



Town of Esto, Florida
The Home of Two-Toed Tom

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 15, 2023, 7:00 PM CDT

at Esto Town Hall, 3312 2nd Ave South, Esto, FL 32425

The data reflected in these proceedings constitute an extrapolation of information elicited from notes, observations, recording tapes, photographs, and/or videotape. Comments reflected herein are sometimes paraphrased, condensed, and/or have been edited to reflect essential subject matter addressed during the meeting. Parties interested in receiving a verbatim account of the proceedings are responsible for coordinating with the Esto Town Clerk and providing their own representative and equipment pursuant to Chapters 119 and 283, Florida Statutes.

Town Council Members in Attendance

Teresa Harrison (TH), Council President
Josh Davenport (JD), Council Vice President
Garet Skipper (GS)
Greg Wells (GW)

Town Council Members Absent

Others Present

Krystal Bien (KB), Town Clerk
Billy Martin (BM), Director Public Works / Water Works Director
Shawna Powell (SP), Assistant Town Clerk
Michelle Blankenship Jordan (MBJ), Town Attorney
Ben Tew (BT)

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

TH- Opening prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, and called meeting to order at 7:00 PM CDT.

Consent to agenda items, previous council minutes including special meetings, and bills to be paid

JD – Motions for consent on agenda items

GS - Second

TH - All In Favor, motion carried including bills to be paid.

Public Comment

BT asked to be recognized before he was later to present to the council an update on the Two-Toed Tom Festival planning. BT asked to be appointed for the remainder of the term to the seat vacated by Casey Laycox. JD said the town rules call for the town to advertise for the open position for the remainder of the term. If another

resident wants to vie for the open seat, the candidates will come before the council and be interviewed. Then the council would appoint who they feel is best.

JD called for the town to start the process of advertising the open council seat to be filled at the September meeting.

BM wanted to make sure the council was aware of a distant family relationship between him and BT. MBI clarified relatives would be parents, siblings, step-siblings, half-siblings, aunts, uncles, first cousins. BM and BT are not close enough relatives to have a conflict.

GW asked how much longer in the term of the open seat. KB made the point that the person appointed would still have to be elected in November for the remainder of the term which would be two years.

Whoever is appointed would serve as an interim council member until a special election could be called for the remainder of the seat's term.

Update on the Two-Toed Tom Festival Planning

BT – There have been two meetings of the festival planning committee since the town council last met. Much has been accomplished. The festival has a final logo. BT shared some materials that had been generated including a brochure for business sponsorships (attached to the minutes). BT also said the festival has a website, the committee has discussed sponsorships and fundraising. The festival committee has discussed activities, the cakewalk has been approved and will be at the TTT Fest. BT said they are looking to the town senior group that meets every 3rd Wednesday to be involved with the cakewalk. The festival will have a car show, and music entertainment. There will also be a new event for the festival that was inspired by TTT Fest Committee member Courtney Collins. The festival will have a carless parade – go carts, tractors, lawn mowers, bicycles, golf carts, but not horses. The parade will go down Commerce Street from the Sunny Hills area. The festival committee has tabled the issue of a pageant for the festival, since members are keen, but no one has experience or expertise, so the committee is waiting to get more info.

JD suggested a costume pageant, or alternative. BT invite JD to come to the next TTT meeting and said how ideas can come from anyone present. Courtney Collins didn't think she'd be contributing much, but she sparked the idea for the carless parade and everyone is really excited about it. The next TTT Fest planning meeting is August 21, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

BT said he wanted the festival to have a significant entertainment feature. He wants the festival to hire a traveling lumberjack show. He said that there are only 3-4 companies in the US that do so and one company has an open availability on the day of the TTT Festival. BT said the discussion on hiring the lumberjack show would be part of the next TTT Fest Planning meeting on Monday, September 21, 2023.

BT told the council that the lumberjack required a \$1,000 non-refundable reservation fee to claim the date. BT asked the council if the TTT Planning Committee approved the lumberjack show would the Town advance the funds to pay the reservation fee.

GS asked what the total cost for the show would be. BT replied the lumberjack show's total cost would be \$12,000. BT said that the festival is looking for two companies to be \$5,000 name sponsors for the lumberjack show. BT suggested they were hoping to secure Rex Lumber or Townsend Building Supply as sponsors. BT provided a copy of the Timberworks Lumberjack Show contract to the council (attached to these minutes). The

festival needs to provide a \$1,000 non-refundable deposit to secure the date, and the remaining funds would be due when the lumberjack team arrives on the festival date.

BM mentioned he could help with connections at Rex Lumber. BT replied that any help would be appreciated, and he had high hopes of securing sponsors. The festival would be giving lots of publicity to the sponsors that helped fund the lumberjack show. (BT provided an example of a poster promoting the lumberjack show at the TTT Festival. It is attached to these minutes.)

MBJ asked whether they'd been to the Tourism Development Council. BT replied that the TSDC had a reimbursement grant for advertising. The TDC would reimburse 75% of advertising costs up to a maximum of \$5,000. So, the TTT fest could spend 6,600 on advertising and get \$5,000 back afterwards. 2024 is an election year and BT expects lots of politicians will want vendor spaces. And believes there will be lots of money-making opportunities with the fest, through merchandise, programs books, t-shirts, etc.

Returning back to the lumberjack show BT said no other event in the Florida Panhandle between Tallahassee and Pensacola has something like this. It ties in well with the Two-Toed Tom story and would draw people from Dothan and Enterprise.

GS asked if BT had researched the company. GS was concerned the Timberworks contract gave the company an out in event of weather or other reasons for not performing. MBJ brought up the town could protect itself with special event insurance.

BT showed a short video of highlights from the Timberworks Lumberjack Shows. The Lumberjacks would put on three 30-minute shows throughout the day, with seven lumberjack events highlighted in each show.

JD asked would the lumberjack show be the only entertainment, or would there be other music entertainment. BT replied that many on the festival committee were passionate about musical entertainment. The festival would need similar sound and amplification setup for welcomes, and announcements, so musical entertainment could easily fill out the day's entertainment schedule. BT said SP is taking the lead on the musical investment.

BT reiterated that the fest committee had not yet approved the lumberjack show, and what he was asking for the council's approval of was if the festival committee approved the show would the council approve paying the \$1,000 deposit securing the date.

JD motioned for the town to pay the \$1,000 if the TTT Festival Committee approved the Timberworks Lumberjack Show as the entertainment for the 2024 Two-Toed Tom Festival. GW seconded. TH asked "All in favor?" "Motion carried."

TH we can see all the work being done on this festival. TH has been at both of the festival planning meeting and has seen the work they've put in.

The group had open discussion about the festival.

Esto Volunteer Fire Department Report

Fire Chief Cliff Kimble was absent, and no fire department report had been sent previous to the meeting. KB said Chief Kimble was at the hospital in the emergency department with a neck injury.

JD asked if the letter to the County Commission about the Esto Volunteer Fire Department funding was available. KB said computer problems had got in the way. JD said he'd come in later and sign the letter so it could get to the county commission before they had their budget locked in.

Public Works / Water Works Report

Public Works Director Billy Martin reminded the council that there were upcoming expenses. He was concerned as a resident the previous TTT festival decision could impend on other town priorities.

One of the items that will cost a chunk of money, is dealing with the air conditioning system at the park. BM says the previous company that installed the AC system has gone out of business and there's no warranty coverage to fix. He recommended finding a new company to fix or replace the system.

BM also mentioned that there may be upcoming expenses for power systems. Recent storms had caused problems with the town's water system. He was having to reset the water wells system when the electricity flickered. BM and JD discussed getting service from Jason ?? with the SCADA system.

KB returning to the Park AC system asked MBJ if the town needed to do request for quotes and public bids to replace the Park AC. MBJ said the town could decide it was an emergency purchase because the park building couldn't be rented without adequate air conditioning.

BM brought up that three people had complained to the county road department about issues around Esto. BM says he has cold patch coming to fix potholes. BM says the town may have to start paying the county for cold patch to repair roads. BM says the county has only one tractor doing bush hogging along Esto's district roads and we are sharing it with two other county districts. BM requested that a council member attends a county commission meeting with him.

GW returned to the Park AC issue and suggested that renters should be charged extra when they want to set up on the day before it's rented. KB says the electric bill for the park was over \$600, the park building had been rented for six events. The council was shocked by the monthly electric bill for the park.

There was discussion also that two different events on the same weekend required a town employee to come in for at least two hours to clean and prepare the building between Saturday and Sunday's events.

Discussion about rates for renting the building. The park rental rate had been set at \$350. The rate had been lowered to encourage new business. The current rate is \$150 to rent with a \$50 cleaning deposit.

KB suggested adding an extra \$50 for those that want to get into the park building the day before their event to decorate.

GW suggested putting off any new rates to start in January.

KB says 6-10 events are already scheduled for 2024. GW said let those already planned for next year keep the \$150 rate, but any new ones should be \$50 more. KB said right now people give her two separate checks, one for the rental fee, which she takes to the bank and another deposit fee check, which she holds onto and then returns after the event to the renter.

GW made a motion that people wanting to get into the park building the day before their rental, then there should be an extra \$50 fee. JD seconded. TH asked "All in favor?" Motion carried.

GW suggested the town should at a later date look at raising the rental fee for the park building by \$50, and at the same time increasing the day-before fee to \$75. Discussion about returning to the issue in December or January.

JD spoke about the park always having trouble making money or breaking even. He said the town had the same problems even back when the rental fee was \$100.

KB shared that previously renters that had an Esto address would get a reduced rate.

GW made a motion that in January 2024 the park rental price would increase to \$200, with a \$50 deposit and a day before fee of \$75. JD seconded. TH asked "All in favor?" Motion carried.

BM returned to the complaints from the county road department about Esto roads. One a mail carrier complained about the surface on 6th Avenue. Another complaint was about potholes on 1st avenue North. BM said he spoke to a county commissioner and the county would make a purchase of cold patch in the next few weeks. The last complaint was for Newton Road, complaining about kudzu in the ditches. BM said the town's equipment will not reach into the ditches. GW suggested the Newton Road complaint could be remedied with prison workers.

BM says the town will need to get a mower. BM said the county will send someone to talk to him about Hwy 79. BM says he thinks the county wants the town to take a contract from Florida Dept. of Transportation and then contract with the county to maintain the rights of way along Hwy 79. BM said he told County Commissioner Stafford and Phillip Music he feels the town council would withhold funds if the county doesn't maintain good service in such an arrangement.

JD says right now the town isn't liable for the state of the rights-of-way, but if the town takes in money, then Esto could be liable if something bad happens. JD says he doesn't trust the State DOT to handle the contracts the right way. GW, JD and GS agreed that the state would need to offer a contract around \$22,000-\$24,000.

BM reminded that the filters in all the town AC units be cleaned regularly. An issue he brought up was that he does not have a key to the Fire Dept. office. SP says the filters need to be cleaned every 30 filter. KB says the \$400-and-something check the council signed was for two cleanings from P&P Heating and Cooling. P&P will come every six months.

BM asked the council what to do with the white Ford. He suggested giving back to the sheriff's dept or another municipality. GW suggested tabling the issue until the next meeting.

BM gave an update on the community garden. The supplies are in his office, dirt is coming and the planter boxes will be put out soon. KB says the Health Dept. has secured dirt from Mafis but she doesn't know if it will be delivered or needs to be picked up. Discussion about what to plant in the community garden. BM asked if the council still wants the gazebo enclosed for storing gardening supplies. JD asked what the community participation is like, and how many have signed up to be part of the project. Discussion about the lack of interest and hope that when the temperature is cooler more people will be interested. JD asked how much it might cost to enclose the gazebo. KB says the Health Dept can't pay for lumber or steel that is structural. Discussion about the cost of lumber and studs and how to enclose gazebo. JD directed BM to get materials list and cost to enclose gazebo for community garden storage.

GW called for a motion to preapprove the purchase of up to \$1,000 in materials to enclose gazebo. JD seconded. TH asked "All in favor?" Motion carried.

Town Clerk Report

KB elaborated on the Community Garden project saying that the dirt was on the way as well as ten fruit trees.

KB asked does the town want P&P Heating and Cooling to do a diagnostic evaluation on the AC system at the park? It would be a \$75 fee plus labor hours. SP says a P&P tech went and looked at the system a few days earlier and found it with no freon so there is a leak but the technician couldn't pin down where the leak is coming from since there was no freon in the system. SP said P&P might waive \$75 fee since they were just out there. SP said a diagnostic call would pinpoint the problem with the system and get a quote on repair or replacement. GW, and GS were positive to the idea and moving towards getting system fixed.

The 2022 audit is at the auditor. KB says it will be finished by the end of August. For the first time in many years the town will be up to date on all its audits with none missing. KB reports that the bookkeeper spent 8.25 hours on the 2022 audit work. That comes to \$1,195 for the bookkeeping side of the audit. GS asked for a grand total on bookkeeping services for all the audits. KB didn't have that on hand but estimated the total was \$10,000 less than what was quoted.

