***HAVANA TOWN COUNCIL***

***REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING***

***JULY 27, 2021 6 pm***

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

***Member(s) Absent:*** Decorkus Allen and Warkeen Jordan

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Hart.

Invocation was led by Councilman Vickers followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2021 Special Meeting for the State Revolving Fund to approve Resolution No. 2021-04R was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2021 Regular Council Meeting was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

***VISITORS:***

Mr. Jerome Harris, 131 East 11th Avenue, advised that he has a new organization called Havana SPAIN (Special Project Against Illiteracy and Neglect). Mr. Harris gave an overview and mentioned he will be working with the Gadsden County Judicial System, the Havana Police Department and Sheriff’s office to assist people in need of transitioning back into society. Havana Spain is before the council seeking assistance with funding. Mayor Hart thanked Mr. Harris for his presentation.

Ms. Thelma Hickman, Principal for Havana Magnet School and Ms. Deborah Schaffer, Assistant Principal, introduced themselves and stated they look forward to partnering with the Town.

Mrs. Terri Paul, Wanderings, stated her concerns regarding the dumpster service for the downtown merchants. Her request is for the Town to continue collecting dumpster payments and have all dumpsters moved to the parking lots.

Ms. Stacy Henderson, 331 4th Street SE, appeared before the council to voice her concerns regarding the utility billing process and procedures. She also questioned the town’s extension policies. After a lengthy discussion, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve a one-month extension for the month of August. Motion carried.

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***OLD BUSINESS:***

N/A

***NEW BUSINESS:***

Mrs. Karen Kent, Downtown Improvement Committee member, stated she is requesting to gift three lighted sculptures to add to the Christmas décor. Wayfinding signs were also discussed. During the discussion, an example of the wayfinding signs was presented to the council by Mrs. Edna Hall Whitehead. Councilwoman Stone mentioned the signage seemed too large for the areas and inquired if they can be reduced in size. The committee members will contact the vendor.

Mrs. Kent stated she is also seeking approval to increase the annual payment to the Christmas Tree Farms for the upkeep and maintenance of the lighted sculptures. The amount will increase to $1,000 which will come from the Downtown Improvement committee funds. Motion to approve the increase to the Christmas Tree Farms was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Mr. Wayne Durrett, James Moore and Company, thanked the council for the opportunity to present the 2018-2019 financial audit. Mr. Durrett also thanked the town manager and all involved in the process. After his presentation, Mr. Durrett inquired if there were any questions or comments. With there being no comments, motion to approve the 2018-2019 Financial Audit was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Mr. Johnson mentioned the fire hydrant painting project and advised Havana Main Street and the Town are working to beautify the town. The fire hydrant painting designs were reviewed by the Town Manager, Chief of Police and Fire Chief. Motion to approve the fire hydrant designs was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

Chief Tracy Smith stated Havana Main Street presented several Special Event Permits for approval. They are requesting to host Wood Fest, Pumpkin Festival, A Quilt Show and Winterfest. Chief Smith advised he recommends approval. Chief also mentioned an additional permit that was submitted from Blessings of Hope Empowerment Outreach. Blessings of Hope is requesting to host a barbeque giveaway on this Saturday at 11am. Motion to approve the special event requests was made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion carried.

Chief Smith gave a brief update on the concerns for the appearance of the old elementary school. Contact was made with the owners to clean up the property. Chief stated he is also in contact with the owner of the car lot on US 27. He explained the difficulty of contacting owners that are out of town. Mayor Hart mentioned a

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constituent contacted her in regards to an old mobile home on Salters Street. Chief Smith advised that he will follow up.

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

Mr. Johnson mentioned the Waste Pro changes. Starting September 1, 2021, all commercial customers with dumpster service will contract directly with Waste Pro. All downtown businesses were notified of this change.

There are opportunities in the county to receive funding for broadband and infrastructure needs. Gadsden County Government is planning and discussing the potential use of federal funds for both infrastructure and broadband projects. Mayor Hart and Town Manager Johnson attended a meeting and will continue to update the council on the County’s role in increasing broadband throughout Havana and all of Gadsden County. Mr. Johnson also reported that the Wastewater Facility Plan and Lift Station projects were submitted to the county’s contactor that is assisting them with federal projects and funding.

The Town applied for a Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Technical Assistance Grant to fund a feasibility study for a bike trail in Havana but did not receive an award. Mr. Johnson advised that Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) has maintained focus on this project as a priority and will be working to conduct the feasibility study.

Mr. Johnson mentioned he attended the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA) annual conference. The conference was held on July 20th – 22nd and advised during the board meeting legislative matters were discussed. Currently, members of the Florida Legislature are contemplating proposing policies that would limit what local governments could transfer from the electric utility fund to fund general government operations. This is an issue that FMEA’s legislative team are working to mitigate. Mr. Johnson advised that he will monitor this matter and report any changes.

Congratulations to Mr. Howard McKinnon for being the second longest serving board member for Florida Municipal Power Agency (FMPA). During the FMPA board meeting that ran concurrent with the FMEA conference, Mr. McKinnon was recognized for serving fifteen (15) years as a board member for FMPA.

On July 13, 2021 the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) conducted a Regional Floodplain Management meeting. This training was mandatory for all local governments. The training was held to inform communities of the current assessment to update Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) in our area. The training is to ensure compliance with local governments that opt into the National Flood Insurance Program. Mr. Johnson stated Havana is in compliance and he is working with FDEM on

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updating our flood ordinance to ensure consistency with new state and federal flood provisions.

There are several areas on 12th Avenue East that the crew has been working on for some time now due to the erosion and washout on the street. Mr. Johnson advised the areas are barricaded for safety. The Town’s engineers are working with the town crew to find the problem. Also, an application was submitted to repave 3rd Street SE in 2020, but not funded. Mr. Johnson stated the application was resubmitted for funding in 2021, and the Town is now waiting to see if it will be awarded.

Mr. Johnson reported on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). There is no official word on the actual date as to when to expect the federal COVID relief funds that will be allocated to Havana. Mr. Johnson advised he will provide updates as they occur.

The July edition of the Apprise newsletter went out with this month’s utility bills.

The annual Florida League of Cities (FLC) conference will be held in Orlando, Florida, August 12th – 14th. All council members that are interested in attending and have not registered must contact the Town Clerk or Town Manager.

Mr. Johnson gave a brief update on the plans for the construction of the new Havana Police Department. Plans are still under review and being drawn by the architect and engineer. All updates will be reported accordingly.

***COUNCIL COMMENTS:***

Mayor Pro Tem Bert stated that Blessing of Hope Empowerment Outreach placed a thank you article in the newspaper.

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