

TOWN OF HAVANA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 31, 2023

Member(s) Present: Mayor Janice Hart, Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert, Councilman Dwight Vickers, Councilman Tim Loughmiller, and Councilwoman Jenny Stone

Member(s) Absent: Councilman Decorkus Allen and Councilman Eddie Bass

Roll Call: Mayor Janice Hart, Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert, Councilman Dwight Vickers, Councilman Tim Loughmiller, Councilwoman Jenny Stone, and Town Manager Kendrah Wilkerson

The Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Janice Hart.

Invocation was led by Chief Tracy Smith with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Visitor #1: Ronnie Butler of 600 Twin Ponds states that he understands the Town is in a deficit and he asks the question what are we doing as a community to get ourselves out of this deficit besides taxing the community. Councilwoman Stone states that the things that he believes he is talking about have been addressed in the last Budget Meeting trying to get caught back up on things moving forward having better records so that we know where we are at. Some of the rates that are going up on have not been increased in ten to twenty years. Mr. Butler stated about a month and a half ago we had a city wide outage and from his understanding the substation breaker failed. Have we rectified that situation if not why not? The Town Manager stated the Town has been able to procure a used breaker that worked with our system, we had it tested and evaluated by engineers and it has been put into service. We sent the old damaged breaker off for it to be repaired, and now we are looking at getting alternative funding that does not involve rate increases, tax increases through grants or state appropriation money to bring our substation up to current state technology. Councilwoman Stone states that concerning Mr. Butler's previous question you have to have a little grace with things to go out we are trying to update a lot of our equipment that is very costly to update. Things like that they are not in the budget it has got to come from somewhere. You will see that in next years budget meeting where we went over and where were in a deficit because things like this was not budgeted. Mr. Butler stated he understood that he has worked in utilities for the past 35 years and he states that there is money out there and it is for townships like us. He stated we need to be aggressive to get this money it is at the state and federal level. The Council thanks him.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS (Continued):

Visitor #2: Doug Croley of 255 Longview Lane which is outside the city but in Havana. He thanks the Council for allowing him to speak. He wishes to bring to the Council's attention that this issue with insurance and fire rating has a major impact on all of us. He agreed that storms have caused an impact on insurance rates. But also what bears an impact on your insurance is fire protection and Havana had previously been a 6 or 7 and now you are a 10 and that is inside the city limits and it also affects all of us that live in the unincorporated areas within 5 driving miles of the Havana Fire Station because we are dependent on Havana for our Fire Service. So it is in everyone's collective best interest to get this matter addressed. There is a lot of us who would be happy to help the town in any way. He asked the Mayor to please have an agenda item to have a workshop to discuss it. The Council thanks him.

Visitor #3: Christina Basile of 103 Horseshoe Drive. Christina was told when she came into City Hall to discuss the roadway where she lives that it would be maintained. She states since she has been there in one year it has not been maintained there are limbs and branches hanging all over the road. What she also states she has seen is the Family Dollar store and the Grocery Store has had a real problem with trash and there are private citizens that are dumping their trash in those dumpsters. The dumpsters get so full and there is no fencing around it. She stated that this causes a problem because the trash is then put outside the dumpsters and strawn all over the parking lot and down the streets. She stated that she loves this town and just wants the streets to look nice. The Council thanks her.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 31, 2022 MINUTES

Mayor Hart asks if there was a motion to approve the December 31, 2022 Regular Council Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Councilman Stone to approve the minutes seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Minutes passed.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1: Resolution 2023-03R Water and Sewer Rates. The Town Manager requests a recommendation of Water and Sewer Rate increases. She states this is stemming from a recent conversation with Department of Environmental Protection as far as the State Revolving Fund we have got some big projects coming. We are required to cover debt service by doing a certain percentage increase each year in our water and sewer rates. It is recommended that we currently have debt service obligations and the one that is coming with the lift stations that we raise our sewer and water rates by 13% for the remainder of this fiscal year and then 5% by the start of the new fiscal year thereafter unless some major project changes. We have been discussing some pretty big infrastructure projects with the water and sewer lift station projects and we were able to get grant funding for she thinks it was \$3.2 million dollars which 80% of that is loan forgiveness basically through DEP and we are looking at a CDBG mitigation grant for the remainder. We are getting grant funding but there are unforeseen projects that are not covered by grant funding. One that specifically comes to mind is Well 1 Project that we have discussed using Rescue Funds for but that want always be available. We have to have some money in reserve to cover those emergency repairs as they pop up and then also cover debt service so I am making a recommendation for the infrastructure needs that are on the horizon that are not an

