

TOWN OF HAVANA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 29, 2022

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

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Roll Call: Mayor Janice Hart, Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert, Councilman Dwight Vickers, Councilman Tim Loughmiller, Councilman Decorkus Allen, Councilwoman Jenny Stone, Councilman Eddie Bass, 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 Councilman Dwight Vickers with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Janice Hart.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:**

Visitor#1, Dr. Gallop P. Franklin II of the Florida House of Representatives, District 8 introduces himself to the Town Council. He addresses the Council by stating that he went to high school with Councilwoman Jenny Stone. He said it was an honor to go to the Gadsden County Commission a few weeks ago and he said to them what he will say to the Town Council they are true leaders. People always ask what is a true leader? He said he believed that a true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the need of others. He thanked the Town Council for their local commitment to the needs of the Town of Havana. As a District 8 Representative we do represent all of Gadsden County and about half of Leon County. He stated the district wants to be a partner with all the local municipalities and cities within the entire district. The way he sees us being able to partner is when the Town Council decides what are the priorities for their communities he wants to give them the voice of action at the Capitol. He states so when we look at infrastructure, quality water, and economic development what can we do together to try to move those investments forward. He states he looks forward to continuing working with the different towns, cities, neighborhoods and municipalities. The Town Council thanks Dr. Franklin for coming out.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 25, 2022 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Mayor Hart asks if there was a motion to approve the October 25, 2022 Regular Council Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Councilman Bert to approve the minutes seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Minutes passed.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ITEM #1: REQUEST FOR LOT SPLIT AT 310 NORTH MAIN STREET (2ND READING)**

The Town Manager stated the Town has received a Zoning Application to split the lot at 310 North Main Street into three lots. This is the second and final reading and has been approved by the Apalachee Regional Planning Council. Motion was made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Councilwoman Stone to approve the lot split. Motion carried to approve the lot split at 310 North Main Street.

**ITEM #2: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS RECOMMENDATIONS BY PLANNING COUNCIL**

The Town Manager stated there was a workshop last night and three properties were reviewed. There was a Certificate of Appropriateness for 301, 308, and 306 North Main Street. All three were recommended and given approval. Motion was made to approve by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried to approve Certificate of Appropriateness for 301, 308, and 306 North Main Street.

**ITEM #3: DISCUSSION ON ORDINANCE 387 TO SCHEDULE WORKSHOP**

Ordinance 387 a consolidated proposed ordinance for the Central Business District was created and implemented in Spring of 2021. Since that time there have only been a few requests go through this process and the Town Manager states we have run into an issue that we did not anticipate specifically exterior changes painting of unpainted masonry that are not clearly and specifically outlined within the document as required in the application prior to work commencing. The ordinance does say any material change and there are some other language items in there that talk about paint color and painting as part of maintenance. It does not talk about previously unpainted masonry as an item under a material change. A lot of other areas that have a similar ordinance does specifically state that and requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Town's Attorney reviewed all the documentation and also stated this need to be clarified in the Ordinance since it was such a gray area and in order to give people the benefit of a doubt. The Town Manager requests to schedule a workshop to clarify what the Ordinance says. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to conduct a workshop. She also stated to treat the buildings like they are part of the Historic Registrar is not really appropriate because they are not so to have someone to follow guidelines as if they are is not very fair but we do need to probably set some guidelines that if they don't need a Certificate of Appropriateness that they are going to paint within a certain color that would be appropriate. Motion was made by Councilman Bass to approve an Ordinance 387 Workshop seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried and the workshop was set for January 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

**ITEM #4 DISCUSSION OF USE OF RESERVES**

The Town Manager states it should be no surprise from all the budget and council meetings that she has been to since she has been here that the Town is short of funds. In full transparency and disclosure the Town Manager states she likes to operate in sunshine. So she wanted to disclose that she has had to use some reserve funds for some of the months where just based on our checking account there was not enough to cover payroll and checks. Right now Ad Valorem is starting to come in so we are in a little better spot. We are going to have to take action to increase revenue to meet our monthly demands not withstanding the infrastructure issues and problems we continue to have. As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, we have had a substation breaker go, it is \$5,000 for the inspection and we are waiting on that now. The Town is running on a recloser. The new equipment would be about \$125,000.00 which does not really even scratch the surface of all the infrastructure needs. The Town Manager states since she has taken this position she has increased the electric rates which has increased the monthly revenue by about \$16,000. At the December Council meeting we will look at water and sewer rates which was noted in the utility bills that went out which is required by law. There was a travel request that came in and she states she will have to have a budget amendment for it. She says we did not budget for that expense and she needs to know where to pull those funds from. There are other expenses that have come through that are not budgeted. She states she needs Council direction on if we have unbudgeted expenses where should the money be coming from in the budget. Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked what the travel expense was for and the Town Manager stated that a travel expense came in for about eight hundred dollars for a trip in August of 2022. The current budget travel is two thousand dollars for the whole year for the whole town which she stated she cut travel by three thousand dollars this year. Councilman Allen stated he received approval to attend a conference for the Florida League of Cities he also stated it was done in the prior budget year. The Town Manager stated either way it was not budgeted for this year. Councilwoman Stone said since it was done in the prior years budget to take it from the travel budget for this year. Councilwoman Stone also stated that the budget was not decided and that the rule for travel by the Council was not enforced until the current budget year. Councilwoman Stone asked was there anything set in stone as far as the Council traveling she said she thought the Council would be asking ahead of time for approval for travel. The Town Manager said there was not and that it was kind of up in the air. The Mayor Pro Tem said that he thought the Council was going to approve Council travel and Councilwoman Stone agreed that is what she remembered. Councilwoman Stone stated that she agrees with the other Council that they agreed they would not travel until next budget year. Mayor Hart told the Town Manager to establish a travel policy in place.

