area, what is the depth of that or is it going to be landscaped. Mr. Brown answered that it would be landscaped and would be designed sufficiently to hold storm water. Councilman Bryce asked what the lighting rule is. Mr. Brown stated that it is vague. We would want a light at the intersection into the subdivision and one at the end of the cult de sac. Mr. Layton stated that is what I discussed with Mr. Palmer. Motion was made by Councilman Rapier and seconded by Councilwoman Howard to approve the Sunset Circle Subdivision preliminary plat. Motion carries unanimously.

E. Graham County Coop - Gas Utility Presentation

Mr. Cook stood and stated that I am the assistant general manager The Graham County Board has authorized the potential sale of the gas company to Southwest Gas. On October 17 we will have our annual meeting and the sale of the gas company must have the approval of two thirds of the members who attend. The gas company has not made any money since 1989 and the debt that is owed to GCEC is 2.6 million dollars. The projected loss for this year is just under \$300,000. The board asked staff to look at all the options, and this appears to be the best one. Councilman Bryce asked if you sell to Southwest will that service your debt. Mr. Cook answered that we are still under a non-disclosure agreement. This is all pending member approval and corporation commission approval.

F. **ORDINANCE NO. 186-2020.** AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, RELATING TO THE TRANSACTION PRIVILEGE TAX; ADOPTING "THE 2012-2014 AMENDMENTS TO THE TAX CODE OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER" BY REFERENCE; ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE DATES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

Mr. Brown explained that this an update to the model tax code. Motion was made by Councilman Welker to approve Ordinance No 186-2020 and was seconded by Vice Mayor Allen. Motion carries unanimously.

G. **RESOLUTION NO. 689-2020.** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, DECLARING AS A PUBLIC RECORD THAT CERTAIN DOCUMENT FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK AND ENTITLED "THE 2012-2014 AMENDMENTS TO THE TAX CODE OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER".

Councilwoman Smith made the motion to approve Resolution 689-2020 and was seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Town Manager's Report

- **Public Works Projects – Recreation Complex, 1st Street Sewer Tap, Solar Lights, WWTP**

Mr. Brown mentioned that we have been building the walking path at the recreation center. This week we have been working on the sewer tap over on 1st. We put the conduit in today and then we will be putting the driveways back in. We purchased some solar lights to put along the walking path and they were not bad. We ordered enough to put them on every existing pole. There are a few stretches where there are no poles, so if we decide we need more then we will have to put in more poles.
- **Welcome to Thatcher Signs**

We contracted some work to have the letters done for our sign.
- **Highway Beautification Grant**

Annie Reidhead has been working on putting the grant together so that we can publish it. If you had a chance to look at the flyer, it answers a lot of questions. It would be a \$500 minimum with a \$10,000 max and will require a 30% match. The dates we propose would be right away and the application deadline would be early November with a start date of the end of November. They would have until June 1 to complete the project. It would include everything with frontage along the highway from Reay Lane to 20th Avenue.
- **Financial Summary**

We are being really blessed right now. We collected more sales tax again this month.
- **PSPRS Information**

The company that we hired to help give us with PSPRS estimates, helped to come up with some different scenarios, if we put \$250,000 towards PSPRS and then if we did that for the next three years and the next five years. If we paid \$250,000 the next three years, then it would save us around \$600,000 and if we did that for five years then it would save us around a million dollars. Councilman Bryce stated that he is very hesitant to pay it. I feel like they are going to give us more debt. Mr. Brown stated that I have the same concerns. Councilman Welker stated that this might be the cheapest money that we can get. Let's wait and see where we are at.
- **Census Status**

Councilwoman Smith stated that they moved up the deadline to September 30. We aren't making a lot of progress and our response rate around 65.8%. Mr. Brown asked if there are people going door to door, and Councilwoman Smith answered yes.
- **New Businesses in Town**

I was going to mention the Gila Valley Made and then we have a new MVD place coming that is privately owned.

- Work Session October 5, 2020
There was a suggestion to have someone from the Town of Pima come and give us a presentation on tax revenue sharing. Council stated they would like to have them come.

B. Fire Department Report

- Calendar / Events
Chief Payne stated that on August 28 we went down to help with the river fire, but we didn't do anything. We participated in the 9/11 stair climb for Thatcher High School and one for the college as well. We also participated in the Gila Valley First Responders We are going to be burning a house on September 26. We will be hosting an extrication event on October 2 and have invited all the other local agencies to participate. Mayor Rivera stated please thank our fire fighters for keeping our city and surrounding areas safe.
- Calls / Activity

C. Police Department Report

- AZ Attorney General Grant
Chief woods stated that we received \$16,000 from the AZ Attorney's office and we bought rifle plates and helmets that are lighter and more user-friendly.
- Department Training
Last month we had firearms qualifications. We also participated in our law and legal update.
- 9/11 Event Participation
We participated in the 9/11 event with Thatcher Middle School as well.
- TRACS Update
We finally had our first ticket submitted via the TRACS system and the court was very happy with that.
- Homeless Population
Mayor Rivera stated please thank our officers.

D. Council Reports

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S

Councilman Bryce stated that I think we need to touch base with the County, Safford, and Pima about COVID. I would like to see things get back to normal. We have a low incident rate. Can we open that dialogue back up and talk about it at our planning meeting? Mayor Rivera stated that I can mention that in our Mayor's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Allen and seconded by Councilwoman Smith at 8:00. 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 21st day of September. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk