

TOWN OF WELAKA
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 10, 2022 at 6:00 PM
Honorable Willie Washington, Jr. Town Council
Room 400 4th Avenue, Welaka, FL 32193

MINUTES

1. **CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:00 PM**
2. **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
2. INVOCATION – Prayer led by Decan Tim Praut, referred from Councilwoman Finch.
3. **ROLL CALLED** by Meghan Allmon, Town Clerk: Mayor Jamie Watts-Present; Council President Jessica Finch-Present; Councilwoman Tonya Long-Present; Councilwoman Kathy Washington-Present; Councilwoman Marianne Milledge-Present; Town Attorney Patrick Kennedy-Present.
4. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** - April 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes. Council President Finch made a motion to accept, and Councilwoman Milledge seconded. Passed 5/0.
5. **APPROVAL OF CURRENT AGENDA** – Councilwoman Milledge made a motion to accept, and Councilwoman Long seconded. Passed 5/0.
6. **RECOGNITIONS** - None
7. **RESOLUTIONS** – None
8. **PROCLAMATIONS**
 1. **PROCLAMATION NO. 2022-06** – Proclaiming May as Cancer Awareness Month. Council President Finch read aloud. Councilwoman Milledge made a motion to accept, and Council President Finch. Passed 5/0.
 2. **PROCLAMATION NO. 2022-07** – Proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Councilwoman Long read aloud. Mayor read the last paragraph. Councilwoman Washington made a motion to accept, and Councilwoman Milledge seconded. Passed 5/0.
 3. **PROCLAMATION NO. 2022-08** – Proclaiming May as Historic Preservation Month. Councilwoman Washington read aloud. Council President Finch made a motion to accept, and Councilwoman Milledge seconded. Passed 5/0.

Mayor is a first responder in FL and he was called to go to the Pulse Night Club to assist in removing the murdered victims from the club and also help notify their loved ones. Three weeks later Mayor was at Publix and saw a magazine, remembered their families, and it hit him hard. He went to mental health counseling, and it helped him tremendously.

Council President Finch spoke and said that we need to preserve and take care of the Town's cemetery as it's very historic and special.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **ORDINANCE NO. 2022-07 – Fee Schedule: (FIRST READ)** Council President Finch made a motion to accept and Councilwoman Milledge seconded. Passed 5/0.

Town Attorney said why he added the current Fee Schedule and that we need to use this and reflect it. Planning and Zoning Fees are missing and there's so many, they require lots of time and different costs. Advertising costs are very high. As we are getting more requests in, we will be addressing these fees in the future for zoning and planning.

Councilwoman Washington asked if these are all current fees?

Town Attorney said, no these are all brand new. He used the City of Crescent City fees and we adjusted them as necessary and custom to our Town and usage. This is just a starting point for our discussions in getting something drafted up to start.

Council President Finch said primarily Schedule D is what we're looking at. The other fees are standard are already in place.

Mayor said we're doing an asset rate study so we may be able to place some of these impact fees in line where appropriate.

Councilwoman Washington - residents get impact fees? Patrick said no. They're typically for new development.

Councilwoman Washington - can residents come by the Town Hall and get a copy of the fees?

Mayor, yes, but they may be changed. This is a draft.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - Lenore Toole (Kiwi) spoke regarding the yard debris and foliage in the Town. What's the policy for people to cut and leave and burn? It's all on Elm Street and it's the Town's expense. Mayor stopped the leaving of whole trees by the road. Waste Pro picks up some and the Town gets the rest?

Kiwi - The corner or front and Oak is piled.

Kiwi said it's lying all over the place and he's had prior burning issues with this same person.

Kiwi - small debris and brush is ok but not large tree chunks.

Mayor said he will go by there tomorrow, on 5/11/22, and let the person know that this large amount is not allowed.

Mayor said that if you pay someone to cut your trees down, they must haul it off. The Town cannot, due to it being dangerous and damaging our equipment

11. PRESENTATIONS/ REPORTS TO TOWN COUNCIL

1. **Scott Turnbull with Citizens Advisory Board Update (He referenced his handout & map)**

Downtown map provided and outlined. CRA - Community Re-Development Area

Damaged areas that the Town could use, the taxes or money from that property can be put into a fund and can be used within 3 years of collecting it. CC did the same thing, and the funds grew

CRA can be designated for small shops and larger shops/restaurants/businesses, etc.

The larger this CRA is, the larger the revenue

Scott asked to designate this outlined area as the CRA.

Town Attorney said this is a starting point and this is heading in the direction to designate a business district. The plan is a good guiding document to create a financing tool on how to create, budget and use the income from the CRA district. In the future, the Town could finance against it once it's creating revenue and valuable.

Lights and sidewalks can be purchased once it's creating income since most grants did not pay for

sidewalks.

51% of properties need blight. Falling down, and run-down buildings need this.

Town Attorney - property taxes are the main source of income and build the funds account for the CRA.

Once the value of the property increases, the property taxes collected increase and contribute to the general fund for the town and the county also.

The funds earned can only be used for the CRA area to increase its value.

He said it's a good and defined program that's a plan and we can make our Town have a plan and move forward with it.

Town Attorney asked is this is something the Town would like for the Council to explore or not.

Mayor wants to continue to improve the Town with sidewalk, better lighting, road work, repairs, parks, infrastructure, etc. The biggest negative impact is that the Town is freezing a certain amount, like \$20,000, can be used for the CRA only.

We must have our own projects and planning now before other people will do it with their vision and not ours.

Council President Finch-the forum discussion was about getting ahead of this and create the CRA to be ahead of it. We will gain the county's revenue also for the property taxes if we designate the area for the CRA. We can use the funds to better the Town.

Vacant property is deemed Blight. There's a lot of commercial properties in the CRA that can be utilized.

They have a zoom meeting with Margo with the NEFRC on 5/11/22 in regards to get funding.

Mayor mentioned there's a \$40,000 grant for economic development.

Town Attorney has hands on experience in dealing with it from being the City of Crescent City's manager.

Councilwoman Milledge - agrees, we need a plan. She asked if the RA could get funded through grants?

Town Attorney said yes, we can apply for small grants to help people paint their residence, etc.

Councilwoman Washington - agrees, we need a plan for the future

Councilwoman Long - agrees, we need a plan for the future

2. Welaka Events Committee – Courtney Desouza

Food Truck Friday event on 5/6/22 was successfully. Next one is 6/3/22. Handicapped and golf cart parking will be on the field.

They're looking for sponsorship to pay for the entertainment.

She thanked Public Works and Chief for all their hard work.

Councilwoman Washington - the Jazz event went very well also. The posted menus were very helpful also.

Courtney is trying to plan an encore Jazz night in August and the mayor is talking to the Palatka Mayor on how to include beer/wine for their next event.

We don't want to do on-site cooking under tents at a Food Truck Event.

12. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Moved down UNDER #13. Council President Finch motioned and Councilwoman Milledge Seconded. Passed 5/0.

2. Mayor read letter aloud from Brian Walsh with Walsh Logic to not continue his IT contract.

3. Zack Dunlap, Inspired Technologies, VP. IT Services Co. Small County/Small Municipality IT provider. Palatka, CC and Sheriff's Office IT support provider. Makes it easier for small municipalities with a

flat rate, fixed fee rate for their services. From Help Desk to higher end services, disaster relief services. IT approach from cyber security to audits, police dept. help and knowledgeable also. They maintain credentials with FL Dept. of Law.

Look into a cellular or satellite-based SW program and not just Cloud based. He spoke of BS&A SW.

They have techs that live in Putnam County and have an office at the Sheriff's office now.

Use Microsoft 365 now and we can link our docs to the site.

Mayor-emails that weren't backed up brought up this issue.

They use Office 365 email retention, and we can place a legal hold on someone's emails and can search them.

There's always login and reporting and detailed steps that are backed up.

He worked with Matt Reynolds this morning and a Kernel with their camera system.

It's our decision to buy HW from them or we can buy from somewhere else. They can help with the buying process or offer their HW.

Mayor - the passed legislative bill says there will be no pay out.

Zack-sat on the Cyber Crime Committee and if we ever get attacked by cyber-attack, they have us always backed up and will have us back up and running within 5 minutes.

Zack-they'd come in here and do scans, testing tool sets, vulnerability tests ran to see how safe or unsafe we are right now.

They'd do in-house staff testing for us here. They'd look at the Flagler Beach BS&A SW with us. They're very hands on.

Councilwoman Washington-How long is your contract for?

They do a 1-Year Contract and 1 month out. 30-day breakeven contract break time also. That's in a FL Statute.

Council President Finch-You'll be here in the office sometimes?

Mayor-If we call them with a problem, they'll be here within 2 hours. Call time average is less than 5 minutes.

They have a remote-in and help desk also.

When they get started, they'd make routing in-office visits to check on things and help.

