

Town of Brooker
Regular Monthly Council Meeting
August 9, 2022

Present: Steve Acree, Linda Bennett, John Maines, Suzanne McRee, Gene Melvin, Charlene Thomas, Joe Tolleson
Community: Diane Andrews, Terry Thomas
Absent: Chris Caldwell

Meeting called to order by Gene Melvin, Mayor. Meeting start time: 6:58 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance

A motion was made by Steve Acree to approve the July 12th meeting minutes as presented.
Seconded by Joe Tolleson, Motion passed.

SCOP Grant Update – Town Clerk

Following discussion between the design contractor (Infrastructure Consulting & Engineering) and FDOT, specifically addressing concerns of inflated prices which may result in cuts to the plans, ICE has submitted updates to the completed plans for review/approval. Separately, additional monies were identified (outside of the existing SCOP grant) to include replacement of stop signs within the city limits. The design updates would include the removal of the paving fabric in Shady Oaks subdivision (estimated \$48,000 savings), elimination of the construction/paving of Michigan Avenue (estimated \$80,000 savings) and the inclusion of stop signs. FDOT will review the updated completed plans and provide a formal Authorization to Advertise for the construction contractor. A motion was made by Steve Acree to accept the updates to the plans previously submitted by ICE to the FDOT. Seconded by Linda Bennett, Motion passed.

Comments from the Public:

Commissioner Diane Andrews advised she is working with Bradford County on a county-wide broadband project. She relayed that there is a link on the Bradford County website that prompts a “speed test” of the user’s internet speed, which serves as a survey for the need for improvements and broadband implementation. This project is a federally funded project.

Attorney – John Maines:

- I. Gene Melvin advised that a quote was received from a contractor (Walt Seiler) for repair of the water lines and installation of fire hydrants in Shady Oaks subdivision. The quote was separated into “Clay Electric” responsibility and “Town” responsibility, based on the 7-28-20 incident with the Clay Electric contractor which resulted in damage to the existing fire hydrant. He asked Mr. Maines for direction as to how to proceed with presenting the quote to the Clay Electric contractor (All Reliable Services, Inc.). Mr. Maines suggested that the bid, specific to All Reliable Services, Inc. be presented to the company for payment, however the bid, specific to the Town of Brooker, would need to be in compliance with the Town’s bidding process, requiring an Invitation to Bid. The Clerk was directed to advertise the

- Invitation to Bid for installation of a new fire hydrant and gate valve from a contractor with the required certification and licensure.
2. Linda Bennett asked for input from the attorney as to possible liability issues related to holding community-wide functions on the grounds of City Hall, citing possible future plans to host Halloween trick-or-treat on the property. She questioned if he would have concerns about the council giving approval for usage of the facilities for community-wide functions. Mr. Maines advised he would not have concerns with the council granting such approval, upon request and further recommended that such requests be routed thru the Town Clerk for placement on the agenda for Council consideration.

Fire Department – Joe Tolleson:

Diane Andrews reported there has been no update, as of this writing. No decision has been rendered with regard to the grant that could fund the new fire station.

Town Clerk Report – Suzanne McRee:

1. Past due report was passed out. Still out \$410.12 in overdue accounts. One (1) meter was locked this month and remains locked.
2. Water Works building repairs are scheduled to begin the week of 8/8/22, with the contractor, Carlton Construction, Inc., having provided the necessary insurance and worker's compensation information.
3. Reminder of upcoming election events on Tuesday, 8/23/22, with voting equipment being delivered on Sunday, 8/21/22. Voting equipment will be picked back up on Wednesday, 8/24/22 by the Office of the Supervisor of Elections (they have a key for access to the building).
4. Town Clerk asked for consideration of website update and new web design, utilizing ARPA funds. This topic has been presented in the past; however, it is noted that ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds can be used for the one-time expense to completely revamp the Town website, offering improved communication to the customers and residents of the Town. In accordance with the Town's bidding process, three (3) bids were obtained, however the Clerk recommends the NET Group Online – MuniCreative, Inc., as they are the only provider in the locality, offering the widest range of services to the Town. A motion was made by Steve Acree to accept the bid from Net Group Online-Municreative, Inc. for a revamp of the Town's website design, utilizing ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds. Seconded by Linda Bennett, motion passed.
5. The Town Clerk advised that she will be out of the office from August 24, 2022 thru September 16, 2022, requesting a Leave of Absence during that period. A motion was made by Linda Bennett to approve the requested Leave of Absence. Seconded by Steve Acree, Motion passed. A motion was made by Linda Bennett to approve Charlene Thomas as the Acting Town Clerk during the time period of August 24, 2022 thru September 16, 2022, in Suzanne McRee's absence. Seconded by Steve Acree, motion passed.

