



TOWN OF WHITE SPRINGS
“On the Banks of the Suwannee River”

MINUTES

WHITE SPRINGS TOWN COUNCIL

Regular Council Meeting

Town Hall Council Chambers

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

6:30 p.m.

1. **Call to Order, Invocation, and Pledge Allegiance to Flag** – Mayor Rivers called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Town Clerk stated the Invocation as the Council gave Pledge of Allegiance in unison.
2. **Roll Call** – Mayor Rivers called the roll. Members present: Vice-Mayor N. Williams, L. McCallum, M. Berry, and Mayor A. Rivers. Council member J. Williams was tardy but, was present by 6:40pm.
3. **Additions, Deletions, and/or Amendments to the Agenda** – Add Item C. “Planning and Zoning Board Appointments” to New Business.
4. **Citizens from the floor:** (Request form needed - 5min. limit)
 1. **Beth Daniels** – Ms. Daniels wanted to know had or when would the ARPA funds be disbursed for the town? Town Manager George stated that half of the total funds (\$191K) are still in the bank and have not been disbursed. Disbursing of the funds would be through discussion and approval from the Town Council. TM George also stated that she was aware of a “Consent Order” from the state referencing our Water Treatment Plant and that ARPA funds could be used for that “consent order”.
 2. **Julie Williams** – Ms. Williams presented a \$5K check to the Town of White Springs from herself and Scott Gay, specifically for the WSVFD. The funds would be placed in the TOWS General Account with restrictions and funded exclusively to the WSVFD as outlined in the attached letter. Attorney Foreman suggested that the gift of \$5K be voted on and

accepted by the council. Mayor Rivers stated to add Item D. "Acceptance of \$5K Gift" to WSVFD to new business and asked for the motion by council. Vice-Mayor N. Williams made the motion to add Item D. to New Business and M. Berry seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. A photo was taken with Julie and TM George presenting the check to the town for the WSVFD.

3. **Thomas Brazil, Sr.** – Mr. Brazil stated that he had some concerns about the town's finances. He stated that the country was in economic downfall and the town was economically depressed. He said the Town Manager was being paid \$60K and was working part-time; the Town Clerks' salary was unknown; the water and sewer rates are going up; the website is non-existent and outdated; Facebook should not be the way a town runs its business; the town gives zero dollars to the VFD, other than what the county presents (\$30K); and he doesn't think the council should vote on giving themselves a salary increase. He also stated that the town was consistently late on payments.
4. **Sylvester Warren** – Mr. Warren rebutted Mr. Brazil by stating that the economy is booming and that the state of White Springs prior to when this staff and council came into a year ago has made significant progress and should be commended.
5. **Ashley Bryant** – Ms. Bryant asked why the gates at the ballfield were locked. Mayor Rivers asked that the Town Manager answer. TM George stated that the council had approved a rental lease agreement for the town's properties and that a discussion will be made on exactly how the public portions of the properties were to be operated. Vice-Mayor N. Williams stated that the community should have access to the public portions of the properties Citizen, Tonja Brown stated that the ball field was public and should not be locked at anytime and the town could not dictate when the community can and cannot go into public property. TM George stated that the reason the town has considered "rental/lease options" is the number of daily calls received for renting town facilities. FD/Thomas Brazil, Jr. stated the town should just leave it open for 24hrs. daily and if someone is using it for a party or gathering without permission, just call HCSO and have them removed.

5. **Presentations:** None

6. **Consent Docket:** "Minutes"

Approval of Minutes: Motion to accept the November (9th & 30th) minutes were made by Council member J. Williams and Vice-Mayor N. Williams seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

November 9, 2021 – Town Hall Meeting

November 30, 2021 – Notice Final Millage/Budget 2021-22

7. Old Business

- a) **Rental/Lease – Adoption of Rental/Lease Agreement for the Town of White Springs Properties** – Atty. Foreman read Resolution 21-06 “Facility Use Agreement”. Council member J. Williams motioned to accept, and Council member L. McCallum seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