Budget meeting are in September. The meeting to set a tentative millage rate and budget is on September 7, 2023 at 6:00 PM. The meeting to set the final millage rate and budget is September 15, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Councilors had a copy of the proposed budget in their meeting packets (attached to these minutes). KB wanted to get the budget as close to locked in before the tentative meeting as possible since the budget summary would have to be turned in to the newspaper for advertisement as soon as the tentative meeting on Sept 7 was over. GW mentioned he would not be able to be at the Sept. 15 meeting.

GS-What's the reserve on the budget? KB-That will be whatever's in the bank account on the day the budget goes into effect so that number isn't set yet.

GW-Do you have the insurance in here at \$46,000? KB-The insurance cost is \$42,893, because of the property and workers comp coverage cost increases. The property deductible could be changed from 7.5% to 10% and that would bring the deductible from \$18,000 to \$14,000. Another municipal insurance company is preparing a quote.

GW-Just one quote? KB-I don't want to go with someone not trustworthy. FMIT is the most trusted one in the state. The company preparing the quote is called Boyd. [Boyd Insurance of Bristol, FL is an agent for Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust.]

KB-Our largest expense in the budget is payroll. The way it has been calculated is two 40-hour employees at \$18 an hour. Then one 32-hour employee, at \$13 an hour and then a 15-hour employee at \$13 an hour.

JD-That's going from a 35-hour a week position to increasing both skilled positions to beyond their current rate. So, I'd like to rather distribute the funds to the town's regular laborers. Folks like Tony that stayed with the town through the summer, and SP that have been putting in the hours.

KB-These are preliminary numbers and the town won't go this far increasing hours and pay rates. So, the council needs to decide what they want to do. It makes the budget work easier to initially plan for larger expenditures, so the numbers can be reduced to the actual limits the council wants, rather than being too low and then having to shuffle other numbers to find the revenue to support the council's wants.

JD-How short are we on the budget with expenditures vs. revenues? KB-Public Works is about \$6,500 short. The Fire Dept. is not going to be short at all. The General Fund will be about \$25,000 short. That may change depending on the town's reserve funds.

JD-What's included in the Public Works budget? KB-Public Works has their payroll -- JD-Are you including roads? KB- No public works is just public works. JD-What all is included in this cluster of Public Works expenses? KB- Just water Works expenses. JD-Just water works with none of the additional things is running behind \$6,500. KB-that is correct. JD-How much of the payroll is covered by water works? KB-40. JD-I think that's inaccurate. If the public works budget is paying 40% of payroll, then other places aren't carrying the weight of that expense, and we're still short on the General Fund by \$25,000.

KB-The General Fund's portion of the payroll expense is at \$63,991 and the Public Works budget portion of the payroll is at \$42,661.

JD-The general fund should be carrying a heavier portion of this expense if the public works budget is only paying for water works expenses. We need to really look at the numbers on our payroll if the general fund is this far behind. To reflect something that is going to make sense on our budget.

KB - We need to figure out a way for our physical workers BM and Tony, what their percentages of work is. Most of their day-today work is not water works.

JD-Have the employee activity logs been being filled out? KB-They used to be in the council room, but the paper mâché Two-Toed Tom mascot got in the way. JD-We need to find an accessible spot. We need to be doing employee logs to increase our eligibility for grant monies. The activity logs need to be made available to council members during the monthly meetings. A rule needs to be made that at the end of the day when employees clock out, they fill out their activity log for the day.

KB-If we had the activity logs, we could have gotten grant money, but we don't have any logs of when Yvonne Hagens was clerk, so we can't prove she worked on a specific project.

GS-Water Works has always been made to look bad in the budgets because it has to shoulder most of it where most of the Public Works employees actually spend their time on parks and roads.

JD-So let's get it on paper so water works doesn't just carry all of the expenses, and we split it up the right way. Let's get a better reflection in the budget and the employee logs, so we can go this is how much time is being spent on each portion, and if we need to give some money from water works to somewhere else then we'll know where we're running at. Otherwise, it doesn't make a lot of sense.

KB-I'll have a better idea of the budget at the end of this month, closer to the budget meeting, because our state payments for August will hit. So, we can look at the bank accounts and go, "We have this much money, right now that's not allocated." That will be the reserve fund, we move from one year to the next.

JD--I know this is rough to hear, but because of all the changes and benefits that we've added on I feel like we need to take a look at what this budget looks like at lower hours and at the rates we're currently running. Because this number, is just insurmountable at this point. We can deal with something like \$5,000 or \$10,000 over, but these numbers are rough.

