



**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
December 15, 2025**

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Howard, Vice Mayor Vining, Councilman Bryce, Councilman McEuen, Councilman Carter, Councilman Allen, Councilwoman Gaethje

Staff Present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Fire Chief Steve Curtis, Town Clerk Annie Reidhead, Procurement Officer Gary Allred, Building Inspector Alan Bryce

Staff Absent: Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Glen Orr

Visitors: David Bell, John Howard, Eric Bejarano, Trinity Bejarano, Jeff Low, Marie Low, Morgan Seale, Matt Petersen, Natasha Petersen, Tye Stewart, Ryan Conrad, Lori Sedgeman, Chip Griffin, Don Ambler, Aimee Ambler, Jim Daley, Lynn Daley, Dylan Reedy, Presley Motes, Becky Motes

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

Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Vining.

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC HEARING:

- A. **RE-ZONE REQUEST:** To consider the matter of a proposed re-zone of parcel 104-28-087 from a mix of R1 - 43 (Single Residential, 1-acre minimum lot size) and R1-8 (Single Residential, 8,000 SF minimum lot size). The applicant is requesting that the entire parcel be zoned R1-8 (Single Residential, 8,000 SF minimum lot size). The total parcel is approximately 0.67 acres and is located at 3050 W. Spencer Lane in Thatcher.
- B. **Proposed Amendments to the Town of Thatcher Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances:** To consider the matter of proposed text amendments to the Town of Thatcher Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances which would allow for administrative personnel to review and approve site plans, development plans, land divisions, preliminary plats, final plats and plat amendments without public hearing, along with other required ordinance amendments.

2. OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Eric Bejarano, newly appointed Interim City Manager for the City of Safford, addressed the Council and expressed his enthusiasm for future opportunities. He introduced Jeff Lowe, the City of Safford's newly appointed Utilities Director. Mr. Lowe addressed the Council and stated that he looks forward to collaborating with the Town. Mr. Bejarano also introduced Morgan Seale, Water Division Manager, for the City of Safford.

Matt Petersen, Superintendent of the Thatcher School District, addressed the Council and expressed his appreciation for the continuation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. He discussed an incident that occurred earlier in the month in which it was reported that a student was in possession of a handgun on school property. Mr. Petersen thanked SRO Officer Whisman, Chief Orr, Sergeant Larson, and Sergeant Maner for their prompt response and for ensuring a safe environment during the incident. He stated that the presence of the SRO Officer was critical and that, without the program in place, the situation could have escalated. Mr. Petersen also thanked the Mayor, Council, and Town Manager Heath Brown for their efforts in establishing an IGA to continue the SRO Program after grant funding ended.

3. PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

A. Christmas Lighting Contest Awards



Town of Thatcher	
Christmas Light Contest 2025	
Grand Prize - \$150	David Ramirez
First Prize - \$100	Chip Griffin
Second Prize - \$75	Jim & Helen Daley
Third Prize - \$50	Lori Sedgeman
Honorable Mention - \$25	
Joaquin & Nancy Canez	Patty Ellerman
Donald & Aimee Ambler	William or Jason Cole
Daniel Escobedo	Cheyenne Iske

Mayor Howard announced the Christmas Light Contest winners and presented the winners in attendance with their prize money.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve Minutes of November 17, 2025, Regular Council Meeting
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report
- C. Police Monthly Report
- D. Approval of Invoices
- E. Financial Reports

Councilmember Gaethje made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented and was seconded by Vice Mayor Vining. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS: None

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Proposed re-zone of parcel 104-28-087 from a mix of R1-43 and R1-8 to R1-8.

Mr. Brown stated that this is the third time this agenda item has been proposed. The parcel is located on the east half of Spencer Lane with half of the lot zoned R1-8 and half zoned R1-43. He stated that since the last discussion the Town's Planning & Zoning (P&Z) code has changed and now allows for accessory dwellings on lots. Alan Bryce, Town Building Inspector stated that no citizens were opposed and P&Z approved with the condition the lot be split only once. Discussion also took place on what type of structure would be built on the lot.

Councilmember Bryce made a motion to approve the re-zoning of partial 104-28-087 from a mix of R1-43 and R1-8 to R1-8 and was seconded by Councilmember McEuen. Motion carried unanimously.

- B. ORDINANCE NO. 198-2025: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THATCHER TOWN CODE BY AMENDING PORTIONS OF SECTION 3.0 AND AMENDING THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF THATCHERBY AMENDING PORTIONS OF SECTIONS 3.2, 3.3, & 3.4 THEREOF AND ADOPTING BY REFERENCE PURSUANT TO A.R.S. s9-802, THESE AMENDMENTS WHICH ARE FULLY DESCRIBED IN "EXHIBIT A" ATTACHED HERETO.

Mr. Brown indicated that this Ordinance is to accommodate the mandated state law which changes the approval process of subdivisions. The law states that staff are now able to approve proposed subdivisions, if the proposed subdivision meets all the Town requirements, instead of going through the public hearing process. If the proposed subdivision does not meet requirements it will go through the current process for approval.

Councilmember Allen made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 198-2025 as presented and was seconded by Councilmember Carter. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Town Council Meeting Dates for January and February 2026

Mr. Brown informed Council that the currently scheduled Town Council meeting dates for January and February 2026 fall on holidays, which is a reoccurring item each year. Staff recommended adjusting the meeting dates to ensure proper scheduling and public access. Staff propose changing the meeting dates to

the fourth Monday of each month instead of the third Monday, which would be January 26th and February 23rd. After discussion, the Mayor and Council agreed to modify the meeting dates accordingly.

