



**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
JANUARY 22, 2024**

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

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Fire Chief Steve Curtis, Deputy Town Clerk Annie Reidhead, Procurement Officer Gary Allred

Staff members absent: Town Engineer Tom Palmer

Visitors: County Supervisor John Howard, David Bell, Brooke Curley, Officer James Whisman, Detective Rebecca Thatcher, Officer Nick Orr, Officer Brooks Knight, Officer Jason Larson, Misty Woods, Conner Woods, Kyren Woods, Amanda Larson, Keith Dennis, Judy Lynn, Lucas & Erica Johnson, Julie Johnson, Morgan Maylen, Brody Hinton, Ryder Hinton, David Whitmer, Darlee Maylen, Jordan Maylen, Debbie Turley, Rhett Hatch, Rene Layton, Tami Reynolds, John Bryant, Ronda Sweet, Shawna Bryant, Donna Cunningham, Matt & Cindy Hatch, Avery Johnson, Jaxson Fiorino, Marjorie Griffin, Kelly Griffin, Mark Smith, LaDawn Bryant, Brandon Homer

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:30 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 Vice Mayor Howard.

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC HEARING:

A. CDBG Presentation and CDBG Project Selection/Discussion

Mr. Keith Dennis, Executive Director of SEAGO (Southeastern Arizona Governments Organization), addressed the Mayor, Council, Staff, and Visitors. Mr. Dennis stated that this is a federal grant program for rural areas that is administered by the Arizona Department of Housing. He then referred to a PowerPoint presentation that would explain more about the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant).

The grant criteria must include one of these three.

- Benefit Low to Moderate Income Persons
- Prevent or Eliminate Slum or Blight Conditions
- Address Urgent Needs Related to Health and Safety Issues

The grant is funded every four years in Graham County and this year Thatcher's portion is \$281,000. In 2020 the Town used the CDBG funds to add sidewalks to High School Avenue. This will be the first of two required public hearings for the grant. Mr. Dennis opened the presentation to the Mayor, Council, Staff, and Visitors.

Mr. Brown suggested using the grant funds towards.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| ADA Improvements to Parks | ADA Surfacing for Parks |
| ADA Ramps to Intersections | Housing Rehabilitation |
| Street Projects in Low/Moderate Areas | Drainage Improvements on Frye Creek Road |
| Sidewalks to Schools | Drainage Improvements to Reay Lane |
| Retention Basins | Canal Drainage Improvements |
| New ADA Playground Equipment | |

Mr. Lucas Johnson suggested adding sidewalks on 1st Avenue south of 8th Street.

Mr. Brandon Homer suggested using the funds for a recreation center.

Mr. John Howard suggested adding cold water stations and shade stations to the parks.

Mr. David Bell asked if the grant funds would be able to be used towards a regional transportation program.

Councilmember McEuen suggested night lighting for the elderly.

Mr. Dennis stated that some of the grant funds may need to be used towards an income survey. He finished by stating that the project chosen must be sustainable for five years.

2. OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Mrs. Donna Cunningham addressed the Mayor and Council regarding her concern about the recent concrete steps that have been built at the top of the diversion dam at the end of 4th Avenue. Her concern is in time that water will run off the steps and trench down the dam comprising the dam. She also stated that the neighborhood is unhappy and has the same concern she does. Mrs. Cunningham stated that she is aware that the state did not issue a permit to build the steps. She implied that it was offered by town engineer Tom Palmer because his brother built a house near the dam and that is a conflict of interest. She discovered that her concern had been turned over to Mr. Brown and she spoke to him this morning over the phone. Mr. Brown agreed that the state had not issued a permit for the steps to be built. Mr. Brown will be working with ADWR (Arizona Department of Water Resources) to help in obtaining a permit for these steps and existing steps that are at the bottom of the dam. If this does not occur Mrs. Cunningham would like the steps to be removed from both areas. She asked the Mayor and Council that her concern be addressed.

3. PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

A. Matt Hatch Incident – Chief’s Award Presentation

Police Chief Woods addressed the Mayor, Council, Staff, and Visitors introducing Matt Hatch and speaking regarding the incident that occurred on November 22nd, 2023. Thatcher Police Department received a call that there was an unresponsive man at the Thatcher pickleball courts. Officer Jason Larson responded to the call where Mr. Hatch was having a cardiac emergency and was unresponsive. Officer Larson employed his AED machine and shocked Mr. Hatch, and he regained consciousness. Mr. Hatch was then transported by ambulance to Mount Graham Regional Medical Center. Chief Woods recognized individuals at the scene that performed live saving measures, Rhett Hatch, Debbie Turley, Ronda Sweet, Rene Layton, Michelle Wilson, Tami Reynolds, and John Bryant. Chief Woods then presented to three individuals the Chief’s Award, which is an award presented to individuals that make significant contributions to the police department, for performing CPR, Morgan Maylen, Lucas Johnson, and Shawna Bryant. He also presented Officer Jason Larson with the Chief’s Award. Mr. Hatch thanked everyone for their help and hard work. He especially thanked the Thatcher Police Department for equipping the police officer’s patrol cars with AED machines. There was a standing ovation.

