



**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL  
December 16, 2024**

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

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Glen Orr, Fire Chief Steve Curtis, Town Clerk Annie Reidhead, Building Inspector Alan Bryce

Visitors: David Bell (EA Courier), Shaffen Woods, Bryce Carter, John Howard, Bob Rivera, Bart Carter, Vicki Carter, Alysén Lines, Kyle Lines, Curb Kerber, Rebecca Kerber, Kendall Curtis, Mesia Curtis, Merri Aden, Ned Rhodes, Lisa Sutz, Lori Sedgeman, Sean Williams, Scott Ambler, Misty Woods, Shirley Rhoten, Dani Carter, Cole Carter, Callie Carter, Jim Justice, Barbara Daley, Travis Palmer, Phillip Palmer

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 Councilmember Smith.

**AGENDA**

**1. OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBERS RECOGNITION:**

Mayor Bryce presented Councilmembers Eddy Carlton and Ashley Smith with plaques. He thanked Mr. Carlton for his four years of service and Ms. Smith for her six years of service. Mayor Bryce stated that they will be missed.

**2. SWEARING IN OF NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Mayor Bryce introduced the two Newly Elected Councilmembers, Shaffen Woods and Bryce Carter. Town Manager Brown administered the Oath of Office to Shaffen Woods and Bryce Carter. After being sworn into office, Councilmember Woods and Councilmember Carter assumed their seats on the Council.

**3. ELECTION OF MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR:**

Mayor Bryce announced that the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Thatcher are elected by the Council and these positions are not elected positions.

Mayor Bryce nominated Vice Mayor Jenny Howard for Mayor and was seconded by Councilmember McEuen. Motion carried unanimously. Vice Mayor Howard assumed her seat as Mayor.

Mayor Howard nominated Councilmember Heston Welker for Vice Mayor and was seconded by Councilmember McEuen. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF GILA VALLEY CONSOLIDATED MUNICIPAL COURT MAGISTRATES:**

Mr. Brown explained that the Gila Valley Consolidated Municipal Court is overseen by a Magistrate and a Deputy Magistrate, each serving two-year terms. Currently, Merri Aden holds the position of Magistrate and Ned Rhodes serves as Deputy Magistrate. With their terms concluding, staff recommended reappointing both individuals to their respective roles.

Vice Mayor Welker made a motion to reappoint Merri Aden as Magistrate and Ned Rhodes as Deputy Magistrate and was seconded by Councilmember Woods. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. PUBLIC HEARING:**

- A. To consider the matter of a proposed re-zone of three parcels. Re-zone of parcel 104-23-032I from a Mix of R1-43 (Agricultural Single Residential) and R1-8 (Medium Density Single Residential) to R1-10 (Low Density Single Residential). The parcel is approximately 13.63 acres. Re-zone parcel 104-23-008N from a Mix of R1-43 (Agricultural Single Residential) and R1-8 (Medium Density Single Residential) to MU (Mixed-Use Commercial). The parcel is approximately 1.00 acres. Re-zone parcel 104-23-008M from R1-8 (Medium Density Single Residential) to MU (Mixed-Use Commercial). The parcel is approximately 1.00 acres. All three parcels are located West of Reay Lane across from the Gila Institute for Technology building in Thatcher.

Steve Curtis, 225 S. Reay Lane, resides across the street from the property. He stated that he does not necessarily have an issue with the property being zoned as commercial, but his major concern is traffic and the 45-mph speed limit. He explained that there is already a lot of speeding traffic on this curve and the commercial property will add to that traffic. He questioned the parking of the facility. Mr. Curtis also mentioned the safety concerns regarding children crossing the road to access the sports facilities and the splash pad.

Kendall Curtis, 300 S. Laughing Quail Lane, resides on top of the hill near the property. He stated that he has the same concerns that Steve Curtis has regarding speeding traffic and the safety of children.

Phillip Palmer, a co-owner of the property, acknowledged the concerns raised by the residents. He explained that they plan to construct office buildings on the property with provisions for safe parking. He also noted that the staff recommendation during the Planning & Zoning meeting supported the rezoning.

Shawn Williams, a co-owner of the property, stated that they plan to have one turn off on Reay Lane into the commercial property. He reported that they will work with the Town’s Planning & Zoning to make the commercial property as safe as possible.

