

**TOWN OF WELAKA**  
**REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

August 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM  
Honorable Willie Washington, Jr. Town Council Room  
400 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Welaka, FL 32193

*(This meeting will be broadcasted, for view only, on the Town of Welaka's Facebook Page)*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INVOCATION**

**3. ROLL CALL BY ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK, Ellen Dickason**

**4. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** July 11, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

**5. APPROVAL OF CURRENT AGENDA**

**6. RECOGNITIONS**

1. Pauline Kinney, Utility Field Tech - Mueller Product Valve/Hydrant/Drilling/Tapping Training Course passed

2. Emma Sledge, Utility Clerk - FRWA 10-Hour Clerk Training Course passed

3. Meghan Allmon, Town Clerk - Certified Annual Member & Ethics Course passed

**7. PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS TO TOWN COUNCIL**

1. Citizens Advisory Committee Update

2. Events Committee Update

*Presentations are scheduled by individuals or businesses to inform the Town Council of issues, projects, etc. The Council shall not take formal action upon issues or matters presented under presentations at the same meeting. If formal action is desired, such matters shall be deferred and scheduled for a subsequent or future Council Meeting for consideration. Council may, however, by a majority vote, act on items they deem necessary and appropriate. Items not requiring Council action shall be directed to the mayor for consideration and further action.*

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS - None.**

**9. RESOLUTIONS - None.**

**10. PROCLAMATIONS - None.**

**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*A 'Request To Speak Form' shall be completed and submitted to the Town Clerk to officially address the Town Council. There will be no response to the speaker by Council or Town Staff, except the Council Members desiring to address a comment made during this part of the meeting may do so under Section 13 of this section. One specific issue per Form may be submitted, and you will have up to 3 minutes to address the Council.*

**12. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS - None.**

**13. NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. TOWN MATTERS**

**a. Town Council Appointments for Citizens Advisory Committee and Events Committee**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Jessica Finch - Committee Chairwoman

Lisa Teal - Sponsored by Mayor Jamie Watts

Robert (Scott) Turnbull - Sponsored by Council President Jessica Finch

Sandra Walker - Sponsored by Councilwoman Kathy Washington

John Karichkowsky - Sponsored by Councilwoman Tonya Long

Michael Anthony - Sponsored by Councilwoman Kimberly Dugger

**EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Courtney Desouza - Sponsored by Mayor Jamie Watts

Debbie Edwards - Sponsored by Council President Jessica Finch

Sandra Walker - Volunteer

Crystal Dryer - Volunteer

Diana Gonzales - Volunteer

Wendy Wood - Volunteer

Rachel Minion - Volunteer

**b. Tree Committee & Updating the Ordinance discussion**

**c. Medical Clinic RFP preparation**

**d. Starting the Town Council Meetings at 5:30 PM instead of at 6:00 PM each month**

**2. ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS - None.**

**3. CODE ENFORCEMENT BOARD - 517 7th Avenue, Welaka - Town was set to mow this property but it has been mowed. Charges were to be applied to a code lien balance accordingly.**