They handle 17 elections offices and 20 Sheriff's offices in FL also.

They recommend SW that's not thru a single vendor and they can refer and design for us. Umbrella's, Tentacle Network, etc.

4. Konica Minolta - Eric, Service Manager.

Strategic IT reviews. The requirement to get a good work flow and skill available to us on a daily basis.

They manage 350 networks and have tools to allow them to resolve issues as fast as possible.

Angie, his partner rep. He showed a slideshow of their 350 networks all over the country,

They've built out a private cloud and they'll let us know how they're performing for us and how these technologies are working for us.

They offer unlimited support onsite and remotely.

They don't want us to go bump in the night and come in over the weekend to off-line PCs.

They meet us weekly at first, then monthly, and then quarterly.

Mindful of our budget and they can lay out our budget for us and stay in line with it.

They look at and help to take advantage of savings and costs like using grants.

Email archival backup and implementation is what they can easily do.

They're within 2 hours driving distance of us.

Antivirus/malware 5 layers around email, spam filtering, anti-virus/cyberware.

They will come in and train staff and will send tests to see if we're click happy or not.

They have 600 techs from remote service centers.

Any technology they spend time with us to adopt new technology. They like to eliminate disruption and we can call or online chat within 90 seconds.

Everything is in their package, and he thanked us for our time.

Mayor - you say the server room. What's your thoughts?

Eric-If we're budgeted for it, they'd like to remove the HW devices that cannot be repaired and they parts are obsolete. They recommend we upgrade out of older SW that we may be using. They can do critical patching but would rather update the SW.

Reduced costs can be helpful and they're in tune with the idea of making there's no vulnerabilities here.

Mayor-the backup of emails is essential. How would u handle it?

Email archives.

Mayor-If we need u here on site, a needed, they'd try to resolve on the phone and then if needed they'd dispatch within 2 hours.

\$150 per hour outside of the contract. Such as an event, that'd help.

They'd include the security or spam filtering, anti-virus and anti-malware.

It's a much more mature tool that can filter and block things. Everything they use can be dialed in.

Council President Finch-How much of it needs to be replaced int he server room? Everything?

Eric-Not everything, but a refresh schedule would need to be ran. Anything that needs to be replaced should be updated and tried to use first.

Going to BestBuy or Amazon to buy items, we're getting Home devices that do not work well on the Town's network. Eric will find the best price and quality if we are looking for something specific.

If we buy a new server, they'd charge for it to set it up.

Mayor asked - Each company can be here within this 2-week time frame.

Councilwoman Long-Chose Inspired

Councilwoman Washington-Chose Inspired

Council President Finch- Chose Inspired

Councilwoman Milledge - Chose Inspired

Town Attorney- Review Contract

Mayor - Motion made by Councilwoman Long, Seconded by Councilwoman Milledge. Passed 5/0.

13. NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. TOWN MATTERS

a. Car Wash person on the corner by the gas station, he receives a credit. Council President Finch motioned and Councilwoman Milledge Seconded. Passed 5/0.

Town Attorney said 1st thing is to call the owner and tell them they have \$100,000 lien and they can simply quit claim deed it to the Town. If that's not acceptable, we'd have to go through costly court costs.

Mayor and Town Attorney said there's Tax Deeds on these properties. Town Attorney will identify and contact all owners to see if we can work out a deal with them.

Town Attorney charges \$146 per hour, plus \$3,000-\$5,000 legal fees, plus around \$1,500 hard costs/expenses for each one.

He doesn't think they're homesteaded properties and we couldn't foreclose on them if they were. If the owner sells or files for bankruptcy, there's more expenses and work involved.

The Town will have to tear down the homes and maintain the properties and plan to utilize the properties in the future or sell it.

Councilwoman Washington - If you must go thru the court system and cannot reach the owners, how long?

own Attorney said it may take 6 months to 1 year from once you file the paperwork.

Councilwoman Milledge - are the 2 buildings condemned?

Mayor and Town Attorney - yes. You cannot occupy them, and the owner is responsible to pay for the demolition, but they are clearly not interested.

Council President Finch-The 2 homes on Palmetto owned by the same person? Town Attorney - No.

2017 was \$286,000 worth of fines for mowing. It's much more by now.

Councilwoman Milledge - motion for Town Attorney to proceed with the foreclosures of 308B property and on Palmetto. Councilwoman Long seconded. Passed 5/0.

John - should we board up the entrance ways to the homes? They're dangerous and vandalized.