**ITEM #5 ELECTRIC CUSTOMER CHARGE INCREASE – RESOLUTION 2022-03R3**

Looking at infrastructure issues specifically what it takes to maintain our electric system, the grid, equipment, the lines, transformers, breakers, the substation, every piece of it. It is very, very old and it is not easy to get those pieces when they break which we are finding out the hard way. In order to plan for those things to fail we are going to need to replace those items. In speaking with FMPA, our electric provider, increasing the customer charge for basically having power at a location it is a split cost that

**ITEM #5 ELECTRIC CUSTOMER CHARGE INCREASE – RESOLUTION 2022-03R3 (CONTINUED)**

covers infrastructure. They recommended raising it from \$6.60 to \$12.60 which is an additional \$6.00 per customer per month. Talquin's is \$32.50. The Town Manager states she hates to be the bearer of bad news and she knows we have hit the residents hard but we have had a lot of issues with things breaking. She states she does not know any other way to raise revenue other than raise taxes which we did and then increasing rates to cover the cost of things going wrong. Mayor Hart asked about what other municipalities are raising their rates to. The Town Manager stated that Quincy may raise theirs to \$10.00 that sort of gives you the range of what that cost may be. Paul Harbin of Circle Drive asked if there was a Contingency Plan in place for the repairs. The Town Manager said we would call Duke Energy and ask them to bring in a semi truck that has a generator to run our town very quickly. She states we have a second recloser that we found and it is expected to be up and running in the next two weeks. Paul asked what would be the turn around time if we had to execute that contingency plan, the Town Manager said she did not know. He asked if we wouldn't be in the dark until then. She stated she felt like there were other reclosers that would work around the nation but it would take us flying someone out to pick it up and to bring it back on a truck. Paul asked if we could order the \$125,000 recloser without having the funds? The Town Manager stated she did not know the answer to that question. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert and seconded by Councilwoman Stone to increase electric rates. Motion to approve Resolution 2022-03R3 Electric Customer Charge Increase passed. Mayor Pro Tem asked when the increase will take affect, the Town Manager said it will go before the PSC and will be in affect in 30 days. Mayor Hart asked the Town Manager to notify the customers.

**ITEM #6 FY 20 AUDIT**

The audit is complete and the Town Manager has noted the Plan of Action to the Auditors recommendations.

**ITEM #7 WELL 1 – MOTOR REPAIRS**

Well 1 is the most productive well we have in terms of the most amount of gallons per minute. The motor is going out quickly. We have moved the function over to Well 2 but that motor is going to have to be repaired so very rough estimates for the motor itself and the work it will take to get the motor pulled will be around \$20,000 dollars. A crane will have to be brought in to pull that motor and that is another expense which could increase the cost. There was a \$15,000 budgeted item for the SCADA system but we have found a radio system that is working to support that system. The Town Manager is requesting to postpone the replacement of the SCADA system and replace the money for it with the money for the motor repair of Well 1. This would be paid for with Rescue Funds it does qualify as a water project. The maintenance of the system could be covered under Southern Water Services.

**ITEM #7 WELL 1 – MOTOR REPAIRS (CONTINUED)**

Mayor Hart asked if the Project Manager from Southern Water Services expense is included in the \$20,000 fee quoted. The Town Manager stated his expense would be totally separate and she does not know what that will be. She stated she has discussed it with the Project Manager and it would be about 25 hours at an estimated rate of \$95/hour. David Vause was a great resource on staff that could have handled this however he has retired. Motion was made by Councilman Eddie Bass to transfer funds to get this well operational and to hire Southern Water Services to oversee motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion passed to use Rescue Act Funds for Well 1 Motor Repairs and to use Southern Water Services to oversee the maintenance of the system.

**ITEM #8 HOLIDAY BONUSES**

The Town Manager stated that the Town has historically given the employees a \$100 holiday bonus as a small token for their hard work. This has been done for years and years, this year has been extremely tumultuous financially and the town employees are doing everything they can to provide the same level of service to our customers on very little funding. The amount of the bonuses would be \$3800.00 dollars. Motion was made by Councilman Loughmiller and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion carried to approve \$100 holiday bonuses for all town staff.

**ITEM #9 SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT – TERRANCE ROBERTS**

Chief Smith approaches the Council with a Special Events Permit for the Annual Martin Luther King Parade in January of 2023. The parade will go up Highway 27 to Carver then turn and go to the Old Havana Historic High School. It will be on January 16 and will start about 10:00 a.m. There will be no impact on traffic southbound and one lane will be closed. All permits have been received from DOT. Motion made by Councilman Bass to approve Special Events Permit for Martin Luther King Parade on January 16, 2023, seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried to approve the Permit.

**ITEM #10 TOWN STAFF – HOLIDAYS**

Recently Governor Desantis approved the closing of all state offices an additional two days on December 23, and December 30, 2022. In keeping with the Town's history of following the states lead for holidays, the Town Manager requests that we update the Town policy to give the authority to the Town Manager to follow the guidelines of the state lead. Councilwoman Stone moved to approve the Town's history of allowing employees the same holidays as mirrored by the Governor's office and she also moved to approve that the Town Manager being allowed to enforce the Towns lead on office closure as directed by the Governor, motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bert. Motion carried to approve holiday office closure and Town Managers right to update policy of office closure mirrored by the Governors office. Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked if the Town Council could change their Council meeting to December 20<sup>th</sup>? Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bert to move meeting to December 20<sup>th</sup> and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried to move the Council meeting to December 20<sup>th</sup>.

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**ITEM #11 CITIZEN COMPLAINT – SHERRON FLAGG (EMAIL)**

The Town Manager stated that an email complaint was forwarded and dated November 18<sup>th</sup> about Main Street. The Town Manager's comments and responses are highlighted. She states her door is always open to anyone with any issues they may have. Mr. Lombardo takes the floor, he states he does not wish to speak about the Flagg allegations because the majority of them are false. He states if you have an issue with Havana Main Street then he will certainly respond to that issue. Main Street was chartered five years ago and the reason for Main Street was to put together a group of people that focused on the revival of Downtown Havana. At that time, downtown was suffering, business were dying, survivors were barely hanging on. If there was no action there was a strong possibility it would return to a virtual ghost town. Main Street America in its 900 Main Streets was created to address the issues that was causing the rural downtowns to die. Main Streets had a unified method of filling that position. We have followed their methods and adopted their objectives in our Mission Statement. We successfully produce about 40 events a year, people come, they spend money, and they frequently return. We put about \$600,000 in grants in design standards and ordinances. We have worked very closely with the Town financially, physically and mentally. Councilwoman Stone states that the email this person has sent is stating things wholly inaccurate and very accusatory. Media outlets have received an additional email other than the one given here tonight that accuses the council of being racist and criminally active which are wholly inaccurate. She has definitely slandered the Council and she should stop. She stated she would be glad to work together with the constituent with any actual problems that she may have.

**REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

HPD vehicles, two cars have been ordered with Enterprise by the Chief. They were \$169/month cheaper than budgeted. One of our employees recently resigned, Courtney James, she is one of our front line workers so there is an opening if you know of anyone interested please tell them to apply. A project has been in the works for awhile to repaint the substation it is \$7500 cheaper than the \$30,000 we had budgeted. The Havana Fire Department is having their annual Christmas banquet this week. I want to take the time to thank the Volunteer Fire Department for their time. There was in the budget a fire extraction tool, the Jaws of Life, the quote has come in higher than anticipated. It is \$30,000 for a new set, \$20,000 for the demo tools that are basically refurbished. Chief Beach is working on a project of about \$15,000 which would save \$5,000. Havana Police Department is requesting help from the Council Members with the Toys for Tots Holiday Shopping trip it is scheduled for December 21<sup>st</sup>. Sorting will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please see if you are able to help.

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**RECOGNITION OF EACH COUNCIL MEMBER**


Councilman Tim Loughmiller had nothing.  
Councilman Dwight Vickers had nothing.  
Councilman Nick Bert had nothing.  
Councilman Decorkus Allen had nothing.  
Councilwoman Jenny Stone had nothing  
Councilman Eddie Bass had nothing.  
Mayor Janice Hart had nothing.

**Motion to Pay the Bills**

Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to pay the bills, seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion passed.

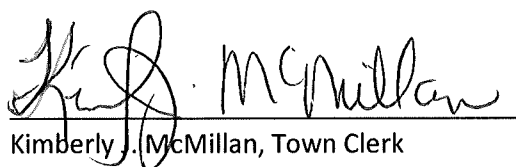
**Motion to Adjourn**

Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion passed.  
Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.



Presiding Town Council Official

ATTEST:



Kimberly J. McMillan, Town Clerk