**4. UTILITY MATTERS - None.**

**14. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**1. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT**

**2. UTILITY DEPARTMENT REPORT**

**3. POLICE CHIEF MICHAEL PORATH REPORT**

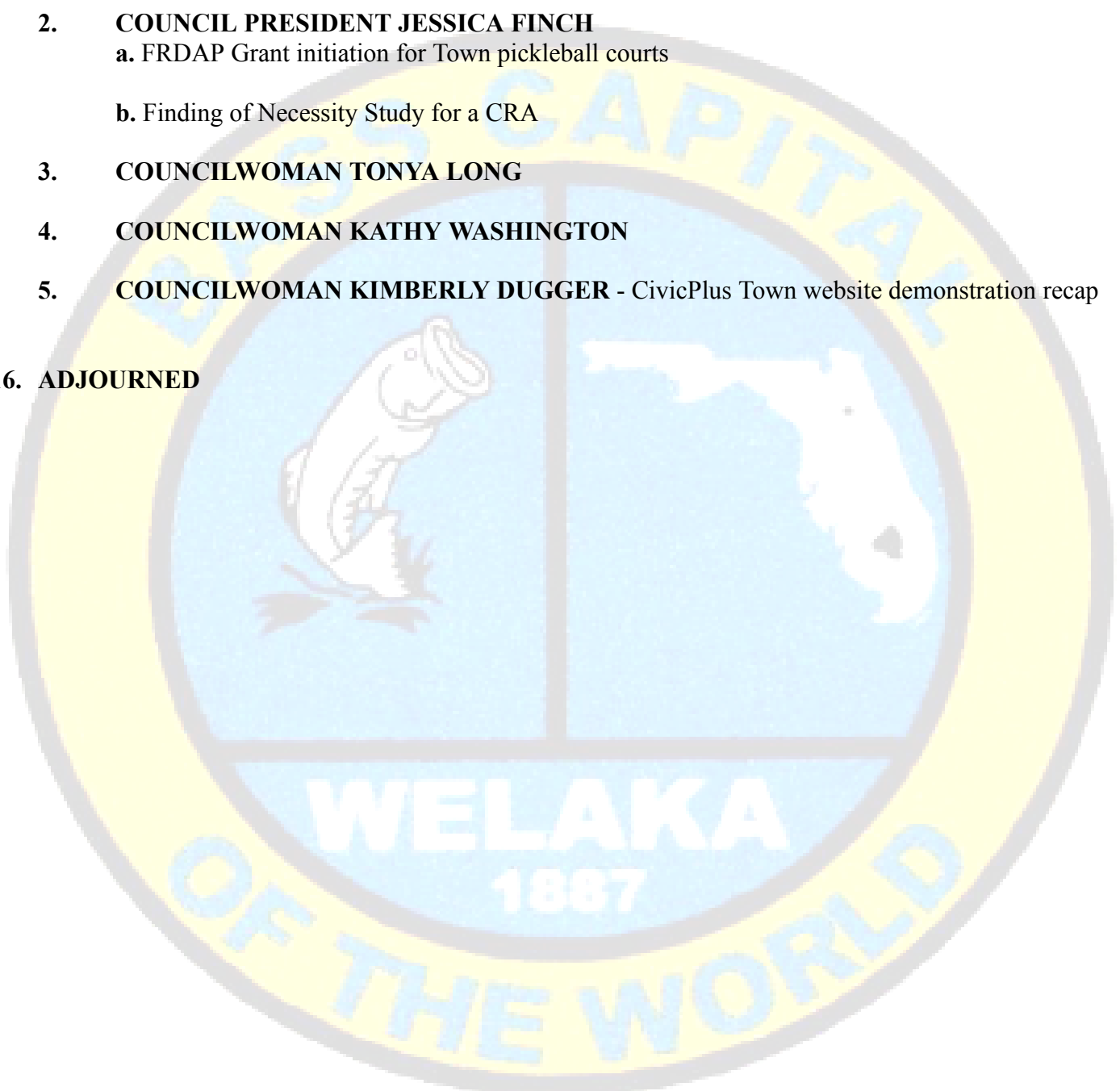
**4. TOWN ATTORNEY PATRICK KENNEDY REPORT**

**5. TOWN CLERK MEGHAN ALLMON REPORT**

**15. MAYOR & TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS**

1. **MAYOR WATTS** - Town Hall digital sign D&P Electrical Contractor quote approved - \$1,175.00
  
2. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT JESSICA FINCH**
  - a. FRDAP Grant initiation for Town pickleball courts
  
  - b. Finding of Necessity Study for a CRA
  
3. **COUNCILWOMAN TONYA LONG**
  
4. **COUNCILWOMAN KATHY WASHINGTON**
  
5. **COUNCILWOMAN KIMBERLY DUGGER** - CivicPlus Town website demonstration recap

**16. ADJOURNED**



**TOWN OF WELAKA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**July 11, 2023, 6:00 PM**  
**Honorable Willie Washington, Jr. Council Room**  
**400 4th Ave., Welaka FL 32193**

**MINUTES**

*(This meeting was broadcasted for view only on the Town of Welaka's Facebook page)*

1. Mayor called Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Everyone stood and said the pledge of allegiance and Finch gave the invocation.

