



**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE WORK SESSION MEETING  
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 30, 2023**

Councilmembers present: Mayor Bryce, Vice Mayor Howard, Councilman Welker, Councilman Vining, Councilman Carlton, Councilman McEuen

Councilmembers absent: Councilwoman Smith

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Deputy Town Clerk Annie Reidhead

Visitors: Shawn Turley, Debbie Turley, Matt Hatch, Cindy Hatch, Renee Layton, Mark Romero, Marah Romero, Valorie Michaud, Robert Dallas, LaDawn Bryant, Mark Smith, Karley Smith, Shelby Smith, Stetson Click, Todd Russell, Ronda Sweet

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Bryce and he stated that this is a public meeting of the Thatcher Town Council. He stated that we do have a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Carlton.

**AGENDA**

**1. OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Debbie Turley spoke representing the pickleball community and asked that the Council consider adding more pickleball courts to the Thatcher Recreation Complex. Others from the pickleball community stated that they are in attendance to show their support for additional courts. The group also thanked the Council for the existing courts and stated that pickleball is a rapidly growing sport.

**2. NEW BUSINESS:           None**

**3. BUDGET WORK SESSION:**

**A. Public Works Projects**

**1. Additional Pickleball Courts**

Mr. Brown referred to the drawing of the Recreation Complex included in the Work Session packet that indicates areas that may be suitable for additional pickleball courts. He also referred to the Pickleball Court Construction Costs included in the packet which are approximately \$23,000 per court which include costs for lighting and fencing. The Council discussion included suitable areas for additional courts at the Recreation Complex, costs, and the idea of resurfacing the existing pickleball courts at Daley Estates Park.

The consensus among the Councilmembers is to build 2 to 4 additional courts without prospects of any other additional courts. Staff will begin the process of researching where the best location for the additional courts would be at the Recreation Complex.

**2. Golf Course Projects**

- a. Bottle Filling Stations
- b. Cart Paths
- c. Entrance Hardscape

Mr. Brown stated currently we assist with the utilities at the Golf Course. The Golf Course belongs to the City of Safford, and they subsidize \$200,000 per year. The Golf Course needs improvements to the course. Mr. Brown stated that the Golf Course is utilized by lots of Thatcher residents and is beneficial to our community. Mr. Brown proposed to the Council that the Town assist with small projects that may include the above items (a, b, c). and would entail our crews work on small projects for 2 to 4 weeks a year and spend \$18,000 to \$20,000 per year.

The consensus among the Councilmembers was to move forward with assisting the Golf Course with

improvements and include it in next year's budget.

3. Daley Estates Park Improvements

Mr. Brown referred to the aerial photos of Daley Estates Park included in the Work Session Packet. The photos show areas where old asphalt has now become gravel. Mr. Brown proposed improvements to these areas which would include removal of the asphalt, planting grass and trees, and adding sprinklers. Councilmembers agreed and would like staff to move forward with the improvements.

**B. Planning**

1. Recreation Center

Mr. Brown discussed the funding of the Recreation Center which included an option of a Sales Tax Bonding. The Sales Tax Bond would be to the vote of the people. Discussion also included the possibility of starting infrastructure on an indoor facility to generate funds. The indoor facility might include basketball courts and an indoor pool.

2. Town Center

Mr. Brown referred to Mayor Bryce to start the discussion. Mayor Bryce looking towards the future of Town and sees a potential for a Town/City Center. He suggested staff look for potential locations for a future Town/City Center. The Town/City Center may include municipal buildings and commercial buildings. Mayor Bryce suggested staff to start looking for potential land, 20 to 40 acres, to purchase now for future use.

3. Potential Annexations

Mr. Brown referred to a map of Thatcher town limits included in the Work Session Packet. Mr. Brown stated that there are 2 criteria for annexation. The first is to have signatures/agreement from half the number of landowners and second is to have signatures/agreement on half the value of the area. Council members directed staff to create a priority list of potential annexations and continuously keep the list updated. The Councilmembers would like the priority list to include the pros and cons of each potential annexation.

