



**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
November 18, 2024**

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

Councilmembers absent: Vice Mayor Howard

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Glen Orr, Fire Chief Steve Curtis, Assistant Fire Chief Josh Curtis, Senior Account Clerk Rachel Nicholas

Visitors: David Bell (EA Courier), Shaffen Woods, Bryce Carter, John Howard, Bob Rivera, Sean Wenham, Rue Mattice, Brian Thompson, Cayden Curtis, Ryan Curtis, Joshua Stailey

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:32 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 Councilmember Welker.

AGENDA

1. **PUBLIC HEARING:** None

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

David Bell representing Safford Downtown Association invited the Council to the Merry Main Street event in Safford on Friday, November 29th. Mr. Bell extended a special invite to Mayor Bryce to represent the Town of Thatcher along with other local dignitaries on the main stage during the tree lighting ceremony.

3. **PUBLIC APPEARANCES:**

A. Freeport-McMoRan Grant Presentation

Sean Wenham and Bob Rivera representing the Freeport-McMoRan Community Investment Fund presented a check in the amount of \$100,000 to the Thatcher Fire Department. They congratulated the department for submitting a winning grant application for the Wildland Brush Truck to improve the handling of wildland fires. Accepting for the Thatcher Fire Department was Chief Steve Curtis, Assistant Chief Josh Curtis, and Firefighters Rue Mattice, Brian Thompson, Cayden Curtis, Ryan Curtis, and Joshua Stailey.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA:** **Action Item**

- A. Approve Minutes of the October 21, 2024, Regular Council Meeting and the November 4, 2024, Council Work Session Meeting.
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C. Police Monthly Report.
- D. Approval of Invoices.
- E. Financial Reports.

Councilmember Smith made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Councilmember Carlton. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **OLD BUSINESS:** None

6. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Town of Thatcher / Epic Motorsports Lease Renewal

Mr. Brown stated that the lease being presented is for the old Val's Building next door to Thatcher Town Hall. He said this renewal lease is identical to the previous lease except for one change. The one change being the increase of the monthly rent to \$3,800. The Town has updated the lighting and will be updating the air conditioning units in the building as part of the lease renewal agreement. Mr. Brown stated that this is a 20-year lease and terms can be adjusted every 5 years. Staff recommend approval of the lease.

Councilmember McEuen made a motion to approve the Epic Motorsports Lease Renewal as presented and was seconded by Councilmember Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Electric Department – Out of State Training Approval

Mr. Brown stated that he tasks the Electric Department to find training that targets the municipal sector. Training that would provide them with additional experience and education. The Electric Department collaborates with the Graham County Coop Electric Department on projects to build experience; however, further opportunities for development are required. Mr. Brown explained that PowerTest 2025 Conference referring to the information presented provides that. The conference is being held in Orlando, Florida, in March 2025, and the registration fee is \$1,100 per person. The registration fee does not include flight, hotel, and meal expenses. The two eligible to attend the conference would be Shawn Turley and McKay Griffin.

Councilmember Carlton made a motion to approve the Out of State Training for the Electric Department as submitted and was seconded by Councilmember Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Thatcher Electric Substation Contractor Award

Mr. Brown discussed that Graham County Coop is acting project manager for the Electric Substation and they put the construction of the substation out to bid receiving eight bids.

Electric Substation Bid Summary		
Bidder	Price	Notes
BHI	\$ 1,652,499	50 hours weeks
Addison	\$ 1,382,721	Start electrical construction May 2025
NWFO	\$ 2,337,558	60-hour weeks
National Conductor	\$ 1,616,834	Start in Nov 2024
Interstate	\$ 1,660,932	Start in Dec 2024
Sturgeon	\$ 1,886,999	Start in Jan 2025
American	\$ 2,263,410	
National	\$ 2,249,216	Start in Dec 2024

Mr. Brown stated that Addison came in with the lowest bid and the Coop has previously worked with them on different projects. Graham County Coop and staff recommend the awarding of the bid for the construction to Addison Contractors.

Mr. Brown noted that expenses incurred have been charged to the electric contingency fund, which currently has a balance of \$600,000. When budgeting for the Electric Substation, it was anticipated some current costs would be allocated to next year's budget. The Coop has reported that \$1 million in materials is expected to arrive in the fourth quarter, with \$690,000 of the \$1.4 million construction costs impacting this year's budget. Mr. Brown explained that there is an overage in the Purchase of Power budget, which could be utilized for these expenses. He also mentioned that this might pose an issue with Expenditure Limitation, and staff will research the amounts further.