3. **ROLL CALL** taken by Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon.

Mayor Jamie Watts - present, Council President Jessica Finch - present, Councilwoman Kimberly Dugger - absent, Councilwoman Kathy Washington - present, Councilwoman Tonya Long - present, and Town Attorney Patrick Kennedy - present. Four Council Members are present, mayor. We have a quorum.

4. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES from 6/13/2023 MEETING**

Corrections:

Pages 2 and 5.

Man in brown shirt is Jack Clemmons.

Motion to adopt 6/13/2023 Town Council Meeting Minutes made by Finch and seconded by Washington. Passed 4/0.

5. **APPROVAL OF CURRENT AGENDA**

Item Number 12.1. and Item Number 13.1.b. to be removed from Agenda per Watts.

Motion for approval to accept current 7/11/2023 Town Council Meeting Agenda as corrected made by Long and seconded by Washington. Passed 4/0.

6. **RECOGNITIONS**

1. None.

7. **PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS TO TOWN COUNCIL**

1. **CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Handed out their recommendation sheet to the Council**

1. Isiah Mills Speaking – recommendation to charge ramp fee to maintain the ramp repairs and create better parking.

Watts – Cedar Key put in a boat ramp and residents pay for a sticker. The county acknowledges that the Town of Welaka indeed owns the ramp.

Kennedy – if the boat ramp was installed with grant funds, then you cannot charge a fee.

Watts – he needs to find the paperwork to see if it was grant funds or not.

Washington – who would monitor these fees?

Chief – it would be done by active around-the-clock patrols. Could be a uniform city parking violation.

Washington – used for parking or launching?

Watts – they are typically 2 separate things.

Finch – spoke with Kennedy about this and if the Town acquires parking for the boat ramp, then we can look into this.

Chief – usually it's part of the fee if you launch your boat and park also.

Long – we need to go forward and figure out some funds to get a parking area before the land is gone.

Finch – if it's grant funds, then can we not charge?

Kennedy – it depends on the grant.

Finch – Ms. Padgett, on Front Street, is willing to lease her lot to the Town for parking.

Watts – he can start looking into land and parking for the boats and trailers.

Council – all agreed.

**2. Tree Board Appointment** – Mills doesn't see why we need a Tree Board if we have an ORD in place already. He only sees commercial properties clearing land to make money when it's sold.

Residents rarely remove trees unless they're diseased or a bad tree. He doesn't think he needs a permit to cut a tree down in his yard.

Washington – she agrees with Mills. The hurricane season is here, and some people would like to have their trees trimmed and removed from around their house. Some tree companies are too far out with scheduling.

Watts – wants to protect our rural charm and it's a catch 22 a times because he wants to prepare for hurricane season also.

Finch – If the ORD requires a Tree Board to enforce the ORD. Should we change the ORD or appoint a Tree Board?

Long – People are getting upset to be over-governed where they need a permit for everything.

Washington – updating the Tree ORD – please put on future agenda.

Watts – We need to appoint the Board or update the ORD. The Code Enforcement Board should possibly be handling this. Put on the August 2023 meeting agenda.

Stallings – The ORD states a lot more than a permit process. It also addresses which trees are removed and trees should be replaced with other trees.

Finch – a lot of people have approached her about the cleared lot on 309 that was cleared and are very upset. Someone needs to be on sight to determine the 85% remaining canopy.

Stallings – We should include the Division of Forestry to supervise also.

Washington – the business district may have to go through all the paperwork.

Stallings – most Towns have a Tree Board.

Audience – it took longer than an hour to clear that lot on 309. Couldn't someone go tell them?

Chief – We put a stop on it and they came into Town Hall to get a Business Tax Receipt.

Watts – the lot has been cleared in full now.

Toole – a lot of people work on the weekends.

**3. Chief and Kennedy are asked to attend their next Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting.**

Kennedy – he will not be available next month on their meeting date. He will sync with the Chief to schedule it.