Bookkeeper – Charlene Thomas:

1. Went over Revenue and Expenditures for the months July.
2. Roll back millage rate for 2022/23 will be 0.2662
3. Due to SCOP Grant and ARPA funds, the budget will be over \$750,000.00 which will require a Full Single Audit for 2022/2023. This will cost the Town more than is usually paid for the audit.

4. There will be some budget amendments in September to add the amount that has been spent from the ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds to this year's budget.
 5. Ms. Thomas spoke with Kara Wainwright from Reddish & White concerning the Fire Department's separate listing on the Budget. She advised that expenses associated with the Fire Department can be added under General Administration. Any expense will show "FD" to identify what was spent on the building (Repairs, Utilities, Insurance).
 6. Ms. Thomas spoke with both Kara Wainwright (Reddish & White) as well as the Town's attorney, John Maines concerning the Town Clerk's Leave of Absence, specifically as to how to handle the Town Clerk's salary and compensation to Ms. Thomas during Ms. McRee's three (3) week absence. It was noted that the Town Clerk position is a salaried position, so an approved Leave of Absence does not affect compensation. The matter of compensation for both parties must be addressed separately. Options presented were as follows:
 - a. Town Clerk could request a Leave of Absence and decline/waive her salary for September. Bookkeeper receives the Town Clerk's salary as compensation for her time worked during that period.
 - b. Town Clerk could request a Leave of Absence and the Council decide to compensate her during that absence. Bookkeeper would be compensated for her additional hours at her usual rate.
- Ms. McRee waived her salary for the month of September; however, the Council discussed the fact that she would not be out of the office for the entire month and felt that she should be compensated while out of the office for this period. A motion was made by Steve Acree to pay both the Town Clerk and the Bookkeeper for the time period of August 24, 2022 thru September 16, 2022. Seconded by Linda Bennett, Motion passed.
7. City Hall will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. during the Town Clerk's absence (8/24/22 thru 9/16/22)
 8. Quotes have been received for additional playground equipment, utilizing ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds. A four (4) seat Teeter-Totter is \$2,083.95, eight (8) foot Merry-Go-Round is \$4,013.95, two (2) seat See-Saw is \$758.95. The shipping for all three pieces is \$3,425.00, total cost is \$10,281.85. Several companies were contacted for quotes and the prices are the same at all companies. Discussion followed concerning possible liability issues with the Merry-Go-Round and Ms. Thomas advised she would follow-up with the Town's insurance provider (Florida League of Cities). Follow-up information will be provided at the September meeting.
 9. The compressor on the A/C unit at the storage building went out and a new unit was purchased for \$569.00.
 10. Purchase of Emergency/911 address signs, utilizing ARPA Fiscal Recovery funds was approved at the July 12th meeting, however the number of signs to be purchased was reported as 90. Actual number purchased was 96, changing the cost from \$1980.00 to \$2112.00.
 11. Kara Wainwright of Reddish & White will attend the September 13th meeting to discuss a new procedure that the Auditor General is requiring for audits.
 12. The Town did receive the second allotment of ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds in the amount of \$84,143.00.