GS-Where are we at on the admin assistant? How much did you budget and at what rate? KB-The admin assistant was \$13 an hour. It was \$10,100 and some odd dollars a year. There was no point in giving them a raise

to \$12 an hour because in September the minimum wage goes to \$12 anyway. JD-We all talked about in the last meeting being sure we distributed some raises to the other laborers, because the rate is so pitiful right now. KB-I can redo that. Do you want me to make either one of the part-timers' rates more than \$13 an hour? JD-I say because the budget numbers are so bad right now -- This is rough. So why don't we take a look at what 13 looks like at both of the part timers, and crank KB and BM down. If employees have to work less hours, then that's what it has to be. I hate to be that way, but \$25 is a lot. So, let's see if we can have 35 hours a week for our skilled employees and the laborers move them up to \$13 an hour.

KB-I had budgeted them at 32 hours a week at \$15 an hour.

JD-No, we only have a billing cycle, and portions of data entry. Krystal we can't afford that. We're talking something more like 30 hours a month like what Shawna's working now. 15 hours a week is a lot more money.

KB-It's \$10,000 a year. GS-We're already overbudget by \$25,000. KB-so I need to give up my person. JD-I'm gonna be honest we've already purchased a bookkeeper to assist.

KB-I talked to the bookkeeper and my job will not change at all. JD-The reconciliations will change. KB-I never did them so, it doesn't change much. JD-But that was part of your job description as a clerk.

KB-Shawna will be leaving this month permanently, so I need to be able to advertise that position. Or I just don't get an assistant, and you want me to stay at \$15 an hour? And cut my hours to 35? I mean, I'm just clarifying.

JD-Looking at these numbers...

KB-So I cut my hours to 35, I lose my assistant and I don't get a raise? But the council will make a \$100 a meeting? JD-It's been since 2011 we haven't got a raise. KB-In September we will spend \$1,500 if there were five council members. September would cost \$1,500 for just council member payments, but I can't have a 15 hour a week assistant. I'm just making sure that's what I'm hearing? JD-That's what you're hearing.

KB-Well we need to advertise for a clerk too. JD-That's unfortunate, I appreciate, KB-I got three audits done. JD-You've done a great job here. I don't have anything negative to say to you Krystal. KB-So we can cut my office who's worked my behind off JD-I appreciate all that you've done, and I think we've voiced that, even by adding on benefits for you. KB-A meager \$24 a week. JD-We're thankful for the service that you've given. I'm sorry that you see it that way. I think you've done a great job at helping us. KB-Good luck at getting somebody to give a crap. JD-I'm sorry you feel that way.

KB-I'm taking my keys with me, because I have a lot of stuff in the office.

JD-That's fine. Let me understand, do you want to look for a two week. I'm definitely not gonna say you were terminated, that's not what's going on here.

KB-I need to go take a moment, so y'all can continue, but I have to step out. JD-But I want to nail this down now, so two weeks? Are you giving us your two weeks? KB-I need to step out. Can you let me? JD-Two weeks from now? KB-Ms. Teresa can we adjourn the meeting for a moment? JD-We need to figure out how this evolves. Two weeks from now.

TH-She needs a minute. We're adjourning for just a moment, till she gets...

TH-If it's that important then perhaps we need to look at Tonny's position. He's getting what-32 hours. How many hours is he getting? JD-32, like he's always had. We've always had a public works with an assistant at 32 hours a week.

GS-My thing with the clerk, is that it's always been that the clerk has done all the work, including the accounting- not saying they got that right, but now we have an accountant on board. I don't know what the need is for an assistant. Me personally. I'm open to y'all. JD-There's less responsibility than ever before.

GS-You also can't have that in a council meeting. You can't act that way. JD-We've had this happen multiple times. TH-We have. GS-I've been a big supporter, but you can't do that. It's a bad look, and we're already \$25,000 over budget. It's a rough choice. I'm open to discussion on that, but that's kinda where I'm at, as rough as that may be.

JD-We also included an employee benefit package. We given a 4% raise; we've given them an insurance stipend. I wouldn't be against even thinking about a raise next year, but the fact that we just got hard lined, that way in a meeting without any discussion, nothing like that. I'm uncomfortable continuing with someone that's that unstable with us in the future. That's just my--I'm not gonna be held hostage that way, "So I want a raise. I didn't get it and I'm gonna quit." That's not it for me.