ITEM #1: Resolution 2023-03R Water and Sewer Rates (Continued)

emergency yet that could become one. So I recommend the 13% increase which would be an additional \$1.64 for the first 3,000 gallons of water that is what the impact would be and if customers also have sewer it would be an additional \$4.40 for the same number of gallons. Mayor Hart requested the Town Manager give more information of what was going on with Well 1. The Town Manager stated our Water Contractor tests our well water and tracks our measures, he noticed a bad sound coming from the motor in Well 1 which is our primary producer. After pulling the pipe and casing it could not be patched or salvaged. There is considerable damage to it and it is very expensive to fix. We are running on Well 2 which is in similar condition we believe just on the age of it. So we know we are going to have to have \$50,000 to \$60,000 in repairs with Well 1 and we know we have the same issues coming on the next well we need to get ahead of those. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert to approve Resolution 2023-03R Water and Sewer Rates increases and motion was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

ITEM #2: Havana Volunteer Fire Department Guidelines (Revised) The Town Manager brings this item forward after much discussion with Fire Chief Beach. It became apparent that we needed to update our procedures it has not been updated since 2008. There were a lot of safety type items that were not clearly delineated. She states she will go through briefly some of the updates that have been approved by the Town Attorney. Revised guidelines will focus on safety measures, training opportunities, and ensuring firefighters are attending meetings on a regular basis. The Chief has requested to incentivize fire certification this goes along with training and goals for our certified firefighters that are on the roster. The incentives are not budgeted for the current fiscal year but the Chief on behalf of the Fire Department has agreed that any fire certifications that are attained for the remainder of this fiscal year would be paid out of the Volunteer Fire Fighter Fund. This is money they earn on their own and he is willing to pay that incentive out of that funding. If this is approved by the Council all firefighters will sign these guidelines at the next Fire Meeting. The Chief has been actively trying to get certified members and this should help our ISO rating. She reads that a Class 10 is not meeting the number of certified firefighters to a structure fire. A lot of discussion has been made about the ISO rating. We currently do not have a paid Fire Department it is Volunteer. The Chief has done an amazing job at trying to get people involved to become a firefighter. Doug Croley approaches the Council to discuss at the county level the Town is getting \$49,000 yearly and that maybe we need to ask for more support from the county. The county is allocating the funds and he is not sure that we are standing up for what we need. We really need to get this subject on the agenda as a workshop to hopefully help what needs to be done. Mr. John Haire of 190 Stillwater Lane stated that Mr. Croley has a great idea of getting the county involved more than they are, he states that he is sure that Chattahoochee and some of the other small towns have the same problem. He stated that his insurance rates have went up and that he hopes the council will consider working with the county to get this resolved. Chief Beach recommends that a County wide meeting needs to take place among the Fire Chiefs to discuss specifically ISO. There currently is \$1.6 million dollars for the county but only \$800,000 of that is making it to the boots on the ground. I would like to question where the rest of the funding is going. This is a workshop that we need. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert to approve the HFD new guidelines and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

ITEM #3: REQUEST FOR LOT SPLIT – 2nd AND FINAL READING (HARRELL/SPOONER)

The Town received a request for a lot split at the parcel id that is listed to turn one lot into two per the Town Manager. This application was reviewed by Apalachee Regional Council and is in compliance with our Performance Zoning Ordinance. It has been advertised in the paper and a sign has been posted on the property. This is the 2nd public hearing request. Motion was made by Councilman Vickers to approve the 2nd and final reading of the request for lot split and motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion of the 2nd and final reading was approved. Motion carried.