D. 1st Avenue Right-of-Way Consultant Contract

Vendor	Quote Amount
Cart Enterprises LLC, Phoenix, AZ	\$126,000
Consultant Engineering Inc., Phoenix, AZ	\$270,205

Mr. Brown stated that this is a project that includes widening 1st Avenue from Quail Ridge to Eagle Drive. Federal funds will be utilized for this project therefore hiring a Right-of-Way consultant would be the first stage of the project. He referred to the above information regarding the two bids that staff received. The project has been budgeted for \$200,000 and staff are recommending Cart Enterprises.

Councilmember Bryce made a motion to approve the 1st Avenue Right-of-Way Consultant contract to Cart Enterprises in the amount of \$126,000 and was seconded by Councilmember Allen. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Liquor License for Native Grill & Wings

Mr. Brown stated that we received the official liquor license from the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control for Native Grill & Wings which will be located at 2185 W Highway 70. He reported that the license has been filed as a type 006 bar license, the common license for restaurants/bars. Staff posted the license at the location for the required 20-day period, and no public comments or protests were received.

Councilmember McEuen made a motion to approve the liquor license for Native Grill & Wings as presented and was seconded by Councilmember Gaethje. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Power Relocation at new Marriott Hotel – Potential Project

Mr. Brown reported on a potential power relocation project associated with the new Marriott Hotel. He explained that existing power lines located along the westbound side of the highway currently obstruct visibility and are unsightly. Staff have discussed the possibility of burying the lines with Graham County Electric Cooperative (Coop). The Coop recommended including the area from Church Street to U-Haul in the project to achieve cost savings. The Coop estimated the project cost at \$40,000 and proposed a \$15,000 credit to the Town due to the age of the existing lines. The total estimated cost to the Town is approximately \$50,000, which includes \$25,000 payable to Graham County Electric Cooperative, \$22,000 for boring under the U-Haul driveway, and \$3,000 for conduit. Mr. Brown stated that the project would be funded through the new electric construction budget.

Councilmember Allen made a motion to approve the Power Relocation project at the new Marriott Hotel in the amount of approximately \$50,000 and was seconded by Councilmember McEuen. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

A. Town Manager's Report

- Public Works Department

1st Avenue

Half of the Public Works crew is working on relocating utilities from Church Street to the Highway.

Town Yard

The substation has been removed and the other half of the Public Works crew worked on shifting some of the fencing in preparation for the new automatic gate.

Ball Field Lighting

Electric crew has started placing the conduit for the lighting. Anticipated completion date is expected before the junior high school baseball and softball season begins.

Crack Sealing

A crew began crack sealing last week. Staff plan to maintain a full crew on the project this year to complete the work sooner than in previous years.

- 1st Avenue Traffic Signal

Town Engineer Tom Palmer met with Circle K earlier today and the project is moving forward. Their team is working on a design plan and on a development agreement.

- Town Hall Entry
New tile has been installed in the Town Hall lobby entrance.
- Town Christmas Party – December 22nd
The annual Town Christmas Brunch Party is scheduled for Monday, December 22nd, 10:00 to 11:00, hope to see everyone there. An invite was given to Mayor and Council.
- Christmas Decorations
The Christmas decorations are in place outside of Town Hall and at the Reay Lane Park which include a couple of new decorations. Staff will continue to update the decorations as time allows.
- Water Rate Comparison
A comparison of Graham County Electric Cooperative water rates versus City of Safford water rates was requested and the information was emailed. City of Safford rates are lower.
- Financial Summary

GENERAL FUND		SEWER FUND		ELECTRIC FUND	
TOWN TAXES	\$335,918	SEWER REVENUE	\$40,173	ELECTRIC REVENUE	\$346,567
SHARED REVENUE	\$199,908	SEWER EXPENDITURES	\$26,875	ELECTRIC EXPENDITURE	\$264,550
OTHER REVENUES	\$59,482	SEWER NET	\$13,298	ELECTRIC NET	\$82,016
TOTAL REVENUE	\$595,309	SANITATION FUND			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$436,294	SANITATION REVENUE	\$38,693		
GENERAL FUND NET	\$159,015	SANITATION EXPENDITURE	\$17,997		
		SANITATION NET	\$20,696		

- Police Department
Chief Orr Absent
- Fire Department
Chief Curtis reported that the department participated in funeral services for former Town employee Rusty Noland, and the family expressed their appreciation. He also noted that the department participated in the annual Light Parade with entering four vehicles, which was a successful event. Additionally, Chief Curtis reported that a mobile home fire occurred the previous morning, appropriate action was taken, and the home was saved from a total loss.

B. Council Reports

Mayor Howard discussed the ADOT Open Meeting is scheduled for January 15th and encouraged all to attend. This is for key entities to voice their transportation needs and will hold an open meeting for the public in the spring.

John Howard, Graham County Board Supervisor, addressed the Council and noted that 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of Independence Day. He stated that the County has begun discussions regarding a potential community-wide 4th of July celebration and expressed interest in participation from all local entities to bring the community together. While planning is still in the early stages, the event may include daytime activities, a concert featuring a well-known artist, and of course a firework display.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUOROM'S: None

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Howard adjourned the meeting at 6:49 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 the 15th day of December. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Annie Reidhead, Town Clerk