

TOWN OF BROOKER
REGULAR MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2025

Present: Linda Bennett, Chris Caldwell, Joe Tolleson, Gene Melvin, Randy Starling,
Charlene Thomas, John Maines – Zoom.

Community: Terry Thomas

Meeting called to order by Gene Melvin, Mayor.

Pledge of Allegiance!

A motion was made by Linda Bennett to approve the minutes as presented from the November 11th regular monthly council meeting. Seconded by Chris Caldwell. Motion passed.

John Maines – Attorney: zoom:

Mr. Maines was asked to discuss with the council about the bid to sell the Old Fire Station and property. He advised the council that they could add a minimum reserve amount to the bid. That way the bids we get will start at this amount. He suggested we advertise this in the Telegraph and place the bid on our website. Also, he suggested we have the bid opening date at the February 10th meeting and put in the bid that the awarded bid will close in 60 days. A motion was made by Randy Starling to put the reserve minimum amount at \$25,000.00. Seconded by Chris Caldwell. Motion passed. Clerk will get this advertised.

New Fire Station:

1. Gene Melvin reported a ground breaking ceremony was held on December 5th. We had a lot in attendance. State Representative, Chuck Brannen, did attend as well. Hopefully, we will get funding for Phase II next go round.
2. Charlene Thomas, Town Clerk, did mention to Council the email she received from NCFRPC concerning the site plan application we submitted on October 24, 2025. There were several items not on the site plan that our Land Development Regulations require. (Off street parking, refuse & service areas, landscape buffer, landscape, signs & lighting) I forwarded the email to Mark Williams on November 24th so he can get these items corrected on the site plan. As of this meeting I have not received anything from Mark Williams. I did mention this to Diane Andrews, County Commissioner, at the ground breaking ceremony. Also, NCFRPC advised us that the seven lots that the New Fire Station will be sitting on has to be combined into one unified lot via a partial plat prior to the issuance of a certificate of zoning compliance and building permits. I called John Maines and he suggested I contact Pat Welch since he did the original survey for us. Pat Welch was contacted. Mr. Maines did say we cannot legally start anything on this property until the site plan is approved by NCFRPC.

Charlene Thomas – Town Clerk:

1. Past due water report was passed out for review. We are still out \$935.45.
2. I did contact Fortiline to see if there is anyway the Town can know about a water break before the meter is read monthly. I was told NO because our setup is for AMR (Automated Meter Reading) and that is the only way we will know about a break is after the meter is read that month.
3. Last meeting I was asked to check with our insurance provider to find out if someone gets hurt on Town property if we would be liable. Tom Conley, Florida League of Cities, said we have liability insurance. But in order for our insurance to pay the accident must be the town's fault. (ie we didn't maintain tennis court surface, creating a hazard.) If someone gets hurt playing pickleball, or tennis, the person knows there is a risk of injury, and the person assumes the risk by participating. That would not be the Town's fault. In other word's if someone gets hurt on our property we would have to be found liable. Which means if we know about an area that needs repairing and we didn't fix it and someone gets hurt then we would be liable.
I did go over to the tennis court to see if it needed any repairs. I found several cracks in the court. I contacted Steve, Tennis Unlimited, and ask him to come and give us an estimate to fix the cracks. I received a quote in the amount of \$1200.00. A motion was made by Joe Tolleson to pay Tennis Unlimited \$1200.00 to fix cracks in court. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Motion passed.
4. Auditor- Reddish & White has done our audit for over 20 years. I received a call and email from Doug Reddish stating due to the loss of two important auditors from his Company and it being impossible to find anyone to do governmental audits he will no longer due the audit for the Town of Brooker. He did give me an audit firm referral. The company is Powell & Jones out of Lake City. This firm does the audit for the Town of LaCrosse. I contacted John Maines, Attorney, on this and he said we should bid this out but because we are behind on starting the audit for 2024/25 year and this is considered an emergency to go ahead and call Powell & Jones and get a proposal. We will need to bid this out before the audit for 2025/26 is done. I did receive a proposal in the amount of \$20,000.00. Last year we paid Reddish & White \$17,000.00. A motion was made by Chris Caldwell to pay \$20,000.00 to Powell & Jones for 2024/25 audit. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Motion passed.
5. Bernard Carter contacted me about ordering a meter for the well behind tennis court. The cost is \$400.00. I ordered it from USA Blue Book.
6. I spoke with Trudy, EMT Affordable Lawn Care concerning the installation of "Road Closed" sign on Melvin Street. Her husband, Edward, is not doing well. She said she would have to get someone to help her with putting up the sign. Joe had given her the sign to take home. I told her to bring it back and I would have Terry put it back up. I told her it is alright to tell the town NO if she can't do something we ask. I told her we would continue to let Terry put up street signs for the Town.
7. Went over Revenues and Expenditures for November 2025.

Gene Melvin – Water Department:

1. He mentioned Bernard Carter is checking on a different Generator for water department and will report back to us. We are hoping Florida Rural Water can help with this. Possibly a grant available.

Sanitation, Roads/Streets, Ground Maintenance/Mowing – Nothing to report

Recreation/Parks – Linda Bennett:

1. Gene Melvin mentioned there are some exposed electrical wires at the tennis court. He thinks maybe the mowing people could have hit them. He said he thinks there are 3 and they are located at base of lights at tennis court. He suggested we contact Len Eaves to come and fix.

Community Center – Gene Melvin:

1. Town Clerk reported she has two upcoming rentals.

Town Council/Mayor:

1. Joe Tolleson questioned about cameras for Town Hall property? Town Clerk said she didn't have anything to report on this. She has checked into several cameras but can't seem to find anything that will work for us. She will report back when she has something to report.

Old Business:

1. Ethics training has to be done by December 31st. Chris Caldwell is the only councilmember who hasn't completed this.

New Business:

1. Open bids "Class C" Operator. Two bids were received. One from Bernard Carter in the amount of \$1000.00 a month. One from U.S. Water Services Corporation in the amount of \$945.34 a month. U.S. Water Services Corporation is located in Ocala. The Town Council felt like we need to have someone closer due to problems we have at the water department. A motion was made by Chris Caldwell to accept the two year bill from Bernard Carter in the amount of \$1000.00. Seconded by Joe Tolleson. Motion passed.
2. Christmas bonus for Town Clerk. Last year we paid her \$400.00. Joe Tolleson made a motion to give her \$500.00 this year. Seconded by Linda Bennett. 4 yes votes. Gene Melvin abstained from voting.

Checks approved: GFund – 8743-8767, WFund – 6262-6275

A motion to pay the bills by Randy Starling. Seconded by Chris Caldwell. Motion passed.

Gene Melvin made a motion to adjourn. Time: 8:08p.m.

Everyone wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Cecil E. (Gene) Melvin, Mayor

Charlene Thomas, Town Clerk