GS-I just wanna make sure we can discuss this as we've adjourned, can we? MBJ-It's all in a public setting. You're not hiding anything. It'll be OK. JD-Just because someone else wasn't able to continue attending the meeting doesn't mean...

GS-It's an uncomfortable conversation. You're fussing about us getting a hundred dollars a meeting, but that's been that way for years. And we spend a lot of time here. Once a month we stay here and give it a lot. I don't like that being thrown up and passing the blame. I'm not big on that. And she acts like we didn't do anything, like I said. She made out like \$300 a month is no big deal to her, "It's only x amount a week." What? Find another municipality that's gonna do that much, that's gonna pay how much? 15? JD-\$15 an hour, insurance stipend, and a 4% match on a savings account that you choose. Sounds like a good-- GS-And let's you off whenever you need to. JD-Flexible, anytime.

GS-That was not good conduct. Of course, we don't like having this conversation, but we're \$25,000 over budget. TH-Yeah JD-More than that. GW-31 GS-31? GW-We at 31.5 GS-We don't need to be getting mad and storming out. Thank God there's not a lot of people here. How bad would that look with a room full of people. JD-Wretched. TH-Or if a reporter was here. MBJ-I should advise against judgmental-- JD-That's fine. I'm fine saying everything I've said on recording. I'm uncomfortable with the conduct of this meeting and I was expecting a different meeting.

MBJ-I would go ahead and readjourn the meeting. JD-Start it up you mean again? MBJ-Yeah. SP-Do we need to wait on the clerk? I mean I'm here, I'm the assistant. MBJ-As long as you're here, you don't even have to have it recorded, you just have to take notes of some kind. SP-And it's recorded, and I take notes, so...

TH-Alright so we're starting again? OK. The meeting is started and we'll be moving on.

JD-I don't understand how we're gonna move on if we just received a resignation. So, to me if we received a resignation just now, I don't have any problem with-- I definitely don't want to make this look negative on our employee. So, I will go ahead and accept it as a resignation, I think we need to understand... we need to follow some procedures to get the keys back eventually. There's no rush here. I trust Krystal, I'm not angry with her. So, I think we follow step-by-step regular resignation process, and carry on.

[KB returns to council chamber]

JD--Krystal just so we're clear, can we go ahead and get an official -- Are you resigning? KB-Does anybody else have an opinion? JD-Who? We all have talked about this. KB-I've heard a lot from you, that I appreciate your opinion, but I'd like to hear from the other council members if they have an opinion on the matter or are in agreement.

GW-Right now you're \$31,500 over budget. I don't see how you-- I wouldn't have voted personally for the \$100 raise, and I told them that especially for me. I would have stayed at \$50, because we are over budget, and I don't see where anybody needs a raise till we get in line.

TH-Well if we're that much over budget then we can't afford to give anybody a raise, employees included. Where I've worked in the past, when expenses had to be cut, the first place we cut was payroll. So, that's my mentality, that's where you start. You don't add to it by giving everybody a raise on payroll, and I think that's one thing that you were saying we were going to give you a raise. Well, if we're over budget then we can't give anybody a raise.

KB-So does that mean y'all are all going back to \$50 a meeting? Or \$50 a month. JD-I don't think that's necessary, and I really don't think that's related to you, and your choice here. KB-But it relates to the budget does it not? JD-Whatever choice-- KB-Does it not? It's a yes or no question. JD-Here's the yes or no question, "Is this unacceptable for you?" KB-It's unacceptable for the council to get a raise, when we see y'all 99% of the time once a month, and I'm in here every day in the trenches. So yes, it is unacceptable for me. JD-Your payrate isn't related to our administrative rate. KB-It is not, but it is related to the budget. JD-It is related to the budget. What I'm saying is you've asked for two additional expenses. KB-I don't necessarily need a raise, but if I'm not gonna get one then why do y'all? JD-Krystal, that's not for you to decide. KB-You're right it's not, but that is unacceptable in my eyes. Because, look at the numbers, we went from \$6000 a year for council member payments to \$4,500 from water works and \$4,500 from-- So it went from \$6,00 a year to \$9,000 a year. JD- And you know the amount of work the council had to additionally put in as far as administrative roles. Look, this needed administrative oversight, and it really doesn't matter whether you understand that or not. We as a council know it required oversight to handle this audit situation. KB-And you got paid for it. JD-And we should've. And we all decided that should've and that's the increase. KB-And y'all got an extra \$50 a meeting for those meetings. JD-Correct and that's why we did what we did. Number 1 those expenses wouldn't be the same year-on-year, because hopefully we don't need to continue doing those audit meetings. KB-Those are not even included in the \$9,000. JD-Exactly I'm saying we're not gonna have these additional \$100 every week type meetings. We've already had our audit scenario, that's why we stopped doing the weekly meetings. Because that scenario has been completed. we're done with anything to do with that, so we stopped doing those weekly meetings. I don't understand the confusion here. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

