



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 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

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

Town Council Members Absent

Others Present

Ben Tew (BT), Town Clerk
Billy Martin (BM), Director Public Works / Water Works Director

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

TH- Opening prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, and called meeting to order at 7:01 PM CST.

Consent Agenda

- TH called for Consent to agenda items, Consent to previous council minutes including special meetings, and Consent to bills to be paid. GS motioned. JD seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

Public Comment

Andy Gonzalez spoke to the Council about a property he was looking to develop into a type of farmer's market business. He asked what zoning and permitting the council would require and was told that the town did not manage zoning and permitting. The county administration handles the zoning and permitting for Esto. The Council would be glad to make a recommendation to the county about Gonzalez's project.

Agenda Items

- **Rural Billing Software Transition Update**

The Town Clerk, Ben Tew, updated the council on the transition to Redline Data System, Rural Billing software program for the water utility billing.

The software had been installed on the clerk's computer, account data had been ported into the new software and payments were being entered into both Rural Billing and the town's previous utility billing software Asyst. Readings at the end of December would be entered into both systems to make sure bills were being calculated correctly but starting January 1, payments would only be entered into Rural Billing.

- **Update on Solar Projects**

The Town Clerk, Ben Tew, updated the council on the 2 solar projects the council was investigating. Tew had contacted a commercial solar installer to discuss the projects. The solar representative pointed out hurdles that might hamstring the proposed projects. Council member JD suggested solar installations at the wells could offset those installations and might be seen more favorably by WFEC. Council member GS requested the issue be tabled till after the first of the year, so more research could be done.

- **Park Internet Verizon Quote**

The town council discussed getting internet / Wi-Fi access at the John Clark Park Community Center though a solution provided by Verizon. The project would have an upfront cost of \$1,128.92, and the continuing service cost would be \$36.05. JD motioned to accept the solution and spend the funds. GS seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

- **Sealed Bid of Ford F-150 Result**

The person that made the winning bid in the sealed auction for the town's surplus Ford F-150 truck did not pay. GS motioned to accept the second-place bid. JD seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

- **Certification of 2023 Town Council Election**

The Town Clerk presented the results from the town election scheduled for Monday, December 4, 2023. There were two seats up for election, Seat 2, and Seat 4. After the qualifying period, only one candidate had qualified for Seat 2 and only one candidate had qualified for Seat 4, so they were declared winners unopposed. The clerk presented the council with an official election certification, which the council members signed. JD motioned to accept the results of the election. GS seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried. The winning candidates will be sworn in and take office at the regular monthly town council meeting on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 7:00 PM.

Public Works Director Report

- **Line Break on Joy Meadows Circle**

Public Works Director BM shared with the council the news that a water line had broken on Joy Meadows Circle, and it was in a difficult place to repair, very deep and possibly with a fiber optic cable line on top of it. The council discussed options for contracting the repair. JD motioned for the town to spend up to \$10,000 to contract the repair. GS seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

- **Update on Backflow Valve Tests**

BM updated the council after the town sent letters to commercial water customers reminding them of the required annual backflow valve test. Of the 13 customers contacted 5 had responded in one form or another and 8 had not. JD called for the town clerk to send a 2nd letter to the businesses that had not responded explaining the requirement and consequences for not following up with the backflow test requirement.

- **FMIT Lightning Claim Update**

The town submitted a lightning damage insurance claim to FMIT on September 28. The documents from N-Lite-N / SCADA had errors and needed to be resubmitted. The town clerk returned the appropriate notarized forms, and FMIT paid out the claim (\$7,830) minus the Town's deductible (\$1,000).

- **Town Vehicle Problems**

The town van had mechanicals problems when it was used in a recent Christmas parade. The other vehicle has wiring problems. BM said he could take the vehicles into a mechanic to get the vehicle checked out.

- **Lead Service Line Inventory**

The Federal EPA is requiring all water systems to complete a Lead Service Line Inventory by October 2024. The water system is required to have documented evidence to prove whether every service line on both the utility side and the customer's side of the meter potentially contains lead. Florida Rural Water Assoc. has funds to help water systems complete the project. The town clerk has applied for the grant funds, and named Alday-Howell Engineering, and CINCH Underground as the town's contractors to complete our Lead Service Line Inventory.