Town Attorney - we could ask the county to demo them homes, but they will charge us in the court costs.

Public Speaker - the mowing of the property was contracted out and it is not anymore. It needs to be boarded up and mowed. Children could get hurt in there.

Different Public Speaker - She ran out 5-6 kid from the house that were in there playing and it's dangerous.

Mayor-the Tow is not mowing it currently.

Mayor - We will look into some RFPs to demolish the homes and will bring to the June, 2022 meeting. We will also get it cleaned up and mowed.

Kiwi-It was boarded up a long time ago and we should board it up immediately.

Mayor said he will take care of it as it's unsafe.

b. ARPA-read the list from the Open House

Bobby Payne sees that Seconded Ave. is a great idea for the James E. King Trail. He's helping to get us the Appropriation since we will receive the DEO grant. He said it's a good idea to start a plan.

c. BS&A Software - The Mayor, Kendrea and Meghan are going to meet with Flagler's Finance Director and the Utility Clerk to see how they like the software. The data conversion is what costs so much. We split the payroll in 1/2, PO's, also.

d. Code Board Applicants sound good. Mr. Miller and Mr. Sands are offering their knowledge to be on the Board. Councilwoman Washington-the Welaka website needs to have the applications on there. Someone came to her and asked. Not known if they're interested in being a Board Member but they expressed why the applications were not on the website.

Councilwoman Long - Last month's meeting stated that we are down 2 Code Board Members, and we need to add members ASAP.

Mayor - We should accept these 2 members and then add alternates also.

Councilwoman Milledge - We should accept these 2 members and then add alternates also.

Kiwi - The Zoning Board needs 2 alternate Members also.

Town Attorney - we need to decide today and not make it tentative upon other people joining

Councilwoman Milledge made a Motion to accept the 2 Code Board Applications. Councilwoman Long Seconded. Passed 4/1 (Councilwoman Washington rejected)

Public Speaker -stood up and said it needs to be listed on the website.

Mayor said it's on the Facebook page and the website is not his job and he sees to it

2. ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS - None

3. UTILITY MATTERS - None

14. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. GENERAL MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT: JOHN STUART

a. Cycle equipment in and out and get a new one each year for a few years and get rid of the older ones. Council President Finch thinks it's a good idea.

Council President Finch Motion to purchase as Cash Price for \$18,324.98. Councilwoman Milledge Seconded. Passed 5/0

b. Mayor - Tyler ordered man-hole risers and they should be here within 3 weeks.

John - Rented CAT, Grader, Roller, grinder, etc. to smooth out the roads and grind up millings to spread. Utility dept. will be helping Public Works dept. to use the tractors too. Seconded, 4th, Orange, Shell, 1st, Pears, a lot of the roads need work and we'll be using the equipment daily.

Engineer, Rob Pinner, Duval Asphalt, is helping coordinate with John to help eliminate drainage problems. We need to cut the higher edges of the sides of the roads. He lives in Satsuma and is very helpful. He offered to consult here and loved this Town. He wants to help show us how to use this heavy equipment properly. Council President Finch-Are we waiting on Seconded Ave for an Appropriation from the State? John - No, we're moving forward with it.

Mayor-Mill it, grade it, pack, and do what we can. The Legislative cycle starts in March of 2023 and may not be finalized until May-July, 2023 so we should temporarily fix this road now. It's a highly used road and it needs to be fixed for now and pave it when we get the funds later.

Council President Finch-Putnam Well Drilling drainage issue where they drain their trucks and there's a mound and it needs to be leveled out because there's not place for the water to go. It's not just from the rain but also from their trucks too.

John-Side road next to Blessings needs work too. We will be sealing the roads too for the longevity of repairs.

c. Mayor - John and he met with the contractor at the docs. Most rods are in good shape and the bumpers need to be replaced. We can get it all in at or below our budget. If we use composite boards, then it'll be very expensive. He said the dock is structurally very sound and in good shape.

John - A maintenance. program annually will be in place to tighten the bolts and John can help. They used to be tightened in the past, before John started here, and then the maintenance contract was not renewed or continued so John can maintain it now.

The condition is not that bad and is fixable with maintenance.

John is going to get 3 local electricians for the electrical work to get lights on the dock with LED lights on the dock itself.

Mayor said we can get lights that shine down into the water and will help people with shrimping too and they won't pull or twist our light down to the water. People could get electrocuted that way.

John-This has been needed for 5-6 years now.

Council President Finch-Do we have a start time for the dock repairs to start?

