

TOWN OF HAVANA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 30, 2022

**Member(s) Present:** Mayor Pro Tem Nick Bert, Councilman Dwight Vickers, Councilman Tim Loughmiller, Councilman Eddie Bass, Councilwoman Jenny Stone

**Member(s) Absent:** Mayor Janice Hart and Councilman Decorkus Allen

Mayor Pro Tem Bert called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Invocation was given by Chief Tracy Smith followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Jim Brennan of Post 84.

Roll call of all Council Members and the Town Manager. Five of the seven council members answered roll call with two members Mayor Hart and Councilman Allen being absent. The Town Manager also answered roll call.

**Recognition of Visitors:**

**Visitor #1, Malissa Collins of Gocki's**

Malissa Collins states that her and her husband operate three businesses in the downtown area located at 206 NW 1<sup>st</sup>, 208 NW 1<sup>st</sup>, and 102 8<sup>th</sup> West. Two of the three business are restaurants and they operate a third business as an event venue. She states she is here to ask the Council to take into consideration when someone comes in to the Town to hold an event or parade downtown and how it impacts the businesses. Some events like the Farmers Market, Sidewalk Sale, Car Show, they actually help our business. However, the large festivals can be hard to navigate when roads and lots are closed, we have trouble getting to our businesses. Pumpkinfest last year and the staging for Winterfest was brought in on Friday before the actual event on Saturday and it stayed until the next week. We get approximately 50-60 customers in for lunch on those Thursday and Fridays and approximately 80-100 people on Saturday therefore parking becomes a problem. When the customers cannot get to us and the roads are closed we have to close and we lose that income. She states she is not asking for the Council to deny an event but that there be some type of procedure in place for the merchants to know far enough in advance that the parking lots are not going to be blocked off any longer than needed or if they could find less used lots for events. Ms. Collins thanks the council for their time.

Councilman Bass recommends the Town Crew makes sure they remove any bleachers or anything that could be taking up parking lot space.

Mayor Pro Tem Bert thanked Ms. Collins and stated the Council would take her comments into consideration when making future decisions.

**Recognition of Visitors (Continued):**

**Visitor #2, Tony Lombardo of Havana Main Street**

Tony Lombardo states that he is President of Havana Main Street located at 101 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He says that he is here to discuss the 100% cut in Havana Main Street's Annual Budget. It is a major hit for media budget needs. He states it has been explained to him that the Town now has a \$400,000 annual deficit and major cuts need to be made and he certainly understands that. He states he guesses where his disappointment occurs is not in the need of questioning cutting the budget but it is with Main Street not being an essential service. He says he comes to that conclusion because it is not a 20% or 50% cut but a 100% cut. The next four months are the downtowns busiest season. Main Street will be planning, producing and implementing six different major events with about \$18-\$20,000 dollars being spent for marketing these events. They will require 100's of volunteers, most of them from the community. We have been very successful in getting them engaged in the Town and in the events we put on. I had previously discussed with the Town the need for economic development. Your budget for downtown is \$9,000 out of a \$6,000,000 million dollar budget including grants as Kendrah has explained to him is about 15/100 of a percent of your total budget. He states if we were part of this town would you cut us a 100%? He says he is not here to challenge cutting the deficit or your cutting Main Streets budget, I am asking you to not cut it 100%. Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked if the Council had any comments. Mayor Pro Tem Bert states that none of the Council likes cutting the non-profits but that we have got to take a pause this year. The Mayor Pro Tem states they have cut every single department the Town including the Police Department. Hopefully things will be back to where the Town can help again next year. Councilman Bass states we cut every organization. We do not want to turn into Quincy. Next year hopefully we will be stronger than before.

**Visitor #3, Lenora Mazon of L & M Smith Cares**

Visitor #3 Lenora Mazon has a non-profit organization called L & M Smith Cares located at 115 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She states that she knows there is a lot of non-profit organizations in the Town of Havana. She says that the non-profits some of them are caring for the elderly and disabled that cannot be reached out to by the Town. The non-profits usually reach and get grants to assist them. She asks how can the Town help if it is not with funding is there some other way they can assist the non-profits. Mayor Pro Tem Bert suggests that Ms. Mazon talk to the Town Manager. The Town Manager recommends turning a letter of her request for funding or help. Councilman Bass suggests getting grant funds from the state. Councilwoman Stone stated that Ms. Mazon needed to let the Council know how they could help even if it is not financially.

**Recognition of Visitors (Continued):**

**Visitor #4, Ron Tiller of 302 Live Oak Lane**

Visitor #4, Ron Tiller of 302 Live Oak Lane asked if the Town gets any sales tax revenue generated by the merchants. Mayor Pro Tem Bert answered yes they do and that we do not get it all. Mr. Tiller asks if there were any other non-profits that brings money into to the Town of Havana other than Main Street? Mayor Pro Tem Bert answered by saying the Havana History Museum does and the HCDC does. They all do something for the community. Mr. Tiller asked the Town Council to consider that if the Council cuts Main Street off and they have to shut down then we cut the Town off because then you will not get that tax revenue. Mayor Pro Tem Bert said they do support Main Street that the Council and Town could not support them monetarily this year.