- **Community Sign Requests**

A new town resident has requested a "Deaf Child" warning sign along Rolling Hills Circle. The council directed the Public Works department to install the sign.

EVFD Report

- **Activity Report for November 2023**

Fire Chief CK was not present and did not provide a report on the department's activities in November.

Parks Report

- **Community Garden & Open House Update**

There is more interest in the Community Garden for 2023. An Open House Day event has been scheduled for Saturday, March 9, 2024. Several community organizations have already signed up to be part of the Open House event.

- **Disc Golf Update**

The Health Depart has purchased a 9-hole disc golf course set for John Clark Park.

Two-Toed Tom Festival Update

- **Christmas Parades**

The TTT Fest had a parade float in the Enterprise Christmas Parade, and the Graceville Christmas Parade. The festival's next planning meeting will be towards the end of January. The festival purchased a new supply of tumblers, but there have been no sales.

Town Clerk Report

- **Holiday Hours**

The council decided to close the Town Hall from Thursday, December 21st thru Tuesday, December 26 for the Christmas holiday. The Town Hall would also be closed on Monday, January 1st for New Year's Day.

- **Financial Update**

BT, Town Clerk gave an update on the town's financial accounts. BT requested permission to work on a detailed budget so the town could have better track of its expenditures and revenues. BT presented reports from the new utility billing software, showing charges and payments. The council saw a list of accounts with balances including those who were over the disconnect threshold. The council decided to do disconnects on Wednesday, December 27th if the customers hadn't paid.

- **Ferguson Sizemore Amended EL for 2023 Audit**

In the November meeting it was directed to ask Ferguson Sizemore to amend their EL for the FY2022-23 Audit to include assisting with the State required AFR. The cost for Ferguson Sizemore to perform the FY2023 Audit is quoted at \$8,000. The council discussed if the town was required to have an audit for the FY2032-23. GS called for the issue to be tabled until January.

- **Update on Local Business Tax Receipts**

16 Commercial water customers were notified about the town's local business tax. 2 businesses have paid their 2024 Business Tax.

- **Verizon Town Hall Phone System Quote**

Verizon has provided a quote for phone service for the town hall. The initial setup cost would be \$200 to purchase the appropriate desk phones. The ongoing monthly cost is \$25/per desk phone, and \$20 per month for the automated answering service. GS motioned for the town to change phone service to Verizon. JD seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried.

- **Version3 Tech Support Service**

Version3 charges the town \$250 a month for tech support. Having an IT firm on retainer made sense when the town was looking to provide internet service for residents. But that is no longer the case, so the town could save \$3,000 in 2024 by ending the service. GS motioned for the town to terminate its service with Version3. GW seconded. All in Favor -- Motion Carried

Correspondence

- **FMIT Asset Survey Returned**
FMIT has returned their asset survey of the town’s property. The town clerk will go over it with an FMIT representative in a upcoming meeting. Then the town will have till June to contest or amend the asset survey.
- **Central State Water Resources Contact**
Jo Anna McMahon, VP of Government Affairs with Central States Water Resources, will be in the area and can attend the Town Council meeting on Tuesday, January 16.
- **2023-2024 Resilient Florida Program Planning Grant**
Alday-Howell Engineering applied for a grant to produce a Master Stormwater Plan for the town. It has been approved.
- **MSCOP Grant Notice**
Small County Outreach Program for Municipalities: Application Cycle for Projects in the Fiscal Year 2026 Tentative Transportation Work Program. Applications open Dec. 11 closes on March 15, 2024. Municipalities are not required to provide matching funds.

Council Member Items

- **Seat 1 - Council Member Josh Davenport**
- **Seat 2 - Council Member Greg Wells**
- **Seat 3 - Council Member Garet Skipper**
- **Seat 5 - Council Member Teresa Harrison**

Adjourn

TH adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM CT.

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

Council President, Teresa Harrison (Seat 5)

Council Vice President, Josh Davenport (Seat 4)

Council Member Seat 2, Greg Wells

Council Member Seat 4, (Open)

Council Member Seat 3, Garet Skipper