Mayor-the contractor mentioned approx. 2 months from now and do the lights after the dock is done.

d. Legacy Tree Service trimmed all around the Town and 40 acres looks gorgeous.

40-acre park Horizons has been spraying on the ponds and it's so clear and looks great. They're spraying at the Welaka Village also and Councilwoman Milledge said it looks great.

John - Bush-hog and mower are going to be used and it'll be safer to mow around the edges

e. Town Clerk and John did some research and printed pictures. Wheelchair swings need their own frame and the full restraint swings are offered also.

John-Our parks are getting used a lot. He suggests we get 2 wheelchair swings for different parks.

Mayor-he asked for the Council's approval, so he can approve the swings.

Councilwoman Long-would like to add in the Autism swings too. The larger ones for \$618 each.

Councilwoman Washington-Get some handicapped signs for the playgrounds.

Extra - John - had Crescent City Termite give him a price to spray for ants, ticks and bugs. They will spray unlimited as we need for around \$1,000 per year. FL Pest Control was around \$2,300 per month.

Ricky donates flags for cemetery. Public Works cleaned up the cemetery today.

Mayor-Locked the parks and bathrooms because there's an individual that had a big party in CC and we didn't want it to move to Welaka.

Councilwoman Washington-She had to address the ppl at the party because they had a pinata hung over the lights at Jefferson Smith park and she asked them nicely to not do that. We don't want the lights to get broken.

John-flowering plants are ordered for the flower beds here

2. UTILITY DEPARTMENT: ROBERT MATSON (Absent) & TYLER BUFORD (Absent)

- a. Pump 1 at the Water Plant needs to be replaced. We have 3 Quotes. Putnam Well Drilling approved. Council President Finch-Motion & Councilwoman Washington Seconded. Passed 5/0
- b. FRW - Mindy moved on, but Dyana is still with us. We should have the Asset Survey done by June, 2022.
- c. RFQ-001-2022 was published and we're waiting to get those back.
- d. Mayor said they're working hard. Robert's running the plant great, and Tyler and Crew are doing great in the Town and Harbor.

15. MAYOR & TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS

1. MAYOR - Mayor took Bobby Payne on a tour of the Town. Mayor will work with him on the Legislative Appropriation request and Chief will work with him also. The Meet and Greet went very well and the Town enjoyed it.

2. COUNCIL PRESIDENT FINCH - Taking in cats on May 23rd.

3. COUNCILWOMAN MILLEDGE - None

4. COUNCILWOMAN LONG - None

5. COUNCILWOMAN WASHINGTON - Residents worried about lights being on. Mayor said we're getting 2 digital timers and they're LED.

Mayor-question for Councilwoman Washington. Will she take this project on to start training to manage the website? Councilwoman Washington agreed to do so.

16. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORTS

a. Town Attorney added some legal ease to the contract with Leary Const. as they were fine with adding some incident/insurance to it. It will be signed and executed within this week.

Mayor - Approval from Council

Councilwoman Long Motion & Council President Finch Seconded. passed 5/0.

17. POLICE CHIEF REPORTS:

a. Public Works - Has arrived at Duval Ford. Should have in about 3 weeks. They're doing the specs, logos, lights, etc. on it. It arrived there today or yesterday.

b. Seconded Police Officer. 27 applicants and 22 didn't meet qualifications. He's down to 4 applicants and no new ppl are not coming forward.

We're not looking for a new officer to work here. They must be in the field by themselves and the 2 we hired in the past right from the Academy have quit doing that line of work now. There is a large worker shortage right now.

Side-by-side issue he discussed with Bobby Payne, and he said we should be able to include some verbiage in our ORD to allow side-by-sides, but they will not be plated and ran like a true vehicle. Rep. Payne will help us with the language and add the state law.

Chief's going to reach out to get some clear language.

Town Attorney said the issue is that they go so fast.

Councilwoman Washington-Side by Sides are trying to go thru the back trails behind the developments? Chief said they cannot get through the road between River Hill and Welaka Village. It's blocked off with a pile of asphalt and 2 metal bars.
Big heavy trucks were using this road due to Google Maps and now it's blocked off.
Councilwoman Washington-concerned with golf carts and side by sides coming out of the development can be dangerous on the road.

18. TOWN CLERK REPORTS

We have the Gordon Sands plaque ready to install in front of the Town Hall Pavilion. Meghan showed everyone the bronze plaque and stake and let them hold it. It's very heavy.

19. ADJOURNED at 9:49 PM on 5/10/2022.