

TOWN OF WELAKA
Regular Town Council Meeting
January 11, 2022, at 6:00 PM

MINUTES

1. **CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:00 PM.**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INVOCATION** led by Council President Finch.
3. **ROLL CALLED** by Meghan Allmon, Town Clerk: Mayor Jamie Watts - Present; Council President Jessica Finch - Present; Councilwoman Tonya Long - Present; Councilwoman Marianne Milledge Present; Councilwoman Kathy Washington - Present via telephone conference call.
4. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** - Motion made by Councilwoman Washington to correct item E (vote count was 4 to 1). Motion to adopt minutes of regular meeting December 12, 2021, made by Council President Finch. Councilwoman Milledge seconded. All in favor, motion carried 5-0.
5. **APPROVAL OF CURRENT AGENDA** Motion to accept agenda as published in the Palatka Daily News made by Council President Finch, seconded by Councilwoman Milledge. All in favor, motion carried 5-0.

6. **RECOGNITIONS**

Mayor Watts recognized Councilwoman Washington for completing Part 2 of training with the Institute of Municipal Officials.

Mayor Watts recognized Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon, and Deputy Town Clerk, Cara McCoy, for completing their 4-hour FLC Ethics training and received their FDLE Security Awareness certifications.

Pauline Kinney was formally sworn to and executed the code enforcement oath for the Town of Welaka by Town Attorney Patrick Kennedy. Mayor Watts stated code enforcement is about compliance not punishment. Her primary job first is to work with those out of compliance to get in compliance. Not a money maker for the town. We are making a brochure and door hanger. Education is the best mode of enforcement.

7. **RESOLUTIONS**

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-01_ A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF WELAKA AMENDING RESOLUTION 2012-02R PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES. Read by Mayor Watts. Motion to adopt by Council President Finch seconded by Councilwoman Milledge. All in favor, motion carried 5 to 0.

8. **PROCLAMATIONS**

PROCLAMATION NO. 2022-01_ ARBOR DAY_2022. Read in entirety by Mayor Watts. Motion to accept made by Councilwoman Milledge seconded by Councilwoman Long. All in favor, adopted

5-0. Council President Finch spoke of the significance of an Arbor Day Proclamation. Welaka Women's Club will be celebrating January 22 at 11 am at Jefferson Park in Welaka. Planting two trees in honor of Arbor Day and the late Mayor Gordon Sands.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

10. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Bob Trevor 404 Sportsman Drive - Mr. Trevor stated that he believes Lazy Days only pays \$49.90 and reiterated his continued frustrations regarding water usage. Mayor: We are conducting an asset survey (FL rural water) not prepared to make any decisions on rates until the results of that survey. Council President Finch - Welaka Lodge pays a commercial rate which is much higher than residential rate. Council President Finch inquired as to whether he has had a well on his previous properties, perhaps that is why he has not seen before now. Councilwoman Milledge stated if pressure washing or something that uses excessive water not going into the sewer, call the utility department for sewer credit. Per Mayor Watts, Council will await the report from Rural Water before taking any action because the purpose of the rate study is to address these matters.

11. PRESENTATIONS/ REPORTS TO TOWN COUNCIL

Clu Wright- Putnam County Fire Inspector – (Copy of town 1997 Fire Ordinance provided for reference.) Mr. Wright suggested updating the Ordinance with current state statutes. Councilwoman Milledge - surprised that we have not had inspections in over 5 years. Councilwoman Milledge suggested sending postcards to remind people. Wright suggested sending the notice of inspections with occupational licenses when they are renewed annually (Renewals are October every year). Council President Finch - Lightfoot only checked fire extinguishers. Councilwoman Washington asked what percentage of places were not in compliance. Wright - 100% failed initial inspections, upon reinspection some made corrections, probably 80% had not. Mayor Watts - we are moving forward with an interlocal agreement with the Putnam County fire department. Wright reiterated the importance of re-doing the ordinance and offered his assistance. Wright - Per Florida state statutes and Fire Prevention code, all municipalities must enforce minimum fire safety code which is updated every three years. Question from resident - has a trailer that is out back and will be cooking in there and taking food into the main building. Mr. Wright - you would still have to follow fire code. If it is a fryer away from a building you wouldn't worry about that but if in a building or trailer, you would have to comply. An open trailer would still be subject to fire code. Council President Finch - if our inspector is not doing new inspections, who is responsible? Wright - still needs inspection by law to obtain a certificate of occupancy, applies to commercial, not residential buildings. Mayor Watts - stated that the pavilion kitchen also lacked range hood, he will get quotes for residential hood and bring that to the Council.

12. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- Sewer Credits for Businesses on the Welaka Utility System - Councilwoman Milledge motioned to accept; Council President Finch seconded. All in favor, motion carried 5 to 0.

13. NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: NONE

- Town Matters
- Zoning Recommendations
- Utility Matters

14. DEPARTMENT REPORTS/STATUS

- General Maintenance: JOHN STUART- could not attend the meeting.

• Utility Department: TYLER BUFORD- vacuum system updates - still in motion on pumps. We are waiting on water separators to be delivered. Angel will be the one installing those and his is professional. Sewer plant-in progress as well, replaced blower motor last week. Lift stations are all running well. Tyler found a backflow preventer and explained benefits on installing. Per Tyler - When the lift station went down this last time, it prevented backflow into homes. The cause of the backflow issue seems to be overcollection of single use cleaning rags (Clorox wipes are not biodegradable). Still moving forward with everything else we have in motion for vacuum stations. We also have quotes for insta-valves to help isolate mains. Veritable Frequency Drive- will help prolong all equipment by ramping up to meet demand and then back down. VFD will save wear on breakers, controls etc. Councilwoman Washington - does that fan run constantly? Tyler- Yes, it does. Councilwoman Washington - status of establishing SOP? Tyler - Currently working on SOPs not complete yet but almost done. Councilwoman Washington- status of mold in shed? Tyler - Mold has not been removed yet, we are in searching of a new shed (possibly a FEMA trailer). Mayor Watts - we are trying to get a FEMA trailer, have contacted FEMA but have not had a response yet. Councilwoman Washington - will that shed have a bathroom facility? Mayor Watts - Yes, trailer will have a bathroom, office area and air conditioning. Councilwoman Washington - with that are we talking six months, what is the time frame on that? Mayor Watts - we will be using a trailer until we get another. Mayor Watts - Would like to see it completed this year if FEMA responds, hopefully by the end of 2022. Councilwoman Washington requested a deadline on the SOP because it is very important that if anything happens someone has to step in, they should know what to do and what has been done step by step. Mayor Watts - this is also part of the purpose behind the asset survey we are working to compile.

15. MAYOR & TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS

- Mayor Watts: MUNICODE- Deputy Clerk will send Municode email tomorrow to council for review. Mayor asked council members to only familiarize themselves with Municode, not look for changes as it is not yet complete. Moving forward ordinances will be written and updated from within Municode. Deputy Clerk to organize a noise ordinance workshop. NEFL regional council would like to bring comp plan and recommendations to the Zoning Board next month and then the Council in March. Identified 4 ordinances that need to be updated. Meeting with engineers on Friday about the new sewer plant and they've said what we have is useless. Contacted commissioner Pickens, he reached out to the procurement agent for Putnam County, and they are sending us copies of their contracts for paving, etc. Golf cart signs are now on 308-B & 309 - no carts allowed.
- Council President Finch - Re: cemetery and historical committees - we've lost several people. Town wants to open committees to anyone - must have interest first, otherwise

they would not show up for meetings. Cemetery committee's goal is to list Oakwood Cemetery on historical register. Crescent City JROTC members will be coming out in February to help clean up the cemetery. If anyone is interested, please contact Council President Finch. Meetings are usually after the Friends of Welaka meetings (9 a.m. on the second Monday each month). Citizens Advisory Committee discussed instead of a county-wide clean-up with Keep Putnam Beautiful, Friends of Welaka would like to do quarterly clean-ups in January, April, July, October. Had 35 volunteers this last weekend.