**4. Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting time has been changed back to the original time of 9:00 AM on the Fridays before the Council Meeting monthly.**

**5. Digital Sign** – regulation of data on the new sign. Who does it go through for approval?

Kennedy – only meeting and Town related information, emergency information and government messages can be legally posted on the digital sign.

Mills – asked for status.

Finch – asked if we received another electrical quote yet.

Town Clerk – asked Scott Turnbull to get a third quote to run the electric from the building to the digital sign area.

**2. EVENTS COMMITTEE** – Last Food Truck Friday event and fireworks is on 8/4/23. We're still taking funds for sponsors and donations for the fireworks. Please contact the Town Clerk.

## **8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. None.

## **9. RESOLUTIONS**

**1. RES 2023-05 - Setting Maximum Millage Rate for submitting DR-420 for year 2023.**

Watts - \$87,754 difference in ad valorem taxes from 2022 to 2023. That's assuming it's 100% collection rate. FMIT – our personal current property insurance is around \$23,000 and has jumped to \$47,000 this year. Crescent City received the same shocking number we received.

Kennedy – he's been through his before and we can do an RFP to get a comparison but it's going to be tough because there's not too many government insurance companies out there.

Watts – contacted a lot of other municipalities and they are all increasing/doubling also. Inflation is making everyone struggle and we can look at the budget. We need to set a tentative millage rate. We are at 5.50 mills and is in favor of keeping it there.

Kennedy – this is for the filing of DR-420 and this sets the cap. We can lower it as we go through our budget, but we cannot raise it.

Washington – what does this do regarding the residents?

Kennedy – this sets the cap when we set our budget. We can only go lower.

Long – the properties values have gone up. We should not lower it because everything across the board has gone up. We all know everything has increased. She wants to protect the fact to have enough money for next year.

Watts – the bond initiative is also going to kick in this year. A \$100,000 property sale is going to have a \$400 additional tax increase since it's been approved. We need to keep the millage rate at 5.50, the same.

Finch – we need to see the compensation study from Chief Porath's LagomHR company to review before we do the budget also.

Mayor read the RES 2023-05 aloud.

Finch made a motion to accept RES 2023-05 with the millage rate of 5.50 and seconded by Long.  
Passed 4/0.

**10. PROCLAMATIONS** - None.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

## **12. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Sewer Credits** – Mayor elected to strike this section from this agenda and future agendas.

## **13. NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

## **1. TOWN MATTERS**

**a. Confirmation of Town Council Appointments for Citizens Advisory Committee and Events Committee.**

Watts – any Council Members have any people they'd like to sponsor?

Long – does not have anyone.

\*Finch – Scott Turnbull turned in his application for the Citizens Advisory Committee and is sponsored by Finch.

\*Watts – Lisa Teal is sponsored by the mayor for the Citizens Advisory Committee.

\*Washington – Isiah Mills is sponsored by Washington for the Citizens Advisory Committee.

\*Long – as a group – we can take what we have and go with that.

\*Long – John Karichkowsky is sponsored by Long again for the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Watts – with the blessing of the Council.

\*Finch – current Citizens Advisory Committee members: Isiah Mills, Pam Olson, Mark Anthony, Scott Turnbull, John Karichkowsky and Jessica Finch.

Watts – asked Kennedy – there's to be 5 members on the Committee. One person sponsored from each council member, correct?

Kennedy – correct.

Washington – only 3 Citizen's Advisory Committee and people have handed in their volunteer applications.

Kennedy – we need to open it up further to get more and new volunteers.

Watts – we can table this until the August meeting.

Washington – everyone on the Citizens Advisory Committee wants to stay on the committee?

Watts – anyone can participate with the Citizens Advisory Committee, but the only members allowed are members sponsored from the 5 council members. Not everyone who is currently on the committee will remain on the committee.

Toole – same thing for the Event Committee?

Watts – same thing, yes. Council members will have a say so for committee members.

Watts – told Finch to tell the Citizens Advisory Committee members to re-apply even if they don't have a council sponsorship, if they'd like.