KB- Y'all are technically part of the payroll. So, if payroll needs cuts why is it?-- JD-Why is it that you gave yourself that much of a raise and you're having a problem with it-- KB-It's not necessarily I gave myself and Billy both that much of a raise. I never said that's where it had to go. JD--You're the one that just told us you're wanting to resign-- KB-I want to resign because not only did you give yourself a raise-- JD-I don't want to keep going around in circles with you. KB-Me either because it's like I'm speaking Spanish to you. JD-Me too. KB-I don't understand what you don't understand about this. JD-Neither do I, and that's Ok. I don't want to keep going in circles with you, and I appreciate-- KB-Because its right for the person that put in so much work to get this done. JD-I appreciate what you've done. KB-To not get any-not even someone to help.

JD-And I'm sorry you feel the way you feel. I would even be will to revisit this raise conversation next year after we've worked out some of these budget problems. We've already given our employees a really great benefit package in my opinion, 4% match, insurance stipend. These are things that I think that we as an administration

team should be proud of and we've just added them on. I'm asking-- look if you're trying to resign, and that's what you're, where you're at, I appreciate what you've done for us. I'm sorry you feel this way and I don't want any hard feelings with you Krystal. KB-Too bad. JD-Well that's your choice, and I'm sorry you feel like that. I don't speak for the whole council, that's just how it is. Our budget's very- we're very over budget right now.

TH- Why don't we just revisit the budget, go back over it, see if we can work it out any closer.

GS-You keep saying that we gave ourself a raise, and you didn't get anything-- KB-I don't care that I didn't get a raise. What really kind of ticks me off is that not only do I not get a raise, I lose an employee, if she chose to stay, she would get to be here, but because she's leaving, we're just not gonna replace her.

GS-Let me ask you something. KB-Go ahead. GS-You're making \$15 an hour, we just gave you a benefit package for \$300 a month, plus retirement matching up to 4%. KB-What's the \$300 a month? GS-The health insurance stipend we're either gonna pay towards your health insurance or give you as a check to pay toward it. KB-When did we do that? GS-That's what we've been discussing. JD-We did that last meeting. KB-We didn't set down on a number. JD-Yes, we did. GS-We said was it 3? JD-3 GS-Yeah. That's what I'm saying. SP- I haven't finished typing up the minutes from that meeting. JD-It was either 250 or 3 Krystal.

GS-And if you look back most municipal clerks--I'm not throwing off on you or anybody else. It's a one-person job. That included the accounting, that included everything. Now did it get done right by clerks throughout the years? No, it did not. So, we gave the accounting part to someone else. To make sure it's done right. So, the admin assistant thing, I have a hard time seeing that. Because that's \$10,000 a year and we gave you all that and you're throwing off on us for giving us \$50 for a meeting when we're here two or three hours a night.

KB-My thing is for those people there a public works clerk too. Is there not? Because I do everything-- GS-Not in some municipalities. JD-Krystal the average obviously-- KB-The average rate for some-- JD-Less than fifteen-- KB-No it's not. It's 20-something odd dollars an hour. JD--Depends on where ya look. Depends on the averages ya run. KB-And do those places, do they offer all benefits? JD-We offer multiple benefits for our employees and take a look at our budget. KB-And this don't even include the \$300-- JD-That's what I'm saying look at our budget and look at what we're trying to give our employees. GS-We're not renegotiating the health stipend, just because the budget is over that's-- KB-Well it's not in there so. JD-Well We'll figure out how to put it in there. KB-Cause it's probably gonna end up being even more expensive with my hourly rate. GS-But the point I'm trying to get across-- JD-It's a benefit package.

GS-The point I'm trying to get across to you is; it's not personal, the first place you cut is payroll during budget. And another thing, you can't, I know it's a hard conversation to have. We don't like having this conversation, no more than you like listening to it or having it with us. But you can't threaten to quit and get upset. God forbid there be a room full of people here. KB-I don't care who's here. JD-We do. GS-That's a problem.

