



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 16, 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 4 - Maxie Yates (MY)

Seat 5 - Teresa Harrison (TH), Council President

Town Council Members Absent

Others Present

Ben Tew (BT), Town Clerk

Cliff Kimble (CK), Fire Chief

Tony Manis (TM), Public Works Department

Michelle Blankenship (MB), Town Attorney

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

TH- Opening prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, and called meeting to order at 7:04 PM CT.

Consent Agenda

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

Public Comment

- No members of the public wished to address the council.

Fire Department Report

- Fire Chief Cliff Kimble provided an overview of the Fire Department's activities and statistics for June 2024.
- Fire Chief Kimble and members of the Esto Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) expressed grievances regarding the town clerk, management of the department's financial accounts, and the clerk's concerns about a separate account used for community events.

- **4th of July Fireworks**

This item was not discussed.

- **Fire Department Donation Account**

The town clerk discussed the separate donation account managed by EVFD members for funding community events. Concerns were raised about the lack of town oversight, and possible legal liabilities. It was decided that the EVFD members would form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to manage these funds independently before any further events.

Resolutions and Ordinances

- **Resolution 24-06 Directing the 2024 Town Council Election**

Resolution 24-06 was presented to set the candidate qualifying period for the 2024 town council election. Seats 1 and 5, along with an open Seat 3, are up for election. The qualifying period was set from August 26, 2024, to August 30, 2024. GW made a motion to approve Resolution 24-06. MY seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.

Special Agenda Items

- **Public Works Director Job Opening**

The position of Public Works Director was advertised following the resignation of Josh Davenport. Two applications were received. The council decided to hold a separate meeting to interview the applicants for the position. GW motioned to hold a special town meeting on Wednesday, July 24, 2024 at 5:30 PM at the Esto Town Hall. KB seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.

- **Previous Interim Town Manager / Public Works Director Benefits**

Discussion on how to handle accrued benefits for Josh Davenport, who resigned from his position. The total benefits amounting to \$1,108.23 were reviewed. KB motioned to deny the benefits due to Davenport not holding the position beyond 90 days. MY seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.

Town Clerk's Report

- **Financial Report**

Reviewed financial status including accounts and upcoming bills. Outstanding customer balances and recent billing adjustments were discussed.

- **Fire Department Fund Appropriation**

The Fire Department fund was found to be short of covering current expenses. A supplemental allocation was approved to address the shortfall. KB motioned to allocate an addition \$658.26 to the EVFD fund in August and September 2024. GW seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.

- **FY2023 & FY2024 Audit Quote**

An audit quote from Ferguson Sizemore CPAs for FY2022-23 and FY2023-24 was reviewed. The cost for each audit is \$8,000. KB motion to sign the engagement letter and hire Ferguson Sizemore CPAs. GW seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried. TH signed the engagement letter.

- **FY2025 TRIM & Budget Meeting Dates**
Dates for the TRIM and budget meetings for FY2025 were discussed to meet state requirements for setting property tax rates. The council set Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 5:30 PM at the Esto Town Hall as the date for the 1st TRIM and budget meeting. The second meeting date would be set at a later meeting.
- **FY2025 Proposed Millage Rate**
The proposed millage rates for FY2025 were discussed. The rollback rate and the implications of setting a higher rate were reviewed. KB motioned to set the town's millage rate at 2.5000 for FY2025. GW seconded the motion. All in favor - Motion carried.
- **FY2025 Preliminary Budget**
The preliminary budget for FY2025 was presented.
- **New Employee Handbook**
A new, comprehensive employee handbook was proposed to replace the outdated 2021 version. The updated handbook includes relevant policies for municipal operations. Changes to the holiday schedule and travel policy were discussed.
- **FL Dept of Environmental Protection Resiliency Grant Agreement**
An update on the FL Dept of Environmental Protection Resiliency Grant was presented.

Public Works Report

- **Tap-Ins for New Water Customers**
The cost of new water service tap ins was reviewed. The council requested the Public Works Department review the prices for meters and water meter boxes to see if the price for water works customers needed to be adjusted.
- **Lines at Hwy 79 & Hwy 2 Intersection**
The condition of the water pipes at the Hwy 79 and Hwy 2 intersection was discussed, highlighting their need for repair. The Public Works Department was directed to contact the FL Department of Transportation to see about assistance relocating the lines.

Two-Toed Tom Festival Report

- **Two-Toed Tom Festival Budget Update**
The budget for the Two-Toed Tom Festival was reviewed, including vendor fees and expenditures for advertising and promotional materials.
- **Two-Toed Tom Festival Vendor & Sponsorships Update**
Updates on vendor applications and sponsorships for the festival were provided.

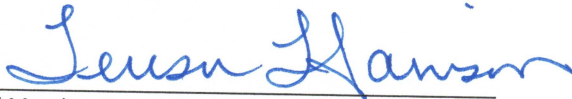
Council Member Items

- **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 8:57 PM CT.

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



Council Member Seat 5, Teresa Harrison,
Council President