Long – we should be appointing 1-2 new members every time. That would be a good thing.

Washington – these new people should come to the next meeting so everyone can meet them.

Kennedy – if people are leaving or being removed from any committee, they should come in also so we can thank them for their time and service to the Town.

Washington – we can put a face with a name. They don't have to make a speech or anything.

**b. Preliminary Millage Rate Discussion** – Stricken from the agenda since it was discussed earlier in this meeting.

## **2. ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS**

**a. REPLAT - Fern Farm SD Plat**

Kennedy – been review by Mr. Snyder and the Clerk's office. Roughly 6 lots that are now ½ acre each. The density meets the land use category. Two units per acre are allowed. a-f are the lots being created. Some are not being divided. 1 unit per .8 acres also.

We sent letters out to neighboring property owners within 400 feet. The lots meet the zoning requirements.

Watts – is this a public hearing?

Kennedy – yes, the property owner is here now and can speak.

Victoria Parette – it's going to be six ½ acre lots.

Washington – can someone buy a lot that’s 100-foot wide?

Parette – yes, that’s correct.

Finch – this was a combined lot and now is a replat?

Kennedy – it’s a replat.

Parette - some lots are combined and are not changing.

Kennedy – platted lots and parcels are different.

Long – it’s a great thing to develop with residential in this area.

Parette- doesn’t want to over-crowd the area.

Janis Brown – zoned for homes or mobile homes?

Kennedy – manufactured homes and homes only. Not mobile homes. There’s a HUD sticker on them and they’re certified by the DEA and a mobile home is certified by the DMV. A lot of mobile homes are a little less expensive and they are very similar to modular homes. Mobile homes we can restrict, but we must allow modular homes wherever homes are allowed.

Finch – the home behind the post office – modular or mobile home?

Kennedy – mobile home.

Motion made by Finch to accept the Replat

Roll Called by Town Clerk. Passed 4/0. Dugger is absent.

Kennedy – signature on the paperwork will be needed after Kennedy receives them.

### **3. UTILITY MATTERS**

a. None.

## **14. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **1. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT**

### **2. UTILITY DEPARTMENT REPORT**

**3. POLICE CHIEF MICHAEL PORATH REPORT** – Motorola mobile radios and Ford patrol trucks are on order. We must have all of the paperwork wrapped up by 9/30/23. The other residual JAG grant funds should be around \$20-\$25,000. Will be adding more speed limits signs. It’s working because people are slowing down. Has been issuing citations for phone usage while driving. Additional grants are being worked on. Would like to order stop sticks.

Forestry property is still under discussion. Possibly the 40- acre park may be a good spot for the new police/fire building, and we can move the playground, or remove it, since it’s not being used that much. Filling in the ponds in the 20-acre parcel across from that may be costly and takes a lot of paperwork.

Another tentative Officer backed out and he and Officer Bryant will be interviewing additional ones.

**4. TOWN ATTORNEY PATRICK KENNEDY REPORT** - Has sinus surgery scheduled for early next month. One of the Code Enforcement cases is almost resolved, and they submitted a lien reduction letter awhile back. The juke-joint property owner is willing to finalize the lien on his property.

Chief – believes that a new lien reduction application should be submitted.



Kennedy – he bought it with a tax deed.

Kennedy – Charter is ready and will be attending the Zoning Board Meetings also. Charter meeting is at 5 PM on 7/12/23.

Finch – asked about no-wake zones.

Kennedy – can post signs at least within 300 feet in front of our ramps and places where they sell fuel and where property owners allow it.

**5. TOWN CLERK MEGHAN ALLMON REPORT** – possibly will try to create a shared Outlook calendar for the Council to mark their date availabilities for upcoming meetings, or try a different route to syn with the council to get approved dates.

## **15. MAYOR & TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS**

**1. MAYOR WATTS** - Geotech was at the WWTP today digging 60 feet down to get a footprint. Within 30-45 days or so, we can see some drawings to see where the plant will be going. Spoke to John Stuart – he’s trying to get to the clay on the Jefferson Smith ballfield. Dirt or clay placed on the field today and it ready to be spread. Charter Meeting is tomorrow at 5 PM. Come join us.