Councilmember Carlton made a motion to award the Electric Substation Bid to Addison Contractors in the amount of \$1,382,721 with funding line items to be determined later and was seconded by Councilmember McEuen. Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Thatcher – American Southwest Credit Union Lot Sale Approvals:
 - a. Memorandum of Right of First Offer
 - b. First Amendment to Purchase & Sale Agreement
 - c. Special Warranty Deed & Closing Documents

Mr. Brown referred to the three documents listed above included in the council packet. The main document being the First Amendment to Purchase & Sale Agreement. Currently we have a Purchase Agreement in place with the Credit Union with \$10,000 earnest money. Mr. Brown explained that when the Thatcher Plaza project was started it was determined that the Town would construct the infrastructure of the site and then would be reimbursed by the businesses purchasing the lots. The change is a result of businesses withdrawing from the project. The First Amendment to Purchase & Sale Agreement includes the revised language for this change. Mr. Brown explained that the Memorandum of Right of First Offer states that if the Credit Union chooses to sell the lot the Town will have the first option to buy. The Special Warranty Deed & Closing Documents are self-explanatory and normal for any land purchase. Mr. Brown stated the purchase price of the lot is \$120,000 and Matt Clifford, Rose Law Group, and the Credit Union’s attorney have all reviewed the contracts.

Councilmember Welker made a motion to accept as presented and discussed the American Southwest Credit Union Lot Sale Approvals including Memorandum of Right of First Offer, First Amendment to Purchase & Sale Agreement, and Special Warranty Deed & Closing Documents and was seconded by Councilmember Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Town Manager’s Report

- PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
8th Street

Tom Palmer gave the update. The canal bridge is completed, and irrigation pipes are being installed across the tail end of the Householder field. The crews will then finish up the utilities to be ready for the contractor. Contractor bids are due December 5th.

Mr. Brown referred to a picture of the railing that is included in the council packet. This is the type of railing that will be used for the bridge.

- PAVING PROJECT

The paving at Daley Estates will be completed tomorrow.

- STREET CRACK SEALING

Crack sealing with the new machine started today. A representative from Crafcoc was present to advise on the first-time use of the machine.

- TOWN MOBILE APP

Rachel Nicholas gave the update. The IOS side is completed. Currently it is in the testing stage and when completed it will be on the Google App Store by the end of this week. Zora Cloud has asked the Town to choose 30 people to test the App before rolling it out. The App is anticipated to be ready in December.

- ANNUAL AUDIT

Colby & Powell and Baker Tilly were on-site all of last week preparing for the 2023/2024 audit.

- MANAGER LEAVE REQUEST

Request for 3-week vacation during June and July.

- FINANCIAL SUMMARY

GENERAL FUND		SEWER FUND		ELECTRIC FUND	
TOWN TAXES	\$445,108	SEWER REVENUE	\$44,812	ELECTRIC REVENUE	\$507,840
SHARED REVENUE	\$198,144	SEWER EXPENDITURES	\$36,076	ELECTRIC EXPENDITURE	\$349,985
OTHER REVENUES	\$ 52,975	SEWER NET	\$ 8,736	ELECTRIC NET	\$157,855
TOTAL REVENUE	\$696,227	SANITATION FUND			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$912,657	SANITATION REVENUE	\$37,542		
GENERAL FUND NET	-\$216,430	SANITATION EXPENDITURE	\$14,744		
		SANITATION NET	\$22,798		

- POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Orr reported that the incinerator will ship at the end of this month and the concrete pad is set to place the incinerator. Briggs Baldwin, the police recruit, will be graduating from the academy on December 5th. He also reported that the department has handled 500 additional calls so far this year.

- FIRE DEPARTMENT
Chief Curtis reported that it has been quiet as far as calls. He stated that they will be participating in a Mass Shooting Event this Friday at Safford High School along with EAC, Lifeline Ambulance, Safford Police Department, and Mt. Graham Hospital. Chief Curtis announced that the new Wildland Brush Truck is available for viewing in the front parking lot.

B. Council Reports

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S

The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 16th.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Bryce adjourned the meeting at 7:15 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 18th day of November. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Annie Reidhead, Town Clerk