- Councilwoman Milledge - we are having problems with large heritage trees being cut @ 681 Third Avenue. Maybe put tree info in the newsletter or provide a copy of the tree ordinance to residents. People need to come to Town Hall and need to find info on what trees are protected. Mayor Watts - some sort of flier - golf cart, tree ordinance, etc.... to new residents, something to inform. Educate.

- Councilwoman Long - thanked Chief for his assistance with trespassing patrons from Long's Cabins. He went above and beyond.

- Councilwoman Washington - question for Town Attorney regarding the committee meetings - it was suggested that she not attend because of perceived intimidation. Per Attorney, when the committees present something to the council, councilmembers should be learning the info at the same time. Town Attorney clarified the meetings that Councilwoman Washington refers to are: Code Enforcement and Zoning Board meetings and he confirmed that elected officials should not be attending because the Boards should be separate. If members are attending board meetings, minutes should be kept. This will be the first month we have separate meetings. Again, it's not technically illegal, but it does not present well to the public. Mayor Watts - Patrick you have recommended that the Council not be present at board meetings? Kennedy - Yes. Mayor Watts - We discussed the fact that the Charter Review Committee proposed workshops with Council members present to give input along the way. Goal is to have the Charter review completed by September of this year. Council members should not attend Codes or Zoning Board meetings; however, Advisory Boards are acceptable.

Mayor Watts - we are having an issue with Mayor Sands plaque due to supply chain issues, however we also have tree planting in his memory. We will have something to acknowledge Mayor Sands Day. Councilwoman Long - stated that she is getting complaints from River Hill, they don't have lights and want streetlights. Mayor Watts has reached out to Clay Electric, and they are to contact the Town Clerk about turning lights back on. Mayor Watts has also spoken to the head of the HOA and will determine when HOA will take over costs. The mailbox issue was also brought up. Residents cannot get mail. The County requests cluster mailboxes, and the postmaster is working with us to set this up. Retaining walls on properties - we are awaiting drawings to allow permits. Councilwoman Milledge - they have their own inspector who talks to our inspector? Mayor Watts - yes that is correct. Our inspector is not going to permit the entire wall, but individual lots. Mayor Watts will be speaking to them Thursday to hopefully alleviate their concerns, but if not, they are welcome to attend a Town Meeting.

16. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORTS

Someone wants to sell property mortgaged to Welaka (Grant property) Rufus & Elemae Walls at 300 11th street. They were there for five years. Attorney drafting satisfaction on Mortgage. Council President Finch motioned to allow the Mayor to execute a Satisfaction of Mortgage once prepared.

Seconded by Councilwoman Milledge. All in favor, motion carried 5 to 0. Also, we are “dangerously close” to having golf cart ordinance ready.

17. POLICE CHIEF REPORTS

Police department has received the new Ford SUV and everything is working well. Our check has cleared so we are waiting on FDLE JAG to review and send their check. Both cars have a Cardiac AED Machine now because we are a rural community, we will have life-saving capabilities in both vehicles. Stop sign and golf cart sign installation completed last week. Family movie night Feb 11, 6:30 pm at Jefferson Park with Friends of Welaka, barring any rain delays. Council President Finch - VFD offered use of their facility in case of rain. Council President Finch - asked about the status of hiring a second officer. Chief - we’ve eliminated one but are having difficulty finding candidates who want to work a couple of days per week.

Mayor Watts commented, Re: incoming Bass Pro resort - he intends to have a meeting about annexing into the town. Town Attorney Kennedy - suggested that we think about establishing a Utility District Chapter.

18. TOWN CLERK REPORTS

Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk both completed their 5-hour FLC Ethics courses the day after our last meeting.

19. ADJOURN at 7:38 pm by Mayor Watts.