**2. COUNCIL PRESIDENT JESSICA FINCH** – AZA Health status?

Watts – approx. 3 weeks ago, a certified letter was mailed and signed for, and one was hand delivered to AZA Health.

Kennedy – we should start creating an RFP and have it ready for the August meeting.

Finch - Vulnerability Study status?

Watts – will review this tomorrow with NEFRC.

Watts – Historical Society Committee update?

Finch – working on this. Other Towns have this committee also.

Finch – Basketball resurfacing plans yet?

Watts – maybe we should put an RFP out for this at Jefferson and Downtown Park also?

Finch – I believe it’s only for the Jefferson Smith Park as we may be re-doing or removing Downtown Park with the visionary project.

Washington – 2 checks received for ARPA payments?

Watts & Town Clerk – yes, two ACH transfers were already made in August of 2021 and 2022 for a total of \$359,112.00.

Town Clerk – recently made an ARPA spreadsheet and will email it to the Council this week.

Finch – Mark Litten, regarding the river eel grass, from the Chamber, reached out to Finch asking for a donation.

Watts - he can look at the budget and see where we’re at so we can make possibly a \$500 donation.

Finch – Historical preservation should be re-established, so it helps with the grant processes.

Watts – asked Kennedy if he can make a RES.

Kennedy – agreed to make the RES for the Historical Committee.

Finch – people are asking to start the Meeting at 5:30 instead of 6:00 PM since the meetings are getting so long and going too late.

**3. COUNCILWOMAN TONYA LONG** – encouraging everyone to plant trees in their yards. Submit pictures to her if they’d like. It’ll be in the August newsletter. Survey your yard and encourage people to plant trees to create a future canopy of trees.

**4. COUNCILWOMAN KATHY WASHINGTON** – letter from FLC that asks for a voting delegate. Are we assuming the mayor is the delegate? Does the Council vote on this? Also depends on who's going to the conference.

Watts – he has already registered as the voting delegate for the FLC.

Washington – what if the mayor isn't going? How do we know who will be there and who will vote?

Watts – the past few years, our vote hasn't been done until now.

Kennedy – it's not a requirement.

Washington – if he's not the mayor next year, we need a delegate and she goes to conferences also.

Watts – he was unaware of this also until the FLC sent him the application when he attended the last conference.

Watts - Would Washington like to be our Town's delegate?

Washington – I wanted to ask the Council this, and would like to see how it's done.

Watts – we can change the delegate to Washington. He asked the Town Clerk to contact FLC and change this to Washington.

Town Clerk – agreed and will notify Eryn at FLC.

**5. COUNCILWOMAN KIMBERLY DUGGER** - Absent.

**16. ADJOURNED** - 7:27 PM

# D & P Electrical Contractor Inc.

508 Georgetown Shortcut Rd.

Crescent City, Fl. 32112

386-559-0399 dandpelectric@gmail.com

Don Combs

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Town Of Welaka  
400 4th Ave.  
Welaka, Fl. 32193  
Job: New Sign

We hereby submit specifications and estimates for the electrical wiring as listed below.

1. Install 2 20 amp 120 volt circuits from existing panel located on North side of building to new sign location.
2. Trenching by others.

We propose hereby to furnish material and labor complete in accordance with above specifications, for the sum of: One thousand one hundred seventy five dollars. \$1175.00

Payment to be made as follows: Upon completion

All material is guaranteed to be as specified. All work to be completed in a workmanlike manner according to standard practices. Any alterations or deviations from above specifications involving extra costs will be executed only upon written orders, and will become an extra charge over and above the estimate. All agreements contingent upon strikes, accidents or delays beyond our control. Owner to carry fire, tornado and other necessary insurance.

Note: this proposal may be withdrawn by us if not accepted and returned within 30 days.

Authorized Signature Jami D. White Date 7/13/23

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL - The above prices, specifications and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. You are authorized to do the work as specified.

Payment will be made as outlined above. Signature

Date of Acceptance 8-3-23

Jami D. White