***HAVANA TOWN COUNCIL***

***REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING***

***AUGUST 31, 2021 6 pm***

***Member(s) Present:*** Decorkus Allen, Eddie Bass, Nick Bert, Janice Hart, Jenny Stone and Dwight Vickers

***Member(s) Absent:*** Warkeen Jordan

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Hart.

Invocation was led by Councilman Decorkus Allen followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2021 Regular Council Meeting was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

***VISITORS:***

Mrs. Terri Paul, Havana Main Street, inquired about Waste Pro’s decision regarding the dumpsters downtown. Mr. Johnson reported Waste Pro will not split contracts and the dumpster service will not change at this time. After a brief discussion, Mr. Johnson stated he will continue the conversation with Waste Pro.

***PRESENTATION:***

Chief Tracy Smith introduced the town’s new K-9, Charlie. Charlie was donated by Promise Land Proud Bloodhounds and will be an asset to the Town and Gadsden County to assist with tracking. Her handler will be Officer Amanda Winters. Mr. Johnson thanked Chief Smith and Officer Winters for the presentation.

***OLD BUSINESS:***

N/A

***NEW BUSINESS:***

A request was made to subdivide the property located at 408 5th Street SW. The owner is requesting to have two (2) separate residences on the property. Final approval will be considered at the next meeting. Motion was made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert to approve the subdivision of the property. Motion carried.

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Mr. Johnson explained the proposed request to subdivide the property located at 204 2nd Street NW. The property is owned by Planters Exchange. Mr. Johnson mentioned his conversation with the planning consultants, Apalachee Regional Planning Council, regarding this request. The Council should be aware of a vital piece that is critical to making this decision. Upon approval, the parcel will be reduced down to a size that will not be buildable for this zoning area. This proposed request will also need final approval before moving forward. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the proposed subdivision of this lot. Motion carried.

OMI presented Amendment #12 to their annual contract. OMI is the contractor managing the town’s wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the amendment increase and explained the two options for payment presented by OMI. Mr. Johnson stated he recommends the council pay the actual cost of the contract increase. Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the amendment presented by OMI and pay the amount recommended by the Town Manager. Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2021-05R is to approve the disbursement of firemen pension funds. The resolution will authorize the Town Manger to pay retirement to a fireman by a lifetime payout. The resolution is a requirement to begin the process. Mr. Johnson stated this motion must be made by roll call. After a lengthy discussion regarding the firemen training, certifications and payments, a motion was made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Councilman Allen to approve Resolution No. 2021-05R. Motions were as follows; Councilman Allen, yes; Councilman Bass, yes; Councilwoman Stone, yes; Councilman Vickers, yes; Mayor Pro Tem Bert, yes; and Mayor Hart, yes. Motion carried with no oppositions.

Mrs. Edna Hall Whitehead, Havana Main Street, is requesting to place festive pumpkin decorations around town and on town’s property. A special event form was submitted for approval. The decorations will be taken down no later than November 1, 2021. Motion to approve the request was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

A special events permit was presented for approval. Blessings of Hope Empowerment Outreach is requesting to host a benefit fundraiser at the Hazel Baker Community Center. Their plans are to have a fish fry to assist them with purchasing turkeys and hams for a giveaway to benefit the seniors in the Havana community. Motion to approve the event was made by Councilman Allen and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

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***REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:***

Mr. Johnson gave an update on the lien placed against the Town by Planters Exchange. The lien was dismissed in court and the matter is resolved.

Per the state guidance, the firefighters pension fund actuary report is currently being conducted and is near completion. This item was mentioned during the 2018-2019 financial audit.

Mr. Johnson advised the Town has been awarded design funding from the State Revolving Fund for the improvements at various lift stations. The designs will need to be completed in order to submit the plans to Florida Department of Environment Protection (FDEP) by December 21, 2021 for construction funds to be awarded in February, 2022.

Mr. Johnson reported on the FDEP consent order update. The most recent consent order update reference our progress towards improving the town’s wastewater system has been submitted to the State along with the consent agreement.

At the September regular meeting, the Town will host a public hearing confirming the council’s support for a grant to fund the 25% match for the lift station generator project. This public hearing is a requirement to receive funding from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO) Hazard Mitigation Grant. The generator additions are critical to the lift stations and are also part of the consent order with the town’s wastewater system.

Mr. Johnson discussed the fire hydrant painting contest. The contest will be conducted on October 2, 2021.

The town’s newsletter is being drafted. Mr. Johnson advised if any items are to be added to please contact the office prior to October 11, 2021.

Mr. Johnson reported on the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. The agreement was executed and submitted to the State. The funds were $717,000 and have increased to $855,458. The Town will receive funds in two (2) increments. At this time, there is no exact date of receipt.

Mr. Johnson mentioned a conversation with a citizen regarding the town’s utility billing process. He explained if there are over 31 days on a customer’s bill, the council can decide to grant a courtesy extension. This is being mentioned for information purposes only and the council can bring it back during another meeting if desired. Mr. Johnson reminded the council that most utility companies average a number of 29 – 35 billing days on a customer’s bill due to certain circumstances, such as inclement weather, holidays or small staff.

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***COUNCIL COMMENTS:***

Councilman Bass expressed his concerns regarding the meter reading process. Mr. Johnson advised he will speak with Councilman Bass to get this addressed.

Mayor Pro Tem Bert inquired about 12th Avenue. Mr. Johnson stated the town crew is working diligently to resolve the problem. Engineers have been on site. After a lengthy discussion, Mayor Hart advised this has been ongoing and the town needs to be proactive and possibly seek assistance from other entities.

Councilman Allen mentioned several sink holes located behind the old elementary school that are dangerous. This is a major concern with children walking in the area. Chief Smith advised the owners were notified by letter and they are aware of the problem.

Motion to pay bills was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn.

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***ATTEST:***

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Shelia A. Evans, Town Clerk