**REQUEST TO APPROVE MINUTES**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Bass to approve the July 26, 2022 minutes. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

N/A

**NEW BUSINESS**

**AGENDA ITEM #1**

**Certificate of Appropriateness Recommendation by Planning Committee for Mark Pettus located at 306-308 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW.** Mayor Pro Tem Bert states this is an application for an Irish Pub to be built in Havana. The Planning Committee met prior to this meeting and the Council has approved the application. Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked the Town Manager to comment. The Town Manager stated that the Council did meet before the Council Meeting and did recommend approval of this application. Motion was made to approve by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Loughmiller. Motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #2**

**ARPA SURVEY**

Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked the Town Manager to brief the Council on this item. The Town Manager states that there has been discussion in workshops and meetings but there has been no vote. Generally this conversation has happened, happened, and happened, but now we are going to bring it forward before the Council to collectively discuss it. The Town Manager asks if it is the goal that the Council has any interest in doing a survey of the residents for potential uses of rescue funds. She states she spoke to Mayor Hart shortly before the meeting and she wanted to make sure if she wasn't available to speak that her thought or intention was clear in that she is requesting this happen in the spirit of inclusion that we are asking the residents their opinion because she wants to be inclusive of all community members. The Town Manager states she says this on behalf of Mayor Hart and she says she will say that right up front. The Council has discussed this a few different times. This will be a two step question, the first is does the Council have any interest in doing a survey of the residents at this time and the use of rescue funds. Collectively the Council has discussed or decided previously in Budget Workshops to use some of the rescue funds to balance the budget because we have a loss of revenue so we can use the funds to offset some of the deficit that we have in balancing the budget so that is what we will do for this fiscal year. That does leave some remaining funds so the question is still on the table. The Town Manager asks the question do we still want to hold some of these funds in reserve, do we want to go ahead and survey the residents to see if they have a different interest in the use of that fund, so I ask for your opinion on it. If the Council is interested in doing a survey it can be sent out with the utility bills. The cost would be \$175.00 for a black and white survey or \$365.00 for a color survey to be included as an insert with all utility bills. This will be a paper survey that customers could drop back off with their utility bill if they so choose. The first question will be for the Council's discussion if the Council is interested in doing a survey at this time or at some time in the future and if the Council is so inclined to do the survey are you good with the sample survey attached or would you want some other recommendations. Those would be the two items for discussion here.

Mayor Pro Tem Bert states it is open for discussion and he also says that he will say first that he wishes to postpone until at least after the first quarter of the new Fiscal Year just to see if we are headed in the right direction because of the same reason we have been talking about we have got to build our revenues back up. First the Council has got to make sure we are trending in the right direction, he states that is his suggestion.

**AGENDA ITEM #2 (Continued)**  
**ARPA SURVEY**

Councilwoman Stone comments that the Council recommend using some of this money next budget cycle so she states that she does not even think the next quarter of the next year is even necessary to even think about it. She thinks maybe during so or after the next budget meetings or whenever the Council is going to decide needing those funds for what the Council has to do for the things that have been put off and have to be done next year, things that will be put off one more year and we can use this money for that. Then, she states we should do so. She thinks it does not make any sense to ask people before we even figure if we need to use it for something to ask people how they would prefer us to use it. Fifty percent of the responses could be to recommend the Council using it for something they cannot do. She states it is not a good idea to ask until the Council can confirm that there is additional funds because right now it is not additional. We may need it, it is possible we may need it in the next budget cycle. She recommends moving to postponing until the next budget discussion and the Council decides whether we need it or not.

Councilman Vickers recommends to address it again at the next budget meeting unless the Council suggests raising the utility rates sky high to get us out of the hole.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to postpone the ARPA Survey until next budget discussion. Motion was seconded by Councilman Loughmiller. Motion carried to postpone.

**AGENDA ITEM #3**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – GRANT ADMINISTRATION SERVICES**

The Town Manager states that the Town of Havana recently published an RFP for Grant Administration Services. We have one submission by The Management Experts who we already have a contract with. We piggybacked off of the City of Chattahoochee's contract but in the interest of making sure that we secure them we went ahead and did an RFP for services so that we can issue a contract of our own. Management Experts was the only person that submitted for the RFP. Management Experts received a 100 out of the possible 100 points. We will sign a task order for anything that we are requesting this company to do. There is no payment due until we ask for services to be rendered or as we need them. The Town Manager requests that the Council award a contract to Management Experts for Grant Administration. Motion made to approve the Grant Administration Contract motion was made by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried to approve the Grant.

**ITEM #4**

**SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT- HAVANA MAIN STREET MUSIC FEST**

Chief Smith presents to the Council a Special Events Permit for the Havana Main Street Music Fest to take place on October 22, 2022 at 5:30 P. M. The Chief states HPD will close/barricade the downtown streets and Town Parking Lots. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to approve the Special Events Permit and was seconded by Councilman Vickers. Motion carried.