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

Former Thatcher Mayor Bob Rivera congratulated the newly elected councilmembers, the newly appointed Mayor and Vice Mayor. He remarked that the Town of Thatcher has made history by appointing its first female Mayor.

**7. PUBLIC APPEARANCES:**

**A. Christmas Lighting Contest Awards**

Mayor Howard announced the Christmas Lighting Contest winners and presented the winners present with their prize.



Town of Thatcher  
House Decoration Contest 2024

Grand Prize- \$150	Jeff & Karen Martin	3130 W Aguila Dr
First Prize-\$100	Thomas Griffin	1289 N Stadium Ave
Second Prize- \$75	Dale Holladay	3086 W Shadow Lane
Third Prize-\$50	Joaquin & Nancy Canez	2732 W Dove Lane
Honorable Mention- \$25		
Donald & Aimee Ambler	854 N Stadium Avenue	
Lori Sedgeman	2618 W Dove Lane	
Michael Armstrong	1526 S Cactus Wren Lane	
Christopher & Marcia Wood	711 Diamond Springs Dr	
Patty Ellerman	2964 W Church Street	
Kristen Seale	3085 W Shadow Lane	
Kevin & Alyssa Camargo	726 Oak Lane	

**B. New Police Officer Announcement**

Chief Orr introduced David “Briggs” Baldwin as a new Police Officer. Chief Orr stated that Briggs graduated from the Police Academy on December 5<sup>th</sup> with high honors. Briggs is currently progressing through the Field Officer Training Program and performing well. Chief Orr expressed his excitement about welcoming him to the team. Mayor Howard congratulated Officer Baldwin and stated she looks forward to him serving our community.

**8. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Approve Minutes of the November 18, 2024, Regular Council Meeting
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report
- C. Police Monthly Report
- D. Approval of Invoices
- E. Financial Reports

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

**9. OLD BUSINESS:       None**

**10. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A.** Proposed Re-Zone of Parcels 104-23-0311, 104-23-008N, & 104-23-008M as stated in above Public Hearing

Mayor Howard referred to Town Engineer, Tom Palmer. Mr. Palmer stated that the proposed rezone was unanimously recommended by the Planning & Zoning committee. He stated that he does agree with the issues and concerns that residents mentioned earlier in the Public Hearing. He explained that as Thatcher continues to grow and develop, Reay Lane is expected to become a key area for expansion. He also mentioned that the mixed use of the area fits well with the Town’s General Plan. Mr. Palmer announced that the Building Inspector, Alan Bryce, is available for further questions.

Councilmember McEuen made a motion to approve Re-Zone of Parcels 104-23-0311, 104-23-008N, & 104-23-008M as stated in above Public Hearing and was seconded by Councilmember Carter. Motion carried unanimously.

- B.** 8<sup>th</sup> Street Widening Project – Bid Award

**Town of Thatcher Project #24-25-02**

8th Street Widening Project

<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>BID AMOUNT</b>
Standard Construction	\$7,718,212.00
WW Clyde	\$4,771,785.00
KE&G	\$4,813,513.00

Mr. Brown referred to the three bids above. The lowest bid was received from WW Clyde, whom the Town has previously worked with. Staff recommends awarding the bid to WW Clyde.

During this discussion, Mr. Brown provided an overview of the expenditure related to the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Widening project. He outlined that \$600,000 has been spent on engineering, \$200,000 on utility relocation, and \$300,000 on underground power, totaling \$1.1 million before awarding the construction contract. Staff estimates the railroad crossing portion of the project will cost \$1.4 million. The project has received a \$4.5 million grant, which has been invested and grown to \$4.8 million. However, staff projects that total cost of the project to reach \$7 million. Mr. Brown also mentioned other significant expenditures, including \$1.7 million on the Substation and \$1.2 million on the Paving Project, raising concerns about the Town’s Expenditure Limitation. He shared an estimate of the remaining fiscal year expenses and said that he had consulted with Colby & Powell. Following the abbreviated Expenditure Limitation report, it was determined that the Town is projected to exceed the limitation by \$95,000. Mr. Brown expressed confidence that the expenditure limitation will not be exceeded. Lower cost of power purchases, the option to seek funding from private lenders, and using the \$1.7 million expenditure limitation carry over from years past will make this possible.