Water Department – Gene Melvin:

1. Bernard Carter is attending a conference in Daytona during the week of August 8th, 2022.
2. DEP was notified by a customer that there was an issue with the water in the trailer park, citing low chlorine and yellow in color. DEP made contact with Bernard Carter who addressed the issue on Sunday, 8/7/22. He flushed the lines and checked the chlorine residual, which was in compliance. The Town Clerk relayed that this issue was not presented to Town Hall by the customer.
3. Clyatt Well Drilling will be meeting with Gene Melvin and Bernard Carter about a quote for the non-potable well. Mr. Melvin has checked with other contractors; however, they were not certified for installation of a well for the general public.

Sanitation – Chris Caldwell (absent):

1. Nothing to report.

Road/Streets – Joe Tolleson:

1. Nothing to report.

Recreation/Parks – Linda Bennett:

1. Nothing to report.

Ground Maintenance/Mowing – Steve Acree:

1. Mowing is taking place as scheduled.
2. Joe Tolleson observed that the trash cans at the tennis courts were not being emptied; Steve Acree will follow up with the lawn maintenance contractor.
3. Gene Melvin mentioned that the fire hydrant by Michigan Avenue needs weed-eating.
4. Additional areas for sidewalk cleanup, specifically clean-up of tree branches coming thru fences onto the sidewalk, low hanging branches over the sidewalk and clean-up of the entrance at Shady Oaks to the privacy fence. A proposal was received from A. J. Lawn Care in the amount of \$1300.00 to do this work. A motion was by Steve Acree to contract the additional area of clean-up with A.J. Lawn Care. Seconded by Joe Tolleson, Motion passed.

Community Center Building – Mayor Melvin:

1. Community Center roofing project has been completed by North Florida Painting.
2. North Florida Painting will be giving a quote for the interior painting.

Town Council:

1. Nothing to report

Old Business:

1. Annual review of water rates was conducted and discussion to raise rates followed. Last rate increase was 10/01/21, with a rate increase of \$1.00. A motion was made by Steve Acree to raise rate \$1.00 effective October 1, 2022. Seconded by Joe Tolleson, Motion passed. Clerk will have Resolution ready for approval at September meeting.
2. Compensation for Additional Duties related to ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds (utilizing Fiscal Recovery Funds)

- a. A motion was made by Linda Bennett to compensate Suzanne McRee, Town Clerk, \$1000.00 for additional administrative duties associated with the ARPA, utilizing Fiscal Recovery Funds. Seconded by Steve Acree, Motion passed.
- b. A motion was made by Joe Tolleson to compensate Charlene Thomas, Bookkeeper, \$1000.00 for additional administrative duties associated with the ARPA, utilizing Fiscal Recovery Funds. Seconded by Steve Acree. Gene Melvin abstained from voting, declaring a Voting Conflict, and filled out Form 8B. Vote called for – 3 yes (Chris Caldwell absent). Motion passed.
3. Compensation for Additional Duties related to the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP Grant)
 - a. A motion was made by Joe Tolleson to compensate Suzanne McRee, Town Clerk, \$1000.00 for additional administrative duties associated with the SCOP Grant. Seconded by Steve Acree, Motion passed.
 - b. A motion was made by Joe Tolleson to compensate Charlene Thomas, Bookkeeper, \$1000.00 for additional administrative duties associated with the SCOP Grant. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Gene Melvin abstained from voting, declaring a Voting Conflict, and filled out Form 8B. Vote called for – 3 yes (Chris Caldwell absent). Motion passed.
4. American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) – Fiscal Recovery Funds Usage
 - a. Council members were provided an updated report of the current and estimated expenditures.

New Business:

None

Checks approved: General Fund: 7847-7868 Water Fund: 5773-5783 _____

A motion was made by Steve Acree to approve the bills. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Motion passed.

Gene Melvin made a motion to adjourn. Time: 8:32 p.m.


 Cecil E. (Gene) Melvin, Mayor


 Suzanne McRee, Town Clerk