



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 7:00 PM CT

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

Seat 1 - Krystal Bien (KB)
Seat 2 - Greg Wells (GW)
Seat 3 - Gareth Skipper (GS)
Seat 4 - Maxie Yates (MY)
Seat 5 - Teresa Harrison (TH), Council President

Town Council Members Absent

Others Present

Josh Davenport (JD), Interim Town Manager / Public Works Director
Ben Tew (BT), Town Clerk
Cliff Kimble (CK), Fire Chief
Michelle Blankenship (MB), Town Attorney

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

TH- Opening prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, and called meeting to order at 7:03 PM CT.

Swearing in New Council Member

- New council member Krystal Bien was sworn in following the standard procedure. The Oath of Office was administered by the Town Clerk, and the Councilmember Bien took her seat at the council table..

Consent Agenda

- GS motioned for approval of consent agenda including final agenda, previous meeting minutes, and bills to be paid. GW seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

Public Comment

- Robert Sherman spoke to the council about the removal of the commemorative soldier statue at John Clark Park. The council directed the statue be returned.

Special Agenda Item

- Discussion on the new town manager position, which was advertised in local newspapers and closed on May 31. There were zero applications submitted for the position. Councilmember GS proposed making JD the official Town Manager / Public Works Director. Councilmember GW and KB reported they had spoken to other officials at the county, and state level that suggested the town council had not followed the appropriate steps to create the town manager position. Town attorney MB disagreed and said the town council had the authority to delegate the appropriate authority for the position. GW motioned to remove the Town Manager duties from the position and return it to only a Public Works Director position. MY seconded the motion. Council members GW, KB and MY voted in favor of the motion. Council members TH and GS voted no. After the vote JD said he could not continue in the position and resigned at 7:45 PM. Public Works Department employee Tony Manis then resigned. Council member GS also resigned effective immediately. Esto resident William "Billy" Martin volunteered to help out with well checks and other Public Works needs after the resignations of Davenport and Manis.

Town Manager Report

- **Junkyard Property Lease**
The Town Clerk updated the council on the proposed lease of the Junkyard property. The EPA has concerns about leasing the junkyard property, including potential interference with ongoing testing and cleanup. Special environmental insurance endorsements may be required. Additional soil samples will be taken to assess contamination. Discussion on the lease was held; no formal decision was made.
- **New Employee Handbook**
The existing employee handbook, created in 2021, is outdated. A new handbook, based on examples from other Florida towns, has been drafted. Council members are to review the new handbook and discuss it in the July meeting.

Fire Department Report

- Chief Kimble provided the May Fire Department report. Details were noted but no specific action was required.
- **4th of July Fireworks**
The Family Fun Day on June 15 was a fundraiser for the 4th of July fireworks. A \$5,000 grant request has been made to the Holmes County Tourism Development Council.

Town Clerk's Report

- **Financial Report**
Reviewed financial status including accounts and upcoming bills. Account balances and large bills were reviewed. Credits of \$1,540 were issued. Outstanding customer balances were discussed.

- **FL Dept of Environmental Protection Resiliency Grant Agreement (Stormwater Plan)**
The town was awarded a \$235,000 grant for a stormwater management plan. The grant agreement is ready for signing, with activities starting July 1, 2024. GW made a motion to approve the grant agreement. MY seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.
- **FY 2024-25 Budget Discretionary Projects**
Discussion on planning for the FY 2024-25 budget. Anticipated income and expenditures were reviewed. Planning for new projects is suggested.
- **FY 2024-25 TRIM & Budget Process**
Overview of the TRIM process for setting property tax rates. Key dates and requirements for the upcoming fiscal year were outlined.

Public Works Report

- **Hyperchlorinator Pump Replacement**
The new hypochlorinator pump for well 3 has been installed. The pump on well 2, which is similar in age and condition, also needs replacement.

Streets Department

- **Rep Dunn FY2025 Appropriation Grant Update**
The request for federal FY2025 appropriation for repaving Dixon Heights and Joy Meadows Circle was not included in Rep. Dunn's submitted projects.

Park Report

- **Sinkhole & Beaver Problem**
A sinkhole at the park caused by beavers was repaired. Ongoing beaver issues are affecting the park.
- **Park Cleanup & Proposed Repairs**
Park cleanup and repairs are underway in preparation for the Two-Toed Tom Festival.
- **Tap Ins for Park / Community Garden**
Water access issues for the park and Community Garden were discussed. Quotes for new water tap ins will be sought.

Two-Toed Tom Festival Report

- **TTT Fest Budget Update**
Updates on the TTT Fest budget, including grant approval and remaining budget questions. Discussion on commitments for expenses. GW made a motion to approve the current Two-Toed Tom Festival budget. KB seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.
- **TTT Vendors & Sponsorships Update**
Vendor and sponsorship applications are coming in. Current numbers and costs were reviewed.

- **Entertainment Decision**

Discussion on entertainment options for the TTT Fest. KB brought proposals from Past Time Productions for either 3 or 6 music acts for the festival. GW made a motion for the town to sign the contract for 3 music acts, costing \$5,100. KB seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.

- **Advertising Decision**

Various advertising options for the TTT Fest were reviewed, including digital and traditional methods.

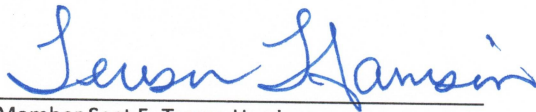
Council Member Items

- **Seat 1 - Council Member Krystal Bien** - No Items
- **Seat 2 - Council Member Greg Wells** - No Items
- **Seat 4 - Council Member Maxie Yates** - No Items
- **Seat 5 - Council Member Teresa Harrison** - No Items

Adjourn

TH adjourned the meeting at 9:04 PM CT.

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



Council Member Seat 5, Teresa Harrison,
Council President