8. New Business

- a) **Dr. Roger Greene – Town Alley Purchase** (in packet) – TM George stated that in lieu of Utilities Director, Ray Vaughn and Mr. Greene being absent that this discussion be tabled until the January meeting. Council member J. Williams made the motion to accept tabling Item a. New Business until next meeting and Council member L. McCallum seconded. Motion passed 5-0. Thomas Brazil, Jr. asked where the alley was located. Mayor Rivers read Mr. Greene’s letter on the property located on 16588 River St.
- b) **First Reading – Ordinance 2021-05/Council Salary Increase** – Atty. Foreman read Ordinance 2021-05. Council member J. Williams made the motion to accept Ord. 2021-05 and Vice-Mayor N. Williams seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
- c) **Planning and Zoning Board Appointments** - Mayor Rivers read the names of the board applications: Michael Hutchinson, Tonja Brown, Carolus McKire, Nicole Williams, Scott Gay, LaDonna Gardner, Ashley Bryant, Annetje Hutchinson, and Cheryl McCall. Mayor Rivers asked for a motion to accept all the applicants for the Planning and Zoning Board. Council member J. Williams made the motion and Council member M. Berry seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Attorney Foreman asked to clarify that the name “Nicole Williams” was not the Vice-Mayor. Mayor Rivers stated that it was Vice- Mayor Nicole Williams. Attorney Foreman recommended that Vice-Mayor Williams not be appointed to the Planning and Zoning Board, because she was a

“council member” and the planning and zoning board would be coming to the council for approval on all Planning and Zoning issues. Mayor Rivers asked for another motion to accept the read names of the applicants apart from excluding Nicole Williams. Council member J. Williams made the motion to exclude Nicole Williams from the names read and Council member M. Berry seconded. Motion passed 5-0

d. **Acceptance of \$5K Gift** – Mayor Rivers asked for a motion to accept the \$5K “restricted” gift from Scott Gay and Julie Williams to TOWS for the WSVFD (spent only through the approval of Chief Kevin Pittman). Council member L. McCallum made the motion to accept the gift and Vice-Mayor N. Williams seconded.

9. Departmental/Administrative Comments

a) **Public** - None

b) **Departments:**

Town Manager – Municode is in the process of building the town’s website. Andrew Greene is working with Accountant Michael Whitehead to complete the rate study and now must stop to obtain additional information. Based on the current rates the town is losing money, therefore according to the study rates must be increased. Rates have not increase since 2013.

(Citizen) Beth Daniels asked did the town supply water and garbage to every residence? Mayor Rivers answered “no, in some areas residents pay for water, sewer, and garbage. We don’t charge a fee on vacant or abandoned houses. Also, she stated that there is no code enforcement officer here and if there was an officer, they have no power to enforce code violations.

(FD) Thomas Brazil, Jr. mentioned that the City Lake City charges an access fee for water customers. Mayor Rivers stated that any town water customers can have access to the water system and pay a access fee.

TM George stated to Mayor Rivers that ARPA funding was specific to how funding could be disbursed and that no funding could be spent specifically to residents. Mittauer is searching for grants to assist in funding various projects as I stated earlier it may be that we would use funding for the 2016 Consent Order from the state. The reason for the consent order is that the town was using the company Nutrient’s pond and they did not want the state to monitor their pond; therefore we need our own pond. We have the property, we have the property, we

just need to know how much money is needed to complete the project. She also stated that there were 4 categories on how the funds could be spent. Council member J. Williams asked what were the 4 categories?

TM George read the 4 categories:

The legislation defines eligible use of the fiscal recovery funds as follows:

- *To respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.*
- *To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the city performing such essential work, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work.*
- *For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in city revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the city prior to the emergency.*
- *To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.*

She also stated that funding a Digital Water System or purchasing general computers for the water system may be used for funding also. TM George mentioned that she had spoken to the state's Joint Legislative Committee to advise them that Richard Powell and Associates will complete the 2020 Audit by the end of January.

Utilities Director – TM George stated that Ray had ordered the street signage for renaming Suwannee St. to “Kenneth Hutcherson Memorial Drive”. His wife and family are hoping to have the Dedication Ceremony on his birthday January 2nd.

Fire Department – Thomas Brazil Jr. stated that the FD answered 4 calls. The garage door is not working, and he is getting quotes; along with Ray Vaughn checking with another company on quotes. The initial quote was \$1,600, it may be more. Mayor Rivers asked if the council could go ahead and approve anything over \$2,500 so TM George could pay for it. Council member J. Williams made the motion and Vice-Mayor N. Williams seconded. Motion passed 5-0. Mr. Brazil

stated that the internet was down again he back-up generator needed repair. TC A. Ruise told him that an IT company was coming the next week to look into the internet. Mr. Brazil also mentioned that the FD fundraisers have been successful at the Suwannee Hardware store, and they have scheduled another one in February.

c) **Council** - None

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 7:13pm

IF A PERSON DECIDES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING, THAT PERSON WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR PURPOSE THAT PERSON MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PERSONS NEEDING SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS TO PARTICPATE IN THE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE NOT LATER THAN THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

Town Manager,

Town Clerk, or Designee