**C. Employee Benefits**

1. Health Benefits

Mr. Brown presented a Health Benefits Monthly Breakdown that included what the Town is currently paying for full-time employee Health Benefits. The breakdown was reviewed by the Councilmembers and premium sharing was discussed. Council members directed staff to research other cities and towns' rates and their plans.

2. Parental Leave

Mr. Brown referred to the "Proposed" Parental Leave policy included in the Work Session Packet. The "Proposed" policy would allow the mother up to four consecutive weeks of paid leave and the partner up to two consecutive weeks of paid leave. The Councilmembers approved the Parental Leave policy. Staff will include the policy in the Employee Handbook and include in a future agenda for approval.

3. Mental Wellness

Mr. Brown stated that Mental Wellness is becoming more present amongst our first responders and wanted to present what the Town has available. He presented five program options for Mental Wellness.  
Blue Cross Blue Shield – Current medical insurance provider  
AMRRP Under the Shield  
100 Club Bulletproof & Fireproof Support Services  
Tania Glenn & Associates, PA  
Healthiest You  
Councilmembers directed staff to provide all employees the information in the form of a packet on the programs that are available at no cost as soon as possible. Those programs include AMRRP and 100 Club.

4. Life Insurance

Mr. Brown stated that currently the Town does not provide a Life Insurance Policy benefit to full-time employees. He presented the costs of adding a Life Insurance Policy for all full-time employees. The cost would be \$5.50 per month per employee, which would be 40 full-time employees x \$5.50 equals \$220 per month. The policy is a \$25,000 life insurance policy with AD&D and would be provided by BEAM Benefits through Vector Employer

Solutions.

Councilmembers directed staff to investigate the policy some more to see if there are options to add spouses. They agreed that this is a good option and would like to revisit the item before the 24/25 budget is completed.

5. Employee Appreciation

Mr. Brown stated that in July when Employee Evaluations were completed, we added an "Employee Conversation" sheet. The sheet consisted of 5 different questions, one being what employees would like to see from upper management. We received a lot of the same answers, that employees would like to have some type of "Employee Appreciation" of some sort. A good percentage suggested having their birthdays off, employee appreciation luncheons, and 5-year mark anniversary gifts.

Council members came to a consensus on the employee appreciation luncheons and the 5-year mark anniversary gifts.

**D. Town Code & Ordinances**

1. Guest Homes as Rentals – Short & Long-Term

Mr. Brown stated that there are a lot of homes that have a guest house behind them and are being rented out. Our Town Code does not allow that. Some of these have been grandfathered in and others have not been under the current code. Mr. Brown referred to Mr. Palmer for examples. Mr. Palmer stated that there are quite a few incidents that he has had to deal with where the guest house is being rented out to people that are not family. Mr. Brown and Mr. Palmer would like the Councils direction to change the current code to allow for this to make it more manageable.

Council members agreed to allow staff to draft a revised code that would go through the Planning & Zoning board and then presented to Council for approval.

2. Short Term Rentals

Mr. Brown stated that we may want to add a Short-Term Rental code for Air B&B types. There will be a few stipulations. Staff will add this to the draft revised code for presentation.

3. Bardominium Regulations

Mr. Brown and Mr. Palmer discussed that currently there is not a code in place for these Bardominium homes being built.

Council members asked staff to draft a code for review.

4. Facility Rentals

- a. Fees
- b. Exclusions

Mr. Brown stated that for the last couple of months the Town has been receiving requests for organizations and individuals to utilize the Recreation Complex for events. For this reason, the staff has created the Facility Event & Registration Rules & Regulations Agreement that was presented to the Council. Mr. Brown stated that staff would like to draft a fee schedule for these rentals.

Council members directed staff to draft a fee schedule for review to get established.

**E. Town Vehicle Fleet Update**

Mr. Brown presented a spreadsheet that included the vehicles that are currently being leased by Enterprise and the cost of each. Currently we have 17 vehicles on lease. Mr. Brown recommended to Council that the program be revisited once Enterprise has sold a vehicle that we have on lease.

The Council members reviewed the spreadsheet and directed staff to move forward and revisit in another 6 months.

**F. Other Discussion Items as Needed**

None

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Bryce made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Heath Brown, Town Manager

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Randy Bryce, 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 30th day of October. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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Annie Reidhead, Deputy Town Clerk