

**HAVANA TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
February 28, 2019                      6 pm**

**Member(s) Present:** Decorkus Allen, Eddie Bass, Nick Bert, Cathy Johnson, Shirley McGill and Vernell Ross

**Member(s) Absent:** David Norman

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ross.

Motion made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2019 Regular Council Meeting. Motion carried.

**VISITORS:**

N/A

**OLD BUSINESS:**

N/A

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mrs. Karen Kent, Downtown Improvement Committee made a request to proceed with the façade grant program. The committee is requesting the council approve \$8,000 for the program. The grant will be a 50/50 match for the merchants. An ad will be published in the newspaper to notify merchants that applications are available and the due date will be the end of May. Mr. Howard McKinnon, Town Manager, advised the reimbursement will be capped at \$2,000 per merchant. Motion made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the Façade Grant program. Motion carried.

Mrs. Kent also requested funds for the Havana Christmas Tree Farm. They maintain the Christmas figurines that are displayed around town during the holidays. This year they are requesting to repaint and string new lights on the figurines. The cost is \$750 with half being paid in November and the balance paid in January. Motion made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen to approve the \$750 for the maintenance of the Christmas decorations. Motion carried.



Mrs. Terri Paul, Havana Main Street, advised the council of the upcoming event that they are proposing on April 4<sup>th</sup> - April 7<sup>th</sup>. The event is the Urban Airstream Rally which is now gathering in small towns. Originally thirty RV's were participating but now it is up to seventy-five with an additional sixteen wanting to display at the park. The request is to close the streets and line up downtown and park. The host is the Big Bend Airstream group and they are very excited about the event. There will be approximately two hundred plus people downtown and the RV's will be open to the public. Councilman Bert stated this is a big economic boost for Havana and inquired if the RV's were self-contained. Mr. McKinnon stated yes they are self-contained and hats off to Main Street for hosting this event. The merchants signed agreeing to the event and needs approval for the additional sixteen RV's at the park. Motion made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the Urban Airstream Rally. Motion carried.

Mr. McKinnon mentioned the CDBG Program Income. This deals with the community center and the housing program to repair roofs. The Town advertised for the grant administrator and there was only one response from Jones-Phillips and Associates. Jones-Phillips has provided services to Havana and there are very good reviews dealing with the organization. Mr. McKinnon stated he recommends approval for the grant administrator. There are other things to do such as the environmental assessment and the advertisement. Hopefully this can be approved at the April or May's meeting. Councilwoman Johnson stated she needs clarification regarding the bidding process for the administrator. Mr. McKinnon stated the ad ran in the Tallahassee Democrat and only one firm responded. Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and seconded by Councilman Bert to approve the CDBG grant administrator, Jones-Phillips and Association. Motion carried.

The policy for Housing Rehab must be approved. This will assist in scoring the applicants and to have an equitable and fair process. A standard agreement was used but the language should identify projects for roofs only. Recommendation was made to limit each applicant to \$10,000 each. Mayor Pro Tem Ross inquired if there will be income qualifications. Yes, this project is for low income residents only. Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the policy for the housing rehab. Motion carried.

The town's sick leave accrual was discussed sometime back. It was determined leave is not in line with surrounding jurisdictions. Mr. McKinnon stated he recommends changing the accrual to be more competitive. Councilwoman Johnson inquired about where the resources came from? Mr. McKinnon stated Lt. Andrews called around statewide and local. Motion made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen to approve changing the town's sick leave accrual. Motion carried.



**REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:**

Mr. McKinnon advised Ronny Butler was hired as the part-time recreation director and Vic Vickers will assist.

Mr. McKinnon mentioned he returned from Washington, DC and had a very productive meeting with Representative Al Lawson. There was a discussion about getting Congress to streamline the FEMA reimbursements. 5G technology was also discussed. The phone industry is working to install on electric poles and not pay a fee for attaching. Mr. McKinnon stated the town will work with them but wants rent paid. This item will be brought back in the near future with a pole attachment policy. FCC issued a rule allowing phone companies to do it but is now in court. This is a very big issue and big threat to home rule.

March 20, 2019 is Gadsden County Legislative Day at 10:00 am at the Capitol on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Contact was made with Southern Earth Science about the asbestos in the Alexander building. Councilman Bert asked if asbestos is found will it be abated. Yes and the process should not take long. Mayor Pro Tem Allen stated he understood the funds were not recouped from the last demolition. Mr. McKinnon mentioned the town received approximately \$15,000 to \$17,000.

The Town received a grant from Florida Department of Transportation to replace the crate myrtles on Highway 27.

Mr. McKinnon advised the utility bills included the flyer regarding the GED program.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilwoman McGill inquired about doing something for the garbage workers. Mr. McKinnon advised if their drivers go accident free for one year they will receive a huge bonus.

Councilwoman Johnson asked if there were any word from Ms. Rosa Hall regarding the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Mrs. Edna Anderson. The event will be held at Havana Northside on Saturday, March 2, 2019 from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen stated the 1200 Church of Tallahassee donated more supplies.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen mentioned attending the Florida League of Cities conference in Kissimmee. They are asking all leaders to come together to discuss major issues and

the future of Gadsden County. He also attended a meeting in Crestview and the NW FLC is offering free ethic training and also trying to find sponsors for the FLC.

It was also mentioned that the FL of Cities is interested in hosting a dinner in Havana.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen reminded all of the upcoming NW FLC Summer Dinner which will be held at San Destin Golf and Beach Resort on May 7, 2019.

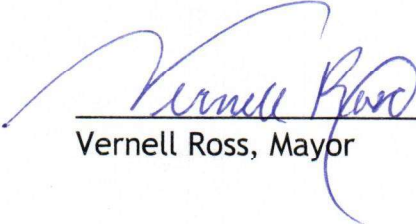
Councilman Bert inquired about purchasing an inexpensive audio system for a better way for council members to attend meetings by phone.

Councilman Bass stated he is glad the Town received the grant for the community center and the council should work hard to find money to update the police department. He encouraged all council members to visit the station. The police department is owned by the town and will not qualify for grants. Mr. McKinnon stated this can be discussed during the budget workshop.

Mayor Ross stated it is now official, Havana Northside is on the National Registry of Historic places as of November, 2018.

Motion made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to pay bills.  
Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn.

  
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Vernell Ross, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Shelia A. Evans, Town Clerk