B. Police Chief Shaffen Woods Retirement Recognition

Mayor Bryce announced that Police Chief Woods will be retiring as the Thatcher Police Department Chief. He presented Chief Woods with a plaque that read, *In Grateful Appreciation of Your Dedication and Service to the Citizens of The Town of Thatcher. 25 Years of Service, Chief of Police 2012-2024.* Mayor Bryce stated that he will be greatly missed. There was a standing ovation.

4. CONSENT AGENDA: Action Item

- A.** Approve Minutes of the December 18, 2023, Regular Council Meeting
- B.** Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C.** Police Monthly Report.
- D.** Approval of Invoices.
- E.** Financial Reports.

Councilmember Carlton made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and seconded by Vice Mayor Howard. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS: None

6. NEW BUSINESS: Discussion, consideration, and possible action

A. Annual Paving Project & Budget Considerations

Mr. Brown stated that each year an annual paving project is completed. Last year at the request of the Council a 6-year plan for street maintenance was developed to keep our roads in good working condition. This year is year two and more funds are planned than we received in HURF funding. Mr. Brown presented a breakdown of the street maintenance project that estimated cost at \$1,231,422. The anticipated HURF revenue is \$537,000 leaving \$694,422 to be funded for the project. He then went on to present underfunded projects to include Allred Lane and the soccer field lighting, the savings available for the year to include PSPRS that is 95% funded and the

unused park budget for a savings of \$350K. Mr. Brown stated the goal of the discussion is for the Council to determine what amount of funds the paving projects should use. The Council asked staff to compile summary of budgets, contingencies, get information on the expenditure limitations, and legal advice on the possibilities of reapproving budgets to review at the February council meeting or review at a special meeting if needed.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Town Manager's Report

- PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The streets crew is at the World of Concrete in Las Vegas.

ALLRED LANE

The crews have completed conduit for the primary power. All the road crossings are in except for one. The crew is two to three weeks from pouring concrete.

RECREATION COMPLEX

The crew completed all the path lighting. There are some complications with the controls of the lighting and the manufacturer is scheduled to come out in two weeks to inspect and train on the controls. The crew is working on replacing the lighting at Gila Outdoor.

- YOUTH COUNCIL

Referred to Annie Reidhead to discuss the possibilities of forming a Thatcher Youth Council to attend the Arizona League of Cities and Towns Annual Conference. The Town would pay for their travel, lodging, and food during the conference. Requirements for the youth might include attending four council meetings per year and volunteering time during Town events. There would also need to be a chaperone for the youth during the event.

- AMERICAN SOUTHWEST CREDIT UNION UPDATE

The credit union has hired a design firm and would like to start construction on the 1st of April and be in the building by January of 2025. They are working on putting together a satellite office here in Thatcher next to Vector Employer Solutions.

- CITY OF SAFFORD PROPERTIES

We had approached Safford regarding the selling of some properties that are within Thatcher limits. Some of the council members are in favor of this and will be appraising the land.

- DIAMONDBACKS BALLFIELD GRANT UPDATE

Due to the high volume of applications the Diamondbacks have received they are still in the review process for choosing the next grant awardee.

- FINANCIAL SUMMARY

GENERAL FUND		SEWER FUND		ELECTRIC FUND	
TOWN TAXES	\$446,460	SEWER REVENUE	\$37,922	ELECTRIC REVENUE	\$329,380
SHARED REVENUE	\$218,343	SEWER EXPENDITURES	\$22,307	ELECTRIC EXPENDITURE	\$242,006
OTHER REVENUES	\$120,867	SEWER NET	\$15,615	ELECTRIC NET	\$87,374
TOTAL REVENUE	\$785,671	SANITATION FUND			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$492,127	SANITATION REVENUE	\$33,169		
GENERAL FUND NET	\$293,544	SANITATION EXPENDITURE	\$13,434		
		SANITATION NET	\$19,735		

- POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Woods thanked the Mayor and Council for everything over the years. He stated that he would be available for support if needed.

- FIRE DEPARTMENT

The fire department in the fire truck presented gifts to a family during the Christmas holiday and it went well. They plan on doing it every year moving forward.

B. Council Reports

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – INTERIM POLICE CHIEF

At 8:02 p.m. Councilmember Smith made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Vice Mayor Howard. Motion carried unanimously.

At 8:23 p.m. Mayor Bryce made a motion to exit the Executive Session and return to Regular Session. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Mayor Howard made a motion to appoint Sergeant Everett Cauthen as the Interim Town of Thatcher Police Chief starting the evening of Thursday, January 25th and seconded by Councilmember Carlton. Motion carried unanimously.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Bryce adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

APPROVED:

Heath Brown, Town Manager

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 22nd day of January. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Annie Reidhead, Deputy Clerk