**ITEM #5**

**SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT – HAVANA MAIN STREET WINTER FEST**

Chief Smith presents to the Council a Special Events Permit for the Havana Main Street Winter Fest to take place on December 10, 2022 starting at 7:00 A.M. The Chief states this is a yearly event that usually takes place downtown. The Chief states that HPD will close/barricade the downtown streets and Town Parking Lots as it has been done in the past. Councilwoman Stone comments about the entire street being shut down and the snow not being put in front of someone's business for safety of the community. After the event the snow will be removed by the Town Crew with the backhoe. Councilman Bass recommended to put the snow between the HPD parking lot and the old Alexander building location. The Council agreed the location of the snow will be placed in the Gocki's parking lot. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone to approve the Winterfest Special Event with the exception of the parking lot being cleared by noon on Sunday the next day. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vickers. Motion carried with exception.

**ITEM #6**

**SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT – POST 84 AMERICAN LEGION – MEET YOUR CANDIDATES**

The Chief presents with Jim Brennan of Post 84 a Special Event Permit to take place at the Hazel Baker Community Center to meet all the candidates running for office. The date of the event is October 15, 2022 at 9:00 A. M. Mayor Pro Tem asked if all the candidates in Gadsden County will be invited. Mr. Brennan stated that all local candidates are invited. Motion made by Councilwoman Stone to approve the Special Events Permit for Post 84 and was seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

**ITEM #7**

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL, APPLICATION TO PLACE BANNERS ON RIGHT OF WAY (US 27)**

The Town Manager states that this agenda item seeks approval by the Town to allow Havana Main Street to place street banners on the right-of-way of US 27/SR-63 Main Street for two festivals, Pumpkin Fest and Winter Fest. The FDOT requires local government entities approval before they will consider these requests. Motion was made by Councilman Bass to approve banner application and was seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

## **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

**Update on the 2019-2020 Audit (extension approved to 09/30/22).** The Town Manager states that the Town is still working diligently on the extension. A gentleman from FMPA who is our electric provider he is a CPA and is working on site to help us get through some of the audit issues.

**FDOT M-SCOP AWARD – 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE (2023-2024).** The Town Manager states that the Town has received notice that they have received the FDOT M-SCOP Award to repave 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE. She states it was a little bit more so she has updated that line item in the budget and sent that back out to the Council. It will probably not be effective until next year about this same time.

**GENERATORS AT THE LIFT STATION.** The Town Manager says that the Town just received approval on an award amount for the matching portion of the grant for installing the generators at the lift station. We have not been able to move forward on that because we have been waiting on this 25% matching grant. Once received we can install the generators for the lift station.

**FINANCE MANAGER.** The Town Manager states a new Finance Manager was hired on August 26, 2022 and he is doing wonderfully.

**STATE OF THE CEMETERY.** The Town Manager has had some calls from customers about the state of the Cemetery. Historically we have hired out for the maintaining of it. We have in the past couple of years taken that back on and it has been a struggle to maintain it like it should be. It is super detailed work. The Town Manager recommends that the Council consider in the future the outsourcing of the Cemetery grounds.

## **RECOGNITION OF EACH COUNCIL MEMBER**

Councilman Tim Loughmiller had no comments.

Councilman Vickers inquired about the roof at the Fire Station. Councilman Vickers asked if there was money in those funds to fix this problem. The Town Manager stated there was. The Town Manager stated she has not received any quotes to repair the roof at the Fire Station. Councilwoman Stone stated that this is a concern of putting off repairs and maintenance of things that need to be fixed. She stated she would be interested in using ARP monies to handle this fairly soon.

**RECOGNITION OF EACH COUNCIL MEMBER (CONTINUED)**

Mayor Pro Tem Bert asked about the status of the Havana Elementary School. He asked where we were at with the fines and the payment of them. The Town Manager stated the company is getting a \$100/day fines and it is about \$3000/month. Councilwoman Stone asked what is the next step. The Town Manager stated since no fees/fines have been paid after a duration of time the next step would be to do a lien on the property. The Chief has been following up with the company. The Chief recommended that when the Town assesses \$10,000 in fines a lien would be recommended.

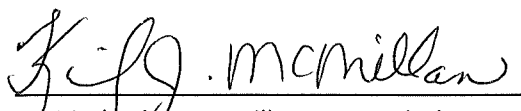
Councilwoman Stone had no comments.

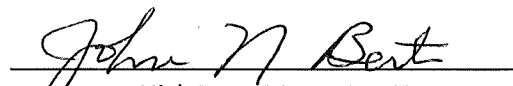
Councilman Bass addresses the attendees of the meeting that he hopes they realize what this Council has gone through over the last four months trying to put the budget together. He states the Council struggles with everything but that the Council's heart is in this community and every one of the Council hopes they have done the right thing. Please bear with us as we hope that next year we will be back and the Council will be able to do stuff. We cannot drain our reserves down. He explained how the Council does not get paid that they are doing this out of their heart for this community. The Council is trying to do the best for this town.

Motion was made to pay bills. Motion was made by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn. Motion was made to adjourn by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Bass at 7:10 P. M.

ATTEST:

  
Kimberly J. McMillan, Town Clerk

  
Nick Bert, Mayor Pro Tem