Vice Mayor Welker made a motion to approve the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Widening construction project to WW Clyde in the amount of \$4,771,785 and was seconded by Councilmember Vining. Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Gila Outdoor HVAC Units Replacement – Bid Award**

**Town of Thatcher - RFQ Recap Sheet**

RFQ Item: Project Replace Four (4) HVAC Package Gas Units 2024-25

COMPANY	BID AMOUNT
NexLvl Services	\$78,494.48
Zona Mechanical	\$92,701.18
Mt. Graham AC & Heating LLC	\$94,500.00
KooDB Inc.	\$138,000.00
Home Comfort Solutions LLC	\$94,900.00
B&D Air Conditioning	\$80,921.00
Advanced Air Systems	\$65,766.00

Mr. Brown stated that this is a budgeted item to replace the four HVAC units at Gila Valley Polaris. This was also included in the lease agreement signed by Gila Valley Polaris. Seven bids were received, and staff recommend approving the bid to Advanced Air Systems.

Councilmember Bryce made a motion to approve the HVAC package to Advanced Air Systems in the amount of \$65,766 and was seconded by Councilmember Woods. Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Town Council Meeting Dates for January & February 2025**

Mr. Brown addressed the scheduling of the upcoming January and February Council Meetings, noting both dates fall on holidays when staff are not scheduled to work. He explained that, traditionally, such meetings are rescheduled to the fourth Monday of the respective months. He proposed moving the January meeting to January 27<sup>th</sup> and the February meeting to February 24<sup>th</sup>. The council agreed with the proposed dates.

**11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

**A. Town Manager's Report**

- **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET**  
The bridge is complete, and we will be receiving bids for the bridge railing. The underground irrigation lines have been replaced. Staff is also working on the insurance permit to bore under the railroad.
- **PAVING PROJECT**  
This project is complete which included Quail Ridge and Daley Estates.
- **STREET CRACK SEALING**  
Two temporary part-time employees have been hired to assist with this project due to the absence of inmates that normally help with this project each year.
- **MOBILE APP**  
The company has encountered challenges, which are currently being addressed.
- **CHRISTMAS OFFICE SCHEDULE**  
Office staff have requested to utilize leave hours on Tuesday (Christmas Eve) and Thursday (the day after Christmas). As a result, the office will only be open on Monday and closed for the remainder of the week. During this time, staff will remain accessible via the on-call phone.
- **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

GENERAL FUND		SEWER FUND		ELECTRIC FUND	
TOWN TAXES	\$377,535	SEWER REVENUE	\$38,436	ELECTRIC REVENUE	\$384,459
SHARED REVENUE	\$210,067	SEWER EXPENDITURES	\$28,359	ELECTRIC EXPENDITURE	\$249,021
OTHER REVENUES	\$267,174	<b>SEWER NET</b>	<b>\$10,077</b>	<b>ELECTRIC NET</b>	<b>\$135,438</b>
TOTAL REVENUE	\$854,776	<b>SANITATION FUND</b>			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$397,716	SANITATION REVENUE	\$37,873		
<b>GENERAL FUND NET</b>	<b>\$457,060</b>	SANITATION EXPENDITURE	\$45,424		
		<b>SANITATION NET</b>	<b>-\$7,551</b>		

- POLICE DEPARTMENT  
Chief Orr announced that Officer Fischbeck has returned to duty following shoulder surgery, bringing the department back to full staff. The incinerator has been installed and is awaiting utility connections. It is expected to be operational by the beginning of the year, with preliminary testing planned in the coming weeks.
- FIRE DEPARTMENT  
Chief Curtis reported an increase in gas related calls due to the weather conditions. The crew effectively managed a molten sulfur fire at the Safford mine site. Additionally, the crew took part in the Safford Christmas Light Parade, decorating three of the department's trucks.
- ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EMPLOYEE BRUNCH  
The brunch is scheduled this Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 to 11:00. All are invited.

**B. Council Reports**

Councilmember Bryce suggested that, with the recent appointments of the new mayor and vice mayor, one of them should take responsibility of representing the Town at the monthly SEAGO meetings. Vice Mayor Welker volunteered to serve as the Town's representative.

Councilmember Bryce also raised the issue of the speeding traffic on Reay Lane, suggesting that it be reviewed by staff, has mentioned earlier in the public hearing.

**12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUOROM'S:**                      None

**13. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Howard adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Heath Brown, Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenny Howard, 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 16<sup>th</sup> day of December. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Annie Reidhead, Town Clerk