KB-It's a problem? Do you really wanna know what I find a problem with, because I doubt you want those recorders to record it? JD-So that's a problem right now that you can't hold it. KB-Because there's things that happen in the town, with town employees, and council members. Who you wanna talk about issues? We got issues. So, me getting upset in a meeting when it comes to my job--you can hmmm all you want to... but it's true. Look around you. And think about people's extracurricular activities in this room, and tell me if all of them are doing-giving a positive look to Esto? GS-Do I-I don't keep up with other council members Krystal. KB-Well, you would... Any which a way that's neither here nor there I reckon. But me getting upset in a meeting because I feel like my job is the one that's always attacked--

JD-Krystal this is inappropriate. KB-Then let it be inappropriate. JD-It's not appropriate-- KB-It's not a threat to quit. I am worth it. JD-Ok so you're saying you're quitting. Either you saying you're quitting or you're not. I'm not gonna keep running around in circles with you.

KB-Fire me! JD-I'm not gonna do that, because I think that-- KB-No because y'all are screwed without me. JD-If we have to do something else, we will. We don't want to. But you're not gonna leave us in a position where we're under the gun like this Krystal. KB-Just talk about something else. JD-That's not gonna be a possibility until we resolve this.

TH-Well what do y'all wanna do? Are we ready to dismiss? What do we wanna do?

JD-Krystal if you're unable to carry out the duties the way that we're discussing; that's fair enough to say, and we can figure something out. We can do a two-week thing; we can do severance pay. I mean we can figure this stuff out to make it easier on your side. To make this work. That's not the conversation we wanna have tonight, but I feel like how this has gone, we're gonna have to find some type of resolution here. And because you said you wanna quit I can accept your resignation if that's what you'd rather do. That's fine with me. I don't like it, but we can do that.

KB-I'm willing to rework the numbers, but I will rework the numbers with four employees. JD-Well that's not gonna be what we're gonna do. KB-Ok then. JD-So is that where we're at? KB-It's an official resignation. JD-Then I appreciate your time-- KB-You can't meet my terms then-- JD-Yes ma'am. Well I appreciate your time, and like I said we are willing to talk about it but thank you for coming and talking about it with us. I'm sorry we can't meet your terms-- KB-There is no discussion though. Like there's no give and take here. It's just your way or the highway. JD-Ok Krystal. I'm sorry you feel that way.

KB-I'm done with my report.

JD-Thank you for your time... So, we'll give you two weeks or as much time as you need, and well go from there. Thank you for your service. I'm sorry it feels that way for you.

Open Agenda Items

TH-Ok. Do we have any open agenda items from last month?

Final Call

TH-Ok. Final call for discussion and possible action from council members. Greg, do you have anything? GW-No ma'am. I got mine out earlier. TH-Garret, do you have anything? GS-No ma'am. TH-Josh? JD-No ma'am.

TH-Krystal I hope that you will reconsider and know that we do appreciate you. And maybe we can work this out and move forward. We don't want you to go. With that being said--

MBJ-Ms. Theresa with that being said I wanted to let everybody know formally that Jeremy in my office has sold his practice to a firm in Tallahassee. And so, he's not gonna be working with me after the end of the month. We were hoping he was gonna be here tonight to have a last meeting with y'all so he could say goodbye. But the new firm he's already started working with them, and they've really be throwing stuff at him quickly.

The other thing was I had sent a letter a couple weeks ago about my fee is going to increase as of October 1. So, in line with the budget conversations y'all had tonight, if that's not going to work for you all and you need to advertise, y'all just let me know. GS-How much of an increase was it? MBJ-I'm going from \$150 to \$200. So, the

last time that I raised everybody to \$175 I did not raise y'all up. But I'm getting squeezed myself -- all of my software, my legal research, everywhere has gone up. JD-You're cutting us still a good deal at \$200, I understand. SP-When is that effective? MBJ-October 1, and that's everybody, all my clients are gonna be going up to that.

TH-Thank you for being here tonight. Nice to see you.

BM-Gonna miss Jeremy.

JD-I hate to say this, but if this is the direction we're going, we're gonna have to do some interviews. Start thinking about what we're gonna do. TH-Yes. JD-I'll just say it on record with me and you are gonna have to make some meetings and do that together. TH-Yes.

Meeting Adjourned

TH-All right. This meeting is adjourned.

Meeting minutes typed and prepared by Ben Tew, Town Clerk.

Teresa Harrison, Esto Town Council President

Josh Davenport, Esto Town Council Vice President

Greg Wells, Esto Town Council Member

Garet Skpper, Esto Town Council Member