ITEM #4: REQUEST FOR LOT MERGE – 1st READING

We received a request for a lot merge located at 604 and 606 2nd Street NE they are adjoining parcels. The lot has been advertised and the sign has been posted and Apalachee Regional has approved this parcel merge. Motion was made by Councilman Vickers to approve the 1st reading of the merge lot and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion carried.

ITEM #5: RESOLUTION 2023 -14R for Claim of Lien – Old Elementary School

The Town Manager states this resolution is for placing a Lien on the Old Elementary School, this is the second Claim of Lien and we have been doing these about three months. This is the second one we will be filing so that we can recognize the lien of the property. The property has been cited with the Nuisance Ordinance and the fines have been imposed at the rate of \$100.00 per day that commenced June 3, 2022. To date no improvements have been made and nothing has been done. As of to date, the fines are a total of \$24,300 plus a \$15.00 administrative fee. Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem asked the Town Manager about making contact with the owners and the Town Manager stated she has spoken to one of the owners and she states that she is struggling trying to invest more money into the property if the other owner is not willing to. There is a legal battle with the two owners. The Mayor asked what is the next step and the Town Manager stated there is not much else that we can actively do. Until the Council thinks the property should be condemned because it is dangerous then we would pursue that but it could be a considerable expense to the town. Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked how do we get the property condemned the Town Manager stated she would have to research how to that. Chief Smith approached the Mayor and the Council that the next step would be to contact the Building Official in Quincy to come over and assess the property in order to condemn which would be your next step. Then you would start getting estimates to remove the building. It would be the same process as the Alexander Building. He stated we looked at doing this before and it would be close to a million dollars because of the asbestos. Councilwoman Stone stated that the Council should consider waiting a little longer with the Claim of Lien. Councilman Vickers asked if at the state level there would be any assistance that could be made for the condemning of a building. The Town Manager stated there are grants to fix a building but not to demo one. David Wesolowski stated the fines should be higher. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to approve Resolution 2023-14R The Claim of Lien of the Old Elementary School and for the Town Manager to research/seek grant funding to possibly consider condemning it at a later date, she also recommended the rate increase be made to \$500/day, motion was seconded by Councilman Loughmiller. Motion carried as stated.

ITEM #6: AMENDED AGREEMENT – APALACHEE REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL (FY 2023)

The Town Manager states for the Councils review is the Apalachee Regional Planning Council Agreement for FY 2023. This agreement will be retroactive back to October 2022 our previous agreement has expired with a rate increase of \$55 to \$65/hour. Mayor Hart asked if we would have to pay the rate increase all the way back from October 2022? The Town Manager stated that she believed no invoices have been paid since the agreement had expired. The Town Manager stated if work has been done from October until the current date yes we would have to pay the adjusted rate. Motion was made to approve by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carries.

ITEM #7: DOGWOOD AVENUE LIFT STATION PUMP. This lift station is one of the lift stations we are looking at renovating and fixing with State Revolving Funds. This project is going out to bid, unfortunately the pump failed before we could. It is no longer feasible to try to rebuild this pump due to the age and scarcity of the pump. Terry Presnell of OMI was able to get a pump that will work with this system. The approximate cost of this rental will be about \$3,000 dollars a month until the work can be completed. At that time we will replace that pump with new technology. We can use rescue funds for that rental and she recommends we do so. Councilman Vickers asked how much a pump is? The Town Manager did not know. Councilman Vickers also asked if we could call around to inquire if anyone had an extra pump. The Town Manager stated she could check into it. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert to do the rental pump and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

ITEM #8 ZONING APPLICATION FEE INCREASE. The Town Manager states that these fees have not increased in quite awhile. She states she based the increase on the amount of time it takes to review the zoning application at a rate of \$65.00 an hour. A lot of administrative costs are not being accounted for. She recommends that the cost increase be approved. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to approve the Zoning Application Fee increases and was seconded by Councilman Loughmiller. Motion carried to increase fees.

ITEM #9 RESCHEDULING APRIL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING. The Town Manager requests the April Town Council Meeting Date for April 25th be rescheduled due to the Town Council Election date being the same day. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilwoman Stone to approve the meeting date change to April 27th. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT#1-HAVANA HILLS SPRING CLASSIC BIKE RIDE 2/26/23. Chief Smith stated that they are requesting to close 1st Street NW and the parking lot we will be placing barricades out and we will reopen the parking lot next to Gockis. Motion was made to approve by Councilman Loughmiller and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT #2 – ROBERT F. MUNROE SOFTBALL FIELD. Chief Smith asked for the Councils approval for the Special Events Permit for Robert F. Munroe to be able to use our ball fields for their softball games. They will also be using our concession stands and our restrooms. Motion was made to approve by Councilman Vickers and was seconded by Councilman Stone. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT #3 – HAVANA MIDDLE SCHOOL (BALL FIELDS). Chief Smith stated the final permit is from Havana Magnet School. They are requesting similar to Munroe the same usage of the Gus Bert ball fields, field two. There will be coordination between the two schools use of the field. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

The Town Manager stated that the Town was able to get the damaged parts of the playground replaced. There will be mulch put down. We have a grant out for the Walking Park. There have been bids posted for restrooms and picnic pavilion those are also posted on the front glass. The Town staff will pour the concrete for the Pavilion and sidewalks and then the Garden Club in the past have stated that will donate money for a swing set. There is a Downtown Beautification Grant that we are working on with another workshop that is scheduled for February 8th there will be two, one at 3 and the second one will be at 5:30. We have transformers at our substations that are going to need repair with initial quotes at \$45,000 to \$50,000. This past week our annual PSC gas audit took place it went very well with no material findings. A meeting was held with Representative Franklin about funding for infrastructure needs and other building of our police station. She states Drinking Water System improvements we are ballparking with repairs to Well 2 and also repairs to the ground water repair tank at about \$150,000. There is a storm drain repair application in progress and we anticipate that project to be about a \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000. Substation Repairs would be about \$245,000. This is all independent of grants. Annual election date is April 25th with election seats up for Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 up for re-election. The Council Meeting has been moved to the following Thursday to accommodate this election. There is an ethics and financial disclosure that has to be done every year by the Council. If you do the Ethics Training you must notify the clerk via email that you have done so and the date of your completion. There is no certificate for this training. It is required that you complete this by July 1st or initially 30 days after employment for training. There was a Certificate of Appropriateness Meeting prior to this meeting that went well. We will be streamlining this process. In early May two audits will be done. The downtown area does have sidewalks that are starting to heave. Every other tree will be removed. Police Chief has given final word that he is resigning. The Mayor asked if that what is in writing. We will need to start advertising. The Town Manager thanked the Chief for his service. Carol Tribue is another new employee who will be working on the front line.

RECOGNITION OF EACH COUNCIL MEMBER

Councilman Tim Loughmiller had nothing.
Councilman Dwight Vickers had nothing.
Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert had nothing.
Councilwoman Jenny Stone had nothing.
Mayor Janice Hart had nothing.

Motion to Pay the Bills

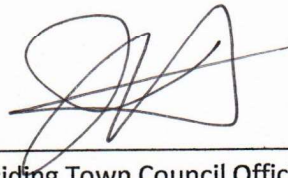
Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to pay the bills, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion passed.

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Motion to Adjourn

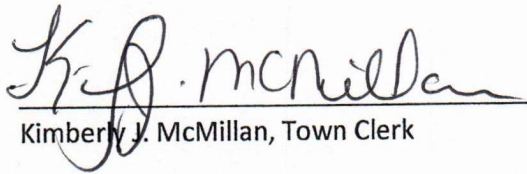
Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Vickers to adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



Presiding Town Council Official

ATTEST:



Kimberly J. McMillan, Town Clerk